

***“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.”***

**- HEBREWS 4:12 NLT**

**ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:**

**FOUR ATTRIBUTES OF THE BIBLE:**

- ***Necessity - God’s Word is what we NEED.***
- ***Sufficiency - God’s Word is ENOUGH.***
- ***Clarity - God’s Word is UNDERSTANDABLE.***
- ***Authority - God’s Word is FINAL.***

## WEEK 3

# THE BIBLE

Living. Powerful. Sharp.

**W**hen it comes to the Bible, we all have had struggles with consistency and understanding. The Bible can seem intimidating to pick up because of its physical size, its spiritual origin, and its emotional impact. We all have had the same thoughts: *“Why should I read the Bible?”*, *“Why can’t I hear God’s voice speak to me more?”*, and *“Where do I start in my Bible reading?”* These are great questions to ask and are, in fact, the right questions to be asking. Our hope is that by the end of this week’s small group you will know:

- **Why the Bible is important.**
- **Where to start reading.**
- **How to hear God’s voice.**

### **1. WHY THE BIBLE IS IMPORTANT.**

Let’s start with a hypothetical story: Think back to a time when you were in school and had a crush on someone. You know, that someone who was so attractive to you that they not only made you blush, but you also wanted to get to know them better. What if this person secretly passed you a written note in class with a look that says, *“I love you, too.”*? You put it in your pocket to read immediately when you get home. When you do get home, you realize that you have a

social studies project due tomorrow and difficult math homework to get done. You work studiously and finish it right before your mom calls you downstairs for dinner. At dinner, you remember the note, but do not dare pull it out at the dinner table for fear of your siblings making fun of you. *"I will wait until I am alone,"* you think. After dinner, your dad wants to watch your favorite TV show, so you sit down and spend some quality time with him and the rest of your family. Before you know it, it is time for bed. Your mom tells you to wash up, brush your teeth, get your jammies on, and hop into bed. As you lay in bed trying to go to sleep, you think again of the love letter your crush handed to you today at school. You excitedly throw off your covers, run to your dirty clothes hamper, pull out the pants you wore to school, and pull the love letter out of the pocket. You walk back over to your bed, set it on your night stand, turn off your lamp, and fall asleep. Tomorrow you will open it up and read this love letter from your crush.

This hypothetical story sounds pretty silly, right? You are probably thinking you would want to open that thing as soon as possible. You would want to know what it says. You would want to know what insights this holds about the giver's personality, likes, dislikes, etc. It would be unthinkable to continue putting off reading a letter that you are passionate about reading because of who gave it to you.

Simply put, the Bible is so important, arguably *the most* important book, because it is God's love letter written for you!

**How does this simple definition make you feel?**

**Have you ever thought about the Bible this way before?**

The Bible *is* important. Why? Because you are desperately loved, more than just an infatuation or a crush. This is *real* love. This is God's love. An unimaginable, unrelenting, unmatched, unending kind of love.

**How does knowing how much God loves you shape the way you view His Word?**

## **2. WHERE TO START READING.**

You may be thinking the beginning would be a great place to start. You would not be entirely wrong, but it's definitely not the *best* place to start reading. Because the Bible is a compilation of many different books, written by many different authors, who lived in different parts of the world, and who wrote in different decades and even centuries, it may be hard to pinpoint exactly where to start. All of those books, and all of those authors, throughout all of the various places and times of writing, wrote with a central theme: **God loves you**. God best displayed that love through His Son, Jesus. Jesus is the *best* place to start.

There are four accounts written of Jesus' life here on earth. Those books are commonly referred to as The Gospels. You'll remember that last week, we defined The Gospel as Good News. These books are titled: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Because John's Gospel largely focuses on Jesus' divinity — His fully Godness, this is one of the best places to start your reading.

