

How I Study My Bible

A guide to hearing God's voice
through His Word.

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Pathway
TO Victory



HOW I STUDY MY BIBLE

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The Bible is God's ultimate communication with His people. Most of what you need to know about God's plan and His desire for your life can be found in Scripture. It is full of precepts and teachings that He wants us to know. And the Bible is packed with practical wisdom for your life.

THE PURPOSE:

Why study God's Word?

God connects with us through His written Word. When God wanted to reveal His plan for Israel—the Ten Commandments by which they would live—He didn't appear to Moses in a dream or a vision. Instead, He wrote His commandments on two stone tables. It was His written Word, contained in two tablets of testimony, that guided the people of Israel.

Today, the written Word—the Bible—is still the primary means for discerning God's direction in our lives. That is why it is so important to make time to study and “listen” to what God is telling us through His Word.

What is the Bible?

Before we talk about how to study God's Word, it is important to know what it is and why it is important for believers today.

The Bible is God's perfect revelation.

That means that every word in the Bible can be trusted. Paul told Timothy:

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for

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teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

(2 Timothy 3:16–17)

The word “inspired” comes from two Greek words: *theos* and *pneustos*. Literally, *theopneustos* means “God-breathed.” In other words, all Scripture comes from the very mouth of God—breathed out, as it were. And every breath of God is good and true.

According to 2 Timothy 3:16, all Scripture was initiated by God, not men. It has no errors. Everything you need to know about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, heaven, hell, salvation, and more is contained in God’s Word.

The Bible is also God’s living revelation.

That is what distinguishes the Bible from every other book that has ever been written.

Jesus said to His disciples, “It is the Spirit who gives life . . . the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life” (John 6:63). God’s Word is alive and actively works in the lives of its readers, just as the writer to the Hebrews said:

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as

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far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

How Do You Make God's Word Part of Your Life?

Let me share three practical ways you can make God's Word a part of your life.

First, make sure you are spiritually prepared.

If you truly want to hear the voice of God through His Word, you must prepare for it. You need a supernatural power to hear God's voice: the Holy Spirit

When you become a Christian, God sends the Holy Spirit into your life to illuminate and give you understanding of the truth found in God's Word.

Second, to understand God's Word, you need a submissive mind.

God did not give us the Bible to increase our level of knowledge, but to increase our level of obedience.

If you are not committed to putting the wisdom of Scripture into action in your life, God will not reveal

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Himself to you. The psalmists wrote about the relationship between understanding and obedience in Psalm 119:

“Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes,
And I shall observe it to the end.
Give me understanding, that I may observe Your law
And keep it with all my heart.” (Psalm 119:33–34)

Third, to hear from God through His Word, you need to develop a plan.

You cannot just wish to spend time in God’s Word. You must develop a decisive plan and put it into action.

As you commit to make God’s Word an important part of your faith and life, let me make a few suggestions that

Make a goal of reading something from God’s Word every day.

have helped me in my own personal Bible study.

THE PLAN:
Set Aside a Period of Time for Reading God’s Word.

Some people think more clearly early in the morning. Others have more focus late at night. Your

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personality and schedule are unique to you, so you decide when you will be most engaged. But the important thing is to determine a period of time every day that you will read the Bible. Twenty minutes is a great place to start.

Spending even a little time each day reading God's Word is better than spending no time at all. Make a goal of reading something from God's Word every day.

Have you come to the point in your life where you are so desperate to hear from God that you are willing to commit your time to it? It will transform your life. Determine that no matter what happens, you will be in God's Word during your designated period of time.

Designate a Place to Meet with God.

God can meet with you anywhere, but I think there is something special about having a place you've designated specifically to read your Bible and pray.

When God met Jacob, He met him at Bethel. When God met Moses, He revealed Himself on Mount Sinai. God met with His people at geographical locations.

You need to have a place that helps you focus and get into the right frame of mind for studying Scripture.

Choose a Translation of the Bible that Speaks to *You*.

If you can understand the King James Version, more power to you. But most people have found that modern translations and paraphrases such as the New International Version, the New Living Translation, or the New American Standard Bible (the version I use) are more helpful in trying to understand the Bible. But you ought to use the translation that you find easiest to understand, and have a study Bible on hand, like the Ryrie Study Bible, for when you have questions.

Learn to Distinguish Between Principles and Precepts in Scripture.

