

THE S.O.A.P. BIBLE STUDY METHOD

One simple but effective model for studying the Bible is called S.O.A.P. The acrostic S.O.A.P. stands for Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer. As you prepare for this week's Life Group, we encourage you to begin practicing this method on the passage. Here is a brief breakdown of the steps below.

- **Scripture-** Read the Scripture passage above slowly and ask the Lord to give you insight into His Word for yourself and for your group.
- **Observation-** Begin walking through the passage by making observations about the text. What are some things that stand out to you as you read it? What questions come to your mind as you read the passage? What words or phrases seem like they are important to understanding the meaning of the passage? Are there any words that are repeated more than once? What does this passage say about God? Are there any lists in the passage? Is this passage telling us how to do something or is it something happening to you?
- **Application-** Write down a few ways that this passage applies to us as Christians. How has God spoken to your heart through your time in His word? Are there any principles discovered in the observation section that can be applied for your group? Take a few moments and write down a few things that God wants you to focus on for this week's discussion.
- **Prayer-** Pray over the things that God has shown you. Ask God to first work in your heart through what you've learned. Pray for your group and for your upcoming meeting. Ask God to lead your group and give you wisdom as you discuss this week's content.

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

This week's sermon discusses the unique role that the Holy Spirit plays in our development as Christians. He is our personal guide who leads us daily into a closer relationship with Him.

For more insights relating to this week's sermon, see <https://newbreak.church/blog/>. We post a new blog every Sunday which coincides with the sermon passage or theme from that day.

ICEBREAKER

1) What was the most impactful movie that you've seen in the last few years? What about it really left a mark on your heart?

2a) If you were asked to say one thing about who the Holy Spirit is, what would you say?

2b) How do you discern God's will in your life? What role does the Holy Spirit play in your decision-making process?

DIGGING DEEPER INTO THE SERMON

Read: John 16:7-15

As you read through these verses keep these questions in mind:

- What value does this chapter add to what we understand about God?
- What are some of the things that stand out to you when you read the passage?

—DISCUSSION POINTS—

Point 1 – Rely on the Holy Spirit, who is residing in me.

Read: John 16:7-15

In John 14 Jesus told His disciples that He was going to leave them. This realization brought a great deal of sorrow and worry in the hearts of His followers (John 16:6). In John 16:7-15, Jesus goes into detail on why it was actually a good thing for Him to leave because He would send them the Holy Spirit. The Spirit would be their "Advocate" (16:7) who would bring conviction to the world (16:8-11) and help guide them into all truth (16:13). Yes, it was true that the disciples

would carry on the work without Jesus in the flesh but they were now going to continue the work with the help and companionship of the Holy Spirit. Below are a few unique ways that the Spirit provides our heart with the counseling, advocacy, guidance, and focus on Jesus that our heart's need.

As our **advocate**, the Holy Spirit acts as our representative, we do not represent ourselves but He stands as our legal guardian, providing a kind of advocacy we couldn't for ourselves. The Greek word for "advocate" *paraklētos* can also be translated "**counselor**." Imagine that He has made His counselor's office insight our heart- the control center of our inner being. He is with us all the time, ready to listen and provide us with the insight and care that our heart's need around the clock. The Spirit also guides us into truth (John 16:13, 1 Corinthians 2:9-10). He is like a **compass** that always points us to true north. As we engage with His Word, the Spirit helps us to understand and apply the truth where we need it most. He also helps guide us in seasons of unknown as we try to discern what is the best route forward.

The Spirit also helps shine the **spotlight** back on Jesus (John 16:14). He helps us look more like Christ and even reminds us of the things that Jesus taught us. He reminds us that it's all about Jesus and His work in the world.

(DISCUSS):

- Which role of the Spirit (Advocate, Counselor, Compass, and Spotlight) is the most important to you right now? Why?
- When is the last time that you sensed the gentle conviction of the Holy Spirit? How did you respond?
- For centuries, many Christians have noted that the Holy Spirit gives peace when there is clarity on a path to pursue or a decision to make. Are you in the habit of asking for the Spirit to give discernment in decision making?

—Additional Insight—

In Larry Warner's book *Discernment, God's Will & Living Jesus*, Warner highlights two modes of Christian Discernment. The first mode is referred to as the "Pyrotechnic Mode." This type of discernment comes with bell and whistles, usually an undeniable declaration of God's will. A door opens out of the blue that you have been praying for, new orders are given and you need to move, a clear answer to prayer. This type of discernment is evident in the calling of Paul in Acts 9. He was on his way to continue persecuting the believers when God broke into his life and dramatically changed his life forever. (For more examples of this see Exodus 3 and Acts 16:6-10. Although this type of discernment is what most of us seek when we need His guidance, this is not the norm when it comes to God's leading.

