

How to Study the Bible

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Preacher: Jason Webb

[0:00] Oh, how I love your law. I meditate on it all day long. Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me.

I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts.

I have kept my feet from every evil path, so that I might obey your word. I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me.

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth. I gain understanding from your precepts, therefore I hate every wrong path.

Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light for my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws.

[0:59] I have suffered much. Preserve my life, O Lord, according to your word. Accept, O Lord, the willing praise of my mouth, and teach me your laws.

Though I constantly take my life in my hands, I will not forget your law. The wicked have set a snare for me, but I have not strayed from your precepts.

Your statutes are my heritage forever. They are the joy of my heart. My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.

On these Sunday evenings, we are in a series called How To. They're practical lessons on how to live the Christian life.

And tonight I want to look at how to study your Bible. How to study your Bible. And I guess the first question we need to ask is, what exactly do I mean when I say, study your Bible?

[2:04] And here's my answer, a simple definition. I mean, growing in your understanding of what the Bible teaches about every area of your life.

Your life touches all sorts of things. And everywhere your life touches, the Bible has something to say about it. And study is the process of growing an understanding of how the Bible teaches us in those different areas.

And so, it has to do with your mind. Tonight is talking about how we use our minds to address God's Word. So let me ask you, do you need to study the Bible?

Do you need to study the Bible? Well, do you need to escape the devil's lies? If you do, then you need to study the Bible. We just read from Psalm 119, Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me.

Wiser than my enemies. Do you need insight and understanding to make difficult decisions? I know I do. I'm sure you do. Well, we just read, I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes.

[3:21] And I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts. Do you need to be taught by God? Do you need to be taught by God?

Or have you come to the place where you already know everything? Well, if you need to be taught by God, then you need to study your Bible.

It says, I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me. God takes an active role in teaching us as we study. Do you need to escape the path that leads to destruction?

That path that seems so right to a man, but the end thereof is destruction, is death. Or are you an immovable rock that has nothing to worry about?

Well, if you want to take heed lest you fall, then you need to study your Bibles. He says, I gain understanding from your precepts, therefore I hate every wrong path.

[4:21] I hate every wrong path. I steer away from every wrong path because I understand. I've gained understanding from your precepts. And so for all these things, for wisdom, for insight and

understanding and obedience and safety, you must study your Bibles.

There's no shortcuts. There's lots of shortcuts in this world to do all sorts of things. But the route to wisdom and to insight and to obedience and safety, there's no shortcut.

It's studying the Word of God. And so we want to talk tonight about how to effectively do that. How can I sit down personally and study the Word of God so that I can grow in understanding and so that I can be wise and insightful and protected and obedient and that I can love the Lord my God with all of my mind.

With all of my mind. Well, that's what we want to talk about tonight. I have three main points. The first point is the shortest. And here it is. The first point is two warnings.

The first point is two warnings. And here's the first warning. Bible study will not save you. Bible study will not save you. Some people think wrongly about studying the Word of God and about reading the Bible in general.

[5:41] But some people think that they can save themselves by doing it. By reading the Bible. But is that true? Well, the Bible itself. The Bible that they are so keen on reading says no.

There's only one name under heaven by which a sinner can be saved. And it's Jesus Christ. And the Bible can make us wise unto salvation. It can show us. It points us to the person who can save us.

And so tonight, if you're looking inside of your own heart and you're seeing sin, and you're hearing in your ears that cry of guilty. You are guilty.

Be careful that you don't substitute something good for something necessary. The good thing is reading the Bible. The Bible can teach you. It can make you wise unto salvation.

But it does that by pointing to Jesus Christ. The Bible is pointing to Him. There's only one way that you can be right with God.

[6:43] And that's if you are covered in the righteousness of Jesus. Without His righteousness, you cannot be right with God. So if you repent of your sins, if you entrust yourself to Jesus, then He will save you.

Because He's the Savior of sinners. And so you should go to the Scriptures in order to see and be pointed to Jesus Christ. But don't make the mistake.

Stopping at studying the Scriptures, stopping at reading the Scriptures, is sort of like going to the grocery store and buying your groceries, filling your cart up, but then never going home and actually cooking and eating them.

Going to the grocery store alone doesn't feed you. The grocery store is where you get the food that you need, but itself, it doesn't feed you. And that's a very good picture of Bible study.

