



# The Abide Method

LEARN TO STUDY THE BIBLE

At Risen Motherhood, we use The Abide Method for studying the Bible. Similar to the Inductive Bible Study method, it is a way of studying the Bible that puts God first. As image bearers of God, we can only understand ourselves correctly through the lens of who God is, carefully studying the character and purposes of God, as revealed in the Scriptures. This is critical to a Christian's growth and maturity.

Engaging in a deliberate and dedicated study of God's Word can feel slow and difficult at times. It will mean some frustration, questions, and learning to live deep in the "I don't know."

But over time, seeking to understand the true meaning of God's Word provides a backdrop for gospel-centered thinking, allowing us to discern truth and make wise decisions through a biblical lens.

Ultimately, proper study of the Scriptures will increase our knowledge of God, transforming us into his image as the affections of our heart follow our minds. "We all . . . beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor. 3:18).

Could there be a more worthwhile pursuit?

## GETTING STARTED

If you're ready to get started with this Bible study method, follow the steps below. Don't worry about doing them all perfectly or feeling like you must complete each step in this order. Use this method to guide your time and provide a general framework, but know that it can be fluid enough to meet the needs of the time you have and the text you are studying.

Before starting, gather your materials:

- **Scripture:** You can write directly in a Bible (like a [journaling Bible](#)), or we like to print out the book or passage we're studying on paper in a large font (10-12 pt.), double-spaced. You can search what you'll be studying [here](#) and copy and paste it into a Word document to print.
- **Worksheets/Extra Paper:** To help guide your study and give you room to write down your thoughts, we designed worksheets to go with The Abide Method. Print out a handful (20-50) for you to use each time you're in the text or feel free to grab an empty notebook or loose leaf paper to keep it simple!
- **Binder/Folder:** To stay organized, a binder or folder is helpful to keep everything together.
- **Pens/Pencils/Markers:** Some people like to just use one great pen; others use a whole slew of multi-colored pencils, pens, or markers. We noted a few of our favorites [here](#), but you use a system that works for you.
- **Reference Materials/Books:** Many books and commentaries can be accessed online, or you can slowly work towards building up a small library of the resources you find most helpful.
- **Gather a Group:** (Optional, but encouraged!) Remember that fallible human minds have a hard time discerning truth in isolation. Consider grabbing a group of women to study the same book or passage at the same time. Then, meet once or twice a month, start a [Voxer](#) conversation, or begin an email chain to discuss what you're learning. Or even take time to listen to relevant teaching together.

## BEGIN WITH PRAYER

We need God's help to understand his Word. Before reading and studying the Bible, always pray that the Holy Spirit would come and work during your time. Ask that God would open your eyes to new truths, to see God as holy as he is, and for his character, purposes, and plans to come alive as you read. Of course, you can structure your prayer time in any way you wish during your study—feel free to pray all throughout the study or just at the beginning and end—however the Spirit leads. But by all means, start with prayer, asking God for help as you strive to uncover truths in the Word.

## BUILD A FRAMEWORK AND CONTEXT

When you're first starting to dive into a new book of the Bible, start by reading the book's introduction in a study Bible (We personally like the [ESV Study Bible](#)) or find a trusted commentary. Read a bit about who the author was, look at the maps and timelines, and research the setting, people, and culture when the text was originally written. Basically, get a feel for the historical and cultural context of the text. This will help you to discover what the text would have sounded like to the original hearers.

Start by answering the questions on an extra sheet of paper or in a notebook:

1. *Who wrote it?*
2. *When was it written?*
3. *What was the culture and setting like at the time?*
4. *To whom was it written?*
5. *Why did they write it?*

Once you have some initial framework and context for the book you're about to begin studying, begin with Observation. You'll spend a significant amount of time in this portion of the study, but this is the part that will truly stretch and grow you to understand what the Bible actually says and will build the basis for good theology and an understanding of who God is.

## OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

- Read the text at least once all the way through for comprehension. (The "pros" recommend doing this once a week for the short books and two or three times for the longer books during the duration of the study.)
- Read again, this time working through the text slowly and deliberately, marking:
  - *Key words (Feel free to make up your own markings or check out this robust [list](#) on Precepts-style markings.)*
  - *Time, locations, and people*
  - *Repeated words, ideas, and phrases*
  - *Transition words (but, therefore, because, likewise, if/then . . . )*
  - *Lists (Make a note when the author makes several points in a row.)*
  - *Contrasts and comparisons*
  - *Commands*
- As you work through the text, note any questions you have about the meaning of certain words or of the text in general.
- For those of you who are more familiar with studying the Bible, we would encourage you at this point to mark major themes in the text, listed below. **If this type of study is brand-new to you, feel free to move to the next step and add this in as you become more confident.**

- *Gospel Truths*
- *New Self/Identity*
- *Great Commission*
- *Great Commandment*
- *The Church*
- *Redemptive Promises*
- *"Types" of Jesus*

- Get out the dictionary. Look up the difficult words you don't know the meaning of. But also look up the key words in the text (like ‘holy,’ “sanctification,” “abide”), even if you think you know what they mean. You'll be surprised with what you discover! Note the appropriate meaning for the passage and any related words.
- Consult different translations for clarity and deeper understanding. (If you don't have hard-copy favorites on hand, we recommend [Bible Gateway](#). Our go-to translations include ESV, NIV, CSB, RSV, and NASB.)
- Look up related Scripture (also known as cross-references). In some Bibles, related Scriptures are listed in the middle column of the Bible; otherwise, you can use [Study Light](#) to do a word search. You can also use [Blue Letter Bible](#) for checking on a specific word and seeing where the original Hebrew/Greek word was used in other Scriptures (This is cross-referencing but going even another layer deep to see the original word).

