

*How to*



**On the Bible**

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*"Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." ~ John 14:21 (ESV)*

"Only 9% of all born-again adults have a Biblical worldview...The other 91% possess a patchwork of theological views and rarely rely upon those perspectives to inform their daily decisions" ~ George Barna<sup>1</sup>

Most Christians agree that the Bible is important. Few read it consistently. Even fewer live out its teachings everyday. Some never will because other things will always be more important. Others desire to, but struggle with literacy, understanding types of literature, and just where to get started. This short workshop is designed to get you started in having the commands of Christ and putting them into practice. It was Ghandi who said, "If Christians really lived by the teachings of Christ, as found in the Bible, all of India would be Christian today." As our goal is community transformation and the Bible is one of God's resources to us in completing that goal, I'm hoping today would be the beginning point for more transformation in our personal lives, neighborhoods, and communities. Let's get a grip on this book and let it's truths get a grip on us, allowing God to shape and change our lives.

Lane Corley

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1 George Barna, Revolution

# Bible FAQ:

## *How did we get the Bible?*

After the 4<sup>th</sup> century the Christian church had to make a decision about which writings would be considered authoritative for faith and practice. There were many letters and books written claiming to be gospel, so what criteria was used to choose what would be placed in the "canon" or rule and reference point and become what we have today as the Holy Bible? This was done by a process of recognition rather than an event or imposition.<sup>2</sup> **Christians began to recognize that certain books WERE being used as authoritative on the basis of authorship and accuracy to oral history.**<sup>3</sup> For the New Testament, the major question was could the book be traced with relative certainty to an apostle? For the Old Testament, the canon had been set by Jewish Rabbis. The council of Trent in 1546, included other books known as the Apocrypha that related stories of life in the years before Christ. Most of these remain in Roman Catholic endorsed Bibles today. The apocryphal books are considered to be valuable history, but not authoritative for faith and practice among most protestants churches.

## *Why is this one book so important?*

The Bible contains sixty-six books, written in three languages (Hebrew, Greek, & Aramaic), over a period of more than a thousand years, by more than forty authors on three continents. Authors of the Bible include kings, peasants, philosophers, farmers, fishermen, poets, statesman, & scholars. The books of the Bible cover history, sermons, letters, songs, geographical surveys, architectural specifications, travel diaries, genealogies, & legal documents. It covers hundreds of controversial subjects with amazing continuity. It's the best selling book of all time & is now available in nearly three thousand languages.<sup>4</sup> So what's the big deal about the Bible?

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2 Michael Horton, The Portable Seminary

3 Alister McGrath, Christianity's Dangerous Idea

4 Josh McDowell, A Ready Defense

**When you & I read the Bible, we can hear directly from God.** How can I hear from God through something written 2,000 years ago in different languages & cultures & it be relevant to my life in the 21st Century?

***There are five steps that have taken place for the Bible to speak to us as it does.***

**Step 1) Revelation/Inspiration** is the miraculous event whereby God revealed His truth to a person & inspired them to write down what He had to say. (2 Timothy 3:16 & 2 Peter 1:19-21).

**Step 2) Transmission** occurred when the original copies of the inspired writings were carefully copied by trained scribes so that other copies could be made available for people to read. In antiquity, there were no copy machines, so there was room for human error. But the available manuscripts have proven accurate & trustworthy, in spite of much criticism & scrutiny from opponents of Christianity.

**Step 3) Translation** occurs when people want to read the Bible but are not familiar with the original languages in which they were written (Hebrew, Greek, & Aramaic). This work is usually done by teams of highly trained scholars. The first English Bible was begun by John Wycliffe & completed by John Purvey in AD1388.

**Step 4) Interpretation** occurs when someone reads the Bible in a language they understand & determines the meaning of the verses they read by the enablement of the Holy Spirit.

**Step 5) Application** occurs when we take the truth/principles in the Bible & by the power of God's Spirit & grace adjust our lives to become what God wants us to become.

While the first step, Revelation, is the only one that is absolutely perfect, the others are very trustworthy & should be considered inspired by God. It's the third step that we find ourselves questioning often today because of the many available Bible translations. Two questions I want to answer: Why are there different translations? Which one is best for me?