The second mode of discernment is the more common type referred to by Warner as “Inner Prompting.” This second mode involves an inner awareness and sensitivity to God’s leading in your heart. This type of discernment is a byproduct of the gift of the Spirit to lead us into all truth as discussed in John 16 and 1 Corinthians 2:8-10. As we grow in our relationship with Christ, we become more aware of the prompting of the Spirit to take a step of faith, to obediently say “no” to the flesh, or to share your faith with others. As you learn to listen the inner prompting of the Spirit, you may find yourself being nudged by God to text a friend who is struggling, to share your God-story with your neighbor, or to even pick up a piece of trash that you see on the road. As you pursue the Lord deeper in prayer, Scriptural reading, times of silence, you will learn to discern the prompting of the Spirit. (For examples of this type of discernment see 1 Kings 19:12 and Acts 8:26-40.

How does God factor into your decision-making process? Have you ever experienced a “Pyrotechnic” revelation of God’s will in your life? When was the last time you experienced the “Inner Prompting” of God to do something?

Point 2 – Stay in step with the Spirit’s leading.

Read: Galatians 5:22-25

Galatians 5:22-25 discusses in greater detail WHAT the Spirit does in the lives of a believer as the Spirit leads. God begins to transform us from the inside out by the power and direction of the Spirit. This process is often referred to as sanctification. How does God actually do this? Paul gives us the answer in Galatians 5:25.

In verse 25, Paul tells us to “keep in step with the Spirit.” To understand what Paul is saying, we need to think like a soldier. Imagine that you are in boot camp and you are taught to keep in-step with your commanding officer. By keeping “in step,” you are following the lead of another. In this passage, Paul is encouraging us to keep in step with the Spirit’s direction in our lives. Where He goes, we follow. When He says “stop,” we learn to stop. One way that we learn to keep in step with the Spirit is to practice the spiritual disciplines daily. Every time we spend time in silence, we are giving God space to speak to hearts and point out truths about Himself. When we read His word, we are inviting God to examine us and teach us how to surrender to His leadership in our lives.

One prayer to consider praying on a daily basis is: “Keep me in step with you Lord. Not in front of you or behind you but in step with you.”

(DISCUSS):

- Where are you out of step with the Spirit in your life? Is there an area of your life that the Spirit wants you to “fall back in line with Him? (Example: Fear choking faith, receiving the compassion of God for yourself, answering gently to your family, etc.)

- Have you seen God produce a specific fruit in your life this past year that wasn't there before? If so, please share with the group.

—Additional Insight—

Some of us may be wondering why we still struggle with sinful habits even though we have the Spirit in our lives. The truth is that even after we become a Christian, our sinful nature still fights for control. Paul tells us in Galatians 5:17 that the Spirit and the flesh are contrary to one another. Paul then goes on to explain in Galatians 5:19-23 what it looks like when the flesh is in control of our lives. The flesh is our sinful nature that we inherited from Adam (Romans 5:12) that wants to please itself, justify itself, and take good things of God and twist them.

Here is the good news. Before Christ, we were powerless against our flesh. In Christ, the power of sin and death has been broken (Romans 8:1-2) and we are now free to submit ourselves to Him. Paul actually says in Galatians 5:24, that the flesh *has been crucified*. In a sense, our sin nature has been dealt the death blow, but we still struggle with the residual effects. Now that we are filled with the Spirit of God and empowered by His resurrection strength, we can say “no” to the flesh and “yes” to Him. Through the Spirit’s work of sanctification, Christ begins to form in us (Galatians 4:19) and this process of internal transformation is making us more and more like Him every day (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Transformation happens as we partner with His work in our lives. Read 1 Corinthians 15:10 and Philippians 2:12-13 and reflect on the symbiotic relationship between God’s work in our lives and our willingness to cooperate.

—Summary—

Before Jesus left the world, He promised to send us the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is our great advocate, counselor, guide, and spotlight. As we submit to Him, He begins to transform us every day to look more like Christ.

Point 1 - Rely on the Holy Spirit, who is residing in me.

Point 2 - Stay in step with the Spirit’s leading.

—FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

- 1) How are you going to think differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?
- 2) What is one thing you are walking away with from this discussion?

- 3) BONUS: For those of with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids?

—CLOSING PRAYER—

Leave some margin in your time together to pray together.

- Is there anything specific you need prayer for?