If you want to be wise unto salvation, then study your Bibles. But Jesus is the only Savior. And so don't satisfy yourself with just mere reading of Scripture.

[7:47] Move on. Move to Jesus. That's the first warning. Here's the second warning. Bible study will not necessarily make you holy. These things might be discouraging, but we want to put fences around, and I want to put a fence around to protect you.

Bible study will not necessarily make you holy. Paul Tillich was one of the most famous, most influential theologians of the last century.

He was a very intelligent man. He taught in Germany, and then he came over and he taught at the university at Harvard, and at the University of Chicago. And he probably knew academically more than any of us here about the Word of God, about the Bible in a purely academic sense.

And when he died, they buried him in New Harmony, Indiana, and they put on his gravestone these words, He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season, and whose leaf does not wither.

Whatever he does prospers. And of course, you know where that comes from. That's from Psalm 1. It's about the man who loves, whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

[9:01] But sadly, nothing could be further from the truth. He knew a lot about the Bible. He had studied the Scriptures intensely, but he was not a holy man.

He was in fact a very wicked man, a very evil man. He cheated on his first wife to have an affair with an engaged woman. And then he cheated on his second wife to have multiple affairs, and the day after he died, they opened his drawers on his desk and out fell, along with all of his academic writing, all of this brilliant material, so to speak, pornographic pictures and letters from all of his

mistresses.

He was a man enslaved to sin. Knew a lot about the Bible, but still enslaved to sin. And so you can study the Scriptures. You can have a lot of the Scriptures memorized.

You can win Bible trivia every time you play. But that does not necessarily make you a holy person. Studying the Scripture is not a machine that you come to and put in your money and automatically receive holiness.

You have to have real dealings with God. It's the grace of God that makes a man holy, not cleverness. So those are the first two warnings.

[10 : 27] When you hear the rest of the sermon, don't wander into those paths. Now here's the second main point. Four adverbs.

Four adverbs. An adverb is a word that describes a verb. It tells you how something was done. It's the way that it was done.

And so we want to talk about what way do we study the Bible? What way do we do that? Well, the first adverb is humility. We study the Bible humbly, humbly.

Now the author of this book is God. It's God. And if you're ever going to be a godly student of God's Word, then you have to begin there that all Scripture is God-breathed.

So over this entire Scripture, it's written, Thus saith the Lord. It comes from His mouth. He has said it. And so the Lord, the Maker, the Sustainer of the entire universe, including you, has spoken.

[11 : 37] He is your judge. He's the one that upholds you. And you will stand before Him in the day of judgment and give an account for how you have handled His Word. And so we have to handle the Scriptures with humility.

We have to do it humbly. So are you over the Scriptures? Are you under the Scriptures? As you come to the Bible, do you come as judge or do you come as student?

Do you decide what it says and what it means? Not at all. You're not going to get to first base with actually studying the Word of God if you come to it with an attitude that I am going to decide what I like and what this says and what it means.

We have to remember this is God's Word. He holds the whole universe in His hand and if He stops holding it, it disappears.

He holds your life in His hand. He gives you a breath and He gives you another breath. And one day, He will blow upon you and you will wilt.

[12 : 45] So study your Bible humbly. Second adverb. Study your Bible prayerfully. Prayerfully.

The Bible is God's book. The Bible is God's book. Now, in the Children's Catechism, the tenth question, it asks, where is God?

Where is God? And the answer is, God is where? Everywhere. God is everywhere. So as you sit down on your couch or in your study or on your chair in your living room, wherever you are reading your Bible, wherever you are attempting to study God's Word, you do it with God right beside you because God is everywhere.

Now, what would you do if you had your favorite author sitting down next to you while you were reading one of his books? Think about that. Now, one of my favorite authors is J.R.R. Tolkien.

I love The Lord of the Rings. And what I would do is if he was sitting there, I would ask him, if I ran across something that I didn't quite understand or what I want some clarification on, I would ask him.

[14 : 02] I would talk to him about what he had written. Now, there's this line in The Fellowship of the Ring where it talks about in the northern part of the Shire, this person saw these things that looked like trees walking.

And every time I've read that, I've wondered, what in the world is that talking about? And so, if I had Professor Tolkien on my couch and he's smoking his pipe and he has his tweed jacket on just like I've always imagined him, and I came to that part, I would ask him.

I would talk to him. And that's the wonderful privilege that we have whenever we read our Bibles, whenever we're studying. We get to talk to the author.