## ***Why are there different translations?***

Different translations exist because there are different theories or philosophies of translation utilized.

### **The four general theories most common in Bible Translation are:**

**1) *Word-for-word translations*** (known as literal translations or formal equivalence) seek to carefully translate & interpret each word from the original Greek, Hebrew, & Aramaic into English. They tend to be favored by serious students of the Bible because of their accuracy. These include the King James Version (KJV), New American Standard Bible (NASB), New King James Version (NKJV), Revised Standard Version (RSV), Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB), & the English Standard Version (ESV).

**2) *Thought-for-thought translations*** (know as functional equivalence) seek to convey the full meaning of a passage of scripture by interpreting the entire meaning & not just individual words. There may be words included that are not in the original text in an effort to make the text more readable. These include the New International Version (NIV), the New Living Translation (NLT), Contemporary English Version (CEV).

**3) *Paraphrases*** pay less attention to original word meanings for the sake of readability. They simply seek to capture the essence of the passage & do require more interpretation by the author/translator. Available paraphrases are The Message, The Living Bible, The Amplified Bible, The New Testament in Modern English.

**4) *Corruptions*** are translations of Scripture that seek to undermine foundational elements of Christian orthodoxy. Most common in our area is the Jehovah's Witness translation called the New World Translation, which was written in large part to eliminate the deity of Jesus Christ. These should be avoided & not considered credible for reading or study.<sup>5</sup>

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5 Mark Driscoll, Pastoral Reflections on Bible Translations, [http://www.hcbaptist.com/hcbaptis/Mark%20Driscoll-ESV%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.hcbaptist.com/hcbaptis/Mark%20Driscoll-ESV%20(2).pdf).

## *What translation is best for me?*

**The translation you choose should depend upon your reading level & your purpose for reading or studying.** If you read poorly, the King James Version is probably not the best choice of Bible translations. You might want to start with the New Living Translation or New International Version. If you are looking for something fresh & different for your devotional time, The Message might be a good choice. As long as you remember that it is a paraphrase. If you are a serious student of the Bible & regularly teach others, you should at least have on hand a word-for-word translation to refer to for the literal meanings.

That leads me to the Bible that I chose & find myself currently studying, reading, & teaching from today. The English Standard Version. I like the English Standard Version for two simple reasons: 1) It's the most recent word-for-word translation which had scholarly and pastoral input. 2) It's accessible and affordable. A leather bound ESV, such as I use each Sunday can be purchased at area book stores for less than \$30. **Whatever you do, don't let the many & various translations be an excuse for not spending time in God's Word.**

## *Understanding How the Bible is put together*

The Bible is broken into 66 books, 39 Old Testament telling God's story beginning at creation and through the lives of his chosen people Israel, and 27 New Testament telling God's story of sending his son and the first Christians after his death and resurrection. There 11 additional books in the Roman Catholic Bible representing the 400 year period between the Testaments.<sup>6</sup> There are at least 9 different types or categories of Bible Literature in the two Testaments, which gives us a hint about why they are in the current order and how they fit together.

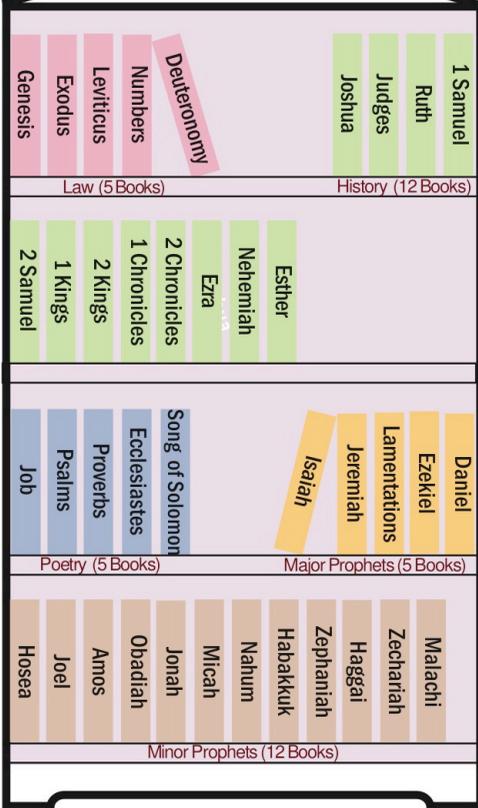
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6 See a helpful article by Erwin Lutzer on where these books came from and why protestants reject them as authoritative for faith and practice at <http://bible.org/article/how-many-books-are-bible>.

