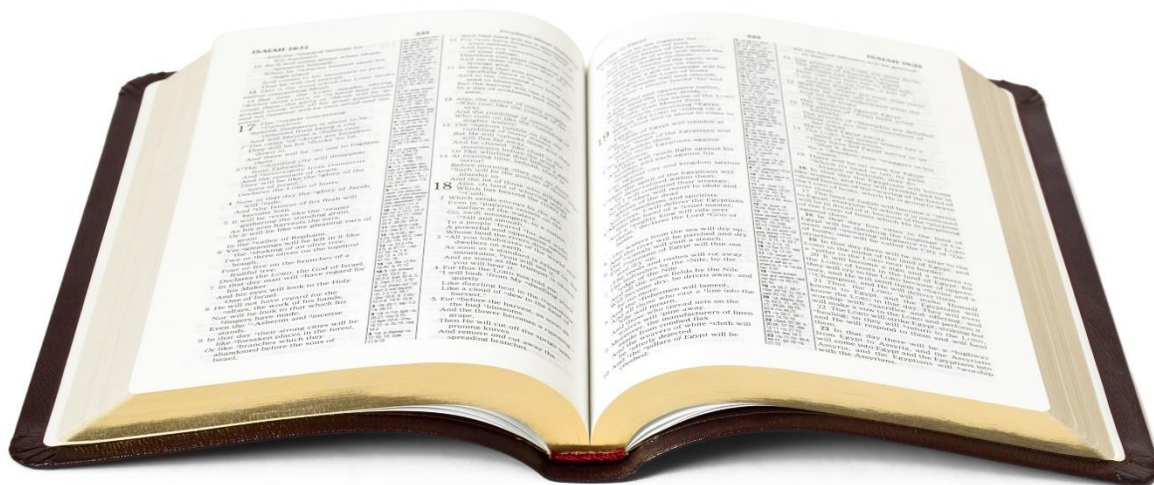


READ

A Bible Study Plan for Unpacking God's Word

CYNDEE OWNBEY



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READ: A Bible Study Plan for Unpacking God's Word is also available for purchase in paperback from Amazon, other online retailers, and at www.womensministrytoolboxshop.com.

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Before you dive in...

I am so excited about the journey you are about to embark upon.

God's Word is so rich! There is much He wants us to learn and discover.

If you are new to the READ method or inductive-type Bible study, let me encourage you to stick with it! You may struggle a bit at first as you get accustomed to the format. But, in time, you will find your rhythm and discover the rewards of regularly engaging with God's Word.

TO COMPLETE THIS STUDY, YOU WILL NEED JUST 4 THINGS:

1. **A Bible**—I suggest a word-for-word translation (see the chart on page 16). A study Bible can be helpful, but it is not necessary.
2. **Access to a commentary**—If you have a study Bible, the notes at the bottom are a commentary. You can also find many free online commentaries at biblestudytools.com, biblegateway.com, blueletterbible.org, netbible.org, and studylight.org. Most of these commentary sites also offer a free app you can download onto your phone. You may decide to invest in a printed commentary. You can find a list of my favorite commentaries at womensministrytoolbox.com/read-resources.
3. **Access to another translation of the Bible**—I suggest using a thought-for-thought translation (see the chart on page 16). Selecting a translation from the opposite end of the chart on page 16 will add depth to your study time. Most of the websites mentioned above also offer a variety of translations online and in their apps.
4. **READ Weekly Worksheets**—In order to take time to savor and thoroughly unpack God's Word, I strongly recommend reading only one chapter each week. You will be blessed as you slow down, dig deep, and really digest each chapter of Scripture.

As with any Bible study, the more you put into your study time, the more you'll get out of it! Check out the reading plans for pacing suggestions on page 23 to pace yourself.

It is my deepest and most heartfelt prayer that you will grow in your ability and confidence to study God's Word. I am praying that God will open your eyes so you may see wonderful things in His law (Psalm 119:18 NIV).

Humbly His,

Cyndee Ownbey

Women's Ministry Toolbox

Why READ?

The READ Bible study method, like other inductive-type Bible studies, is successful because it encourages familiarity, digestion, connections, examination, application, growth, and understanding.

