

**AUDIO BOOK ACCOMPANYING PDF**



# **SATURATION BIBLE STUDY**

**THE ADVENTURE TO KNOW JESUS  
AND BE TRANSFORMED BY TRUTH**

**NRJOHNSON**

# Audiobook Accompanying PDF

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## APPENDIX ONE

# The Structure of Scripture

The Bible is shallow enough for a child not to drown,  
yet deep enough for an elephant to swim.  
– Saint Augustine –

One of the things I love about how God gave us His Word is that He used stories.

Though Scripture contains history, it is not a history book. It has theology but was not written as a systematic theology textbook. God did not give us a dictionary of definitions or an encyclopedia of information. He gave us stories.

Stories fascinate. They help us remember. They stir our emotions and cause us to think.

And these stories are true. The Bible is not a collection of good moral tales or legends; rather, God, in His brilliant sovereignty, utilized the literal events from history past to tell us about His nature, heart, and purpose. He reveals Himself and His redemptive plan to us through the use of story. And while the Bible is a collection of hundreds of smaller stories, there is one overarching focus, person, and purpose in view from Genesis through Revelation—Jesus Christ.

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Remove Christ from the Scriptures and there is nothing left.  
– Martin Luther –

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Paul tells us that God, from eternity past, has always had a singular plan and focus. This eternal purpose has **always** been centered on Jesus Christ. Paul wrote to the Ephesians:

*To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the **eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord** ... (Ephesians 3:8–11).*

Paul, addressing the Colossians, described this mystery “which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, **which is Christ in you**, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:26–27).

In his exhortation to Timothy, Paul reminds him that God, “who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to **His own purpose** and grace which was **given to us in Christ Jesus from all eternity**, but now has been manifested by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:9–10 LSB). Again, Paul declares that God has an eternal purpose which, from eternity past to eternity future, is given to us in Jesus. Jesus IS the plan.

Or as he told the Romans, “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever” (Romans 11:36).

There has never been a plan B. The eternal purpose of our Triune God (Father, Son, and Spirit) has always been about Himself. Even before the fall of humanity in Genesis 3, Jesus was the focus—for He is “the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (Revelation 22:13).

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The Bible is one book, written by one Author, with one subject:  
Jesus Christ and the salvation God ... provides through Him.  
– Alistair Begg –

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As such, the Bible is holy and wholly unique. Its aim, while giving countless substories and characters, is to focus on Jesus, the Author of the Word. The entirety of Scripture is a revelation of Jesus Christ and His redemptive work upon the Cross. Everything in Scripture points to Him. It is all about the centrality and preeminence of Christ (see Colossians 1:18\*).

In short, everything in the Old Testament leads us to Jesus Christ and the Cross, and everything in the New Testament flows from this amazing reality.

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As we go to the cradle only in order to find the baby,  
so we go to the Scriptures only to find Christ.  
– Martin Luther –

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The topic of Christ being the fulfillment of all of Scripture is not the focus of this book (and perhaps another book on the theme will be forthcoming, as it is one of my favorite things to meditate upon in Scripture). But it is a foundational truth if we desire to properly understand the focus of Scripture. And with this as a backdrop, let's talk about the structure of Scripture.

## **THE STRUCTURE OF SCRIPTURE**

Many of us take for granted the 1000+ pages clothed in leather we carry to church each Sunday. So what is this Book we call "Scripture," "God's Word," or "the Bible"?

Growing up in church, I was often told to read, study, memorize, meditate upon, and know the Bible. I spent countless hours in Sunday School with a flannel board or cut-out characters taped to toilet paper tubes to help illustrate the stories throughout Scripture. We had Bible quizzing, conferences, retreats, and weekly events all focused on this Book, yet rarely did someone stop and explain the structure of Scripture.

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The Book of books is called the Holy Bible because it has a holy author,  
and aims at a holy purpose, the production of holiness in its readers.

– Daniel Steele –

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So let me give you a quick overview.

The Bible is a collection of 66 books written over a span of 1400 years by approximately 40 different authors from every walk of life. And though God used various authors to write down His words, the Bible is, in fact, the very words of God (hence why we call the Bible "God's Word").

Author and scholar F.F. Bruce once described Scripture by saying:

*Any part of the human body can only be properly explained in reference to the whole body. And any part of the Bible can only be properly explained in reference to the whole Bible. The Bible, at first sight, appears to be a collection of literature – mainly Jewish. If we enquire into the circumstances under which the various Biblical documents were written, we find that they were written at intervals over a space of nearly 1400 years. The writers wrote in various lands, from Italy in the west to Mesopotamia and possibly Persia in the east. The writers themselves were a heterogenous number of people, not only separated from each*

*other by hundreds of years and hundreds of miles, but belonging to the most diverse walks of life. In their ranks we have kings, herdsmen, soldiers, legislators, fishermen, statesmen, courtiers, priests and prophets, a tentmaking Rabbi and a Gentile physician, not to speak of others of whom we know nothing apart from the writings they have left us. The writings themselves belong to a great variety of literary types. They include history, law (civil, criminal, ethical, ritual, sanitary), religious poetry, didactic treatises, lyric poetry, parable and allegory, biography, personal correspondence, personal memoirs and diaries, in addition to the distinctively Biblical types of prophecy and apocalyptic. For all that, the Bible is not simply an anthology; there is a unity which binds the whole together. An anthology is compiled by an anthologist, but no anthologist compiled the Bible.<sup>1</sup>*

Don't be overwhelmed by the quote. Bruce explains that the entirety of Scripture is perfect in its unity—even though it contains a range of topics (history, law, poetry, parable, biography, personal correspondence, and prophecy, to name a few) and was written by people who were different from one another (had different jobs and education levels, lived in a variety of places, etc.). Despite the medley of its authors, no part of the Bible contradicts itself.

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There is no other book like the Bible. It reveals a different kind of wisdom,  
comes from a different source, and tells of a different love.

– Kevin DeYoung –

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The Bible isn't a collection of random ancient writings; instead, there is such perfect harmony and unity that the Bible can be explained in no other terms except that it is supernatural and God Himself wrote it. And as such, it was meant, as Jewish meditation literature,<sup>2</sup> to be read, re-read, and meditated upon. It was designed for us to spend our entire life saturating in and thinking upon it.

The 66 individual books that make up Scripture are grouped into two major collections: 39 books in the Old Testament (Old Covenant) and 27 books in the New Testament (New Covenant). Our modern thinking often equates "old" with irrelevant and needing to be replaced—but "old" here is best understood as the former or prior covenant. As Paul wrote Timothy, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable ..." (2 Timothy 3:16). The Old is just as important and profitable as the New. Though many Christians carry around the New Testament and often ignore the Old, the Old and New Testaments are two parts of a single book with the same focus. You need both to properly understand God, His love, the Gospel, salvation, and the other major themes of Scripture.

As W.T. Purkiser wrote:

*All of the New Testament writers assumed that God's dealings with man in the history of redemption form a continuous whole, out of which whole came both the Old and New Testaments. ... Neither the Old Testament nor the New is fully understandable without the other. Both form two halves of a perfect-whole. The Old Testament without the New is like a head without a body. Tertullian said, "In the Old Testament the New is concealed; in the New Testament the Old is revealed."*<sup>3</sup>

In short, what Purkiser and Tertullian are saying is that we can only properly understand the Old and New Testaments when seen in light of each other. The New is hidden all throughout the Old, and the Old is explained all throughout the New. We need both. As Christians, we are not merely New Testament believers but entire Bible believers.

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These halves [Old and New Testaments] of the Bible cannot truly be separated. They deal with a single theme ... throughout the whole runs an organic unity. No part could be taken out without destroying something vital to the whole. The Old Testament is incomplete without the New Testament. The New Testament requires the Old Testament as its foundation.

– W.T. Purkiser –

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## **THE OLD TESTAMENT**

The Old Testament contains the first 39 books of the Bible, covering approximately 4000 years of history. It begins with creation, explains the fall of humanity by sin, and describes who God is and His redemptive plan to free His people from sin. In its pages, you discover God's promises and covenants; trace the history of His chosen people through their faithfulness, desire, and obedience to God; and watch their rebellion and disobedience against Him as they seek after other gods and idols. Ultimately, you see humanity's desperate need for a Savior.

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We shall not benefit from reading the Old Testament unless we look for and meditate on the glory of Christ in its pages.

– John Owen –

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It's important to note that while the organization of the Old Testament books is not chronological, there is a purposeful arrangement to it. We divide the Old Testament into three major sections: history, poetry (wisdom literature), and prophecy.

## **History**

5 Books of Law (The Books of Moses: The Torah)

Genesis

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

Pre-Exile History

Joshua

Judges

Ruth

1 & 2 Samuel

1 & 2 Kings

1 & 2 Chronicles

Post-Exile History

Ezra

Nehemiah

Esther

## **Poetry** (which also includes the books of wisdom)

Job

Psalms

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Song of Songs (Song of Solomon)

## **Prophecy**

Major Prophets\*

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Lamentations

Ezekiel

Daniel



### Minor Prophets\*

Hosea  
Joel  
Amos  
Obadiah  
Jonah  
Micah  
Nahum  
Habakkuk  
Zephaniah  
Haggai  
Zechariah  
Malachi

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What is the difference between the “Major Prophets” and the “Minor Prophets”? The distinction between major and minor prophetic books is not about the importance or impact but is a literary concept determined by the length and focus of the book.

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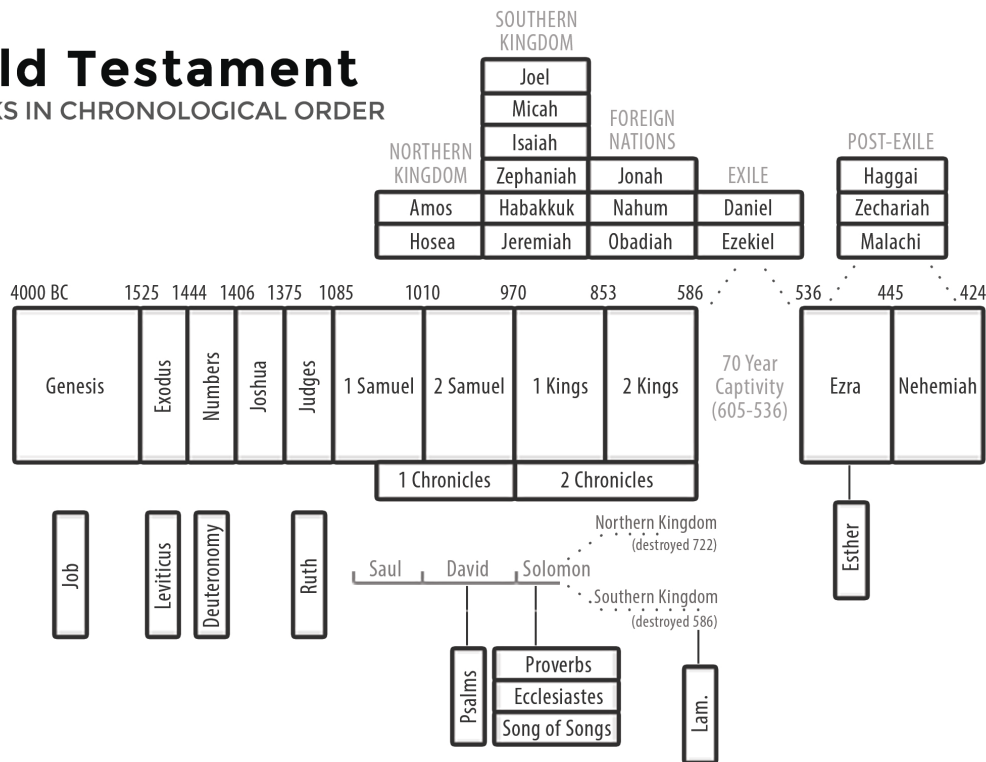
## Old Testament

BOOKS IN “BIBLE ORDER”

History			Wisdom	Prophecy		
5 Books of Moses The Law (Torah)	Pre-Exile	Post-Exile	5 Books of Wisdom, Poetry, & Praise	Major Prophets	Minor Prophets	
					Pre-Exile	Post-Exile
Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles	Ezra Nehemiah Esther	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah	Haggai Zechariah Malachi

# Old Testament

## BOOKS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER



## THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament contains the remaining 27 books of the Bible.

The New Testament begins with the Gospels, four books containing the life and words of Jesus Christ. It continues with the history of the Early Church (Acts), includes letters of encouragement, exhortation, and warning, and concludes with the apocalyptic (prophetic/end-times) book of Revelation, which describes the return of Jesus Christ.

Again, it's important to note that the order of the New Testament books is not chronological. Still, there is a purposeful arrangement to it. It has four major sections: biography (the Gospels), history (Acts), letters (epistles) grouped by author, and apocalyptic (Revelation).

The Bible is like a telescope. If a man looks through his telescope, then he sees worlds beyond; but if he looks at his telescope, then he does not see anything but that. The Bible is a thing

to be looked through, to see that which is beyond; but most people  
only look at it; and so they see only the dead letter.

– Phillips Brooks –

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**The Gospels** (Life and words of Jesus Christ)

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

**History** (of the Early Church and the works of the Holy Spirit)

Acts

**Letters** (Epistles)

Paul's Letters to Churches (arranged, for the most part, longest to shortest)

Romans

1 & 2 Corinthians

Galatians

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

1 & 2 Thessalonians

Paul's Letters to Individuals

1 & 2 Timothy

Titus

Philemon

General Letters

Hebrews

James

1 & 2 Peter

1, 2, & 3 John

Jude

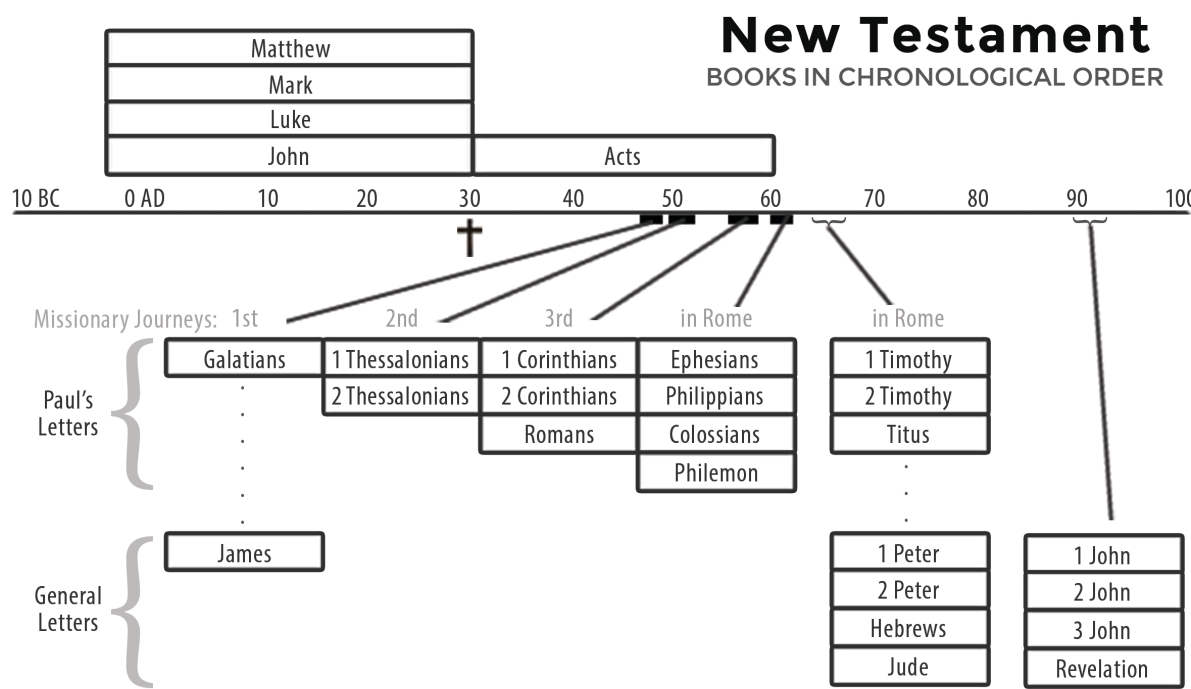
**Apocalyptic** (Prophecy)

Revelation

# New Testament

BOOKS IN "BIBLE ORDER"

Biography	History	Letters			Prophecy
Gospels	Church History	Paul's Letters to Churches	Paul's Letters to Individuals	General Letters	End Times
Matthew Mark Luke John	Acts	Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians	1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon	Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude	Revelation





## APPENDIX TWO

# The Supremacy of Scripture

Defend the Bible? I would just as soon defend a lion.  
Just turn the Bible loose. It will defend itself.  
– Charles Spurgeon –

Throughout Christian history, believers knew the Bible was God's inspired Word and contained the Gospel, which, as Paul explains, "is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). As such, they stood boldly for the Bible with a willingness to die for its preservation and proclamation.

As believers, we, too, must be willing to stand unashamed in our culture for the integrity of God's Word and the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ and Him crucified. But if we are going to be grounded upon the rock of Scripture, which doesn't change and is a sure foundation for every situation and season of life, we must know the nature of the Book.

Like a three-legged stool, the Bible has three aspects that describe its importance and infallibility—and all three are essential. The Bible's inspiration, inerrancy, and immutability are the reason we:

- stand immovable in our faith
- build our lives upon God's Word
- take the promises of God as a guarantee because we know they are true, and He is faithful
- have absolute confidence in the character and nature of God
- live triumphant and holy lives, unlike the world around us

### **INSPIRED**

*The authority of Scripture*

When we describe Jesus (the Word of God in Person), we explain that He is 100% God and 100% man. There is a mysterious union in the incarnation—God came in the flesh. So too with Scripture (the Word of God in Text). The Bible was written 100% by men and yet 100% by God.

