



# THE BACKPACK

BE PREPARED FOR THE JOURNEY



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# FOR THE JOURNEY.



## INTRODUCTION

Life is a journey...

Yes, it is a well-worn cliché, but before rolling your eyes, let's suspend judgment and imagine for a moment that life really *is* a journey. What would you need for the trip?

Like any good trip, you'd want to know where you are going, you'd want some travelling companions to go with you, and you'd want to have the right skills and equipment to get you there safely. And you would carry some of these things in a *backpack*.

In our walk with Jesus through this life, there are some things that we will find helpful to *know* and to be able to *do*. The Navigator Backpack is a series of short studies addressing some of these things on this journey. The Backpack is divided into 3 sections: 1. Things We Need to Know, 2. Things to Help Us Relate to God & 3. Things to Help Us Relate to Others.



# SCOPE



## WHAT IS IN THE BACKPACK?

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### SECTION **THINGS WE NEED TO KNOW.**

# 1

As the name suggests, this section of The Backpack deals with the *things we need to know*. What is the author of our journey – God – like? Where have we come from? Where are we headed? What sort of journey is this? How should we travel? What sort of travellers should we be?

Section One is divided into three parts, with each part having a number of short studies in it. Here are the main three parts: 1. What is God Like? 2. What God is doing – the Good News of Jesus & 3. What we are called to Do.

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### SECTION **THINGS TO HELP US RELATE TO GOD.**

# 2

This section helps us focus on things we can do that will help us relate to God. We look at how the Holy Spirit helps us; we also explore ways of praying and of getting into the Bible. These studies have a more practical bent to them and they include a variety of time proven resources that we encourage you to try. They are not so much designed to bring about more reflection and knowledge but rather they are designed to bring about more action!

Section Two is also divided into three parts, with each part having a number of short studies in it. Here are the main three parts: 1. The Holy Spirit 2. Prayer & 3. The Bible

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### SECTION **THINGS TO HELP US RELATE TO OTHERS.**

# 3

Section Three focuses on strengthening how we relate with others. On this faith journey we will encounter other travellers. Some have yet to start this journey, others may be a few steps behind us in the journey, while others may be further ahead of us. We can help some of these people and some of them can help us. To keep us all moving forward we will look at key areas of sharing our faith, discipling or mentoring another person and the significance of how we travel together in community. Section Three is divided into three parts, with each part having a number of short studies in it. Here are the three main parts: 1. Sharing Our Faith 2. Mentoring & 3. Community

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The studies in The Backpack are not everything you need to know for the journey. After all, a backpack is not a caravan or a holiday home – it's just a backpack. Neither are these studies designed to get you there alone. They are best used when worked through with someone else...for example, a person who has been on the journey a little bit longer who is now helping a newer traveller who is now on the way.

So, if you've been on this faith journey a little while, we would like to encourage you to use The Backpack with someone who could benefit from your help. And if you are fairly new to it, go ahead and find an 'experienced traveller' who is farther down the path that you trust and work through it together.

Whatever the case, please give this a go, because this journey is too important to make unprepared.

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# SECTION TWO: THINGS TO HELP US RELATE TO GOD

This section helps us focus on things we can do that will help us relate to God. We look at how the Holy Spirit helps us; we also explore ways of praying and of getting into the Bible. These studies have a more practical bent to them and they include a variety of resources that we encourage you to try. They are not so much designed to bring about more reflection and knowledge; rather, they are designed to bring about more action!

Section Two is divided into three parts, with each part having a number of short studies in it. They can be seen below:



## THE HOLY SPIRIT:

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1. The Holy Spirit – At Work in Us
2. The Holy Spirit – Detecting God’s Presence
3. The Holy Spirit – Keeping in Step
4. The Holy Spirit – Help in Temptation
5. Summary



## PRAYER:

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1. Prayer – What is it?
2. Ways to Pray – Quiet Time
3. Ways to Pray – Using the Bible
4. Ways to Pray – Anywhere, Anytime, Anything
5. Ways to Pray – Big Day Out
6. Summary



## THE BIBLE:

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1. The Bible – What is it?
2. The Bible – Read it
3. The Bible – Study it
4. The Bible – Memorise it
5. Summary

Each study is 2 pages in length and we would like to encourage you to spend half of your time looking at it by yourself, and the other half talking it through with someone else...because this is a journey in which we really need each other’s help.

So please read, pray, share your life and open your heart. And let’s trust that the LORD of ALL will meet you exactly where you are at in your journey to encourage, inspire and challenge you in significant ways. And by all means, please do try some things!

Enjoy the journey!



THINGS TO HELP US RELATE TO GOD:

# THE HOLY SPIRIT

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When we turn and believe in Jesus, God lives in us through the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is a guarantee of God's commitment to us for the future, but this Spirit is also at work in us now.

Through God's Spirit in us we have privileged access to communicate with God and can be empowered to live a life of reckless generosity and love as strong as death. This Spirit is the very presence of God in us that enables us to persevere despite major setbacks. It is the love of God in us that is able to absorb the pain, to break the chains of revenge, and to help us walk in freedom to help others out of their chains. This Holy Spirit is the eternal presence of Good News in our lives... and it truly is good news.

In this series of studies we look broadly at what the Holy Spirit does in our lives, what we need to do to keep in step with the Spirit, as well as some practical help on hearing what the Spirit is saying to us and some practical help on positively dealing with temptation.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT STUDIES:

As you seek God through the studies listed below take time before you begin to ask God to reveal himself to you and to give you insight and understanding of His Word.

✓ 1. The Holy Spirit – At Work in Us

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✓ 2. The Holy Spirit – Detecting God's Presence

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✓ 3. The Holy Spirit – Keeping in Step

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✓ 4. The Holy Spirit – Help in Temptation

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✓ 5. Summary

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# 1. THE HOLY SPIRIT - AT WORK IN US

The Holy Spirit, as one of the three persons of the Trinity, is God. There is no explicit spelling out in the Bible of this doctrine of one God in three persons and the Holy Spirit's role in this; rather, it is just assumed (e.g. 2Corinthians 13:14, Ephesians 2:18; 4:4-6; 5:18-20; 1Thessalonians 1:2- 5; 2Thessalonians 2:13) and the emphasis is on talking about how God's Spirit makes a difference in us.

This Holy Spirit is at work in Christians in numerous ways and is our greatest 'resource' for anything and everything! But what exactly does the Spirit do? Here we will try to answer this question.



## THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Read through the following verses to answer the question: How and when do we receive the Holy Spirit?

- Matthew 3:11
- Luke 11:13
- John 3:5-8, 14:15-17, 7:37-39
- Acts 2:17, 38-39; 5:29-32
- Galatians 3:1-5
- Ephesians 1:13-14

On the next page is a table detailing the ways the New Testament talks about what the Spirit of God does. There are a lot of verses! Some of these talk directly to what the Spirit does and some of them only mention the Spirit's work in passing.

Begin by reading through the whole table (you don't have to check through all the Bible references).

From the table, choose 1-2 areas where you feel currently you would most like to receive more of the Spirit's help. Read through the Bible passages associated with that area.

- What do you expect will be different for you when the Spirit has helped you more in this area? In your partnership with the Spirit, what actions do you think you need to take to receive this help?
- Summarise in your own words what God's Spirit does for us.



## TAKE ACTION

- Spend some time thanking God for his Spirit in us which helps us in so many ways. Use your summary and the bullet points in the table as a starter for your prayer.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**2 Corinthians 13:14**

## WHAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD DOES

Convicts us of right & wrong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7-15)</li> </ul>
Is our seal of salvation: God living in us by his Spirit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Causes us to be spiritually born and gives us life (John 3:5-8; 6:63, 7:37-39; 2Corinthians 3:6)</li> <li>• Lives in us (John 14:16, 1Corinthians 3:16, 6:19-20, 1John 3:24)</li> <li>• Is the seal of our salvation (Acts 15:7-8; Romans 8:9-16; 2Corinthians 1:21-22, 5:5; Galatians 4:6-7, Ephesians 1:13-14)</li> </ul>
Frees us from law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives freedom from the law (Romans 7:6, 8:1-2; 2Corinthians 3:17)</li> </ul>
Transforms us and makes us holy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transforms us (2 Corinthians 3:18)</li> <li>• Makes us holy (Romans 15:15-16; 2Thessalonians 2:13; 1Corinthians 6:11; 1Peter 1:1-2)</li> <li>• Enables us to live the Christian life (Romans 8:5-6, Galatians 5:22-25)</li> <li>• Changes our heart or inner person (2Corinthians 3:3; Ephesians 3:16)</li> </ul>
Gives us understanding and reveals Jesus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps us to understand and explains spiritual truth (1Corinthians 2:10-13)</li> <li>• Helps us understand God's love (Romans 5:5, 15:30)</li> <li>• Prophesies through people (Acts 1:16, 4:25, 11:28, 21:10-11)</li> <li>• Glorifies, testifies, and witnesses to Christ (John 15:26, 16:14-15; Acts 5:31-32; Romans 1:1-4)</li> <li>• Reveals things to us (Luke 2:25-26; Acts 15:24-29; 20:22-23; Ephesians 3:4-5; 1Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 9:8, 10:15; 1Pe 1:10-12)</li> </ul>
Gives miracles, power, and strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives us gifts and ministries (1Corinthians 12:7-11)</li> <li>• Gives us power (Luke 4:14; Acts 1:8)</li> <li>• Enables miraculous things to occur (Luke 1:35; Rom 15:17-19)</li> </ul>
Comforts, encourages, and assures us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives us hope (Romans 15:13)</li> <li>• Gives us peace and joy (Romans 14:17; 1Thessalonians 1:6)</li> <li>• Assures us of our salvation (Romans 5:5, 8:15-16,23)</li> <li>• Encourages us (Acts 9:31)</li> <li>• Helps and intercedes for us (Romans 8:26; Philippians 1:19; 2Timothy 1:14)</li> </ul>
Guides and teaches us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaches us all things and reminds us of Jesus words (John 14:26, 16:12-15)</li> <li>• Gives us words to say when we are brought before people for our faith (Matthew 10:20)</li> <li>• Sends or leads us to places (Matthew 4:1; Luke 2:25-32; Acts 8:29; 8:39; 10:19-20; 13:2-4; 16:6)</li> </ul>
Unifies the Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unifies the Body of Christ (1Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 4:3)</li> </ul>



### TAKE ACTION

→ Talk to someone about these action steps you decide on to get their help on it. Ask the person to keep you accountable to what you propose to do (accountability is a helpful tool to aid us in our walk with God).



