

HOW TO
ENJOY
READING
YOUR BIBLE

CHAPTER-ENDING STUDY QUESTIONS

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Designed for use with Keith Ferrin's book
How to Enjoy Reading Your Bible



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Study Guide for Tip 1

Remember Why You Are Doing This

For the Group

1. When have you felt like you were in a true relationship with Jesus? What were your thoughts, activities, and habits at that time? What changed (if it has)? Describe it.

2. Do you want to be in a true relationship with Jesus? Describe what that would look like for you. Be clear about what you want and need out of your relationship with Jesus. Write it down. (Then put your pen down and talk with Him about it.)

3. How do you feel about the Bible? Do you enjoy it? Did you ever? If so, and you don't now, what changed?

4. Why do you study the Bible? Is your approach more informational or relational?

5. Spend some time sitting in silence, pondering the truth that Jesus calls you “friend.” Meditate on John 15:15 for a good five to ten minutes. Then jot down your thoughts.

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

John 15:15

6. What is one practical change you can make to approach the Bible more relationally (e.g., where you read, what chair you sit in, what time of day you read, a way to reduce distractions)?
7. Which of the two pictures (*You, God, and a Cup of Coffee* or *Playing with God*) was most helpful for you? Which is the harder one for you to embrace and live out? Why do you think that is?
8. Recall the story of a British director who once said, “Well, you know . . . the Bible is the Word of almighty God. But it also happens to be a jolly good read.” Have you ever thought of the Bible as a “jolly good read”? What are a few stories in the Bible that remind you of that truth?

Scripture to Soak In

- John 1:1–18. Read it in your favorite translation. Then read it in *The Message* by Eugene Peterson. He really brings out the relational tone of the text. (Note: If you don’t own a copy of *The Message*, head to www.BibleGateway.com or the YouVersion Bible app. You can read it—and many more translations—there for free.)
- Ephesians 3:12–21
- Romans 5:1–11
- John 10:1–18

Study Guide for Tip 2

Set Your Expectations Really High

For the Group

1. What are your expectations when you open your Bible? (Honest evaluation is going to be really helpful here.)
2. Describe a time when a book, story, psalm, or section of the Bible exceeded your expectations. What was different?
3. If you do expect the Bible to be engaging and enjoyable, have you always felt that way? What helped you make the shift?
4. Reread Psalm 19:7–10. Do you come to the Word with a “David-esque” attitude? Mark this passage in your Bible and read it daily as an “appetizer” to your time in God’s Word for the next couple of weeks.

5. What is your reaction (for you personally, your family, your church, and the church at large) when you read the following?

“Our problem is not that we expect too much of God. Our problem is that we expect too little.”

6. What is one or two (. . . or eight) steps you can take to start shifting your expectations when it comes to God and His Word?

— Scripture to Soak In —

- Psalm 119:9–16, 97
- Isaiah 40:8
- Luke 8:4–15
- Ephesians 3:20–21
- Hebrews 4:12

4. Which of the three “before you read” prayers do you think will be most helpful for you? Jot down your answer. Now pray these prayers before you read for the next week. Write down your thoughts again at the end of the week. You can also use this prayer:

I confess, Lord, that my mind drifts when I want to focus. My thoughts turn to other things when they should be centered on You. My desire is to focus on You, engage with You, hear from You, and know You more as I read Your Word. Protect my mind. Guard me from the attacks of the enemy. Help me be fully present as I read today. Amen.

5. Do you ever stop and “talk with the Coach” in the middle of your Bible reading? Write down your reaction to these three statements:

- The Coach is on my side.
- The Coach knows how to beat the defense.
- The Coach sometimes just wants to chat.

6. For the next week, finish your Bible reading by praying the prayer I suggested a few pages earlier for after you close your Bible. Then, set a Bible-reading reminder on your phone or computer that simply says “Listen. Expect. Obey.” Write down your experience here.

