

How to Read Your Bible

UNDERSTANDING THE GREATEST STORY
THAT WAS EVER TOLD IN 30 DAYS

Leader's Guide



HOW TO STUDY

How to Read Your Bible

We are so glad you picked out this study! This six-week study guide was created for you to use on your own or in a group. Throughout the study, you will find reflection questions for your own personal time of study and you will find group questions as well. Use these questions to facilitate conversation within your small group and dig deeper into each week's topic.

STUDY COMPONENTS:

- 1. Videos:** The videos are a tool to help unpack the weekly topic of the study. Watch the video at the start of each week. We encourage you to watch and discuss the videos as a small group before diving into the daily reading.
- 2. The PDF (or web page):** This is where you will find the daily reading and reflection questions. This can all be found in two places:
 - In the PDF. This is the most effective format for groups. If you need one or more copies, head to shoppe.ifgathering.com.
 - IFequip.com. This is our web-based version of the study. Each devotional is added daily. If you access the study through this site, your group members will need to keep journals to write down their answers each day, so they can refer to them during group discussion.

Note: *If you are leading a group, it can be helpful to plan an "intro" group meeting to give an overview of the study format and schedule before diving in. This also gives your group members time to get to know one another.*

HOW TO STUDY

How to Read Your Bible Continued...

TYPICAL WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

1. Get together with your group to watch the video. After week one, review what you learned through the daily readings from the previous week before watching the video.
2. Go over the discussion questions in the Leader's Guide with your group.
3. Do the week's reading and questions on your own (there are five days of content for each week).

HOW TO ACCESS THE WEEKLY VIDEOS:

Watch on RightNow Media.

1. Log in to your RightNow Media account and search "IF:Gathering" to find the *How to Read Your Bible* video series.
2. If you do not have a RightNow Media account, go to rightnowmedia.org/ifgathering to access the videos for free through an exclusive RightNow Media and IF:Gathering resource library. After creating an account, log in and search "How to Read Your Bible" to watch the series.

Watch on ifequip.com.

WEEK
ONE

Understanding the Bible

Does the Bible feel too intimidating and complex? Does understanding it feel impossible, so you don't even try?

In this six-week study, we want to help you understand why the Bible is the greatest tool we have. We want to open your eyes to the way the Old Testament and New Testament connect and show you the purpose of each book of the Bible. Through this study, featuring teaching videos from Jennie Allen, Bianca Juárez Olthoff, and Jo Saxton, you will:

- Understand that the Bible is relevant for you here and now.
- Uncover what each of the books of the Bible is about and how they all connect.
- Discover a method to breaking down Scripture in order to better comprehend it.
- Have a new confidence in understanding the Bible and a hunger to know it more.



Watch “Understanding the Bible” with Jennie Allen, Bianca Juárez Olthoff, and Jo Saxton (13 minutes).

ACCESS THE SESSION ONE VIDEO AT [RIGHTNOWMEDIA.ORG/IFGATHERING](https://rightnowmedia.org/IFGATHERING).

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK ONE



REVIEW

Jennie introduced the series by talking about how she didn't learn how to read the Bible until she was an adult. What's been your experience with studying the Bible? In what ways can you relate to Jennie?

Jennie gave a quick overview of the story of Scripture, which we'll unpack more as we go through this series. How familiar are you with the story of the Bible? What stood out to you from Jennie's description?

There are many ways to study the Bible, but in this series we're learning the inductive study method: observe, interpret, apply. Which of the three steps comes the most naturally to you? Where do you see opportunity to grow in how you read the Bible?



DIG IN

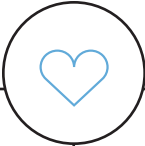
Read Hebrews 4:12. What observations, interpretations, and applications stood out to you from Jennie, Jo, and Bianca's conversation? What do you observe about this verse? How might you interpret and apply it?

Read 2 Timothy 3:16–17. What do these verses tell us about Scripture? What is the Bible useful for?

