READ

Sample Pages from the READ for Groups Bundle

Women's Ministry Toolbox
...equipping and encouraging women's ministry leaders

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The following samples pages are from:
How to Host the READ Bible Study
in Your Church or Community
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Before You Get Started

What makes this Bible study different:

As you read through the following pages, you’ll discover that the READ method may seem to be lacking a piece of the Bible study time.

There is no formal teaching time.

No video. No lecture. No one standing before the group to teach on the scripture that was studied.

This was completely intentional. God made it clear that the purpose of READ is to teach women how to read the Bible not teach the Bible to women.

The Holy Spirit serves as the teacher for each woman as she works through her study during the week.

When the women discuss the scriptures during their discussion group time, they’ll also teach one another as they share what they learned during the week in accordance with God’s desire in Titus 2:4 that older women teach the younger.

This frees you and your group facilitators up to love on and shepherd your women without having to be an expert on the content.

So what is the format then?

On the following pages you’ll find sample schedules that will help you with your planning. We used the 1 1/2 hour plan, but I realize many groups only meet for an hour and wanted to make this easily accessible to those groups as well. For those blessed with 2 hours together, there is a 2 hour schedule for you.

You’ll see the majority of the time is spent working through the READ Worksheet questions. A short time is reserved for prayer requests and announcements.

Our women repeatedly told us it was the time in discussion group that the benefited from the most. Having rich discussions with other women about God’s Word is priceless! As answers were shared we learned about each other’s lives and hearts.
Choosing a Book to Study

Women tend to enjoy several shorter Bible studies, rather than one long continuous study.

Consider choosing shorter books of the Bible initially as your women acclimate to a new way of studying God’s Word.

The “quick-win” will build your women’s confidence and they’ll soon be able to say they studied an entire book of the Bible from start to finish—something many of them have probably never done before!

For shorter books of the Bible, I recommend covering 1 chapter per week. For longer books, such as Genesis or Matthew, you may want to study 2 or 3 chapters each week.

When calculating the number of weeks for your study you will want to add an intro week at the beginning and a Reflections week at the end. So a study of Galatians would last 8 weeks, not 6.

Each group member will need:

- 1 set of the READ Bible Study Worksheets for each week of your study
- 1 set of READ Reflections worksheets for each book completed.
- 1 copy of the READ Workbook for Groups

Print the needed copies plus one extra set (so they can study additional books of the Bible on their own) and placed them along with the READ Workbook inside of a 3 prong—2 pocket folder, however a 1 inch binder would also work well.

Books you may want to consider starting with include (chapters listed in parentheses):

Galatians (6)  1 Timothy (6)  Ephesians (6)
2 Timothy (4)  2 Peter (3)  Esther (10)
Philippians (4)  Titus (3)  Colossians (4)
1 Thessalonians (5)  James (5)  Ruth (4)
2 Thessalonians (3)  1 Peter (5)
How to Divide Women into Groups

In some churches dividing women into groups can be a hot-button topic. Some women don’t like being told which group to go into. Others get upset when their best friend isn’t in the same group.

If this is a known issue (it was in ours), you will need prayer coverage and confidence.

During our very first day of Bible study we explained to our women how the groups were going to be formed.

We emphasized:

1. That God is sovereign and that He is a God of detail.
2. That our leaders would pray and then ask God to place each woman in the group He had planned.
3. That often God places us in a group so that we can love on and encourage another group member, it’s not always about us.

This is exactly what we did:

1. We had every woman complete and return an information card (page 25 in the Digging Deeper booklet) on that first day of Bible study.
2. Our Bible Study Coordinator and our Discussion Group Facilitators stayed for about 20 extra minutes to form the groups.
3. We prayed over the cards.
4. We stacked the cards by age groups—20’s, 30’s, 40’s, 50’s, and so on. Our hope was to have at least one woman from each age group in each discussion group.
5. We flipped the cards over and the Discussion Group Facilitators took turns pulling from each stack. We distributed the cards from each age group before moving onto the next.
6. We flipped the cards over and examined our groups for any MAJOR known conflicts. We tried very hard not to disturb the groups God had created, but heeded the Holy Spirit. We would not have left an ex-wife with a current wife in the same group. We did NOT move friends around.
7. Discussion Group Facilitators took the cards home and were to contact their group members within a couple of days to let them know which group they were in and where they would meet the next week.
8. A master list was created by our Bible Study Coordinator with every group’s info.
9. Any new women that joined at a later time were randomly and equally divided into the groups. We tried to keep our group numbers even.
Name tags aren’t just for the first day—be sure to create name tags that can be used at every Bible study session.

