

# The Spiritual Discipline of Study

## Week 2



### Talk Outline

*Why study?*

*Additional approaches*

*What is study?*

*Other books*

*Four components of study*

*Nonverbal subjects*

*Six key questions for Bible study*

### Discussion starters

- Read John 8:31-32. What do you think Jesus means when he says “knowing” the truth will “make you free? Free from what? Free for what?
- What images, emotions, or experiences does the word *study* bring up for you? Were your experiences in school mostly positive or mostly negative? Do you think those experiences in school influence how you think about the spiritual discipline of study? How?
- How do patterns or habits of thought shape behavior, beliefs and values? How influential are thought patterns on behavior, beliefs and values? If you have seen a person change their behavior because they changed how they thought about something, share that with the group (within appropriate boundaries, of course!).
- What are some major differences between reading a book and studying a book? Reading the Bible and studying the Bible?
- Where have you already practiced the steps of regularity and repetition, concentration, comprehension and reflection in different areas of your life?
- How does live discussion of a book you are reading affect how you understand the material? (Think back to your experiences in good book clubs, which are a great example of live discussion.) Do you seek out opportunities to discuss what you are reading? Why or why not? Do you enjoy discussing what you are reading with others? Why or why not?

- What other non-book topics for the spiritual discipline of study can you think of that would help you learn the truth about God and yourself?
- Calvin Miller has written, “Mystics without study are only spiritual romantics who want relationship without effort.” What is Miller saying? Is he correct? What is Miller challenging Christians to understand about the balance between personal experience and knowledge of the truth?

## To Consider This Week

If you are new to the discipline of study, choose a passage or two from the Bible and study it using the six key questions of study. You may study a passage of your own choosing or consider one of the following:

Ecc 12:9-12

John 8:31-32

Matt 22:37-40

Rom 12:1-3

Luke 18:9-14

Phil 4:8-9

How do you approach the passages differently when you are studying them rather than reading them? How do you experience the passage differently when you are studying them rather than reading them?

If you have practiced the discipline of study in the past, consider reading the book of 1 John (or another shorter book) each day this week or even each day during Lent. As you do, apply the four components of study (repetition, concentration, comprehension and reflection). Expect times of great insight and also times of boredom. Take heart, others have had the same experience:

*To take a book of the Bible, to immerse one’s self in it and to be grasped by it, is to have one’s life literally revolutionized. This requires study and the training of attention. The student stays with it through barren day after barren day, until at last the meaning is clear, and transformation happens in his life. ~Elizabeth O’Conner*

If you are interested in studying a “nonverbal” topic, pay attention to a specific relationship you have. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you study the conversations you have in this relationship, paying extra attention to the following things:

- What topics do you discuss and who takes the lead in changing topics?
- How do you (or do you) show courtesy to the other person in the conversation?
- How much of your speech is used to justify your actions?
- How closely do you listen to the other person? How much time do you spend formulating your response while they are still speaking?
- How many words do you use in building the other up? In tearing them down?
- Does your body language conflict with or corroborate your words?

What have you noticed about your conversations? What have you learned about what your beliefs are? Your values? Your behavior? What situations or topics do you avoid? What situations or topics do you seek out? Do you need to adjust the amount of time you spend listening? Do you need to change the amount of words you use to justify yourself? Do you need to tweak the number of words you use to build up? Tear down? Do you need to more closely consider the “conversation” you are carrying on with your body language?

## Additional Resources

“How to Read the Bible for All It’s Worth” by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart

“How to Read the Bible Book by Book” by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart

*For the purposes of our study this Lent, we compiled the following list of spiritual disciplines: study, prayer, celebration, service, simplicity, fasting, fellowship and confession.*