The man Luke wrote the Gospel that bears his name; yet, while Luke put pen to paper, he was carried along by the Holy Spirit to choose specific words and record what he did. Likewise, Paul didn't write random words like we often do with a text message—even the Apostle Peter said that Paul wrote under the inspiration of God:

*"And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:15–16, ESV).*

In Christian history, this concept has often been called the inspiration of Scripture.

Paul tells Timothy that "All Scripture is **inspired by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness ..." (2 Timothy 3:16). The word "inspired" means "God-breathed"—divinely inspired, spoken by God, produced by the Spirit. And Paul clarifies it isn't "some" Scripture that is inspired, but all of it. All of Scripture are the very words of God; He is speaking to us!

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Get into the habit of saying, "Speak, Lord,"  
and life will become a romance.  
– Oswald Chambers –

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The Apostle Peter emphasized the inspiration of God by writing, "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but **men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God**" (2 Peter 1:20–21).

Scripture states that it was written under the direction and influence of God Himself. For example, in Acts 1:15–20, Peter quotes Psalm 69 and Psalm 109 and explains these psalms were written by the Holy Spirit through David to address the issue of Judas Iscariot—"Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas..." (Acts 1:16). Or read through the first several chapters of Hebrews. Over and over, an Old Testament passage is quoted and attributed to God ("He ever say," "He says"—e.g., Hebrews 1:5–8, 13).

The Old Testament constantly reminds us that the human authors' words weren't their own but rather "the Word of the Lord" came to them and proclaimed, "thus says the Lord."

The Bible isn't merely a good book of words written by humans—yes, it was penned by men, but the Bible contains the very words of God. He is the One speaking.

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We should read the Bible as those who listen to the very speech of God.

– FB Meyer –

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As God's Word, it must hold the authority in your life. It has the power and ability to give you orders which you must obey. You must surrender your will and preference and submit to the Word of God.

For more on the inspiration of Scripture, see Acts 1:16, 28:25, and 1 Corinthians 2:10.

## **INERRANT**

*The accuracy of Scripture*

Inerrant means “without error”—God's Word is perfect and without flaw. And for note, we are not referring to a specific translation but the original writing of Scripture. Wayne Grudem explained inerrancy as believing in the “total truthfulness and reliability of God's words.”<sup>4</sup> The Bible is true and always tells the truth.

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Fact is fact. Truth is truth. It does not matter how you feel.

We do not listen to our feelings. We believe the truth of God's Word.

– Eric Ludy –

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God is perfect, holy, and without flaw. And as we already examined, the Bible is His very words. Thus the Bible is also perfect, holy, and without flaw. It is accurate.

Grab a pen and underline the statements below about how God describes His Word:

- As for God, His way is blameless; the word of the LORD is tested; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him (2 Samuel 22:31).
- Then You came down on Mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven; You gave them just ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments (Nehemiah 9:13).
- The words of the LORD are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times (Psalm 12:6).

- The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes (Psalm 19:7–8).
- The works of His hands are truth and justice; all His precepts are sure (Psalm 111:7).
- Your word is very pure, therefore Your servant loves it (Psalm 119:140).
- Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him (Proverbs 30:5).
- Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth (John 17:17).
- So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good (Romans 7:12).

We could spend countless hours together talking about the accuracy of the Bible. Whether you want to view its accuracy from a scientific, archeological, geographic, historical, or prophetic perspective, God's Word is continually proven accurate and without error. The more we understand and uncover about science, history, geography, or \_\_\_\_\_ (name the field), the more we understand the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture. God's Word is pure, perfect, sure, and right (see Psalm 19:7–8). It is the truth (see John 17:17), absolutely accurate, and without error.

## **IMMUTABLE**

### *The unalterability of Scripture*

Immutable is another big theological term meaning unchanging. God's Word doesn't shift and bend based on culture, preference, or political correctness. It is timeless, eternal, and permanent.

There has always been an attack against God's Word. "Did God really say?" has been the anthem of the enemy starting in the Garden of Eden and continuing into our present day. Society delights in sin and balks at God's perfect standard. Jesus said in John 3:19, "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."

This same questioning lie, "did God really say?" is creeping into the modern Church and causing Christians to devalue the Bible and question its validity. They may still have a copy on their shelves, but many presume it's irrelevant, a collection of good stories, or needs to change because culture has changed. One example is how the Bible has been compared to a trampoline that must flex and bend with the progression of culture<sup>5</sup>—in short, their flawed argument is that the meaning of Scripture should change based upon what culture and society deem as good, appropriate, and right. While it may be a popular message in today's society, the mindset is dangerous and wrong.

The Bible is not flexible, nor does it bend. The Bible is an unchanging, unalterable rock, and therefore, can be the foundation of our faith. You must have something outside of yourself and your sinful preferences to be the standard by which you measure your life. Scripture is just that—an unmoving,



unchanging, timeless, eternal, permanent rock. Even Jesus compared His words to a solid rock we must build our lives upon (see Matthew 7:24–27\*). And as you build your life and faith upon rock, it enables you to be bold, stand firm, and have unwavering confidence.

The Bible doesn't change. It is unalterable.

Another term for this is **infallible**. Infallibility declares that the Bible is authoritative and will endure forever. To be infallible is to be permanent, not able to fail or be broken. It is perfect. Jesus said in John 10:34–35 that “Scripture cannot be broken.” Peter wrote, “the word of God ... lives and abides forever ... the word of the LORD endures forever” (1 Peter 1:23, 25, NKJV).

## WHY THE BIBLE IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR LIFE

When I was a kid, I often longed for a burning bush experience or some neon sign in the sky to give me wisdom, understanding, and direction for life. I look back and laugh because I realize I wanted a clear word from the Lord about my life. Do you see the irony? I wanted God to speak to me, yet He HAS spoken! I have His words contained in The Word. The Bible is not some dull, dusty, and dry book—it is living, active, powerful, and is a double-edged sword in my life (see Hebrews 4:12).

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The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me;  
it has hands, it lays hold of me.  
— Martin Luther —

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Do you see the necessity and importance of Scripture in your life?

John Wesley once said, “God Himself has condescended to teach the way. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that Book! At any price, give me the Book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be a man of one book.”<sup>6</sup>

The Bible is God's inspired Word and is inerrant (accurate), immutable (unchanging), and infallible (perfect and permanent). He is the One speaking to you, and His Word is to have the ultimate authority in your life. He cannot lie, His promises are sure, and thus you can trust and put your confidence in what He says.

The question is not “Will God speak?” The real question is, “Will I listen, heed, and obey the Word He has spoken?”

## APPENDIX THREE

# The Beauty, Blessings, and Benefits of the Bible

The Bible calls itself food. The value of food is not in the discussion  
it arouses but in the nourishment it imparts.

– William H. Houghton –

If you want to understand Christianity, do not shut your Bible—  
open it, read it!

– D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones –

Scripture promises benefits and blessings to those who read and study the Bible. Though there are many more, I've condensed them into eleven categories.

### 1. STUDYING THE BIBLE CAUSES GROWTH AND MATURITY

You must be in the Word if you desire to grow and mature in your faith. 1 Peter 2:2–3 tells us, “like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.” And yet, we shouldn’t be content to drink milk the rest of our lives, but rather to mature toward “steak and potatoes.” As Hebrews 5:11–14 exhorts us:

*“Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”*

If you are new to the faith or just learning how to study, you may need to drink a little milk, but you can’t expect to fully grow and mature if you subsist on a lactose diet.

We need to be in the Word.

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Man of God, you cannot expect to grow in grace  
if you do not read the Scriptures.  
– Charles Spurgeon –

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## 2. GOD’S WORD MAKES YOU SPIRITUALLY EFFECTIVE

2 Timothy 3:16–17 says, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

Paul says not only is Scripture divinely inspired and breathed by God, but it is also profitable in our lives. He then gives a list of how it is beneficial and useful in our lives:

- **Teaching (doctrine):** instruction on a particular subject or topic—and that instruction is always true (see John 17:17\*). God’s Word instructs us how to think and live biblically; thus, we must align with the truth and allow the Spirit to remove any false or incorrect teaching, instruction, or doctrine within our lives.
- **Reproof:** Scripture defines the boundaries for godly living and exposes areas in our lives outside those boundaries.
- **Correction:** the Bible purifies, cleanses, and conforms us to the image of Christ. This is where the rubber meets the road and deals with the specific things in our lives that must change for us to live holy, upright, and godly lives in this present world.
- **Training in righteousness:** the instruction, training, correction, or discipline that reveals and teaches us how to live in truth and righteousness. Righteousness is the way God is and the way humanity is called to live.

In short, the Holy Spirit uses His Word to teach and train us in godly living. He uses the reproof of Scripture to bring about correction in our lives so He can, with our obedience, enable us to walk in purity, righteousness, holiness, and conformity to God’s will and standard of living.

Paul clarifies the purpose for all of this: “so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17). The word “adequate” means to be complete and capable; to be furnished, equipped, or proficient with everything you need to accomplish a task or purpose. The word “equipped” is a re-emphasis of the “completeness” concept and reminds us that Scripture is not

for selfish purposes but so that we become equipped and useful to God and others (also see Ephesians 2:10).

We need to be in the Word.

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What could we do without the Book  
That God gave us to read?  
No more than any farmer  
Who hadn't any seed!  
– C.T. Studd –

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### **3. THE BIBLE IS THE SOURCE OF TRUTH WHICH GIVES YOU GUIDANCE AND WISDOM**

Truth is more than facts and details. Jesus declared that He and His Word are the truth (see John 14:6 and 17:17). As the truth, the Bible provides guidance and wisdom for daily living.

Joshua encouraged his fellow Israelites by declaring, “This Book of the Law must not depart from your mouth. Meditate on it day and night so that you may act carefully according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way successful, and you will be wise” (Joshua 1:8).

Psalms 119:105 says: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

We need to be in the Word.

### **4. SCRIPTURE TRAINS YOU IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PURITY**

We live in a culture that does everything possible to get us to live like the rest of the world—but we are called to live in holiness, righteousness, and purity.

Psalms 119:9 asks the question, “How can a young man keep his way pure?” Though talking specifically about young men, the verse applies to every believer—how can you live in righteousness and purity? The second half of the verse answers: “By keeping it according to Your word.” Scripture must train your life.

Interestingly, two verses later, we are told, “Your word I have treasured [hidden] in my heart, that I may not sin against You” (Psalm 119:11). There is an exciting connection between keeping your way pure, living according to the Word, and hiding the Word in your heart.

We need to be in the Word.

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The Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible.

– DL Moody –

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## **5. THE BIBLE PRODUCES DELIGHT AND JOY WITHIN YOU**

Whoever said reading or studying the Bible is boring never truly got into the Book. When you dive into God’s Word, you will experience joy and delight.

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I have read the Bible through a hundred times in order, and every time with increasing joy. Whenever I have started afresh it seemed like a new book to me.

– George Müller –

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Our world tries to find fulfillment in everything that can’t produce it—drugs, alcohol, one-night stands, entertainment, etc. Yet Christians have access to the fullness of joy. Listen to what Scripture says:

- I have set the LORD continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. ... You will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever (Psalm 16:8, 11).
- [Scripture is more] desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb (Psalm 19:10).
- I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word (Psalm 119:15–16 NKJV).
- These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full (John 15:11).

We need to be in the Word.

## **6. THE WORD OF GOD GIVES YOU ASSURANCE OF SALVATION**

Are you confident that you are saved? The Word of God assures and reminds us of our amazing salvation through the work and grace of Jesus Christ.

In writing his gospel account, the apostle John reveals his purpose: “but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31). Later in 1 John 5:13, he tells us, “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

Likewise, Paul reminds us in Romans 8:15–16, “For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God ...”

We need to be in the Word.

## **7. GOD’S WORD CONVICTS, CLEANSSES, AND SANCTIFIES**

Sanctification is a big term we don’t typically use in normal conversation. The word is used to describe the process of being freed from sin and made holy. This happens when God uses His Word to confront our lives with truth and reveals any behavior, attitude, or thought that is ungodly, doesn’t belong in our lives, and needs to be repented of.

When our lives are exposed and we come to Him in humility and repentance, He washes and cleanses us with the water of His Word (see John 15:3 and Ephesians 5:25–27).

As Jesus prayed to the Father, “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth” (John 17:17).

We need to be in the Word.

## **8. THE BIBLE GIVES YOU PEACE**

You will never experience true peace outside of Jesus, for He Himself is our peace (see Ephesians 2:14 and Isaiah 9:6). In comforting His disciples, Jesus told them, “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Perhaps one of the most popular books in the Bible on peace is the Psalms. Countless Christians throughout history have turned to its pages to seek comfort and peace amidst life’s storms and

difficulties—always finding Jesus to be the Great Shepherd who leads, comforts, and brings peace (see Psalm 23, John 10:1–18, and Hebrews 13:20).

We need to be in the Word.

## **9. GOD’S WORD HELPS YOU IN PRAYER**

Not only does the Bible contain many prayers that are edifying to pray in your own life (see as examples: 1 Samuel 2:1–10, Psalm 3, Ephesians 3:14–21), but the Bible teaches you how to pray (see Matthew 6:9–13\*) and reveals the types of prayer God answers (see 1 John 5:14–16, James 5:13–16).

Jesus tells you, “if you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7 NKJV).

We need to be in the Word.

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The mightier any is in the Word, the more mighty he will be in prayer.

– William Gurnall –

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## **10. THE WORD OF GOD PRODUCES VICTORY AND SUCCESS IN YOUR LIFE**

You are to live a triumphant Christian life (see Romans 8:35–39). One way to help you live victoriously is to have the Word of God within you (see number four above). Joshua 1:8 again says, “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.”

Likewise, the apostle John wrote, “I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one” (1 John 2:14b).

We need to be in the Word.



## **11. SCRIPTURE HELPS YOU DISCERN TRUTH AND GUARD AGAINST DECEPTION**

Lies and darkness seem to increase daily in our world. There are more distractions, noise, and opinions than ever before. How can you know what is true and stand against the lies and schemes of the enemy?

Paul warned Timothy, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths” (2 Timothy 4:3–4). We live in such a day.

Only when you know and stand firm upon God’s Word will you recognize error and lie from the truth. You must test what you hear against God’s perfect and unchanging Word and be like the Bereans who “received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). You must discern between good and evil and not be tossed around with every deceptive wind of teaching (see Hebrews 5:14 and Ephesians 4:14).

We need to be in the Word.

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The canon-mind is the most honest, happy, holy, and healthy mind in the universe. It’s a mind controlled by the person of Jesus Christ, esteeming the things that He esteems, despising the things that He despises. It is a mind in tune with Heaven, discriminating between light and darkness with the deftness of God Himself. It is a mind radically loyal to the words of Scripture, unbending in opposition, unyielding to doubt and unwavering in its allegiance.

– Eric Ludy –

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## **EXCEEDINGLY GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES**

These are exceedingly great and precious promises from God’s Word! Countless benefits are waiting for you as you read and study Scripture. Here is what King David said about the beauty and sufficiency of Scripture:

*The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the*

*commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward (Psalm 19:7–11).*

## **DIVE DEEPER**

Psalm 19 is a condensed version of the beauty, blessings, and benefits of the Bible found in Psalm 119. Take some time and saturate in both of these psalms and reflect upon what it says are the blessings and benefits of reading, meditating, and studying Scripture. I encourage you to read through both psalms four times. Each time reflect upon something different:

1. Read the psalm and get the overall tone and flow.
2. Read the psalm again and make a list of all the different ways (synonyms) God's Word is referred to. Example: Law (119:1), Testimonies (119:2), Precepts (119:4), Righteous Judgments (119:7).
3. Read the psalm again and make a list of all the things we are to do with the Word. Example: Walk in it (119:1), Keep it (119:2), Seek Him with all our hearts (119:3).
4. Read the psalm again and make a list of all the benefits we receive when we read and heed the Word. Example: Our ways are established (119:5), We will have an upright heart (119:7), Our way will be pure (119:9).

After saturating in both psalms, compare and contrast them to each other. Consider grouping your reflections into categories and/or write a summary statement.

## APPENDIX FOUR

# What's Your Problem?

True Bible-readers and Bible-searchers never find it wearisome. They like it least who know it least, and they love it most who read it most. They find it newest who have known it longest, and they find the pasture to be the richest whose souls have been the longest fed upon it. When one of our missionaries had to read a certain Book of the Old Testament through a hundred times while he was translating it, he said that he certainly enjoyed the hundredth time of reading it more than he did the first, for he understood it better, and it seemed to him to be fuller and fresher the more familiar he became with it.

– Charles Spurgeon –

You can always find a “good” excuse not to study the Bible. Regardless of how far-fetched those excuses might be, there are plenty of distractions and reasons we give ourselves not to spend time in the Word.

No one will ever twist your arm to read and study God's Word. This is also true with the other essential things in life—spiritual life, physical health, quality time with family and friends, etc. We say these things are indispensable, but no deadlines or alarms alert us to their neglect. So it's easy to ignore and push them off to “another time” when it's convenient (or at least until we hit a crisis moment—for example: when we find ourselves in the hospital because we disregarded our health).

Though there are countless excuses people give for not being in the Word, I want to focus on the five most common ones. Examine your life in the Word and see if you've wrestled with any of these struggles. I hope you find that Saturation Bible Study removes every excuse and sets you free to grow in Christ through His Word.

### **STRUGGLE 1: TIME**

Perhaps the most common excuse I've heard about spending time in God's Word is time itself—“I just don't have enough time!”

We live in a busy culture, and while we have gazillions of gadgets and gizmos to help us manage and free up time, we are busier than ever. Most people today seem stressed as they rush from one activity

to another. And culturally, things are only increasing in intensity, not slowing. As such, many Christians think they don't have time for the Bible.

