

STARTING OUT AS A CHRISTIAN · STUDY NOTES

Study 7: Studying the Bible

For personal study or groups

Your name

biblehelp.net

How to use these notes. Watch each part's video on biblehelp.net, or read the text below. Look up each passage in your own Bible and write the answer on the lines. The verses are printed at the back if you need them. At the end there are questions to think about on your own or to discuss in a group.

PART 1

Why study the Bible?

God's word written down

The Bible is the word of God written down. It is a library of 66 books, written over many centuries by about 40 different authors, in three original languages: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. It is quite unlike any other library, because it was written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. So it is a reliable teacher of everything God wants us to know about Him and His ways. Above all, the Bible points us to Christ. He is its great central theme.

1. The reason for Bible study

It is vital that we study the Bible, because it tells us all that God wants us to know about the Christian life. It gives us knowledge of God and of His will. It encourages us to trust and serve Him.

1 **Look up 2 Timothy 3:16–17**

What is Scripture useful for, and with what result?

2. The benefits of Bible study

The Bible is food to help us grow spiritually. Our souls, like our bodies, need food to be healthy; not eating is a sign of ill health. Christians need spiritual food to be spiritually healthy. As healthy babies feed, so healthy Christians take in the milk of God's word.

2 **Look up 1 Peter 2:2–3**

What should we crave, and what will it do for us?

The Bible is light, showing us right from wrong and directing our lives.

3 **Look up Psalm 119:105**

What two things does the psalmist call God's word?

See also: Psalm 119:130.

The Bible is a probe, searching our hearts and showing us things about ourselves that need to change.

4 **Look up Hebrews 4:12**

What does the word of God judge?

The Bible is a weapon to use in our fight against the devil.

5 **Look up Ephesians 6:17**

What is the sword of the Spirit?

3. Studying the Bible with others

We study the Bible when we meet for Sunday worship. We can only worship God rightly if He tells us what He is like. And we can only serve Him if we know what He wants us to do. To get the most out of the preaching:

- Pray before coming to church.
- Bring your Bible and use it.
- Concentrate on the sermon; accept that this takes effort.
- Apply the sermon to your life.
- Ask about anything you don't understand (afterwards!).
- Take notes if you find it helpful.

A church's mid-week Bible study is also an important and valuable way of getting to know the Bible. Go whenever you can, and make a note of anything that puzzles you.

PART 2

Reading the Bible yourself

4. Studying the Bible by yourself

It is important to spend time studying the Bible on your own. Try to find a regular time for this. Aim to read the Bible every day, even if you can only manage 20 minutes.

There are many ways to study the Bible at home, and you will never exhaust them. Before anything else, pray for understanding. The psalmist's prayer is a good one:

6 **Look up Psalm 119:18**

What does the psalmist ask God to do?

Reading the Bible every day takes effort. Either sin will keep you from God's word, or God's word will keep you from sin.

7 **Look up Psalm 119:11**

Why did the psalmist hide God's word in his heart?

Now follow these simple guidelines:

- Start with a part of the Bible that is not too difficult. One of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John), followed by the Acts of the Apostles, is a good foundation for a new believer.
- Read several paragraphs, or even a chapter, every day – more than once if you need to.
- Read more widely as you have opportunity, and don't neglect the Old Testament.

There are many Bible reading notes available; ask your pastor about them. Try to move on to notes that work steadily through a section of the Bible. Most books of the Bible have a developing theme, and you will miss it if you jump from one book to another.

5. Thoughtful Bible study

Read the Bible thoughtfully. God wants us to meditate on His word every day.

8 **Read Psalm 1:1–2**

When does the blessed person meditate on God's law?

Bible meditation is not about emptying our minds. It is thinking about what God says, and considering how we should live as a result. So, whether you are studying at church or at home, ask yourself:

- What does this passage teach me about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit?
- What does it teach me about myself, and about people in general?
- Is there a promise to claim, or an example to follow?
- Is there a warning to heed, or a command to obey?
- Is God saying something directly to me in my present situation?

6. More hints on Bible study

- Write down what you have learnt, especially if there is action to take.
- Pray for courage to take that action.

- Memorise verses you have found particularly helpful.
- Read helpful books; ask your pastor to suggest some.

7. Finally: a note of caution

Never let your times alone with the Bible turn into dry academic study. The main aim of reading the Bible regularly is to have fellowship with the Lord, not to pass an exam. You are looking for a faith for life, not a "thought for the day"!

A jigsaw

Everything you learn is another piece of the jigsaw of God's truth, and every day the picture becomes clearer. The Bible tells us all we need to know to live the Christian life, but only in heaven can we hope to understand all that it says.

THINK IT THROUGH

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. Which of the four pictures of the Bible (food, light, probe, weapon) do you need most at the moment?

2. When and where could you read the Bible each day?

3. Choose a short passage and ask the five questions in section 5. What did you learn?

HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

Memory verse for study 7

Learn this verse by heart this week. Cut out the card and keep it where you will see it.

STARTING OUT AS A CHRISTIAN · STUDY 7 · MEMORY VERSE

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

Psalm 119:105

Berean Standard Bible · biblehelp.net

“I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:11, BSB)

AT THE BACK

The Bible passages (BSB)

1 **2 Timothy 3:16–17** *16All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for instruction, for conviction, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.*

2 **1 Peter 2:2–3** *2Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 3now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

3 **Psalm 119:105** *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

4 **Hebrews 4:12** *For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it pierces even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

5 **Ephesians 6:17** *And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

6 **Psalm 119:18** *Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things from Your law.*

7 **Psalm 119:11** *I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.*

8 **Psalm 1:1–2** *1Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or set foot on the path of sinners, or sit in the seat of mockers. 2But his delight is in the Law of the LORD, and on His law he meditates day and night.*

Scripture: Berean Standard Bible (BSB), public domain. Quotations keep its American spelling. Like many English Bibles, it often says ‘man’, ‘he’ or ‘brothers’ where it means people in general, men and women alike.

FOR GROUP LEADERS

Study 7: Studying the Bible

> **Memory verse:** “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119:105). Say it together at the end, and ask who can say it without looking.

Aims

- Show what the Bible is (God's word written down) and why we study it.
- Explore four pictures: food, light, probe, weapon.
- Give practical help for listening to sermons and reading the Bible daily.

Suggested timing (about 60 minutes)

- **5 min** Welcome and short prayer.
- **20 min** Part 1 video (4 min); 2 Timothy 3:16–17, 1 Peter 2:2–3, Psalm 119:105, Hebrews 4:12 and Ephesians 6:17.
- **30 min** Part 2 video (4 min); Psalm 119:18, 119:11, Psalm 1:1–2, then try the five questions together on a short passage.
- **5 min** Summary and closing prayer.

Tips

- Bring a few Bibles and recommend a reading plan or reading notes your church uses.
- Practise the five questions on a short Gospel passage (for example Mark 2:1–12).
- Encourage a realistic daily habit; 20 minutes is plenty to start.

Answers to watch for

- **2 Timothy 3:16–17:** all Scripture is God-breathed and useful, so that we may be equipped for every good work.
- **1 Peter 2:2–3:** crave pure spiritual milk, to grow up in your salvation.
- **Psalm 119:105:** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
- **Hebrews 4:12:** the word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword.
- **Ephesians 6:17:** the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
- **Psalm 119:18:** "Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things from Your law."
- **Psalm 119:11:** "I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You."
- **Psalm 1:1–2:** the blessed person meditates on God's law day and night.