### THOUGHT TO FINISH

Without God's Holy Spirit in us, there is no Christian life. For us, the Spirit is both the guarantee of eternal life and the source of our on-going transformation now: he helps us to see the truth and he gives us the strength to change for good. Therefore, in everything, let us rely totally on the Holy Spirit AND let us do all in our power to keep in step with the Spirit (**Galatians 5:25**). In this way, his work of grace becomes complete in us.



## 2. THE HOLY SPIRIT - GOD'S PRESENCE

In **1 Corinthians 2:6-16** we are told that through the Spirit living in us, we are able to understand what God has freely given us; we are able to understand Spiritual truths. However, this doesn't mean everything is crystal clear and easy for us to see! Rather, although we know the Lord is committed to communicating with us, for us to receive that communication we must do some work.

This was the Apostle Peter's experience. The Lord wanted to show him that the gospel was not just for Jews, but also for Gentile, non-Jews. It took some time, but through a combination of dreams, experiences, and re-telling his story, Peter finally got the message (**Acts 10-11**). The messages that God wants to communicate to us may not be as earth-shatteringly significant as that one he communicated to Peter, but they will still be vitally important for us. To ensure we hear the Lord speaking to us, we need to develop sensitivity to detecting the Spirit – not just when we're reading the Bible or praying, but in all the moments of our days.



### THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Up until Acts 10, the gospel had been moving only amongst Jews, because they believed that the Messiah Jesus had only come to save them rather than the Gentiles. For God, however, this good news was meant for everyone and this was the message he wanted to communicate to Peter and the early disciples.

- Read Peter's story of bringing the gospel to the gentiles: **Acts 10:1-11:18**
- At first, Peter rejects God's vision asking him to eat non-kosher food (**Acts 10:11-16**). He can't make any sense of it at all. But by the end of the story, he had understood that God was also giving eternal life to the Gentiles (**Acts 11:17**). Carefully look through all that Peter did in the story. What things do you think he did that really helped him understand what was going on?
  
- What can we learn from his story that might help us make sense of what the Spirit is doing or saying to us?

This exercise is to help you make connections between what you experience and what the Lord might be trying to communicate to you.

1. Pick out an experience you've had recently that, for whatever reason, sticks in your mind.
2. Work through the questions below. You may not be able to answer all of them with regards to your event, but try to answer as many of them as possible.
3. As you work through each box, do you sense God talking to you about something in this area? It may be a new thought, a reminder, a memory, a relevant Bible passage, or a recollection of some words from someone else. Write it down.
4. Attempt to summarise what you believe the Lord may have been wanting to communicate to you through the experience. It may be something big or small.
5. Is there something you need to do as a result of this? It may be things to avoid; promises to claim; examples to reflect on; Commands to follow, or good thoughts to stick in your memory. Write it down, plan (as much as possible) when you are going to act on it, and tell someone about it.
6. Pray, thanking God for revealing this to you. Ask for continued help to see and hear any future messages the Lord may be wanting to communicate to you.

Experiences	What Happened? At home, at work, out, etc. (e.g. events, incidents, activities, conversations).	Where was God in this?
Matthew 10:29, 30 Romans 8:28	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>→ Is there an outstanding event or incident?</b></p>	
Romans 9:1 Colossians 3:15	<p><b>How did it affect me?</b> Reactions, responses, emotions. (e.g. angry/happy, disappointed/encouraged, anxious/relaxed, guilty/proud)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>→ Is there a dominant emotion?</b></p>	
Philippians 2:12-13	<p><b>What did I do/say?</b> How was I provoked/tempted to respond? How was I challenged/motivated to act? (e.g. Words, actions, decisions, habits, strategies)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>→ Is there a pattern?</b></p>	
1 Corinthians 2:12	<p><b>What did I think?</b> What questions and issues were raised in my mind? What ideas came to mind? What insights did I have? What mental arguments took place? (e.g. What was I thinking about God? What did I feel about myself? What did I say to God?)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>→ Is there a theme?</b></p>	
Romans 8:26,27 Philippians 3:10 2 Corinthians 5:2	<p><b>What did I want?</b> What longings and desires came to the fore? (e.g. Longings for safety / acceptance, adequacy / significance)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>→ Is there a persistent heartfelt longing?</b></p>	



## TAKE ACTION

Try out the above exercise this week. It needn't take long to do, but it could be very significant. If possible, arrange to do it with someone else, so that you work on your own experiences separately but then share your findings.



## 3. THE HOLY SPIRIT - KEEPING IN STEP

*“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit” - Galatians 5:25.*

The Spirit of God lives within us. Not only has he guaranteed our eternity with God for the future, but he is also at work within us in the present, changing us for good. However, we are not called to be passive recipients of this change, but rather to be active participants in it. We are called to keep in step with the Spirit and here we will look at what it means to cooperate with the Spirit in our own growth and development into Christlikeness.



### THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

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Romans chapter 8 is one of a number of passages which talks about the Holy Spirit at work within us.

- Read **Romans 8:1-27**
- From this passage note down some of the changes the Spirit makes in us.
  
- Of these changes, are any of them things we could achieve by ourselves, if we worked harder without the help of the Holy Spirit?
  
- If the Spirit does all this good work, what are we meant to do... nothing? What is our part in working with the Spirit? Read the following verses and note down what we need to do.  
**Galatians 5:16-25**  
**Ephesians 4:22-30**  
**Colossians 3:8-14**

- Read the verses in the box on the right. What sort of things might we do to grieve the Spirit or quench the Spirit's work within us?
- What practical things can we do to avoid this?

Do not put out the Spirit's fire.  
- 1 Thessalonians 5:19

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.  
- Ephesians 4:30

Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.  
- 1 Timothy 4:14

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. - 2 Timothy 1:6

- Read **Matthew 13:10-15**. What is the effect of having hard or calloused hearts?
- Read **Hebrews 3:7-15, 4:7**. What causes a hard heart and how do you avoid having one?

→ Try out the **JUST DO IT** exercise.

1. Prayerfully read Psalm 139:23-24. If God brings to mind something you need to do or stop doing, resolve to do something about it as soon as is practically possible.
2. If after doing the above you have a clear conscience, then try the following:
3. Read any of the New Testament letters with a view to finding something for you to do. As soon as you read a verse that you believe God wants you to do something with, stop reading. Resolve and plan to do something about it as soon as practically possible.  
Try this exercise once a week for a few weeks to keep in the habit of responding with action.



## THOUGHT TO FINISH

God's Spirit is responsible for changing our lives in ways we just cannot do. We are responsible for keeping in step with the Spirit. A crucial part of our role is to respond by God's grace to do what the Spirit asks us to do. If we get used to reading the Bible and hearing the Spirit but not doing anything about it, we will slowly become immune to the Spirit's guidance and our heart will harden. We avoid this by taking seriously and responding immediately to what the Spirit asks us to do. So "today, if you hear his voice"...do something about it!



## 4. THE HOLY SPIRIT - HELP IN TEMPTATION

Temptation today is often thought of as being negative. However, in the Bible, it carries the more neutral idea of ‘testing’ or ‘trials’, and whether it is positive or negative depends more on who is doing the testing. For us, in one way or another, temptation is a daily occurrence. Will we act in ways that are consistent with the things we say to be true, or will we allow ourselves to follow a different set of values and move in the direction of a different destination? That is the test of our belief; that is our challenge.

This study looks at this area of temptation and some practical ideas that can help us deal positively with our own personal battles of faith.



### THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

#### *Testing by God*

In the Old Testament, in particular, the Lord tested his people to see if they would keep their side of the covenant (or agreement); he never tested those who weren't his people, and as far as the Bible talks about God testing individuals, it was always aimed at godly individuals rather than ungodly ones. Testing by the Lord isn't always recognisable at the time, but it develops stronger faith and character of the person.

- Read **Matthew 4:1-11; James 1:2-4, 12; 1 Peter 1:6-7; 1 Peter 4:12-13**, which describe God's use of testing with people. As you think back over your life, can you recognise any times when the Lord used testing in your life to strengthen you in an area?

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

- **Matthew 4:1**

#### *Testing by the Devil*

By contrast, the evil one comes only to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). The goal of his tempting is to defeat us, discourage us, and separate us from a strong relationship with the Lord.

- Read **Genesis 3:1-6; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 1 Thessalonians 3:5; Galatians 6:1**. As you think back over your life, can you recognise any times when the evil one has successfully tempted you to do something causing you to move away from God?