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Am I willing to trade my addiction to the world's entertainment  
for more time with my Bible?  
– Leslie Ludy –

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My first job was in a Christian bookstore (remember those ancient places you had to physically visit to find a Christian book?!). When I began working there, we had a small collection of books called “devotionals”—usually a daily guide with a verse, a modern-day story, and sometimes even a short prayer, all conveniently arranged on a single page. Throughout my seven years at the bookstore, I noticed a concerning trend—our devotional section of books got more prominent, and the devotionals themselves became shorter. Our collection of devos could easily fit on a couple of shelves when I started and became multiple bookcases when I left. Devotional length went from being advertised as a “fifteen-minute devotional” to seven ... to five ... to three ... eventually to a “one-minute devotional.” Why? Because we just don't have enough time to spend with Jesus.

Yet I don't think time is the real issue. As an illustration, if I offered you a million dollars if you found thirty minutes a day to spend in the Word, I presume you could come up with the time. You may have to get up earlier or cut something from your life, but you'd find a way to make it happen. The issue isn't time but priority. We make time for the things that are most important to us.

But let's say hypothetically you legitimately don't have time in your day. Your schedule is packed from when you wake up to when you hit your bed for those few precious hours of rest. I still don't think time would be an excuse because Saturation solves the time dilemma. Let me explain.

Saturation is not about a certain amount of time; rather, you are to live in the Word like a fish in water. Bible reading and study isn't a “chapter a day keeps the devil away” concept. Sure, you should dedicate time each day to read the Word and study its depths, but even on days when you're extremely busy, you can ponder, memorize, think through observations, and talk to the Author about what His Word says.

We all spend large amounts of our day thinking and “wasting time” (for example, waiting in lines, at traffic lights, etc.). What if you used these spare moments to turn your attention to Scripture? What if your time in the Word wasn't about the clock because you lived in the Word?

Think of the vine and branch from John 15. Jesus declared:

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing” (15:1–5).

When does a branch abide in the vine? How much time does it abide each day? The presumption in the text is that unless the branch abides **all the time**, it will wither and die. The branch doesn’t consider if it spent the appropriate amount of time abiding today; it just abides. Likewise, you should focus less on “fifteen minutes a day for Jesus” and instead live in the Word all the time.

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Beware of saying, “I haven’t time to read the Bible, or to pray”; say rather, “I haven’t disciplined myself to do these things.”

– Oswald Chambers –

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Again, for most of us, we DO have time, and we need to use it for what is most important. But even if you have days where there isn’t much time, you can still saturate and ponder God’s Word throughout your day—you can meditate on a small portion of Scripture, listen to an audio Bible, or read the Bible in the random small chunks of time we typically use to check phones or engage in social media.

And let me give you one quick word of warning about busyness. I have found Corrie ten Boom’s statement incredibly true in my life: “Beware the barrenness of a busy life.” When we become bullied by busyness, we often lose what is most important, especially in our spiritual lives. But as we give time and intentionality to the Bible, we become more sensitive to the Spirit and His wooing of our hearts to spend more time with Him in His Word. In short, like a good relationship, the more time we spend with someone, the more we want to—the same is certainly true with God and His Word.

Regardless of how much time you have, you can always saturate in Scripture.

## **STRUGGLE 2: TRAINING**

A second struggle I’ve heard people use is that they don’t know Hebrew or Greek, can’t understand grammar, or never received good grades. They’ve never had training and thus can’t study Scripture.

But their focus tends to be on gaining facts and knowledge rather than embracing the Author. When your purpose for study becomes facts and truths, you can easily miss the truth. Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6). Jesus isn’t a bunch of details, facts, or information to be gleaned; He is the truth itself.

When we come to the Bible, our purpose and desire must be to know the truth (Jesus), not merely gain information. Yes, information is important; facts and details matter, but your objective is to know Christ intimately—not just know about Him.

The heart of Saturation is about embracing the Author through His Word and allowing the truth to transform your life. While you will gain information and deep insight into Scripture as you study, your motive and focus is the Person of Christ. This is freeing because it means you don’t have to be brilliant, good-looking, or have special training—which I’ll explain more about in the next struggle.

### **STRUGGLE 3: TECHNIQUE**

People often tell me they don’t know HOW to do Bible study. They don’t know the proper technique or order. The Bible gets too confusing, and they don’t know what to do next. With complexity comes frustration, so they quit.

Saturation solves the struggle of technique because the pressure is more upon God than us. As I mentioned, we don’t have to be clever, have special training, or know the proper technique to study God’s Word. Reading Scripture is not like reading Shakespeare.

In high school, I had the “privilege” of reading a lot of Shakespeare. While I enjoyed *Romeo and Juliet* and a few of his comedies, I got lost reading the sonnets. Every couple of lines, I cried out, “huh?!” It didn’t make sense. And I had another problem: Shakespeare is dead. I can’t walk up to him and ask, “What does this mean?! What were you trying to say?”

Saturating in the Bible is entirely different. The Author of the Word is alive and lives within us through His indwelling Holy Spirit. Engaging with the text of Scripture is less about your brilliance, looks, training, or a special technique; it all has to do with Him. When you get to something which doesn’t make sense, you have a relationship with the Author and can ask Him what it means. You likely won’t hear a booming voice, but the Spirit will lead and direct you. He will use books you read, conversations you have, sermons you listen to, and He will even bring thoughts and insights into your mind. It doesn’t always happen immediately, but the more you saturate and “marinate” in the Bible and the more time you give to His Word, the more you’ll find the Holy Spirit guiding you into all truth.

As Jesus was in the upper room before His death and resurrection, He explained to His disciples one of the roles of the Holy Spirit.

*But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment ... But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you (John 16:7–8, 13–14).*

Jesus said, “It is to your advantage that I go away.” What?! If I were in the room, I would have interrupted and forcefully explained that it was not to our advantage for Jesus to leave. But Jesus said He would send His Spirit to us if He departed.

According to Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit is better than having the physical presence of Jesus with you. With further examination, it makes sense—if Jesus were physically here, He would be limited to one physical location. But when Jesus ascended into the heavenly realms and sat down at the right hand of the Father, He sent forth His Spirit to indwell each of our lives as believers. We do not have to go to a temple in Jerusalem, a throne room in Israel, or any other physical locale to talk and have a relationship with the King of kings.

Christians often desire a burning bush, to experience God like David or Daniel, or have a neon sign in the sky. They would love to have been with Jesus like His disciples, who were able to eat with Him, talk with Him, and slap Him on the back. But according to Jesus, what you and I experience now through the infilling of the Holy Spirit is better than what the disciples had before Pentecost. Yes, they got to be physically present with Jesus, but we get His Spirit living in our lives. And Scripture indicates that in eternity we get both!

In John 16, Jesus also says that the Holy Spirit will “guide you into all truth” and will “glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.” The word “guide” doesn’t mean to give directions but conveys the concept of grabbing your hand and taking you somewhere. So get the progression: Jesus is the truth (John 14:6), He calls His Word the truth (John 17:17), and says the Spirit of truth (i.e., the Spirit of Jesus, the Holy Spirit) will take you by the hand and lead you into all truth (i.e., Jesus and His Word).

When you have the Holy Spirit residing in and leading your life, He continually glorifies Jesus while guiding you into all truth. This radically affects your study of God’s Word. The emphasis is not upon

you, your ability, intellect, or training; instead, it is upon what the Spirit of God desires to reveal and say to you through His Word.

One of my friends is an older man named Joel. He spent many years homeless, living in his van. He told me he never received good grades, never finished high school, and continues to struggle with reading. Yet, he has had great insight into God's Word. Joel may not have the traditional skills, ability, talent, wisdom, or technique in Bible study, but he allows the Holy Spirit to guide him and reveal truth that transforms his life.

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Don't settle only for spiritual food that's been "predigested" by others.  
Experience the joy of discovering biblical insights firsthand through your  
own Bible study!  
– Donald Whitney –

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Studying the Bible is far more exciting than reading Shakespeare because the Author of the Word is alive and dwells within the believer. As you read and study the Bible, spend time with the Author, ask Him what things mean, and allow the Spirit of God to bring revelation and insight to you from His Word. It may not come immediately, but as you work through the process of Saturation outlined in this book, you'll discover that Bible study has little to do with your ability, training, or technique, and instead has everything to do with Christ and His Spirit guiding you into all truth.

## **STRUGGLE 4: TOOLS**

Many people believe Bible study is all about tools and resources. And while resources can be helpful and speed up the study process, they aren't necessary.

If you were stuck on a deserted island and all you had was a Bible, that alone would be sufficient.

Sure, tools and resources (like commentaries and dictionaries) can give additional insight and help with original languages and contextual clues. Yes, tools may be helpful, but there is no substitute for the Spirit of God.

Please note, I do think you should use resources. We live in an unprecedented age with more access to the Bible than ever before in human history. With a click of a button on your computer or phone, you can have insights into Scripture that people a generation ago spent years studying to understand.



The danger in our modern day is that too many people use tools and resources and neglect the Bible. They spend more time in the resources about the Bible than they do in the Bible.

I love using resources and tools in my study, and many are free online (see Appendix 6). But remember, tools and resources are not a replacement for the Holy Spirit in your life, and the best resource to study the Bible is the Bible itself.

## **STRUGGLE 5: “TO DO”**

Have you ever opened the Bible only because you felt like you had to?

Bible study and reading are certainly a discipline, and sometimes you don't feel like doing it. But your time in God's Word is to be a delight, not a duty. It's a get-to, not a have-to.

Many Christians struggle with reading or studying the Bible because they don't understand the purpose of engaging the text. They see it only as a habit, a chore, or an obligation. But as we discussed in chapter 5, the purpose of Bible study is to know Jesus and be transformed by truth.

When you miss this purpose, you become engrossed in Bible information, checking it off a list, or doing it because people tell you, “that's what good Christians do.” It can quickly become tedious and a “to do” you feel obligated to perform daily.

Have you ever talked with someone who's engaged to be married?

I've nearly given up on conversations with engaged couples until they've been married for a few months. During the engagement, they seem to live in la-la land. Never once have I had to go up to an engaged man and tell him to discipline himself to think about his future wife; he can't help it! He is so wrapped up in the relationship that it consumes his thinking and everyday life.

Imagine if you had that same connection with Scripture. Since the purpose of Bible study is to know the Author and your goal is to grow in intimacy, oneness, and relationship with Him, the Bible should consume your thinking and everyday life. You should desire a greater relationship with the Author and hunger to know Him more.

If you struggle to get into the Word, check your motives. Yes, there may be days you're tired or do not want to read. Still, I've found that even on those days, if I get into the Word, God draws me closer to Himself, satisfies my longing, and I leave refreshed and hungry for more of Him. If the Bible seems more like a duty and obligation, pray and ask God to turn the duty into delight and the obligation into

obsession. Spend time and tell God you want to know Him, not just know about Him. Ask Him to breathe upon your time together and stir your soul towards Him.

I hope you are beginning to understand that no struggle or excuse is valid when you saturate in Scripture and know the purpose of Bible study. Saturation frees us from every excuse and allows us to pursue Christ and know Him more as we soak like a sponge in His Word.

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The most foolish person in the world is the one who has the opportunity to read, absorb, digest, live in, be immersed in worship-reading the Bible, but doesn't do it because of PREOCCUPATION with other things of this world.

– Rex B. Andrews –

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## APPENDIX FIVE

# 100+ Questions to help you observe

Read the scripture, not only as history, but as a love letter from God.

– Thomas Watson –

For some years now, I have read through the Bible twice every year. If you picture the Bible to be a mighty tree and every word a little branch, I have shaken every one of these branches because I wanted to know what it was and what it meant.

– Martin Luther –

I've found that a list of questions is helpful while observing a text. While not all of these questions will pertain to every passage you study, they are a good reference tool in your "Bible study toolbox" to help you wrestle with a passage and see things you may typically overlook.

Most of these are starter questions ... a good follow-up question is: "so what?" or "why?" Remember that insight often comes when you ask the question behind the question, so keep asking questions.

I've also made the list as a downloadable PDF so you can print it off and have it handy. Go to [deeperChristian.com/saturationbook](http://deeperChristian.com/saturationbook) to download your copy.

### OVERVIEW (BIG PICTURE) QUESTIONS:

- Who is the author? How does that help me understand the book/passage?
- Who is the author writing to? What can I discover about them?
- Who are the characters in the book/passage?
- What is the purpose of the book I'm studying, and how does that give insight into this particular passage?
- When and where was the book written?
- When did this book, event, or passage happen in relation to other events?
- What is the main context? (*i.e., What is happening before and after the passage?*)
- What genre is this? (*e.g., biography, prophecy, narrative, parable, poetry, proverb, exposition/epistles, etc.*)

## THE CLASSIC JOURNALIST QUESTIONS:

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?
- How?

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND QUESTIONS:

- What time period in history are we dealing with?
- What is happening around the world at this time?
- What's happening at a regional or local level?
- What's happening historically at the location where this passage takes place?
- Has anything happened in the past (*especially in the Old Testament*) that gives insight into the passage?
- Is there any other historical background that would be helpful to know?

## CULTURAL BACKGROUND QUESTIONS:

- Is the context of this passage Jewish, Roman, Egyptian, Babylonian, or??
- How does that context impact the passage and its implications?
- Are there any cultural clues given in the passage?
- Are there any cultural values that influence the understanding of the passage? (*e.g., honor/shame, patriarchal, communal/individual*)
- What assumptions do I have from my own cultural lens that I may be enforcing upon the passage to mean something different than the original culture?
- Is there any other cultural background information that would be helpful to know?

## OLD TESTAMENT QUESTIONS:

- If studying Hebrew poetry, is parallelism being used? (*where one word or phrase is said differently, but either means the same thing or is used to establish a contrast*)
- Is there a chiasm in the text? (*where there is a parallel in phrases or thoughts leading inward to a central point*)
- How does this Old Testament passage reveal (or point to/foreshadow) Jesus Christ?
- How does the passage/concept find its fulfillment in the New Testament?

## **NEW TESTAMENT QUESTIONS:**

- Does this New Testament passage or verse show up in Old Testament? If so, how does the original context give insight into the New Testament passage?
- Can this New Testament passage be illustrated from the Old Testament? If so, how?

## **PARABLE QUESTIONS:**

*If you are studying a parable in the New Testament, here are some questions to consider.*

- What is the occasion (context) for the parable—who was the parable spoken to, why was it told, and what prompted its telling?
- Is there a clear explanation of the parable? *(Jesus often explained His parables to the disciples)*
- What is the central focus or idea of the parable? *(Note: parables have one central focus/theme)*
- What are the relevant and irrelevant details? *(Not all details matter in a parable. Because there is one central focus, you must identify what details contribute to the main theme and which ones and merely added for the sake of the story)*
- How does cultural and historical context help interpret the parable? *(A Bible dictionary or a book on Bible times and customs can be helpful as many of the parables are related to things outside our normal context—e.g., the parable of the different agriculture soils, the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, etc.)*

## **GEOGRAPHY QUESTIONS:**

- Is there a location mentioned? If so, look it up on a Bible map.
- What kind of place is it (desert, mountain, valley, near the coast, urban, rural, etc.)?
- Has anything happened previously at this location that informs the passage I'm examining?
- Who lives in and around this location? What do we know about them?
- Who's the ruling authority at this location? *(e.g., Pharaoh, Caesar, a king, the Sanhedrin, etc.)*
- What does the name of the location mean? Does the meaning have any significance to or wordplay in the passage?

## **WORD QUESTIONS:**

- What is the meaning of this word in its original language?
- How can I properly understand this word in light of its context?
- Do other translations use a different word or phrase? If so, why? *(e.g., Philippians 2:5 — “let this mind/attitude/lifestyle be in you”)*

- Does the original language give any pictures or illustrations that help me understand the word better? (e.g., the Greek word *baptizō* – baptism – gives the picture of a cucumber being immersed in the vinegar solution and turning into a pickle)
- How is this word used elsewhere in the book? In the writings by the same author? In the entire Bible?

## SENTENCE QUESTIONS:

- Are there any words I don't know and need to look up the definitions for?
- What are the keywords in this sentence? Should I do a word study on them?
- Is there any repetition of words, phrases, or concepts? (*repetition often shows importance or emphasis—e.g., God is holy, holy, holy*)
- Is there a contrast? (*things that are different*)
- Is there a comparison? (*things that are alike*)
- Is there a list given?
- Is there a cause and effect? (*Note: sometimes the effect is given before the cause*)
- Is there a conjunction? (e.g., *and, but, for, therefore, since, because ...*)
- What is the main verb?
- Who is the subject of the sentence?
- If there are pronouns, who do they refer to? (e.g., *he, she, them, they, you, me, etc.*)
- Is there any indication of time? (i.e., *when something happened*)
- Are there any figures of speech or idioms?
  - Simile: comparing two different things with a connecting word (*often with “like, as, such as” or with the phrase “as ... so”—e.g., Psalm 42:1*)
  - Metaphor: an implied comparison (e.g., *John 15:5*)
  - Exaggeration (hyperbole): a purposeful exaggeration to emphasize something (e.g., *Matthew 23:24*)
  - Metonymy: using the name of one object or concept to refer to another (e.g., *Mark 1:5—“country” refers to the people not the location*)
  - Synecdoche: where the whole refers to the parts or the parts refer to the whole (e.g., *“the law” in the Old Testament can refer to the Ten Commandments, the Pentateuch [the first five books, the books of Moses], or the entire Old Testament*)
  - Personification: an object is given the characteristics or attributes of a person (e.g., *Isaiah 55:12*)
  - Irony: saying something opposite of what you mean (e.g., *1 Corinthians 4:8*)
  - Idioms: an expression that means something different than the individual words mean in the expression (*English Examples: it's raining cats and dogs, he's in a jam*,

*underdog, etc. // Bible Examples: lamp unto my feet, harden your hearts, white-washed tombs, a double-edged sword, etc.)*

## **PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

- What are the keywords in this paragraph? Should I do a word study on them?
- Is there any repetition of words, phrases, or concepts? (*repetition often shows importance or emphasis—e.g., “In Christ” shows up 30 times throughout Ephesians 1–3*)
- Is something stated generally or specifically? (*e.g., general: “I like desserts” ... specific: “I like chocolate cake”*)
- Are there questions asked ... or answers given? (*Note: sometimes you have a question without an answer, an answer with a presumed question, or both a question and its answer*)
- Is there dialogue? If so, who is speaking? Who are they speaking to?
- Is there a purpose statement given? (*e.g., John 20:31*)
- Is there a summary statement of a passage (*e.g., “so that” or “for this reason”*)
- What is the means by which something is accomplished? (*e.g., “in the power of the Spirit”*)
- Are there actions or roles of God or other people mentioned?
- Are there any emotional terms?
- What is the tone of the passage? (*e.g., affectionate, chiding, disciplinary, instructive, reproof, correcting*)
- Is there a sequence of events? (*this happened, then this happened*)
- Are there any symbols in the passage? (*a picture that represents something else—e.g., John 10:7*)

## **GRAMMAR QUESTIONS:**

- What can the grammar of the passage tell us? (*i.e., examine each word and its contribution to the whole—nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, direct objects, etc.*)
- Should I diagram this passage? (*remember 6th-grade sentence diagramming? Sometimes this can reveal how a passage breaks into its pieces*)

## **OTHER GREAT QUESTIONS AND THINGS TO LOOK FOR:**

- Is the passage prescriptive or descriptive? (*i.e., prescriptive: tells you what to do, a command | descriptive: tells what someone else did, narrative, story*)
- Is there a logical order or progression in the passage?
- What do we learn about God’s character and nature?
- What do we learn about people? (*e.g., character, nature, attitude, behavior, etc.*)
- What do we learn about how to relate with God and/or others?

