

# How to Study the Bible



## SABBATH—APRIL 25

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** John 15:1–8; Mark 1:35; Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 50:4; Psalm 119:103, 104.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “So My Word which goes from My mouth will not return [come back] to Me empty. It [My Word] will do what I want it to do, and will carry out My plan well” (Isaiah 55:11, NLV).

**THINK BACK** to the time when you got your first Bible. Maybe a family member gave it to you when you were a child. Or maybe you bought your first Bible when you were an adult. How much do you love your Bible? Is it one of your most precious belongings? Or do you need to force yourself to read it? Do you sometimes wonder, “How do I read this Book to grow close to God in my heart? Where do I start?”

Martin Luther said, “Many years ago, I started reading the whole Bible two times a year. I want to read every verse to learn everything it can teach me.”

Some of you may study the Bible every day. But other people leave their Bible on a shelf and hardly open it. For sure, we all can develop better Bible study skills. This week, we'll look at how we can get more from our study time with God. We will learn ways to study the Bible better.



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## TIME (John 15:1–8)

Was there a time when you woke up earlier to read your Bible? Or did you lie in bed and then look at the clock and say, “I have 15 minutes before I need to get out of bed. I better hurry!” Do you then rush your prayer or read a chapter from the Bible too fast? Do you feel satisfied when you’re done? Not really, right?

“We must not read the Bible in a hurry. We won’t get much of a blessing if we read it fast. You can read the whole Bible from cover to cover. But you may not understand its beauty or deep meaning.”—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, page 90, adapted. So, take time to read slowly.

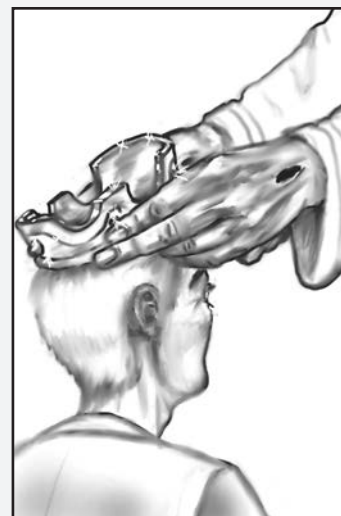
We can get many blessings from reading the Bible. But if we read too much too fast, we can miss so much. God gave us the Bible so we can learn more about Him (and ourselves, too). So, we must take time to see the beauty of God and the way He shows His love for us. When we do, we will love Him more. The Bible shows us the history of everything God did for the human family and will continue to do for us. We can hold this history in our hands. But those words don’t do us much good if we don’t take time to read them. We can know God if we read His Word, the Bible (Acts 17:11). Do the things below:

**Ask God to fill your heart with love for Him:** Ask God to keep His promises in Jeremiah 29:13 and Psalm 37:4. Invite God to wake you up early in the morning so you can study and pray. Or ask Him to help you make time in your day to do so.

**Give your time to God.** Yes, you’re busy. You have so many things to do. But time with God is important. Go to a quiet place where you can be alone. Read Psalm 46:10. Read or sing the words to the hymn “I Surrender [give to Jesus] All [everything].” Think about the parts of your life that you don’t give to Jesus. Offer those parts to God.

**Spend time with God, even if you don’t want to.** You must make the choice to be healthy. In the same way, you must choose to be close to God in your heart. Don’t give up. Remember, you need to do something for 21 days before it becomes a habit. Also, don’t forget you need the Holy Spirit’s help. We can’t enjoy success without Him.

**Read again John 15:1–8. In these verses, Jesus talks about living in Him. What does this mean? Why is living in Jesus so important for our faith?**



The Bible shows us the history of everything God did for the human family and will continue to do for us.

**A PLACE (Mark 1:35)**

**Jesus is our perfect example in everything. What does Mark 1:35 tell us about Jesus' time with God?**

We can learn so much from this one verse. Long before the sun came up, Jesus went to a quiet place to be alone with His Father. Try to imagine this picture of Jesus in your mind: Jesus sits near the Sea of Galilee or on the side of a hill. Jesus prays and talks with His Father before everyone else around Him wakes up. Mark 1:35 tells us that prayer was very important to Jesus. For sure, Jesus' prayer time gave Him the strength He needed for the day. Jesus needed to start every day with prayer. What about us? How much more do we need to start our day with prayer, too?

God tells us, " 'Come near to me' " (Psalm 27:8, EASY). He hopes that we will answer with these words: "So I will come and pray to you, LORD" (Psalm 27:8, EASY).

