

How to Study the Bible – Week 1 – People of the Book – Bible Study Helps

Title: People of the Book

Sermon Summary: In this introductory session of our new Bible study series on how to study the Bible, the sermon issues an urgent call for Christians to return to deep, sustained engagement with Scripture. Drawing on the cultural reality that declining literacy and shortened attention spans are reshaping how people consume information, the sermon argues that these trends pose a direct threat to the church's ability to know, obey, and teach the word of God. The sermon establishes that God's design has always been for His people to be readers, thinkers, and students of the Bible. The Holy Spirit chose words like read, study, search, meditate, hear, and observe to describe how believers are to engage with Scripture, and none of those words describe passive, distracted, or shallow consumption. The sermon challenges the congregation to examine their personal habits, love for the Bible, and the example they are setting for the next generation.

Key Points:

- Reading matters because God's plan was to give His people a book, and His commands have always assumed that His people would read it, study it, and obey it
- Thinking matters because the Bible calls believers to search, study, meditate, and understand, all of which require sustained mental attention that modern culture is actively training people to avoid
- The Bible is a life-changing book, and engagement with it requires deep attention through reading, studying, searching, meditating, hearing, understanding, remembering, observing, teaching, and keeping its words
- Declining literacy and shortened attention spans in the broader culture are directly threatening the church's ability to engage with and rightly divide Scripture
- Christians cannot sustain the Christian life through podcasts, short videos, or secondhand Bible knowledge alone; personal reading and study of the Bible are essential
- The example believers set in their homes regarding Bible reading and study versus screen time shapes what the next generation understands to be truly important
- The English language is not improving, and God gave His people His perfect Book at the height of the English language; believers should aspire to rise to the level of the book rather than demand the book be lowered to them

Scripture Reference:

- 1 Timothy 4:13-16, where Paul instructs Timothy to give attention to reading, exhortation, and doctrine, and to meditate on these things and continue in them

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- Isaiah 34:16, which calls God's people to seek out the book of the Lord and read it
- Deuteronomy 17:18-19, which commands the king to write his own copy of the law and read it all the days of his life
- Deuteronomy 31:11-13, which commands that the law be read before all Israel, including men, women, children, and strangers, so that they may hear, learn, and obey
- Exodus 17:14, where God commands Moses to write a memorial in a book for Joshua and future generations
- Joshua 8:34-35, recording that Joshua read every word of the law before all the congregation of Israel
- John 5:39, where Jesus commands His listeners to search the Scriptures
- 2 Timothy 2:15, which instructs believers to study to show themselves approved unto God
- Psalm 1:2, which describes the blessed man as one who meditates on God's law day and night
- Proverbs 4:7, which declares that wisdom is the principal thing and instructs believers to get understanding

Stories:

- The pastor recounted his own upbringing in a Mormon church, where neither he nor his family knew what they believed and had to rely on his grandfather to answer doctrinal questions; upon salvation and beginning one-on-one discipleship two days later, he discovered that the Bible contained all the answers and committed himself to reading and studying it
- The pastor described his experience homeschooling his two youngest children and wrestling with whether audio books were an acceptable substitute for reading, ultimately concluding that following along in the physical book and taking notes remained important for genuine engagement with content
- The sermon referenced William Tyndale, who translated the Bible into English by candlelight while on the run for his life, and whose words are said to constitute approximately ninety percent of the New Testament text of the King James Bible; Tyndale reportedly told a priest that he would cause every plow boy to know God's book better than the priest
- A situation involving an Amish couple teaching the Bible and leading women's Bible studies, with Amish church leaders opposing it because people who know the Bible cannot be as easily manipulated or controlled by religious authority
- A conversation with a friend who recommended a teacher who had studied for forty years and concluded that all Christian churches are wrong for not meeting on the Sabbath; the response was an explanation of the biblical basis for Sunday worship rooted in the resurrection of Christ

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Discipleship Questions

The current generation is losing its appetite for sustained reading and this connects directly to a declining ability to engage deeply with Scripture -- in what ways have you personally noticed this drift in your own Bible reading habits, and what has been the spiritual cost?

Paul commands Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:13 to give attendance to reading, exhortation, and doctrine as a primary pastoral and Christian duty -- what does it reveal about God's priorities that reading is listed first, and how should that order shape our own spiritual lives?

The sermon draws a sharp contrast between the world's command to scroll and God's command to search the Scriptures -- where do you find the greatest tension between these two pulls in your daily life, and how do you resolve it?

Deuteronomy 17 instructs the king to personally write out and read his own copy of God's law all the days of his life -- what would it look like practically for you to take that level of personal ownership over your engagement with Scripture?