- How would you describe the before and after of an event or encounter?
- How long did something take?
- Look for keywords
- Look for commands
- Look for warnings
- Look for comparisons (things that are alike)
- Look for contrasts (things that are different)
- Look for illustrations
- Look for causes and effects and reasons for doing things
- Look for promises and their conditions for fulfillment
- Look for progression from the general to the specific
- Look for progression from the specific to the general
- Look for steps of progression in a narrative or biography
- Look for results
- Look for advice, admonitions, and attitudes
- Look for connectives, articles, and prepositions
- Look for explanations
- Look for Old Testament quotes in the New Testament
- Look for paradoxes
- Look for emphasis through the use of space (proportion)
- Look for planned exaggerations or hyperboles
- Look for the use of the current events of the times
- Look for the force of the verbs
- Look for anything unusual or unexpected
- Look for anything that is emphasized
- Look for things that are related
- Look for things that are alike or unlike each other
- Look for things true to life



## APPENDIX SIX

# Bible study resources to help you observe

Visit many good books, but live in the Bible.

– Charles Spurgeon –

A Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't.

– Charles Spurgeon –

You don't need resources to study the Bible.

I know that's a funny way to start the appendix on Bible study resources, but before we talk about specifics, you really need to know that. You **don't** need to go out and spend money to study the Bible—you just need the Bible. Many people think Bible study is all about resources (see “struggle 4” in Appendix 4), and while I agree that resources are an incredible value and help, they do not replace Scripture itself.

I love using tools and resources to help me speed up and deepen my personal study of God's Word. But they aren't required. Yet, I'm still going to suggest you use them. Confused?

Let me explain. We live in an unprecedented time in history where we have more access to Scripture than ever before. Most of us walk around with dozens of Bible translations on our smartphones, have access to countless free tools online, and can access original language details with the push of a button. So while using resources are not necessary and the **Bible** should always be our primary resource to study the Bible, it would be foolish not to leverage the tools available to us.

Many of the resources are free online (my favorite is [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org)). And while I will mention a variety of tools and resources you could spend thousands of dollars buying, my suggestion is to start with the free stuff and build your library as you go, if it's needed.

I want to start with the five most important tools to use in Bible study. I will also talk about various other helpful resources, as well as give my favorite suggestion for Bible software (both free and paid).

## THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT TOOLS

Out of all the resources you can use, the five I recommend you start with are a Bible, a Bible dictionary, a concordance, cross-references, and an atlas.

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While I will give examples of resources in the categories below, my desire isn't to provide a complete list of recommendations but to introduce you to the types of resources. If you want specific suggestions, I encourage you to check out [deeperChristian.com/biblresources](http://deeperChristian.com/biblresources), a page I keep updated with my favorite recommendations, tools, and resources for studying the Bible.

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### 1. USE A GOOD “STUDY” BIBLE

What I mean is probably different than what you are thinking. Rather than buying a typical “study Bible” (where there are study notes below the biblical text), I suggest you create your own “study” Bible—while you read and study the Bible, write your own notes, cross-references, and other helpful insights in the margins.

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The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible  
is the religion of Christ's church.

– Leonard Ravenhill –

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Here are a couple of things to consider having in your own “study” Bible:

- A word-for-word Bible translation. When you study, you want to get as close to the original languages as possible. So start with a solid word-for-word translation.<sup>7</sup> I love to use the Legacy Standard Bible (LSB), but here are a few others I'd recommend: New American Standard Bible (NASB95), English Standard Version (ESV), Lexham English Bible (LEB), Modern English Version (MEV), King James Version (KJV), and New King James Version (NKJV). I also enjoy having the Amplified Bible nearby as a reference tool.
- A Bible without study notes or commentary at the bottom of the page. I've noticed that people who use traditional “study Bibles,” with commentary notes at the bottom of the page, lean on those notes rather than doing their own study. While these notes can be helpful for quick reference, they often distract, and people can unintentionally give the notes the same priority and authority as the actual words of Scripture. My suggestion is to have your

resources separate from your Bible (except for cross-references and translation notes that may come with a standard Bible).

- Invest a little extra and get better paper quality. Don't buy a pew Bible or a cheap paperback version—they fall apart too quickly. A Bible with good paper and a cover that will endure doesn't have to be expensive (I love imitation leather over the real stuff, and it's far cheaper).
- Wide margins (or a journaling Bible). While some people desire a nice “keepsake” Bible, I suggest you get a Bible you can use, mark up, and fill with notes. I can trace my spiritual journey through the various Bibles I've used. Typically I have to replace my Bible every couple of years because of use—and reviewing my notes reminds me of all God has done and taught me throughout my spiritual life. So a Bible with larger margins can be beneficial if you plan to write in it.

## 2. BIBLE DICTIONARIES & ENCYCLOPEDIAS

A Bible dictionary is like Webster's but focuses specifically on words and terms in Scripture.

When you come to a word or phrase, it is important to understand what it means (how often have you skipped over terms like *propitiation* or *justification* because you didn't know what they meant?).

Here are two examples of entries of the word “cistern,” the first from *Easton's Bible Dictionary* and the second from *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*.

**CISTERN**—the rendering of a Hebrew word *bor*, which means a receptacle for water conveyed to it; distinguished from *beer*, which denotes a place where water rises on the spot (Jer. 2:13; Prov. 5:15; Isa. 36:16), a fountain. Cisterns are frequently mentioned in Scripture. The scarcity of springs in Palestine made it necessary to collect rain-water in reservoirs and cisterns (Num. 21:22). (See WELL.) Empty cisterns were sometimes used as prisons (Jer. 38:6; Lam. 3:53; Ps. 40:2; 69:15). The “pit” into which Joseph was cast (Gen. 37:24) was a *beer* or dry well. There are numerous remains of ancient cisterns in all parts of Palestine.<sup>8</sup>

**CISTERN**—Translation of a Hebrew term that means “hole,” “pit,” or more often “well.” The difference between “cistern” and “well” often is not apparent. The innumerable cisterns, wells, and pools that exist in Palestine are evidence of the efforts of ancient people to supplement the natural water supply. The cistern of Palestine was usually a bottle or pear-shaped reservoir into which water could drain from a roof, tunnel, or courtyard. The porous limestone out of which the cisterns were dug allowed much of the water put into the cistern to escape. After 1300 B.C. cisterns began to be

plastered, which resulted in a more efficient system of water storage. The mouth of a cistern was sometimes finished and covered with a stone. Some cisterns have been found with a crude filter to trap debris. The biblical writers revealed that cisterns were used for purposes other than holding water. Joseph was placed in a “broken” cistern by his brothers (Gen. 37:20–29). The prophet Jeremiah was imprisoned in the cistern of Malchijah, King Zedekiah’s son (Jer. 38:6 NASB). In Jer. 14 the pagan gods were symbolized as broken cisterns that could not hold water. Cisterns also served as convenient dumping places for corpses (Jer. 41:7, 9). See *Waterworks; Wells*.<sup>9</sup>

That’s a lot of information, but reading through a Bible dictionary will help you understand how a word is used throughout Scripture and often give you further passages to track down on the word or topic.

### 3. CONCORDANCES

Most Bibles have a simple concordance in the back. A Bible concordance is a list of all the verses in Scripture using a specific word. These are specific to your Bible translation and can be helpful to quickly find a reference for a verse when you can only remember a word or two.

An exhaustive concordance is the expanded version of the one in the back of your Bible—usually containing all the references, not just the more popular verses.

When considering a concordance, note that there are two kinds: those based on English and those based on the original languages (i.e., Hebrew and Greek). For example, if you want to look up all the verses containing the word “love,” an English concordance will show you every reference in which the English word “love” is used, but it often does not clarify which of the four Greek words for love is used. Since the Greek gives a different nuance to each word, it can be helpful to search an exhaustive concordance that separates the word “love” into the four primary words in Greek (***agapē, phileō, eros, storge***).

Online or digital concordances are the best (often using Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance) because they allow for quick searching without having to flip pages and jump back and forth between the concordance and your Bible.

### 4. CROSS REFERENCES

You can find cross-references in many Bibles as a center column. Cross-references suggest other Bible passages that have to do with similar words or topics.

Whether or not your Bible has cross-references, I encourage you to create your own. When you encounter a passage linked to another in theme, topic, phrase, etc., write the reference in your Bible. I suggest going to both passages and writing the other reference so you have it in both places, creating a link between the two. That way, no matter which verse you come across later, you have a reference to the other one.

My cross-references are one of the few things I copy over when I get a new Bible—I love the links (cross-references) connecting words, concepts, topics, and phrases I have discovered over the years.

For example, in my Bible, I wrote the reference “Deut. 6:5” next to 2 Kings 23:25, which says of King Josiah, “Before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.” This passage quotes what the Jews call “The Shema” (Deuteronomy 6:4–5): “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” And to help give me an example of someone who lived “the greatest commandment,” I put the reference “2 Kgs 23:25” next to Deuteronomy 6:4–5.

If I turn to Deuteronomy 6:4–5 in my Bible, I’ll also see the references for: Matthew 22:36–40, Mark 12:28–31, Luke 10:25–37, Ecclesiastes 12:13—and the list keeps growing.

## 5. BIBLE ATLAS (MAPS)

A Bible atlas has become an indispensable tool in my Bible study. Don’t overlook the geography of the Bible—incredible insights are found when you see where the Bible happened.

While some Bibles may have a few maps in the back, a Bible atlas is an expanded resource with dozens (sometimes hundreds) of maps, charts, and graphics to help you understand the significance of geography in Scripture. Often broken up into locations, books of the Bible, or Biblical accounts, a Bible atlas is handy to look up locations, topography, and distances as you study God’s Word.

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Also consider aiding your understanding of Bible geography by going on an Israel Bible Study Tour. Unlike a tourist trip, a Bible study tour allows you to walk the land, experience the culture, and study the Bible on location with like-hearted believers. Learn more at [deeperChristian.com/israel](http://deeperChristian.com/israel) and consider joining me on the next study tour I lead ... yes, this is a shameless plug—but the trip will open up the Bible unlike you’ve ever seen and will profoundly impact your life. I’d love for you to join me!

## OTHER HELPFUL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

### BIBLE HANDBOOKS

A Bible handbook can be a great tool to help you gain a quick understanding of a book of the Bible (or a section of Scripture). Handbooks typically explain background information on the author, audience, and provide an overview of the purpose, main structure, key passages, and important topics of each book of the Bible.

My favorite handbook is *Talk Thru the Bible* (by Wilkinson and Boa). This is one of the few Bible resources (along with a Bible atlas) I love to have a print copy of to flip through and see the charts.

### LEXICONS

A lexicon is a dictionary for Hebrew and Greek words. They are more academic and technical than the Bible dictionaries mentioned above, often requiring a basic understanding of that language. These dictionaries are organized alphabetically in Hebrew or Greek and can be extremely helpful in understanding the original languages.

### GRAMMARS (FOR HEBREW AND GREEK)

If you are interested in learning Hebrew (Old Testament) or Koine Greek (New Testament), you'll need what is called a "grammar." Some good online classes and book suggestions are available on the recommended resource page online ([deeperChristian.com/bibleresources](http://deeperChristian.com/bibleresources)).

### COMMENTARIES

You may have wondered why I've waited till now to mention commentaries. I love a good commentary, but I've noticed far too many students of the Word rely almost exclusively upon commentaries and fail to actually study for themselves—they merely glean insights from others who have studied the Bible.

Commentaries are a way to ask someone, scholar or not, what a passage means. While their perspective may give insight or press on something that helps you wrestle with the text more deeply, they are still not a substitute for Scripture itself.

You must remember that **the Bible is its own best commentary!**

Every commentary is someone's study and interpretation of the Word. While these can be helpful (especially with understanding culture, history, and original languages), my suggestion is to wrestle

through the Biblical text yourself and use commentaries later in your study, so you don't rely upon their conclusions.

In other words, don't use commentaries to shortchange your own study of Scripture; use them to augment and deepen your own study.

As you look for commentaries, note there are two different styles of commentaries—what I will call “sermonic” and “academic.”

A sermonic commentary is typically a “commentary” comprised of someone's sermon, whether the actual transcript or a written version of the sermon (for example, commentaries compiled from the sermons of Charles Spurgeon, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, or Stephen Manley).

An academic commentary is often written by professors and scholars analyzing the passage in light of original language, grammar, structure, history, culture, geography, etc. These read differently than a sermon and sometimes require a basic grasp of Hebrew or Greek. Often more analytical, these types of commentaries usually don't give answers or conclusions as much as they help you understand the text so you can come to your own conclusions.

While sermonic commentaries can be beneficial for your personal devotional and spiritual life, if you plan to use commentaries, use academic ones in your study. You can use sermonic commentaries later in the study to deepen, augment, or discover potential missing concepts.

One final note about commentaries. Most people use commentaries from scholars from their own theological traditions. But it is helpful to gather a few different commentaries from a variety of theological perspectives (i.e., Reformed, Arminian, Pentecostal, etc.) or denominations (i.e., Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Wesleyan, etc.) so that you can better understand the tension points and come to an informed decision based on a variety of opinions and perspectives rather than just one scholar's conclusions. Though this approach takes more time to read and wrestle through, it helps you better understand the nuances and differing views of a passage.

In a nutshell ...

- Remember, the Bible is its own best commentary ... and you should use the Bible to interpret the Bible.
- If you use commentaries, use them later in your study process, so it gives you time to wrestle with the text before you seek someone's opinions,
- Lean toward academic commentaries over sermonic commentaries for your Bible study.
- Use a variety of commentaries to see perspectives, insights, and tension points.

- While a commentary series may look good on your shelf, not all commentaries within a series may be the best option for a particular book of the Bible. Rather than buy an entire series, pick and choose good commentaries for the book you are studying from different series. To find good commentaries on a specific book, consider using a resource like *An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry* by David Bauer, *The Pastor's Library* by Robert Yost, or [bestcommentaries.com](http://bestcommentaries.com)—all three give reviews of the best commentaries for each book of the Bible.

That being said, here are a few commentary series I've found particularly helpful (more suggestions are available at [deeperChristian.com/bibleresources](http://deeperChristian.com/bibleresources)).

- *The New International Commentary of the New Testament*
- *The New International Greek Testament Commentary*
- *Word Biblical Commentary* (requires a basic understanding of Hebrew or Greek)
- *New American Commentary*
- *Pillar New Testament Commentary*
- *Wiersbe's "Be" Series*

## ONLINE BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

Digital resources have transformed my personal Bible study time and have come in handy when traveling, quickly searching for something, or being able to copy/paste and follow ideas and concepts without having to turn pages.

Over the years, I've spent a lot of time on [BlueLetterBible.org](http://BlueLetterBible.org), but eventually saved my money and upgraded to Logos Bible Software.

If you're starting out, I suggest you use a free online resource like [BlueLetterBible](http://BlueLetterBible.org). It is amazingly comprehensive for being free, and its tools get better every year. If you'd like a simple overview of how to use [BlueLetterBible](http://BlueLetterBible.org) in your study, check out the free tutorial I put together at [deeperChristian.com/saturationbook](http://deeperChristian.com/saturationbook).

### **Logos Bible Software**

I've tried nearly all the major Bible study software over the years, and Logos is by far my favorite. I use it almost every day and what it allows me to do boggles my mind. Don't get me wrong, it's expensive, but personally, it's worth every penny.



My brother is a fantastic plumber. Over the years, he has spent thousands of dollars buying the tools and equipment he needed to do his job. Similarly, Bible study is one of my main focuses in ministry and one of my passions. So while friends have scoffed at the money I spent on Logos, for me, it's like my brother buying the necessary tools for his job.

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Funny note: years ago, my roommate got engaged at the same time I bought Logos, and we both spent the same amount of money that month—he bought a ring, and I bought Bible software. I guess we both had different priorities, haha.

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For most people who study the Bible, Logos is overkill—and I think 90% of people who study the Bible would find everything they need in a free tool like [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org). But if you want to take your study to another level, have access to great digital resources at a discounted price, and have everything indexed and searchable, Logos is what I recommend.