*Once you have a clearer picture of what the text says, move to Interpretation.*

## INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

- Ask yourself: What would the original hearers have thought? It's critical to linger here before considering what this passage means to you today.
- Challenge yourself to evaluate how this passage fits within the greater theme of the Bible: Creation-Fall-Redemption-Consummation.
- Paraphrase: Rewrite the text in your own words. (This is challenging and hard, but the wrestle will be worth the effort.)
- Consult reliable commentaries. (An easy one is the [ESV Study Bible](#). Here is a great [list](#) for the top commentaries for every book of the Bible or check out [Precepts Austin](#) and [Blue Letter Bible](#), both of which have online commentaries and sermons—but there are many great options. Just be sure to do your research to make sure they are founded on good theology.)

*After you've discovered the meaning of the text, move to Application.*

## APPLICATION: HOW DOES THE TEXT CHANGE ME?

Answer these questions:

- What does this passage tell you about who God is?
- What does this passage tell you about your sin and need for a Savior? How does it change how you view yourself?
- How can these truths transform your life today?
- Remember that all actions begin as thoughts and desires of the heart. How do these truths transform what you love, worship, and value most?
- In turn, how will these renewed desires change the way you respond to God and others?
- Are there practical things God is leading you to do differently as your heart changes?
- What might these truths look like in action? Is the Holy Spirit bringing to mind any specific people, circumstances, conversations, or sins for your prayer, repentance, and reconciliation?

## TAKE IT FURTHER

After a careful inspection of the text, here are some ways to respond to what God is teaching you:

- Journal or write down some of these conclusions for further reflection and meditation.
- Share what you learned with a spouse or close friend.
- Pray, repent, and ask God for what you need.

*As we mentioned at the beginning, we highly recommend you strive to discuss your process and what you're learning with a group of believers. Even the most mature believers still have many questions after studying the Bible in this way! Discussing themes, questions, observations, and conclusions with other women can illuminate things you missed and challenge your hidden biases.*



# The Abide Method: Reference Page

## OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

*As you work through the text, note any questions you have.*

- Read the entire text for comprehension.
- Read again, this time marking:
  - Key words
  - Times, locations, and people
  - Repeated words, ideas, and phrases
  - Transition words (but, therefore, because, likewise, if/then . . . )
  - Lists
  - Contrasts and comparisons
  - Commands
- Read again, marking major themes such as:
  - Gospel Truths
  - New Self/Identity
  - The Great Commission
  - The Great Commandment
  - The Church
  - Redemptive Promises
  - “Types” of Jesus
- Use the dictionary to look up key words; note appropriate meanings and related words.
- Consult different translations of Scripture.
- Look up related cross-references.

## INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

- What would the original hearers have thought?
- How does this passage fit within the greater story of the Bible? (Creation-Fall-Redemption-Consummation)
- Paraphrase: Rewrite the text in your own words.
- Consult reliable commentaries.

## APPLICATION: HOW DOES THE TEXT CHANGE ME?

- What does this passage tell you about who God is?
- What does this passage tell you about your sin and need for a Savior?
- How can these truths transform your life today?
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- What might these truths look like in action? Is the Holy Spirit bringing to mind specific people, circumstances, conversations, or sins to mind for prayer, repentance, or reconciliation?

*If possible, discuss your process and what you’re learning with a group of believers. Even the most mature believers have questions after studying the Bible in this way. Discussing themes, questions, observations, and conclusions with other women can illuminate things you missed and challenge hidden biases.*



# The Abide Method: Discovering Major Themes in Scripture

## GOSPEL TRUTHS

What does the text say (explicitly or implicitly) about the gospel message? Look for statements about God's holiness, man's sin, redemption through Christ, and our future hope in the full restoration of creation.

## NEW SELF / IDENTITY

What does the text say about who we are in Christ, after we are filled with his Holy Spirit and living free from the penalty of sin? Often, this is seen in context of our "old self," in passages that compare and contrast qualities of a believer versus an unbeliever.

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

What does the text say about Jesus' command to go and make disciples of all nations? (Matthew 28:16-20) Where and how does this text encourage us to love our neighbor, witness to unbelievers, and help other believers mature in the faith?

## THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

What does the text say about loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength? (Mark 12:30) What does this love look like and how do we obtain it?

## THE CHURCH

What does the text say about God's establishment of, purpose for, and mission for the church (globally and locally)? It's sometimes helpful to note where a passage is speaking to the church (general), the church (specific), or a believer (as an individual).

## REDEMPTIVE PROMISES

What does the text say about God's promises to us as redeemed followers of Jesus? What can we look forward to, be confident of, and have unchanging hope in?

## "TYPES" OF JESUS

How do the main characters or themes in the passage point back—or forward—to the person and work of Jesus? (As the Jesus Storybook Bible says, "Every story whispers His name.")



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## PRAY



# The Abide Method

## QUESTIONS FOR BIBLE STUDY

### OBSERVE

- Who was this written to?
- What is happening in the passage?
- When and where did this take place?
- Why did the author write this?

### INTERPRET

- What would the original hearers have thought?
- How does this fit in with the greater story of the Bible?
- Are there other parts of Scripture that help you understand this passage?

### WITH THESE TRUTHS IN MIND:

### APPLY

- What does this tell you about who God is?
- What does this tell you about your sin and need for a Savior?
- How might these truths transform your life today?

### PRAY