1. FAMILIARITY - Repetition breeds familiarity and begins the process of memorization. The more we know God's Word, the more we know about God. See Psalm 119:10-11.
2. DIGESTION - Slowing down to spend dedicated time on one passage allows the Holy Spirit to speak and provides time to digest God's Word. See Joshua 1:8.
3. CONNECTIONS – Examining how Scripture connects with other passages leads us to see consistent themes throughout the Bible.
4. EXAMINATION- God doesn't specify how much time we should spend or how quickly we should read His Word. Sometimes we treat it like a race. We learn more by digging deeply than by skimming the surface. Unpacking the cultural and historical context brings Scripture to life by providing insight that can change the way we view and understand Scripture.
5. APPLICATION - It's not enough to study the Word; we must act upon the Word. How we apply God's Word matters. See James 1:22-25.
6. GROWTH & UNDERSTANDING - Studying Scripture gives us a greater understanding of who God is and what He has done for us. When we apply that knowledge to our lives, we reflect His image. See Romans 12:2, Psalm 119:18, Proverbs 2:1-5, and 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

R stands for Record

On the following pages, you'll find excerpts from the READ Weekly Worksheets, which will guide you through the record, explore, apply, and do exercises.

Together we'll look at Joshua 1:1-18. Though it's not an entire chapter, it is long enough for you to get a good feel for the READ Bible study method.

Before we begin, take a moment to pray. You may want to ask the Holy Spirit to renew and transform your mind as you study God's Word. (See John 14:26 and Romans 12:2.)

Your first task each week is to record the answers to the "w" questions below.

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 genre was the passage written in? See page 12.
6. Why was this passage written?

I like to record the "w" facts on my READ Weekly Worksheet the first week of Bible study. Then I recall and reflect on them each week after that. Doing so helps me to remember the context of the Scripture passages.

To find the answers to these questions, we need to pull out some Bible study materials.

Open a commentary or study Bible (physically or online) and search for the introduction to the book of Joshua.

Read through the introduction looking for the answers to the "w" questions and record your answers below.

Who?	To whom?
When?	Where?
What genre?	Why?

Were you able to find all of the answers? Sometimes historians aren't certain, don't know, or disagree. Don't worry about any blanks or uncertain answers.

In my research, I found Joshua may have written this book. It was written to the Israelites around 1200-1170 BC. The book of Joshua records Joshua's leadership and the fulfillment of the covenant between God and the Israelites. This book falls into the history genre. Scholars aren't sure where the book of Joshua was written. Your findings should be similar.

READ on Your Own

Now that you've practiced using the READ Bible study method, it's time to dig in!

1. Select a book of the Bible to study.
2. Determine the pace at which you'll proceed. I suggest studying one chapter over a week, devoting about 15 or more minutes each day to work through the READ Weekly Worksheets (pages 33-35).
3. Pray, asking God to open your eyes and mind each day before opening God's Word. Consider praying one of the Scripture passages noted in the Prayer Scripture section.
4. Read or re-read the Scripture passage each day.
5. Complete at least one section of the worksheet. See the Suggested Reading Plan on the next page for pacing and section suggestions.
6. Pray, thanking God for any fresh insight you received during your time in the Word.

Savor the slower pace of studying God's Word. You'll find your retention and knowledge greatly increase when the Scriptures are allowed to marinate in your mind.

Praying Scripture

Prayer is a crucial part of studying God's Word as we cannot understand without the help of the Holy Spirit. (See John 14:26.)

Here are some Scriptures you may want to use in your prayer time before and after studying.

EXAMPLES OF PRAYING SCRIPTURE:

Lord God, just as Psalm 19:14 says, I ask that the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight.

Father, God, help me to understand, obey, and observe your law with all my heart (Psalm 119:34).

God, use my time in your Word to transform and renew my mind so I may be able to discern your perfect will (Romans 12:2).

OTHER SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER PRAYING:

Isaiah 55:11 NKJV— So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Psalm 119:34 NASB—Give me understanding, that I may observe Your law and keep it with all my heart.

Proverbs 2:1-5 ESV—My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

Psalm 19:14 NIV—May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Psalm 119:10-11 ESV—With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

James 1:22-25 HCSB—But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man looking at his own face in a mirror. For he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but one who does good works—this person will be blessed in what he does.

Romans 12:2 HCSB—Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Psalm 119:18 NIV—Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.

Psalm 119:105 KJV—Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

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.

Frequently Asked Questions

HOW SHOULD I SELECT A BOOK OF THE BIBLE TO STUDY?

Spend time in prayer, asking God to point you to a particular book of Scripture. I've often found that God will place verses from the same book in my path repeatedly—during church services, over the radio, and even through social media. Even if you're unsure, pick one anyway. God will bless and use the time you've spent in His Word, no matter which of the 66 books you read.

If you're brand-new to Bible study, you may want to begin in the New Testament by studying Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John.

HOW MUCH TIME DOES IT TAKE TO COMPLETE THE HOMEWORK?

Most people complete the homework in about 10-20 minutes per day. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's prompting to dig deeper. Many people enjoy spending more time on the commentary section and following cross-references.