If I may geek out for another moment—one of the other reasons I love Logos, besides its powerful tools and features, is that I have the books by some of my favorite people available and searchable. I used to spend hours searching for quotes by Charles Spurgeon, A.W. Tozer, Andrew Murray, Oswald Chambers, the Puritans, and countless others. Now I have all their books in my software and can quickly search based on a word, topic, phrase, or Bible passage.

I have more information about Logos Bible Software, including a discount code (which gives you a discount off the cost and also helps support the ministry of deeperChristian in the process, at no additional cost to you) at [deeperChristian.com/bibleresources](http://deeperChristian.com/bibleresources).

## APPENDIX SEVEN

# Guided Observation Study

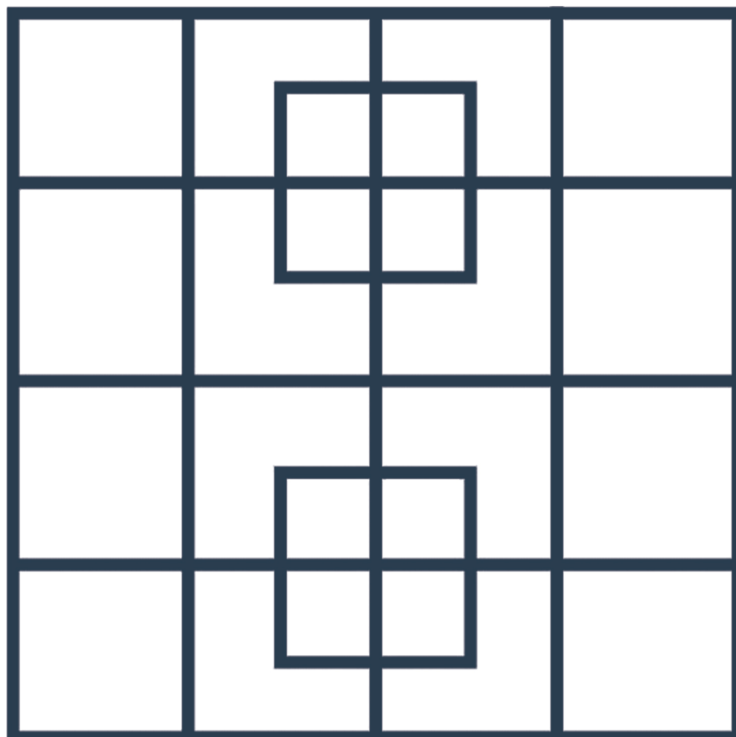
The one marvelous secret of a holy life lies not in imitating Jesus, but in letting the perfections of Jesus manifest themselves in my mortal flesh. Sanctification is “Christ in you.”... Sanctification is not drawing from Jesus the power to be holy; it is drawing from Jesus the holiness that was manifested in Him, and He manifests it in me.

– Oswald Chambers –

Welcome to your first guided study. These guided studies are designed to walk you step-by-step through the process of Bible study and help you practice the concepts throughout this book.

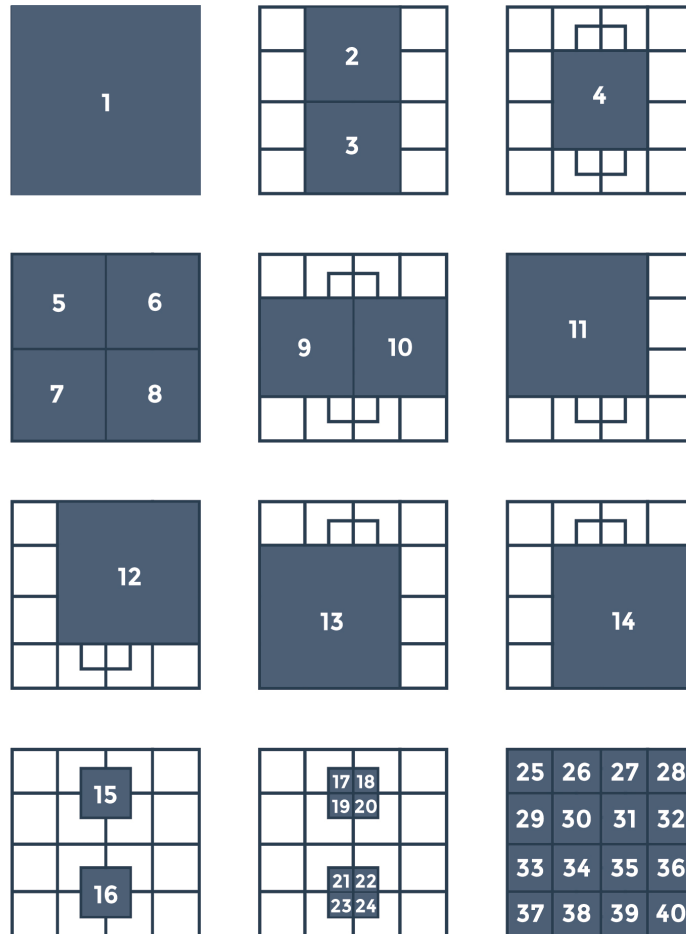
Since we spend the majority of our study time in the observation stage, where we peruse, pray, and ponder a passage, I want us to practically work through the process of observing a text. Again, the longer we spend time thinking and examining the passage, the more we will discover. Let me give you a classic example to show you what I mean.

Look at the following graphic. How many squares do you see?



Did you find 18? More than 25?

Perhaps surprisingly, there are 40 squares hidden in the graphic.



It's an illuminating lesson; the more you observe, the more you discover. This is also true with Bible study.

Remember that though the observation stage takes the longest of the four steps, there is no hurry. The goal of Saturation is to know Jesus and be transformed by truth—and we do that all throughout the process—so there is no rush.

While you could work through this guided study in a single sitting, I encourage you to go through this observation process over the next seven days. If you rush through the practical exercises below, you will have a good understanding of how to observe a text but miss the importance of saturating in it. Like meat in a marinade or a good cup of French Press coffee, take the time to soak in the passage. Again, we are not in a rush.

## FOCUS

We are going to examine Ephesians 1:4, within the context of Ephesians 1:3–14.

## BEFORE EACH DAY

Before you begin each day, start with prayer. Ask God to prepare your heart and give you insight into His Word. Invite Him into the study and declare your desire to know (ginōskō) Him more and be transformed by truth.

## DAY 1

When we observe a passage, the best place to start is reading and re-reading the passage. In your Bible, read Ephesians 1:1–14 a couple of times.

What is the “big picture” of what Paul is saying? What is a summary of these first fourteen verses of Ephesians?

Read Ephesians 1:4 in a variety of translations. As you read through each translation, note any similarities, differences, and initial insights you gleaned from the passage. Consider writing the verse down on a notecard (in your primary translation) and carry it with you throughout the day—pull it out, read the verse, and ponder what it says.

Today, don’t worry about doing anything specific; just read and re-read the text below.

**NASB** – ... just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love ...

**ESV** – ... even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ...

**NKJV** – ... just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love ...

**NIV** – For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ...

**NLT** – Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.

**LSB** – ... just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love ...

**AMP** – Even as [in His love] He chose us [actually picked us out for Himself as His own] in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy (consecrated and set apart for Him) and blameless in His sight, even above reproach, before Him in love.

## **DAY 2**

In the context of our passage (Ephesians 1:3–14), Paul gives an overview of the blessings we have in God. Every spiritual blessing is found in Christ Jesus because God is a blessed God who can't help but bless those He loves (see Ephesians 1:3).

After the general overview in verse three, Paul gets into the actual blessings in 1:4–14. While this is not a comprehensive list (there are many others listed throughout Scripture), Paul is explaining the “riches of His grace which He lavished on us” (1:7–8).

While I encourage you to eventually study all the blessings found in Ephesians 1, we want to focus on the first one Paul mentions in 1:4.

One of the aspects of Saturation is to continually keep a passage in mind and soak within it throughout the day. I encourage you to go back and read the entire section (Ephesians 1:3–14) in your Bible every day this week and focus specifically on verse four (read and reflect upon the verse over and over).

Examine Ephesians 1:4 and make a list of as many observations as you can find. Again, observations are anything you see in the text and key questions that help you dig deeper. Here are a few simple questions to get you started (consider using Appendix 5 for additional questions to ask):

- What are the main keywords in the passage?
- How would you summarize or write the passage in your own words?
- What is the key action in the passage? Who is doing the action (God, Paul, us, or someone else)?
- Where does the key action take place?
- Does Paul mention a time element for the main action (when it took place)?
- What is the purpose or result of the main action? Why is God doing the main action?

Take the passage with you throughout the day, reflect upon it, make observations, and ask God to give you wisdom and insight into it.

### DAY 3

One of the main keywords in the passage is the verb “chose.” Do a word study on what this word means in its original language (Greek). For a video tutorial on how to do a word study, visit [deeperChristian.com/saturationbook](http://deeperChristian.com/saturationbook).

Here is a summary of the word study I did:

#### **Chose**

Greek: **eklegomai**

Parsing: Verb, Aorist, Middle, Indicative, 3rd Person, Singular

Aorist Tense: often translated in the past tense but typically signifies a focus on the action and less on “when” it took place. In other words, don’t worry about when it happened; focus on what happened.

Indicative: a simple statement of fact

Etymology: from two root words: **ek** (from, out of) + **legō** (to say, speak, call)

Biblical Usage: to pick out, choose, to pick or choose out for one’s self

Occurs 22x in 20 verses in the NT

Key passages: Luke 6:13; 9:35; 14:7; John 15:16; Acts 1:2

Throughout the day, consider the concept of God choosing us. Reflect upon the word, its meaning, and look up key passages and see how the word is used in those other passages. What additional observations, insights, and thoughts do you have?

## **DAY 4**

Yesterday we spent time pondering the concept of God choosing us. Let's continue the reflection by examining where it takes place.

Notice Paul says that God chose us IN Him, speaking of Jesus. We are chosen in Christ! Paul uses the phrase "in Christ" throughout His writing to discuss the Christian's position. Just in the first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul uses a variety of that phrase thirty times (e.g., in Him, in Whom, in Christ).

We are not chosen apart from Christ—it is not because of who we are or what we have done (see Ephesians 2:8–10 and John 15:16). It is all because of Jesus, and we solely find our hope, salvation, security, joy, and life in Him. Our position is IN Christ.

There are so many promises and benefits of being IN Jesus! Though this is not a complete list, read through it and spend the day reflecting on what it means to be chosen IN Christ Jesus.

### ***When we are in Christ ...***

- We will bear much fruit (John 15:5)
- We will be made alive to God (Romans 6:11; 1 Corinthians 15:31)
- There will be no more condemnation hanging over our lives (Romans 8:1)
- We will be made free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2)
- Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39)
- We will have access to the Wisdom, the Righteousness, the Sanctification, and the Redemption of God (1 Corinthians 1:30)
- All the Promises of God will be "Yes" and "Amen" to us (2 Corinthians 1:20)
- Our spiritual lives will be established and anointed (2 Corinthians 1:21)
- We will be led forth in triumph (2 Corinthians 2:14)
- He will diffuse through our lives the fragrance of His knowledge in every place (2 Corinthians 2:14)
- The veil that shrouds our spiritual sight will be taken away (2 Corinthians 3:14)
- We will become new creations; all things will become new (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- The complexities of life will be made simple (2 Corinthians 11:3)
- We will from henceforth live by the power of God (2 Corinthians 13:4, Ephesians 1:19-20)
- We will have an astounding liberty to now do that which is right (Galatians 2:4)
- We will become sons of God (Galatians 3:26)
- We will be blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3)
- We will be chosen to be holy and without blame (Ephesians 1:4)
- We will obtain an inheritance (Ephesians 1:11)
- We will be made to sit with Him in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6)

- We will be made to know the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us (Ephesians 2:7)
- We will have works prepared beforehand for us to walk in (Ephesians 2:10)
- We will be brought intimately near into His very presence, and we will have boldness and confidence in our approach unto His Throne (Ephesians 2:13; 3:12)
- We will become the very temple of the Lord, the very dwelling place of God (Ephesians 2:21-21)
- We, the Gentiles, will become fellow heirs and partakers of the promises (Ephesians 3:6)
- We will know His Great Mystery that has been hidden for ages and generations (Ephesians 3:9-11; Colossians 1:26-27)
- We will have power to rejoice (Philippians 3:3)
- We will have a prize set before us of the upward call of God (Philippians 3:14)
- We will have access into all the fulness of God (Colossians 1:19; 2:9)
- We will be clothed in His Perfection (Colossians 1:28)
- All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge will be made available to us (Colossians 2:3)
- We will abound in thanksgiving (Colossians 2:7)
- We will be made complete (Colossians 2:10)
- We will be circumcised from the sins of the flesh (Colossians 2:11)
- We will have the promise of Life (2 Timothy 1:1)
- We will be given a holy calling (2 Timothy 1:9)
- We will be supplied an empowering grace (2 Timothy 1:9; 2 Timothy 2:1)
- We will have faith and love (2 Timothy 1:13)
- We will have salvation (2 Timothy 2:10)
- There will be no more darkness (1 John 1:5)
- The Love of God will be perfected in us (1 John 2:5)
- We will not be ashamed before Him at His coming (1 John 2:28)
- We will purify ourselves just as He is pure (1 John 3:3)
- We will not sin (1 John 3:6)
- Anything we ask according to His will, He will hear us (1 John 5:14)
- We will know Him (1 John 5:20)

## DAY 5

We are chosen IN Christ! Let's continue the reflection by observing when it took place. Paul says that it happened "before the foundation of the world."

The Greek word for "foundation" is **katabolē** which gives the idea of "laying down" or creating a foundation. Interestingly, of the eleven times it is used in the New Testament, it is always used in



reference to the world, except once in Hebrews 11:11 when it refers to Sarah being able to conceive by faith (katabolē is translated here as “conceive”).

The Greek word for “world” is **kosmos** (where we get the English word “cosmos”). It has a few meanings like “world,” “order,” or could refer to humanity or world affairs. But every time it is used in conjunction with the word katabolē (foundation), the context specifically refers to the created world.

Throughout the day, make a list of observations and implications of what it means for God to choose you BEFORE the “foundation of the world.”

To aid your reflection and observation, read Genesis 1:1–2:3; Jeremiah 1:4–5; Matthew 25:34; John 1:1–3; Colossians 1:13–20.

## **DAY 6**

Paul explains the reason why God chose us before the foundation of the world is so “that we would be holy and blameless before Him.”

Do a study on the words “holy” and “blameless.” Throughout the day, consider God’s desire for your life to be holy and blameless. What additional observations, biblical insights, and thoughts do you have on these two topics?

Here is a summary of the word studies I did:

### **Holy**

Greek: **hagios**

Etymology: comes from the idea of “pure, chaste, clear” and from the Hebrew concept of being set apart and unlike the world

Biblical Usage: most holy thing; saint; used to describe the Spirit of God (i.e., Holy Spirit)

Occurs 233x in the NT and 627x in the OT

Key passages: Exodus 3:5; 15:11; Luke 1:49; 2:23; Romans 12:1;

Interesting to note that while Paul usually uses the word for the “Holy Spirit” and “saints,” he also describes as holy: Scripture (Romans 1:2), Law (Romans 7:12), root (Romans 11:16), kiss (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26), the sanctuary of God (1 Corinthians 3:17; Ephesians 2:21), children (1 Corinthians 7:14), unmarried women (1 Corinthians 7:34), the Christian (Ephesians 1:4; Colossians 1:22, 3:12), apostles and prophets (Ephesians 3:5), the church (Ephesians 5:27), and God’s calling (2 Timothy 1:9).

## **Blameless**

Greek: **amōmos**

Etymology: from two Greek words meaning **a** (without, no) + **mōmos** (blemish) – (i.e., without blemish)

Biblical Usage: without blemish, faultless, blameless, without spot, unblameable

Occurs 9x in the NT and 78x in OT

Passages: Ephesians 1:4, 5:27; Philippians 2:15; Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 9:14;

1 Peter 1:19; Jude 1:24; Revelation 14:5, 18:13

Important to note that this word is used of Jesus as the perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 9:14 and 1 Peter 1:19) and used throughout the Old Testament for how animals had to be for sacrifice (see Exodus 12:5). Interesting to consider this concept in light of Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29; Acts 8:32–35; Romans 8:29; 1 John 4:17, etc.

## **DAY 7**

Go back and read Ephesians 1:1–14 and consider the significance of verse four in light of all the blessings Paul mentions. Is there any significance for Paul placing this one first?

Read through all your observations from the last seven days and write a summary statement of the observations for what Paul is saying about being chosen by God.

## APPENDIX EIGHT

# Guided Passage Study – Acts 1:8

We are going to take the six-stage path mentioned in chapter 13 and walk through Acts 1:6–8, focusing specifically on verse eight.

Here are a few reminders before we jump into the study:

1. There is no rush. Take your time throughout the study to think, review, and reflect upon the passage.
2. Saturate in the passage and take the study with you throughout the day. Consider writing the verses on a notecard and carrying it with you to think, ask questions, make observations, etc.
3. This study will likely take you a few days to go through (again, there is no pressure to rush). So before you start engaging with the passage each day:
  - 3a. Start with prayer. Ask God to prepare your heart and give you insight into His Word. Invite Him into the study and declare your desire to know (ginōskō) Him more and be transformed by truth.
  - 3b. Read the passage (Acts 1:6–8) multiple times and consider the larger context of Acts 1:1–11.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

1. **Bible** – I encourage you to have a physical Bible handy for these studies. While you could use online and digital resources, I've found reading and studying from a physical Bible changes the way I engage with the text. Use whatever primary translation you typically use (and if you are looking for a good translation, I encourage you to use a word-for-word translation such as: KJV, NKJV, NASB, LSB, ESV, CSB, etc.).
2. **Notebook or computer** – to record your observations and thoughts, use pen and paper, a computer or digital device, or a combination of both.

