Understanding Reading the Bible

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# 📖 How to Read the Bible and Understand It

## 🎯 Sermon Objective

To help teenagers understand **why** and **how** they should read the Bible—and to equip them with simple, practical tools to read it meaningfully, grow in their faith, and apply it to their lives.

## 🧭 1. Introduction (Hook)

**Ask:**

* “Have you ever opened your Bible, read a verse, and thought, ‘What does this even mean?’”
* “Or maybe you feel like reading the Bible is for pastors or adults—not teens like you?”

**Say:**

You’re not alone. Many believers—young and old—struggle with reading and understanding the Bible.  
But here’s the truth:  
> **God didn’t write His Word to confuse you. He wrote it so you could know Him better.**

## 📖 2. Why Should We Read the Bible?

### 🔹 a) It’s God’s Voice

**2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NIV):**  
> “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

**Hebrews 4:12 (NIV):**  
> “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.”

**John 10:27 (NIV):**  
> “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”

**Explain:**  
The Bible isn’t just an old book full of stories and rules. It’s **God’s living and breathing Word**, given to us as a direct line to His heart and will. Through the Scriptures, God speaks to you personally, guiding you, teaching you, and correcting you. Each verse reveals God’s character, His promises, and His direction for your life. Just like any relationship, God wants to communicate with you—**and He does that through His Word**.

In a world where voices constantly compete for your attention, the Bible is the **most trustworthy voice** you can listen to. When you read the Bible, you are hearing directly from God, who wants to speak truth into your life.

### 🔹 b) It Lights Our Path

**Psalm 119:105 (NIV):**  
> “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”

**Psalm 119:130 (NIV):**  
> “The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.”

**Proverbs 3:5–6 (NIV):**  
> “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”

**Proverbs 6:23 (NIV):**  
> “For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life.”

**Illustration:**  
Imagine you’re walking through a dark forest at night, without a flashlight or any source of light. It would be easy to stumble, get lost, or hurt yourself. This is how life can feel without the guidance of God’s Word—**confusing, uncertain, and even dangerous**. Without a clear direction, you can get caught in wrong choices, struggles, and doubt.

But when you read the Bible, it’s like turning on a flashlight in the darkness of your life. **God’s Word gives you clarity**—it shows you where to go, how to walk, and which decisions will lead you to peace. Just like a lamp guides your physical steps, the Bible lights the way for your spiritual journey, making sure you don’t lose your way.

The Bible is not just a book of rules; it’s **a guide to living wisely**. It helps you navigate tough decisions, avoid temptation, and find peace in times of confusion. Just as light reveals the obstacles in front of you, God’s Word reveals what is right and what is wrong, allowing you to stay on the right path.

### 🔹 c) It’s the Source of True Knowledge and Wisdom

**Proverbs 2:6 (NIV):**  
> “For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.”

**James 1:5 (NIV):**  
> “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.”

**Colossians 2:2–3 (NIV):**  
> “My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

**Explain:**  
The Bible is not just a moral guide; it’s the **source of true knowledge and wisdom**. In a world filled with opinions, trends, and human-made knowledge, God’s Word is the ultimate truth. It reveals the mysteries of life, exposes the truth about who we are, and gives us understanding of God’s plan for humanity.

Through the Bible, we gain wisdom that transcends worldly knowledge. While the world may offer fleeting wisdom, God’s wisdom is eternal and unshakeable. When you read the Bible, you’re not just gaining knowledge—you’re receiving **divine wisdom** that will help you live according to God’s will.

By seeking wisdom from the Bible, you learn how to make wise choices in life. Wisdom from the Word helps us to navigate relationships, manage challenges, and live with purpose and integrity. Just as the psalmist declares, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Psalm 111:10), the Bible teaches us how to live wisely in the fear and knowledge of God.

### 🔹 d) It Cleanses Us

**John 15:3 (NIV):**  
> “You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.”

**Ephesians 5:25–26 (NIV):**  
> “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word.”

**Psalm 119:9 (NIV):**  
> “How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word.”

**Explain:**  
The Bible has a cleansing power. It **washes away impurities** in our hearts and minds. Just as we need physical cleansing to stay healthy, we need spiritual cleansing to stay pure in God’s eyes. When we consistently read and meditate on God’s Word, it purifies our thoughts, attitudes, and actions. It convicts us when we go astray and guides us back to a life of purity and holiness.

The Scriptures help us renew our minds (Romans 12:2) and transform our lives. As we immerse ourselves in God’s Word, we are changed from the inside out. The Bible isn’t just a book for learning; it’s a tool for **spiritual renewal** and **heart transformation**.

