



# ***The Art Of Study***

## ***Life Group Study***

*"Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them."  
Psalm 111:2*

### **I. Time of Sharing and Prayer – 10 Minutes**

Icebreaker: *What's a movie scene that can make you cry?*

After everyone has shared, go around the group, and for those who are willing, simply thank or praise God in a sentence for one thing that has been a blessing or encouragement to them this week.

### **II. The Bible Discussion – 50 Minutes**

- A. Quiet Time Update – Take 5 minutes to encourage each other with any of these questions:

*How's everyone doing with our project of starting a daily quiet time?*

*What book are you reading? Are you keeping a notebook of key verses & thoughts?*

*What's one thing you've learned so far?*

*Where could you use some help or encouragement?*

Note: Developing a new habit takes time. Keep at it, pray for one another, and enjoy the ride!

- B. In recent teachings, we discussed how going beyond mere reading, or even meditation of Scripture, into real study can deepen your love and knowledge of God. But what are some good study approaches?

We've identified 8 ways to study Scripture, which we want to work on together over the next couple of weeks. So fire up your digital device, and let's have some fun.

Don't rush through this. Take as much time as you need working through this, until each person has a basic knowledge of each study method in view.

#### **1. Search through a Study Bible.**

A study Bible is a must-have for every serious disciple. There are many good ones on the market (here's a useful article to guide you: <https://theblazingcenter.com/study-bible>). But each should offer a robust library of resources to help you grow deeper in your study.

Particularly useful will be study notes and cross-references that are found on each page of the biblical text.

Below is a sample from one study Bible on Genesis 1. Read verse 1, then have somebody read the study notes for verse 1. Then have each person look up at random any of the cross-reference verses given for verse 1 (in the middle column) and read them. (Can somebody give a working definition for a "cross-reference"?)

Once you've finished this, discuss how a study Bible could help enrich your Bible reading. If you currently own and use a study Bible, feel free to share what you enjoy about it.

## GENESIS 1:1

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### The Beginning

**1** In the beginning<sup>a</sup> God created<sup>b</sup> the heavens<sup>c</sup> and the earth.<sup>d</sup> <sup>2</sup>Now the earth was<sup>e</sup> formless<sup>e</sup> and empty,<sup>f</sup> darkness was over the surface of the deep,<sup>g</sup> and the Spirit of God<sup>h</sup> was hovering<sup>i</sup> over the waters.

<sup>3</sup>And God said,<sup>j</sup> "Let there be light," and there was light.<sup>k</sup> <sup>4</sup>God saw that the light was good,<sup>l</sup> and he separated the light from the darkness.<sup>m</sup> <sup>5</sup>God called<sup>n</sup> the light "day," and the darkness he called "night."<sup>o</sup> And there was evening, and there was morning<sup>p</sup>—the first day.

<sup>6</sup>And God said,<sup>q</sup> "Let there be an expanse<sup>r</sup> between the waters<sup>s</sup> to separate water from water."<sup>t</sup> <sup>7</sup>So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it.<sup>u</sup> And it was so.<sup>v</sup>

1:1 <sup>a</sup>Ps 102:25; Pr 8:23; Isa 40:21; 41:4, 26; Jn 1:1-2 <sup>b</sup>ver 21,27; Ge 2:3 <sup>c</sup>ver 6; Ne 9:6; Job 9:6; 37:18; Ps 96:5; 104:2; 115:15; 121:2; 136:5; Isa 40:22; 42:5; 51:13; Jer 10:12; 51:15 <sup>d</sup>Ge 14:19; 2Ki 19:15; Ne 9:6; Job 38:4; Ps 90:2; 136:6; 146:6; Isa 37:16; 40:28; 42:5; 44:24; 45:12,18; Jer 27:5; 32:17; Ac 14:15; 17:24; Eph 3:9; Col 1:16; Heb 3:4; 11:3; Rev 4:11; 10:6 <sup>e</sup>12 <sup>f</sup>Isa 23:1; 24:10; 27:10; 32:14; 34:11 <sup>g</sup>Isa 45:18; Jer 4:23 <sup>h</sup>Ge 8:2; Job 7:12; 26:8; 38:9; Ps 36:6; 42:7; 104:6; 107:24; Pr 30:4 <sup>i</sup>Ge 2:7;

<sup>8</sup>God called<sup>v</sup> the expanse "sky."<sup>w</sup> And there was evening, and there was morning<sup>x</sup>—the second day.

