



## Spiritual Disciplines

# SESSION 5: STUDY

Based on *Celebration of Discipline*  
by Richard Foster

What does the word “study” remind you of? What comes to mind when you hear the word “study”? How would you define it?

The purpose of the Spiritual Disciplines is to be transformed. If study is a Spiritual Discipline, How will the spiritual practice of “study” transform you?

Not including the Bible, what book has had the greatest influence on your life and why?

Study is the experience in which the mind takes on an order conforming to the order of what it concentrates on. In study we come to understand who God is, what he is like, and how he works with his children. Through study we come to know the truth that sets us free. The Bible and classics of Christian literature are not the only books to be studied. Literary classics and the “nonverbal books” of nature and life are also important parts of study.

Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: Supplemental Video Program*

The process that occurs in study should be distinguished from meditation. Meditation is devotional; study is analytical. Meditation will relish a word; study will explicate it...Although meditation and study often overlap and function concurrently, they constitute two distinct experiences. Study provides a certain objective framework within which meditation can successfully function.

Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*

### FOSTER'S FOUR STEPS TO STUDY

1. **Repetition.** Repeated exposure to what is being study. *\*In the first two steps we listen for understanding.*
2. **Concentration.** Focus, intensity, and intentionality.
3. **Comprehension.** “Aha” or “Eureka” moments. *\*In the third step we listen for insight.*
4. **Reflection.** Consider the significance of what we are studying. *\*In the fourth step we listen for evaluation*

It is in study that we place our minds fully upon God and His kingdom. And study is brought to its natural completion in the worship of God

Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*



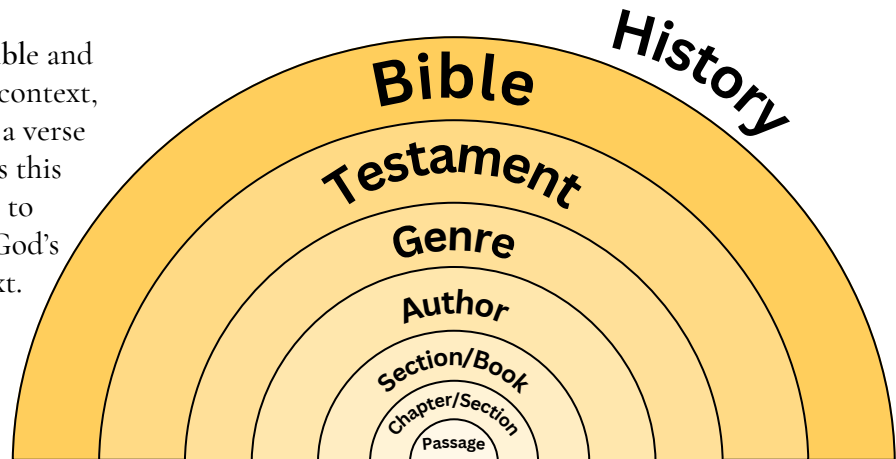
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### HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Begin with reading the passage over and over (*repetition*) with focus and intentionality (*concentration*). After listening for understanding, find the context of the passage - where does the passage fit into the greater picture of Scripture.

Context is key to studying the Bible and a big part of analyzing. Without context, we are much more prone to take a verse out of context and say "what does this mean to me?" But if we are going to study, to conform our minds to God's truths, we need to do it in context.



"A fundamental principle for Bible study is to interpret passages in harmony with other passages by the same author. Furthermore, since God is the ultimate author of Scripture, we need to interpret passages in light of clear teaching throughout the Bible." - Philip B. Payne

Ask basic questions (*comprehension*) about the passage such as *who, what, where, why, when, and how*. Next, begin asking questions about God and His character and listen for insight.

Finally, begin *reflecting* on the passage by asking questions about God's character and His Kingdom. Remember, the goal is to understand who God is, what he is like, and how he works with his children.

**This is not looking at "What does this mean to me?"**

### RESOURCES FOR BIBLE STUDY

- Ray Lubeck - *Read the Bible for a Change* [amzn.to/3RYYBsh](https://amzn.to/3RYYBsh)
- Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart - *How to Read the Bible for all Its Worth* [amzn.to/3LpALU9](https://amzn.to/3LpALU9)
- The Bible Project - *How to Read the Bible* video [bit.ly/3qR6NyQ](https://bit.ly/3qR6NyQ)

### SUGGESTIONS TO STUDY

- Richard Foster - *Celebration of Discipline*
- Dallas Willard - *The Spirit of the Disciplines; The Divine Conspiracy*
- C.S. Lewis - *Chronicles of Narnia; Mere Christianity*
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer - *Cost of Discipleship*
- Watchman Nee - *A Normal Christian Life*
- Hymns & Poetry
- 5-Minutes in Church History Podcast
- "Light and Life" Free Methodist Resources; online articles and podcast



**REPETITION & CONCENTRATION**

Before "beginning" the study, read the passage three or four times for repetition and intentionality. Listen for understanding.

**COMPREHENSION** Listen for insight and discernment.

**CONTEXT**

**Passage:**

**Chapter/Section:**

**Section/Book:**

**Author:**

**Genre:**

**Testament:**

**Whole Bible:**

**History:**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Who are the characters? Who is the narrator?

What is happening?

Where is it happening?

When is it happening?

Why is it happening?

How is it happening?

Summarize the passage in your own words.

What questions do I have about the passage?

What similar passages come to mind?

What do I learn about God and His character?

**REFLECT** God's perspective. Listen for evaluation. Place your mind fully on God and His Kingdom.

What truths do I find? How should those truths be applied?