

# Reading Scripture with The Bible Project

## Reading the Bible as a Group

*"What should we study as a group? I want to have my group go through a book of the Bible, but I don't know where to start?"* You might have said these things to yourself before. How can you take your group into Scripture, but in a simple way that isn't draining your time? How can you take people into Scripture so that it's not a dry lecture from you, the small group leader?

Well, introducing a simple, no prep, biblical method that keeps the goal of transformation (in particular, your identity in Christ) in mind. What is it? **Reading the Bible as a group.** Yep, that's the main part of it. Watching a Bible Project video, then taking turns to read a large portion of Scripture (maybe even a whole book) in one sitting, and then asking a few simple questions afterward (more on that later).



The benefit of this practice is:

- Keeps you in the Bible
- Let's you explore many books of the Bible
- Not just read the Bible, but let's the Bible "read" you
- Form your identity in Christ, individually and collectively
- Is a practice rooted in Scripture... all the way from the Old Testament.

### *Scripture reading in the Old Testament*

A large part of the tradition in the ancient times was to have things memorized, rather than written down. The first mention in Scripture of something being written down is in **Exodus 17:14**, "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'write this on a scroll as something to be remembered...'" Right there we see the purpose behind these writing was for Israel to remember God's saving hand and how He was faithful to them again and again.

The first time we see Israel gathering as a group to hear God's word is in Exodus 19-24 at the foot of Mt. Sinai where God establishes the terms of the covenant relationship He would have with them. They then respond saying that they will do what God has said. It's in the hearing of this covenant that their identity as a people, individually and collectively, it is made.

So, in these first instances we get an understanding of even the purpose of Scripture itself. It certainly retells the story of God's saving hand and His character. And it also invites them into an intimate covenant relationship and whole new way of life that is different from those around them. They are remembering and course correcting their life in light of who they are as God's covenant people. Their identity is being formed.

You will see this practice of reading Scripture throughout Israel's history in Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 2 Kings and all the way to Nehemiah, when they return from exile. During Jesus' ministry before His resurrection, He and His disciples participate in traditional weekly readings from Scripture in the synagogue. It was even in this context that Jesus launched His mission after publicly reading from Isaiah.

## ***Scripture reading in the New Testament***

Even in the beginnings of the early church, the practice of reading Scripture was encouraged. (See 1 Thessalonians 5:27, Colossians 4:16, 1 Timothy 4:1-16)

So, in conclusion, Jesus has included all of us into His grand story. Reading Scripture as a group allows us to understand our place in it as a community. It's like the "smelling salts" for our mind and heart so that we remember who we are in Christ. It challenges pre-existing stories we have about God, ourselves and the world, and allows us to course-correct in order to live out our identity in Christ. So.... how do we do this in a group?

## **Steps to Reading the Bible as a Group**

### ***Gather & Catch Up (15 minutes)***

Gather together everyone in the same room and ask everyone "how has their week been?" and "what has God been teaching you this week?" Pray for people on the spot if needed. This allows you to catch up with each other.

### ***Pray (1-2 minutes)***

To start your study, either yourself or someone else begin with prayer. Ask God to help you listen closely and hear His Word. Look up Deuteronomy 6:4 if this helps everyone get in this frame of mind.

### ***Watch (6-7 minutes)***

For whatever book of the Bible you will be reading from, watch the video of the book on the Bible Project site ([www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com)). They have an overview video of each book of the Bible, and helps you and your group understand what you are reading and where it fits in the whole storyline of the Bible. The videos are 6-9 minutes each. Each book in the Bible is either 1 video or broken into 2 videos. You can customize how fast or how slow you want to go through a book in the Bible.

### ***Read (15-20 minutes)***

Take turns reading through the Bible book that you just watched. Don't be afraid of reading long passages of Scripture. For example, read the whole book of Philippians, or Colossians, etc. If it's a long book like Genesis, Read chapters in chunks. To know which chunks to read, take a look at the Bible Project posters online at [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com) to know how to break down the book. Most of the time the reading should only take 15-20 minutes.

### ***Respond (30 minutes)***

Ask how you are to respond to what you all just read. Ask these questions:

- From what you read, what's the story so far?
- From what you read, what did you observe that was interesting about a certain character, event, or situation?
- What does this passage remind us about who God is in our life?
- How does this remind us of what Jesus has done and who we are in Jesus?
- How does this renew you or challenge certain ways of thinking or actions currently in your life?
- How should we respond to what we read in our upcoming week?

You will notice that these questions can be asked with any passage or book in the Bible that you read.

### ***Pray (10 minutes)***

Have a few people close in prayer based on what was discussed and read. This will be a little bit longer time of prayer than when you prayed at the start.

**The next page is a reproducible Study Guide you can print out for your group to help them prepare for your meeting.**



# Reading Scripture with The Bible Project

## Study Guide

### Before the next time we meet...

1. **Watch at** [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com) **the following video:**

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2. **Read the following Scripture\*:**

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\* break up the passages to read a little each day.

### During our meeting...

1. **Gather & Catch Up**

2. **Pray**

3. **Watch**

For whatever book of the Bible you will be reading from, watch the video of the book on the Bible Project site [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com)\*\*

4. **Read**

Take turns reading through the Bible book or sections that you just watched.

5. **Respond**

- From what you read, what's the story so far?
- From what you read, what did you observe that was interesting about a certain character, event, or situation?
- What does this passage remind us about who God is in our life?
- How does this remind us of what Jesus has done and who we are in Jesus?
- How does this renew you or challenge certain ways of thinking or actions currently in your life?
- How should we respond to what we read in our upcoming week?

6. **Pray**

Have a few people close in prayer based on what was discussed and read or split off into guys and girls for prayer requests.

\*\* *The Bible Project is a nonprofit animation studio that produces short-form, fully animated videos to make the biblical story accessible to everyone, everywhere. They focus on the Bible's overarching themes and each book's literary design and are committed to understanding the Bible in its historical context. They create videos, podcasts, and study guides that explore the Bible's unified story that leads to Jesus.*