### 1. SELECT A PASSAGE

Ideally, we would select an entire book or long passage to study, but for the sake of this guided study, we will focus on Acts 1:8 and its surrounding context.

### 2. GET THE BIG PICTURE

*The 30,000-foot view*

## 2.1 – THE AUTHOR

*Who wrote the book?*

The author of Acts isn't explicitly mentioned, though in 1:1 he mentions, "The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach ..." If we search the Bible for "Theophilus," we discover it only appears twice (in Luke 1:3 and Acts 1:1). Based upon this and Christian tradition, we know Luke is the author of this two-volume book: Luke/Acts.

But what do we know about Luke? Read the following passages and record what you discover about him: Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 1:24. Also consider the "we" passages in Acts, where it is presumed Luke joined Paul in his ministry: Acts 16:10–17; 20:5–21:18; 27:1–28:16.

For more consideration, read this paragraph taken from the Bible handbook *Talk Thru the Bible*:

*Luke may have been a Hellenistic Jew, but it is more likely that he was a Gentile (this would make him the only gentile contributor to the New Testament). In Colossians 4:10–14, Paul lists three fellow workers who are "of the circumcision" (Col. 4:10–11) and then includes Luke's name with two Gentiles (Col. 4:12–14). Luke's obvious skill with the Greek language and his phrase "their own language" in Acts 1:19 also imply that he was not Jewish. It has been suggested that Luke may have been a Greek physician to a Roman family who at some point was set free and given Roman citizenship. ... Tradition also says that Luke was from Syrian Antioch, remained unmarried, and died at the age of eighty-four.*

*Suggested dates for the writing of Acts range from A.D. 62 to the middle of the second century. Twentieth-century archaeological discoveries have strikingly confirmed the trustworthiness and precision of Luke as a historian and show that his work should be dated in the first century. Luke's perplexingly abrupt ending with Paul awaiting trial in Rome has led many to believe that Acts was completed prior to Paul's trial (A.D. 62). If it was written after this crucial event, why didn't Luke mention the outcome? Luke may have had a reason, but the simplest explanation of his silence is that Paul had not yet stood before Caesar. Acts*

*gives no hint of the persecution under Nero (A.D. 64), Paul's death (A.D. 68), or the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70).<sup>10</sup>*

## **2.2 – THE AUDIENCE**

*Who was the author writing to?*

Read Acts 1:1 and Luke 1:1–4.

Note that “Theophilus” is a Greek name meaning “friend of God.” Many scholars presume Theophilus was the financial benefactor behind Luke's research and writing of the two-volume book of Luke/Acts.

## **2.3 – THE AUTHOR’S PURPOSE OF THE BOOK**

*What’s the point?*

Luke explains his two-volume book: “Many people have set out to write accounts about the events that have been fulfilled among us. They used the eyewitness reports circulating among us from the early disciples. Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also have decided to write an accurate account for you, most honorable Theophilus, so you can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught” (Luke 1:1–4, NLT).

Though the book may have been originally intended for Theophilus, it was circulated with the other Gospel accounts within the Early Church.

Stephen Manley says this about Luke and Acts having the same focus:

*Luke’s purpose for writing the Book of Acts is the same as his purpose for writing the Gospel of Luke, the truly former account. ... Luke writes one book, not two. He has the same purpose, and he uses the same style and thrust in each volume. Thus, there is no way to grasp the Book of Acts without first understanding the flow from the Gospel of Luke. What is the theme? This is the proposition. There is a divine God who is acting in redemptive ways. Every story, every circumstance, every scene is about a God activity thing.<sup>11</sup>*

## **2.4 – THE BACKGROUND**

*What's going on?*

Acts 1 picks up where Luke 24 leaves off. Read Luke 24:1–12, 36–53, and Acts 1:1–11. Notice that Acts begins with a summary and greater explanation of what is recorded at the end of Luke. Consider using the other Gospel accounts for more details.

Summarize the background and the overall context for Acts 1:1–11.

## **2.5 – THE GENRE**

*What's the category?*

The book of Acts is a historical account of what happened in the Early Church.

## **2.6 – OUTLINE OF THE PASSAGE**

*What is the structure?*

Typically, we'd want to create an outline of the entire book, but since our focus is on a smaller passage, read through Acts 1:1–11 multiple times and break it into several key sections. Make sure you name (title) each section.<sup>12</sup>

## 2.7 – MAJOR THEMES AND TOPICS

*What's it all about?*

The major theme of Acts is the movement and action of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the apostles and members of the Early Church.

Read through our passage (Acts 1:1–11) and record any repeated themes, topics, words, or phrases.

## 3. PRAY

Before engaging with the text, ask the Holy Spirit to give you insight, wisdom, and understanding into His Word.

I love using Ephesians 1:17–18 as a Bible study prayer—“God, give me a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of You. I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened ...”

Take the time before every study to:

- Consecrate your heart and mind
- Surrender your life and will
- Ask for wisdom, insight, and grace to understand
- Commit to obey His Word regardless of how difficult it may be
- Declare that you desire to know Him (not just information) and that you long for the Word to sanctify and transform your life so that you might be conformed to the image of Christ
- Ask for His involvement, grace, and enablement not only in the study but to live it out

## 4. READ IN LIGHT OF THE BIG PICTURE

Now that we've walked through the “big picture” of Acts, take the time to read through the entire book. While this will take some time, it will be helpful to see our passage (Acts 1:1–11) in light of the entire book. As you read, consider how the book illuminates, explains, and deepens our passage (and visa versa).

## 5. CHOOSE A SECTION OF VERSES TO STUDY

If we were to study the entire book of Acts, we'd start with the introduction (1:1–3) and move through the book section by section. However, for the rest of this guided study, we will narrow our focus of study to Acts 1:6–8, specifically verse eight.

## 6. ASK THE FOUR QUESTIONS

### 6.1 – WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY? (OBSERVATION)

Remember, the observation stage will take the longest amount of time. Don't feel rushed working through this section but take several days (or weeks) to work through the observations.

**6.1.1** – Start with reading Acts 1:6–8 in a variety of translations. As you do, notice differences between translations and key words that stand out to you.

**NASB** – So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

**ESV** – So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

**NKJV** – Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

**NIV** – Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

**NLT** – So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?” He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those



dates and times, and they are not for you to know. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

**LSB** – So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” But He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has set by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the end of the earth.”

**AMP** – So when they were assembled, they asked Him, “Lord, is this the time when You will reestablish the kingdom and restore it to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to become acquainted with and know what time brings [the things and events of time and their definite periods] or fixed years and seasons (their critical niche in time), which the Father has appointed (fixed and reserved) by His own choice and authority and personal power. But you shall receive power (ability, efficiency, and might) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends (the very bounds) of the earth.”

**6.1.2** – Examine verse six and, in your own words, summarize the central question the disciples are asking Jesus.

***Acts 1:6 – So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”***

Consider these quotes from three commentaries on this passage:

*"They thought Christ would restore the kingdom to Israel, that is, that he would make the nation of the Jews as great and considerable among the nations as it was in the days of David and Solomon, of Asa and Jehoshaphat; that, as Shiloh, he would restore the scepter to Judah, and the lawgiver; whereas Christ came to set up his own kingdom, and that a kingdom of heaven, not to restore the kingdom to Israel, an earthly kingdom."*<sup>13</sup>

*"Once we read the disciples' question against this [Old Testament prophetic background—Ezekiel 36–37; Isaiah 49:5–6], we realize that it is a legitimate question asked by Israelites in the presence of the resurrected Messiah—Israelites who have particular expectations about the future and who are now being confronted with that future. This background sheds great light on Jesus' response as well. The Lord does not rebuke the disciples for asking the question. He tells them that they do not or cannot know the time in familiar terms; only the Father knows the exact time. He redirects their question to the more important issue that focuses the disciples on a different idea of time. The disciples are thinking in regard to the consummation, the final establishment of the kingdom. They are also likely thinking of a decisive event. But Jesus directs them away from a specific day and instead focuses on the situation that exists as a result of his resurrection. The kingdom is being restored and will continue to be restored through the coming of the promised Holy Spirit, who will empower the disciples. The restoration begins now."*<sup>14</sup>

*"Israel at this time was under the political domination of Rome. Most Jews were unhappy with this situation and longed for the time that God would sovereignly intervene in fulfillment of the prophetic texts and remove these impure and arrogant Gentiles from power. The nation took matters into their own hands in A.D. 66 and inaugurated a war with the Roman forces that eventually led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. It appears that the disciples still did not completely understand the nature of this phase of the kingdom plan that Jesus was inaugurating. In fairness to them, however, we need to realize that they had not yet received the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. After Pentecost, there was no more misunderstanding about this issue."*<sup>15</sup>

What insight into the cultural context do these quotes give you into the mindset of the disciples?

Many scholars point out that the disciples were asking a cultural question. Because the Roman Empire had taken over the known world, the Jews during Jesus' day thought that when the Messiah came, He would free Israel from the Roman bondage and restore the nation to the glory days of David and Solomon. While the question is not bad, Jesus shifts their focus away from the political to the spiritual (in verses 7–8).

For additional insight into this cultural perspective, consider our passage in light of John 6:14–15.

**6.1.3** – Verse eight becomes the focal point of the entire section. Jesus, in essence, is answering the question the disciples should have been asking but didn't. Let's begin to observe the text from a variety of angles.

Start with making a list of observations you see in the verse and write down any questions you have.

**Acts 1:8 (ESV) – *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.***

**6.1.4** – The Holy Spirit is the central focus of verse eight. The power and witness come as a result of the Holy Spirit “coming upon you.” What do you know about the Holy Spirit? Make a list of everything you know about the Holy Spirit; use the verses below for additional help and insight.

» Genesis 1:2; Exodus 31:1–11; Psalm 139:1–24; Isaiah 11:1–16; Jeremiah 31:31–34; Ezekiel 36:26–27; 37:1–14; Joel 2:28–29; Matthew 3:11–17; 28:19–20; Luke 2:25–35; 4:18; 11:11–13; 24:49–53; John 3:1–4:26; 6:60–66; 7:37–39; 14:1–16:33; 20:19–25; Acts 2:1–4; 2:14–39; 4:5–12; 6:1–15; 10:17–11:30; 15:6–29; 19:1–10; Romans 5:1–5; 7:6; 8:1–30; 1 Corinthians 2:1–16; 3:5–17; 6:11,

19; 12:1–31; 2 Corinthians 1:15–2:2; 3:1–18; 5:1–8; 6:1–10; 13:11–14; Galatians 3:1–4:7; 5:1–26; 6:6–10; Ephesians 1:3–14; 2:18–22; 3:14–21; 5:15–21; 6:10–20; 1 Thessalonians 1:2–10; 1 Timothy 3:14–4:5; 2 Timothy 1:6–14; Titus 3:1–8; Hebrews 3:7–15; 6:1–8; 9:6–15; James 4:1–6; 1 Peter 1:1–12; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 2:20, 25–27; 3:24–4:16; 5:6–13.

6.1.5 – Word studies are important as they give you insight and depth into the meaning of a passage (the linguistic context). During your study, you can either look up any word you don't know or determine the main keywords in the passage and focus on those. In verse eight, there are two keywords we need to define: **power** and **witness**. Two additional word studies that could be helpful to examine (as they are the main verbs in the passage) are **you shall receive** and **you shall be**.

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For a tutorial on how to do word studies in a free online resource like [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org), visit [deeperChristian.com/saturationbook](http://deeperChristian.com/saturationbook).

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## **POWER**

Greek word: **dynamis**

Definition: strength, power, ability

Found 120x in NT

Translated (in KJV) as: power (77x), mighty work (11x), strength (7x), miracle (7x), might (4x), virtue (3x), mighty (2x)

Read through a variety of the 120 places the word **dynamis** shows up in the New Testament (giving specific focus to the verses in Acts, as it is our book of focus) and make a list of insights and observations you discover about how this word is used. For example, I notice that dynamis is often used as the type of power that is physically seen or demonstrated (for example: miracles)—in contrast to an inner or hidden strength/power.

## **WITNESS**

Greek word: ***martys***

Definition: a witness

Vine's Dictionary: where English gets its word "martyr" (one who bears "witness" by his death); denotes "one who can or does [declare] what he has seen or heard or knows"

Found 34x in NT

Translated (in KJV) as: witness (29x), martyr (3x), record (2x)

Read through a variety of the 34 places the word ***martys*** shows up in the New Testament (giving specific focus to the verses in Acts, as it is our book of focus) and make a list of insights and observations you discover about how this word is used. For example, I notice while this word can be used for someone who dies for their faith (what we typically think of when we hear the word "martyr"), it is also used for those who strongly believe something and stand resolutely for it.

## **YOU SHALL RECEIVE/YOU SHALL BE**

It is often important to examine the main verbs of a passage, as verbs drive the action in a sentence. In Acts 1:8 we have two main verbs (you shall receive and you shall be). Even if you don't know Greek or grammar, looking at the "parsing" (grammatical parts) of a verb can help you determine what is going on in the passage.

**You shall receive** (Greek: ***lambanō***)

Speech: Verb

Tense: Future (this will happen in the future)

Voice: Middle

Mood: Indicative (a simple statement of fact)

Person: 2nd Person

Number: Plural (the entire group, not a specific individual)

**You shall be** (Greek: **eimi**)

Speech: Verb

Tense: Future (this will happen in the future)

Voice: Middle

Mood: Indicative (a simple statement of fact)

Person: 2nd Person

Number: Plural (the entire group, not a specific individual)

Notice both of these main verbs have the same tense, voice, mood, person, and number. Jesus is saying that when the Holy Spirit comes (in the future—which we know is at Pentecost in Acts 2) upon the group (“plural” – speaking of the group, not an individual), they will receive power and be witnesses (a simple statement of fact—this isn’t a possibility but a certainty).

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Also note there is seemingly a third verb in the passage “has come upon.” But further investigation into its parsing, we discover that the “mood” of the Greek word **eperchomai** is a “participle”—meaning though it appears as a verb, it will function (typically) as a noun or adjective. Young’s Literal Translation renders it: “at the coming of the Holy Spirit upon you.”

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**6.1.6** – As we examined, the historical event of Pentecost, which Jesus promised with the coming of the Holy Spirit, was in the future for the disciples (between 7–10 days). Yet, we can look at the historical context of this event and better understand what Jesus refers to.

- Pentecost comes from the Greek word *pentēkostē*, meaning “fiftieth” (fifty days after Passover)
- What can you discover about Pentecost from Acts 2:1–4 and Peter’s explanation of what happened (see Acts 2:5–47)?
- What else is this event called? (see Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33)
- How does the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost compare to and fulfill the first Pentecost (also called the Feast of Weeks or the Feast of Harvest ... celebrating the giving of the Law)? See Exodus 19:16–20; 23:16; 32:28; 34:22–23; Leviticus 23:15–21; Deuteronomy 4:10–13; 16:16–17.

**6.1.7** – The geographical context is a primary focus in this passage. Jesus refers to four key geographical locations. See what you can discover about each (biblically and geographically), how they are related, and consider what significance these four locations have in the context of Jesus talking with His disciples. Consider using an online Bible dictionary (like [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org)) and atlas.

***Jerusalem***

***Judea***

***Samaria***

***Ends of the Earth***

**6.1.8** – Are there any other observations, questions, or insights you can glean from our passage? Consider using the “what to look for” list in Appendix 5.

**6.1.9** – After making your list of observations, it is sometimes helpful to consult commentaries and other Bible resources to see if there are any additional insights you missed or ideas that spark more observations. Resources can also help you find answers to unresolved questions.

Remember that commentaries are not Scripture, and you need to be discerning while reading them; as such, it can help to use resources from multiple theological perspectives so you can wrestle with the text and come to a conclusion yourself.

Consider examining several free commentaries on Acts 1:8 in an online resource (like [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org)). I’ve also given several quotations below from other commentaries I’ve paid for (in no particular order). Highlight or summarize your discoveries.



