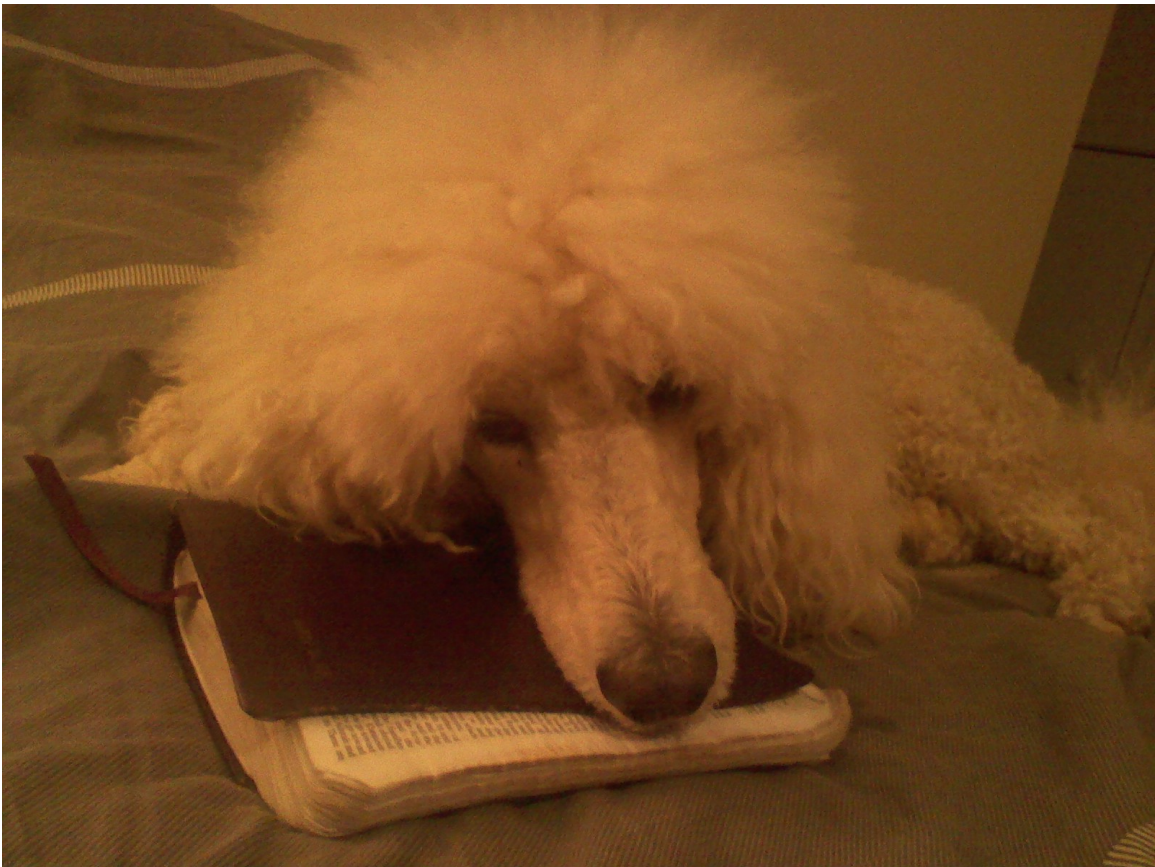


How to Get a Personal Word from God



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This Southern gal moved to Boston after college when I joined the staff of a national youth ministry. Dan Lane, my team director introduced a simple Bible Study method at one of our first meetings. It transformed my Bible reading—and me. The Bible came alive as God spoke to my current needs in my daily times with Him.

Have you ever wondered if God still speaks today? Are those with a seminary degree the only ones qualified to understand the Bible? Listen to how the Bible addresses this:

- “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all that I said to you” (John 14:26, NASB).
- “But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, in your hearts, so that you don’t need anyone to teach you what is right. For he teaches you all things, and he is the Truth, and no liar” (1 John 2:27, TLB).
- Jesus praised His Father that He had “hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children” (Luke 10:21, NIV).

The Bible is God’s message to His people, not just the highly educated. It’s not meant to bore you but to give life.

Spending time with our Lord, digesting His Word, transforms us. Remember Peter and John: “Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus” (Acts 3:13, NASB).

God still speaks to His children. So many times I’ve been amazed when I’ve picked up where I left off in my reading and had God address my immediate need.

One particular time stands out to me. One night I drove past the place where a car accident had occurred. The next morning I read the tragic story of a young husband arriving at the scene to discover that a drunk driver had killed his wife and three young children. Being the mother of young children at the time, my heart bled for this father.

I picked up my Bible and turned to where I’d left off and read: “The righteous perish, and no one takes it to heart; the devout are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil. ² Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death” (Isaiah 57:1-2, NIV).

My heart was deeply moved. If God could orchestrate my life to connect with this verse at this time, He knew this man’s pain and would be there for him too, if he wanted Him.

