Week 3

Studying God's Word with Your Mind and Heart

Opening Question (3 minutes)

"What is your favorite book or story, and why do you like it?"

Allow several responses then transition:

"The Bible is the most important book ever written because it is God's message to us. It is more than a history book or a collection stories. God gave us the Bible so we can know Him, love Him, and learn how to live."

Key Truth

The Bible is not simply a book to be studied; it is God's living Word that invites us into a relationship with Him and changes the way we live. The Bible helps us know God and follow Him every day.

Why Study the Bible? (12 minutes)

1. **To Know God**

   Genesis 1 – 3

   The Bible introduces us to the Creator of the universe. It tells us who God is, what He is like, and why He created us.

   When we read the Bible, we learn who God is and how much He loves us.

   Discussion Question

   What does knowing God personally look like beyond simply knowing facts about Him?

2. **To Learn How Much God Loves Us**

   Psalm 119:12 – 18

As we learn about God's character, His promises, and His faithfulness, our love for Him grows.

The Bible tells us about God's kindness, forgiveness, and promises.

The more we learn about God, the more we love Him.

The goal of Bible Study is not just information but growing in relationship with God.

Discussion Question

Can you think of a Bible story that shows God's love?

3. **To Learn God's Truth and Right from Wrong**

   2 Timothy 3:16

   Scripture is inspired by God.

   God's Word teaches us how to live.

   It teaches us truth, exposes error, corrects us, and trains us to live rightly.

   God's Word acts like a spiritual mirror, showing us where we need growth.

   It helps us make good choices and shows us when we need to change something in our lives.

   Discussion Question

   Why do people sometimes resist what God's Word reveals about their lives?

4. **To Understand and Know Jesus Better**

   John 1:1 – 3

   The whole Bible points us to Jesus.

   Jesus came to show us what God is like and to save us from our sins.

   Jesus is called "the Word" because He perfectly reveals God to us.

   When we study Scripture, we are learning about Christ.

Discussion Question

How does knowing Jesus help us understand God better?

5. **To Help Us Every Day to Find Direction, Hope, and Change**

   Psalm 119:11

   The Bible helps us:

   - Make wise choices
   - Be kind to others
   - Have courage when we are afraid
   - Trish God when life is hard

   Discussion Question

   When might you need God's help this week?

6. **To Grow in Holiness and Love**

   John 17:17 – 23; Mark 12:29 – 31; John 13:34 – 35

   God's purpose is not merely that we know Scripture but that we become more like Christ.

   The more we know God, the more we can:

   - Love Him
   - Love others
   - Live for His purposes

   Discussion Question

   Which is harder for most people: loving God wholeheartedly or loving others consistently?

How Can We Study the Bible Effectively? (8 minutes)

1. Establish a Regular Time

Choose a consistent time and place.

Whether morning or evening, the key is consistency.

2. Begin with Prayer

   Ask God to:

   - Open your understanding
   - Reveal truth
   - Show areas needing growth

   Remember: Bible study is a conversation with God, not just reading a document.

3. Read carefully and Repeatedly

   Imagine receiving a letter from someone who deeply loves you.

   God's Word deserves careful attention.

   Helpful practices:

   - Read slowly
   - Re-read passages
   - Notice repeated words and themes

4. Take Notes

   Write down:

   - Observations
   - Questions
   - Things you learned about God
   - Applications

   Often God teaches us through the discipline of reflection.

5. Submit to God's Authority

   Approach Scripture with a willingness to obey.

We may not understand every passage immediately, but we can obey what God has already made clear.

James 1:22 principle: Be doers of the Word, not hearers only.

6. Study with Other Believers

   Proverbs 27:17

   We learn from one another.

   Group study provides:

   - Encouragement
   - Accountability
   - Different perspectives
   - Shared wisdom

Basic Principles for Understanding Scripture (5 minutes)

Look at the Big Story

The Bible tells one unified story:

- Creation
- Fall
- Redemption
- Restoration

The Old Testament points to the Messiah.

The New Testament reveals Jesus as the fulfillment of God's plan.

Read in Context

Never isolate a verse from its surrounding passage:

Ask:

- What comes before it?
- What comes after it?
- Who is speaking?
- Who is listening?

Discover the Author's Intended Meaning

Ask:

- What did this mean to the original audience?
- What was the author's purpose?
- What timeless truth applies today?

Appreciate Different Literary Styles

God communicates through:

- History
- Poetry
- Wisdom literature
- Prophecy
- Parables
- Letters

Examples of biblical word pictures:

- Living Water
- Bread of Life
- Light of the World

These images help communicate deep spiritual truths.

Closing Application (2 minutes)

As we read Scripture together as a church, we will continually ask ourselves these questions:

1. What stood out to you this week?
2. Was there anything confusing or troubling?
3. Did anything make you think differently about God?

4. How might this change the way we live?
5. How does our reading this week equip us to gather, grow, and go?

Closing Thought

The goal of Bible study is not simply to finish reading a passage.

The goal is to know God more deeply, love Him more fully, and allow His Word to transform our lives.

Read Hebrews 4:12

This passage reminds us that God's Word is living and active.

Every time we open Scripture, we have an opportunity to hear from God who created us, loves us, and wants a relationship with us.