# The Bible - A Library of Sixty-Six Books

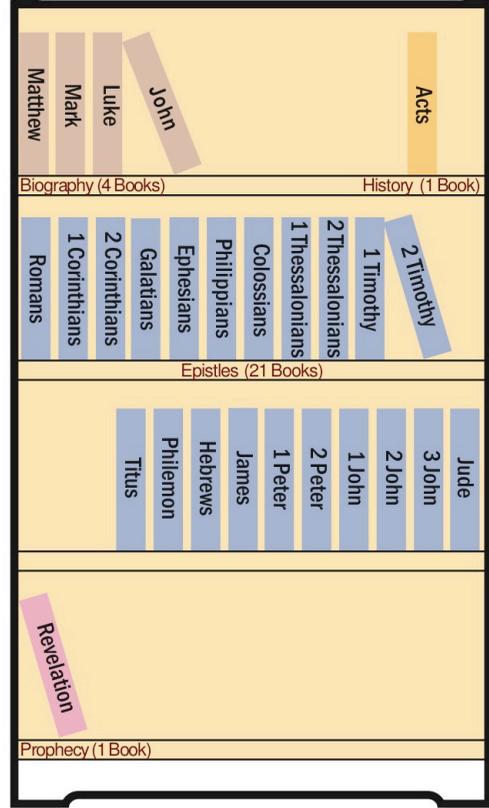
## Old Testament

39 Books



## New Testament

27 Books



## Six Ways to Get a Grip on the Bible:

On this page trace an outline of your own hand.

- |            |            |
|------------|------------|
| 1. Pinky:  | "hear"     |
| 2. Ring:   | "read"     |
| 3. Middle: | "study"    |
| 4. Index:  | "memorize" |
| 5. Thumb:  | "meditate" |
| 6. Palm:   | "apply"    |

# Hearing God's Word

*"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, & the message is heard through the work of Christ." Romans 10:17*

What are some ways to hear God's Word?

The Problem with hearing only: We forget **95%** of what we hear within 72 hours.

## ***Five ways to improve your hearing:***

### **1. BE READY AND EAGER TO HEAR FROM GOD**

*"Everyone should be quick to listen," James 1:19.*

### **2. DEAL WITH THE ATTITUDES THAT PREVENT HEARING FROM GOD.**

- **A Closed Mind:** Is fear, pride, or bitterness preventing me from hearing God?
- **A Superficial Mind:** Am I really serious about hearing from God?
- **A Preoccupied Mind:** Am I too busy to hear from God?

### **3. CONFESS ANY SIN**

*"Therefore, get rid of all moral filth & the evil that is so prevalent & humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you." James 1:21*

When I don't get anything out of a message, I don't ask what is wrong with him but what is wrong with me?

### **4. TAKE NOTES ON WHAT YOU HEAR**

*"We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away." Hebrews 2:1*

### **5. ACT ON WHAT YOU HEAR**

*"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." James 1:22*

# Reading God's Word

*"Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near."* Revelation 1:3

## ***Suggestions for successful Bible Reading:***

### **1. READ IT SYSTEMATICALLY**

### **2. READ IT IN DIFFERENT TRANSLATIONS.**

### **3. READ IT ALOUD.**

### **4. UNDERLINE OR COLOR CODE KEY VERSES.**

### **5. CHOOSE A READING PLAN AND STICK WITH IT.**

- If I read **1** chapter of the New Testament each day I can read it through in 1 year.
- If I read **3** chapters of the entire Bible each day I can read it through in 1 year.
- If I read approximately **15** minutes a day I can read through the Bible once a year.

