

# NEXT STEPS<sup>7</sup>

## FAITH ESSENTIALS: THE BIBLE AND HOW TO READ IT

### SELF STUDY QUESTIONS

What is my understanding of God's word? How is my attitude toward reading it? Am I experiencing genuine intimacy with God as I go through His word?

### GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What truth has God recently shown us individually through reading His word that we can share to benefit each other? In what ways can God transform our community through reading His word?

### MAIN NOTES

#### **The Bible's Structure**

The Bible is God's word, and is a non-chronological collection of 66 books written by the Holy Spirit through various authors which He uses to communicate His heart, nature, and truth to us.

The Old Testament books are categorized in sections of old law, history, and poetry while the New Testament books are composed of the Gospels, history, Epistles (letters from Jesus' disciples), and prophecy.

The Bible is designed to complete us. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

#### **One Story And One Purpose**

The Old Testament shows us types and future references to Jesus coming. It sets up the need for Jesus until He finally comes and fills that need.

The New Testament shows us how to live after Jesus has come. The Epistles show us specifically how to live a Godly life after the example that Jesus modeled for us, while prophetic books show us what it will be like as Jesus fulfills them and returns one day.

#### **Bible Interpretation**

We must be careful to understand who scripture is speaking to, the circumstances that they were in, and the relevancy that scripture has to each of us before taking everything at face value.

To tell if a passage is for us, we should identify if it is for all of God's children (which means us), how it relates to our relationship with God, or whether it is tied to specific actions or circumstances that took place in Biblical history.

The Holy Spirit will catch our attention by highlighting scripture, saying to us "this is for you." We see evidence of this in John 10:27 and Romans 8:16. When we are in a relationship with God, we will recognize His voice.

### **Advice For Starting Scripture Reading**

It can be valuable to begin with Genesis and learn Israel's history in order to gain important context for the rest of the Bible.

The Gospels help us to learn about Jesus' life and are good to read through early on.

Proverbs can easily fill one month of reading by giving us one chapter per day of solid advice for life.

The Epistles can teach us foundational truth to model our life after..

### **DAILY LIVING**

John 1 says that Jesus is God's word that became flesh, so it's no surprise that all scripture works to reveal Him to us. Since Jesus is the living word of God, what perspective should we have of spending time reading the Bible? As we dedicate time to spend in God's word, we are spending time learning about Jesus and who He is. We can gain so much insight and intimacy with Him by being intentional about going through the Bible. When we commit to spending time with someone, we learn more about who they are and what makes them tick. The same goes for God. An investment in your relationship with the Lord will always bring an amazing return.

### **PRAYER POINT**

Take a moment to go through the Self Study and Group Discussion questions again. Ask God to point out a key truth that He wants you to focus on. Ask Him to give you a new perspective and love for His word. Ask Him to show you how His word can become even more relevant in the world around you.

## PERSONAL NOTES