

# Following the Bible



## SABBATH—JUNE 20

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Philippians 2:12–16; Luke 4:4, 8, 10–12; John 5:45–47; Matthew 3:2, 8; Psalm 119:11.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Do what God’s teaching says; do not just listen and do nothing. When you only sit and listen, you are fooling yourselves” (James 1:22, ICB).



**We grow in wisdom and mercy when we read about Jesus. He is the best example. We must copy His life.**

**THE BEST PLAN** for studying the Bible will not help us if we will not live by the truth we learn from the Bible. What is true about education also is true about studying the Bible. You learn best by doing what you learn. When we obey Bible truth, then God will give us many blessings. God will not give us these blessings if we do not take the time to obey what we learn. Our obedience will change our lives in exciting ways. It also will make us smart and wise. So, we must be willing to live what we learn from the Bible. Then our faith will grow strong. We will be powerful witnesses for Jesus too. Our lives will be in perfect harmony with the truth we share with other people.

We grow in wisdom and mercy when we read about Jesus. He is the best example. We must copy His life. He lived in full agreement with God’s plan.

This week we will study what it means to live by the Bible. We will look at what it means to let the Bible have the final say in how we live too.

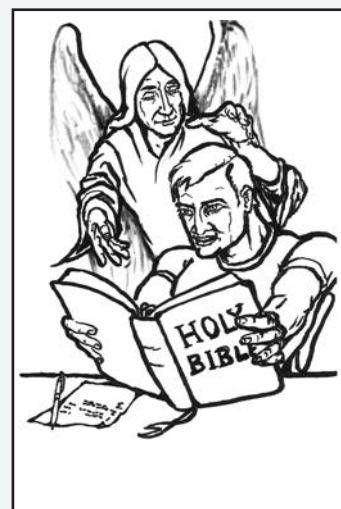
## THE HOLY SPIRIT AND GOD'S LIVING WORD, THE BIBLE (Philippians 2:12–16)

It is very important for us to study the Bible in the correct way. It is even more important that we do what we learn. The reason we study the Bible is not so we can get more knowledge. Yes, knowledge is wonderful. But our reason for studying the Bible is to let the Bible change our lives and our way of thinking. That is what really matters. What does it mean to live the truth that we have learned? It means we must be willing to do what the Bible says. This choice often includes a very deep fight with ourselves. Our fight is about who will control our thinking and our lives. In the end, there are only two sides we can choose: God's side or Satan's.

**Read Philippians 2:12–16. What are these verses saying about how we should live?**

Yes, God works in us. But He does so only by His Spirit. Also, only the Spirit gives us the wisdom to understand the Bible. As sinners, we often fight against God's truth. If God leaves us to do things our way, we will not obey the Bible (Romans 1:25; Ephesians 4:17, 18). Without the Holy Spirit, we do not love God's message. There is no hope, no trust, no love in our hearts. But by His Holy Spirit, God "is working in you. He helps you want to do what pleases him, and he gives you the power to do it" (Philippians 2:13, ERV).

The Holy Spirit is a Teacher. He leads us into a deeper understanding of the Bible. He wants us to feel joy in our study of the Bible. The Holy Spirit brings Bible truth to our minds. He gives us new understanding about those Bible truths. He changes our lives so that we show faith in God and loving obedience to His law. "No one can explain the Bible without the Holy Spirit's help. So, you must study the Bible with a heart filled with no pride. You must be willing to learn too. Then God's angels will be by your side. They will help you to accept Bible truth."—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 411, adapted. 1 Corinthians 2:13, 14 (ERV), teaches us an important Bible rule: we must "use the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths." Then we will follow God's Word with joy. Isaiah 50:4, 5 (ERV), promises, "every morning he wakes me and teaches me like a student. The Lord God helps me learn."



**“You must study the Bible with a heart filled with no pride. You must be willing to learn too. Then God’s angels will be by your side. They will help you to accept Bible truth.”**

## LEARNING FROM JESUS (Luke 4:4, 8, 10–12)

There is no better example to follow than Jesus Christ. Jesus knew the Bible well. He was willing to follow its teachings and live by them.

