

QUIET TIME

Theme: Studying the Bible

- Try to make a specific time every day to meet Jesus Christ through reading and meditating his Word.
- Pray, talk with Jesus Christ and make a few short notes about this Bible passage in your notebook.
- Record what you discover, what speaks to your mind and heart, what you find difficult or what you understood.

Day 1 Ezra 7:10
What you must do before you teach God's Word to others

Day 2 Acts 17:10-12
Test preachers and teachers of the Bible whether they explain the Bible correctly

Day 3 James 1:19-25
God's Word saves you and blesses all you do when you do what it says

Day 4 1 Peter 1:22 - 2:2
God's Word takes care of spiritual growth and ultimately perfect salvation

Day 5^{BS} 2 Timothy 3:10 - 4:5
Continue in what you have learned from the Bible

Day 6 Hebrews 5:11-14
Distinguish good from evil by constant use of the teachings from the Bible

Day 7 John 5:39-40
It is dangerous to diligently study the Bible without the intent to obey it

Day 8 Acts 17:1-4
Participate in a Bible Study every week¹

Day 9 Mark 4:24-25
The size of the measure you use to measure God's Word to yourself and others²

Day 10 Luke 2:46-47
Jesus listened, asked questions and shared his insights during Bible Study

- Think about 1 Thessalonians 3:1.
Pray that you may contribute what is lacking in another's faith.
- Pray every day for someone or something specific and wait in expectation for what God is going to do (Psalm 5:3).

STUDY

Theme: Five practical methods of doing Bible Study

Read study 35 carefully before the next meeting. If you have questions, write them down and mail them to one of your group leaders. We will seek an answer together.

BIBLE STUDY

Theme: Continue in what you have learned from the Bible and proclaim it

If you like, you may already prepare the Bible Study for the coming meeting by reading through the Bible passage. Make use of the 5-step Bible Study method. The Bible passage is: **2 Timothy 3:10-4:5**

MEMORISATION

1. Motivation

Jesus memorised Bible verses (Luke 4:4-13). Are you doing that?

2.2 Memorisation

Memorise this verse in the Bible version of your choice.

BIBLE STUDY

Acts 17:11

Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

Acts 17:11 (NIV)

3. Review and back-review

Review the last 5 memorised verses once every day and back-review all other memorised verses once every three weeks.

¹ **Acts 17:2-3.** Paul has the good custom to discuss the Bible with Jews once a week. He opens (explains) the Scriptures and shows that the Christ (the Messiah) must suffer (die) and be resurrected from the dead.

² **Mark 4:24-25.** Jesus intends to say that when you study the Bible a lot, God will add his blessings to your life. But when you neglect to study the Bible, you will lose even the previous blessings.

35. Practical methods of doing Bible Study

Today God still speaks to us through the words in the Bible. But how should a Christian study the Bible? This study contains practical methods for doing Bible Study. These methods can be employed individually and in a group setting.

Bible Study

1. What is the goal of doing Bible Study?

The goal of doing Bible Study together in a group is to grow together in your relationship to God and in your relationship to one another. The purpose is to help one another discover the truths in the Bible, to understand them and to apply them to your life. The purpose is to change, to be transformed more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

2. The attitude of the group leader and of the group members

During the Bible Study it is important that the group leader assumes the role of a chairman rather than of a teacher. As chairman he guides the group into discovering and discussing the truths. He does not simply pass on truths. The input of every group member is important! That is why group leaders and group members encourage one another to participate in the discovering, discussing and applying of the truths.

If it is evident that a particular contribution is not quite (theologically) correct, the group leader does not say: "That is wrong!" or: "I disagree!" But rather asks: "What do others think?" Or: "Who knows a Bible passage that throws more light on the subject?" In this way the study leads more and more towards the truth as God intended it to be understood. It is not important to discover who has the most Bible knowledge or who is 'right'. It is more important that the group members listen to one another, take one another serious, accept one another, help one another to better understand the Bible and to get transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ!