We don't have to write letters. He's with us. And so we pray and we speak. And so as you begin and in the middle and at the end, you pray.

You pray for light. You pray for understanding. You pray for those eyes that sees wonderful things in your law. Oh Lord, give me those kind of eyes that I can see those things.

[15:12] That's one of the reasons that the Holy Spirit was given to us to teach us all these things. And so we're not asking for something strange when we pray to God and ask him for light.

We're asking for something that he wants to give us. So how do you study your Bible? You do it prayerfully. Here's the third adverb. You do it patiently.

Patiently. Now if you go up to Itasca State Park in Minnesota, you can do something really quite remarkable. You could take your toddler's hand and you could wade across the Mississippi River. A child could cross it all by himself with a few skips and a hop and a jump and he'd be across. Well, how can you do that? Because right there at the very beginning, right when it comes out of this little lake, it's just a stream.

It's just a stream and you could wade across it. And so let's think about that. That's one part of the Mississippi and then we go down and we go further and further and we go all the way down to Louisiana and now this river has earned its name.

[16:22] It's the mighty Mississippi and it's not a few hops and a skip and a jump. It's now, it's a mile wide at its widest part and it's 200 feet deep. That's a picture of what the Bible is like.

There are places where you could wade and there are places where you must swim. Gregory the Great said, Scripture is like a river, broad and deep, shallow enough here for the Lamb to go wading, but deep enough there for the elephant to swim.

So the Bible has 66 books. Now some of those books are what we would say pretty shallow. That doesn't, that's not bad, it's just they're easier to understand.

And some of those books are deep waters. They aren't easy to cross. They aren't easy to cross.

So, could you cross the Mississippi when it's a mile wide and 200 feet deep?

Could you? You could. You could. It would take a while. It would take patience. You would have to swim a lot longer. You might need some help, but you could do it.

[17:37] You could swim. And it's the same with Scripture. Some Scripture is deep and wide and it's going to take patience in order to come to the end of it, to come to some understanding of it.

So, let me ask you, can you read, can you read and understand the book of Revelation? That has a terrible reputation of being a very hard book.

Probably has earned that reputation. But let me ask you, can you understand the book of Revelation? Or is that impossible? Sometimes I hear people talking about it and I, and they think it's impossible so they don't read it.

But, I would say, of course you can read and understand and appreciate Revelation. Maybe you can't get to the deepest parts. Maybe you won't be able to touch the bottom. But to some degree you can understand it.

Because God wouldn't have put it in our Bibles if he wouldn't have, if it didn't make any sense and it didn't do us any good. But is the, is the going going to be easy? Is it going to be easy?

[18:41] Is it going to be a hop, skip, and a jump? Not at all. It's going to take patience. And so, if you're going to study Revelation, if you're going to study other passages of Scripture that are very difficult and deep, it's going, we're going to have to get rid of the instant oatmeal and the microwave mentality.

We're going to have to settle in and realize this is going to be hard. It's going to take patience. I'm going to have to be here for the long haul. So don't get discouraged.

Don't steer away from those harder passages. God didn't put those those sections in there. God didn't put the books in there that are hard just to frustrate us.

They're hard. And it calls for patience. It calls for for us to pray, God, give me a willing heart to sustain me. Don't let me just grow lazy and just go to the same passages that I know so well and and and then I never grow.

I'm never learning anymore. That's the third adverb. Do it patiently. Fourth adverb. Study the Bible personally.

[19:53] Personally. Reading Psalm 119, it shows us a lot about the psalmist's heart. But one thing that we see over and over again and we see it very clearly is that the psalmist wants to obey God.

He wants to obey. He wants to know so that he can obey. Just listen to some of his his phrases. Give me understanding.

He's praying. Give me understanding and I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart. Or this has been my practice. I obey your precepts.

Or my heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end. The whole point of Bible study is to see and understand God's word and how it applies to you.

it doesn't necessarily mean that there's going to be something instantaneous that you instantly that you need to do. Sometimes I think we get the wrong idea when we come to a passage and we can't think of something very concrete and practical that we need to change and do immediately.

[21:04] We kind of become frustrated. But the Bible has bigger and larger purposes than that. Sometimes we come to the Bible and we learn something and the whole point is to create an intellectual adjustment.

in our brain to Romans 12 to be transformed, to be renewed in our mind. And sometimes it has an emotional application.

