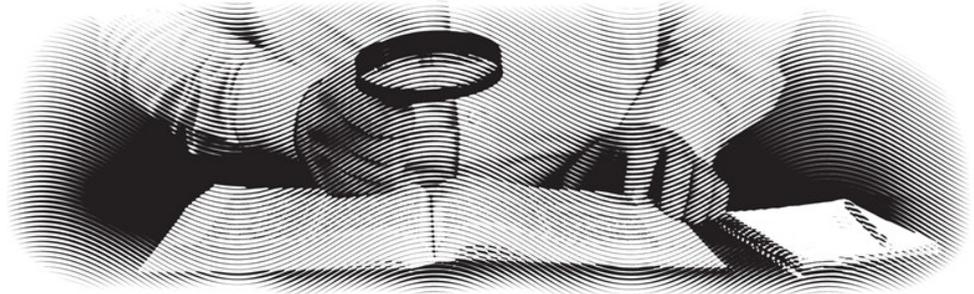


LESSON 5 *April 25–May 1

How to Study the Bible



Sabbath Afternoon

Read for This Week's Study: [John 15:1–8](#), [Mark 1:35](#), [1 Chron. 16:11](#), [Ps. 119:105](#), [Isa. 50:4](#), [Isa 55:1–13](#).

Memory Text: “ ‘So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it’ ” ([Isaiah 55:11, NKJV](#)).

Think back to when you received your first Bible. Perhaps you were a child, and it was given to you by a Christian relative. Or perhaps you purchased it yourself as an adult. However long you've had your Bible for (perhaps you have more than one copy), consider the value that you place on this Book. Is it one of your most precious, treasured possessions, or do you take for granted that you have the Living Word of God at your very fingertips? Do you struggle to be consistent in reading it? Have you ever wondered: *Where do I start? How do I read this Book to grow closer to God?*

Martin Luther said, “For a number of years I have now annually read through the Bible twice. If the Bible were a large, mighty tree and all its words were little branches, I would have tapped at all the branches, eager to know what was there and what it had to offer.”

Whether you experience a thriving, daily Bible study time, or whether your Bible mostly sits closed on a bookshelf, the reality is that we can all develop stronger Bible study times with God. This week we'll explore some practical ways to study the Word of God better.

** Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, May 2.*

Time

Have you ever set your alarm a little earlier than usual in order to wake and read your Bible? Have you ever struggled to drag yourself out of bed and then looked at the clock and thought, *I have 15 minutes before I need to begin the day. I better hurry!* Have you ever gone through the motions of having a brief prayer or skimming a chapter, only to find your conscience appeased but your heart unsatisfied with the result before you rushed into the day?

“There is but little benefit derived from a hasty reading of the Scriptures. One may read the whole Bible through and yet fail to see its beauty or comprehend its deep and hidden meaning.”—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 90.

While there are indeed blessings that come from reading the Bible—like drinking from a fire hydrant (lots and fast)—it is possible to read the Bible through quickly and miss so much. God gave us His inspired, precious Word so that we would come to know more about Him (and, in the process, more about ourselves, too). When we take time to see the indescribable, beautiful character of God and the ways He has interacted with humanity throughout history, we can only love Him more. The record of His interactions is right there in our hands—but we must find time, and take time, to know God through reading His Word ([Acts 17:11](#)). Consider the following suggestions:

Ask God to place a desire in your heart for Him. Claim the promises in [Jeremiah 29:13](#) and [Psalm 37:4](#). Invite Him to wake you up earlier than usual or to free up some time in your day to do so.

Surrender your time to God. Yes, you’re busy, and there are so many urgent things to do. But time with God is invaluable. Go to a quiet place by yourself and read [Psalm 46:10](#). Read the words or sing to God the hymn “I Surrender All.” Think about the areas of your life that may not be surrendered and offer them to God.

