

Study



Bible reference: Romans 15:4



The word 'study' often has negative connotations. It reminds us of days spent inside revising for exams, while the sun is shining outside. It's associated with cramming information into our brains to regurgitate in an exam. In today's session, we set all those ideas of study aside so that we can focus on what it means to study God's word. We'll look at why it is essential for believers to dive into Scripture and explore creative ways that we can study the Bible.

You will need:

- Study Handout



Beat

Ask:

- What do you think of when you hear the word 'study'?
- Does it have a positive or negative association for you? Explain why.

Say:

Some people love to research and study, exploring every nook and cranny of a subject. However, for most people, study involves being stuck inside, surrounded by a pile of books, desperately trying to get a whole bunch of information to stay in your brain.

In this classic Simpsons clip, Bart is not having a positive experience of study. It's the night before an important test, and if he fails he will need to stay back a year at school.

Watch:

The Last Refuge of a Scoundrel (0:47)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXB1JlsW3VY>

Ask:

What happens when Bart goes to sleep?

Say:

When Bart wakes up the next morning, the ground is covered in snow and his school is closed for the day.

Watch:

Bart Gets An F – Snow Day (1:14)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOfr3G-M1hI>

Ask:

After promising God that he will study for the day, what choice do you think Bart makes?

Say:

Avoiding the numerous distractions outside, Bart spends the day studying and sits the test the next day.

Watch:

The Simpsons – Bart fails the test (1:46)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfXdVooTgIQ>

Say:

Bart's studying paid off when he needed it the most.

The clip presents the kind of studying most of us are used to. It's the kind of study that involves missing out on all the fun, to do something that feels like no fun at all. When writing this session, lots of alternative titles were suggested, all to avoid the negative associations with the word 'study'. As we think about studying the word of God, we need to shift our thinking about what this word means.

Leader's notes:

Read the following definition of the word 'study' and discuss how studying the Bible differs from preparing for an exam.

Study: to devote time and attention to gaining knowledge or to look closely in order to observe or read.

 **Bridge****Ask:**

Do you need to shift your thinking about studying the Bible? If so, how?

 **Amplify****Ask:**

Why is it so essential that we study God's word?

Leader's notes:

Give the group a copy of the Study handout. Discuss the quotes either in small groups or as a whole and summarise why studying God's word is so essential to his followers. In what way do they inspire the young people to study their Bible more?

'If you are ignorant of God's word, you will always be ignorant of God's will.'

- Billy Graham

'I could simply share with you the treasures I've uncovered. But I'd rather give you the treasure map.'

- Jane Johnson

'We must make a study of our God: what he loves, what he hates, how he speaks and acts. We cannot imitate a God whose features and habits we have never learned. We must make a study of him if we want to become like him. We must seek his face.'

- Jen Wilkin

'God wants to communicate with you in the 21st century. He wrote his message in a book. He asks you to come and study that book for three compelling reasons: It's essential for growth. It's essential for maturity. It's essential for equipping you, training you, so that you might be an available, clean, sharp instrument in his hands to accomplish his purposes. So the real question confronting you now is: How can you afford not to be in God's word?'

- Howard Hendricks

'Some people like to read so many [Bible] chapters every day. I would not dissuade them from the practice, but I would rather lay my soul asoak in half a dozen verses all day than rinse my hand in several chapters. Oh, to be bathed in a text of Scripture, and to let it be sucked up in your very soul, till it saturates your heart!'

- Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Say:

We're going to amplify a verse of Scripture found in Paul's letter to the Romans. The Christians in Rome were divided over many issues. They disagreed on what the followers of Jesus should wear, eat, act, believe, how to celebrate the Sabbath - the list went on and on. Paul wanted this letter to unite the church. It is in this context that Paul amplified the importance of God's word, especially the Old Testament.

Leader's notes:

Read through the different translations of Romans 15:4. What does it teach us about the importance of studying Scripture?