Looking at these passages together, along with what we just learned from Jennie, what would you say is the purpose of the Bible? Why is it important for us today?

LEADER'S GUIDE

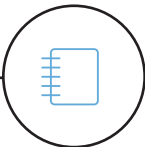
WEEK ONE CONTINUED



MAKE IT
MATTER

How confident do you feel in your ability to read, interpret, and apply the Bible? What, if anything, intimidates you about it?

What questions do you have about the Bible? What do you hope to learn from this study?



REFLECT

We all have varied pasts when it comes to the Bible. Some of us grew up hearing Bible verses every day, while others have only begun to read the Bible. Reflect on your history with the Bible this week. Write out your preconceived notions about the Bible and any questions you have. Skim through the table of contents in your Bible and write down any books you want to know more about. Share what you wrote with someone in your group.

We're going to cover a lot of ground in this study, and it might feel overwhelming at times. But no matter what, we know God speaks to us through the Bible by his Spirit. Take a few minutes to write out a prayer to God about this study. Ask him to speak to you, to teach you, and to mature you as his follower.

WEEK
TWO

Old Testament: The Pentateuch



Watch “Old Testament: The Pentateuch” with Jennie Allen, Bianca Juárez Olthoff, and Jo Saxton (13 minutes).

What helped you better understand the Bible from last week’s session?

Is there a book of the Bible that you’ve really enjoyed reading in the past? If you’re new to the Bible, is there one you’re especially interested in?

In week two, we are going to look at the first five books of the Old Testament, also known as the Law or Pentateuch, to help us understand what they’re about and why they matter.

ACCESS THE SESSION TWO VIDEO AT [RIGHTNOWMEDIA.ORG/IFGATHERING](https://rightnowmedia.org/ifgathering).

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK TWO



REVIEW

As Jo mentioned, the Pentateuch is the name for the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. What did you learn from Jo about the Pentateuch in the video? How familiar are you with these books?

The Pentateuch starts with the creation story and walks through the story of Israel up until right before they enter the Promised Land. These books pack in a lot of stories, laws, and historical moments. They also reveal God's character—his holiness, his care for his people, his power over rulers, kingdoms, and creation. After hearing Jo's teaching, how would you summarize the purpose of the Pentateuch? Why is it still important for us to read today?

Jo, Bianca, and Jennie used the inductive method to study Deuteronomy 6:4–5. What struck you about their discussion of this passage? What did their conversation bring to light for you?



DIG IN

Read Deuteronomy 6:1–6. We know from Jo's teaching that these verses fall at the end of the Pentateuch, right before Israel enters the Promised Land. In what ways does knowing the background of Deuteronomy and Israel's story help you understand this passage better?

Why do you think Moses gave these commandments to Israel? What did he want them to remember and do? Why was Israel's obedience important?

What do you think it would look like if Israel perfectly obeyed these commandments? In what ways would living that way help them in the Promised Land?

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK TWO CONTINUED



MAKE IT
MATTER

Jo, Bianca, and Jennie talked about what it means to love God, as is commanded of Israel in Deuteronomy 6:5. Jo said, “It reminds me that following the Lord is simple, but hard.” In what ways has following God been simple? How has it been hard?

What do you think it looks like to love God with all of your heart, soul, and might? Who is someone you know who embodies the love Moses is talking about in this passage?



REFLECT

The Pentateuch often seems overwhelming—even the name can sound intimidating. But in it, we find some of the most beloved stories of the Bible that reveal God’s character in a rich way. This week, consider these questions: What could it look like to acquaint yourself with these books? What hurdles, if any, stand in your way?

Reread Deuteronomy 6:1–6 this week. Ask God to show you what it means to love him as you go about each day.

WEEK
THREE

Old Testament: History and Wisdom

How many books make up the Old Testament?

How would you describe the purpose of the first five books of the Bible in your own words?

In week three, we are going to continue our study of the Old Testament by looking at the historical and wisdom books.