So you're studying this word and you're reading Romans 13 we'll say and it's talking about rulers and government officials and it's teaching us that we need to have a different emotional attitude towards this or that government ruler.

And so we come to the passages we come to the books and we ask God to teach us to rebuke us to correct us and that's going to mean behavior and that's going to mean emotional and intellectual ways that we're out of bounds.

So ask yourself how as you're reading how is God equipping me? How is God preparing me? How is God changing me?

[22:16] What do I need to think differently or feel differently or do differently as I study? Study for its own sake is no good at all. It needs to be done to obey God. That's the way the psalmist does it.

That's the way the apostle Paul is always writing. He's writing in order to change people. So that's our first our second main point.

Those are four adverbs. Now here's the third main point. Four suggestions. Four suggestions. And this is where we get into some of the nitty gritty things about how to actually study God's word.

And here's suggestion number one. Ask questions. Ask questions. We saw that this morning of how the Ethiopian eunuch how did he read scripture?

He read it asking questions. And that's the way you should do it too. Because the heart of all study is an active participation.

[23:15] It's an active participation in the material. It's engaging the material. It's not passively sitting by waiting for some truth to swing and hit us in the head. We actively engage.

And so what we need to do is as we sit down to scripture if we want to study God's word we have to be conscious about asking questions.

Asking the good questions. And so we ask what kind of literature is this? That's a good question.

What kind of literature am I reading here?

Is this poetry? Is this prose? What kind of literature am I reading? And here's another question.

What kind of what is that literature like?

What rules does that kind of literature play by? And what I mean is poetry uses a lot of descriptive emotional metaphorical language.

[24:18] And then you have we read 1 Samuel today. Not a lot of emotional metaphorical flourish of language. It's very plain. straightforward. It's very literal.

And so I can't read history as poetry. And I can't read poetry as history. That confuses everything. That changes the rules. And that brings all sorts of confusion.

And so we have to ask and you should ask what kind of literature is this? And what are the rules that it plays by? Another question. What does it say?

What does it say? say? Not what do I want it to say? Or what I would have said? Or what does this mean to me?

But simply this. What does it say? What do the words, the sentence, the phrase, the paragraph, what does it say?

[25:18] Another question. Why did he say this now? Why did he say that now? And this is a logic question. And as you ask these questions, you're going to want to understand what's the reasoning behind it?

What's the reasoning? And you're going to have to ask this question, especially in books like the epistles, because Paul uses all these very careful arguments, and sometimes his flow of thought is not very clear.

And he's going along and we're following him and we're following him and all of a sudden he says something. And we have to stop and ask and say, why did you say that now? We want to understand and dig into his reasoning.

Why did he say that now? Why did he use that word? What does that word mean? Those are good questions. Have I seen or heard this somewhere else?

Have I run into something like this before? That's a very good question to ask. The New Testament, if you're going to understand the New Testament, you have to be always going back to the Old Testament, because the New Testament is full of quotes and allusions to the Old Testament.

[26:37] So Revelation 5, it talks about the Lion of Judah. Now is that a name just plucked out of nowhere that just sounds really good? No, that first shows up way back in Genesis.

And Revelation doesn't use it in a way that contradicts that. It actually uses it in a way that confirms what Jacob was saying to Judah. And so we have to go all the way back to Genesis and we have to say, okay, what does this word, Lion of Judah mean?

And then we come to Revelation and we see, okay, how is Jesus the Lion of Judah? If you're reading the Old Testament, this is so key, you're reading the Old Testament and you're reading those Old Testament prophets and the key to understanding the prophets so much is to remember that what they're doing is referring back to what Moses said.

All those covenant blessings, all those covenant curses that Moses talked about, all those laws that Moses talked about, they're referring and explaining and applying those to the present people in Israel at the time.

And so, if you're going to understand the prophets, you have to go back to Moses. And so, that's the point. You ask, have I seen something like this before? How does scripture teach me to interpret this passage in front of me right now?

[28:00] Suggestion number one, ask questions. Suggestion number two, pay attention when God's word is being preached. Pay attention when God's word is being preached. And that might sound like a very strange thing to say when I'm talking about personal Bible study.

But you would be amazed how much you can learn by just listening to the preaching of God's word and how much you can learn about how to study God's word by listening to the preaching of his word.

So, how many years have people been doing Bible study? Thousands, we would say. Right? Thousands of years.