BESIDES A STUDY BIBLE AND A COMMENTARY, CAN I USE OTHER RESOURCES WHEN I COMPLETE THE READ WORKSHEETS?

You may find it helpful to use Bible dictionaries, Bible maps, or a concordance when completing the explore tasks. Like commentaries, these materials are written by Biblical scholars.

I suggest you do not use Bible study books, sermons, articles, or blog posts. While there are many authors and pastors who have much wisdom to share on the Scripture passage you are studying, it would be much like the telephone game. Most would be repeating material and information they discovered in Bible resources during their personal study time. There is no need to get that information second-hand. Go instead straight to the source!

CAN I USE THESE MATERIALS WITH MY SMALL GROUP?

To use the READ materials with your small group, each person will need to purchase their own copy of the book. Alternatively, you may want to use the READ Bible Study Kit for Groups. In addition to workbooks you may copy for participants, you'll also receive materials and resources for leading a small group using the READ Bible study method. You'll find more information at www.readbiblestudy.com.

Date: _____ Passage: _____

RECORD (1st week) or RECALL (following weeks)

Who?	To whom?
When?	Where?
What genre?	Why?

RECORD what this passage is about.

(These notes are just for you—to help you capture the content of this passage.)

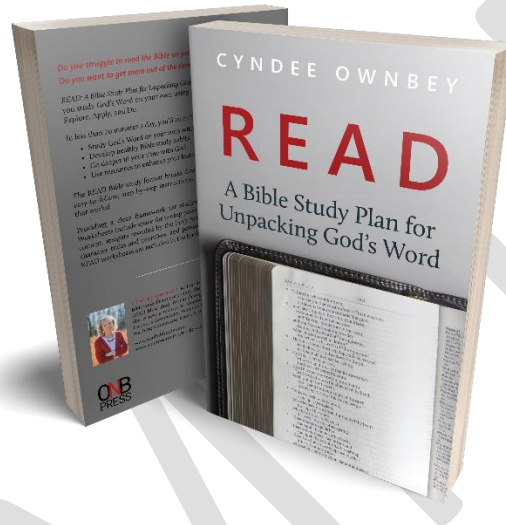
SAMPLE

Record repeated and key words:

Additional Formats

Paperback

READ: A Bible Study Plan for Unpacking God's Word is also available in paperback for purchase online from retailers, including Amazon and the [Women's Ministry Toolbox Shop](#).



Group Kit

READ: A Bible Study Plan for Unpacking God's Word has been used in churches across the country for Bible study, small groups, discipleship groups, and Sunday school.

The *READ* Group Kit includes:

- *READ Workbook for Groups* - Everything your women will need to learn how to *READ* the Bible, resource lists, definitions, explanations, worksheets, and more.
- *Group Facilitator Handbook* - Including group management strategies, prayers for your group, first day tips, timing the lesson, and more.
- *How to Host the *READ* Study in Your Church or Community* - Sample schedules, the first day, how to recruit discussion group facilitators, dividing women into groups, and more.
- *Digging Deeper: Lessons, Activities, and Resources* - Ten lessons & activities, printable worksheets, assessment materials, Bible study information cards, and more.

To find out more information about the *READ* Group Kit or to purchase the materials, go to www.readbiblestudy.com.

About the Author

Cyndee Ownbey is the best-selling author of *Rethinking Women's Ministry: Biblical, Practical Tools for Cultivating a Flourishing Community*. She is a mentor to thousands of women's ministry leaders through her [website](#) and [Facebook community](#), Women's Ministry Toolbox. A seasoned Bible study teacher, Cyndee has taught hundreds of women how to use the READ Bible study format in Bible study groups and at conferences. She is passionate about teaching women and leaders how to study the Bible on their own.

Over the years, God has expanded the reach of [Women's Ministry Toolbox](#) to include a [Facebook group](#) of over 4000 women's ministry leaders, an online classroom featuring women's ministry training, and several printable women's ministry resources.

Cyndee's resources for leaders include:

- [Rethinking Women's Ministry Book and Workbook](#)
- [READ Bible Study Group Kit](#)
- [Prayer Warrior Boot Camp Online Course](#) and [Group Kit](#)
- [Bible Study Facilitator Training Online Course](#)
- [Women's Ministry Event Planning Online Course](#)
- [How to Select a Bible Study for Your Group Online Course](#)
- [Women's Ministry Binder Essentials eBook](#)
- [Everything You Need to Know About Planning a Retreat eBook](#)
- [12 Days of Christmas Icebreaker Games eBook](#)

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You can find her on Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest @womensministrytoolbox and online at www.womensministrytoolbox.com.

To book Cyndee to speak at your retreat, conference, or for a women's ministry training event, please visit womensministrytoolbox.com/connect/teaching-training/.