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

- **James 1:2-4**

## PRACTICAL HELP WHEN FACING TEMPTATION

<p><b>Eyes, desires, pride.</b> Read 1 John 2:15-16, Genesis 3:6 and 2 Samuel 11:2-4. Note the similar issues at work in the three passages. If you are going to be tested, the temptation is likely to present itself as an issue of pride, a sensual craving, or a lust of your eyes.</p>	<p><b>1Corinthians 10:13</b> God promises that any temptation we face is within our ability to handle it. He also promises that there will be a way out of it – we will always have the choice to do what is right. In any tempting situation, we need to look for the way out (- choosing to take that way, however, may be the difficulty!)</p>	<p><b>Pray</b> On the eve of his greatest challenge, Jesus prayed for strength (Matthew 26:36-39). Praying is an easy thing for us to do, but it can be an easy thing for us to forget to do. Prayer is crucial. We neglect it at our peril. Hebrews 2:18</p>
<p><b>Avoid difficult situations.</b> If you go to a party, decide ahead of time when you will leave (i.e. before that time in the evening when everyone gets drunk and natural inhibitions come down). If you are in a committed relationship, limit the amount of time you spend alone with someone else of the opposite sex (i.e. not your partner). If you are in a relationship with a boyfriend/girlfriend, discuss ahead of time what is appropriate and inappropriate touching (e.g. imagine each other wearing bikinis and speedos and resolving not to touch each other on those parts of the body).</p>	<p><b>Make it easy to do the right things and hard to do the wrong things.</b> Do you have Sky TV? Put a security code on adult movies and make sure someone else – not you – knows the code. When using your computer at home, work in shared spaces (dining table, lounge) so it's possible for others to see what you are doing. If you struggle with drinking, don't have alcohol in your house. Organise things so that you really have to go out of your way to do what you know is wrong.</p>	<p><b>Fuel your mind with what is right.</b> Check your diet. Who do you spend most time with? What do you mostly read and watch? Who do you look to as role models? Answers to these questions will help you see what is shaping your view of right and wrong. "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things." - Philippians 4:8</p>
<p><b>Don't do anything when you are tired!</b> As much as it depends on you, avoid facing your more difficult temptations when you are tired. Or if you must do so, enlist others to pray for you and help keep you accountable.</p>	<p><b>Memorise helpful verses.</b> Jesus responded to the devil's temptations with scripture (Matthew 4:1-11); we can do the same. 1 Corinthians 10:13 is a must!</p>	<p><b>Know yourself.</b> Everyone has different areas of struggle. Eating issues? Pornography? Envy? Know what your most common weaknesses are. Naming them is the beginning of doing something about them.</p>
<p><b>Confess your sins.</b> When you sin, don't try and hide it. Confess first to God then to anyone you have offended. God forgives those ask (1 John 1:9). "Those who conceal their sins do not prosper, but those who confess and renounce them find mercy." - Proverbs 28:13</p>	<p><b>Get help from others.</b> Make yourself accountable to someone you trust. Ask them to check up on you. (James 5:16)  As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17</p>	<p><b>It's ok to change your mind.</b> Sometimes you decide to do something or go somewhere, and then you realise it isn't the best thing to do. It is always okay to change your mind – to excuse yourself and pull out. You may feel embarrassed, but that's better than falling into sin.</p>



## THOUGHT TO FINISH

Even though we fall sometimes, there is no situation that is so bad that God can't redeem it and bring some good out of it. There are always consequences to our actions, but there is also hope; the Lord is able to bring life out of death and richness out of our poverty. We fall, but he is able to pick us up.

The Spirit in us is our greatest help in testing times. He is on our side and can give us the strength we need. We need to take responsibility and do all we can, but we can take heart from the Holy Spirit within, who after all is said and done, is able to make us stand.

Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.  
- Ephesians 6:13



## 5. SUMMARY

*'Many claim to have unfailing love, but a faithful person who can find?'* (Proverbs 20:6). In our world today, there is no shortage of promises. Whether its politicians, advertisers, romantic suitors, 'how-to' book authors, 'we must get you over for dinner' acquaintances, or many others in between, there are plenty of people promising us something that they don't always deliver on. In this climate it's easy for us to become a little cynical and weary.

But when it comes to dealing with issues of eternal and ultimate significance, the stakes are too high; we can't afford to be let down. The trouble is that we all have to believe something – and someone; there is no 'fence' to permanently sit on. So who will you rely on to tell you what is true?

Who will you trust to fulfil what they promise? Joshua confronted the Israelites of his day with a question which could equally be asked of us: *"If serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."* (Joshua 24:15). Let us also positively answer this question and trust him, for ultimately he alone is faithful.



### THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Go back over the studies in this section and briefly note down the main new things you have learnt, or the things you already knew but have been freshly reminded of ...

- About God...
- About yourself...
- About your world...

God may have got your attention on one or two things you need to do as a result of going through these studies. You will have the best chance of succeeding in these things if you tell someone else about them and, if possible, if you practically plan when you will do these things.

Write these things down somewhere that will help you to act on them!



### THOUGHT TO FINISH

The Holy Spirit in us – God in us – is a game-breaker. What was impossible for us in our own strength becomes possible in his strength. We have guarantees of eternal life and access to unlimited resources and help. We become part of God's family and with the Spirit's help, we grow to increasingly share the family likeness. Let us not take the Spirit for granted. Instead, let us be very thankful and very responsive to him who lives in us.

*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? - 1 Corinthians 3:16*

*And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. - Romans 5:5*

*Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. - 2 Corinthians 1:21-22*

## THINGS TO HELP US RELATE TO GOD:

# PRAYER

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Prayer is crucial as we relate to God. In this second part of the section ‘Things to help us relate to God’ we will first of all look at what prayer is, before moving into a number of studies focused on the practice of prayer. These studies are not designed to bring about more reflection and knowledge; rather, they are designed to bring about more action! They each consider a different aspect of prayer and make some suggestions for you to try.

Please do come to this section with a willingness to try some new things. There is potentially so much to be gained, and so little to be lost. Give it a go!

### PRAYER STUDIES:

As you seek God through the studies listed below take time before you begin to ask God to reveal himself to you and to give you insight and understanding of His Word.

✓ 1. Prayer – What is it?

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✓ 2. Ways to Pray – The Quiet Time

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✓ 3. Ways to Pray – Using the Bible

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✓ 4. Ways to Pray – Anywhere, Anytime, Anything

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✓ 5. Ways to Pray – Big Day Out

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✓ 6. Summary

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# 1. PRAYER – WHAT IS IT?

Prayer is primarily *not* about requests. It's *not* about a collection of sentences followed by an 'amen'. It's *not* about words. First and foremost, prayer is about a relationship – your relationship with the LORD of the universe who is in love with you. In a relationship communication is important, and *this* is what prayer is: the words, requests, and 'amens' of communication between you and God. In this respect, prayer is a gauge to the quality of your relationship with God, so it's important stuff!



## THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

If we think of prayer at its most basic level as being our ability to communicate with God and being able to approach Him knowing that He will hear us - how often do you pray? What sort of things do you pray about? How do you pray?

- Read the following verses to help you answer the question: why is prayer important?
  - ❖ **Mark 1:32-39**
  - ❖ **Luke 22:39-44**
  - ❖ **John 16:24**
  - ❖ **James 5:13-16**
  - ❖ **Psalm 63:1, 42:1-3**

"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

- Matthew 6:5-8

- Read the verses in the box on the right. How might these ideas about prayer influence how you pray?
- God values prayer highly. If you were to be faithful in regularly praying for a handful of things over a long time, what might those things be?
- There are a number of barriers to effective praying. These include unconfessed sin (**Psalm 66:18**), selfish motives (James 4:1- 3), asking for things outside God's will, or that don't honour God (**1 John 5:14-15**), and wavering faith (**James 1:5-7**). What sort of things can we do to help us not get caught in these traps?

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. - **Luke 18:1**

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. - **Philippians 4:6**

(Jesus) has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. - **Hebrews 4:15-16**

...pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

- **Ephesians 6:18-20**

Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions.

- **Psalm 119:18 (NLT)**

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. - **James 5:16**

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. - **Colossians 4:2**



## THOUGHT TO FINISH

However, we do it, praying to the Lord is an essential activity for our hearts and minds. The beauty of it is that everyone has equal access; the Lord is available to one and all, without queues, barriers, or time limits. All that is required is a humble, soft heart and an authentic desire to meet with him and, of course, the doing of it: actually praying.

The crime is that, despite having unlimited access to the LORD and Creator of everything, we so often fail to take seriously his 'open door' policy. We don't take advantage of all that can be gained in spending time with God, because it's too easy to put aside prayer in exchange for other activities which have more 'visible' results.

Let's not fall into that trap. We're called to walk by faith, not by sight. So in faith, let's make a commitment to pray – often! Let's pray that God would open our eyes as Elisha did and then act on the unseen reality that is before us.

When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?" the servant asked. "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, LORD, so that he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. - **2 Kings 6:15-17**



## 2. WAYS TO PRAY: THE QUIET TIME

It's nice to have special meals and treats but to sustain day-in-day-out life we need to have a regular diet of basic, healthy meals. For us on the spiritual journey, the most basic 'meal' is what we commonly call the *Quiet Time*.

The Quiet Time is a daily meeting with God in prayer, Bible reading, and contemplation. The length of time spent in this isn't as important as the aim: to meet with the Lord. Jesus himself made a regular habit of meeting with the Father, "*Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.*" - **Mark 1:35**

This 'study' is not so much a study as it is a collection of practical ideas and ingredients for you to think about, and try, as you develop your own approach to spending Quiet Time with the Lord.



### THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

#### SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR QUIET TIME WITH THE LORD:

1. **Have a default, regular time, and place.** It's good to have variety, but for this to become a routine that serves you, start with a set time and place. That way you don't have to think about it; it becomes part of the day like brushing your teeth.
2. **Find a bodily position that will keep you alert.** Lying in bed may be comfortable, but it may not help concentration!
3. **Ask God to speak.** The point of doing this is not so much to learn things *about* God as to *meet with* God. For this to happen you need to slow down your heart and head, and you need spiritual help to encounter the Lord of the Universe.
4. **Mark your Bible/make a note in your Bible App as you read.** This may help you keep track of what you have done in the past and help you focus on what you believe the Lord is trying to communicate to you. It's also helpful to have a plan of where you want to read so you don't have to decide again every day. If you're not sure where to start, Psalms and the Gospels are good places to begin.
5. **Keep a notebook.** This will help you clarify and remember what the Lord is saying to you.
6. **Choose a favourite verse to be the basis of your prayer, meditation, and application.** It can be easy for your mind to wander. Use a verse that particularly stands out as a springboard for thinking and praying.
7. **Balance Bible reading and prayer.** As in any conversation, keep the balance between speaking and listening.
8. **Use a prayer list.** There are people and things that are important to us and that we want to bring before the Lord, but as humans, we can also easily forget what some of these are in the moment! A list helps us remember, and we can look back on it to see what God has done.
9. **Maintain variety.** In balance with point No.1, variety can help keep things from going stale.
10. **Develop an expectant attitude.** The Lord wants to communicate with us. Expect him to do it.
11. **Every now and then, have a Quiet Time with someone else.** This can be very encouraging and you can learn from each other.

#### A SAMPLE PLAN FOR A QUIET TIME

- Be still for a moment before God (Psalm 46:10).
- Ask God to search my heart and guide my time (Psalm 139:23-24).
- Read a section of Scripture slowly, several times.
- Meditate on the passage, and perhaps choose a verse to memorise.
- Write down what God has shown me.
- Take time to praise God for who He is.
- Tell God about any sins I'm struggling with, and ask for forgiveness and for His power to abandon them. Ask what I should do.
- Pray for the needs on my list.
- Commit myself and my day to the Lord.

## PRAYER FRAMEWORKS

There are no set rules when it comes to communicating with God – the emphasis is on speaking and listening from the heart. That said, Jesus’ disciples asked him to teach them how to pray (**Luke 11:1**), so clearly, there can be some useful things to learn. Here are two frameworks to help us in our praying.

*Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me. I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and has heard my prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!*

Psalms 66:16-20

### 1. A WAY TO PRAY: ACTS

When you pray, make sure that you include the following elements...

- ❖ **[A]** doration – focus on who the Lord is and on what he has done. It will help you praise him.
- ❖ **[C]** onfession – ask forgiveness from the Lord for anything you know that you’ve done wrong or something you should have done that you haven’t done.
- ❖ **[T]** hanksgiving – remember what God has done for you in big and little ways, and give thanks.
- ❖ **[S]** upplication – ask the Lord to meet your needs and the needs of others you know.

### 2. A WAY TO PRAY: THE LORD’S PRAYER

In **Luke 11:1-4** Jesus gave his followers some straightforward and profound guidelines in their praying. They are like five doors to enter through into the world of prayer. Most, if not all, prayers in the Bible are expressions of one or more of these areas.

Lord’s Prayer Luke 11:1-4	Area	Prompts to pray	Practical ideas
<i>Father, hallowed be your name,</i>	Praising and honouring God.	What am I thankful to God for? What aspects of God’s character am I noticing in people, nature, situations?	Find a Bible passage that describes God and use this to help you thank and praise God. Start any prayer with thanks.
<i>Your kingdom come.</i>	Growth of Gods kingdom in peoples’ lives.	What is God doing in the lives of those I know? What do I long to see God do?	Pray for the people on your relational map (see Backpack resource on <i>Sharing Faith</i> ). Use prayers in the Bible to pray for others (see 2.2.3 Ways to Pray: Using the Bible).
<i>Give us each day our daily bread.</i>	Our needs.	What do I (or friends) need? What am I (or friends) anxious about?	Write down what you are anxious about, need, or long for as a prayer to God. Pray for your friend’s needs too.
<i>Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.</i>	Forgiveness for sin.	In what ways have I sinned against God and others recently? What areas do I desperately need God to help me with? Are there people I need to forgive?	When you are aware of sin in your life use <b>Psalm 51</b> or <b>1 John 1:9</b> to ask for forgiveness from God.
<i>And lead us not into temptation.</i>	Help when tempted.	What am I struggling with currently?	Talk to God about this. Read and/or memorise 1Cor 10:13. Share with a close friend and pray for each other.



## TAKE ACTION

- ➔ This week, try the sample Quiet Time plan on the previous page
- ➔ At least once this week, try praying using the ACTS approach
- ➔ At least once this week, try praying using the Lord’s Prayer as a framework



## 3. WAYS TO PRAY - USING THE BIBLE

In the previous study we looked at the Quiet Time as a basic way to meet with the Lord, and we considered two frameworks (ACTS and the Lord's Prayer) to guide us in our praying. Here we are looking at actual prayers and passages in the Bible that we can use as a springboard to our own praying, using the words and thoughts of those who have gone before as a starting place to help us connect with God.

So whether we are personally struggling, giving thanks, claiming promises, or wanting to pray for others, these prayers can help us stand in solidarity with the generations of believers who have gone before us, as we seek to communicate from the depths of our heart with the Lord.



### THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

#### PRAYING THE PSALMS

The Book of Psalms in the Bible is a collection of musical poems that came from the life of Israel, and they are particularly designed to appeal to the emotions.

Some were written for personal use while others were to be used corporately in more formal settings. They also have a variety of purposes: lament, thanksgiving, praise, celebration, wisdom, trust, and as a reminder of the saving work God has done.

Here, we will look at Psalms of lament, thanksgiving, praise, and trust to help us pray in our personal setting.

Type	What these Psalms express	Example of Psalms to try
Lament	Struggles, suffering, or disappointment to God	Psalms 3, 22, 42, 139
Thanksgiving	The joy of the Lord because circumstances were good, people had reason to thank God for his faithfulness, protection, or benefit	Psalms 30, 66, 116
Praise	Praise for who God is as Creator and Lord of all	Psalms 8, 19, 103
Trust	God is good and cares for his people; he can be trusted even in tough times	Psalms 16, 23, 27, 121



### TAKE ACTION

- Read at least ONE of each of these types of psalms to become familiar with the style.
- At least once this week, use ONE of these psalms as a starter for prayer. As you go through the psalm, read a verse or two then use those words or thoughts to speak with God; then go on to the next few verses doing the same, until you have completed the psalm.

#### PRAYING THE PROMISES OF GOD

The Bible contains numerous promises that the Lord has given to his people throughout history. Some of these were specific for certain circumstances and others were general for all time. Some were unconditional while others required some action by those who received the promise. Many

printed Bibles have a reference section on the promises of God, and these are worth looking at. Mike Treneer, former International President of The Navigators, said this about the promises of God:

*“The promises declare the purposes of God. They reveal His intentions and express what He is doing and will do in our world. When we reflect and pray over the promises of God, it is not our faith that brings them to life as we ‘claim the promises.’ Rather, it is the promises that ignite our faith and shape our lives as they ‘claim’ us, drawing us into their fulfillment.”*

Here is a sample of promises that we can read, meditate, and pray over as we let God’s purposes start to shape and ‘claim’ us:

PROMISE	BIBLE VERSES
Eternal life	John 5:24, John 3:16
Forgiveness	1 John 1:9, Psalms 103:8-14
Help in temptation	1 Corinthians 10:13
Peace	Philippians 4:6-7, Isaiah 26:3
God on our side	Jeremiah 29:11-13, Romans 8:28-33
Guidance	Jeremiah 33:3
God’s Power with us	Isaiah 41:10, Ephesians 3:20
We can be part of God’s blessing	Genesis 12:1-3, Matthew 28:18-20

➔ Choose ONE of the passages above to read and think over, and use this as fuel for prayer, talking to God about what he has promised.

## PRAYING THE PRAYERS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

The Apostle Paul wrote a number of letters in the New Testament and in those letters he often told the recipients of those letters about some of the things he was praying for them.

These can be great examples for us to be praying for the people in our world. Here are a number of Paul’s prayers:

- **Ephesians 1:15-17**
- **Ephesians 3:16-21**
- **Philippians 1:3-11**
- **Colossians 1:9-12**
- **Colossians 4:2-4**
- **2 Thessalonians 1:11-12**
- **2 Thessalonians 3:1-2**
- **Philemon 1:4-6**

*For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all his people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.*

- Ephesians 1:15-17



## TAKE ACTION

➔ Choose ONE of the passages above. Note the things Paul prayed for and use this as a basis to pray for someone in our world.

Feel free to try some of these prayer approaches with someone else. *What we need to learn to do, we learn by doing.* Be diligent in trying some of these ways of praying and you will not regret it!



## 4. WAYS TO PRAY – ANYTIME, ANYWHERE, ANYTHING

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all people.” - John 1:1-4*

So begins John’s Gospel. In his introduction, we are reminded that through Christ, the Living Word, all things were made, and that Word is the source of life for us all. He is everywhere sustaining everything. There is no place on earth where he is not!

If we were to meet the leader of our country, we would probably need to go to where they are and we would have a set meeting time with a definite end. By contrast, amazingly we can meet with the LORD of the Universe anytime, anywhere and we can talk with him about anything! This is a mind-blowing privilege that many of us fail to really take advantage of as much as we should.

This study has some suggestions for things we can try that might help us integrate prayer into all the ‘nooks and crannies’ of our lives.



### THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

#### FROM THE BIBLE: ANYWHERE, ANYTIME, ANYTHING

The Bible includes a number of stories of people in history who prayed in a variety of settings for a variety of things. Here are some examples:

- **Nehemiah 2:1-5** Nehemiah prayed mid-conversation with the king
- **Genesis 24:10-15** Abraham’s servant prayed for very practical, specific guidance in finding a wife for Isaac
- **2 Chronicles 6:14-39** Solomon asked the Lord to hear the prayers of people in whatever situation they were in (when a man wrongs a neighbour when Israel has been defeated by an enemy when there is no rain, when famine or plague, when foreigners pray when people go to war when people sin then repent.)
- **Matthew 14:28-31** Peter prayed a three-word prayer while sinking in the middle of the lake, after having initially walked on water
- **Acts 16:25** Paul and Silas prayed at midnight in prison

The king said to me, "What is it you want?" ***Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king,*** "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favour in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it." - **Nehemiah 2:1-5**

There are no limits! In every area of our lives, we need to acknowledge the presence of the Lord and seek his help.

Then he prayed, "LORD, God of my master Abraham, make me successful today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. May it be that when I say to a girl, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too'--let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac..." Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder.

- **Genesis 24:10-15**

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. - **Acts 16:25**

## IDEAS FOR PRAYING ANYWHERE, ANYTIME, ABOUT ANYTHING

<p><b>Pray NOW!</b> Often we get asked to pray for someone or something. If we wait until a more convenient time, chances are we will forget to do it. SO, when you're asked to pray, do it <i>immediately</i> (even if it's just in your head). If you do pray again later for that request, that is great, but at least you have prayed once for it.</p>	<p><b>Sacred Places</b> Identify the 2 places you spend the most time in a day. When you first arrive there in the day, pray, committing your time in that place to the Lord. This will help remind you that God is everywhere.</p>	<p><b>Prayer hand</b> Assign a name to each finger on your hand. Choose a regular event (eg washing your hands) to remind you to pray for each of these people.</p>
<p><b>On the go</b> If you regularly travel by foot, bus or car, choose to spend the first 2 minutes of the journey praying. (You can always pray longer, but if your goal is 2 minutes every time, then it becomes very achievable). You could use the prayer hand or a memory verse as a starter to pray.</p>	<p><b>Conversational prayer</b> When sharing prayer requests with someone, you can often end up just talking and never get around to praying. Change the way you think about this. Begin by being aware that God is with you as you share information. End by praying 'Lord you have heard all of this. Please hear and answer our prayers' (or similar). Doing this regularly can also increase your expectation that God will guide your conversation.</p>	<p><b>Turn off the iPhone</b> Constant noise can take all of your headspace. Turn it off for a while and pray. Or at least choose to pray for a few minutes before turning on your iPhone (or other noise-making device). Likewise, before you turn your phone on in the morning (please do turn it off at night) take a few minutes to pray, committing your day to the Lord</p>
<p><b>Light</b> In the Bible, light is an image that is often used to communicate God's help to seeing things as they are. Whenever you switch on a light anywhere pray 'may I be a light for you in this place', or if you're by yourself there, ask God to be a guiding light in your own life.</p>	<p><b>Social Media</b> When you use social media (eg Facebook) to look at a person's photos or details, spend a few moments praying for that person <i>before</i> you leave their page.</p>	<p><b>Planes and other triggers</b> Attach reminders to some semi-regular things in your world. For example, whenever you see a plane take a moment to pray for someone you know overseas. Or if you're watching a sporting event on TV, pray for someone you know who plays that sport.</p>



### TAKE ACTION

- Don't try and do all of these things or you will end up doing none of them! Choose one or two to try this week, and if it's a helpful practise, work hard to cement it as a habit. Only then, try another one.
- Remember: these prayer ideas should not be used as a substitute to spending unhurried quality time with God; they are a complement.



## 5. WAYS TO PRAY – BIG DAY OUT

It's good to keep some daily disciplines going that help you stay connected with the Lord, but it's also good to have some seasonal disciplines of spending extended time out with God in prayer. The Bible gives us a few stories of people who did that at various times: Moses spent forty days and nights with the Lord more than once (Ex 24:18, Ex 34:28); Nehemiah prayed and wept before the Lord for some days when he heard the plight of Jerusalem (Neh 1:4); and Jesus spent whole nights praying (Luke 6:12) as well as 40 days in the desert during his temptation (Luke 4:1-13).



### THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

**Mark 1:35**

Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, Jesus said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.

**Mark 6:31-32**

Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

**Luke 5:15-16**

One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles

**Luke 6:12-13**

(After John the Baptist had been killed):

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place.

**Matthew 14:13**

Lorne Sanny, a previous International Director of The Navigators, was a great advocate for spending extended time away with the Lord in prayer and he suggested a few reasons why we might take time out from our busy lives to do this:

- For extended fellowship with God
- For a renewed perspective
- For catching up on our prayers for others
- For prayerful consideration of our own lives
- For preparation for what the Lord might have us to next

This is well worth trying. You have so much to gain from it, and so little to lose!

### A SUGGESTED APPROACH FOR A BIG DAY OUT WITH GOD

- **Put a date in your diary.** Setting aside three or more hours of time in a day is not easy. Get it in the diary so that you can plan around it. And assuming you find this practice helpful, when you get to the end of your Big Day Out, make sure you put another date in for the next one. Fail to do this and it may well be a long time before you get back to it.
- **Choose a venue.** You may like to get out into nature or you may prefer to sit in a café or two in town. Whatever the case, choose somewhere that you won't be disturbed by others and where you won't be distracted. For this reason, it's probably not good to do this at home.

- **Take some resources with you.** Make sure you have a Bible, some paper, and a pen. If you have a journal that you write any spiritual insights in, take that with you so that you can continue to note down anything that God gets your attention on. You may also want to bring an inspirational book you're reading and music that helps you connect with the Lord.

## DIVIDE THE TIME INTO 3 PARTS:

- ***Waiting on the Lord.***

This is where you slow down and seek God. To do this you may find it helpful to read a Psalm or some other part of the Bible that you have found inspiring in the past. Here, in an unhurried way, you are just trying to realise the truth that you are in God's presence.

- ***Praying for others.***

Think through some of the people in your world. Pray for them. You may want to use some of the other prayer ideas from the previous studies as a guide. Some questions that may help you as you think particularly about any people close to you are:

- Where is this person now in his or her walk with Christ?
- What is he or she ready for?
- What is most urgent?
- How can I help?

- ***Praying for yourself.***

If you have a habit of writing reflections in your journal about your relationship with God and what you've been learning, you may want to read back over any of these since the last time you had extended time out with God. You might also write what you sense the Lord has been getting your attention on.

Two important questions that the Apostle Paul asked at his conversion were:

*'Who are you, Lord?'* and

*'What shall I do, Lord?'* (Acts 22:8-10)

These are good questions to keep in mind as you allow the Lord to guide your time with him.

## A FEW FINAL THOUGHTS...

- **Action Points.** Before you leave your Big Day Out, make a note of any action points you need to follow up on.
- **Calendar.** Before you leave, you may also want to look ahead at the coming month (or whatever period suits) so that you can do some planning in light of anything the Lord has got your attention on.
- **Finish in praise.** It's good to end by thanking the Lord and praising him for who he is!

You needn't feel as though every Big Day Out will bring amazing insights, but as you experiment with what works best for you, you will find this to be a refreshing, helpful and enjoyable discipline to make time for!



## 6. SUMMARY

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. - **Ephesians 3:16-21**



### THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

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Go back over the studies in this section and briefly note down the main new things you have learnt or the things you have tried as you have sought to integrate more prayer into your life.

God may have got your attention on one or two things you need to do as a result of going through these studies. Perhaps it is to make a long-term commitment to incorporating a particular prayer practice into your everyday life.

Whatever it is, you will have the best chance of succeeding in these things if you tell someone else about them and, if possible, if you practically plan when you will do these things.

Write these things down somewhere that will help you to act on them!



### THOUGHT TO FINISH

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The great reformer, Martin Luther, once said, "If I fail to spend two hours in prayer each morning, the devil gets the victory through the day. I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer." Such was his large view of reality. We may not yet feel we are up to this 'Olympic' standard, but we do need to continue to grow in our appreciation and practice of prayer. Little by little, step by step, as we call to God we can be assured he will answer us and tell us great and unsearchable things we do not know (Jeremiah 33:3) and as we do this, like Luther, our view of reality will grow. It's worth the effort. Pray today!

## THINGS TO HELP US RELATE TO GOD:

# THE BIBLE

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The Bible is a crucial resource for our faith journey with God. This book has a diversity of content including history, poetry, proverbs, law, prophecy, and letters, which all in one way or another tell the story of how people from history have encountered and come to know the Lord of Heaven and Earth.

This is not just a history book, however. There is life in these pages as we, too, seek to encounter and walk with this Lord. Reading the Bible with an open heart and mind, we can meet with the Author of life who wants to meet with us!

The following studies do include some things to get you thinking, but more of the emphasis is on practically helping you get into the Bible, as you read, study and memorise portions of the book. The skills and ideas here really are worth trying. This will take time and effort on your part, but when the aim of all this is a growing experience of eternal life with God, we really do believe it's worth the effort.

Just like the section on Prayer, please do come to this section with a willingness to try some new things. There is potentially so much to be gained, and so little to be lost. Give it a go!

### THE BIBLE STUDIES:

As you seek God through the studies listed below take time before you begin to ask God to reveal himself to you and to give you insight and understanding of His Word.

✓ 1. The Bible – What is it?

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✓ 2. The Bible – Read it

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✓ 3. The Bible – Study it

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✓ 4. The Bible – Memorise it

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✓ 5. Summary

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# 1. THE BIBLE – WHAT IS IT?

The Bible is the world’s bestselling book. It is the most translated book of all time. Western language and culture, in particular, have been deeply influenced by its many stories and ideas. Allusions to the Bible just keep on popping up all over the place. But despite this, many people do not find it an easy read. In a fast-paced, highly interactive, multimedia age, reading a very large, old book will understandably require some thought and commitment. We need a little help if we are to join the millions of people who have learned to make reading the Bible an indispensable part of their everyday lives. But the rewards can be great! It is no exaggeration to say that the bible has changed more lives for good than any other book on the planet and its most profound effect is to bring people into a living, personal, on-going relationship with God.



## THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

How should we approach the Bible? Read the following verses to see some of the ways we can think about the Bible, how we can approach it, and how it can help us.

VERSES:	What it is. What it is like.	How to approach it.	What it does. How it helps.
Psalm 1:1-3			
Psalm 19:7-11			
2 Timothy 3:15-17			
Psalm 119:97-105			
Matthew 4:1-10			
Joshua 1:8			

- Now consider the following passages which identify some potential problems we may have with the Word. What sorts of things can get in the way when it comes to reading the Bible?

**James 1:22-25**

**John 5:39-40**

**2 Corinthians 3:12-18**

- Read through the descriptions of the Bible from the box on the right. Which description(s) best describe the way you approach the Bible when you read it?

For an exercise, try reading while focusing on an approach that you don't normally use and note how it makes a difference to your reading.

## WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

### **The Bible is a Large Unfolding Story.**

Opening the Bible randomly and beginning to read is a bit like dropping in half-way through a Harry Potter or Lord of the Rings movie. It takes a while to figure out what is going on. You need to be patient and let the picture build. But there is an overall plot, repeated themes and main characters. Someone has likened the Bible to a musical symphony where the same melodic themes are re-expressed over and over. Picking up on these big "notes" is a key to understanding the story of God and the human race.

### **The Bible Is 'The Story We Find Ourselves In'.**

We are not detached readers. As we begin to read it will dawn upon us that we are characters in the story. What began with Genesis in the distant past and will end with the book of Revelation is going on here and now. We discover how previous generations advanced the story so we can find our place, and with God's help move the story along. It's our turn now! In this sense it helps us "find ourselves". It is the "authorised story" of the human race that answers the big 'world-view' questions: 'Who am I?', 'Where am I', 'Why am I here?', 'What is God like?', 'What is wrong?' 'What can be done about it?'

### **The Bible is a very Personal book.**

Reading the Bible is to be a "café experience" rather than a "library experience". We don't merely study and analyse it. We listen to it – or rather, we listen to God speaking through it. It is designed to be a place to encounter God. So when I pick up the Bible it is not just me and the Bible; it is me in conversation with God over an open Bible.

### **The Bible is a Spiritual book.**

By this statement we understand that the Bible has a special character that no other book has. Although written by human authors it claims to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. Not only so, but it can only be truly understood with the help of the Holy Spirit. (See 2 Peter 1:21 & 2 Corinthians 2:14) The bottom line is we need to be open to the Spirit of God working in our hearts and minds as we read. Attitudes like humility, trust, expectancy and responsiveness are important here.

**The Bible needs to be Interpreted.** It is a Middle-Eastern book translated from Greek and Hebrew. It is set in unfamiliar historical and cultural contexts. It is written by scores of different authors employing a variety of literary forms, from poetry through to personal correspondence. This doesn't mean we cannot take much of it at face value, but we need to treat it according to the different literature styles used, and our reading will be greatly enhanced by referring to the excellent background notes and introductions found in many modern translations.



## THOUGHT TO FINISH

The Bible is a collection of stories of real people living in real situations experiencing God and each other in their different worlds over a few thousand years. And through this collection of stories we start to see a big story emerging: of God relentlessly pursuing people to develop a relationship of love with them and to help them find the beginnings of life as it was always meant to be lived. It is a great story.

Now you and I can find *our* place in that story as we encounter the living God through the Bible and it can shape our lives. But to do this, we must first open the book. And we must do it regularly. There is a wealth of resources available to us in the Bible. The question is, will we use it?



## 2. THE BIBLE – READ IT

The Bible can be a difficult book to read, especially given that it was written a few thousand years ago, over a long period of time, in a variety of cultural settings, and using three different languages. It is useful to have access to devotional notes, commentaries, and the thoughts that others have gleaned from the scriptures, but we should have confidence that we can come to the Bible to hear from God ourselves; we don't always need to hear second hand from others we consider to be experts. The Lord wants to speak to us and a significant way he does this is speaking through our reading of the Bible.



### THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

#### READING THE BIBLE: HABITS, SKILLS, QUESTIONS

Here are some ideas that can help us listen carefully to what the Lord might be wanting to say to us as we read the Bible.

##### Whenever reading the Bible...

- Ideally, find a space in your day when you are alert and undistracted.
- Begin by inviting God to speak to you. Ask him to “open your eyes (and heart) so that you might see wonderful things in his word” Psalm 119:18
- As you read, notice what parts of the passage most catch your attention.
- Select a phrase or sentence that seems particularly meaningful. Read it slowly several times, each time emphasizing a different word. Note down your thoughts.
- Write down any feelings, memories, relationships, issues, or situations that come to mind.
- Take time to talk to God about these things.
- Read the passage through a second time. This time pray your way through the passage. Read a sentence or two then stop and pray about whatever comes to mind. Invite the Holy Spirit to direct your heart and mind as you pray. If you don't have time for a full second reading, go back over the section you read, pulling out the main idea, and use that as the basis to pray.

##### Some Good Questions to keep in mind when reading...

- What does this say about God's character, purposes, and relationship with people?
- What does this say about my inner life – my character, heart, attitudes, my identity, and purpose?
- What does this say about my relationships with other people, my friends, family, 'neighbours'?
- What does this say about my outer world – my work, my studies, health, money, possessions? What does it say about the world I live in – the government, environment, justice, arts...?

Where you sense some connection, talk to God more about your specific situation and re-read the important sections, perhaps even taking notes of any new insights or perspective. These might come from:

- ➔ *Warnings...* on things to avoid
- ➔ *Promises...* to claim
- ➔ *Examples...* to reflect on
- ➔ *Commands...* to follow
- ➔ *Good thoughts...* to stick in your memory

## SOME DIFFERENT WAYS TO READ THE BIBLE

- Find some people you can read the Bible with. Read separately and agree to meet regularly to talk about what you are learning or organise to read the Bible together and discuss as you go.
- Blitz reading: try taking an extended time (perhaps 30-60 minutes) each week to read great chunks of the Bible in one go
- Daily reading: reading for 15-20 minutes each day should allow you to read the Bible in a year
- Put yourself into the story: think what it would be like to be there, to hear the words spoken, to experience what happened
- Read from a variety of versions/translations: this will bring new insights, variety, and fresh impact
- Put the passage in your own words
- Keep a journal of your thoughts and reflections
- Take time; don't rush. Enjoy quiet moments of reflection in God's Word.
- Listen to music that has incorporated portions of the Bible
- Pray over a passage; turn each verse into a response to God
- Keep the balance between the "intellectual" (mind), the "devotional" (emotions), and the "practical" (will). Allow God to speak to your whole being. Allow God to speak to every area of your life.
- Listen to God's word: find copies of the Bible on CD or as mp3s.

## EXTRA READING RESOURCES

- **God's Unfolding Story.** The following pages map out the books and main characters of the Bible in the context of what else was happening in world history at the time.
- **Bible Reading Log.** The page following 'God's Unfolding Story' has a box for every chapter of every book of the Bible. Take this page and leave it with your Bible. Once you've read a chapter mark it off on the sheet until you have read it all! Alternatively, you can sign up for an online reading plan that can help you read through the Bible in a year. There are also several great apps available as well.
- **Online resources.** Go online and look at some of the Bible resources such as bible.org, biblia.com, biblehub.com, biblegateway.com, or download free software such as e-sword. These can help give you instant access to different Bible versions, notes, commentaries, and articles. You can also find many very helpful resources on books of the Bible, word studies, and themes at thebibleproject.com.



