

How to have a personal bible study

- you will need: A Bible, a notebook/journal, a pen
- set aside 15 – 30 minutes at a time when you're alert
- go somewhere nice, away from distractions, and turn off your phone
- Avoid the 'random flick' and pick a book of the bible to work through systematically – e.g. the Gospel of Luke.

Step 1. Pray

Thank God that you're alive! Ask God to illuminate his scriptures to you, and be open to what he might say.

Step 2. Refresh your memory

Re-read your last entry to remind you what was on your mind. Maybe something significant has happened since.

Step 3. Write the Purpose of the book

Speak to Alex or Lins, or consult a good commentary (see below) to help you work out why this book of the bible was originally written. Write the purpose of the book at the top of your page.

Step 4. Read the next passage you're up to.

Read the next passage you're up to. Write down any questions you have. Eg. What the heck is a Tetrarch? or, Doesn't that seem to contradict X? or Why did Jesus say X? Don't underestimate the importance of writing your questions down. Be honest. You are allowed to doubt stuff.

Step 5. Ask "Why was this written?"

How does this passage interact with the overall purpose of the book? What do you think the original author was trying to say to his original audience? At this point you might also like to consult a commentary to get a scholars perspective. "If it's hard to see, then stand on the shoulders of a giant"

Step 6. Ask "What might God be saying to me, my family, my church, or my country?"

In light of the purpose of the book and the original intent of this passage, how is this passage relevant to you and the groups that you are part of? Write down your thoughts. Some helpful questions to consider are:

- What is this teaching me about me? Jesus? God the Father? Holy Spirit? The Kingdom of God?
- In light of the point of the passage what will I do differently this week?
- Do I need to confess something? Seek forgiveness? Say sorry?
- How should this impact my values?
- Is there an encouragement in this text?
- Is there anything I can be thankful for?
- Is there something else that I feel God might be saying to me through this?
- Has this issue come up before?

Recommended Additional Resources/ Commentaries:

1. The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament, Craig S. Keener
2. The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament, Walton, Matthews & Chavalas