

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

141. 5 Simple Ways to Study the Bible

You are listening to episode 141 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast, titled 5 Simple Ways to Study the Bible. Welcome to the podcast! Thanks for joining me today. Last week in episode 140 we discussed three ways studying scripture can impact our lives, so this week's piggybacks last week's episode. Feel free to pause this episode today and listen to episode 140 if you wish. It'll give you a better snapshot of where we're going today. No matter if you study the Bible currently, or if you don't, this episode will equip you with simple ways to do this in your daily life. We keep things uncomplicated around here! So, I invite you to hang with me for this next short while and together we'll find encouragement and hope for our real lives today. Let's get into this episode.

Do you study the Bible?

Do you open it up and read it? Or are you a bit intimidated to? Does studying the Bible frustrate you because you just don't understand the words inside of it? Or do you just simply don't have time to read it? Maybe you don't own a Bible?

Well, there are many reasons to shy away from studying the Bible. I know because many of them were once mine. I once thought:

I was too busy to read the Bible.

I couldn't understand the Bible.

The Bible was full of rules and regulations that I couldn't keep.

I didn't think I was smart enough to study it.

I was never taught to study the Bible when I was young.

Since I didn't own a Bible, I thought Bibles were for only special people.

I had every reason not to study the Bible.

But as I mentioned in last week's episode, I enrolled in a Bible study back in 1997, because I had this pull on my heart to see what the Bible was all about. And because my good friend prompted me to. So one Wednesday morning, me, my brand new Bible, and my then three year old showed up to a church to study the Bible.

I had no idea what I was doing, but since that day, I've been on a journey of faith. At that point I was a follower of Jesus already, but wasn't really following Him, if you know what I mean. I believed He died for me, but that's about it. But God used that Bible study, Bible Study Fellowship, to teach me His Word, to grow me through it, and to lead me in a closer relationship with Him as I studied Scripture. Lo and behold, God even put me in a role years later to teach others His Word! Who knew? Certainly not me.

So now studying the Bible is something I do daily.

I don't do it perfectly, and I don't know all there is to know about the Bible, but I'm willing to be a student of Jesus for as long as I'm on this earth. And in 27 years, I've learned a few ways to study the Bible. Some I have used in the past, and some I use now. And yes, there's more than one way to study the Bible. There's more than just sitting down, opening your Bible and reading it. Even though that's great and wonderful! And if you need some reasons why, listen to last week's episode for three ways how studying scripture can impact your life.

Before I share some of these ways, there's more than one way logistically to study the Bible, too. You can study the Bible on your own, or you can study it with others. One nice part of BSF is that you get to do both. And that fit me perfectly (and it still does).

The important piece I've learned is no matter if I'm studying on my own or with others, inviting the Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds and open our hearts to teach us as we study is key. This makes all the difference in my focus, my understanding, my retention, and my application of the passage I'm reading. Because when I don't do this, I might as well not have even tried to read it in the first place. The Holy Spirit helps Scripture be alive and active!

This reminds me of Hebrews 4:12 NLT which says, "For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires."

And one more from 2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIV, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

So, let's get into the 5 Simple Ways to Study the Bible.

Please know there are many more ways to study God's Word, but these will get us started. You may have a favorite already. Tuck these away for another day if this is the case.

1 - The 3-Question Method

I share this method in Chapter 7 of my book, *Right Now Matters*, and in Day 14 of the *Right Now Matters Bible Study*. This is the one Bible study method I use the most. It literally transformed my Bible reading time and was the tool I embraced that helped me apply the Bible to my life. Because before learning this method, I didn't really know how to apply what I was reading to the messy life that was mine.

It involves asking three uncomplicated questions after reading any part of Scripture.

1. What are the facts? (What's happening in this passage?)
2. What are the lessons? (What can I learn from this passage?)
3. What are the applications? (How can I apply this passage to my life right now?)

I write the passage out in my journal, then answer these three questions underneath it. It helps me to see the answers in black and white, plus this gives me documentation of what God is teaching me through His Word. It's amazing how often I come back to certain passages that truly encourage my heart when I read how He is growing me through it. Again, you can find the full details of this method in *Right Now Matters* and in the *Right Now Matters Bible Study*. The link to both books is in the show notes.

2 - Word or Character Study

Have you ever studied a specific word or character in the Bible? I love looking up words in a concordance (which is often found in the back of many Bibles or in a Bible app to read the many passages in Scripture pertaining to that word. Some of my favorite ones have been heart, distraction, love, peace, joy, and grace.