*Watch “Old Testament: History & Wisdom” with
Jennie Allen, Bianca Juárez Olthoff, and Jo Saxton
(12 minutes).*

ACCESS THE SESSION THREE VIDEO AT [RIGHTNOWMEDIA.ORG/IFGATHERING](https://rightnowmedia.org/ifgathering).

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK THREE



REVIEW

Bianca introduced us to two large sections of the Old Testament: the historical books and the wisdom books. The historical books (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 3 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther) tell the story of Israel from when they entered the Promised Land, to the kings, then the divided kingdom, through the invasion and exile, and finally to return to the land. What from Bianca's summary of Israel's history are you familiar with? What was new to you from her description?

The wisdom, or poetry, books (Job, Psalm, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon) include poetry, songs, and wisdom literature from Israel's history. Some of the most famous verses in Scripture come from these books. When have you found comfort in verses from the wisdom books? Why were they comforting to you?

Bianca, Jennie, and Jo discussed Proverbs 3:5–6. As they talked about the passage, they shared some of the methods they use to study the Bible—highlighting sections, circling words, writing passages down by hand. What methods do you use to study the Bible? What are some creative ways you can engage with the Bible moving forward?



DIG IN

Read Proverbs 3:1–6. Bianca pointed out that King Solomon wrote these verses to his son to pass on wisdom to him. What wisdom do we see in these verses? What difference do you think it would make in someone's life to live the way Solomon describes?

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK THREE CONTINUED



DIG IN CONTINUED...

It's important to note the genre when reading passages in Proverbs. Proverbs is wisdom literature, which means it makes statements that harness God's wisdom that, if obeyed, will usually produce good results. They aren't blanket promises of what will happen if you act wisely but rather general principles to live by, backed by godly wisdom. Take verses 2 and 4, for instance. What do these verses say will happen to Solomon's son if he walks in wisdom? In what ways have you seen those statements generally to be true? In what ways are they sometimes not true?

Bad things happen to good, wise people all the time. That doesn't nullify the book of Proverbs—it still shows us what it looks like to live wisely. We just have to be careful to not mistake timeless principles with God's promises. Reread Proverbs 3:5–6. What is Solomon encouraging his son to do in this passage? What does it mean to trust in God?



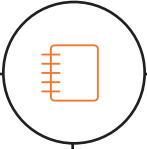
MAKE IT
MATTER

This passage reminds us that walking in wisdom means trusting in God. But that's not always easy. When has it been difficult for you to trust in God? What has God done in your life to prove that he's trustworthy?

When we come to the Bible, especially the wisdom and historical books, we have a lot of history to wade through, and it can feel impossible to understand. But we can trust God—he's with us as we read his Word, and he will help us when we feel overwhelmed. What reassurance does it give you to know you can trust God as you read the Bible?

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK THREE CONTINUED



REFLECT

Trusting God sounds simple, but it's rarely easy. Spend some time reflecting on these questions: What are you struggling to trust God with right now? In what ways are you leaning on your own understanding? Where could you acknowledge God in your life this week?

Take a few minutes to pray—grab a friend if you want—and ask God to teach you how to trust him with your whole heart.

WEEK
FOUR

Old Testament: Major and Minor Prophets



Watch “Old
Testament: Major &
Minor Prophets” with
Jennie Allen, Bianca
Juárez Olthoff,
and Jo Saxton
(12 minutes).

In what ways did last week’s lesson help you understand the historical and wisdom books of the Old Testament? What’s something new you learned?

How does history give you context for what’s happening in your life right now?

This week, we are going to look at the last category of Old Testament books, the prophets.

ACCESS THE SESSION FOUR VIDEO AT [RIGHTNOWMEDIA.ORG/IFGATHERING](https://rightnowmedia.org/ifgathering).

