



BIBLE STUDY WORKBOOK

This workbook belongs to:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purposes and Principles	2
4 Steps for Devotional Bible Study	3-6
Let's Practice Devotional Bible Study	7-8
Let's Process	9-10
5 Steps to Applying Devotional Bible Study	11-15
Let's Practice Applying Devotional Bible Study	16-17
7 Steps to Memorizing Scripture	18-19
4 Bible Study Tools That Will Help You Dig Deeper.....	20

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Special thanks to the LifeWay Resources Groups Ministry team as well as the B&H Bible and Reference team for sharing their knowledge, guidance, and expertise.

PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES

This workbook will teach you how to complete a devotional Bible study and apply it to the four areas of your relationship with God, your life, your relationships with others, and the church. This method of Bible study emphasizes the use of the Bible to change your life. Bible study can become dead and lifeless unless you apply what you learn. The devotional method of Bible study encourages you to make meaningful application of what you study. You still have an interest in the facts and truths of a passage of Scripture, but your primary emphasis is on ways the passage can change your life. This method depends on a spirit of eagerness to do God’s will and to let God’s message change your life.

4 STEPS FOR DEVOTIONAL BIBLE STUDY

1. *Always begin with exactly what the passage means.*

If you don’t understand what a passage is saying, your application can be wrong.

Read Ephesians 4:26. Write what the verse means.

In Ephesians 4:26 Paul was not urging us to show anger based on petty feelings or wounded pride. Paul knew that righteous anger exists. He also knew that this kind of anger can quickly change into anger that is selfish and uncontrolled. Paul was warning us against letting our righteous anger get out of control. Application of a passage must rely on correct interpretation of its meaning.

2. Evaluate the kind of passage you are trying to apply.

You must know whether a passage is talking about a truth that is timeless or temporary. Timeless truth applies to people of any time or circumstance. Temporary truth applies only to a specific individual or group at a specific point in history.

Read the following verses and indicate for each whether its truth is timeless or temporary.

Leviticus 11:1-7

- Temporary
- Timeless

Luke 20:25

- Temporary
- Timeless

The application of some Old Testament verses is affected by information from the New Testament. The food restrictions of Leviticus 11 may contain helpful health information about eating. However, in Mark 7:19 Jesus declared that following those laws is not necessary in our spiritual lives. Some Bible passages, like Luke 20:25, describe a condition we may not face today. However, the principle that was used in the Bible to face the condition in the first century may still be valid today. For example, we are not ruled by Caesar today, but God expects us to give both to the government and to God.

3. Relate the passage to others on the same subject.

This increases your understanding of the meaning of the passage you are studying. Read Matthew 7:7. Jesus' teachings on prayer suggest that those who keep on asking can expect God to answer their prayers.

Read James 4:3 and 1 John 5:14-15. Summarize the ways they change the way you would apply Matthew 7:7.

James 4:3:

1 John 5:14-15:

Such passages as James 4:3 and 1 John 5:14-15 give other factors to consider in seeking answers to prayer. You will want to modify your understanding of Matthew 7:7 in light of such passages' teachings.

Is the Scripture timeless or temporary?

- Temporary
- Timeless

Related Scripture references and their teachings:

LET'S PROCESS

First, there is no single way to write a summary or the main teaching of Ephesians 4:32. An interesting fact about devotional Bible study is that the summary of the passage and its teachings will reflect the needs a person feels most deeply. We don't know what you wrote in your practice area, but you probably dealt with questions like these.

- What happens if the person or persons I think I need to forgive do not want my forgiveness?
- Is my forgiving another person the same as God's forgiving that person?
- Does forgiving a person mean that I act as if that person had never wronged me?

Next, what did you decide about the timeliness of the passage? Is its truth temporary or timeless? The teaching in this passage is a timeless truth. This passage contains a truth that God intends for us to apply fully today.

The next step in your study was to identify related passages that you could compare with the passage you were studying. Some of the more prominent New Testament passages that deal with forgiveness are Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60; and Colossians 3:13.

5 STEPS TO APPLYING A DEVOTIONAL BIBLE STUDY

When you do devotional Bible study, you should continually ask yourself, *How can I use this Bible truth in my life?* Let's complete the study by finding ways you can apply this passage to your relationship with God, to your life, to your relationships with others, and to the church. Follow these steps to apply devotional Bible study.

1. Pray that God will give you insight about the application of the passage.

2. Meditate on the passage.

As you meditate, try to imagine how you might apply the passage. In the case of Ephesians 4:32, consider someone you need to forgive. What attitude must you overcome to offer forgiveness? How can you express forgiveness? In person? By a telephone call? Via email? With a letter? What can you do to demonstrate that your forgiveness is genuine? Let me suggest a simple device you can use to direct your meditation. As you meditate, ask yourself five questions, which form the acrostic PEACE. As you pray, ask yourself:

Is there any—

Promise to claim or praise to offer God?

Example to follow or avoid?

Action or attitude to change?

Command to obey?

Error to avoid?