3. Prayer

Of course, the group prays at the beginning of the meeting. At the end of the Bible Study everyone gets a turn to respond in one or two sentences, saying what he learned during this meeting.

Method 1: The 5 steps Bible Study method (basic and participatory)

This method is easy and transferable. Use it for your own study of the Bible or for a group Bible Study. This method may be used for studying any Bible passage. In the 5 step method of Bible Study every member of the group actively participates in every part of the Bible Study.

STEP 1: Read

Every group member takes a turn to read one Bible verse until the whole passage has been read.



STEP 2: Discover

The group leader asks: "Which truth in the Bible passage touches your mind or your heart?" "Why?" Or: "Which truth interests you?" "Why?" "Which truth in this passage is important for you?" "Why?"



Every group member records his thoughts in one or two sentences.

Then every group member shares his discovery with the group. When everyone has had a turn to share, the group members may discuss other discoveries.

STEP 3: Question

The group leader asks:

"Which question would you like to ask the group?"



Every group member formulates one open question from this Bible passage and records it.

'Open questions' are specific and always begin with an interrogative (question word): 'Who', 'What', 'Where', 'When', 'Where to', 'Why' and 'How'.

'Closed questions' kill the discussion of the matter, because it begins with a verb and can only be answered with 'Yes' or 'No'.

The group leader makes a list of the questions.

Then the group leader leads the discussion making use of as many of the questions of the group members as possible.

During the discussion he makes use of accompanying questions as:

"Who wants to begin with an answer?"

"What do the others think about that?"

"Which Bible passage could throw more light on the matter?"

"Who would like to formulate the question again?"

"Who wants to summarise the answer?" Etc.

STEP 4: Do (put it into practice)

The group leader asks:

"What are possible applications in the passage?"

"Which truths in this Bible passage are relevant and could be applied in the present time?"

The group discusses the possible applications with one another and everyone records the list of possible applications. A 'possible application is a truth in the Bible passage that can be applied in one or another way today.

Every group member chooses one possible application and turns it into a personal application. A personal application remains a matter between God and the group member. But he may share his personal application if he wishes.



STEP 5: Pray

The group leader asks: “What is your response to what God is saying in this Bible passage?”

Every group member takes a turn and responds in a prayer of one or two sentences to what God has taught him in this Bible Study.



Method 2: The method for studying a Bible verse (analytic method)

This analytical method studies a Bible verse in its context. The verse may consist of two or three consecutive Bible verses that form one related thought, as Matthew 28:18-20; John 13:34-35 or Colossians 2:6-7. Not every question of the method can be answered in every Bible verse which you are studying. The questions are only a guideline for the study and discussion.

The Bible verse method also has 5 steps:

1. Read

Let a group member read the Bible verse.

2. Observation

‘To observe’ means to give careful thought to the facts.

Context. “What is the smallest possible context of this Bible verse?” The ‘context’ possibly consists of a part before and a part after the Bible verse that helps you to give the Bible verse its correct meaning. Note the beginning and end of the context. “What are your reasons for this choice?” Study the context. Record your discovery (as short as possible).

Persons and their character. “Who are the persons (God, people) and how are they described?”, “What is their personality and character?” Record your discoveries.

Events and the way they occur. “What happens?”, “What is said and what is done?” “In which way do the events happen?” Record your discoveries.

Reasons and consequences. “What are the motives behind the speaking and acting of God or the people?” “What are the consequences and effects of what they say and do?” Record your discoveries.

Words and expressions. Give special attention to verbs, nouns, conjunctions and repetitions. “Which words or expressions require explanation?” Record your discoveries.

3. Explanation

‘To explain’ means to understand the Bible as it was originally intended by God. It may therefore not be your own interpretation or view. Always use the correct rules of interpretation that belong to the style of literature in which the Bible verse is written (e.g. laws, history, poetry, wisdom, prophecy, etc.). See the study in lesson 36.