Spend time with God even when you may not feel like it. Just as it takes a conscious choice and an action plan to be healthy (exercise, eat well), it takes a conscious choice to have a close relationship with God. Remember that new habits can take at least 21 days to form, and we can never succeed without the Holy Spirit’s help.

Read again [John 15:1–8](#). What is Jesus telling us about abiding in Him, and why is this so crucial to our faith?

MONDAY April 27

A Place

Jesus is our perfect example in all things, and when it comes to personal devotions, it is no different. What does [Mark 1:35](#) tell us about Jesus' time with His Father?

Although [Mark 1:35](#) is just one verse, we can learn so much here from Jesus' example. Long before the sun came up, He removed Himself to a solitary place of quiet so He could be with His Father. Can you imagine the scene—Jesus, sitting by the Sea of Galilee or on the side of a hill, praying and communing with His Father before the world around Him woke up? Although this verse describes Jesus' commitment to prayer, we clearly see that it was a priority for Him. No doubt this time was what gave Him strength to face all that He endured. If Jesus needed this to start every day, how much more do we?

God tells us, “‘Seek My face,’” and He hopes our response will be “‘Your face, Lord, I will seek’” ([Ps. 27:8, NKJV](#)).

What does [1 Chronicles 16:11](#) say about how we should seek His face?

Do you have a place you can go each morning to be with God? Perhaps you can find a chair by a window, a quiet spot outside, or even the kitchen table, where you can come daily to sit at the feet of Jesus to learn from God's Word. Sitting at the feet of Jesus is the best place to be ([Luke 10:39–42](#)). By forming a daily habit of going to a certain place to spend time with God, you'll be more likely to return there each day. Don't become discouraged when you miss a day here or there, because emergencies arise, and you may not be able to spend time with God. But try not to let too much time pass without spending time with God. Remember that having an abiding relationship with God is a daily decision, one that you can start again, today, if you choose to.

During the past week, how much time have you spent in prayer and Bible reading? What does your answer tell you about changes you might have to make in your priorities?

TUESDAY April 28

Deep Bible Study

Even if you don't have to be a scholar to study the Bible, how can you study the Bible deeply?

Pray: It's impossible to overstate the importance of prayer as bookends to (and bookmarks throughout) your Bible study time. Ellen G. White tells us that when we come to read the Bible, we are not alone. By inviting the Holy Spirit to be our guide, we reject all other distractions, and the enemy flees. "The Bible should never be studied without prayer. The Holy Spirit alone can cause us to feel the importance of those things easy to be understood, or prevent us from wrestling truths difficult of comprehension."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 599, 600.

Read and Write: It could be said that a main difference between merely reading the Bible and studying it comes down to one key act: writing. Writing helps us slow down our thoughts, reflect on God's Word, and work through it at a pace where observation, interpretation, application, and commitment can occur. It also helps our initial scattered ideas to work themselves out—from our head, to our pen, and then into our hearts for the day. We are also more likely to remember something that we've written down ([Ps. 119:15, 16](#)). If you're unable to write your thoughts down, try reading the Bible aloud (or listening to it), followed by your thoughts as a prayer to God.

Share: Tell someone what you've learned. This will solidify it in your mind and encourage someone else.

Select a short book of the Bible to begin with (such as Jonah, Mark, Philippians, or 1 John), and slowly work your way through it. Here is a simple approach you can apply to one verse (the verse-by-verse method), a passage, or an entire chapter:

1. **Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide your mind and soften your heart as you read.**
2. **Choose a Bible verse or passage.**
3. **Write the passage in a journal or portions of the passage that stand out as you read.**
4. **Prayerfully read the passage again and underline the key ideas.**
5. **Write down what the underlined ideas tell you.**
6. **Pray over these ideas and how they impact your relationship with God.**
7. **Consider whom you might share this with today.**

"Whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths. This has been true in the history of the church in all ages, and thus it will continue to the end."—Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, pp. 38, 39.