One summer I studied the varying women of the Bible and their roles and relationships with God or Jesus. That was one of my favorites too! And actually, I did this for a chapter in *Right Now Matters* where I include the biblical women who were undistracted for the Lord.

Again, I use my journal and write down what I learn, either about the word or the character I'm studying. I retain what I'm learning much more when I write things down. Some of the useful Bible apps I'm partial to are biblegateway.com, biblehub.com, or blueletterbible.com. Even the YouVersion Bible app is a good one that I have on my phone.

3 - One Year Bible Study

Currently I'm reading through the Bible in a year. Sometime around Christmastime, our church had One Year Bibles available in the foyer. So, I picked one up and began reading it on January 1. I've fallen behind a couple times and played catch up, but right now, I'm on track. It has an Old Testament passage, a New Testament passage, a Psalm, and a Proverb for each day. I find it amazing how I can apply each reading to the day that's before me, and what I've read in the morning, I think about it throughout the day. It's giving me a bigger picture of Scripture and is helping me remember how the Old Testament and New Testament aren't so different from each other in many ways.

You can find a One Year Bible online or in bookstores, and you don't need to wait until January 1 to begin it. You can begin it today or at the beginning of any month. But how cool will it be to finish reading the Bible in a year?! So many truths God will teach us!

4 - Through Devotionals or Books

Many people use devotional books or other books that point to the Bible or take you deeper into the Bible. The Bible study I wrote, the *Right Now Matters Bible Study*, is one of these books. It's written to take women deeper into Scripture with study prompts and actions. Each time I lead a session of the *Right Now Matters Bible Study* with others (a new online session is happening tonight!), I walk through the 28 days with them. It's refreshing anytime we can dig into the ultimate and eternal hope that's available for us in God's Word!

5 - Bible Plans

Numerous spaces and places offer Bible plans that help you study the Bible. One that comes to mind is the YouVersion app. They offer Bible plans for nearly any subject. I have completed some of these in the past, and they are usually very good and biblically sound. I love it when a plan helps me dig deeper in God's Word and helps me think about Scripture in ways I may not have thought before.

But like I mentioned already, there are numerous other ways to study Scripture.

Find one that fits you, that appeals to you. And if these don't sound interesting to you, find another. Don't be afraid to try something you haven't tried before. Ask someone you know who is living out his or her faith what he or she does to study the Bible. Ask your pastor or a trusted Christian for some suggestions. God speaks to us through His Word in powerful, unmistakable ways. No matter how we study it.

One thing I do suggest is to find a translation you understand. Now, some people completely disagree with me on this, one being a very good friend of mine, but that's okay. Some people believe we should only study specifically one or two translations and not all the others. And that's okay. This was quite the issue I came up against when I was writing my books last year. But the thing is, I couldn't rely on what translation others said to use, I needed to use what God led me to use. So I did. That translation was the New International Version. Yet, I sprinkled in others through the books as God led me. Whatever translation God leads you to use, use that one.

My Christian mentor came to faith in Jesus by reading a children's Bible story book, because at that point in her adult life, those are the words she understood and God led her to that story book. If she would have just started out reading a translation she couldn't understand, would that have impacted her the way this children's Bible story book did? Of course, God can use anything, and if that was His will for her to begin with a specific translation, then He would have given her the ability to understand. But clearly, this was not His will. She came to the Christian faith through that story book, and throughout the years, she's led many to that same faith, including yours truly. All because God used a children's story book to impact one woman numerous years ago.

No matter how we do it, when we study the Bible, we will be blessed. God will teach us, grow us, and transform us from the inside out through it. His Word changes us in amazing ways, for our growth, for the good of others, and for His glory.

If you found encouragement in this episode, would you please rate and or review this from wherever you're listening today. It takes less than a minute to do so, and it could help someone else find this encouragement too. Also be sure to subscribe so you never miss a new episode.

I thank you for tuning in today, and I encourage you to ask God how He wants you to study His Word. He will give you all the details. Enjoy this special time with Him, no matter how He leads you. I'm praying for you in this today. God bless you!

Links in the episode:

[Bible Study Fellowship](#)

[Hebrews 4:12 NLT](#)

[2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIV](#)

Episode 40, [3 Ways Studying Scripture Can Impact Your Life](#)

My books: [Right Now Matters](#) and the [Right Now Matters Bible Study](#)

Online Bibles: [Bible Gateway](#), [Bible Hub](#), [Blue Letter Bible](#)

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