Meaning. “How must the above words and expressions be explained?” (Use a dictionary and other Bible translations).

Culture. “What are the historic-cultural facts in this Bible verse?”, “What was the meaning of what people said and did in the time the Bible was written?”

The ‘historic-culture’ of a specific group of people consists of their worldview, truths, beliefs, superstitions, values and experiences at that time in history. Their views are expressed in their convictions in the area of science or religion, their behaviour, relationships, heritage (e.g. clothing, language, music, art, dancing, sport, and humour) and their institutions (e.g. schools, hospitals, political parties and courts). The Bible verse you study: *either describes the human (historic) culture:* life and events, whether good or bad, in the time these people lived

or teaches the culture of the kingdom of God: what God commanded, forbade or taught about how the people of God should change and live. God’s purpose is to transform the culture of people into the culture of the kingdom of God.

Emphasis. The ‘emphasis’ or central thought of the Bible verse you study is that word or clause around which the whole Bible verse turns. “Where is the emphasis in this Bible verse?”

Is the emphasis on teaching doctrine? Then note the nouns and formulate the teaching or doctrine which Christians must believe.

Is the emphasis on commanding action? Then note the verbs and formulate the command or exhortation which Christians must carry out.

Is the emphasis on describing history? Then formulate what happened in history and determine whether it was a good or bad example. If it is a good example, you may follow this example, but without enforcing it on other Christians. If it is a bad example, you may not follow it.

Is the emphasis on a promise or prophecy? Then formulate the promise or prophecy after determining whether it is applicable for today or not (cf. study 7 and 13).

Audience. “Who is God addressing in this passage?”

Note whether it is all people on earth; or all Christians on earth; or only a particular group of people at a specific time in history; or only a specific individual at a specific time in history”

“How do things, which were spoken or done earlier, go into fulfilment later with respect to the addressees?”

Cross-references. A cross-reference is another Bible verse that helps to explain the Bible verse you are studying. Search cross-references that:

throw more light on this Bible verse *that give other points of view* in order to bring balance to the subject *or that give good and bad examples* of what is said or done in the Bible verse you are studying.

First make use of your own knowledge of the Bible and then make use of a Bible concordance if you possess one.

Questions. “Which questions would you still like to ask?”

Conclusions. (the main thought) A ‘conclusion’ is a summary statement. Your conclusions are the building blocks for developing your own convictions. Formulate your conclusions derived from this Bible verse.

4. Application

An ‘application’ is a biblical truth that you make relevant to a particular area in your life. It describes one or several practical ways you glorify God by allowing God’s Word to influence the way you live. “What does God desire that you should * know, * believe, * be, or * do?”

Possible applications. Discuss the possible applications in this Bible verse with one another. *Make a short list.*

Personal application. Ask God which of these possible applications you should turn into a personal application. See to it that your personal application remains realistic and practical. Try to carry out your personal application within one or two weeks.

Prayer as a response. “Which response will you have to God’s Word?” Every group member responds by means of a short prayer (of one or two sentences) to what he has learned from God in this Bible Study.

5. Presentation

A ‘presentation’ is a practical and creative way in which you can present (teach) the truth in this Bible verse to others. For example by means of:

A teaching or sermon. Give a short speech that presents one truth clearly.

A testimony or story. Give a testimony about something that really happened or tell a story that explains the truth.

A drawing or illustration. Present a drawing or illustration that explains the truth.

A poem or song. Write a poem, compose a song or choose a song that elucidates the truth. Recite the poem or sing the song to the group.

A mime or play. Devise a mime or play in which you depict the truth. Stage the play.

A title or paraphrase. A title is a captivating phrase that helps to recognize and remember the main thought of the Bible verse. Devise an arresting title and give the reason why you chose this title. A ‘paraphrase’ is restating the truth of the Bible verse in your own words. Rewrite the

Bible verse in your own words. Try to render the main thought of the writer.

