



# “LEADING THE FAMILY IN STUDY”

church of Christ, Georgia Avenue  
Men’s Ministry Devotional  
February 16 & 27, 2008

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## Learning Objectives

1. The student will consider his own Bible study practices.
2. The student will consider his involvement in his wife’s studies.
3. The student will consider his involvement in his children’s studies.

## Introductory Observations

God expects our homes to be centers of “higher learning” (cf. Deut. 6:6-9). As we consider the topic of leading our families in study, we must understand that leading requires us “to show the way to by going in advance.”<sup>1</sup> Therefore, our goal should be to go in advance of our families in our studies of God’s word so that we can equip them for, and guide them in, their own studies. Let’s not deceive ourselves into believing that we can effectively lead without working harder and going further than those whom we hope to lead. If we do not commit ourselves to true study, as opposed to mere reading, our family will suffer for our lack of leadership.

### **I. SETTING THE PACE THROUGH YOUR OWN STUDIES**

**Questions to ponder:** What is the difference between reading and study? How much time, on average, do you devote each week to reading and studying your Bible? Are you consistent in both? What additional benefits do we derive from studying, as opposed to simply reading? In addition to your daily reading plan, do you have a daily study plan?

Reading the Bible everyday is both reasonable and recommended; however, for those who are serious about God’s word, it is also the bare minimum. We do not read merely for the sake of reading. In order for us to grow in knowledge and understanding, we must slow down, or even stop, to carefully consider and investigate what we’re reading. We might slow down in order to re-read a verse or passage, outline a chapter, or cross-reference other scriptures. We might actually stop reading the Bible altogether as we study in order to do word studies (with English, Greek and Hebrew dictionaries), historical research, or to ask questions of someone who can help us to understand what we have been reading.

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Pickett, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 995.

I personally recommend thorough book studies (in addition to general reading). There is no need to be in a great hurry. Choose one book and consider it in digestible pieces each day. Many Bibles organize the scriptures within the chapters with headings. If you read each section several times over a period of days, stopping to do word studies, note questions and cross-reference other scriptures along the way, you will come to understand it much better. This will also ensure that you are dealing with every verse in context, which is quite valuable. I also recommend that you have a Bible designated for writing, highlighting and underlining as you study, and a notebook for recording important thoughts, questions, or areas for deeper investigation.

## II. LEADING YOUR WIFE IN HER STUDIES

**Questions to ponder:** Does your wife read her Bible daily? Do you talk with her about what she is reading? In addition to reading, does she study her Bible? Do you expect her to? Does she know how to study her Bible effectively? How much time have you invested in equipping her to study (as opposed to simply reading)?

When you decided to marry, you agreed to lead your wife spiritually (cf. Eph. 5:23), and the Bible specifically instructs her to learn from you at home (1 Cor. 14:34-35). In order for you to lead her in study, you will need to provide her with both tools and direction. As busy as we can be sometimes, we absolutely must set time aside to read with our wives, discuss scripture with them, and help them to dig deeper as they investigate God's word. It is a good idea to ask your wife to explain basic Bible doctrines to you so that you can be sure that she understands them and can defend the New Testament's teachings. If you have not already done so, you should sit down with your wife and show her how to use concordances and Greek/Hebrew dictionaries. It would also be a great investment to walk through your library with her and help her build a library of her own.

As you make private investment in your wife's studies, you can help her to grow and develop more intense, independent study habits by encouraging her to teach others. If your wife steps forward to teach ladies' or children's classes, she will be compelled to consider vast amounts of material and synthesize it for clear presentation. This would provide a valuable opportunity for you to assist her in drawing out the meaning of words, verses and passages.

## III. LEADING YOUR CHILDREN IN THEIR STUDIES

**Questions to ponder:** What are the most important things you can teach your children? How much time do you spend talking with your children about God and the Bible? At what age do you believe that your children are/were able to begin learning about Bible matters? Which techniques do you believe are most effective for leading your children through study during their various stages of development?

Along with having children comes the responsibility of raising them properly (Prov. 22:6), which necessarily includes bringing them up with the training and instruction of God's word (Eph. 6:4). The time will come when they will ask about things concerning God and His ways; the Lord expects us to have an answer for them (cf. Deut. 6:20-24). In fact, we can begin answering many questions for them even before they are asked of us.

When children are too young to read, they are still quite capable of learning. In fact, they can memorize verses and the books of Bible well before they are able to read. Try making a game of helping them do so. For story time, read to them from the Bible instead of a book of fairy tales.

Allow your children to listen to Bible songs (some good CD's feature children singing) instead of secular music. Instead of cartoons, allow them to watch age-appropriate Bible-related DVD's. Small children love to sing and play. Sing with them and make up games that revolve around Bible matters. For example, while drawing, help your child to draw trees, animals and people; then explain that God created them all.

As your children get older and are able to read, read the Bible with them and be sure to give them assigned reading of their own; any child capable of studying math, English and science can also study the Bible with your guidance. You can also begin to build a library for your children while they are yet young, which could include CD's and mp3's for their headphones and iPods. The key is the understand that your participation and direction are essential. It is not enough to provide your children with tools; you must show them how to use the tools, provide a schedule, and review with them to ensure and enhance comprehension.

### Concluding Observations

As important as it is to read with your family, and the importance cannot be overstated, reading is not the only important aspect of leading your family in studying the Bible. For example you should lead by ensuring that all members consistently attend and participate in worship services and Bible classes. In addition, you can also take your family to gospel meetings, watch religious debates with them, and listen to the Bible on CD. Be there to investigate the scriptures with them and be sure to give them guidance for studying independently. The key to it all, though, is first preparing yourself by going ahead of your family in your own study.