**Read Luke 4:4, 8, 10–12. How does Jesus use the Bible to help Him say “No” to sin? What does this tell us about how important the Bible is to our faith?**

Jesus knew God’s Written Word, the Bible, very well. Jesus knew it so well that He memorized many verses. He could say these verses by heart. How did Jesus get to know the Bible so well? He spent a lot of time with God studying the Bible.

What if Jesus did not know the exact words of Bible verses and understand them clearly? Then Satan easily could have tricked Jesus. Even the devil said Bible verses and used them for his own sneaky reasons and evil plans. So, just being able to say Bible verses is not enough. We also need to know what else the Bible has to say about a topic. We need to know the correct meaning of the verse too. Then we will not be tricked by the devil. We will be able to fight against Satan’s attacks. Again and again, we read about Jesus opening the minds of His followers to understand the Bible. Jesus did this by telling His followers to do what the Bible says (Luke 24:45, 46; Matthew 11:10; John 6:45). Jesus knew that those who read the Bible can come to a correct understanding of Bible truth: “ ‘What is written in the law? What do you understand from it?’ ” (Luke 10:26, ERV). For Jesus, the truth written in the Bible is the rule we should live by.

In John 7:38, Jesus turned the attention of His followers back to the Bible. The Bible teaches us that Jesus is the Savior that God promised to send to this earth (John 5:39). Jesus Himself was willing to follow the Bible, the Written Word of God. If Jesus was willing to do that, what does that tell us that we should do too?

**What has been your own experience with using the Bible to fight against sin? When Satan tried to get you to sin, did you start reading the Bible or saying Bible verses? If yes, what happened when you did? What have you learned from that experience?**



The Bible teaches us that Jesus is the Savior that God promised to send to this earth (John 5:39).

**DOES JESUS EVER DISAGREE WITH THE BIBLE?  
(John 5:45–47)**

**Read John 5:45–47. What powerful message does Jesus give us in these verses about His connection with the Bible?**

Some people say that Jesus often did not agree with the Old Testament. These people put Jesus' words above the words of the Old Testament Bible.

In the New Testament, we read that Jesus said: “ ‘You have heard that it . . . But I tell you . . . ’ ” (Matthew 5:43, 44, NLV; compare with Matthew 5:21, 22, 27, 28, 33, 34, 38, 39). Jesus said these famous words in the Sermon on the Mount. He was not trying to get rid of the Old Testament, as some Bible thinkers say. Then what was Jesus trying to do? Jesus wanted to show that some people in His day were using the Bible the wrong way. They were using it to say that it was OK to be mean to your enemies (read Matthew 5:43). But Jesus showed that God did not teach that at all.

So, Jesus did not throw out the Old Testament. He did not destroy its power. The Old Testament shows us who Jesus is. Jesus explained what God meant in the Old Testament. By doing so, Jesus added to the Old Testament's power.

Sadly, people use Jesus' words to say that the Bible does not have power over our lives anymore. Or they use Jesus' words to say that some parts of the Bible were not written with the Holy Spirit's help. These are very awful attacks against the Bible. Why? Because these attacks are done in the name of Jesus. We have Jesus' example of how much power He gave to the Holy Bible. In His day, the Bible was made of the Old Testament only. This shows us enough proof about how we should view the Old Testament.

Jesus did not come to destroy the Bible at all. He always taught His followers to trust it. He taught them to depend on the Bible to guide their lives too. Jesus says this very thing on the Sermon on the Mount: “ ‘Don't think that I have come to destroy the Law of Moses or the teaching of the prophets [special messengers]. I have come not to destroy their teachings but to give full meaning to them' ” (Matthew 5:17, ERV). Then Jesus gives us this warning: “ ‘Whoever refuses to obey any command and teaches others [people] not to obey it will be the least important in God's kingdom' ” (Matthew 5:19, ERV).



**The Old Testament shows us who Jesus is.**

**QUIET TIMES WITH THE BIBLE (Matthew 3:2, 8)**

Choose a place where you can read the Bible and meet with God.

Our lives are often busy and filled with stress. Sometimes we need to work hard just to feed our families and pay our bills. Other times, we may have enough of everything we need. But we work harder than we need to because we want more and more. We want the things that we think will make us happy. But, as Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes warns us, that does not always happen.