Use a large, bold font so names (first and last) can be read easily at a distance. A 24 pt font is a great place to start! If possible, use reusable plastic clip-on name tags so clothing items aren’t damaged.

We laid out our name tags next to the pots of coffee and our discussion group facilitators would collect the name tags at the end of each meeting. If they take them home, there’s a good chance they’ll forget to bring them back. So many women no longer carry purses, so leaving them in there from week to week no longer works!

Consider creating different colored name tags for each of your discussion groups. We printed ours on scrapbook paper, but you could use colored cardstock. You could also use lanyards with different colored cords. We made several extras for each group so as women joined us in the following weeks we were ready for them.

And while it may be tempting to put the name tags away after a few weeks:

- Name tags are a huge help to the woman who’s been absent.
- The rest of the group often forgets the name of those who’ve been absent.
- Brain fog can strike at any time!
- It saves a woman from the embarrassment of calling someone by the wrong name. Sally... um...Susan?
- Prayer requests can more easily be noted when you know the name of the person sharing.
- Pastors, women’s ministry directors, and other staff members may stop by your group or room. Name tags give them the opportunity to learn names and scout potential leaders.
- Name tags help new group members who join mid-session.
- It’s much easier for your childcare coordinator to find Timmy’s mom, when she has on a name tag.
- If you’ve got a really big group and they are meeting in many different rooms weekly, it can be very helpful to put their room location on their name tags.

If you choose to delegate the responsibilities of name tags to your Discussion Group Facilitators, please send them a blank template to use with detailed instructions. I’ve heard of competitive groups that have gone a bit overboard with their name tags to the point of distraction, such as the group that had name tags made out of pottery. Yep!
The following samples pages are from: 

Digging Deeper: Lessons, Activities, and Resources for Your Group

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Digging Deeper Lessons and Activities are designed to take approximately 15-20 minutes. Though if time permits, you could certainly stretch them to last a bit longer.

If you find yourself blessed with 2 hours, icebreakers are a great way for your women to connect with one another. Be sure to search www.womensministrytoolbox.com/icebreakers-games/.

You know your women best—ask God to show you what they are struggling with and tailor your lessons around those challenges. Your Discussion Group Facilitators can give you great insight about areas in which your women could use some training.

If you plan to present all 10 lessons and activities, I suggest you use the order in which you’ll find them in this booklet.

These lessons are most effective when presented back-to-back:
1. Recording Observations & Moving from Recording to Exploring
2. What’s your attitude towards God’s Word? & 12 Reasons Why We Need to Read the Bible
3. How We Approach God’s Word & What the Bible Says About Approaching God’s Word

Please pick and choose those activities, lessons, and resources that best suit the needs of your group. You might just use one or you might use them all.

Please note: Unlike the other READ Workbooks, the margins in this booklet have not been moved to accommodate a 3-hole punch.
**READ**

*Moving from Recording Observations to Exploring*

**Purpose:** To show your group the difference between recording and exploring. Encourage them to use a commentary and study the cultural context.

**What you’ll need:**

1. A couple of apples
2. A knife to cut the apples
3. Pre-cut apples slices in containers (soak them in Sprite so they don’t brown)

1. Let’s take a look at this apple.
2. Ask the group to record at least 8 words that describe this apple – based only on what you see – not on what you think you know. Discuss their answers.
3. Cut the apple and show the group the inside of the apple. Have them write down additional observations. Discuss additional answers.
4. Pass around the apples and offer apple slices. Have them write down additional observations. Discuss.
5. Ask the group: If I wanted to know more about apples – what could I do to find out more? Hopefully they’ll say: talk to an apple orchard owner, do research, seek out an expert.
6. State: We’ve moved from Recording to Exploring.

When you use other translations and commentaries you’re gathering additional information that can help you better understand the scripture. If you hadn’t tasted the apple you could guess, but you wouldn’t know for certain if it was sweet or not, soft or crunchy.

Few of us can relate to the occupations often referred to in the Bible. Most of us aren’t shepherds, fisherman, or farmers. We need to do some research to best understand John 15 – and the references to the vines, branches, pruning, and fruit. Taking the time to do the research will open our eyes to whole new levels of meaning and give us a greater understanding of God’s Word.

Likewise, It’s important that we always look at the context of the passage we’re studying. When we understand what was going on during that time period we’re less likely to misinterpret them.

6. Pray: Lord, give us the desire to dig deeper and to do the research that will better help us understand your Word.
**Purpose:** To share steps your women can take to discern if a resource is reliable.

**Supplies:** Roll of Painters tape—for marking a line in the room

1. Today you’re going to test your groups ability to discern true headlines from those which are fake. Ask your women to stand up. After you read the news headline to the group they’ll need to stand on the one side (show them which) if they believe the headline is true. If they believe the headline is fake, they’ll need to stand on the other side of the tape.