**Do you find it difficult to stay consistent in your Bible reading?**

**If "yes", what have you found to be the most difficult?**

**If "no", what has helped you read the Bible on a daily basis?**

At the end of today's session, we have made available a 30 Day Bible Reading Challenge that should help kindle or rekindle healthy habits of consistent Bible reading in your life. In the midst of that challenge, there is a simple and easy way to get the most out of your Bible reading. This method is commonly referred to as "S.O.A.P."

S.O.A.P. is an acronym which stands for *Scripture*, *Observation*, *Application*, and *Prayer*. Implementing this method into your daily study will not only help you understand what you read, but will also help you know how to best apply it to your life.

# **HOW TO S.O.A.P.**

## **S — SCRIPTURE**

*Which verse stood out to you?*

Open your Bible to your reading for the day. Take time reading and allow God to speak to you. When you are done, look for a verse that particularly spoke to you that day, and write it in your journal.

## **O — OBSERVATION**

*What is God saying to you?*

What do you feel God is saying to you in this Scripture? Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal Jesus to you.

## **A — APPLICATION**

*How can you apply it today?*

Personalize what you have read by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, a new promise, or correction for a particular area of your life. Write how this scripture can apply to you today.

## **P — PRAYER**

*Ask God to help you use what you have learned.*

This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this scripture, or even a prayer for a greater insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two-way

conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say!  
Now, write it out.

*\*Next week we will talk more in depth about prayer.*

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### **3. HOW TO HEAR GOD'S VOICE.**

When daily Bible reading becomes a lifestyle, God's voice becomes more and more recognizable. This is because we are getting to know Him better and better. The Bible is God self-identifying Himself to the world. Just like in any relationship, the more you know a person, the more you recognize their voice, honing in on the particular way they speak. The same is true of the voice of our God. When we begin to quiet ourselves and remove distractions, we can hear His still, small voice whispering to us as we read His Word. He wants to speak to you. In fact, He is always speaking, we just need to listen.

**Have you experienced hearing God's voice?**

**If "yes", share a time when you heard Him clearly.**

**If "no", what can you do to better listen for it?**

Let's put this into practice. As a group, let's take turns reading some Bible verses aloud together. As we do so, let's listen to what God is saying to us through them. Remember, no insight is too shallow or silly to share. Let God speak to you.

**Share how God is speaking to you through these following passages:**

- Psalm 119:105
- Joshua 1:8
- Matthew 4:4
- Hebrews 4:12
- Romans 15:4
- 1 Peter 2:2-3
- John 15:7
- Psalm 119:11
- Matthew 24:35
- Isaiah 40:8
- Proverbs 30:5
- Romans 10:17
- John 8:31-32

Our hope is that daily Bible reading will become a part of your regular routine.

Next week, we will look at how to have a healthy prayer life. Remember to check out the 30 Day Bible Reading Challenge on the following page.

# 30 DAY CHALLENGE

## BIBLE READING PLAN

### NEED HELP GETTING STARTED?

ONE DAY AT A TIME IS HOW YOU CREATE HEALTHY HABITS.

DAY 1 - John 1

DAY 2 - John 2

DAY 3 - John 3

DAY 4 - John 4

DAY 5 - John 5

DAY 6 - John 6

DAY 7 - John 7

DAY 8 - John 8

DAY 9 - John 9

DAY 10 - John 10

DAY 11 - John 11

DAY 12 - John 12

DAY 13 - John 13

DAY 14 - John 14

DAY 15 - John 15

DAY 16 - John 16 & 17

DAY 17 - John 18 & 19

DAY 18 - John 20 & 21

DAY 19 - Luke 1 & 2

DAY 20 - Luke 3 & 4

DAY 21 - Luke 5 & 6

DAY 22 - Luke 7 & 8

DAY 23 - Luke 9 & 10

DAY 24 - Luke 11 & 12

DAY 25 - Luke 13 & 14

DAY 26 - Luke 15 & 16

DAY 27 - Luke 17 & 18

DAY 28 - Luke 19 & 20

DAY 29 - Luke 21 & 22

DAY 30 - Luke 23 & 24

### WANT MORE? CHECK OUT THESE APPS:



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