Whatever the reason, we can be very busy in our lives. So, it is easy to push God out of our lives. Often this happens because we do not spend enough time reading, praying, and coming closer to the Lord. “ ‘He is the One who has power over your life and everything you do’ ” (Daniel 5:23, ICB). We can be led away from God by other things. Then we fail to spend enough time with Him. We all need time to slow down and meet with our Savior. How can the Holy Spirit talk to us if we do not take the time to stop and hear what He has to say? The special quiet time with God is the secret to our spiritual life. Prayer and reading God’s Word make us strong.

**Read Psalm 37:7; Psalm 46:10; and Psalm 62:1, 2, 5. What do these verses teach us about our need for quiet time with God? Why is quiet time with God so important?**

If you love someone, you like to spend time alone with him or her. Choose a place where you can read the Bible and meet with God. It should be some place where no one will bother you. You will need to pick a special time to meet with God. Otherwise, the meeting may not happen. Often, the best time of day is in the morning. This time alone with God can become a blessing for the whole rest of your day. The thoughts you get from your time with God will help you during the many hours ahead. Do whatever you must do to make sure you can meet with God without anyone or anything stealing this time away from you.

Nothing will help you to connect with God the way that prayer and Bible study can. It will help you to think and behave the same as Jesus.

**How hard do you try to spend time alone with the Lord? What do you do when you spend time with Him? How has your experience been? How does spending time with God help you to know His love better?**

## BIBLE VERSES AND SONG (Psalm 119:11)

“ ‘I have hidden your word in my heart so that I won’t sin against you’ ” (Psalm 119:11, NlrV).

We must “hide” God’s Word in our hearts. We need to learn Bible verses so well that we can say them without needing to read them from the Bible. Then we will know them forever. So, take time to hide God’s Word in your heart. Then God will bless you in many ways. These verses that we know so well will change our thinking and our behavior. They will help us to make better decisions. Hiding Bible verses in our hearts helps the Bible come to life in new ways. That is why it is so important for us to learn Bible verses so well that we can say them without looking at the Bible. Doing so will help us worship God and to live the way that the Bible tells us.

It is important for another reason to learn Bible verses word by word. These verses will keep us safe from Satan’s lies and traps. When we know Bible verses by heart, we will be able to say them even when we do not have a Bible with us. This can help us when Satan is trying his best to get us to sin. So, we must hide in our hearts God’s promises to us in the Bible. Then we will fix our minds on Bible truth, not on our problems. We will lift our thoughts to God. He has a thousand ways to help us when we see no help at all.

**Read what Paul says about singing in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. How can singing Bible verses help us to hide God’s Word in our hearts?**

We should learn to sing the words of the Bible. This can be a powerful way to learn verses. The beautiful songs will help make it easier for us to learn Bible verses. Also, when we sing Bible verse songs, then it helps us not to feel worried or sad. Even little children can learn to sing Bible verse songs. The Bible has led many musicians to write songs that help us to feel happy. These songs lead our thoughts to God and His Bible. This music is a wonderful blessing.

“Music is a part of the worship of God in heaven. We should try in our songs of praise to match the harmony in the songs that the angels sing.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 594, adapted.



“Music is a part of the worship of God in heaven.”

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “The Privilege of Prayer,” pages 93–104, in *Steps to Christ*.

“The human eye on its own can never see the beauty of Jesus. We need the Holy Spirit’s help. The Spirit also helps us to see that we have no hope without Jesus. We need Jesus’ mercy and pardon. He is the One who took our sins on Himself. He fills our every need. Only the Holy Spirit can help us to understand Jesus’ endless mercy, His love, His kind heart, and His glory.”—Ellen G. White, *The Upward Look*, page 155, adapted.

“We can learn parts of the Bible, even whole chapters, by heart. Then we can say them when Satan comes to us and tries to get us to do what is wrong. . . . Satan will try to lead our minds to think about things of this earth and its pleasures. The best way to win the war against Satan during those times is by saying, ‘The Bible says.’ ”—Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, April 8, 1884, adapted.



