

Bible Study

Sometimes you may ask, “how do I know what the answer to my prayers are?” Sometimes you may ask “what is God saying to me and how can I listen to what He says?”

A Lot of times, the answers to those questions are in the Bible. The Bible is God’s words back to us. It’s a handbook for life. It gives us instructions on what God wants us to do in certain situations. It tells us what to watch out for . It teaches us, encourages us, and shows God’s love for us. It’s kind of like God’s letter to you, to the world.

High schoolers: Pick up a Bible and read any passage that you like to read. If you don’t have one, you can read a great passage about God’s love for us. Read Romans Chapter 5. After you are done reading, it’s not over! You gotta dig deeper. Ask yourself these questions.

What is this verse or passage talking about?

What does this verse mean?

What does this verse mean to my life?

What is God trying to show me or teach me in this passage?

How can I take this verse and use what I know about it in my life?

Sometimes these questions will be harder to answer. But keep trying. If you run into a stumbling block, pray and ask God for wisdom on the verses you are reading. Devotional books are also a great help to understanding the Bible. Talk to your parents about getting you one, or ask Zack for one and he’ll give you one.

When you are done, you can pick a different verse or move on to another station. But before you do, pray and thank God for His words to you. Make a commitment with Him that you will take a certain time every day to read His word.

Middle Schoolers: If you want read the paragraph above and answer the questions OR: Pick up the small devotional book and read through one lesson. Devotional books will help you understand the Bible as you read it. If you don’t have one at home, talk to your parents about getting one or ask Zack and he’ll give you one.

When you are done, you can do another lesson or move on to another station. But before you do, pray and thank God for His words to you. Make a commitment with Him that you will take a certain time every day to read His word.

Journaling

We get close to our friends by writing them. OK a lot of times we don't write long letters and send them in the mail anymore. But think about you're close friends and how much you do write them. You pass notes in school. You text each other. You facebook on each other's walls and facebook chat all the time. Without all the writing you do, your friendships would be very different. And sometimes, an encouraging note from a friend can be a very powerful way to show a friend you care or are there for them.

Notes, and text can mean so much to you. God isn't any different. He loves your love in words too. So you can think of Journaling like writing a note or a text to God. Here you see a pile of empty notebooks with empty pages. Take this time to get closer to God by writing Him. Date it and write a letter to Him. Write whatever you'd like to say to Him. Or if you could write on His facebook wall what would you say. You can even write a love letter to Him.

When you are done, take this book home with you. Write to God every day if you can. Every week at least. When the pages are full, you can go back and read it. You can see how your relationship with God. Your relationship with God will grow closer.

Prayer

You build a closer relationship with friends by talking to them. Take this time to do the same: Talk to God.

How do you pray? If you struggle with this answer, it's ok. A lot of people do. But the simple answer is have a conversation with God.

Look at the model prayer Jesus says "Our Father, Who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Yours is the kingdom, power and glory forever."

Jesus shows us at the beginning of this prayer, when you talk to God, praise Him. Tell God how wonderful or great He is.

Jesus shows us to ask God for His will to be done "on earth as it is in heaven." It's hard knowing how to follow God without knowing where He is going. Ask Him to show you His way and ask for His will to be done in your life.

Jesus asks for life's necessities. When you talk to God, tell Him that you need Him.

Jesus teaches us to pray for forgiveness. You're not perfect, and our sinful nature separated us from God to begin with. Ask God for forgiveness when you talk to him and He promises He will do so. (1 John 1:9)

Jesus teaches us to ask God for protection against evil. We all need God to be our close protector. Ask God to protect you from going out of His will.

At the end Jesus again praises God. It's important again to just give God the props. It helps you realize how wonderful He is and you grow closer to the One you love.

Jesus also prays for others. Take time to tell Jesus about others that you care about and love.

Lastly, THANK HIM. Look for things or areas in your life you are thankful to God for. No matter how bad things get, there is always something to be thankful for since He has given you so much.

So, go for it. Take time now to close your eyes, and talk to God. Tell Him about your worries, your cares. Good times Bad times. At the end of your prayer, think of a good time you can spend talking to God every day, and tell God you will talk to Him then. Then keep that promise with Him.

Meditation

Take a pair of ear plugs. Roll each one between your fingers to squish it and then place it in your ear to plug it. Do the same for the other ear and read on...

As you feel the ear plug block your ear, what do you notice. The shuffle of people around you starts to get faint. The music playing in the room is fading away. If anything makes a noise in the room, it's muffled, weak, and much easier to block out. Maybe you even notice that this page is easier to read because you can now focus on it. It's incredible how much easier it can be to focus when you take away simple distractions you hear without the earplugs.

Leave the earplugs in your ears and use this time for a time of focus. Let your friends next to you fade away, let all the sounds in the room stay muffled and distant. Take a long deep breath, and focus on being still.

You grow closer to your friends when you focus your energy into them. In this moment, focus your attention on God. Read some following passages below and then take TIME to THINK ABOUT what they mean to you.

