24/7 DISCIPLE SERIES • WEEK 2

Study It Yourself

Observe, Interpret, Apply

A study by Pastor Greg Faulkenberry
24/7 Family Church • Bay County, Florida

Bring your Bible and follow along. Scripture is the NIV, written out in full.

1. Opening

Good evening, church, and welcome! This is Week 2 of our four-week **24/7 Disciple Series**.

Your comments are welcome anytime as we go. Unmute and jump in. If a question comes to mind, write it down and send it to me after, and we'll take it up next time. Or text or email me anytime.

On Sunday we learned **how the Bible works**: one library, one Author, one story. Tonight we take the next step. Tonight's question is: **How do I study the Bible myself?**

Not just hear it preached on Sunday, but open it on a Tuesday morning and understand it. By the end of tonight, you'll have a simple tool you can use for the rest of your life.

Prayer: Father, open our eyes to see what your Word says, our minds to understand it, and our hearts to do it. Show us Jesus. In his name, amen.

> **QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF**
>
> *When did I last open my Bible on my own?*

2. Why Study It Yourself

Recap: *We're learning to open the Bible ourselves. Now, why does that matter?*

> **READ: Acts 17:11 (NIV)**
>
> **Setting:** Paul preached in Berea, a city in northern Greece. The people listened gladly, then checked what he said against the Scriptures.
>
> 11 Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

Think about who their preacher was. The apostle Paul. And they **still** opened the Scriptures themselves, every day, to see if what he said was true. The Bible calls that "noble character."

What is Bible study? It's simply reading slowly and asking good questions, so you understand what God is saying.

Why does it matter? Because God wants to speak to **you**, not only through your pastor. When you study it yourself, your faith stands on God's Word, not on someone else's opinion. And you can't be easily fooled.

You don't need a seminary degree. You need a Bible, a pen, and a few good questions.

> **QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF**
>
> *Do I check what I hear against the Bible?*

3. Three Steps and a Prayer

Recap: *The Bereans checked the Scriptures every day. Now, here's how you can too.*

Here's the tool. It's three questions, asked in order, and then a prayer.

1. Observe: What does it say? Before we explain anything, we look carefully at what's actually on the page.

2. Interpret: What did it mean? We ask what it meant to the people who first heard it, and what it shows us about God.

3. Apply: What do I do? We choose one thing to believe, change, or do this week.

4. Pray it. We turn what we learned into a prayer.

Remember Sunday's three questions? "What does this show me about God? About people? How should I respond?" They fit right inside these steps.

Why this order? Each step stands on the one before it. If you skip observing, you end up guessing. If you skip interpreting, you can make the Bible say whatever you want. If you skip applying, you collect facts but don't change. So we take them one at a time.

> **QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF**
>
> *Which step do I usually skip?*

4. Read the Passage: Mark 2:1-12

Recap: *Observe, interpret, apply, then pray. Now, let's read a real passage.*

Let's practice on a real passage. We'll use Mark, the book you've been reading a chapter a day. Open your Bible to **Mark 2**. Follow along with a pen if you have one.

READ: Mark 2:1-12 (NIV)

Setting: Early in Jesus' ministry, in Capernaum, a fishing town on the Sea of Galilee where Jesus made his home base. Word about his healings had spread fast.

1 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the
people heard that he had come home. 2 They gathered in such
large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside
the door, and he preached the word to them. 3 Some men
came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of
them. 4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the
crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by
digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was
lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed
man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 6 Now some teachers of the
law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7 "Why does this
fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins
but God alone?" 8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that
this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said
to them, "Why are you thinking these things? 9 Which is
easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,'
or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? 10 But I want you to
know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive
sins." So he said to the man, 11 "I tell you, get up, take your mat
and go home." 12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full
view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God,
saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Now read it once more, slowly, to yourself. Good study always starts with a second, slower reading. Underline anything that stands out.

> **QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF**
>
> *What stood out to me the first time through?*

5. Step 1: Observe

Recap: *We've read Mark 2:1-12. Now, step one: what does it say?*

What it is: Observing means seeing what the passage actually says, before we decide what it means.

Why it matters: Most mistakes in Bible reading come from not reading carefully. When we slow down, the text often answers our questions for us.

How to do it: Ask the simple questions: **Who? What? Where? When?** Let's do it together with Mark 2.

Where? In a house in Capernaum, so packed there was "no room left, not even outside the door."