### 🔹 e) It’s the Only Way to Know God and Christ

**John 1:1, 14 (NIV):**  
> “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God… The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”

**John 14:6 (NIV):**  
> “Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

**Colossians 1:15 (NIV):**  
> “The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.”

**Explain:**  
If you want to truly **know God**, you must know His Word. The Bible is God’s revelation to us—**the only way we can come to know who He is** and what He desires for us. Through the Bible, we discover the **nature of God**, His love, His holiness, and His plan for salvation through Jesus Christ.

The Word became flesh in Jesus Christ (John 1:14), and it is through Him that we can know God intimately. Without the Bible, we would be left in the dark, guessing about who God is. But through the Scriptures, we encounter **the full revelation of God** and the **perfect life and sacrifice of Jesus**. The Bible is not just a book about religion; it’s **God’s ultimate message to humanity**, showing us the way to salvation and eternal life through Christ.

### 🔹 f) It Reveals Our Identity in Christ

**Ephesians 2:10 (NIV):**  
> “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

**2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV):**  
> “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

**Romans 8:16–17 (NIV):**  
> “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ…”

**Explain:**  
The Bible is essential for understanding our true **identity in Christ**. Through Scripture, we discover that we are **God’s creation** with purpose, designed to live in a relationship with Him. The Bible tells us that we are no longer defined by our past mistakes, but by the grace of God and the righteousness of Christ.

As believers, we are **adopted as God’s children**, and Scripture reassures us that we are heirs to the promises of God through Christ. When you read the Bible, you begin to understand your new identity as a **beloved child of God**, **redeemed and restored** through Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit to live out your purpose.

### 🔹 g) It Helps Us Know What God Has Promised Us

**Philippians 4:19 (NIV):**  
> “And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.”

**Psalm 91:4 (NIV):**  
> “He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.”

**2 Peter 1:3–4 (NIV):**  
> “His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises…”

**Explain:**  
The Bible is filled with **God’s promises** to us—promises of provision, protection, guidance, and peace. When we read the Scriptures, we learn what God has pledged to provide for us as His children. Whether you’re facing uncertainty, anxiety, or need assurance, God’s Word is full of **His faithful promises** to meet your needs and care for you.

Through the Bible, we also learn that God promises to be our refuge, our protector, and our strength. The more we read and meditate on these promises, the more we are reminded of His faithfulness and love, which empowers us to walk in confidence and peace.

## 🛠️ 3. How to Read the Bible and Understand It

### ✨ a) **Ask the Holy Spirit for Help**

**John 14:26 (NIV):**  
> “…the Holy Spirit… will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

**Romans 8:26 (NIV):**  
> “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.”

**1 Corinthians 2:12 (NIV):**  
> “What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.”

**Tip:**  
Before reading, **ask the Holy Spirit** to guide you. Simply pray:  
> *“Lord, open my heart and help me understand what You are saying to me today. Holy Spirit, teach me and give me wisdom as I read Your Word.”*

The Holy Spirit is your ultimate teacher. He doesn’t just help you memorize verses; He helps you **understand** them and apply them to your life. When you read the Bible, ask Him to reveal God’s truths to you and illuminate what you need for that moment.

### ✨ b) **Start in the Right Place**

**Don’t start with Leviticus. Try these instead:**

| **Book** | **Why?** |
| --- | --- |
| Mark/John | Learn about the life and teachings of Jesus. |
| Proverbs | Gain practical wisdom for everyday life. |
| Psalms | Find comfort, express your emotions, and draw closer to God. |
| James | Get practical, real-life advice for living out your faith. |

**Illustration:**  
If you want to understand your phone, do you read the microwave manual?  
**Start with the part of Scripture that fits your season**. If you’re new to the Bible, begin with the Gospels (like Mark or John) to get to know Jesus personally. If you’re seeking wisdom, Proverbs is a great start. If you’re going through tough emotions, Psalms offers comfort. Don’t dive into hard-to-understand books at first—get familiar with the parts of the Bible that are easiest to relate to and apply.

### ✨ c) **Use the SOAP Bible Study Method**

A simple, powerful way to reflect on Scripture:

* **S – Scripture:** Read or write down the verse that stands out to you.
* **O – Observation:** What is happening in the passage? Who is speaking? Who is being spoken to? What is the context or background?
* **A – Application:** How does this verse apply to your life? What is God teaching you through this? How can you live it out today?
* **P – Prayer:** Respond to God in prayer based on what you’ve read. Thank Him for His word, confess any areas where you need help, or ask for strength to apply what you’ve learned.