## TAKE ACTION

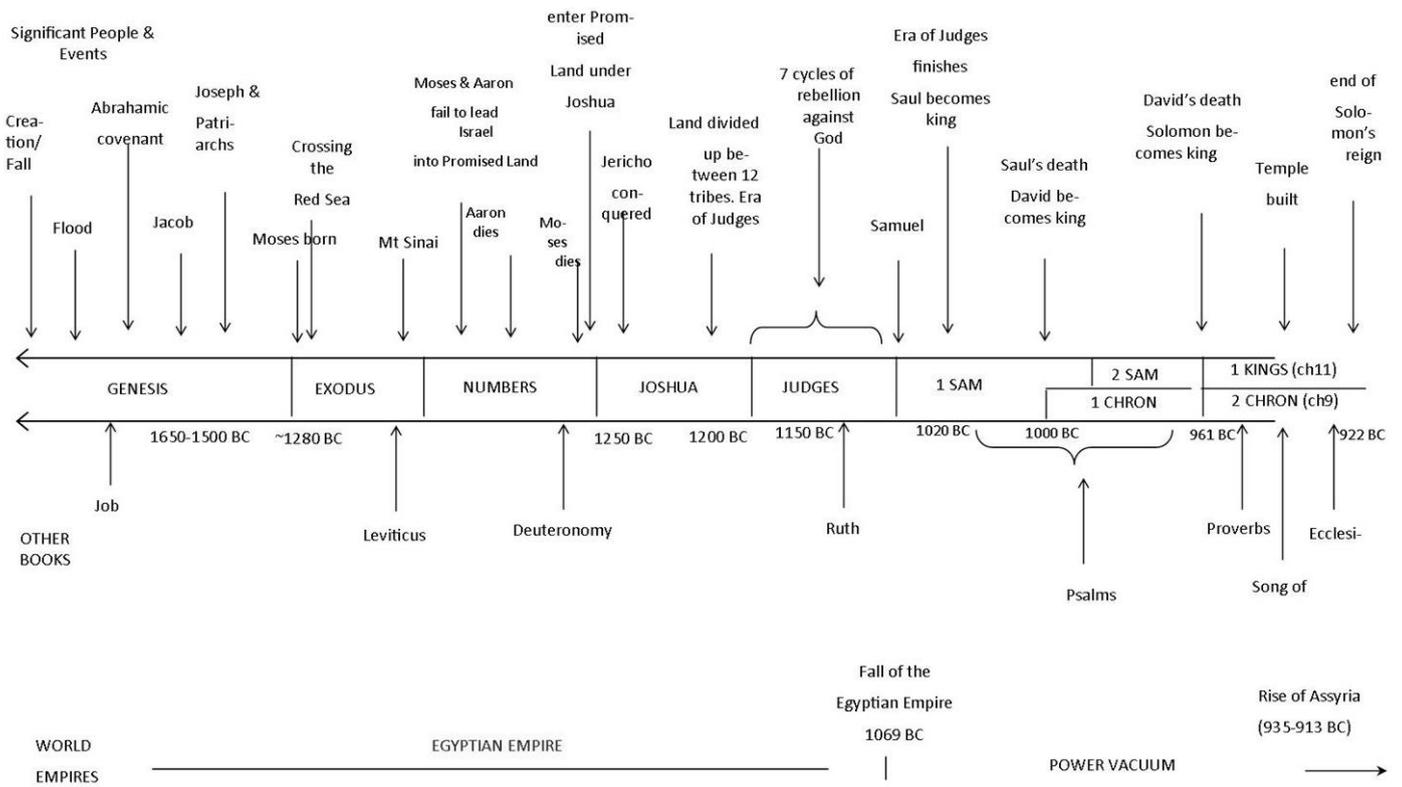
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- From the ideas that you have read in this study, choose 2 or 3 that you will do something with this week. Tell someone about what you intend to do, and once you've done it, tell them how it went.
- Have the 'Good Questions' section (over the page) with you at least once this week when you read. Use it to help you engage with the passage you are reading.
- There is no one thing you can do that will guarantee lifelong reading of the Bible but do spend some time praying, asking God to help you develop consistent habits that will allow the regular intake of God's word in your life.

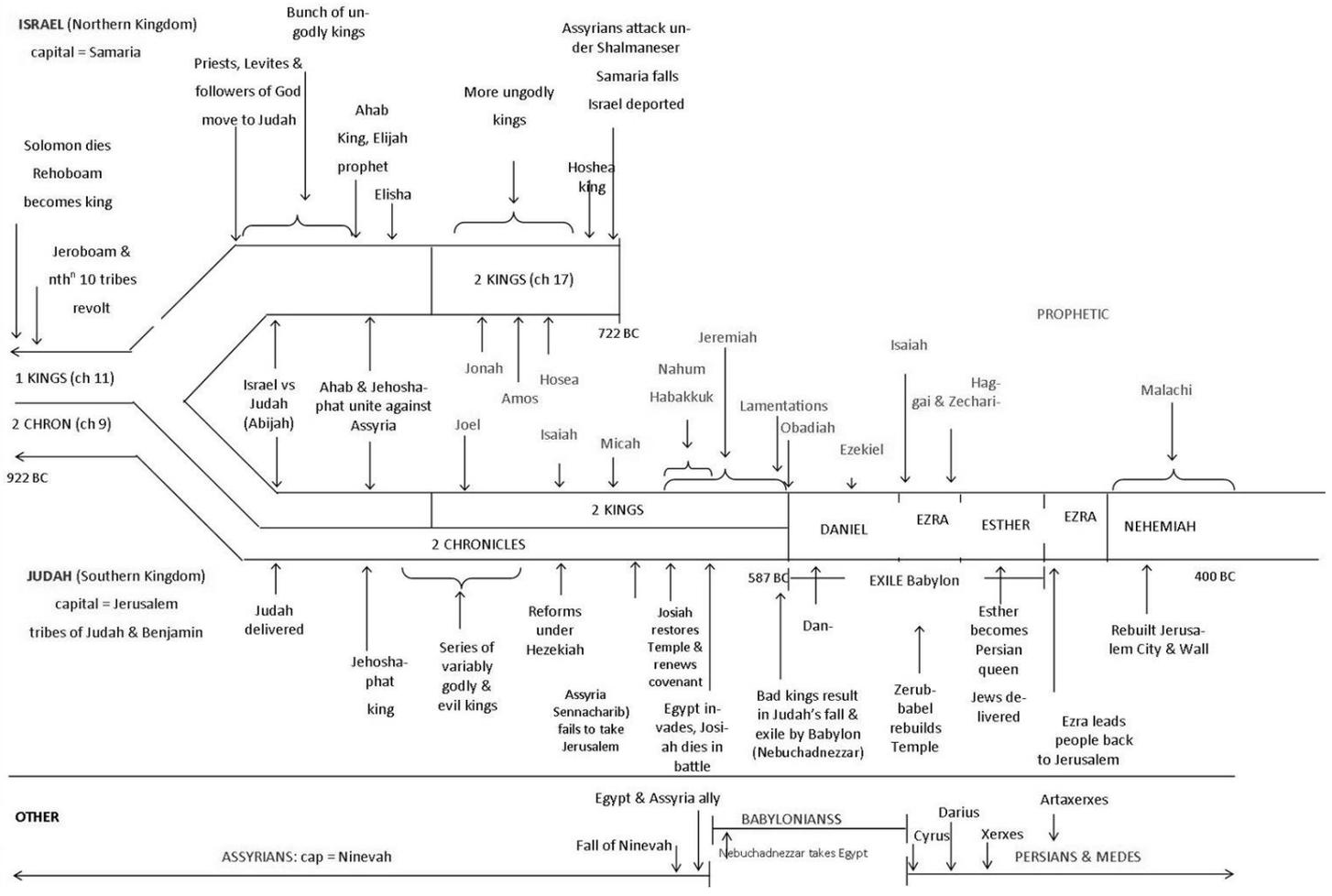
# OVERVIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

## Old Testament Part 1

### GOD'S UNFOLDING STORY



## Old Testament Part 2







## 3. THE BIBLE — STUDY IT

An opinion is something you hold. A conviction is something that holds you. The only way to get solid convictions is by doing your own thinking and testing it out. Studying the Bible is vital because it is an important way to help us do our own thinking. When we study, we don't begin by knowing all the answers; we don't have predetermined outcomes. Rather, this is an open, original study. Together, with our fellow travellers and with the help of the Holy Spirit, we get to figure things out for ourselves. And that is very exciting!



### THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

#### BASIC STUDY: OBSERVATION, INTERPRETATION, APPLICATION

At the most basic level of studying the Bible, there are three things we need to become good at:

1. Observation – what does this passage say?
2. Interpretation – what does this passage mean in its original setting?
3. Application – what does this passage mean for me today?

Whether we're studying a book of the Bible, a chapter, or a topic, these are important skills...

<p>1. <b>Observation</b> – reading a passage for the first time, it is easy to focus on what we don't understand, what puzzles us, or what interests us. But this causes us to narrow in on a few things; it limits our ability to take in <i>all</i> that is being said. Observation asks the question, <b>What is being said?</b> It is the art of noticing and appreciating as much as possible in the passage, even the obvious things. It is amazing how much more we will see in a passage if we just take a little time.</p>	<p><b>OBSERVATION</b> Note key ideas, words, arguments, instructions, illustrations, emotions, attitudes, actions. Gather info about people, relationships, and events.</p>
<p>2. <b>Interpretation</b> – once we have a good grasp of what is there, we can focus on what it means. Interpretation asks the question, <b>What does this mean?</b> Or, more particularly <b>What did this mean when it was written 2000 years ago?</b> One danger is that we move too quickly to 'What does this mean to me?' (That comes later, in the "Responding" step). Here, in particular, we are trying to come to grips with things we don't understand. Interpretation involves stating our questions, gathering information, and drawing conclusions.</p>	<p><b>INTERPRETATION</b> Note words to define, ideas to clarify, questions to answer. Gather relevant info from the passage itself, cross-references, and background sources. Suggest answers and conclusions</p>
<p>3. <b>Application</b> - the key questions are, <b>What does this mean to me? What does this mean to us?</b> Here, we track the things that the Holy Spirit is stirring in us. This is the really exciting part because God is in the process of transforming us, making us more and more like Jesus in how we think, feel, and act (2 Corinthians 3:18). In this step, we need to identify where we are at present and where we believe God wants us to be.</p>	<p><b>APPLICATION</b> What does this passage stir in you – ideas, longings, and desires? What situations, people, experiences, issues, come to mind? How could you respond? Is there a command to obey? A promise to claim? An error to avoid? An example to follow? A principle to apply?</p>

## METHOD FOR STUDYING A TOPIC IN THE BIBLE

If you would like to learn what the Bible says about a particular topic (e.g. success, time, money, marriage, work, conflict resolution,...) here is a tremendous study method to help you.

### Part ONE

<p><b>1. Define your Topic clearly</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State in one word what you are studying.</li> <li>• Write out the main questions you have regarding the topic (two or three at the most).</li> <li>• In light of your questions, write a short sentence stating the purpose of your study.</li> <li>• Choose the boundaries of your study - a book, a section of the Bible, the whole Bible.</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Locate your references</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List any synonyms for your topic (e.g. if looking at the topic of 'work' you might also look at 'call', 'ministry', or you may try and find all occasions where God is described as a worker – gardener, potter, shepherd,...)</li> <li>• With your topic and synonyms, locate references using Concordance, Cross-reference column, Skim reading, Bible software</li> <li>• Set a limit on the number of verses you can handle, choosing those that seem to be most relevant.</li> </ul>
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**3. Make observations**  
List verses you have chosen down one side of paper or word doc and set up the following columns.