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK FOUR



REVIEW

Bianca took us through the major and minor prophets (from Isaiah to Malachi). She taught us that major prophets are simply the longer books, while the minor prophets are shorter. These books also span a vast amount of Israel's history, but they all have a central message: Israel has broken the covenant and they need to repent; if they don't repent, they'll be judged; but there is hope for future restoration. In what ways does knowing the basic message of the prophets help you approach these books?

Bianca told a story of when she shared a passage from the prophet Joel to encourage her dad. When has someone shared Scripture with you to encourage you? What impact did it have on you?

Bianca, Jennie, and Jo spent some time studying Micah 6:6–8. As Bianca pointed out in her teaching and in the conversation, the prophets have an “already, but not yet” lens—their words were for Israel in their time and context, but they also have a larger scope. In what ways did the women's conversation show you the “already, but not yet” aspect of these verses?



DIG IN

Read Micah 6:1–8. The prophets often use language that can seem confusing because they draw on Israel's history and cultural context. But knowing the general message of the prophets can help us figure out what a passage is saying. These verses are part of the call to repent. How does knowing where this passage falls in the general message of the prophets help you understand the passage better?

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK FOUR CONTINUED



DIG IN
CONTINUED...

A theme we often see in the prophets is a call to remembrance, which we find here in verses 3–5. Why do you think God wants Israel to remember what he's done for them? Why would he pair together a call to repent with a call to remember?

As Bianca, Jennie, and Jo discussed, these verses remind us that God's more concerned about obedience fueled by love for him rather than pious acts done out of duty, not devotion. What's different between what the Israelites thought would make God happy in verses 6–7 and what God actually wants in verse 8? Why would God call the Israelites to justice, mercy, and humility in this passage?



MAKE IT
MATTER

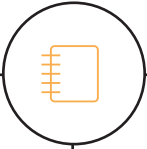
Think back over the past few years in your walk with God. What has he done for you that you can easily forget?

Now think about the past few weeks or months. What characterizes your relationship with God more: duty or devotion? Why do you think that is?

As Bianca, Jennie, and Jo showed us, Micah 6:8 is very applicable to us today. But we can sometimes come to the Old Testament and think it's outdated or that it makes God seem unapproachable. What impression do you have of God in the Old Testament? After watching these past few sessions, would you say your impression is accurate? Why or why not?

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK FOUR CONTINUED



REFLECT

Reread Micah 6:6–8 every day this week. Write it on a notecard or make it the background on your phone. Every time you read it, ask God what it could look like for you to pursue justice, mercy, and humility as you go through your day.

WEEK
FIVE

New Testament: The Gospel & Acts



Watch “New Testament: The Gospels & Acts” with Jennie Allen, Bianca Juárez Olthoff, and Jo Saxton (13 minutes).

What do the prophetic books teach you about God?

What do you know or what did you remember about the Old Testament now that we’ve covered an overview of the thirty-nine books?

We’re turning the pages to the New Testament in week five, starting with the Gospels and the book of Acts.

ACCESS THE SESSION FIVE VIDEO AT [RIGHTNOWMEDIA.ORG/IFGATHERING](https://rightnowmedia.org/IFGATHERING).

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK FIVE



REVIEW

Jo took us through the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) and Acts. These books tell us the story of Jesus's life—his birth, ministry, death, and resurrection—and the beginning of the church. What's something from Jo's teaching about these books that was new to you or a good reminder?

Jo pointed out that each Gospel comes from a different perspective, each with a unique purpose. What are some benefits of having four unique perspectives on Jesus's life and ministry?

The book of Acts gives us a glimpse of the early years of the church. Why do you think it's important for us to understand how the church started? In what ways could knowing how God moved in the early church help us today?



DIG IN

Jo, Bianca, and Jennie discussed Matthew 22:34–40, which alludes to a passage we've already studied. Read Matthew 22:34–40. In what ways did knowing about Deuteronomy 6 enrich your understanding of Matthew's passage?

In this passage, a Pharisee—a religious leader—is challenging Jesus. How would you summarize Jesus's response to the Pharisee? Why do you think he responded in that way?

