

## *Basic Bible Study Method*

If you are unfamiliar with Bible Study methods, the following SOAP method can be a great starting point. Complete the following 3 steps, then proceed to the SOAP acronym. Set a fixed time each day (early morning is best) and prioritize it like an important meeting that you wouldn't change unless something critical arises. Always start with prayer; it could be as simple as something like, *"Lord Jesus, as I spend time reading your word, please reveal your truth to me and use it to change my life. I want to grow in wholehearted love for You. Help me to submit every area of my life to You. Amen."*

- 1) Choose a book. Begin with a Gospel (e.g. Matthew, Mark, Luke or John). If Bible study is relatively new to you, I would recommend starting with the following 5 books in this order: John, Mark, Romans, Genesis and Ephesians.
- 2) Go to [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com) and find the short video summary of the book you are reading (approx. 5min.).
- 3) Read the book through at least once beginning to end, twice is better.

Once you've read the book through, then go back to Chapter 1, verse 1 and study it slowly, using the SOAP method. SOAP is an acronym for: Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer. Each day use your journal to record the date, Bible reference and the following notes:

**Scripture:** Start at the beginning of a Bible Book (Chapter 1:1) and work it through verse by verse to the end. It's good to study section by section (typically not more than a chapter). If necessary go back and read until something significant catches your attention. Remember, it's not about amassing information, but rather transformation of the heart. Sometimes just a phrase will become the focus of your study.

**Observations:** In point form, write down your observations. You don't need any special tools to do this. The Bible was written for the common person to understand. However, using cross referencing, a study Bible or online tools (eg. [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com); [www.e-sword.net](http://www.e-sword.net)) may be helpful. Also write down questions you may have. The more you write the better. *Idea: Try writing down what the text says in response to the following questions: Who is God? What has He done? Who am I? What am I to do?*

**Application:** Pray and ask God questions like, "How does this passage apply to my life? What does this text mean for me today/this week? What next step(s) does God want me to take? In light of this passage, how can I better glorify God with my life? Etc." Then write down what you believe God is speaking to you. Choose ONE item and write a practical application. The more *specific* the better. For example, writing down "Make disciples" isn't likely to result in any changes, however, "Make an appointment today with \_\_\_\_\_ (name of person) to inquire about their spiritual journey," is taking a practical step. Even internal thoughts should be specific. Instead of, "Be more grateful for Jesus," try something like, "tell my family one reason why I love Jesus during each supper."

**Prayer:** Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you be a doer of the Word (James 1:22-25). We must wholeheartedly do what we can, but also recognize our dependency on God, true change only comes through the power of the Holy Spirit working in our hearts.

Enjoy the glorious journey!

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*"...turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers..." Malachi 4:6*