2. After everyone has made their choice reveal the whether the headline was real or fake.
   - Puppy Thrown at German Biker Gang (Real)
   - Dolphins Not So Intelligent on Land (Real)
   - Noah's Ark Theme Park Destroyed in a Flood (Fake)
   - Oyster Vending Machines Installed at French Seaside Resort (Real)
   - London’s iconic Big Ben clock to go digital (Fake)
   - County to Pay $250,000 to Advertise Lack of Funds (Real)
   - Target To Discontinue Sales Of Holy Bible (Fake)
   - Amazon Files Patent for Pay by Selfie (Real)
   - Company asks every employee to pay $1,600 to bail company chairman out of jail (Real)
   - Professor teaches wrong course for entire semester (Real)

3. Ask the group—Was it always easy to tell which was fake and which was real?

4. Share: To identify real money from counterfeit bills counterfeit experts study real money, not the fakes. The same works for us—when we study the Bible and focus on what is true and real, we can more easily discern that which is not.

5. Ask your group to turn to pages 16 and 17 in their Group Workbook and then read thru the 7 checks we can use to help discern if a source is reliable or not.

6. Close with a prayer asking for discernment and attentiveness to the Holy Spirit as we study God’s Word.
My Bible Study Habits

1. Place an “x” on your level of Biblical knowledge according to the scale below.

Preschooler  Elementary School  Biblical Scholar

2. How often do you read your Bible?

___ Never  ___ Once a month  ___ 2-3 a week
___ Only on Sundays  ___ 2-3 times a month  ___ Almost everyday

3. What roadblocks do you face in reading your Bible? Check all that apply.

___ Boring  ___ Don’t understand it
___ Too busy  ___ Struggle to believe it
___ Not relevant  ___ I don’t know where to begin
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READ

Sample Schedule—1 hour

10:00  Pray out loud for the group—Ask God to bless your discussion
10:02  Read passage out loud—Ask each woman to read 2 verses. Go around the circle.
10:05  Recall who, to whom, when, where, what style, and why
10:08  Repeated and Key Words
10:11  Areas of Confusion or Questions
10:16  Share Main Ideas
10:21  Discuss insight from reading other translations.
10:24  Discuss insight from commentaries—draw out cultural and historical context.
10:33  Scriptures that Connect
10:38  What does this passage tell me about God? (His character, His promises)
10:42  What does this chapter say about you and me? (Responsibilities, Sin)
10:45  What does God want me to do today/this week?
10:50  Prayer Requests (if shared out loud)
10:59  Pray and Dismiss
1. **Contact all of your group members**, preferably by phone. Let them know:
   - Your name
   - What room you’ll meet in
   - Childcare information if appropriate
   - How to contact you
   - Ask if they have any questions and answer those you can—follow up if needed

2. **Build yourself an email list/group.** Input everyone’s email addresses so you’ll be ready to go. You may wish to send them a short note the day before the study starts letting them know you can’t wait to see them in the AM. Reiterate the time and location.

3. **Mark out the timing for the lesson.** It will help you to know when you need to speed up or slow down. You may want to use a highlighter to help the questions stand out or different colors of ink for info you want to make sure is mentioned. See the sample on pages 13 and 14.

4. **Pray for each group member by name.** See the 8 Prayers for Your Group Members on page 12 for specific prayer prompts.

5. **Review the Discussion Group Tips** in the READ Workbook so you can step in with gentle reminders if needed. You may even want to read through them together as a group at your first meeting.

6. **Plan to arrive early** to set up your room before everyone arrives each week.
**READ**

**Praying for Your Group Day-by-Day**

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<td>Each one would have a desire to spend time in the Word daily.</td>
<td>2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV) “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Completed lessons; That those who were unable to complete their lessons would not be discouraged.</td>
<td>Romans 15:4-5 (ESV) “For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus…”</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>To experience and recognize God’s presence in their lives.</td>
<td>Genesis 28:15 (ESV) “Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Godly friendships to develop among members of the group.</td>
<td>Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (ESV) “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!”</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>Protection from gossip and over-sharing.</td>
<td>Ephesians 4:29 (ESV) “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”</td>
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<td>God to grow and strengthen each one through His Word and through this study.</td>
<td>Ephesians 1:17 “ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.”</td>
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<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Heartfelt sharing, balanced conversations, and compassionate responses.</td>
<td>Colossians 3:12-13 (ESV) “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”</td>
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In the early spring of 2016 my morning Bible study group wrapped up and without the weekly meetings and accountability, my time in the Word stalled.