Method 3: The method for studying a Bible passage or chapter (analytic and synthetic method)

The verses in the Bible passage or chapter are first studied analytically (as in method 2) and then synthetically (as in method 3), that is, by combining the various truths in the passage or chapter into a new unity.

The synthetic section consists of three parts and 12 steps.

Draw four columns on each of three A4 pages laid sideways.

Page 1. Verse by verse meditation in order to understand the contents.

The titles of the four columns are:

(1) observations	(2) interpretations and questions	(3) cross- references	(4) general notes
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Page 2. Description of the passage or chapter in order to arrange the contents.

The titles of the four columns are:

(5) central idea of each verse	(6) summary ideas in the passage or chapter	(7) overview and title	(8) the emphasis or central thought of the passage
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Page 3. Presentation of the passage or chapter by using the discovered facts.

The titles of the four columns are:

(9) conclusions	(10) personal application	(11) diagram	(12) presentation
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Method 4: The method for studying a Bible theme (thematic method)

The thematic method of Bible Study studies a particular topic throughout the Bible or from a section of the Bible.

1. Bible references

List. Make a list of all the Bible passages that deal with the theme or subject which you want to study. Do this by making use of a Bible concordance or a Bible with many Bible references.

When you study a teaching or doctrine, however, you must study all the Bible passages that deal with the topic or subject and not just a selection.

Selection. When you study a practical topic or subject, you may select about 10 to 15 Bible passages from the list.

2. Main thoughts

Study every Bible passage in your list thoroughly. Note especially the context, the addressee and the emphasis (cf. method 2 and 3).

Main thoughts. Formulate your main thoughts (conclusions) next to each Bible passage in the list.

3. Outline and title

Outline. Group your main thoughts under a few categories and make an outline in point format.

Main or final conclusion. Formulate your main conclusion on the basis of your categories in the outline.

Title. Devise a fitting title for the theme or subject so that you can remember what you studied.

4. Illustrations

Biblical illustrations. Try to find a few biblical examples or illustrations for the theme or topic.

Life illustrations. Give a few examples of this theme or topic from everyday life.

5. Application

Biblical conviction. Formulate your personal conviction about the theme or subject, but base your conviction completely on the Bible (cf. method 2 and 3).

Possible application. Formulate a couple of possible applications. Make a short list.

Personal application. If God leads you, make a personal application from one of the possible applications for the coming week. Formulate your personal application if possible in the 5-point format: (1) Bible reference, (2) truth, (3) personal situation, (4) plan of action, (5) check your progress or response in prayer.

Presentation. Devise a presentation of the theme or subject and present it to the group (cf. method 2 and 3).

Method 5: The method for studying a Bible personality (biographic method)

The biographical method of Bible Study studies a person in Bible history in order to learn from his example (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:6,11). You study his relationship to God and other people, his development as a person, his character and his influence.

You study everything you can find about him in the Bible. Therefore a concordance may help. You may also like to limit your study to one aspect of his life: e.g. 'Moses during the exodus', 'David during his flight from Saul', 'Jesus during the last week before his crucifixion', or 'Paul during his first missionary journey'.

The biographic Bible Study method has 12 steps:

1. Bible references

List. Make a list of all the Bible references that deal with the person which you want to study. Use a Bible with many references or a Bible Concordance.

Selection. Choose which Bible passage you would like to use.

2. Meditation

Read each Bible passage carefully. Think about what it says and summarize the facts in 4 columns:

(1) *Observations* are particular details about the person whom you study. "Who was he (or she)?" "What did he do?" "Where did he live?" "Why did he do these things?" "What were his accomplishments?" "What were the qualities of his character?" "What effect did his words, deeds, personality and character have on his own life and on the lives of other people?"

(2) *Questions.* Record the questions you like to ask about this person, his words and deeds.