**“The Spirit also helps us to see that we have no hope without Jesus.”**

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① God gave us the gift of free choice. We do not have control over everything in our lives. But we are free to choose to accept God’s gift of everlasting life. What are you doing with the gift of free choice that God gave you? What spiritual choices are you making?
- ② Think about the part that the Sabbath can and should have in giving us quiet time to spend with God. How does keeping the Sabbath protect you from working too much and doing things that stop you from spending time with God? How can you let the Sabbath become more of a spiritual blessing in your life?
- ③ What has been your experience in spending time alone with God in prayer and Bible study? How does this spiritual practice cause your faith to grow stronger? In class, talk about your own personal times with God. What have you learned from the time spent in prayer and study? How can your experience help other people grow stronger in their faith?
- ④ What are some of your favorite Bible verses that you have learned word by word? What is it about these verses that you like so much? How has “hiding” them in your heart been a blessing to you?



## Tell the World (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists)

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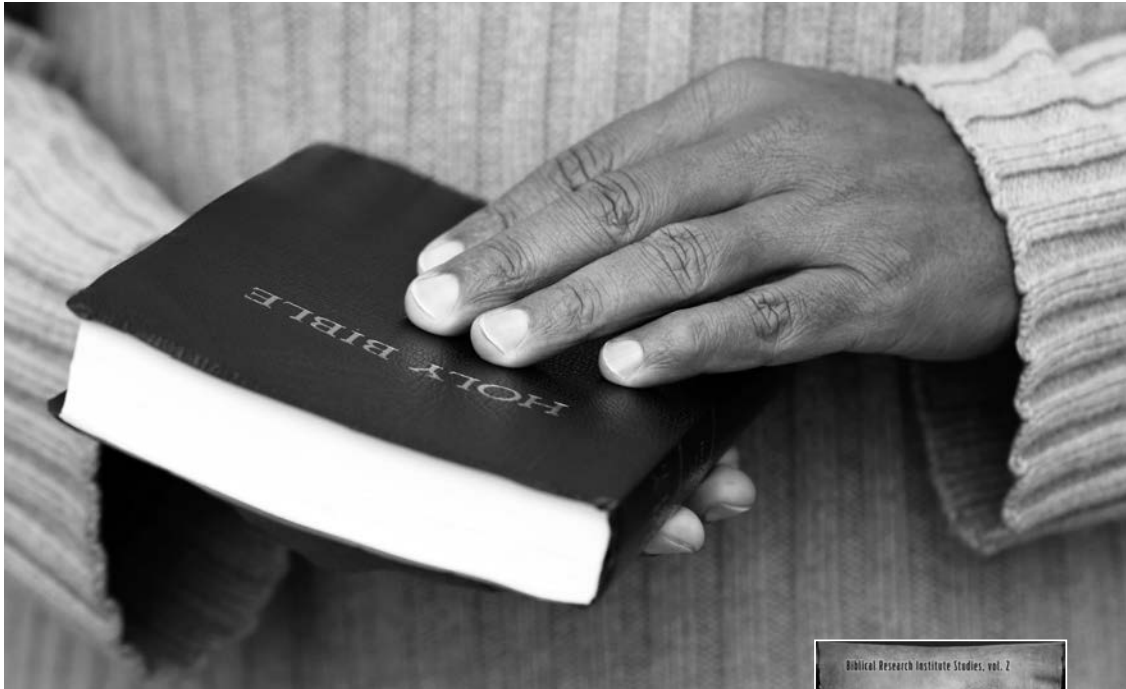
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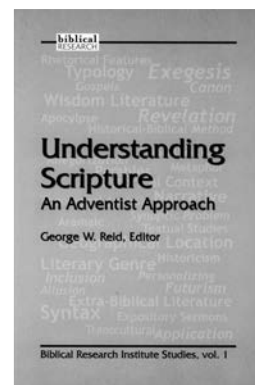
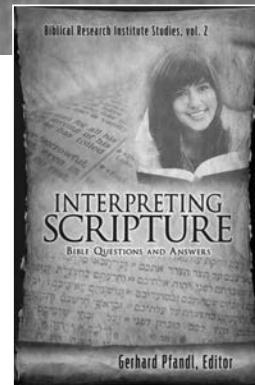




## The Bible Is God's Inspired and Authoritative Word

Have you ever wondered why Christian scholars interpret Scripture in so many different ways? Did the Lord really harden Pharaoh's heart? What does "the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever" (Revelation 14:11, NKJV) mean? And what is the sin against the Holy Spirit? These and more than one hundred other questions concerning the Bible and its teachings are answered in *Interpreting Scripture*.

In *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, practical steps show how a historical-grammatical method of Bible study helps to deepen our insights into God's Word.



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