Verse	Observations	Questions	Applications	Key Thought
	Note any detail. Bombard the references with questions such as Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? Note the nouns, verbs, and other key words	Write down what you do not understand, or things that could be a problem for someone else.	List possible applications.	Summarize the main idea in the verse that relates to your topic

### Part TWO

<p><b>4. Arrange the Verses in Categories</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 'Key Thoughts' from Part One will help you select your categories. Ask yourself Questions like "What are the main categories suggested by these verses?" or "How would I outline this subject to another person?" Alternatively you may simply use the Questions "What? Why? How? When? Who? Where?" Some verses may fit under more than one category.</li> <li>• For each category write a summary paragraph using as many of the key thoughts of the verses as possible.</li> </ul>	<p><b>5. Derive A Personal Application</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the list of possible applications in Part One and select the most relevant and needful.</li> <li>• Write out a personal application using the following outline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The TRUTH to apply - state in a single sentence.</li> <li>- The NEED in my life in relation to this truth.</li> <li>- My PLAN to meet this need.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>6. Prepare for Sharing With Others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look back at Part One, Section 1, in light of your stated purpose for the study, draw one or more conclusions.</li> <li>• For your conclusion(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- select the verse(s) that most clearly support(s) it</li> <li>- develop an illustration(s) that helps explain or reinforce it</li> <li>- state how your conclusion should affect our lives</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Rework the above into a short conviction talk to share with the others.</li> </ul>
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## TAKE ACTION

Find some friends to do this with. Choose either a topic study using the above method for a small, limited topic study OR choose a chapter or book of the Bible to study using the observation, interpretation, application skills over the page. (To do this second option, you could download a New Testament book study from [www.navigators.org.nz](http://www.navigators.org.nz).)



## 4. THE BIBLE – MEMORISE IT

Life is complex. It seems that we increasingly have more opportunities to do things and go places, and so we do! But with our more densely packed lives comes more densely packed heads, and we can find it hard to remember that the Lord is with us in every moment, in every place, and that he wants to help us live the life to the full that he called us to.

Memorising some portions of the Bible can help us with this. In the process of memorising a verse, we are forced to think about the individual words, and this can help our meditation and think about what they might mean. Currently memorising something also means it is somewhere in the short term memory (rather than the distant past) and so is more likely to ‘pop up’ in our day, and we are more likely to make connections between the verse and our everyday life. Memory verses can also act as a great starter for prayer, giving us some ideas on things to pray about wherever we are, whatever time of day. This can also help us in our decision-making, as the verses remind us of important values or ways of looking at our decisions, especially when we have to make decisions on the spot without time to refer to the Bible.

Many, many people can testify to the enormous benefits of memorising Bible verses. It requires ongoing work but the dividends are huge. It is worth the effort... give it a go today!



### THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

#### MEMORISING BIBLE VERSES

##### STEP 1: CHOOSE THE VERSES

- One way to choose your verses is to start with passages from the Bible that you have found meaningful. In this case, it would be good to make a list of at least three or four passages so that once you have learned the first one you can go onto the next one without having to think too hard about it (this is a potential obstacle that can slow you down). It would be good to make sure you always had a few extra ready to learn once you’ve completed the current one.
- Another way is to use a framework as a guide to learning verses on set topics. For example, you could use the ‘What God is Doing’ framework from the Backpack to choose verses. This might be as follows:

Topic	Possible verses	Your choice on these themes
Creation	Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 2:15-16	
Fall	Genesis 6:5-6, Romans 3:23	
Redemption – Big Story	John 5:24, Ephesians 2:8-9	
Redemption – NOW	Romans 8:1-2, John 10:10	
Future hope	Revelation 21:3-4, 1Corinthians 15:55-57	

You could then also go on to memorise verses based on other parts of the Backpack.

Another framework that you could use is the original verses that make up The Navigator's Topical Memory System. These are listed in the table on the right.

### STEP 2: MEMORISE

- As you start to memorise the verse, read the Bible context in which it is written to help you understand what it means.
- When you start trying to memorise, include the verse reference and topic (if you have one) as this will help you find the verse in a Bible or remind you of the context and theme of the verse.
- After saying the reference and topic, learn the verse phrase by phrase, including more and more of it as you go. Always start at the beginning.
- Say the verse out loud as much as possible as this will help. Try to regularly use the verse as a starter for prayer and ask God to help you see how it might be relevant in your life.
- Write the verse out, either on paper or electronically so that it's easy for you to keep working on learning it as you go throughout your day.

### STEP 3: REVIEW!

- Once you have learnt the verse, that is not the end of it... only the beginning! You will need to regularly review the verses you are learning because every time you add a new verse to learn, it becomes that much easier to forget the ones you have learnt in the past.
- Find a regular time in your day or week in which you can go back over the verses you have already learnt. For this, you will need a good system ( e.g. written somewhere on small cards, in a notebook, or electronically on your computer or phone,...)
- Ask a friend to review your verses with you, and you can encourage them by helping them with theirs.

Navigator Topical Memory System verses		
<b>LIVE THE NEW LIFE</b>		
Christ the Center	2 Corinthians 5:17	Galatians 2:20
Obedience to Christ	Romans 12:1	John 14:21
The Word	2 Timothy 3:16	Joshua 1:8
Prayer	John 15:7	Philippians 4:6,7
Fellowship	Matthew 18:20	Hebrews 10:24,25
Witnessing	Matthew 4:19	Romans 1:16
<b>PROCLAIM CHRIST</b>		
All Have Sinned	Romans 3:23	Isaiah 53:6
Sin's Penalty	Romans 6:23	Hebrews 9:27
Christ Paid the Penalty	Romans 5:8	1 Peter 3:18
Salvation is not by Works	Ephesians 2:8,9	Titus 3:5
Must Receive Christ	John 1:12	Revelation 3:20
Assurance of Salvation	1 John 5:13	John 5:24
<b>RELY ON GOD'S RESOURCES</b>		
His Spirit	1 Corinthians 3:16	1 Corinthians 2:12
His Strength	Isaiah 41:10	Philippians 4:13
His Faithfulness	Lamentations 3:22,23	Numbers 23:19
His Peace	Isaiah 26:3	1 Peter 5:7
His Provision	Romans 8:32	Philippians 4:19
His Help in Temptation	Hebrews 2:18	Psalms 119:9,11
<b>BE CHRIST'S DISCIPLE</b>		
Put Christ First	Matthew 6:33	Luke 9:23
Separate From the World	1 John 2:15,16	Romans 12:2
Be Steadfast	1 Corinthians 15:58	Hebrews 12:3
Serve Others	Mark 10:45	2 Corinthians 4:5
Give Generously	Proverbs 3:9,10	2 Corinthians 9:6,7
Develop World Vision	Acts 1:8	Matthew 28:19,20
<b>GROW IN CHRISTLIKENESS</b>		
Love	John 13:34,35	1 John 3:18
Humility	Philippians 2:3,4	1 Peter 5:5,6
Purity	Ephesians 5:3	1 Peter 2:11
Honesty	Leviticus 19:11	Acts 24:16
Faith	Hebrews 11:6	Romans 4:20,21
Good Works	Galatians 6:9,10	Matthew 5:16



## TAKE ACTION

- ➔ This week, memorise a verse. Don't wait until you have everything in place. Just start with something, and experience the benefits of it.
- ➔ If you would like to keep doing this, tell someone! Accountability is our friend. Ask the person to help you review the verses you are learning, and encourage them to memorise as well. Don't wait... do it today!



## 5. SUMMARY

Remember that the Bible is one of the most crucial resources for our faith journey with God. There is life in these pages as we seek to encounter and walk with the Lord. Reading the Bible with an open heart and mind, we can meet with the Author of life who wants to meet with us!

It is also good to remember that when we take time to meet with the Living God of the Universe that the rewards will be great! It is no exaggeration to say that the bible has changed more lives for good than any other book on the planet and its most profound effect is to bring people into a living, personal, on-going relationship with God. It is through the Spirit of God using the Word of God that births spiritual life in us and sets us on a lifetime journey of being transformed to look more like the Son of God – Jesus Christ. May God bless you on this journey!



### THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Go back over the studies in this section and briefly note down the main new things you have learnt, or the things you already knew but have been freshly reminded of ...

- About God...
- About yourself...
- About your world...

God may have gotten your attention on one or two things you need to do as a result of going through these studies. Perhaps it is to make a long-term commitment to memorise verses or to regularly study the Bible or to start a reading plan to read the Bible in a year. Whatever it may be, you will have the best chance of succeeding in these things if you tell someone else about them and, if possible, if you practically plan when you will do these things.

Write these things down somewhere that will help you to act on them!



### THOUGHT TO FINISH

The Holy Spirit in us – God in us – is a game-breaker. What was impossible for us in our own strength becomes possible in his strength. We have guarantees of eternal life and access to unlimited resources and help. We become part of God's family and with the Spirit's help we grow to increasingly share the family likeness. Let us not take the Spirit for granted. Instead, let us be very thankful and very responsive to him who lives in us.

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. - **Hebrews 4:12**

## THE NAVIGATORS OF NEW ZEALAND

*The Navigators of NZ is a non-profit (and non-denominational) organisation that aims to help people find Good News for their life through the story and life of Jesus. We work with people in the areas of developing character, vision and practical skills so that they can follow Jesus in their everyday world. However, this is never just for their own benefit. We help people with the aim of them going on to also help others. This resource is a valuable tool to help you and others on The Journey.*

*The Navigators of NZ is also part of an international organisation - The Navigators – which is involved in over 100 countries around the world. If you'd like any more info on this, just make contact with us: [info@navigator.org.nz](mailto:info@navigator.org.nz) or visit our website listed below.*

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