**Example: *Proverbs 3:5-6***

* **S:** “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”
* **O:** God is calling me to **trust Him completely**, not rely on my own understanding or abilities. This means **letting go** of my control and submitting every decision to Him.
* **A:** I’ve been trying to handle a situation by myself, relying on my own plans and wisdom. I need to **trust God fully** and submit to His guidance. I will pray and seek His will rather than make decisions based on my own logic.
* **P:** “Lord, I trust You with this situation. I surrender my plans to You and ask for Your wisdom and direction. Help me to lean on You completely and not on my own understanding.”

By using SOAP, you engage with the Scripture in a deeper way, allowing the Holy Spirit to work in your heart. This method makes Bible reading more than just a task—it becomes a conversation and a relationship with God.

### ✨ d) **Make it a Daily Habit**

**Joshua 1:8 (NIV):**  
> “Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”

**Psalm 119:11 (NIV):**  
> “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”

**Matthew 4:4 (NIV):**  
> “Jesus answered, ‘It is written: Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

**Tip:**  
Even **5–10 minutes a day** makes a huge difference in the long run. Just like food nourishes your body, **God’s Word nourishes your soul**. By making Bible reading a regular habit, you’ll find your spiritual strength growing over time. The more you read, the more you’ll begin to notice its impact on your thoughts, decisions, and actions.

Consistency is key. You don’t have to read for hours each day, but just as you wouldn’t skip eating meals, don’t skip feeding your spirit with God’s Word. Whether in the morning or before bed, make it a part of your routine and watch how God speaks to you in new ways.

### ✨ e) **Ask Questions When You Don’t Get It**

It’s **totally okay** to be confused sometimes! The Bible can be challenging, but God wants you to understand it, and He’s provided many resources to help.

* **Ask your pastor, youth leader, or a trusted adult** for guidance. Sometimes, a different perspective can help you see things more clearly.
* Use a **teen-friendly study Bible**, which provides notes, explanations, and context to help you understand difficult passages.
* Try using the **YouVersion** Bible app, which offers **reading plans, devotionals**, and **audio Bible features**. It’s a great tool for building a habit of daily reading with easy-to-follow guides and community support.

God doesn’t expect you to understand everything right away. Be patient, ask questions, and trust that the Holy Spirit will lead you in your journey of understanding.

## 💬 4. Real-Life Teen Scenarios

**When you feel…**

### 😰 *Anxious*

**Read:** Philippians 4:6–7  
**Truth:** Don’t worry—pray, and God will give you peace.

### 😞 *Bullied or Hurt*

**Read:** Romans 12:17–21  
**Truth:** Don’t seek revenge. Let God handle it. Respond with grace.

### 🤔 *Struggling to Make Good Choices*

**Read:** Psalm 119:9  
“How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word.”  
**Truth:** God’s Word helps you stay on the right track.

## 🎁 5. Wrap-Up / Key Takeaways

* The Bible isn’t boring—it’s your **spiritual map** for life. It’s not just a book; it’s a **guide** to navigating your faith journey.
* Start small. Stay consistent. Don’t worry about reading it all at once—just keep making progress. Even a few minutes a day adds up.
* **Pray. Read. Think. Apply.** These are the four key steps to truly engage with God’s Word.
* You don’t need to be perfect—just **hungry to know God** more deeply. God is more interested in your heart than your perfection. Approach the Bible with curiosity and openness.

## 🙏 6. Closing Prayer

*“Father, thank You for giving us Your Word. Help us not just to read it, but to understand it, love it, and live it. Give us wisdom and a deeper hunger to grow in our faith. We pray that Your Word would shape our lives and our hearts. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”*

## 🎤 Optional Activity: Bible Reading Challenge

**7-Day Bible Plan:**

Choose from:

* **Gospel of Mark** (to meet Jesus and discover His life and message)
* **Psalms** (to process your emotions, find comfort, and draw near to God)
* **Proverbs** (for wisdom and practical life advice)

**Challenge:**

* Read one passage each day—take your time to reflect and engage with what you’re reading.
* Journal *one takeaway* daily—whether it’s something new you learned, a verse that spoke to you, or an insight you want to apply.
* Come back next Sunday and **share what God showed you**. Let’s encourage each other with how God is speaking through His Word!

This challenge will help you stay consistent, reflect deeply, and build a habit of reading God’s Word regularly.