<sup>9</sup>And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place,<sup>y</sup> and let dry ground<sup>z</sup> appear." And it was so.<sup>a</sup> <sup>10</sup>God called<sup>b</sup> the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters<sup>c</sup> he called "seas."<sup>d</sup> And God saw that it was good.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Then God said, "Let the land

Job 33:4; Ps 104:30; Isa 32:15 (Dt 32:11); Isa 31:5 1:3 <sup>ver</sup> 6; Ps 33:6,9; 148:5; Heb 11:3 <sup>2</sup>Co 4:6\*; 1Jn 1:5-7 1:4 <sup>ver</sup> 10,12,18,21,25,31; Ps 104:31; 119:68; Jer 31:35 <sup>ver</sup> 14; Ex 10:21-23; Job 26:10; 38:19; Ps 18:28; 104:20; 105:28; Isa 42:10; 45:7 1:5 <sup>ver</sup> 8,10; Ge 2:19,23 <sup>3</sup>Ps 74:16 <sup>ver</sup> 8, 13,19,23,31 1:6 <sup>4</sup>ver 3 <sup>5</sup>ver 1; Isa 44:24; 2Pe 3:5 <sup>ver</sup> 9; Ps 24:2; 136:6 1:7 <sup>6</sup>Ge 7:11; Job 26:10; 38:8-11,16; Ps 68:33; 148:4; Pr 8:28 <sup>ver</sup> 9,11,15,24 1:8 <sup>7</sup>ver 5 <sup>8</sup>Job 9:8; 37:18; Ps 19:1; 104:2; Isa 40:22; 44:24; 45:12; Jer 10:12; Zec 12:1 <sup>9</sup>ver 5 1:9 <sup>10</sup>Job 38:8-11; Ps 33:7; 104:6-9; Pr 8:29; Jer 5:22; 2Pe 3:5 <sup>11</sup>Ps 95:5; Job 1:9; Hag 2:6 <sup>5</sup>ver 7 1:10 <sup>11</sup>ver 5 <sup>12</sup>Ps 33:7 <sup>13</sup>Job 38:8; Ps 90:2; 95:5 <sup>14</sup>ver 4

<sup>15</sup> Or possibly became

**1:1** A summary statement introducing the six days of creative activity. The truth of this majestic verse was joyfully affirmed by poet (Ps 102:25) and prophet (Isa 40:21). *In the beginning* God. The Bible always assumes, and never argues, God's existence. Although everything else had a beginning, God has always been (Ps 90:2). *In the beginning*, Jn 1:1-10, which stresses the work of Christ in creation, opens with the same phrase. *God created*. The Hebrew noun *Elohim* is plural but the verb is singular, a normal usage in the OT when reference is to the one true God. This use of the plural expresses intensification rather than number and has been called the plural of majesty, or of potentiality. In the OT the Hebrew verb for "create" is used only of divine, never of human, activity. *the heavens and the earth*. "All things" (Isa 44:24). That God created everything is also taught in Ecc 1:5; Jer 10:16; Jn 1:3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2. The positive, life-oriented teaching of v. 1 is beautifully summarized in Isa 45:18.

God's re-creating work in sin-darkened hearts (2Co 4:6).

**1:4** Everything God created is good (see vv. 10,12,18,21, 25); in fact, the conclusion declares it to be "very good" (v. 31). The creation, as fashioned and ordered by God, had no lingering traces of disorder and no dark and threatening forces arrayed against God or man. Even darkness and the deep were given benevolent functions in a world fashioned to bless and sustain life (see Ps 104:19-26; 127:2).

**1:5** *called*. See vv. 8,10. In ancient times, to name something or someone implied having dominion or ownership (see 17:5,15; 41:45; 2Ki 23:34; 24:17; Da 1:7). Both day and night belong to the Lord (Ps 74:16). *first day*. Some say that the creation days were 24-hour days, others that they were indefinite periods.

**1:6** *expanse*. The atmosphere, or "sky" (v. 8), as seen from the earth. "Hard as a mirror" (Job 37:18) and "like a canopy" (Isa 40:22) are among the many pictorial phrases used to describe it.

## 2. Consult A Commentary

You might say that commentaries are study notes on steroids. But they are much more than that. Listen to this 2-minute clip as Jordan Peterson discusses his astonishment at discovering the wealth of biblical commentaries. <https://youtu.be/RwVb4OQkO2w>

Comments?

Let's run over to biblehub.com (either website or app) and explore what Peterson was talking about. Type in Genesis 39:1 into the biblehub search window (to bring us to the story of Joseph beginning his time of slavery in Egypt). Notice how biblehub brings you first to a "Parallel" page which presents the verse in multiple English translations. Very useful!

You'll want to explore more of the functionality this site provides, but to reach the commentary section, click on "Comment". You have access to more than 30 different historic commentaries in its online database (in blue), but if you start scrolling down the page, you'll see it provides you an immediate sampling for this text.

Take a couple minutes to scroll and skim on your own, till you find a note of interest to share with the group about Genesis 39:1.

*Notes and Insights:*

What do you think might be some "safety tips" for study when it comes to using commentaries?

## 3. Muse On A Map

Maps are an under-rated, underutilized tool in Bible study. How is knowing geography beneficial to you as a student, or citizen, or disciple?