**What does 1 Chronicles 16:11 say about what we should ask God to do for us?**



**Long before the sun came up, Jesus went to a quiet place to be alone with His Father.**

Do you have a place you can go each morning to be with God? Maybe you can sit in a chair near a window. Or you can find a quiet spot outside. The kitchen table is fine, too. Pick a place where you can come daily to be with Jesus and learn from His Word, the Bible. We must be the same as Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet to learn from Him. Sitting at Jesus' feet is the best place to be (Luke 10:39–42). When we meet with Jesus every day, our meeting becomes a habit. The more you do something, the more you will continue to do it. Don't get upset or lose hope when you miss a day every now and then. Sometimes emergencies happen. When they do, you may not always have the time to spend with God. But try not to let too much time pass without spending time with Him. Remember, if we want a living relationship with God, we must choose to spend time with Him every day. The wonderful news is that, today, you can start to spend time with Him again, if you choose to.

**During the past week, how much time did you spend in prayer and reading the Bible? What does your answer tell you about changes you may need to make?**

## DEEP BIBLE STUDY (Psalm 119:105)

You don't need to be an expert to study the Bible. But how can you get the most out of your Bible study?

**Pray:** Pray before and after your Bible study time. "We should never study the Bible without prayer."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 599, adapted.

**Read and Write:** How is reading the Bible different from studying the Bible? The answer is writing. Writing helps us slow down our thoughts and to know what we think. Writing helps us think deeply about God's Word, the Bible. Writing also helps us to notice what the verses are really saying. Then we can more easily follow the Lord's advice and wisdom. We also will remember something better when we write it down (Psalm 119:15, 16). What if you can't write things down or don't have time? Try reading the Bible and then sharing your thoughts on the topic as a prayer to God.

**Share:** Tell someone what you've learned. Sharing helps us to learn and encourages other people, too.

Start with a short book from the Bible (Jonah, Mark, Philippians, or 1 John). Slowly read through it. Follow the plan below for each verse, a few verses, or a chapter:

1. Pray that the Holy Spirit will lead you and soften your heart as you read.
2. Choose one Bible verse, a few verses, or a chapter.
3. Write down your verse or verses as you read. Or write down the parts that are important to you.
4. Read your verse or verses again. Underline the most important ideas.
5. Write down what the underlined ideas mean.
6. Pray about these ideas. How do they change your relationship with God?
7. Think of someone to share these ideas with today.

"God's people must grow in His loving-favor. As people grow in faith, God will give them more understanding about the Bible. Then they will know more about its beauty and wisdom. God's people had this experience all through the history of the church. This experience will continue until the end of human history."—Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, pages 38, 39, adapted.

**How is the message in the quote above true in your life? Also read Psalm 119:105 to help answer the question.**



**How is reading the Bible different from studying the Bible? The answer is writing.**

**A DOUBLE BLESSING (Isaiah 50:4)**

We can study our Bible in many ways. We can study one verse, chapter, topic, word, or book of the Bible at a time. We can study with a Bible dictionary. We also can read the Bible with the writings of Ellen G. White to get a deeper understanding. We can go outside and think about our topic while we walk in nature. Or we can meet with a friend or a small group to study together.

We keep our friendships alive with new adventures and experiences. In the same way, we should keep our daily appointment with God exciting and fresh, too. How? We can use the different plans we talked about above. There is always more for us to learn!

You also can share with other people what you learn. When we explain what we learned, we discover how much we know and remember the information better. Our faith also grows strong. So does the faith of the other person. When we share with other people, that's when we learn the most.

Soon you will see that what you study each day is not just God's message for you. What you study is also God's message for other people.



**We can go outside and think about our topic while we walk in nature.**

**Read Isaiah 50:4. What is this verse telling us about having a close relationship with God? How can this Bible truth change our relationships with other people?**

Our personal Bible study time makes us strong. When we are strong, we can encourage the people we may meet that day. Then our Bible study time becomes a double blessing.

Our spiritual lives are the same as a race. Ask the Lord to help you keep running your 'race' all the way to the finish line. Keep your eyes on the prize: everlasting life with Jesus (Philippians 3:14). Don't feel hopeless if you missed a few study times. Make any changes in life that you need to make to keep your prayer and Bible study time and your relationship with God strong. We may know God today (John 17:3). That's everlasting life. When we spend time each day with God and the Bible, our lives will change.

**Read this week's memory verse again. What does this verse mean? What are you studying right now in the Bible? Think of someone you can share your knowledge with. Ask God to help you do it.**

**SO SWEET! (Psalm 119:103, 104)**

In Psalm 119:103, 104, the poet says that God’s Word, the Bible, is the same as honey. Honey is a symbol for joy and pleasure. The poet says, “Your words are so sweet to me, like [the same as] the taste of honey!” (Psalm 119:103, ERV).

**What does the poet mean when he says to the Lord, “Your teaching helps me to understand things” (Psalm 119:104, EASY)? Why is this idea so important? How does it help us to understand better what Bible study does for us?**

For sure, God’s words are very sweet to our spirits. God’s words are different from anything this life offers us. Do you feel far away from God in your heart? You can read His words that are the same as living water. Nothing else can satisfy our thirst for God.