How do you know if you believe the Bible from cover to cover if you have not read it cover to cover?!?

### **6. READ IT WITH A FRIEND.**

Life Transformation Group info

## **Bible Reading Plans:**

- <http://www.youversion.com/reading-plans/all>
- <http://www.esv.org/resources/reading-plans-devotions/>
- Discipleship Journal Bible Reading Plans -  
<http://www.navpress.com/dj/content.aspx?id=138>

# Studying God's Word

*"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*

*"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15*

The difference between reading & studying is using a pencil & making notes on what you read.

## ***Suggestions for Effective Bible Study***

### **1. LEARN TO ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS:**

1. **WHO?**    2. **WHAT?**    3. **WHERE?**    4. **WHY?**    5. **WHEN?**    6. **HOW?**

**2. GET A GOOD STUDY BIBLE.** Study Bibles give additional helps, such as introductions to books, charts, maps, concordances, notes, essays, etc.

- The Best Personal Study Bibles: **The Life Application Bible** (Tyndale), **The MacArthur Study Bible** (Thomas Nelson)
- The Best Topical & Cross Reference Study Bible: **The Thompson Chain Reference Bible**
- The Best Background Study Bible: **The NIV Study Bible** (Zondervan), **The ESV Study Bible** (Crossway), **The Holman Illustrated Study Bible** (Holman).
- The Best Doctrinal Study Bible: **The Disciples Study Bible** (Holman)

### **3. GET SOME GOOD BIBLE STUDY TOOLS**

**Bible Handbook** – Give introductions to each of the books of the Bible and then briefly survey the contents, chapter by chapter. May also give background material, maps, charts, etc. Good to have along side during personal devotion time.

**Bible Dictionary/Encyclopedia**– Contain articles on a wide range of Biblical topics, including historical, cultural, biographical, and geographical issues.

**Commentaries** – Give verse by verse commentary on the text of scriptures.

**Bible Atlas** – Contains chronological data, maps, charts, and photographs of the Bible lands.

**Bible Concordance** - A concordance lists every word that appears in the Bible and all the verses it is found in. Using a concordance is a good way to find a verse that you only know part of, or you are interested in tracing a particular word or idea throughout the Bible. Most Bibles have limited concordances in the back. An “exhaustive” or “complete” concordance gives every reference for every word. You will want to select a concordance for the Bible translation you use most often. Be aware that you can get many concordances online.

**Language Tools** – For those interested in studying the original Greek and Hebrew meanings of Biblical Words.

#### 4. **SHARE WHAT YOU’RE LEARNING WITH SOMEONE ELSE.**

### **Tools to Get Started:**

- The Life Application Bible (Tyndale) - \$25-\$55
- The ESV Study Bible (Crossway) - \$35-\$65
- The Holman Bible Handbook - \$10-\$16
- The Holman Bible Dictionary - \$10-\$16, <http://bible.lifeway.com/>
- How to Read the Bible Book by Book by Gordon Fee - \$12-\$15
- Bible Software: Logos, Word Search, Bible Works, Bible Navigator
- Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Bible Words - \$26-\$40

# Memorizing God's Word

*"Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart."* Proverbs 7:2,3

## ***Why should I memorize scripture?***

### **1. IT WILL HELP ME DEAL WITH TEMPTATION.**

*"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."* Psalm 119:9-11

### **2. IT WILL HELP ME MAKE WISE DECISIONS.**

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

### **3. IT WILL COMFORT ME WHEN I AM SAD.**

*"When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God Almighty."* Jeremiah 15:16

### **4. IT WILL HELP ME WITNESS TO UNBELIEVERS.**

*"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,"* 1 Peter 3:15

## ***How do I Memorize a Verse?***

1. Pick a verse that is meaningful to you.
2. Say the reference at the start and end.
3. Say it aloud.
4. Break the verse into natural phrases.
5. Write verse on flash cards.
6. Display in prominent places (mirror, computer, dashboard, etc.)
7. Always memorize word perfect.
8. Put verse to music.
9. Get a partner.
10. Start one or two verses a week.

