

How to Read the Bible



Guide



ROOTED
in Holy Habits

Part of Gold Hill's 'Take a Step' discipleship pathway.
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The Bible is a wonderful book, but can also be tricky to navigate, because it is big but also because it contains lots of different kinds of literature written a long time ago in the middle of history that we might be less familiar with. All this can be daunting, but shouldn't put us off! Getting into the Bible is a vital part of growing as a follower of Jesus.

This resource gives a suggested way of exploring what the Bible has to say to us, a way to do that effectively with others, and some pointers for other good resources to go a bit deeper. You can also find other guides, like how to pick the best Bible for you, at www.goldhill.org/disciple.

Discovery Bible Study

Do you have to be an expert or have lots of deep theological training to read the Bible and hear God speak through it? No, absolutely not! As with almost everything, there are ways to go deeper and understand more, but none of it is needed before you get started. The best Bible-teacher is the Holy Spirit, and He loves to teach, guide and instruct us when we open up the Bible.

The 'Discovery Bible Study' method of reading and studying the Bible is very simple, and we recommend using it. Doing it with others is always good but you can also do this by yourself. You can use this method with any part of the Bible, and different parts will be more or less relevant depending on what you are reading. If you're just starting out, we recommend 'Mark', one of the stories of Jesus' life as a great place to begin.

This is the method for a 'Discovery Bible Study'

1. Read & Retell

Read the portion of the Bible. Then read it a second time. Next, retell it in your own words. If you're with others, fill in the gaps missed out from the retelling. If you are by yourself, make sure you've caught all the details.

2. Discover & Discuss

Ask these questions and consider them (discuss them if you're in a group):

- What did I discover about **God** in the passage?
- What did I discover about **people** in the passage?
- Is there a **promise** to hold onto?
- Is there a **command** to obey?

3. Decisions and Actions

Learning is great, but the Bible leads us to action. So consider:

- How will I commit to **obey** what I have learned?
- Who will I **share** what I have learned with?

Three-thirds Method

Reading the Bible by ourselves is fantastic, but we can grow a lot more and a lots faster with others by our side. One really effective way of doing this with other people is know as the 'three-thirds method', where you meet regularly (once a week is best) and divide your time into three thirds:

1. Look Back

This is about taking stock of things since you last met.

- Share how the last week has been for you, including highs and lows.
- Feed back on how you got on with the commitments you made at the end of the last session together.

2. Look Up

This is about receiving fresh inspiration from God through the Bible.

- Pray, asking that God would speak to you all through the Bible as you are guided by the Holy Spirit.
- Open up the Bible together, using the full Discovery Bible Study method.

3. Look Forward

This is about making and sharing plans based on what you've learnt.

- Make commitments about what you'll do to obey what God has taught.
- Decide who you will share some of it with this week.

The purpose of all of this is not to become legalistic, catching each other out when you don't manage what you've committed to! It is about becoming accountable, spurring each other on to put into practice what you learn.

Good Resources

Sometimes it is really helpful to have a bit of a guide so you can understand the background, type of writing and context of a part of the Bible. Below are some good places to go for that sort of thing. If you are starting a series looking at a particular part of the Bible in a Discovery Bible Study or Three-thirds group, one of these could be helpful to give the big picture first.

The Bible Project – YouTube

The videos and guides on this YouTube channel are brilliant. They have an overview for every book of the Bible, as well as all sorts of other tools.

'...for Everyone' guides

There is a really simple an accessible guide for every book of the Bible in this series (e.g. 'Mark for Everyone'). They go through it and give a bit of input to help you get to grips with it more.

All of this advice is good, but the most important thing is simply to read it!



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