*The locations mentioned in this verse represent a geographical broadening in scope of the apostles' mission, from Israel's capital, to the land of Israel, and to the entire world. This also reflects the structure of the book of Acts: The Church spreads in Jerusalem (chs. 1–7), in Judea and Samaria (ch. 8), and to the surrounding nations (chs. 9–28). Compare Isa 49:6.<sup>16</sup>*

*An Old Testament prophet had called the people of Israel to be God's witnesses in the world (Isa. 43:10; 44:8); the task which Israel had not fulfilled was taken on by Jesus, the perfect Servant of the Lord, and shared by him with his disciples. The close relation between God's call to Israel, "you are my witnesses," and the risen Lord's commission to his apostles, "you will be my witnesses," can be appreciated the more if we consider the implications of Paul's quotation of Isa. 49:6 in Acts 13:47. There the heralds of the gospel are spoken of as a light for the Gentiles, bearing God's salvation "to the end of the earth"; here "the end of the earth" and nothing short of that is to be the limit of the apostolic witness.<sup>17</sup>*

*you will be witnesses to me. This statement sums up the main theme of Acts; the apostles are to give testimony to all peoples about what Jesus "did and taught" (1:1), in effect, about the Word of God that he preached: "In his name repentance for the forgiveness of sins shall be preached to all the nations—beginning from Jerusalem! You are witnesses of this!" (Luke 24:47–48). It must now spread abroad through such testimony borne by Jesus' followers, first of all by apostles, but then by others; they are all to become ministers of the Word, empowered by his Spirit. Testimony thus becomes a literary theme in Acts, reappearing in 1:22; 2:32; 3:15; 4:20, 33; 5:32; 8:25; 10:39, 41; 13:31; 18:5; 20:21, 24; 22:15, 18, 20; 23:11; 26:16; 28:23.<sup>18</sup>*

*The sphere of the apostolic witness was to be 'in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth'. Jesus echoes the words and concepts of Isaiah 49:6, especially with the phrase to the ends of the earth. 'Rather than sinking roots in Jerusalem and waiting for the world to flood in, Jesus' followers are to move out from Jerusalem, through Judea and Samaria, and ultimately "to the ends of the earth".' More of this text is quoted in Acts 13:47, as a justification for Paul's ministry among the Gentiles, and it is alluded to in Luke 2:32; Acts 26:23, and possibly 28:28. 'The promise of God's reign is not simply the restoration of the preserved of Israel, but the renewal of the vocation of Israel to be a light to the nations to the ends of the earth.' Acts 1:8 is a prediction and promise of the way this divine plan will be fulfilled, rather than a command. The rest of the book shows how it happened, first in Jerusalem (chap. 2–7), then in all Judea and Samaria (chap. 8–12), and then to the ends of the earth (chap. 13–28). However, Rome is not the ultimate goal of this mission, even though Acts finishes with Paul's ministry in that city.<sup>19</sup>*

*Jewish people often viewed Jerusalem as the world's center; Luke's first volume begins and ends there, but his second volume progresses from Jerusalem to Rome. Many in Luke's world thought of Spain as the western end of the earth, Ethiopia (8:27; cf. Lk 11:31) as the southern end, and knew of the east as far as China. Although Acts climaxes with the gospel reaching the heart of the empire, Luke's immediate world, "the ends of the earth" looks beyond this to all peoples (e.g., Isa 45:22; 52:10).<sup>20</sup>*

*One of the great gifts of Pentecost is that all believers can now speak for God (2:14–21). In a sense all believers are prophets. No believer is a mere fan but a player! The apostles certainly led the church, but the gospel advanced largely through the words and deeds of unordained and uneducated people—informal missionaries. The church today, in fact, desperately needs to recover this practice. The only difference in a believer sitting in his or her American home and a foreign missionary on the field is location, not identity. Every Christian is a missionary. And so each of us should ask, Where do I serve? To whom do I minister?<sup>21</sup>*

*The first element of the risen Lord's promise is 'you will receive power' (lēmpeste the dynamin), and the qualifying clause explains that this will happen 'when the Holy Spirit comes on you' (epelthontos tou hagious pneumatou eph' hymas; cf. Lk. 24:49). The Holy Spirit's 'coming' is not continuous but definitive (the context so delimits the aorist participle epelthontos to show that the meaning is temporal and punctiliar here), though clearly the Spirit is available at any time after Pentecost for those who repent and are 'baptized in the name of Jesus Christ' (2:38). In the light of v. 5, this coming of the Spirit upon the apostles must be equivalent to being baptized with the Holy Spirit (cf. 2:4 note).<sup>22</sup>*

## **6.2 – What did the passage mean to the original audience? (Interpretation)**

So what? This is the time when we consider the interpretation of the passage. How do we understand all our observations in light of the original audience?

Go back and reread your observations, questions, and discoveries. Consider them in light of the context of Jesus giving His final words to His disciples prior to His ascension. What was Jesus telling the disciples, and how would they have understood what He said?

Write out a summary of what the passage meant to the original audience. What is the key concept (“truth nugget”)?

### **6.3** – How does the interpretation connect with the rest of Scripture? (Connection)

Take the main concept you summarized in 6.2 and ask these three questions:

1. Are there any verses in Scripture that seem to contradict the main concept of the passage I am studying? If so, how do I reconcile my understanding of Acts 1:8 with those passages?
2. Are there any verses that can help refine my understanding of the passage I am studying? Cross-references are sometimes helpful for this.
3. How is this concept expressed, illustrated, or expanded in both the Old and New Testaments?

### **6.4** – What does it change in my life? (Application)

As mentioned, we must apply the truth of God's Word to our lives if we want to be changed. Look back at the summary of your key concept. How can you apply the truth principle to your life? Here are some key questions to consider—don't be general; the more specific you are, the better.

- So what? What does it change in my life?
- What specific changes need to happen for me to live and apply this passage in my life?
- How does this concept apply personally to my life (my emotions, marriage, work, free time, family, thought life, etc.)?
- How will I obey and bring about those changes (by God's grace and enablement)?
- What is the one verse to commit to memory (that sums up the concept of the passage I studied)?
- What illustration can I create to remind me of the passage and the concept?
- How can I take this passage and concept and turn it into a personal prayer of surrender unto God?

Before and after you ask the questions, spend time in prayer and ask God:

- to reveal and teach you how you can apply the truth to your life
- to give you the grace to obey
- to busy His Word in your heart and enable it to bear fruit
- to take the information of His Word and allow it to radically transform your life

## APPENDIX NINE

# Guided Topical Study – Humility

We will take the nine-step path mentioned in chapter 14 and examine what the Bible says on the topic of humility. Remember, there is no rush. Take your time throughout the study to think, review, and reflect upon the topic.

### 1. CHOOSE A TOPIC

Humility.

### 2. PRAY

Before you engage in the Word, ask the Holy Spirit to give you insight, wisdom, and understanding into His Word.

Take the time before every study to:

- Consecrate your heart and mind
- Surrender your life and will
- Ask for wisdom, insight, and grace to understand
- Commit to obey His Word regardless of how difficult it may be
- Declare that you desire to know Him (not just information) and that you long for the Word to sanctify and transform your life so that you might be conformed to the image of Christ
- Ask for His involvement, grace, and enablement not only in the study but to live it out

### 3. WHAT DO YOU ALREADY KNOW? WHAT ASSUMPTIONS ARE YOU MAKING?

Before we look at what Scripture says about humility, what do you already know? What assumptions do you come to the topic with? Write down everything you can think of about humility and what you remember Scripture saying about it.

## **4. LOOK IT UP AND WRITE IT DOWN**

One of the best ways to start a topic study is to use a concordance to look up words, phrases, and synonyms for your topic.

### **4a. Make a List of Verses**

Go to an online resource like [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org) and type in words for humility (humility, humble, lowliness, meekness, etc.). Make a list of all the verses you find with the concept of humility.

Because Hebrew and Greek words can have several English translations, it is often helpful to find a key passage in the Old and New Testaments and look up what the Hebrew or Greek word is, how it is translated, and where else in Scripture that word is used.

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For an example of how to do this in [blueletterbible](http://blueletterbible.org), please visit  
[deeperChristian.com/saturationbook](http://deeperChristian.com/saturationbook).

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### **4b. Read and Make Observations**

Read through the verses you found and make a list of insights, thoughts, and summaries of what you discover. Remember to read the verses in their context (the surrounding passages).

For example, Philippians 2:3–4 says, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.” A few simple observations we can make are:

- Nothing in our lives should be done from selfishness or “empty conceit” (also translated as “vainglory” or “trying to impress others”—i.e., pride).
- A key aspect of humility is to regard one another as more important than oneself.
- Another key aspect of humility is to be more interested in the needs of others than my own.

#### **4c. Word Studies**

Understanding the topic in its original context is important. Go back and find a few key passages, look up the word, and discover what it means.

To help you work through some of the keywords, here is what one Bible resource says about the different terms used for humility in Scripture:

In the OT, Hebrew ענה ('nh) carries the basic sense of “to crouch” or “to bend low to the ground”—either to express submissiveness or to metaphorically describe one’s impoverished condition. Some forms of the verb ענה ('ānâ) signify being made low or humble by outside forces, while other forms signify humiliating other people. The nouns עני ('ānâw, “bowed, afflicted, humble”) and ענייה ('ānâwâ, “humility”) refer to humble or meek conditions. There is also a related adjective עני ('ānî, “poor, afflicted, humble”), which has a wide range of applications—spiritual, physical, and mental.

Several words in the Greek NT convey the idea of humility or modesty of character. There is a key family of related words: the adjectives ταπεινός (tapeinos; “lowly, humble”) and ταπεινόφρων (tapeinophrōn; “humble”), the verb ταπεινώνω (tapeinoō; “to humble, lower”), and the nouns ταπεινοφροσύνη (tapeinophrosynē; “humility”) and ταπείνωσις (tapeinōsis, “humiliation”). Most of these terms may carry spiritual or physical connotations. Additionally, when the Greek word μικρός (mikros, “small, little”) is used in a spiritual sense, it refers to a state of humility.<sup>23</sup>

Do your own word studies on a few of the main words used until you have a good understanding of what humility means, based on the definition and on where it is used in Scripture.

#### **4d. Examine the Opposite**

In studying a topic, it is also helpful to consider examining passages that talk about the opposite of the topic—in our study, it would be pride and selfishness. Do a basic search and write down what the Bible says about pride.

Make sure you examine: Psalm 5:1–12; Proverbs 16:18–19; Jeremiah 9:23–24; Matthew 23:1–36; Luke 18:9–14; Romans 1:18–2:24; 12:9–21; 1 Corinthians 1:26–31; 13:1–13; 2 Timothy 3:1–9; Titus 1:5–9; James 3:1–4:17; 1 Peter 5:5–11; 2 Peter 2:4–11 (especially in light of Ezekiel 16:49–50); 1 John 2:15–17.

What do these verses and others you found on pride help you understand our topic of humility?

### **5. SUMMARIZE CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES**

Organize and summarize your study into central concepts and principles. What sub-themes does the Bible give for humility?

For example, you may want to organize your passages and insights based on how the Bible defines humility, how to live it, how Jesus lived and demonstrated humility, the blessings if you are humble, and the warning against those who don't.

However you organize the material, read through and group your insights together so you can see patterns, emphasis, etc. Note: this is easier to do digitally as you can copy and paste your findings into concepts and themes.

Once finished, go back and summarize each of the concepts and sub-themes for quick reference.



For example, as an overarching summary of what I've discovered so far in Scripture, humility is not about personality, quietness, or thinking I have little value. Instead it has more to do with getting my mind off myself. Pride, the opposite of humility, is about self-focus, self-accomplishment, self, self, self. So to walk in humility doesn't mean I lack value (Jesus bought me with a price), but it does mean I stop focusing on myself. I embrace and clothe myself with humility (see 1 Peter 5:5) while allowing the Spirit of God to do a transformative work in my life so that I quit worrying about what others think and be willing to take the lowest place. Humility is about keeping my focus on Christ and seeing myself in light of Him and the standard He has called me to in His Word—in short, I desperately need Jesus and His grace in my life.

## **6. ASK QUESTIONS AND KEEP WRESTLING**

Though we have organized the material, are there any lingering questions you have on humility? Are there any passages of Scripture that appear to challenge or contradict what you are discovering about humility? Search Scripture and wrestle with any questions or tensions and come to a biblical conclusion.

## **7. CLARIFY AND SIMPLIFY**

Define and summarize the topic of humility as simply as possible in a single paragraph (preferably no more than a page).

To take this a step further, consider reducing the summary paragraph into a concise sentence that gives the fundamental concept. How would you explain the topic to someone if you only had one sentence?

## 8. CHECK

Before you finish, consider exploring the topic of humility in a Bible dictionary or other Bible resource to “check your work” and give additional insights you may have missed. If your understanding of humility is vastly different from the resource, go back and re-examine the topic. If there are slight differences, use the resource to help push back on your study and think it through on another level.

Remember, we are not trying to prove our point or preference. Instead, we desire to know what God’s Word says on humility so we can submit our understanding and lives to His truth.

Here are a few helpful insights from resources I examined.

### ***Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary***

**HUMILITY** *The personal quality of being free from arrogance and pride and having an accurate estimate of one’s worth.*

**Old Testament** *The OT connects the quality of humility with Israel’s lowly experience as slaves in Egypt—a poor, afflicted, and suffering people (Deut. 26:6). The Hebrew word translated as humility is similar to another Hebrew word meaning “to be afflicted.” In OT thought, humility was closely associated with individuals who were poor and afflicted (2 Sam. 22:28).*

*What God desires most is not outward sacrifices but a humble spirit (Ps. 51:17; Mic. 6:8). Such a humble spirit shows itself in several ways: a recognition of one’s sinfulness before a holy God (Isa. 6:5), obedience to God (Deut. 8:2), and submission to God (2 Kings 22:19; 2 Chron. 34:27).*

*The OT promised blessings to those who were humble: wisdom (Prov. 11:2), good tidings (Isa. 61:1), and honor (Prov. 15:33).*

*The experience of many kings indicated that those who humble themselves before God will be exalted (1 Kings 21:29; 2 Kings 22:19; 2 Chron. 32:26; 33:12–19). Those who*

do not humble themselves before God will be afflicted (2 Chron. 33:23; 36:12). The pathway to revival is the way of humility (2 Chron. 7:14).

**New Testament** Jesus Christ's life provides the best example of what it means to have humility (Matt. 11:29; 1 Cor. 4:21; Phil. 2:1–11). Jesus preached and taught often about the need for humility (Matt. 23:12; Mark 9:35; Luke 14:11; 18:14). He urged those who desired to live by kingdom standards to practice humility (Matt. 18:1; 23:12).

The person with humility does not look down on others (Matt. 18:4; Luke 14:11). Humility in the NT is closely connected with the quality of gentleness (Matt. 5:5). While God resists those who are proud, He provides grace for the humble (James 4:6). Primary in the NT is the conviction that one who has humility will not be overly concerned about his or her prestige (Matt. 18:4; 23:12; Rom. 12:16; 2 Cor. 11:7).

Paul believed that quality relationships with other people, especially those who had erred spiritually, hinged on the presence of gentleness or humility (1 Cor. 4:21; Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:25). The NT affirms, as does the OT, that God will exalt those who are humble and bring low those who are proud (Luke 1:52; James 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:6). The Greek world abhorred the quality of gentleness or humility, but the Christian community believed these qualities were worthy (2 Cor. 10:18; Col. 3:12; Eph. 4:2).<sup>24</sup>

### **Easton's Bible Dictionary**

[Humility is] a prominent Christian grace (Rom. 12:3; 15:17, 18; 1 Cor. 3:5–7; 2 Cor. 3:5; Phil. 4:11–13). It is a state of mind well pleasing to God (1 Pet. 3:4); it preserves the soul in tranquillity (Ps. 69:32, 33), and makes us patient under trials (Job 1:22).

Christ has set us an example of humility (Phil. 2:6–8). We should be led thereto by a remembrance of our sins (Lam. 3:39), and by the thought that it is the way to honour (Prov. 16:18), and that the greatest promises are made to the humble (Ps. 147:6; Isa. 57:15; 66:2; 1 Pet. 5:5). It is a “great paradox in Christianity that it makes humility the avenue to glory.”<sup>25</sup>

### **Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary**

The concept of humility shades off in various directions, but the central thought is freedom from pride—lowliness, meekness, modesty, mildness. There is a “false humility” (Col. 2:18, 23; NRSV, “self-abasement”). God humbles people to bring them to obedience (Deut. 8:2). To humble ourselves is a condition of God's favor (2 Chr. 7:14) and his supreme requirement (Mic. 6:8). God dwells with the humble (Isa. 57:15). Humility is encouraged (Prov. 15:33; 18:12; 22:4). To the Greeks humility was weak and despicable, but Jesus made it the cornerstone of character (Matt. 5:3, 5; 18:4; 23:12; Lk. 14:11; 18:14). Jesus by his humility drew people to himself (Matt. 11:28–30; Jn. 13:1–20; Rev. 3:20). PAUL emphasized the

humility of Jesus (2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:1–11), commanded us to be humble toward one another (Rom. 12:10; 1 Cor. 13:4–6; Phil. 2:3–4), and spoke of himself as an example (Acts 20:19). PETER exhorted humility before the brethren and before God (1 Pet. 5:5–6).<sup>26</sup>

### **Dictionary Of Biblical Imagery**

The terminology for humility appears nearly a hundred times in the Bible, referencing multiple meanings. Humility reflects godly character (Ps 45:4)—even Jesus was humble (Mt 11:29). It is also associated with wisdom (Prov 11:2; Jas 3:13) and meekness (Job 8:7; Zeph 3:12). Paradoxically, the humble deserve honor (Prov 15:33; 18:12) and the humbled will be exalted (Mt 23:12; also Lk 14:11).

The humble are known for their fear of the Lord (Prov 22:4) and their righteousness (Num 12:3; Zeph 2:3; Acts 20:19; Phil 2:3), but false humility comes from the ungodly, who have no place in heaven (Col 2:18, 23). Believers are commanded to assume humility before everyone (Phil 2:3; Titus 3:2) and especially to humble themselves before God (Ex 10:3; Prov 6:3; Mt 18:4; Jas 4:10). They are even to be clothed with humility (Col 3:12; 1 Pet 5:5). Often humility comes in the form of testing or discipline (Deut 8:2; 1 Kings 11:39).

Humility is always the proper posture before God and others; by contrast, humiliation is never seen as a virtue in Scripture. On the contrary, it is often a punishment brought on by God (Mal 2:9; Lk 13:17) or one's own doing (Prov 25:7; Lk 14:9). Humiliating others is a sin (1 Cor 11:22).<sup>27</sup>

### **Lexham Theological Wordbook**

In both the OT and NT, humility is important for establishing a proper relationship with God, with others, and with oneself (e.g., Prov 22:4; Jas 4:10). The act of bowing low to the ground expresses submissiveness and thus is associated with the virtue of humility. Humility is often listed with righteousness to portray a more complete image of the essential virtues (e.g., Psa 45:4). Humility before God can be expressed through fasting (Lev 23:29).

The prophet Zechariah presents the coming Messiah King as humble (Zech 9:9; Matt 21:4–5). In the great invitation, Jesus characterizes himself as gentle and humble (*tapeinos*) in order to encourage others to come to him (Matt 11:27–29). Jesus demonstrates his humility by submitting to the Father's will, especially in the garden of Gethsemane, where he prayed that the Father's will be done (e.g., Luke 22:40–46). The ultimate act of humility is Christ's submission to the crucifixion (Phil 2:6–8); his humility serves as an example for every Christian to emulate (Phil 2:1–5).