"Be *still* and know that I am God" - Psalm 46:10

"The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a *gentle whisper*." -1 Kings 19:11-12

After you have taken time to think about the verses above, answer the questions on the back of this page.

1. God calls us to be still in one verse. In another verse He shows us that there are many noisy distractions that can come our way that can take our focus away from His voice. What are some noisy distractions in your life that keep you from listening and hearing God's voice in your life? Be honest, only you will see these answers.

2. What are some things you can do in your life to be STILL?

3. Is there a time of day where you just spend listening to God? If the answer is no, is there a time you can make in the day to take a few moments to quiet your mind of life's distractions? Write that time down and commit to doing that with God.

4. Take these last few moments to meditate on this prayer: "God, I want to grow closer to you. I realize my life has many distractions that keep me from focusing on you and my relationship. Give me the strength to turn those distractions off daily and help me to learn how to listen for your still small voice"

Take the earplugs out of your ears. Take them with you along with this paper. Use them as a reminder to every day take a few moments to sit in silence and just listen. Quiet your mind of all the worries and practice listening to the Holy Spirit teach you, and calm you.

Video Station

Go to YouTube and look up “The Awe Factor” to find the Francis Chan video

After Watching read the following from his book “Crazy Love” and then follow the instructions at the end.

Speechless? Amazed? Humbled?

When I first saw those images, I *had* to worship. I didn’t want to speak to or share it with anyone. I just wanted to sit quietly and admire the Creator.

It’s wild to think that most of these galaxies have been discovered only in the past few years, thanks to the Hubble telescope. They’ve been in the universe for thousands of years without humans even knowing about them.

Why would God create more than 350,000,000,000 galaxies (and this is a conservative estimate) that generations of people never saw or even knew existed? Do you think maybe it was to make us say, “Wow, God is unfathomably big”? Or perhaps God wanted us to see these pictures so that our response would be, “Who do I think I am?”

R. C. Sproul writes, “Men are never duly touched and impressed with a conviction of their insignificance, until they have contrasted themselves with the majesty of God.”¹

Switch gears with me for a minute and think about the detailed intricacy of the other side of creation.

Did you know that a caterpillar has 228 separate and distinct muscles in its head? That’s quite a few, for a bug. The average elm tree has approximately 6 *million* leaves on it. And your own heart generates enough pressure as it pumps blood throughout your body that it could squirt blood up to 30 feet. (I’ve never tried this, and I don’t recommend it.)

Have you ever thought about how diverse and creative God is? He didn’t have to make hundreds of different kinds of bananas, but He did. He didn’t have to put 3,000 different species of trees within one square mile in the Amazon jungle, but He did. God didn’t have to create so many kinds of laughter. Think about the different sounds of your friends’ laughs—wheezes, snorts, silent, loud, obnoxious.

How about the way plants defy gravity by drawing water upward from the ground into their stems and veins? Or did you know that spiders produce three kinds of silk? When they build their webs, they create sixty feet of silk in one hour, simultaneously producing special oil on their feet that prevents them from sticking to their own web. (Most of us hate spiders, but sixty feet an hour deserves some respect!) Coral plants are so sensitive that they can die if the water temperature varies by even one or two degrees.

Did you know that when you get goose bumps, the hair in your follicles is actually helping you stay warmer by trapping body heat? Or what about the simple fact that plants take in carbon dioxide (which is harmful to us) and produce oxygen (which we need to survive)? I'm sure you knew that, but have you ever marveled at it? And these same poison-swallowing, life-giving plants came from tiny seeds that were placed in the dirt. Some were watered, some weren't; but after a few days they poked through the soil and out into the warm sunlight.

Whatever God's reasons for such diversity, creativity, and sophistication in the universe, on earth, and in our own bodies, the point of it all is His glory. God's art speaks of Himself, reflecting who He is and what He is like.

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

—Psalm 19:1–4

This is why we are called to worship Him. His art, His handiwork, and His creation all echo the truth that He is glorious. There is no other like Him. He is the King of Kings, the Beginning and the End, the One who was and is and is to come. I know you've heard this before, but I don't want you to miss it.

I sometimes struggle with how to properly respond to God's magnitude in a world bent on ignoring or merely tolerating Him. But know this: God will not be tolerated. He instructs us to worship and fear Him.

Go back and reread the last two paragraphs. Go to the Web site www.crazylovebook.com and watch the "Just Stop and Think" fifteen-minute video. Close this book if you need to, and meditate on the almighty One who dwells in unapproachable light, the glorious One.

Perhaps you need to take a deep breath after thinking about the God who made galaxies and caterpillars, the One who sits enthroned and eternally praised by beings so fascinating that were they photographed, it would make primetime news for weeks. If you are not staggered, go to Isaiah 6 and Revelation 4 and read the accounts aloud and slowly, doing your best to imagine what the authors describe.

You become close to your friends when you understand who they are and accept them for who they are. Take this time in this moment to close your eyes and think about how amazing God is. How perfect, Holy, and eternal He is. Take a Bible and read and just about anywhere you read you'll see how great He is. After you've done that take as much time as you want to talk to Him. Thank Him for how truly AWESOME He is.