I don’t experience an epiphany everyday. But if I am still and listen—God grants me insights, deposits of wisdom, that grow and are available when I need them. Think of Bible study as putting money in the bank. A storehouse of wisdom, comfort, and warning will be waiting when you need it.


May you experience the Bible as God’s personal word for you. He longs to connect with you, to refresh, restore, correct, and sustain you. Are you ready to be blessed?

The Format:

- A. **Begin With Prayer** —“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him’—but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit” (I Corinthians 2:9-10). The Holy Spirit reveals God’s treasures to us. Invite Him to reveal truth to you. You don’t need to hop around looking for insight. He will speak to you as you faithfully continue in the passage you are studying.
- B. **Read The Passage** —*Notice the context.* Read through the passage to understand the context before beginning the verse-by-verse study. Notice the author’s choice of words. Highlight repeated terms, key phrases, or words that grab your attention. Sometimes it helps to read other Bible translations or paraphrases. Meditate prayerfully over the passage. Enjoy this time with Him. As A. W. Tozer put it, “I did not go through the Book. The Book went through me.”
- C. **Observation** —*What does it say?* Observe the facts. By verse or by section, list the prominent facts. Don’t add your own thoughts or what you’ve heard others say about it here. Include the author’s words. Look for the subject, what’s taking place, who’s speaking, and to whom. If you are studying only one or two verses, you may enjoy noticing and listing many details. However, you don’t want to get bogged down and miss the main point or become weary and quit. This is not a homework assignment! This is your time to “be still and know God.” If it takes a few days to gain insight on some verses you are chewing on, that’s all right.
- D. **Interpretation** —*What does it mean?* Interpret the facts. What does the passage mean that crosses cultural and time barriers? Look for a spiritual lesson from each fact. The lessons should fit the context of your passage but be relevant to today. For example, in 2 Timothy 4:13a, Paul writes Timothy, “When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus...” The literal meaning is for Timothy to bring the imprisoned apostle his cloak. Some spiritual lessons we might draw are: even great spiritual leaders have practical needs; it’s appropriate to share our needs and allow others to help us; we should be available to help a suffering saint in need.
- E. **Application** — *How does it apply?* Apply the lessons to your life, family, or culture. Get personal and practical by putting the lessons you’ve learned into the form of a question that you might ask yourself or someone else. You might ask God, “What are You saying to me?” Listen for God to speak to you through the passage.
- F. **Illustrate** —What main thought came from your study? Draw a picture or write a few words to encapsulate the lesson. This optional step helps me better recall what I learn.
- G. **Response** — *How will I respond?* Did the Holy Spirit reveal an attitude, perspective, or a behavior to change? Ask God for the power to apply what He’s shown you. Bible study should be living water, not a dead sea.

Below is an example of a verse-by-verse study.

READ THE PASSAGE	WHAT DOES IT SAY?
<p>Matthew 7:24-29</p> <p>24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.</p> <p>25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.</p> <p>26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.</p> <p>27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."</p> <p>28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching,</p> <p>29 because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.</p>	<p><i>24 Everyone who hears and practices Jesus' words is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.</i></p> <p><i>25 House did not fall when beat against, because it had its foundation on the rock.</i></p> <p><i>26 One who hears and doesn't practice is like a foolish man who built on sand.</i></p> <p><i>27 House fell when the storm beat against it.</i></p> <p><i>28 The crowds were amazed at His teaching.</i></p> <p><i>29 Jesus taught as having authority.</i></p>

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?	HOW DOES IT APPLY TO ME?
<p>24-25 <i>Hearing is not enough; putting God's Word into action protects us in life's storms.</i></p> <p>26 <i>Bible knowledge without application provides no protection in life's storms.</i></p> <p>27 <i>Storms come to everyone—even those who practice God's principles.</i></p> <p>28-29 <i>I need to listen and submit to Jesus' teaching.</i></p>	<p>24-25 <i>What has God said that I'm not applying?</i></p> <p>26 <i>What do I depend on for security, significance, or satisfaction?</i></p> <p>27 <i>What unrealistic expectations have I put on God?</i></p> <p>28-29 <i>In what area am I closed to Christ's authority to teach me?</i></p>
<p>Illustrate or summarize the point you want to take home. How will you apply it today?</p> <p><i>Trust and obey what I know the Bible says.</i></p> 	<p>How will I respond? Ask God for His power to live out and apply what you have learned.</p> <p><i>Lord, help me to faithfully meet with You daily and apply all You say.</i></p>

I suggest you buy a notebook for your Bible study. Begin working your way through a book of the Bible using this method. The Gospels are a good place to start. You can be as general or as detailed as you like. Taking the time to interact with and apply the Scriptures will transform your life.

I turn my notebook upside down and write my prayers in the back of the book. When they meet in the middle, I get a new book.

“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2, NIV).

Go to <http://www.annegrahamlotz.org/2014/10/30/journey-jesus-learning-hear-voice/> to hear Anne Graham Lotz teach basically the same method.