The sermon argues that the decline of reading ability in the culture is not accidental but is part of a deliberate strategy to keep people from being able to engage with the Bible -- do you agree with this assessment, and what evidence do you see supporting or challenging it?

Psalm 1:2 describes the blessed person as one who meditates on God's law day and night -- how does the practice of meditation on a single passage over an extended period of time differ from the way most Christians engage with Scripture today, and what might we be missing?

The sermon warns that consuming Bible content through podcasts and videos, while potentially helpful, cannot substitute for personal study of the word of God -- where do you draw the line between supplemental resources and genuine engagement with Scripture itself?

The pastor shares that when he was saved, he immediately began studying the Bible personally using a concordance and legal pad, and credits that practice with grounding him in truth -- what does your own early or current approach to personal Bible study reveal about what you truly believe the Bible is?

The sermon connects the cultural decline in reading and thinking to the rise of dangerous ideologies, arguing that people who cannot engage deeply with written content become vulnerable to manipulation -- how does a church community's commitment to biblical literacy serve as a defense against both spiritual and cultural deception?

The sermon closes with the challenge of whether the next generation sees us reaching for our Bibles before our phones -- what specific, observable habits in your home or daily life are either reinforcing or undermining the message that the word of God is the most important book in existence?

Small Group Guide: People of the Book

Introduction

This session is based on a sermon introducing a Bible study series on how to study the Bible. The central concern is that a culture increasingly shaped by screens, short-form content, and passive consumption is producing Christians who are less equipped to deeply engage the word of God. This guide will help your group reflect on that challenge and respond with renewed commitment to Scripture.

Key Takeaways

- 1. Reading matters.** God's plan was always to give His people a book. From Moses to Joshua to the early church, Scripture assumes that God's people will be readers who attend carefully to His written words.
 - 2. Thinking matters.** Deep engagement with the Bible requires sustained concentration. Our culture is increasingly training us away from the kind of focused, patient thinking that Bible study demands.
 - 3. The Bible is a life-changing book.** The Holy Spirit chose specific words throughout Scripture to describe how we are to engage with God's Word: read, study, search, meditate, hear, understand, remember, observe, teach, and keep. None of these words describe passive consumption.
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Discussion Questions

Opening

1. When you were growing up, what was your relationship with reading? Did you enjoy it, avoid it, or somewhere in between? How has that changed over time?
 2. Before this sermon, had you ever thought about how your media habits might affect your ability to engage with the Bible? What was your initial reaction to that idea?
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Digging Deeper

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3. The sermon points to 1 Timothy 4:13, where Paul instructs Timothy to give attendance to reading, exhortation, and doctrine. What does it mean practically to "give attendance" to something? What does that look like in your daily life?
 4. The sermon described how the culture is training people to consume information in short bites -- 15 seconds, 30 seconds, a headline, a meme. In what ways have you noticed this pattern shaping your own habits, even in how you approach spiritual things like prayer or Bible reading?
 5. The sermon mentions words the Holy Spirit uses to describe how we engage with Scripture: read, study, search, meditate, hear, understand, remember, observe, teach, and keep. Which of these words best describes your current relationship with the Bible? Which one do you feel most challenged to grow in?
 6. If we train ourselves to move on every few seconds whenever something becomes difficult or boring, eventually we may carry that habit into Bible reading, prayer, discipleship, study, preaching, or doctrine. Do you see evidence of this pattern in your own life or in the people around you? How does it show up?
 7. Deuteronomy 17:18-19 describes the king writing out his own copy of the law and reading it all the days of his life. What do you think that kind of consistent, personal engagement with Scripture produces in a person over time?
 8. The sermon draws a contrast between what the world says -- scroll, give me something quick, tell me what everyone thinks -- and what God says -- search, meditate day and night, what saith the Scripture? Where do you feel the tension between these two pulls most acutely in your own life?
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Personal Reflection

9. When was the last time you simply sat down and read the Bible? Not listening to someone explain it, not watching someone preach it, not reading a devotional about it -- just reading the Bible itself. How would you honestly answer that question?
 10. Do the people around you, especially children or younger believers, see you reaching for your Bible or reaching for your phone. What do you think your habits are communicating to the people who watch your life?
 11. The pastor shared that when he was a new believer, he used a Strong's Concordance and legal pads to learn the Bible. He said, "It seems so archaic, but I was actually learning the Bible." What methods or habits have helped you most in learning Scripture? What has gotten in the way?
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Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice before your group meets again.