Humility as a state of being appears in a variety of ways. Individuals or nations may be humbled or afflicted by God as a punishment for sin (e.g., Deut 8:2; 1 Kgs 8:35) or as an

*encouragement for spiritual development (Psa 119:71). Humility may involve unfavorable conditions characterized by afflictions (Psa 119:107), poverty (Jas 1:9), or even imprisonment (Judg 16:5–19). Humility therefore has both positive and negative connotations. On one hand, a humble spirit produced by divine action, by one's initiative, or by another's action may be a profitable and enriching condition, but on the other hand, consequences that one may experience by oppressive powers, by the sinful actions of others, or by difficult social conditions may be more humiliating than helpful.<sup>28</sup>*

## **9. APPLY**

I've repeatedly stated that Bible study is not for information but for transformation. When you finish your study, spend time and allow the Holy Spirit to examine your life and reveal any area that needs to change. Don't merely esteem the Word, be changed by it (see John 17:17).

According to Scripture, can your life be described as "humble"? If not, what needs to change? How can you walk in greater humility today?

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments*, rev. ed. (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1963), 88.

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to Tim Mackey of the Bible Project for the term “Jewish meditation literature.” For more on this idea and see several examples of major themes and threads of thought that become apparent upon multiple readings of Scripture, see the bonus resources for this book at: [deeperChristian.com/saturationbook](http://deeperChristian.com/saturationbook).

<sup>3</sup> W. T. Purkiser, *Exploring the Old Testament* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1955), 48–49.

<sup>4</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, Second Edition*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 85.

<sup>5</sup> Rob Bell, *Velvet Elvis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), pp. 22, 27.

<sup>6</sup> John Wesley, *Sermons, on Several Occasions* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999), preface.

<sup>7</sup> If you are interested in understanding the difference between a word-for-word translation and a paraphrase (and why you should study from a word-for-word translation), I have an entire article you can read at: [deeperChristian.com/saturationbook](http://deeperChristian.com/saturationbook).

<sup>8</sup> M. G. Easton, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary and Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893), 149.

<sup>9</sup> James Newell, “Cistern,” ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 300–301.

<sup>10</sup> Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, *Talk Thru the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1983), 327, 352.

<sup>11</sup> Stephen Manley, *Acts 1 Commentary* (Lebanon, TN: Cross Style Press, 2015), 3–4.

<sup>12</sup> Here is my outline of our passage. Yours likely will look different but have a good reason for why you divided the passage as you did, or go back and reconsider your division points.

1:1–3 The Introduction

1:4–8 The Commission

1:9–11 The Ascension

<sup>13</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2063.

<sup>14</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr. and Brian J. Vickers, *John–Acts*, ed. Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar, vol. IX, *ESV Expository Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 337.

<sup>15</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, *Acts*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold, vol. 2B, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 9.

<sup>16</sup> John D. Barry et al., *Faithlife Study Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Ac 1:8.

<sup>17</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts, The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 36.



<sup>18</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, *Anchor Yale Bible* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 206.

<sup>19</sup> David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 112.

<sup>20</sup> Craig S. Keener and John H. Walton, eds., *NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 1867.

<sup>21</sup> Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Acts* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2017), 10–11.

<sup>22</sup> David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 110.

<sup>23</sup> G. Scott Gleaves, “Humility,” ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook, Lexham Bible Reference Series* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> Gary Hardin, “Humility,” ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 792–793.

<sup>25</sup> M. G. Easton, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary and Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893), 340.

<sup>26</sup> Moisés Silva, J. D. Douglas, and Merrill C. Tenney, eds., “Humility,” *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 632.

<sup>27</sup> Leland Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 407.

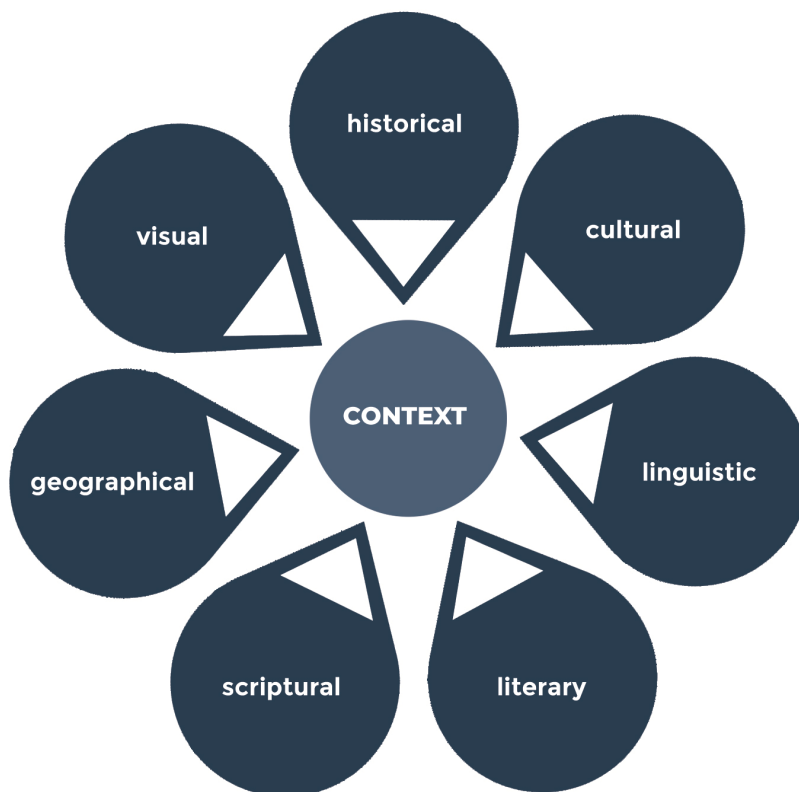
<sup>28</sup> G. Scott Gleaves, “Humility,” ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook, Lexham Bible Reference Series* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

# SATURATION BIBLE STUDY

GRAPHICS IN BOOK

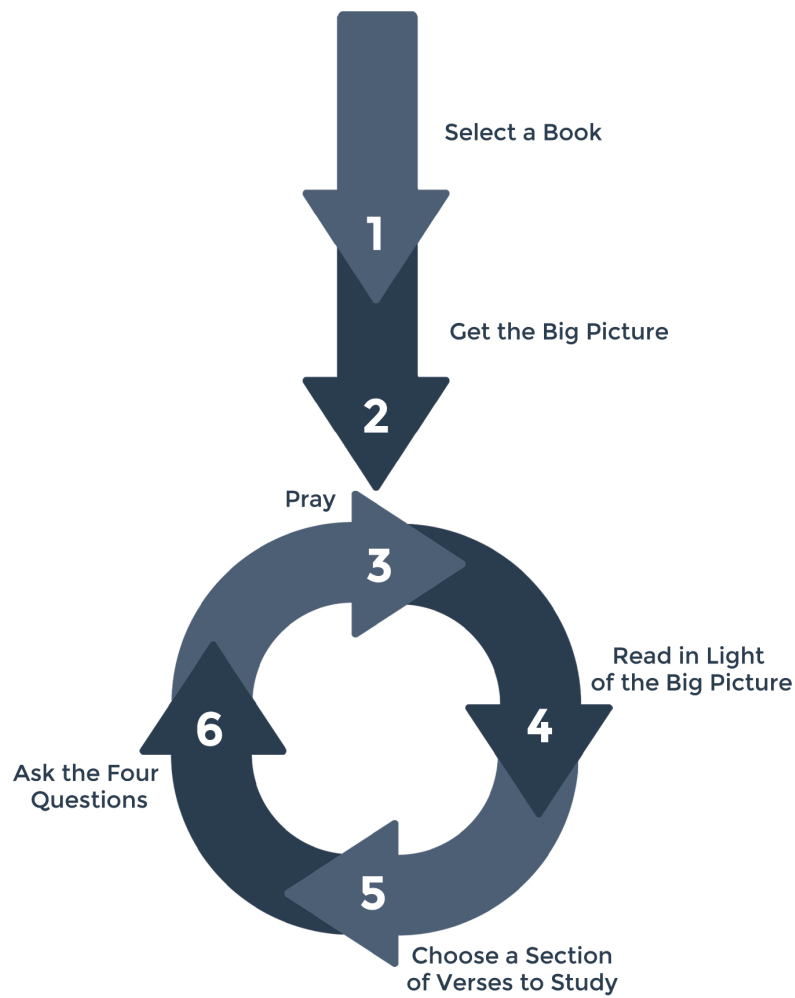
## CHAPTER 9

### 7 TYPES OF CONTEXT



## CHAPTER 13

### THE 6-STEP PASSAGE PATH



## CHAPTER 14

### THE 9-STEPS TO HELP YOU TACKLE TOPICS



## APPENDIX 1

### THE STRUCTURE OF SCRIPTURE

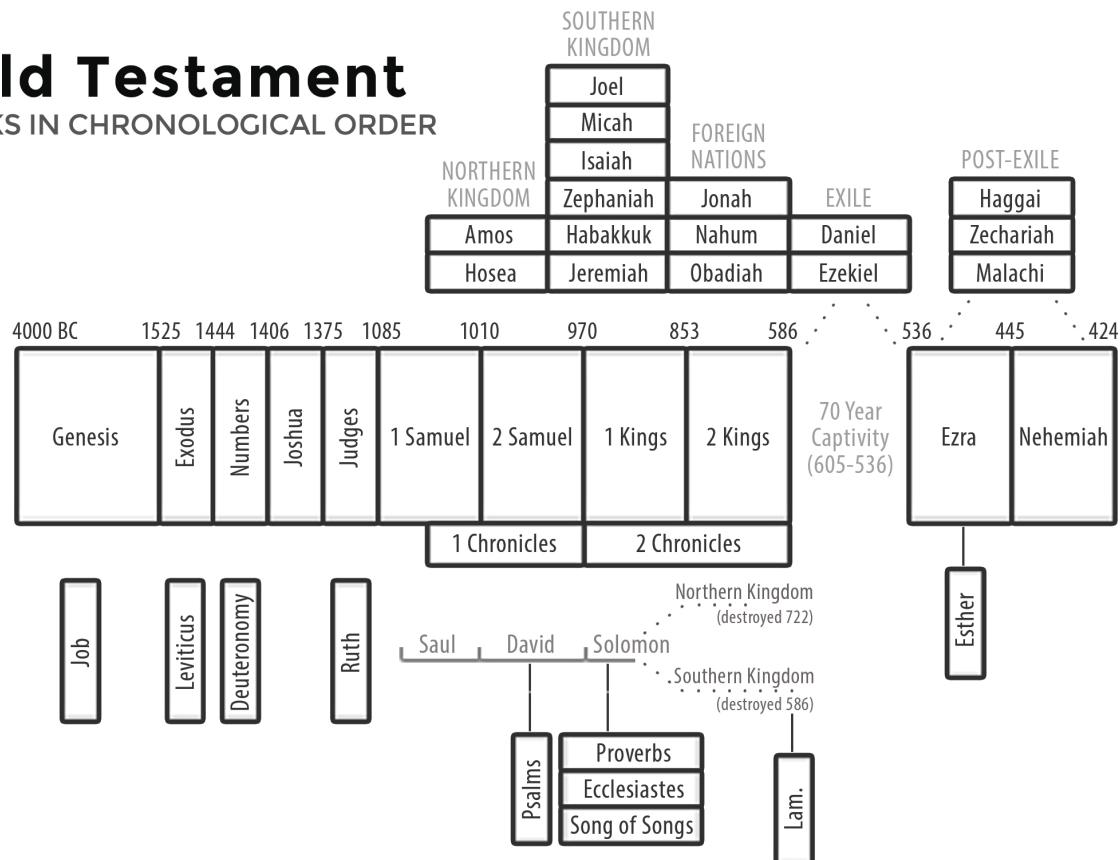
# Old Testament

BOOKS IN "BIBLE ORDER"

History			Wisdom	Prophecy		
5 Books of Moses The Law (Torah)	Pre-Exile	Post-Exile	5 Books of Wisdom, Poetry, & Praise	Major Prophets	Minor Prophets	
					Pre-Exile	Post-Exile
Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles	Ezra Nehemiah Esther	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah	Haggai Zechariah Malachi

# Old Testament

BOOKS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER



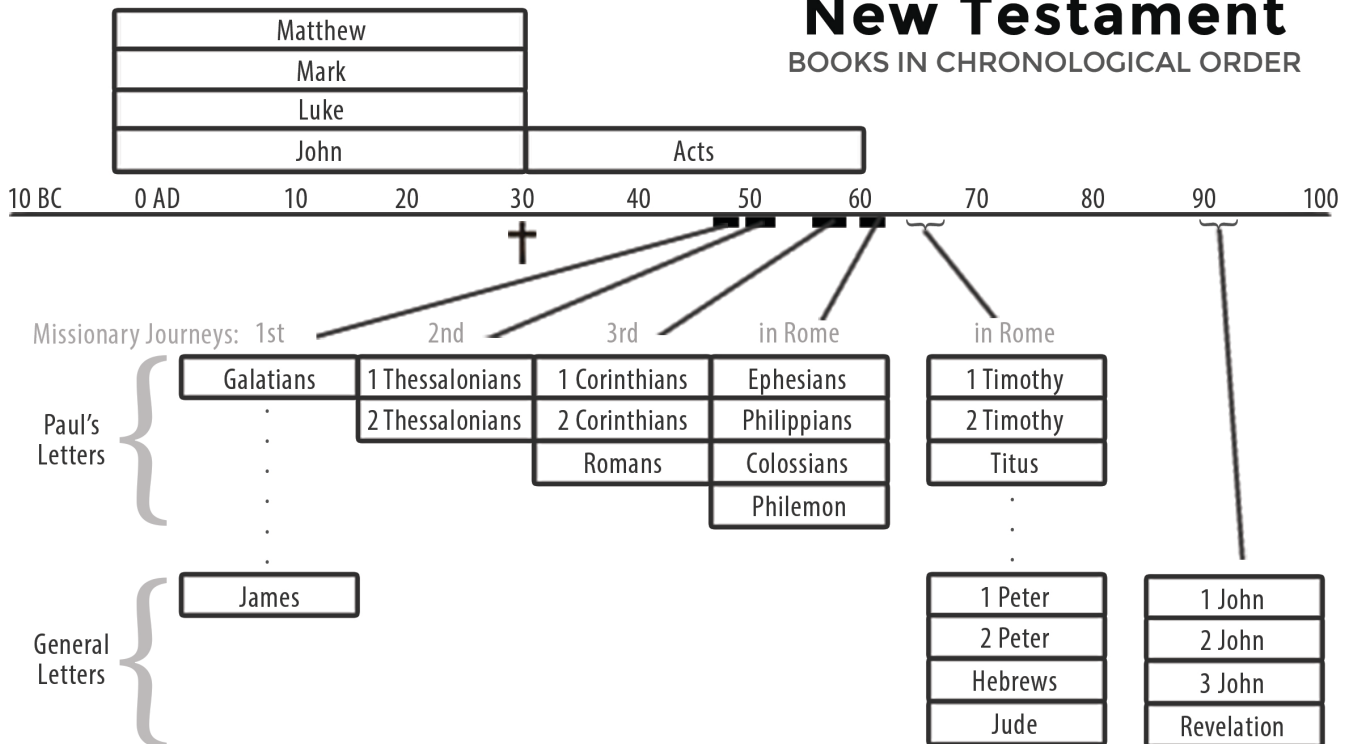
# New Testament

BOOKS IN "BIBLE ORDER"

Biography	History	Letters			Prophecy
Gospels	Church History	Paul's Letters to Churches	Paul's Letters to Individuals	General Letters	End Times
Matthew Mark Luke John	Acts	Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians	1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon	Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude	Revelation

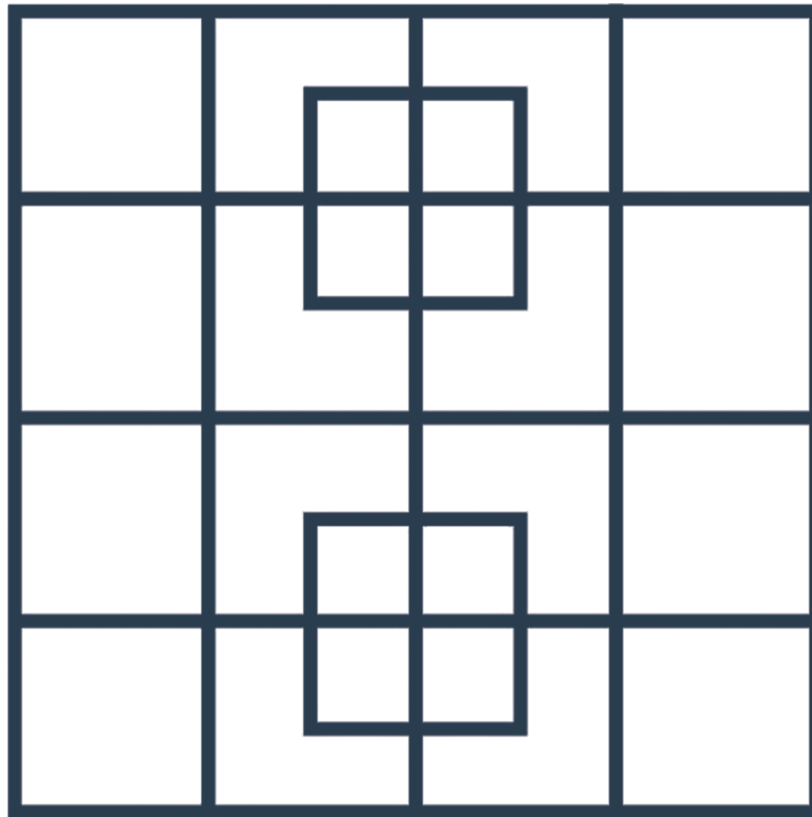
# New Testament

BOOKS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER



## APPENDIX 7

**OBSERVATION: HOW MANY SQUARES DO YOU SEE?**



## APPENDIX 7

OBSERVATION: HOW MANY SQUARES DO YOU SEE?

ANSWER: 40