## ***When do I memorize a verse?***

- During your time alone with God.
- When you are exercising.
- When you are waiting (in the car).

## **Three Keys to Memorizing verses:**

1. **REVIEW**
2. **REVIEW**
3. **REVIEW**

## **Tools for Memorizing Scripture:**

- The Topical Memory System - \$10-\$16
- The Topical Memory System App - \$2.99
- Desiring God Fighter Verses App - \$2.99
- Verse Card Maker – Free

# The Topical Memory System

## ***Live the New Life:***

Christ the Center	2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20
Obedience to Christ	Romans 12:1; John 14:21
The Word	2 Timothy 3:16; Joshua 1:8
Prayer	John 15:7; Philippians 4:6-7
Fellowship	Matthew 18:20; Hebrews 10:24
Witnessing	Matthew 4:19; Romans 1:16

## ***Proclaim Christ:***

All Have Sinned	Romans 3:23; Isaiah 53:6
Sin's Penalty	Romans 6:23; Hebrews 9:27
Christ Paid the Penalty	Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 3:18
Salvation Not by Works	Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5
Must Receive Christ	John 1:12; Revelations 3:20
Assurance of Salvation	1 John 5:13; John 5:24

## ***Rely on God's Resources:***

His Spirit	1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 2:12
His Strength	Isaiah 41:10; Philippians 4:13
His Faithfulness	Lamentations 3:22; Numbers 23:19
His Peace	Isaiah 26:3; 1 Peter 5:7
His Provision	Romans 8:32; Philippians 4:19
His Help in Temptation	Hebrews 2:18; Psalms 119:9, 11

## ***Be Christ's Disciple:***

Put Christ First	Matthew 6:33; Luke 9:23
Separate from the World	1 John 2:15-16; Romans 12:2
Be Steadfast	1 Corinthians 15:58; Hebrews 12:3
Serve Others	Mark 10:45; 2 Corinthians 4:5
Give Generously	Proverbs 3:9-10; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7
Develop World Vision	Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19-20

## ***Grow in Christ likeness:***

Love	John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:18
Humility	Philippians 2:3-4; 1 Peter 5:5-6
Purity	Ephesians 5:3; 1 Peter 2:11
Honesty	Leviticus 19:11; Acts 24:16
Faith	Hebrews 11:6; Romans 4:20-21
Good Works	Galatians 6:9-10; Matthew 5:16

# Meditating on God's Word

*"Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers."* Psalms 1:1-3

Meditation is **SUSTAINED THINKING** about a Bible verse in order to discover how I can apply its truth to my own life.

## ***Why meditate on Scripture?***

### **1. MEDITATION HELPS US BECOME MORE LIKE CHRIST.**

*"Your life is shaped by your thoughts."* Proverbs 4:23

### **2. MEDITATION IS A KEY TO ANSWERED PRAYER.**

*"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."* John 15:7

### **3. IT IS A KEY TO SUCCESSFUL LIVING.**

*"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."* Joshua 1:8

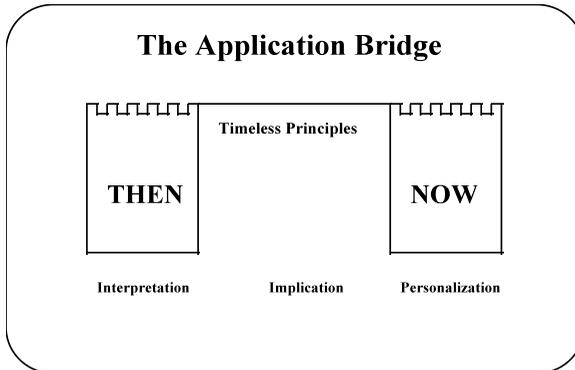
## ***Six ways to meditate on a verse***

- A. PICTURE it!** Visualize the scene in your mind.
- B. PRONOUNCE it!** Say the verse aloud, each time emphasizing a different word.
- C. PARAPHRASE it!** Rewrite the verse in your own words.
- D. PERSONALIZE it!** Replace the pronouns or people in the verse with your own name.
- E. PRAY it (back to God)**
- F. PROBE it (S.O.A.P)**