Scripture to Soak In

- Philippians 4:4–9
- Romans 12:1–2
- 1 Peter 5:8–11

Study Guide for Tip 4

Watch the Whole Movie

For the Group

1. This chapter started with a picture of a group of people getting together and watching a movie, but pausing after each scene to discuss it. How painful would this be? What did it make you think about your approach to Bible studies?
2. When was the first time you read a whole book of the Bible in one sitting (if you have)? What was your experience?
3. Pick a short book from the Bible—Philippians, 2 Timothy, James, or 1 Peter—and read it in one sitting. (Tip 6 will discuss the benefits of reading Scripture out loud.) Write down your observations. What was the author's tone? What stood out to you? What was confusing? What was clarified?

Study Guide for Tip 5

Learn From Your Shampoo Bottle

For the Group

1. Think of anything you do or know well. Anything you do without thinking. Anything you know inside and out. How many times have you done it? How many times have you studied it or read about it?

2. Pick a parable or short psalm. Simply read it—out loud—every morning and/or evening for a week. At the end of the week, just try to say it. How much of it did you have down word for word? Did you ever find yourself thinking about it during the day? Write about the experience.

— Scripture to Soak In —

- Joshua 1:7–9
- Short book—Philippians, 2 Timothy, Colossians, or 1 Peter
- Parables—Matthew 13; 18; 20–22; 24–25; Mark 4; 12–13; Luke 12–19.
This isn't a complete list, but it is a good start.
- Psalms—8; 16; 19; 23; 42; 63; 90; 91; 92; 103

Study Guide for Tip 6

Raise Your Voice

For the Group

1. Are you an “out loud” Bible reader? What has been your experience when you have read it out loud? What about when someone else reads it out loud (in church, Bible study, family devotions, etc.)?
2. Take a minute and read Philippians 1:3–8 and Galatians 1:6–9 again (preferably from your own Bible), out loud and with emotion. What is your initial reaction? What is Paul’s tone? What would be your response if you were the original recipient of each letter?
3. Read the book of Jonah out loud. It’ll take you about seven minutes. Read it with expression and feeling, like you were reading *Curious George* to a five-year-old. How did this familiar story sound to you? What stood out? What had you never noticed before? Try this with various sections of Genesis or one of the Gospels.

4. A study found that we remember 10 percent of what we hear, 20 percent of what we see, and 65 percent of what we hear and see. Does your experience line up with these findings? Try reading out loud for a week, and write down your experience of how much you remember (and how you feel about it). You can also read in the morning and then listen to the same passage (in your car or on your MP3 player or phone) later in the day.

Scripture to Soak In

- Genesis 37–50 (It'll take about an hour, but it's an amazing story!)
- Jonah
- John 2
- Romans 10:16–18
- Hebrews 4:12–13

Study Guide for Tip 7

Read Alone

For the Group

1. Do you ever read *just* the Bible? If not, what are the books, resources, websites, or study tools you always read? Why?

2. *Myth One*: “A Bible commentary carries the same weight as Scripture.” Are you a ping-pong reader? Force yourself to not be a ping-pong reader for a week. (This might require reading from a different Bible with no notes, or reading off-line if you’re always tempted to go look it up on your favorite website.) Write down your experience of reading just the Word.

3. *Myth Two: “I can’t understand the Bible unless someone explains it to me.”* Do you believe this? I don’t mean intellectually believe this. I mean experientially believe it. Is there a little voice that tells you that you’re not smart enough, old enough, or well-read enough to understand the Bible? Talk with God about it. Confess the struggle. Then press on. Record what happens here. (And make sure you share it with the group.)

4. Get a few friends together and do a “pure” manuscript study. Go to www.biblegateway.com and copy/paste *just the text* from a book of the Bible into a Word document. Once you have the whole book in Word, remove all the chapter and verse numbers. Print it out. Biblegateway.com also includes the option to display passages without verse numbers, headings, and cross references (but chapter numbers are retained). Read only the text and see how much you come to understand—and enjoy—the natural breaks, the themes, and even the individual parts that stand out to you. Get together and discuss what you see with your group. I know many people who love manuscript studies so much that they rarely ever study the Bible any other way.

