

How to Study the Bible—1 Beginner's Guide to Studying the Bible

How to Study the Bible

1. Choose a translation you understand.
2. Choose a time, a place, and a plan to study.
3. Understand the context.
4. Read slowly and ask questions.
5. Pray for God to speak to you, and apply what He shows you.

*For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.
Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient ...* Philemon 1:7-8 KJV

1. Choose a translation you understand.

NIV
NLT
NKJV
ESV

2. Choose a time, a place, and a plan to study.
3. Understand the context.

The Bible Is ...

- A collection of 66 different books.
- Written in three languages.
- Across three continents.
- Over a 1,500-year time period.
- By 40 different authors.

It's a collection of poems, prophecies, letters, laws, histories, and biographies, written by people and inspired by God, telling one unified story that shows us our need for Jesus and teaches us to become like Him.

- Who wrote it?
- To whom was it written?
- What is its purpose?

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker²... and to the church that meets in your home ... Philemon 1:1-2 NIV

- Philemon was written by Paul (from a Roman prison) to a wealthy man named Philemon, who led a church in his home.
- It was written about Onesimus, a runaway slave who had stolen from Philemon.
- Onesimus met Paul in Rome and Paul led Onesimus to Christ.
- Paul's purpose was to encourage Philemon to forgive Onesimus and accept him as a brother in Christ.

I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your love for all his holy people and your faith in the Lord Jesus. ... Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people. Philemon 1:4-5, 7 NIV

4. Read slowly and ask questions.

- Is there a SIN to be avoided?
- Is there a PROMISE to be claimed?
- Is there an EXAMPLE to follow?
- Is there a COMMAND to obey?
- Is there something to KNOW about God?

5. Pray for God to speak to you, and apply what He shows you.

Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, ⁹yet I prefer to appeal to you on the basis of love. It is as none other than Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus—¹⁰that I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains.

Philemon 1:8-10 NIV

Formerly [Onesimus] was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. Philemon 1:11 NIV

Instead of asking God “Why?” ask God “What?”

TALK IT OVER

Read Philemon 1:4-5, 7-11. What was the context of this passage—what was going on with Paul and Onesimus when it was written? How does this information help you understand the significance of this letter?

God is writing our stories right now. How have you seen God use His Word to change your life?

How is God calling you to go deeper in the Bible this week?

Find more resources and ways to practice studying the Bible: www.life.church/Biblestudy

Start the Bible Plan, *The Bible: Explained* using Plans With Friends: www.go2.lc/theBible