# Applying God's Word

*"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."* James 1:22

**Use the application bridge:** Getting from what did it mean then to what does it mean now.



## Three Questions:

1. *What did it mean to the original hearers?*
2. *What's the underlying timeless principle?*
3. *How can I practice that principle today?*

## ***Four marks of a good application.***

1. Is it **PERSONAL**?
2. Is it **PRACTICAL**?
3. Is it **POSSIBLE**?
4. Is it **PROVABLE**?

*"Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."* John 13:17

# A Daily Time With God

Definition: "A quiet time is a daily time I set aside to be alone with God in order to get to know Him through the Bible and prayer."

## The Importance of a Daily Quiet Time

1. We were created to have FELLOWSHIP with God.

*"God created man in His own image."* Genesis 1:27

*"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me."* Revelation 3:20

2. Jesus died to make a RELATIONSHIP with God possible for you.

*"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God"* 1 Peter 3:18

3. Time alone with God was JESUS' source of strength.

*"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."* Mark 1:35

4. You cannot be a HEALTHY Christian without it.

*"Jesus answered, 'It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"* Matthew 4:4

*"How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word."* Psalm 119:9

## Purposes of Time Alone With God

1. To give HONOR to God.

*"Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness."* Psalm 29:2

*"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."* Revelation 4:11

2. To get DIRECTION from God.

*"In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."* Proverbs 3:6

3. To gain BLESSING from God.

*"Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart."* Psalm 37:4

*"You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."* Psalm 16:11

#### 4. To grow more LIKE God.

*"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."* 2 Peter 1:3-4

We become like those we spend time with.

## **How to begin a Daily Time With God:**

### 1. Select a Specific TIME.

The best time to have a time alone with God is to do it when I am AT MY BEST.

### 2. Choose a Special PLACE.

*"Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, & his disciples followed him."* Luke 22:39

Solitude is the key. *"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house & went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."* Mark 1:35

### 4. Gather the TOOLS You Will Need.

- † Bible
- † Notebook or Journal
- † Bible Study tools

### 5. Begin With the Right ATTITUDE.

#### a. REVERENCE

*"Be still, & know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."* Psalm 46:10

#### b. EXPECTANCY

*"Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law."* Psalm 119:18

#### c. WILLINGNESS TO OBEY

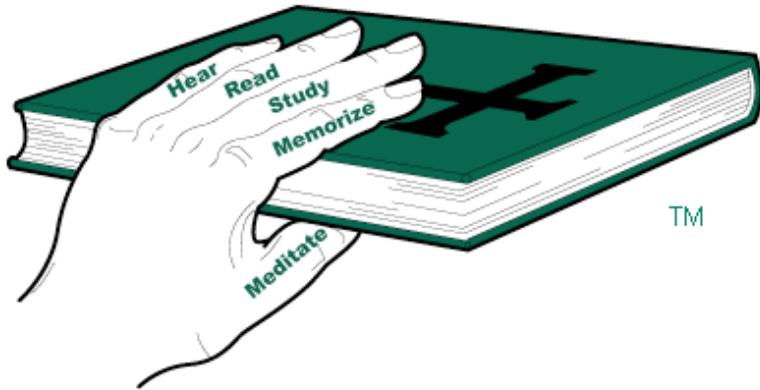
*"If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own."* John 7:17

## 6. Follow a Simple Plan:

- a. RELAX (1 minute) – Prepare your heart. Ask God’s Spirit to guide you.
- b. READ (4 minutes) – Begin reading where you left off the day before. Read until God you feel God has taught you something.
- c. REFLECT (4 minutes) - Use S.O.A.P or one of the other six methods of meditation. Think about what the passage means for your life. Write down your thoughts. Try to memorize any verses that speak to you in a special way.
- d. RECORD (2 minutes) – Write out a personal application statement that is personal and practical.
- e. REQUEST (3 minutes) – Talk to God about what He has said to you and make request from your prayer list.

It takes THREE weeks to become familiar with a new task. Then it takes three more weeks before it becomes a comfortable habit.

*"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Galatians 6:9*





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