(3) *Cross-references.* Seek other Bible passages or other Bible personalities that may throw more light on the person whom you are studying.

(4) *Notes.* Make notes about possible applications, possible themes and possible personalities you may want to study in the future. Note the key Bible verses you would like to memorise.

3. Summaries

Make use of the 'meditation' (point 2) and write a short summary of each Bible passage. This is useful, because your Bible passages may be spread right across the Bible.

4. Biographical sketch

Make use of the 'summaries' (point 3) and write a biographical sketch of the person which you are studying. Record only facts you can find in the Bible, but do not elaborate. Record the following facts (insofar they are available):

(1) *Dates.* "When was he born and when did he die?"

(2) *Descent.* "Where was he born?" "Who were his parents?" "What was his family background?" "Which events surrounding his birth were important?" "What is the meaning of his name?"

(3) *Family.* "Who did he marry?" "Who were his children?" "What were his children like?" "In what way did his wife and children promote or hinder his life and work (ministry)?"

(4) *Occupation*. “What was his work or occupation?” “Who were his colleagues?” “What were their mutual relationships like?” “What influence did his work (occupation) have on his later life and ministry?”

(5) *Contemporaries*. “Who were his contemporaries and friends?” “What kind of influence did they have on one another?”

(6) *God*. “What was his relationship to God?” “To what extent did his relationship with God grow or deteriorate?” “What does God say about him?”

(7) *Circumstances*. “What were the political, social, religious and economic circumstances of his time?” “Which factors and circumstances determined who he became, what he believed and what he did?”

(8) *Events*. “What were the most important events in his life?” If applicable, draw a map of his journeys.

(9) *Accomplishments*. “What were his accomplishments and successes?” “What his contribution to his world?” “What were his failures and sins?” “What was his influence on his wife, children, neighbours and nation?”

(10) *Extraordinary*. “What was extraordinary in his life and work?”

(11) *Death*. “How did he die and where was he buried?”

5. Historic background

Use a Bible Handbook or Commentary and gather more information about the time in which this person lived, the spirit of the age and the culture during that time. First determine when and where he lived. Then try to understand the political, military, social, economic and religious circumstances in that time.

6. Character

(1) *Strengths and weaknesses*. “What were his strengths and weaknesses?” Describe his characteristics.

(2) *God’s view*. “Why did God regard him as great or not?”

(3) *Shortcomings*. “Under which circumstances did he reveal his shortcomings?”

7. Philosophy of life

(1) *Motives*. “What were his motives?” “What motivated him?” “What turned him on?”

(2) *Attitudes*. “What were his attitudes?” “Which wrong attitude brought him into trouble?”

(3) *Goals*. “What were his goals?” “Which goals did he reach?” “Which goals did he fail to reach?” “Why?”

(4) *Expectations*. “What were his expectations?” “How did he react to his unfulfilled expectations?”

8. Key verse

Choose a key verse in the Bible for this person. It must be a Bible verse that describes him and the direction of his life best.

9. Key thought

Describe this person in one sentence. It may be a summary of his life. It may be the most important lesson in his life. It may be positive or negative – something to imitate or something to avoid. The key thought and key verse must correspond to each other.

10. Application

Make a choice out of all the possible applications under ‘meditation’ and write a personal application.

11. Presentation

Use the material you have gathered and make one or more graphic chart about his life and work.

(1) *Chronological chart*. This chart shows the most important phases of his life and accomplishments.

(2) *Social chart*. This chart shows his various relationships: with God and with people.

(3) *Lessons chart*. This chart shows the lessons he has learned in life: his convictions, commitments and mistakes.

12. Comparison or contrast

Compare or contrast this person with someone else in the Bible or with Jesus Christ.

Method 6: The method for studying a parable of Jesus

Note: The Bible Study method for studying parables is explained in *lesson 20*.

Method 7: The method for studying the Bible in the discovery group

The Bible Study method for the discovery group is explained in *study 44*.