Within weeks God drew my attention to the sorry state of my “quiet” time—really the lack thereof. I was floundering without my Bible study group and a guide to keep me on task. As I struggled against the promptings of the Holy Spirit I was forced to acknowledge that I spent more time reading my Bible study book than I did the actual Bible.

Maybe you offer God some of the same excuses I did:

- I’m not smart enough to study scripture on my own. I don’t have a seminary degree.
- I don’t know where or how to start. There are 66 books—should I read them in order?
- Just reading my Bible can be so dry and boring at times.
- I don’t have hours to spend each day studying the Bible.

My feelings did not line up with what I knew God was asking me to do—to put down the Bible study book and learn to study scripture on my own without a Bible study author or Pastor at my side.

God didn’t leave me stranded, but placed several resources in my path—Women of the Word by Jen Wilkin, Multiply: Disciples Making Disciples by Francis Chan, and Sweeter than Honey by Melissa Deming to name a few. As I read through each one, a clear pattern of studying scripture emerged.

They all began by asking the basic “W” questions, encouraged outlining and identifying main themes, digging deeper using other translations and commentaries, reflecting on what the Word reveals about God, and applying scripture to my own life. Observation, interpretation, and application.

Over the summer, I somewhat reluctantly worked my way through 4 different books of scripture. I hadn’t envisioned spending the summer digging into the Word, but rather lounging by the pool.

Desiring nothing more than to be obedient, I dared to share the rough draft of the READ Worksheet with our Bible Study Coordinator. Little did I know that God had planted the desire for a scripture based, inductive-type Bible study on the hearts of the team members almost 2 years prior. I was completely humbled that He was using me to help bring that prayer to fruition.

In the fall of 2016, our small church had 40 women sign up to learn how to READ 1st and 2nd Timothy. Over the weeks their confidence, knowledge, and skills grew and they were studying God’s Word on their own!

READ is just one of many methods you can use to study scripture on your own. I’d be honored if you would use it as a tool in your arsenal to study scripture.
Imagine you are standing on the sidewalk outside of a bakery. What facts could you tell me about the bakery—without going inside? You could describe the outside of the building. You’d know what it was named and the address. You might get a glimpse of what’s happening inside. You’d be able to record a lot of basic facts.

That’s what your first task is—to record the facts.

If you have a study Bible or other reference book, now’s the time to pull it out.

You can find the answers to the 6 W’s in the introduction section in your Bible (if you have one), your Study Bible notes, in a commentary, or online at biblestudytools.com or blueletterbible.org.

Pray and then record the 6 W’s:

1. Who wrote the passage?
2. To whom was the passage written?
3. When was the passage written?
4. Where was the passage written?
5. What style was the passage written in (letter, prophecy, law, etc.)?
6. Why was this passage written?

*You’ll only need to record the facts the first week. Take the time to recall and reflect on them each week thereafter.*

Put any study materials away. You just need your Bible and the Holy Spirit for the next part!

As you read through the Bible passage record what the passage is about. You can opt to hit the highlights or outline the passage. Use whatever method works best for you.

Write down those things that God is drawing to your attention. What sticks out?

Work to come up with a main idea for the passage. You may wish to have one main idea for each section (usually titled in your Bible) with the passage.

As you work through the passage, take note of repeated and key words, areas of confusion, and write down any questions you have.

Great job recording the facts! Let’s move onto exploring the passage!
**READ**

4 Day READing Plan

**Day 1—RECORD**

1. Pray and ask God to open your eyes as you read His Word.
2. Read the passage of scripture through twice.
3. Record the 6 W’s—who, to whom, when, where, what style, and why this passage was written.
4. Take notes on the passage. Outline it if you’d like. Record key words, questions, and areas of confusion.
5. Define the main idea(s) for the passage.
6. Pray and thank God for any fresh insight you’ve gained from your time in the Word today.

**Day 2—EXPLORE**

1. Pray. See the Praying Scripture resource on pages 18-19.
2. Read the passage of scripture.
3. Select a different translation and read the passage of scripture again.
4. Take note of anything of significance that the Holy Spirit draws your attention to.
5. Pray.

**Day 3—EXPLORE**

1. Pray. See the Praying Scripture resource on pages 18-19.
2. Read the passage of scripture.
3. Select and read at least one commentary on this passage. Take note of any new insights gained.
4. Make note of other places in scripture that communicate a similar message. Follow cross references to discover other scriptures that communicate a similar message.
5. Pray.

**Day 4—APPLY & DO**

1. Pray. See the Praying Scripture resource on pages 18-19.
2. Read the passage of scripture.
3. Reflect on: What does this passage tell me about God? What does this passage say about you and me? What does God want me to do today/this week so that I develop Godly character and habits?