In what ways have you found the message in the quote above to be true for you?

See also [Psalm 119:105](#).

WEDNESDAY April 29

A Double Blessing

There are many ways we can study our Bibles, such as the verse-by-verse method (mentioned already), a chapter study, a theme study, a word study, or a book study. We can study with a concordance and Bible dictionary, and we can read the Bible alongside the Conflict of the Ages series for additional insight. We can go for a walk outside in nature and listen to the Bible being read to us, or meet with a friend or small group to study together.

In the same way that we keep our friendships alive with variety and new adventures, we should keep our daily appointment with God fresh and vibrant by using different methods as we study the Bible. There is always more to learn!

Something that will help keep your Bible study time vibrant is sharing with others what you've discovered. When we explain what we've learned, the summarizing, synthesizing process consolidates our thoughts. This helps us retain knowledge. The double blessing is that when we share and discuss with others, the spiritual conversation will often challenge and strengthen both of you. It's often when we share or teach others that the deepest learning occurs in our own minds.

You also will come to see that what you study each day is not only God's message for you but a message for others.

Read [Isaiah 50:4](#). What is this verse telling us about having a relationship with God and how it can impact our relationships with others?

Our personal Bible study time not only strengthens us, but it enables us to encourage others we may meet during the day. It can become a double blessing.

Our spiritual lives are a marathon. Ask the Lord to keep you running your race with constancy, keeping your eyes on the goal ([Phil. 3:14](#)). Don't feel discouraged if you've gone a bit slack for a while, but make any necessary changes in your life to keep your relationship, and specifically your Bible study and prayer time, vibrant. For truly, this is eternal life, that we may know God today ([John 17:3](#)). Our daily commitment to abide in Him and in His Word is life-changing.

Read this week's memory text and consider its meaning. What are you studying at the moment? With whom could you share this?

THURSDAY April 30

'Tis So Sweet!

Think about your favorite dessert. Is it good for your health? Perhaps you use honey as a sweetener, or you may even use Manuka honey for its purported medicinal benefits. If you've ever tried honeycomb, you'll know how sweet the soft texture is as it melts onto your tongue.

In [Psalm 119:103, 104](#), the psalmist describes the Bible as a honeycomb—a metaphor for delight: “How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding” (NKJV).

What does it mean that “through your precepts I get understanding”? ([Ps. 119:104](#)). Why is this idea important in grasping what Bible study does for us?

Yes, God's words are indeed sweet to our souls and unlike anything else the world offers us. Unlike many desserts, the sweetness of God's Word is healing to our souls and life-changing for our characters. If you've been distant from God, you can fall on your knees, open His Word, and drink from the living water that alone will satisfy.

In [Isaiah 55:1–13](#), the prophet expands on the message mentioned above. Spend some time reading this chapter now, and then answer these questions:

- What does the Lord give to those who come to Him, to “eat” from His Word?
 - What is His invitation to you here?
 - What is His challenge?
 - What is His promise?
-
-

God's living and powerful Word cuts straight to our hearts, minds, and souls as it challenges us to grow in Christ. But it can do this for us only to the degree that we take the time and effort (and yes, it takes effort) to delve into the Word with an attitude of submission and humility and a willingness to follow what it teaches.

What are concrete ways you can “seek the Lord while He may be found” ([Isa. 55:6, NKJV](#))?

FRIDAY *May 1*

Further Thought: The purpose of Bible study is to know God and to grow in your relationship with Him, for this is what life eternal is—to be forever with the God we love ([John 5:39](#), [John 17:3](#)).

Part of any relationship is mutual engagement. We read in [Revelation 3:20](#) that Jesus seeks to have this with us, yet we must realize that, as created beings, we can always learn more about our Creator. Like a miner digging for precious jewels, we should be constantly searching in the Bible. There is always more to glean, no matter how many times we've read certain stories or Bible passages. "Whatever may be man's intellectual advancement, let him not for a moment think that there is no need of thorough and continuous searching of the Scriptures for greater light. As a people, we are called individually to be students of prophecy."—Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 41.