Look over the map of Paul's missionary journeys on the next page for a moment. What does this add to your knowledge or awareness of Paul's great work?



#### 4. Work On A Word Study

If you want to know what the Bible says about x, y, or z, doing a 'word study' is worth your time. Maybe you've noticed in reading the Psalms that David talks a lot about the "heart". Or you notice the phrase "fear of the Lord" pops up often in Proverbs, and you want to know what these words meant to the Bible authors, rather than just assuming you know. A 'word study' is where you look up other verses where that same word or phrase is used, then compare the verses, and jot down your findings.

Good tools for doing word studies include Bible dictionaries, or a great index called a "concordance". Biblegateway.com has very good interface for searches like this. Go there right now in fact, and type in "fear of the Lord" in its search window and see what comes up. Then, let's confine our search just to Proverbs (you can use the filter, or just scroll down till you find the Proverbs section.) There are a dozen "fear of the Lord" verses in Proverbs. As a group just read through the verses right now.

*What are a couple of things you just learned about the fear of God because you took a couple minutes to do a word study?*

Of course these days, just Googling “What does the Bible say about....?” will give you a treasure trove of verses to look over.

Let’s practice with one more example. Let’s do a word study on the “Word of God”. What does the Bible say about itself? Take five minutes and jot down whatever you discover, then as a group, compile your answers. (Hint: search engines are word specific, so try using the word “Scripture” as well as “word of God”. If you were studying “sin”, you would also search for words like “iniquity”, “transgression”, etc.)

## What Does The Bible Say About Itself?

### 5. Chart Out A Chapter

By this, we mean be mindful of the structure and flow of what you are reading. The author of the book you’re reading had a purpose behind how he wrote the book. See if you can find it. A good study Bible will outline each book for you, but try to do some of that work on your own.

Let’s try this.

1. Read through all of 1 Timothy chapter 1.
2. As a group, break up the verses into paragraphs, then see if you can agree on a theme or header for each paragraph. For example:

*Paragraph 1, Vss.1-2, Paul greets Timothy*

How did doing this simple exercise enrich your understanding of Paul's message in chapter 1?

Since the Psalms are actual songs, most of them naturally fall into stanzas. In many of the Psalms, the author takes you on a journey that is rewarding to discover. Here is a good selection of psalms to choose from as you practice this: 2, 19, 23, 27, 42, 46, 51, 57, 73, 90, 116, 139. Pick one or two and work on them.

## **6. Cling To The Classics**

While the Bible is to forever be your primary reading material and the anchor of your quiet times, you should always be reading other spiritual books. While no other book has the same authority or power as Scripture, the Holy Spirit has worked in the lives of saints throughout the ages, and as they share of their journey with Christ, our faith and perspective grows.

Take 5" (or more) and make a list of the Christian books that have been most meaningful in your life. Compile a group list as people share, and send in a copy to PBC or the church office. Our desire is to make a comprehensive churchwide list of Bridgeway's best-loved books!

**My Faves:**

**Group Faves:**

## 7. Dive Into A Doctrine

“Watch your life and doctrine closely,” Paul said to Timothy (1 Tim.4:16, NIV). This isn’t just for pastors and the pros. When your Muslim coworker says to you one day that Jesus was a prophet he respects but not nearly as important as Mohammed, what would you say? Or the JW comes knocking, and asks you why you think Jesus is God, what will you answer? Or your atheist neighbor says the Bible’s too full of holes for him to trust it, your response is...?

A type of book that should be in every Christian’s library is known as a “Systematic Theology” book, where the writer takes all the major Christian doctrines, explains what they are, why we believe them, and where Christians may differ in their interpretations of a given doctrine. (Wayne Grudem’s “Systematic Theology: An Introduction To Biblical Doctrine” is a very readable work, and comes in a massive unabridged edition, and one that is more pared down.)

*Take a few minutes to share with each other areas of Christian doctrine that you’d like to dig deep into if you had the time to study it.*

Let’s practice with one. Why do Christians believe that Jesus is God in human flesh? Come up with Scriptures to support this doctrine.

## 8. Hang Out With A Hero From Church History

“Those who fail to learn from history are \_\_\_\_\_.” We said it earlier – the Holy Spirit has been active in the church for 2,000 years. So to be ignorant of that history will impoverish us spiritually.

So who’s a hero from the past that you’ve studied, or would like to study? Or maybe there’s a time period that fascinates you, and you’d like to know more about how followers of Christ lived during that time. Have an open discussion about this area of study.

### III. Praying For Each Other – 15 Minutes.

Write down requests below, then remember to pray for and check in with each other during the week.

### IV. Group Schedule, Ideas, Notes, etc. – 10 Minutes

Write down in this space anything practical related to your life group upcoming get-togethers and connections.