⁴ For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. (Romans 15:4 *NIV*)

⁴ Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled. (Romans 15:4 *NLT*)

⁴ You see, everything written in the days of old was recorded to give us instructions for living. We find encouragement through the Scriptures and a call to perseverance that will produce hopeful living.

(Romans 15:4 *VOICE*)

⁴ Everything written in the Scriptures was written to teach us, in order that we might have hope through the patience and encouragement which the Scriptures give us.

(Romans 15:4 *GNT*)

⁴ For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope and overflow with confidence in His promises.

(Romans 15:4 *AMP*)

Bridge

Ask:

Which do you prefer to read, the Old or the New Testament? Why is that?

Say:

Many Christians avoid reading the Old Testament as it can be tricky to understand.

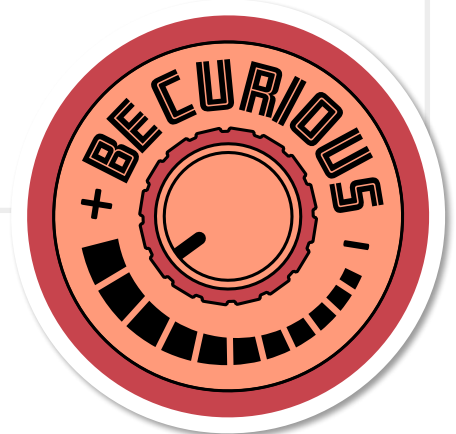
Leader's notes:

Watch the clip together and discuss the reasons why studying the Old and New Testaments is so important.

Watch:

Why should Christian study the Old Testament? (2:03)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1WR4h6DMn6M>



Sound Check

Say:

We've spent a lot of time thinking about why we should study God's word. Now we're going to focus on how!

Leader's notes:

Give the young people time to honestly and openly discuss the way they currently read the Bible, or if they read it at all. After learning about the importance of studying the Bible in the Amplify section, encourage the young people to share ideas and resources for opening

God's word. A number of resources are listed below to add to the discussion. Try to focus on resources that specifically help the young people to study the Bible rather than those that share general Christian themes. Ask one of the group members to volunteer to collate all the ideas into one place and share them with the whole group. The aim of the activity is to equip everyone to study God's word on a regular basis.

Bible Study Resources

<https://bibleproject.com>

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/resources/collections/new-to-bible>

The NLT One Year Bible: Arranged in 365 Daily Readings

The Bible with Nicky and Pippa Gumbel Classic – Podcast

Bible Books in 30 Minutes – Podcast

Overview Bible YouTube Channel

Spoken Gospel YouTube Channel

<https://www.thebibleoverbrew.com>



Bridge

Ask:

- Which resource are you going to try?
- Why does this particular one interest you, and how do you think it will help you to study the Bible more?

Selah

Say:

Our Selah section provides a moment for us to pause and reflect on all we have explored in this session. Today we're going to use Scripture to guide our prayer time.

Leader's notes:

Give each member of the group a Scripture reference to find from the list below. When they have found them, then share in prayer together, asking each member of the group to read their verses. The full Scriptures are listed below from the *New International Version*.

²⁴ The Lord bless you
and keep you;

²⁵ the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;

²⁶ the Lord turn his face towards you
and give you peace.

(Numbers 6:24-26)

¹⁴ May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight,
Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

(Psalm 19:14)

⁴ Show me your ways, Lord,
teach me your paths.

⁵ Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Saviour,
and my hope is in you all day long.

(Psalm 25:4-5)

¹ Do not fret because of those who are evil
or be envious of those who do wrong;
² for like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away.

³ Trust in the Lord and do good;
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

⁴ Take delight in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

(Psalm 37:1-4)

³⁴ Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'

(Luke 23:34)

¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

(Ephesians 1:16-21)

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,



¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰ 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, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

(Ephesians 3:14-21)

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(Romans 15:13)

⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, ¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

(Colossians 1:9-12)

⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.

(Philippians 1:9-11)



Say:

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. It pulls together the different themes and often, but not always, brings resolution to a piece of music.

Ask:

- As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?
- What is the one thing you will take away from this session about the importance of studying the Bible?

Leader's notes:

Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.



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