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK FIVE CONTINUED



MAKE IT
MATTER

In Matthew 22, Jesus boils the Law down to two commandments: love God and love others. What does it look like for you to love God in daily life?

Loving God and others sounds simple, but it can have a profound impact—both on us and on others. What difference does it make in your life when someone shows God's love to you?



REFLECT

Consider the people you encounter each day. How could you love them with the love of God this week?

If you've never read one of the Gospels, consider taking time to read through one in its entirety. Ask a friend to do it with you and use the inductive study method as you go. If you have read the Gospels before, find a new translation you haven't read before—maybe the NET or CSB—and read them again with a friend or on your own. Discuss with your group how you could support each other as you read about Jesus's life and ministry.

WEEK
SIX

New Testament: The Letters & Revelation



Watch “New Testament: The Letters & Revelation” with Jennie Allen, Bianca Juárez Olthoff, and Jo Saxton (13 minutes).

What were you reminded about God after reviewing the Gospels?

Does studying Scripture feel easy or hard for you? How have days four and five of each week been for you?

In this final week, we’re going to study the last section of the New Testament—the letters and the book of Revelation.

ACCESS THE SESSION SIX VIDEO AT [RIGHTNOWMEDIA.ORG/IFGATHERING](https://rightnowmedia.org/IFGATHERING).

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK SIX



REVIEW

Jennie introduced us to the last section in the New Testament—the letters and Revelation. These books were written to specific churches or groups of churches from various leaders and apostles. They give instruction on how to live as Christians, offer rebuke and correction to the churches, and provide encouragement to persevere. What's been your experience with reading these books? What difference does it make to know these letters were written to a specific audience with a specific purpose?

The book of Revelation can be intimidating—it has complicated imagery, confusing language, and heavy allusions to the Old Testament. But, as Jennie said, its main message is that Jesus is king, he's coming back, and he will make all things new. Have you read and studied Revelation before? If so, what was your experience like, and what did you learn? If not, what could it look like to read it, using the tools we've learned in this study?



DIG IN

Jennie, Jo, and Bianca closed the series by talking about our future hope. Read 1 Corinthians 15:55–58. How would you summarize the hope Paul is describing in this passage?

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK SIX CONTINUED



DIG IN
CONTINUED...

The Corinthians—the audience of this letter—had many issues. They fought over which preacher they liked the best, they had disruptive church services, and they were allowing sin to run rampant in the church, just to name a few. Why do you think Paul would encourage the church in Corinth with these words right before ending the letter? How might these verses inspire them?

Looking at verse 58, what should our reaction be to the hope we have in Jesus? What does it mean to stand firm and fully dedicate ourselves to God?



MAKE IT
MATTER

What was true for the Corinthians is also true for us: We have victory over death through Jesus. We can persevere through the most difficult circumstances because we know he is with us and that, in the end, our efforts will not be in vain. When has it been tempting to think that following Jesus is in vain? What has encouraged you to keep going as his follower?

In what ways does this passage, and our study through the entire Bible, offer you hope for your life today? What difference does it make in your walk with God to know what the future holds for Jesus's people?

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK SIX CONTINUED



MAKE IT MATTER
CONTINUED...

Jennie closed the session by saying the Bible “is a good story and it is a good book.” After going through this series, in what ways have you seen her statement to be true? What are your key takeaways from this series? What do you hope your Bible study time will look like moving forward?



REFLECT

Learning about God and reading his Word never stops—there’s always something more he wants to teach us. Take a moment to remember the questions about the Bible you had at the beginning of this study. What answers did you receive through Jennie, Jo, and Bianca’s teaching? What questions do you still have? Take your questions to a trusted Christian leader in your life and ask them to point you to good resources to answer your questions.

Use the inductive Bible study method on your own this week. Start small with a shorter book like Philippians or James. Take your time through each verse to observe, interpret, and apply. Grab a friend to go through the book with you and discuss what God teaches you along the way. Pray God would use the tools you learned in this study to continue to deepen your relationship with him.