Who? A crowd. **Four** men carrying a friend who couldn't walk. Some teachers of the law. And Jesus.

What did the friends do? They couldn't get in the door, so they went up, **dug through the roof**, and lowered their friend down in front of Jesus.

What did Jesus say first? Not "Get up." He said, "**Son, your sins are forgiven.**"

What did the teachers think? "Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

How did it end? The man got up, picked up his mat, and walked out in front of everyone. And they praised God.

Look how much we found without explaining a single thing. That's observing.

> **QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF**
>
> *What detail had I never noticed before?*

6. Step 2: Interpret

Recap: *We've seen what it says. Now, step two: what did it mean?*

What it is: Interpreting means understanding what the passage meant to the people who were there, and what it shows us about God.

Why it matters: The Bible was written **for** us, but not **to** us first. If we skip this step, we can make a verse say anything we want.

How to do it: Use two tools from Sunday. First, **read the neighbors**: the verses around it. Second, **know the genre**: Mark is a Gospel, a true account of Jesus, written so we will believe in him. So we ask: **What does this story show us about Jesus?**

Start with the hardest line. The teachers asked, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Here's the surprise: **they were right.** Only God can forgive sins.

So when Jesus says "your sins are forgiven," he's claiming to do what only God does. Then he asks, "Which is easier?" Anyone can **say** "your sins are forgiven," because no one can see it happen. But everyone can see whether a paralyzed man walks. So Jesus heals the man to **prove** he has the authority to forgive.

Now ask Sunday's questions. **What does this show me about God?** Jesus is God with us, with power to forgive. **What does it show me about people?** Our deepest need is forgiveness. The man came for his legs. Jesus started with his sins.

> **QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF**
>
> *Do I believe Jesus has forgiven me?*

7. Step 3: Apply

Recap: *Jesus did what only God can do: he forgave sins. Now, step three: what do I do?*

What it is: Applying means putting what we learned into practice.

Why it matters: God gave us his Word to change us, not just to inform us. Knowing without doing doesn't help anyone.

How to do it: Choose **one** thing, not ten. Make it small, specific, and real. Use this sentence: **"Because Jesus _____, this week I will _____."**

Here are a few from Mark 2:

"Because Jesus forgives sins, this week I will stop carrying the guilt he already took."

"Because Jesus saw the friends' faith, this week I will pray for one friend by name every day."

"Because those friends didn't quit at the crowd, this week I will invite one person to church."

Write your own sentence in the margin of your Bible tonight.

> **QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF**
>
> *Who do I need to carry to Jesus?*

8. Step 4: Pray It

Recap: *One small, specific step. Now, step four: pray it.*

What it is: Praying it means turning what you learned into a conversation with God.

Why it matters: Bible study isn't homework. It's how we get to know God. Prayer keeps it personal.

How to do it: Use the passage's own words. Thank him for what you saw, ask him for help, and tell him what you'll do. Like this:

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you that you have authority to forgive sins, and that you forgive mine. Help me trust that. Show me who to carry to you this week, and give me the courage of those four friends. Amen.

> **QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF**
>
> *What will I say to God about this passage?*

9. Your 15-Minute Study

Recap: *Observe, interpret, apply, pray. Now, let's put it into a simple daily plan.*

Here's the whole thing as a daily plan. It takes about 15 minutes:

1. Pray first: "Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law."

2. Read one paragraph of Mark, twice.

3. Observe: write down three things you see.

4. Interpret: write one sentence about what it shows you about God.

5. Apply: "Because Jesus ___, *this week I will*

6. Pray it back to God.

That's it. One paragraph a day. Over a year, that's a lot of Bible, studied for yourself.

> **QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF**
>
> *When in my day will I do this?*

10. Close

Recap: *Fifteen minutes, one paragraph, every day. Now, let's close.*

> **READ: Psalm 119:18 (NIV)**
>
> **Setting:** From Psalm 119, the Bible's longest chapter, a poem praising God's Word.
>
> 18 Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.

Pray this verse every time you open your Bible. **This week, keep reading Mark, one chapter a day, and study one paragraph a day** with the steps above.

One Big Story explores the whole Bible, from creation to new creation.

Prayer: Lord, open our eyes to see wonderful things in your Word. Make us eager like the Bereans. Draw us closer to Jesus. In his name, amen.

> **QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF**
>
> *Which paragraph will I study tomorrow?*

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