Well, how many years have people had Bibles in their own hands? 500. 500 years ago, the printing press was invented.

And finally, people could have a copy of Scripture in their own hands. But did that mean for all that time beforehand there was no Bible study?

[29:06] People didn't grow in Bible study in any way or think about the Bible. No, they did it as a church. They did it together. Remember, the early church devoted themselves to the apostles teaching.

They were students and the apostles were teaching them. And so, you'd be amazed how much you can study God's word and learn about God's word just from listening, actively listening to the preaching of God's word.

When I went to college, I took a class called Christian Life. And it was about things like justification and sanctification and election.

And it's not, I'm not bragging or anything, but it was a very easy class. Other students struggled. They had a hard time. It was all very new.

And some of them really liked it and some of them didn't. But I didn't even have to go to get a good grade, to be honest. But I still went. My future wife was sitting in the front row, and so that's where I was.

[30:18] It was at 8 in the morning, and I'm telling you, that's sacrifice in college. Well, what was the difference? Why do people struggle in this class and other people didn't?

The difference was the preaching of God's word. It wasn't that I was so smart. It wasn't that I was smarter than they were or anything like that. They came from churches that didn't preach the word of God faithfully, and I did.

That was the difference. God's God's God's God's word.

God's word. It's sort of like a baby learning to talk. It's just done naturally. You do it without thinking, and that's what the preaching of God's word does. Babies don't go to a seminar down at the library to learn how to talk.

They don't have a class for that. They just hear mom and dad talking. And they talk, and the mom and dad talk and talk and talk to them and smile and talk, and pretty soon the baby is learning vocabulary and grammar and how to interpret a tone of voice.

[31 : 28] And that's what the preaching of God's word does. You begin to understand the scriptures by hearing it spoken to you over and over again. So that's the second major suggestion. Pay attention. This isn't lost time.

This isn't just academically irrelevant in any way. This will help you to study God's word better. Third suggestion. Start big, go small, and repeat.

Start big, go small, and repeat. Now what in the world am I talking about? It's pretty easy. It's quite simple. All I'm saying is you have to understand the big picture if you're going to understand a little picture.

You're going to have to understand a big section of scripture if you're going to understand the small section of scripture. And vice versa. If you're going to understand the big picture, you have to understand the little picture.

And so, do you kind of see what it is? It's a spiral. As you go up and up and up, you understand scripture more and more. So you understand the smaller passages and then you understand the bigger passages and then the smaller passages and then the bigger sections.

[32 : 42] And so what I would suggest and what I'm saying is don't get bogged down all the time in reading a verse or two. And this is, I'm not talking about meditation here.

This is something different. Don't get bogged down in a verse or two trying to understand it. Instead, lift your head up and read a large section of scripture.

scripture. And then kind of go back to the small section. So for example, you might want, if you're saying, okay, I want to study the book of Ephesians.

I want to study this book. I want to really understand what Paul is saying. Read it through one time. Read it through two times. Read it through three times. Read it through four times and five times and six times.

All the way through. Until you understand it. Until you understand the contours and the texture of the book. Until you understand the big picture. the major themes that you just have, you can see at the very surface.

[33 : 39] Read through it. And now, dive down into section, chapter one, verses three through twelve, we'll say. That's sort of the first major section of Ephesians.

And you study it in depth. You look at the words, you look at the verses, and you go for the reasoning, and you try to understand why is Paul saying this here? And now, you sort of worked on this one brick, and now lift up your head again, and read through Ephesians again.

And read through it, and what you're going to see is, you're going to see things that you've never seen before. You're going to see themes that you didn't see before. You're going to see ideas and words pop out that weren't popping out before.

And the reason is, is you dug into this one section. So you read through it several times again, and then you go back, and we'll say we're going to read verses 13 through 23.

And that's Paul's prayer to the Ephesians. And you read it, and you dig into it, and as you do, more themes come out, and you start seeing bigger connections to the rest of the book, and connections to maybe outside of the book, to what he said in Romans.

[34 : 57] And what are you doing? What is all that? Well, that's studying God's word. That's coming to understand it. That's growing. And so that's suggestion number three. Start big, go small, and repeat.

Just keep going around the circle. Don't get stuck in the small side, and don't get stuck on the big side. You need both. Here's suggestion number four. Use your available resources.