**Read Isaiah 55:1–13. Then answer the questions below.**

- **What does the Lord give to people who ‘eat’ from His Word, the Bible?**

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- **What invitation does God give you in these verses?**

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- **What does God ask you to do?**

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- **What promise does God make to you?**

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God’s living and powerful Word touches our hearts and helps us to grow in Jesus. But we must spend time studying the Bible if we want growth to happen. We also must be willing to follow everything that God teaches us.

**The Bible says, “You should look for the LORD before it is too late” (Isaiah 55:6, ERV). What does this verse mean? What are ways you can look for the Lord?**

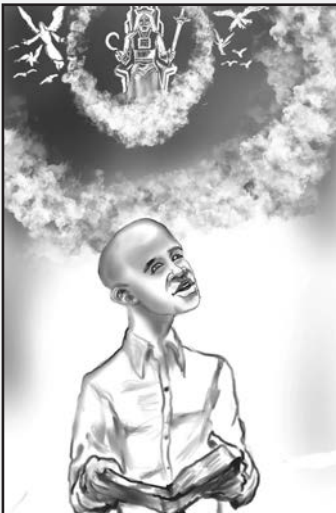


**In Psalm 119:103, 104, the poet says that God’s Word, the Bible, is the same as honey. Honey is a symbol for joy and pleasure.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Bible study helps us to know God. Bible study also helps us to grow in our relationship with Him. Everlasting life is living forever with the God we love (John 5:39; John 17:3).

In Revelation 3:20, we read that Jesus wants to have a loving relationship with us. We always can learn more about our God. We should always search the Bible for more wisdom and knowledge. We always can learn more, even from the stories or verses we already read many times. As much as we think we know, there is always more we may learn from the Bible. So, let us continue to search the Bible for more and more truth. God wants each of us to study the special messages about the future.”—Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, page 41, adapted.

We also should not force the Bible to say what we want it to say. We should not try to make the verses agree with our ideas. “How shall we study the Bible? Shall we force the Bible to agree with our teachings? Or shall we take our ideas to the Bible and check to see if they are correct? Many people may read and even teach the Bible. But they don’t understand the precious truth they are teaching or studying. . . . Many people give the verses of the Bible a meaning that agrees with their own ideas.”—Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, page 36, adapted.



“God wants each of us to study the special messages about the future.”

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What is in your heart when you study the Bible? Is your heart filled with pride? If yes, what must change? Why is having a heart with no pride important to Bible study? Why also must you give yourself fully to the Lord, too?
- ② What, if any, ideas do you need to let go of so that you can accept what the Bible is saying? Pray right now about these ideas and ask God to help you let go of them.
- ③ When you study the Bible, what danger is there in wanting to discover something ‘new’ and ‘exciting’ that nobody thought about before? In what ways is this a selfish wish? How can this selfish wish cause someone to accept false ideas or reject Bible truth?

## COWS LEAD BOY TO THE SABBATH

Rompas was born into a Maasai family in Kenya. His father had nine wives. So, Rompas had a big family: nine mothers and 82 brothers and sisters! Rompas was child number 62.

When Rompas was 13, he was taking care of his father's cows. All of a sudden, the cows started to move in the same direction. Rompas followed the cows to an outdoor religious meeting. The man who preached was a Bible worker from the United States.

Rompas was interested in the sermon. Rompas never went to school, so he didn't know how to read the Bible. But he liked to listen to sermons on the radio on Sundays. He enjoyed remembering what he heard on the radio and preaching the sermons to his family. His family named him "Pastor" because he loved preaching so much!

But the Bible worker was preaching a message that Rompas never heard before. The Bible worker 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. Rompas asked the boy to copy the Bible verses from the sermon. The boy wrote down 33 verses about the seventh-day Sabbath.

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

The pastor looked up the verses in his Bible and said, "You went to a meeting of people who worship the devil."

Fear filled Rompas's heart. He said, "Oh Lord, save me!"

The pastor hit the boy many times on the cheeks with his Bible. The pastor said, "In the name of Jesus, I cast out the devil who took control of this boy."

Rompas got home late. After he fell asleep, he dreamed. In his dream, he saw the Bible worker preaching about the Sabbath again. Rompas woke up, afraid. He worried he was filled with the devil. So, he asked God to remove the devil from his heart.

For the next three years, Rompas had the same dream every night. In his dream, he saw the Bible worker preach about the Sabbath. For three years, Rompas lived in fear that the devil controlled him. For three years, Rompas asked God to remove the devil from his heart.

Then he thought, "What if this dream is a message from God? 'Help me, Lord, to know if what the man preached is true.'"

With that prayer, the boy named "Pastor" started to become a real pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Today, Rompas knows Bible truth. He teaches it to other people in Kenya.

## INSIDE *Story*



**Rompas followed the cows to an outdoor religious meeting.**



**Rompas Josphat Lekishon**