- 1. Audit your media habits.** For one week, keep a simple log of how much time you spend scrolling social media or watching short-form video content versus how much time you spend

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reading your Bible. Do not judge yourself -- just observe honestly. Bring what you notice to the group next time.

2. Read without aids. Choose one chapter of the Bible and read it slowly, without commentary, without a podcast, and without background noise. Read it at least two or three times. Write down one thing you noticed that you had not seen before.

3. Practice a word study. Pick one word from a passage you are reading this week. Use a concordance, a Bible app like Blue Letter Bible, or a reference Bible to find other places in Scripture where that word appears. Write down what you learn and share it with someone in your group.

4. Memorize one verse. Choose a verse from your Bible reading this week and commit it to memory. Meditate on it throughout the day -- while driving, working, or doing household tasks. This is a small but meaningful step toward the kind of day-and-night meditation described in Psalm 1:2.

5. Read aloud with someone. Following the model of public reading described in Deuteronomy 31 and Joshua 8, read a passage of Scripture aloud with a family member, a friend, or another group member. Talk about what it says and what it means.

6. Write out a passage. Take a journal and begin writing out a passage of Scripture by hand. Notice how this slows you down and forces you to engage with every word, every punctuation mark, every thought. Even a few verses can be a meaningful exercise.

Closing Reflection

The sermon closed with this challenge: "Do you truly know the book that God has given you?"

Take a few minutes as a group to sit quietly with that question. Then close in prayer, asking God to build in each of you a genuine love for His Word -- not just an appreciation for it in theory, but a daily, disciplined, joyful engagement with the one book He has given you to know Him, make Him known, and live for His glory.

Suggested Scripture for Further Study

- Psalm 1:1-3 -- The blessed person meditates on God's law continually
- Psalm 119:9-16 -- Hiding the word of God in the heart
- Joshua 1:8 -- The command to meditate and act on the word of God
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 -- The purpose and profit of Scripture
- Nehemiah 8:1-8 -- A model of public reading and explanation of the words of God

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5-Day Bible Reading and Devotional Guide

Rooted in the Word: Returning to the Book God Gave Us

Day 1: The God Who Speaks Through a Book Reading: 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Devotional: God did not leave His people without direction. He gave us a book — breathed out by His own Spirit — sufficient for every need of the soul. In a world drowning in noise, the quiet authority of Scripture stands unmoved. The question is not whether the Bible has something to say. The question is whether we are willing to sit still long enough to hear it. Open the word of God today not as a duty but as a conversation with the living God who wrote it for you.

Day 2: The Discipline of Attention Reading: 1 Timothy 4:11-16

Devotional: Paul's charge to Timothy was direct: give attendance to reading, exhortation, and doctrine. Attendance requires showing up with a focused mind and a willing heart. Our culture trains us to consume quickly and move on. God calls us to something slower and deeper — to meditate, to linger, to let truth take root. Neglecting the gift of the word of God is not a neutral choice. Every day we choose what will shape our thinking. Choose today to give your full attention to the only book that can transform you from the inside out.

Day 3: Searching as Those Who Expect to Find Reading: John 5:36-40; Proverbs 4:5-7

Devotional: Jesus told the religious leaders to search the Scriptures, pointing out that those very writings testified about Him. Searching implies effort, expectation, and hunger. Wisdom, according to Proverbs 4, is the principal thing — worth pursuing above everything else. Yet wisdom is not stumbled upon by passive scrolling or casual listening. It is found by those who dig. The word of God is a treasure buried in plain sight, waiting for the believer who is willing to stop, open the book, and investigate with a heart that genuinely wants to find the God who is already there.

Day 4: Meditating Day and Night Reading: Psalm 1:1-6; Joshua 1:7-9

Devotional: The blessed man of Psalm 1 is not described as the most talented or the most connected. He is the one whose delight is in the law of the Lord, turning it over in his mind day and night. Meditation is not emptying the mind — it is filling the mind with the word of God until it begins to shape every thought, decision, and response. God commanded Joshua to

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meditate on His words so that he would know how to act. The same is true for us. A mind soaked in Scripture becomes a mind prepared for whatever God calls it to face.

Day 5: Doers of the Word Reading: James 1:22-25; Deuteronomy 17:18-20

Devotional: The king in Deuteronomy was commanded to write out his own copy of God's law and read it all the days of his life — not as a scholarly exercise but so that he would learn to fear God and obey. James echoes this same truth: hearing the Word without doing it is self-deception. The goal of reading, studying, searching, and meditating is always obedience. The Bible was never meant to sit on a shelf or fill a notification feed. It was meant to change the way we live. Let the word of God you have read this week move from your mind into your hands and feet.