Use your available resources. What do you do if you get stuck? stuck, and you have a question or perplexing problem? What do you do if, let's say you come to the book of Ecclesiastes, and you're reading it, and you're reading the big, and then you're reading the small, and you're kind of getting some idea, but really, it's just a big muddle.

You're not sure. Well, what do you do? You have to use your available resources. I mean, if you're going to cross the Mississippi, when it's a mile wide and 200 feet deep, if you're going to explore all of it, you're probably going to need a rowboat.

You're going to need some help. You're going to need some other people, and that's what I'm saying. So what do you have available to you? What resources do you have available to you?

[36:12] Well, you all have pastors. You all have pastors. And so, use your pastors. Really, use. If you have a question, please, send us an email.

Stop us. Talk to us. If we have time for anything, we have time to help you understand the Word of God. So please, use us.

Most of you have resources, more resources than that. If you have a computer and the internet, you have access to an obscene amount of resources.

If you want to study with the help of Greek and Hebrew, of other languages, of other versions, with commentaries, they're all available online.

It's amazing. One that I use a lot is called esor.net. So you go there, esor.net, you can download the program for free.

[37:20] And they have multiple versions. Multiple Languages. It has concordances and word studies and all these books packed in and it's all free. So if you have the internet and a computer, use those resources.

Use them. Well, what about commentaries? What about commentaries? One of the greatest gifts that God has given his church are people that can, are teachers, and teachers who can write, and teachers who can simply explain scripture.

And so make use of them. Make use of them. So it, and I'm kind of really hesitant to just start listening, oh, this commentary is good for this, and this, that's good for that.

If you don't know what commentary, or commentaries, or sets, or books that are whatever, ask us.

Again, stop Pastor John, stop me, stop Pastor Bob, ask us.

We've read lots of commentaries. Some of them are good. Some of them are bad. We can help you figure out what exactly you need to be looking for.

[38:30] Because commentaries range all over. Some of them are way too hard, and some of them are just way too simple. They're not where you need to be. And so ask. Don't be afraid. And finally, perhaps just get a good Bible, a good study Bible.

A good study Bible. But I want to be careful here. Use it only for study. I really prefer that, like, I prefer for myself just a plain Bible.

Because just for me, it's way too easy for me to be reading along, and all of a sudden I want to read it I don't want to think for myself, and so I just want to look at the notes. And so what ends up happening is I'm reading this section, and I've looked six or seven times away from the Word of God, and now I'm looking at what other men have said.

And that can be good, but it can also keep us from actively participating. It can short-circuit our personal study, our personal asking those questions, and our personal digging in.

And so don't do that. If you get a study Bible, use it for study, but be careful that you're not always looking at it and using it as a crutch when you need to learn to walk on your own two feet.

[39:57] So let's use our available resources. But above all, let's be Bible readers. Before you read a commentary, read the Bible. Before you turn on your computer and turn on the internet, read your Bible.

Think for yourself. Ask those questions. Even before you email your pastors, think for yourself. Look for the answers on your own, because that's the way that you actually really start to grow and you learn.

And if you get perplexed and you need help, please call us, email us, do whatever, buy those commentaries. But above all else, let's be Bible readers.

And then we'll be able to say from the bottom of our hearts what the psalmist in Psalm 119 says, oh, how I love your law. I meditate on it all day long. Well, let's pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you that we do have the Word of God in our own language. We thank you that we have different versions, that we have just an embarrassment of riches, so many commentaries and so much help, so much guidance and teaching.

[41:21] And I pray, Lord, that we wouldn't be afraid to study, but we would set our heart to it and that we would go after it, that we would be men and women and boys and girls who are ever

seeking to grow in our understanding of the Scripture.

Thank you that no matter how long we spend in the water of your Word, there's still more places to explore, there's still more of Jesus to see. And really that is our longing, that as we study that we would see Him and we would be changed as we do.

Lord, I pray that you would please help those who need help in this area, we all do, help those to begin who need to begin.

I pray that we would be more diligent, more careful in how we read your Word, that we would actually be engaging it. And Holy Spirit, will you come and draw our hearts in and teach us, teach us about Jesus.

We pray that you would bless us as we go on our way. We help us to be obedient this week. We help us to believe your promises, bring them to mind, and help us to rest on them.

[42 : 44] Thank you, Lord, for your great love for us. And we pray that you would accept our weak love and help us to love you more. It's in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Well, let's stand and sing hymn 674. may may