We also should not try to make the Bible fit into our own human opinions or thoughts. "How shall we search the Scriptures? Shall we drive our stakes of doctrine one after another, and then try to make all Scripture meet our established opinions? or shall we take our ideas and views to the Scriptures, and measure our theories on every side by the Scriptures of truth? Many who read and even teach the Bible, do not comprehend the precious truth they are teaching or studying. . . . Many give the words of Scripture a meaning that suits their own opinions."—Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 36.

Discussion Questions:

- 1. What attitude do you usually come to the Bible with? Is there anything that needs to shift? Why is an attitude of humility and surrender to the Word so crucial?**
- 2. Are there any established opinions that you might need to lay aside to allow Scripture to speak for itself? If so, how can you start praying about them right now?**
- 3. How might originality become a stumbling block in a person's outward relationship with God? That is, how might the desire to find something new and innovative lead someone astray, especially if they are doing it for selfish purposes?**

Summary: Personal Bible study is at the heart of having a vibrant and enduring relationship with God. God's Word speaks into our twenty first- century lives in meaningful ways, just as it has during past centuries. In a similar way to keeping any friendship alive, we should look for ways to keep our devotional lives vivid as we abide in Jesus, trusting His promise that His Word "shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it' " ([Isa. 55:11](#), [NKJV](#)).

Cows Lead Boy to the Sabbath

Rompas was born into a Maasai tribal family of one father and nine mothers in Kenya. He has 82 siblings. He is number 62.

When he was 13, he was tending his father's cattle in the bush when he noticed that the animals seemed to have a mind of their own. They kept moving in a single direction. He followed the cattle and found himself at an outdoor religious meeting led by a missionary from the United States.

Rompas was intrigued. He had never been to school, so he could not read the Bible. But he liked to listen to sermons on the radio on Sundays. He enjoyed memorizing what he heard and preaching the sermons to his family. His love for preaching had earned him the nickname "Pastor."

But the missionary was preaching a message that he had never heard. He said the Bible teaches that Saturday, not Sunday, is God's holy day.

Rompas ran off to find a friend who knew how to read and write. He asked the boy to copy down the Bible verses from the sermon. The boy jotted down 33 verses about the holiness of the seventh-day Sabbath.

That evening, Rompas took the cattle home. But he didn't stay. He then walked four miles (six kilometers) to the home of a pastor and handed him the list of 33 verses. "Does our Bible contain these verses?" he asked.

The pastor looked up the verses in his Bible and said ominously, "You have gone to a meeting of devil worshipers."

Fear seized Rompas. He began shaking. "Oh Lord, save me," he said.

The pastor struck the boy repeatedly on the cheeks with his Bible. "In the name of Jesus, I rebuke the devil who has possessed this boy," he said.

It was late when Rompas returned home. After falling asleep, he had a dream. He saw the missionary preaching about the Sabbath again. Waking up, he was afraid that he had been possessed, and he rebuked the devil.

For the next three years, Rompas had the same dream every night. He saw the missionary preaching about the Sabbath. For three years, he lived in fear that he had been possessed. For three years, he kept rebuking the devil.

Then he thought, I wonder if this might be a message from the Lord. Let me find out if what the pastor said is true.

With that, the boy nicknamed "Pastor" took a first step toward becoming an Adventist pastor. Today, he knows the truth and is teaching it to others in Kenya.



Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering, will support projects in Kenya and elsewhere in the East-Central Africa Division. Read more about Rompas next week, and watch a YouTube video of him at bit.ly/Rompas-IS.

Provided by the General Conference Office of Adventist Mission, which uses Sabbath School mission offerings to spread the gospel worldwide. Read new stories daily at AdventistMission.org.