— Scripture to Soak In —

- Psalm 56:9
- Psalm 139
- Jeremiah 31:31–34
- Luke 12:1–7
- Ephesians 1:15–23

Study Guide for Tip 8

Don't Read Alone

For the Group

1. If you are reluctant to get a Bible buddy (or small group of buddies), why is that? Don't have time? Don't need to talk about it? Too private? Whatever the reason, clearly identify it here.

2. Is consistency a struggle for you? What *are* you consistent at? Is it something you do alone? Is it beneficial? Is it something that brings you joy?

3. Revisit this quote:

“Whatever we talk about, we get more interested in.”

Where have you seen this to be true in your own life? What are your hobbies? How do you spend your time? Can you trace it back to someone who introduced you to it or talked with you about it?

4. Have you ever been a part of a small-group discussion and been blown away by what other people saw in a section of the Bible that you totally missed? (Or shared something someone else didn't see?) Was it beneficial or encouraging? Is there any reason you wouldn't want to put yourself in a situation where that could happen more frequently?

5. Do you consider yourself a verbal processor? Do you like to journal? What is your reaction to the following quote?

“Thoughts disentangle themselves passing over the lips or through pencil tips.”

Dawson Trotman, founder of The Navigators

Scripture to Soak In

- Proverbs 27:17
- Ecclesiastes 4:9–12
- Colossians 1:9–14
- 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- Hebrews 10:24–25

Study Guide for Tip 9

Go on a 60-Day Adventure

Use this page to write down thoughts, questions, themes, and application as you do the first couple of weeks of reading through Philippians or 2 Timothy each day.

Background Study—Author

What can you learn about Paul from the text itself? You might want to consult your study Bible, a Bible dictionary, or an online study resource.

Background Study—Audience

What can you learn about the audience from the text itself? Was it written to one person or a group of people? Were they people Paul knew well or had just heard about? You might want to consult your study Bible, a Bible dictionary, or an online study resource.

Background Study—Atmosphere

What can you learn about the region that Paul—and the audience—lived in? What about the time period? What else was going on at the time? Was it a time of peace or persecution? You might want to consult your study Bible, a Bible encyclopedia, or an online study resource.

Summary (Purpose Statement)

I call the one-sentence summary of a book (finalized on Day 25) a purpose statement. It is not very hard to get to this purpose statement if you take it one small step at a time. The first step is to *not even start* until Day 10. Otherwise, it will be a very “heady” exercise. However, once you have read the book ten times, you will know it quite well. At that time, writing a summary will be a piece of cake.

Day 10: Write a one-paragraph summary of Philippians or 2 Timothy. (Don’t overthink this.)

Day 15: Narrow your summary down to two or three sentences.

Day 20: Narrow your summary down to one or two sentences.

Day 25: Take what you wrote on Day 20 and get it down to a single concise sentence.

Word Studies

If you would like more in-depth instruction on how to do a word study, there is a whole chapter devoted to the process in my book *Falling in Love With God's Word*. You can also go to www.keithferrin.com and search for "word study." Use this space to jot down what you learn about the important words and phrases in Philippians and 2 Timothy.

Life Application

Years ago, I was inspired and deeply convicted when I read these words by Bob Shirock, senior pastor of Oak Pointe Church in Novi, Michigan:

"You have not truly mastered any part of the Bible until that part of the Bible has mastered you."

This is where you jot down the conversations you have with God. Answer some of these questions (and any others you come up with):

- What is God telling you?
- Where is He leading you?
- What is He asking you to apply?
- Where is He correcting your thinking? Your behavior? Your attitude?
- What is God showing you about who He is?
- What is one step you will take today to be more like Jesus?

Just so you know, I hope you end up needing a lot more than this space!