

# Exploring using Scripture



Way In

The Bible is God’s story, given to us that we might know God and understand our place in God’s own universe. It’s one thing to *read* the Bible, another to *understand* it – but the ultimate goal is to *hear God speaking to us through the Bible*. This session will help you share your experience of using the Bible so that you can learn from one another and hear God together.



## Connect: Share with the group

1. Which sport do you most enjoy playing or watching, and why?
2. What have you done in terms of your ‘action point’ from the last meeting?
3. Which character or verse or book in the Bible is your favourite? Why?



## Contemplate

1. Give each person a postcard-sized piece of card. Provide some scissors. Ask each person to cut out a shape that says something about their week. (There’s no need to explain them.)
2. Put the pieces in a circle on the floor and light a candle in the middle of them.
3. Sing, read or listen to the song, ‘Jesus be the centre’ (*Singing the Faith* 447), as a prayer



## Consider 1: Read Scripture

Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord. Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart.

I seek you with all my heart;  
do not let me stray from your commands.  
I have hidden your word in my heart  
that I might not sin against you.

Oh, how I love your law!  
I meditate on it all day long.  
Your commands are always with me  
and make me wiser than my enemies.  
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.  
(Psalm 119:1-2; 10-11; 97-104) TNIV

## Wesley’s wisdom

Serious and earnest prayer should be constantly used before we consult [the Bible]; seeing that “Scripture can only be understood through the same Spirit whereby it was given”. Our reading should likewise be closed with prayer, that what we read may be written on our hearts.

It might also be of use, if, while we read, we were frequently to pause and examine ourselves by what we read, both with regard to our hearts and lives  
(John Wesley: Preface to explanatory notes upon the Old Testament)



## Consider 2: More about

- Psalm 119 is a great hymn to God’s law – God’s self-revelation in Scripture.
- Notice how highly the psalmist values it – he ‘loves it’ and it ‘tastes’ great to him!
- To know God’s word requires more than merely reading it. The psalmist ‘meditates’ on it and lets it live with him “all day long”.
- *Understanding* is not his goal: *obedience* is. The Scriptures are not meant to fill his head with facts about God, but move his heart and feet to follow God.
- The psalmist realises that the words of Scripture connect him to God in a personal way (“for you yourself have taught me”).
- Meditating on Scripture enables us to hear God so that we can lead a ‘blessed’ life.
- For the psalmist ‘the Law’ is a collective term for all of God’s guidance for God’s people in Scripture. For the Christian it

must be focused on the life, teaching and person of Jesus, who is the final edition of 'God's law', showing us God and God's requirements in the clearest possible way.


- When we read the Bible, we pray for the Spirit's help since we also *expect* to hear God. This is the most important thing – more important than 'just reading', than 'intellectual understanding' or than 'completing the day's reading plan'! Quality not quantity counts. Better to meditate on one verse than rush through two chapters.


(for more on Scripture, see the article on the Methodist Church website [www.methodist.org.uk/deepeningdiscipleship](http://www.methodist.org.uk/deepeningdiscipleship))





### Consider 3: Your response

Spend a moment in quiet, considering your own response to the readings. You might like to jot down your thoughts in the following boxes.

 What new thing have I seen about using the Scriptures?

 What puzzles me in these readings?

 What encourages me to want to use Scripture to hear God?

 How might meditating on Scripture help my walk with Jesus?



### Consider 4: Sharing wisdom

Now share your thoughts, questions and insights together in the group.

- Take it in turns to share something from your personal reflection.
- Listen to one another carefully.
- Discuss the issues raised, sharing your knowledge, experience and wisdom together.
- Aim to help one another find out what you are each learning about the importance of the spiritual practices in following Jesus.



### Commit 1: Reflect


Take a few moments to sit in silence together, reflecting on this session. How is God asking you to respond as an individual? These questions might help you think through your response:

- How could I find time to spend more time with God's word?
- What help would I need to *hear God* in the Scriptures? (a new approach? a new resource? sharing it with friends?)
- Has God spoken to me in Scripture recently? How have I responded?
- Which phrase best describes my use of Scripture: I study it? I skim it? I skip it? I soak in it? Which word or phrase would I *like* to describe my use of Scripture?



### Commit 2: Focus

Write one thing in the box below that you would like to take away from this session, either to do, or to think and pray about further.

 **MY ACTION POINT:** In response to this session on using Scripture, before the next meeting I would like to...



### Commit 3: Pray

Lord Jesus, our desire is to know you, to serve you, and to love you more deeply. Help us as we seek to deepen our discipleship this week. Amen.