

Week 2: Simple Methods for Personal Bible Study

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1. The SOAP Method

- **Scripture:** Write out a short verse or passage that stands out to you.
- **Observation:** Ask: What stands out? What is happening in this passage? What is the context?
- **Application:** Ask: How can this truth apply to my life today?
- **Prayer:** Write a short prayer asking God to help you apply this truth in your life.

2. Observation and Interpretation

- **Observation** — What does the text say?
- **Interpretation** — What did it mean to the original audience?
- **Application** — What does it mean for my life today?

3. Studying Bible Characters

- Choose a person from Scripture and read the passages that describe their life.
- Identify spiritual principles that apply to your own life.
- Ask: What can I learn from this person's faith or mistakes? What does their story teach me about God?

4. Understanding Context

- Read the chapters before and after, and consider at the broader message of the book.
- Context helps us understand what the author intended to communicate.

5. Helpful Study Practices

- Start with prayer, asking God for understanding.
- Be consistent. Short, regular study times are often more effective than occasional long studies.
- Ask questions while reading the text.
- Write down insights or questions as you study.

6. Helpful Study Tools

- **Footnotes** – Notes in many Bibles that explain words, references, or alternate translations.
- **Commentaries** – Books that explain passages of Scripture and provide historical and theological insight.
- **Concordances** – Tools that help you find where specific words appear throughout the Bible.
- **Cross-references** – Related verses that connect to the passage you're reading. Many Bibles include these in the margins, and they can be used to “chain” together passages on the same topic.

Discussion Questions

- What tools or methods have helped you most in your personal Bible study?
- Where do you usually study the Bible, and what helps you stay focused during that time?
- How long do you usually stay on a particular passage or topic before moving to something else?
- What challenges do people often face when trying to be consistent in personal Bible study?
- What is one new method from today that you might try this week?