3. Write specific, practical ways the passage can be applied.

Think of specific and practical ways to apply the passage to your relationship with God, to your life, to your relationships with others, and to the church. Merely saying, "I will be more forgiving" is not specific enough. Offering to express forgiveness to everyone who has ever sinned against you is not practical.

4. Memorize the verse or verses you have studied.

When you memorize Ephesians 4:32, this verse will become a tool God can continually use to help you in the process of forgiving others. The challenge of forgiveness requires time for mastery, and continual help is essential. You can reference the section of this workbook titled, "How to Memorize Scripture" on page 18 for more practical tips.

5. Put the application into practice.

In the matter of forgiveness you may need to visit someone, make a phone call, or write a letter to express forgiveness to someone who may have harmed or injured you. Avoid saying to someone, "If I've done anything wrong, I want to apologize." Specifically mention the incident that demands forgiveness. Also, it is best if you admit negative thoughts about a person only to God. Mentioning them to the other person will cause him to wonder what you are thinking.

GOING FURTHER

Complete "Let's Practice Applying Devotional Bible Study" on the following pages. Make your application of Ephesians 4:32 by following the steps you studied today. Be sure to allow adequate time for the meditation process, using the PEACE acrostic, and for writing applications to the four areas of your life.

Devotional Bible study is a great way to apply the Bible to your relationship with God, to your life, to your relationships with others, and to the church. Applying the truths of God's Word to your life should be the end result of all Bible study. That is a significant way you grow to be more like your Master Teacher, Jesus Christ.

LET'S PRACTICE APPLYING DEVOTIONAL BIBLE STUDY

Scripture reference (choose your own passage):

1. Pray that God will give you insight about the application of the passage.
2. Meditate on the passage, asking yourself, is there any:

Promise to claim or praise to offer God?

Example to follow or avoid?

Action or attitude to change?

Command to obey?

Error to avoid?

3. Ways this passage can be applied—

to your relationship with God:

to your life:

to your relationships with others:

to the church:

4. Memorize the verse(s).

5. Ways you can put the application into practice:

7 STEPS TO MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE

Following these seven easy steps will make Scripture memory a meaningful and effective discipline that will enhance your spiritual growth.

1. Begin with a positive attitude.

Many think they can't memorize, but Philippians 4:13 says you can do all things through Christ. If you can memorize phone numbers and addresses, you can memorize Scripture.

2. Glue the reference to the first words.

To remember both the verse and the reference, say the reference and the first words without pausing. For example, "Philippians 4:13—I can do all things."

3. Memorize bite by bite.

Repeat the verse to the end of the first phrase, ending with the reference. For example, "Philippians 4:13—I can do all things—Philippians 4:13." Say that over and over until you have it memorized. Then repeat what you have learned and add the next phrase, still starting and ending with the reference: "Philippians 4:13—I can do all things through Him—Philippians 4:13" and so on. Memorizing a verse phrase by phrase is easy because you are learning only five or six words at a time. Learn the verse word-perfect this way.

4. Review, review, review.

This is the master secret to memorization. Use memory cards to review. Say the verse as quickly and accurately as possible. After memorizing, review the verse every day for 90 days, weekly for the next six weeks, then monthly for the rest of your life. The best review is using the verse in your life or to help another person.

5. Meditate on the verse.

Meditation can increase your grasp of the passage's teaching and its application. Experience Christ as that verse's truth works in you. Think of ways the verse can be lived.

6. Use spare time wisely.

Carry Scripture-memory cards with you to use during your spare time, such as when exercising or waiting in line.

7. Team with a friend.

Listen to each other's verse, checking the Bible or Scripture-memory card for accuracy.

4 BIBLE STUDY TOOLS THAT WILL HELP YOU DIG DEEPER

Notes

1. Bible Concordance:

A Bible concordance is an index that tells you where words occur in the Bible...The abridged concordance in the back of your reference Bible...doesn't have all the words from the whole Bible in it, just the words you might use to look up a familiar passage... For example...you could look under "Virgin" or "Conceive," and it would point you to Isaiah 7:14, where it says, "the virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel"...Comprehensive and exhaustive concordances...include almost every word in the Bible, but the exhaustive concordance also connects the English word to the Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek word it was translated from.

2. Bible Dictionary:

Like an encyclopedia, a Bible dictionary contains brief articles (in alphabetic order) about the people, places, and customs of the Bible. It also has articles about individual books of the Bible—who wrote them, when they were written, and what they're about. It also explains biblical words and concepts like grace, faith, prayer, the church, Abba, and abomination. There are usually articles, too, on basic things Christians need to know about the Bible, like the canon and how the Bible came to exist.

3. Bible Commentaries:

Bible commentaries are a written, systematic series of explanations and interpretations of Scripture. Commentaries often analyze or expound on individual books of the Bible, chapter by chapter and verse by verse.

4. Bible Handbook:

Handbooks take each book of the Bible and give an overview and summary of that book. They are arranged in the same order as the books of the Bible. So if a person was studying a given book, he could go to the Handbook and get a 30,000-foot view of that book...For the novice, it gives an accessible overview that provides a context as they read and study the details of the book. For the experience Bible student, it can serve as a reminder of a wider perspective they may have lost sight of in their focus on details of a given book.

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