The purpose of reading the Bible is to hear from God and begin living your life according to His plan. But it can be confusing to understand which lessons directly apply to our lives today. The key is in understanding the difference between principles and precepts in Scripture.

Precepts are specific commands that apply to us. For example, if you see a sign that says “Speed Limit 35,” that is

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a precept. It is a command without any ambiguity.

Principles, on the other hand, are guidelines. You must apply a general guideline to your individual situation. An example would be a sign that says “Drive Carefully.”

It is the same way with God’s Word. Some of the messages in the Bible are precepts, specific commands. These include abstaining from sexual immorality, not stealing, and refraining from gossip. Precepts, the commands we must obey, are generally found in the New Testament.

Principles are general truths that help us know how to live. For example, God’s command to “be holy, for I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44) is a general principle that we must apply to our lives in a variety of ways.

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Keep a Journal.

As I’ve grown in my relationship with God, one of the most powerful tools I’ve learned to use is the journal. I want to encourage you to write out your thoughts, prayers, lessons,

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and testimonies as you spend time studying God's Word.

As God reveals something to you, write it down. It may be an important source of encouragement to you later. If you have a particular concern, write it down. The Scriptures may have an answer that you can write out next to it.

I've placed journal pages in the back of this booklet to get you started. Write out your thoughts and prayers every day.

Establish a Program for Reading Through God's Word.

Too many people approach God's Word in a haphazard way. Without context and understanding, Scripture cannot help you in your daily life. And you cannot gain understanding without proper planning. So, to get the most out of God's Word, you need a plan that will provide you with the greatest possible understanding.

Through the years, many people have suggested different plans for reading the Bible. A lot of people use a "read through the Bible in a year" plan. Those plans have never really worked for me because I become more interested in getting through the chapter and checking it off the list than in really hearing from God.

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The question is not how many times you've been through the Bible, but how many times the Bible has been through you!

I often say, "The Bible took 1,600 years to write; why do we feel like we have to rush through it in a year?" It makes a lot more sense to read smaller sections of the Bible and let God's Word speak to you.

I came across a plan several years ago that has been of great help to me. I want to challenge you to try it. According to this plan, you read through one book of the New Testament once a day for thirty days. Believe me, after thirty days you will know that book backwards and forwards.

God will reveal different aspects of His Word as you are able to focus on a particular book. And you can appreciate the full context of the Scripture instead of trying to understand just a few verses standing alone.

The question is not how many times you've been through the Bible, but how many times has the Bible been through you!

DR. ROBERT JEFFRESS is Senior Pastor of the 14,000-member First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas, and a Fox News Contributor. He is also an adjunct professor at Dallas Theological Seminary.

Dr. Jeffress has made more than 2,000 guest appearances on various radio and television programs and regularly appears on major mainstream media outlets, such as Fox News Channel's "Fox and Friends," "Hannity," "Lou Dobbs Tonight," "Varney & Co.," and "Judge Jeanine," as well as ABC's "Good Morning America," and HBO's "Real Time with Bill Maher."

Dr. Jeffress hosts a daily radio program, *Pathway to Victory*, that is heard nationwide on over 1,000 stations in major markets such as Dallas-Fort Worth, New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, Washington, D.C., Seattle, San Francisco, Denver, and Philadelphia.

Dr. Jeffress hosts a daily television program, *Pathway to Victory*, that can be seen Monday through Friday on the Trinity Broadcast Network (TBN), and every Sunday on TBN, Daystar, and TCT. *Pathway to Victory* also airs daily on the Hillsong Channel. His television broadcast reaches 195 countries and is on 11,295 cable and satellite systems throughout the world.

Dr. Jeffress is the author of 26 books, including *Not All Roads Lead to Heaven*, *A Place Called Heaven*, *A Place Called Heaven for Kids*, *Choosing the Extraordinary Life*, and his newest

book, *Courageous: 10 Strategies for Thriving in a Hostile World*, available February 2020.

Dr. Jeffress led the congregation in the completion of a \$135 million re-creation of its downtown campus. The project is the largest in modern church history and serves as a “spiritual oasis” covering six blocks of downtown Dallas.

Dr. Jeffress graduated with a D.Min. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, a Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary, and a B.S. degree from Baylor University. In May 2010, he was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree from Dallas Baptist University.

In June 2011, Dr. Jeffress received the Distinguished Alumnus of the Year award from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Dr. Jeffress and his wife, Amy, have two daughters and three grandchildren.

