



**Educate
+ Engage**



SPIRITUAL
DISCIPLINES: ~~TH~~

The word

OVERVIEW

It seems that many people are in love with Jesus. They want to follow Him with their whole hearts. However, part of following Jesus is getting to know His Word. To really follow Jesus, you've got to get excited about and become besties with His Word. It's one thing to know **about** Jesus, but to really **know** Jesus requires us to stay in His Word.

Scripture Passage

II Timothy 3:14–17 (ESV)

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Discussion Question: Why is reading the Bible intimidating sometimes?

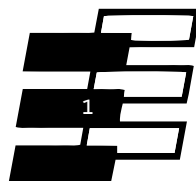
EDUCATE

1. Understanding the Bible.

The Bible can be an intimidating book to understand, so let's cover some basics before we dive deeper into the lesson today. The word *Bible* actually means "books." The Bible is a collection of sixty-six books compiled in the Old and New Testaments, with at least forty different writers, covering approximately four thousand years of human history. Although there were many different writers, there was really only one author: that author was God.

Discussion Question: Can anyone tell me what the word "testament" means? Answer: a covenant or an agreement. In this case, testament refers to the covenant God made with His people.

Can anyone tell us the five sections of the books of the Old Testament?



Lesson 3

Old Testament: 39 books, 5 sections: The Law, Historical Books, Poetic Books, Major Prophets, and Minor Prophets

What about the five sections of the books of the New Testament?

New Testament: 27 books, 5 sections: The Gospels, Book of Acts, Letters from Paul (Pauline Epistles), General Letters (General Epistles), and Revelation

How do we remember how many books are in the Bible? Use this little trick to help: Count the letters in the words *Old Testament*. 3 and 9 = 39 Old Testament books. Count the letters in the words *New Testament*. $3 \times 9 = 27$ New Testament books. $39 + 27 = 66$ books in the Bible!

Discussion Question: What is your favorite book of the Bible and why?

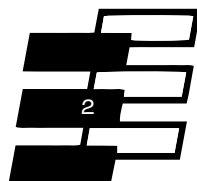
The Bible has been preserved for thousands of years. Moses was the first to record and preserve the Word of God via the Ten Commandments. These Ten Commandments were to be stored in the Ark of the Covenant, while the remainder of the written Law was to be kept alongside the Ark.

After the death of Moses, Joshua continued to pen God's words and works among the Israelites, and this practice was continued until professional scribes began to copy the Law and store the copies in the Temple and later in synagogues. What's cool about that process is that the Old Testament scribes followed strict guidelines when producing copies of the Law and other Old Testament books. Here are a couple of examples of those guidelines:

- Every letter and every word of the original manuscript was counted. If the copy did not match the original count, it would be destroyed, even if it took days or weeks to copy. Can you imagine the frustration of having weeks of work thrown out?
- Every word had to be spoken before written. No word could be written from memory. There had to be special reverence while copying the Word of God.

2. The Bible is our foundation for everything in life.

The Bible answers some of life's most difficult questions related to Creation, human identity, what we should be doing with our lives, how we are made right with God, and what happens after we die. It is the foundation for science, history relies on the Bible for evidence and context, and it is the source of emotional strength. Whatever you need can be found in the Word of God.



Lesson 3

The Word of God accomplishes the impossible. Check this out: There are well over 1,500 prophecies in the Bible, and many of them have already been fulfilled. Some of the fulfilled prophecies include specific details regarding global leaders, kings, and the future of the nation of Israel. Some of the most powerful prophecies were fulfilled in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Jesus' time on earth, He fulfilled those prophecies just as the prophets foretold.

Discussion Question: Can anyone tell us a prophecy from the Old Testament that Jesus fulfilled?

What are the actual chances that one person could fulfill these Old Testament prophecies accidentally? Let's have a look at some of these odds calculated by Peter Stoner, a mathematician. He calculated one person fulfilling just eight of those prophecies by chance is one in one hundred quadrillion. That's a huge number!

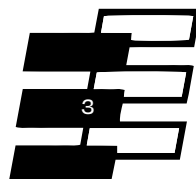
After calculating these odds, Mr. Stoner said, "Any man who rejects Christ as the Son of God is rejecting a fact, proved perhaps more absolutely than any other fact in the world." The Bible is the written proof of the impossible becoming possible through a man called Jesus Christ.

3. Time spent in the Word is never wasted.

Have you ever had a crush on someone? Maybe that person was in your science class, so instead of listening to your teacher you found yourself wondering what your crush was thinking. Perhaps you found out they were trying out for the school choir, so you decided to join, too just in case you got the chance to interact. When you like someone, you want to know all about that person.

That's exactly how we should feel about studying God's Word. We should desire to talk to God and hear His voice. We should be thinking about Him and wanting to know Him more. Sometimes we hear the voice of the Lord through reading His Word; sometimes we hear His voice through our youth pastor or pastor.

Discussion Question: What do you think we need to do to allow us to have more time for reading His Word?



Closing

So, how do we do this? As we discussed earlier, the Bible can be an intimidating book to read, especially if you have no previous knowledge of it. Start by picking a Bible translation that will help you understand. Talk with your youth pastor or pastor for translations they recommend. Be careful not to rely on paraphrases of the Bible for your personal devotion. You must also be willing to utilize tools to help you in your study. Apps such as Blue Letter Bible or YouVersion are great resources to help you understand what you are reading.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:11: "Give us this day our daily bread." The Word of God must be experienced daily. Bible reading is the daily bread that sustains our souls to make it from one day to the next. When you begin to develop a plan to read the Bible daily, there are many reading plans to choose from. Again, a tool like YouVersion has Bible reading plans that will last three, six, or twelve months. When considering a plan, be sure to pick one that will help you stay on track and get everything from God's Word you can. Here are some examples of Bible reading plans:

- Read Genesis through Revelation by reading a certain number of chapters each day.
- Read two chapters of the Old Testament and two chapters of the New Testament every day.
- Read the books of the Bible in chronological order of when they were written.
- Read through just the New Testament in one year. This plan will help you take your time and help you learn more as you read.

ENGAGE

These are just options for you to choose from to begin your journey of reading the Bible every day. If you are still having issues reading or understanding, take some time to reflect on what you are having difficulty with that day. If you are struggling with anger, look up all the verses you can about anger. If you are struggling with depression, see what the Bible says about joy. If you are having difficulty loving your friends and family, research what the Bible says about love.

Sometimes the best approach to reading God's Word is not a "just in case" approach, meaning just in case I need this insight one day. Sometimes the best approach is a "just in time" approach, meaning going to the Word for what you are dealing with and struggling with right now. You will always find the answer in His Word.

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