

BASICS OF

Bible Study

by Andrea Plotner



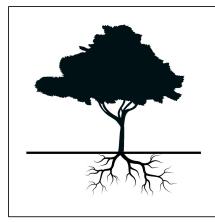
PLANTINGROOTS.NET

INTRODUCTION

As we dig into the basics of Bible study, I want to differentiate Bible “study” from Bible “reading”. Though there are many fantastic Bible reading plans out there (my favorites being the multiple-chapters-a-day because big themes emerge), here we’ll assume Bible “study” goes a level or two deeper. Bible “study” involves adding questions, answers, and curiosity to the mix. The Bible is a treasure trove. You could mine its depths for a lifetime and never exhaust its riches. The Bible is also like a treasure map, and Jesus is the X that marks the spot. The whole Bible points to Christ. As we study we discover more of Him and His love.



New Testament Books



BE CURIOUS

Listen to what Psalms, Hebrews, and Timothy say about the value of God's Word:

At midnight I rise to praise you, because of your righteous rules. I am a companion of all who fear you, of those who keep your precepts. The earth, O Lord, is full of your steadfast love; teach me your statutes!

-Psalm 119:62-64

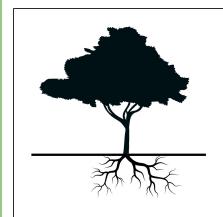
For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

-Hebrews 4:12

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

-2 Timothy 3:16-17

Because of the living and active nature of God and his Word, I like to enter into Bible study with a prayerful sense of expectancy. I expect to either learn something new about God or be reminded of a vital facet of his character in which I can grow.

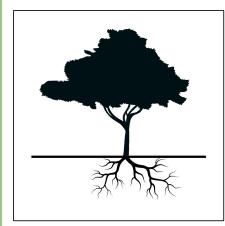


GET READY

Although there is no “right” amount of time, at least 15-20 minutes gives time to wrap your heart and mind around a passage. Have a Bible, pen, and notebook to capture your questions and answers. I also like to have a hot drink and a cozy chair. The treasure hunt is treasured time!

Where you start unearthing treasure is up to you, though starting at the first chapter of a Bible book lends context to the search. Studying one Psalm at a time (Psalms are generally shorter poems or songs) can be good training ground to hone your study skills.

So now you’ve opened up a book of the Bible and started to read. Let’s discuss a few different approaches. Perhaps try them all at first.



The 5Ws & H Approach

Also identified as The Journalistic Approach, this method involves asking the following questions:

Who?

Are there hints as to who wrote the book and who is the intended audience?

What?

What do I learn about God in this passage? About his character? His activity?

Where?

Is a geographical area mentioned? Locales often have prophetic significance.

When?

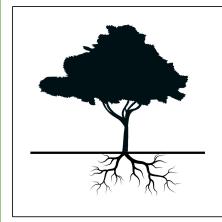
Phrases such as “in the time of King Herod” give historical insight.

Why?

Key words such as “so that” and “which” can point to the author’s purpose in writing.

How?

The manner of happenings (“in the power of the Holy Spirit”) matters!



The “What Does It Say & Mean to Me?” Approach

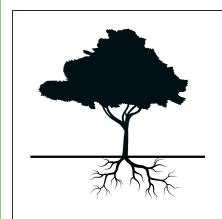
One popular method asks three questions as you study:

1. What does the passage say?
2. What does the passage mean?
3. What does it mean to me?

Record your answers on paper.

The Paraphrasing Approach

In school, my boys learned to write by hearing a fairy tale, rewriting it in outline form and then retelling the story in their own words, working only from their outline. I've adopted a similar Bible study routine (a very basic form of homiletics). Using my notebook, I rewrite a Bible chapter in about ten sentences without missing any of the key details. It's amazing how this exercise can cement a chapter in my brain and help me “meditate” on it even after I've walked away from my study time.

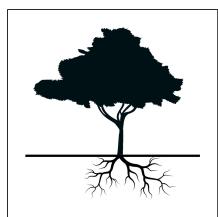


The Study-Bible Approach

One basic tool is a study Bible. After spending time interacting with a Bible passage on its own, a study Bible can provide explanatory notes and cross references. Explanatory notes are scholarly comments that often go beyond the obvious or provide more detail. Cross references lead you to other places in the Bible that relate to the passage at hand, without commentary. There are many different versions of study Bibles, so you might want to check out several before purchasing and/or ask a pastor or trusted friend what they recommend.

The Bible Study Group Approach

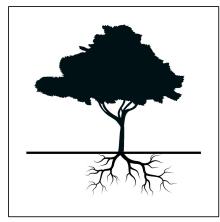
If studying the Bible on your own seems daunting, consider finding a study group through your local church, chapel, ministry, etc. Many installations have their own chapter of Protestant Women of the Chapel (PWOC) or Christian Wives Fellowship (CWF). Bible study groups can shape the decision of what and how to study and allow a place to ask questions and glean from the discussion with others. You will get the most out of group Bible study when you arrive familiar with the passage and with any homework done.



CONCLUSION

Bible study is not just for “studious” people, just as treasure hunting isn’t just for pirates. We study the Bible to encounter the living God and learn of his wisdom and his ways. Over time (time I have never regretted), you’ll discover your preferred methods of asking questions, finding answers, and developing a curiosity that will help you grow in Christ and Christ-likeness.

Remember:  marks the spot!

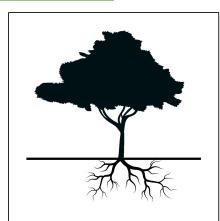


PLANTING ROOTS

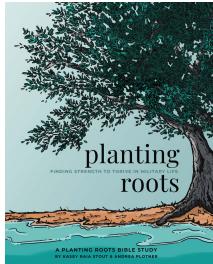
Planting Roots is an interdenominational Protestant 501c3 not-for-profit organization of military women and wives. Our heartbeat is to connect, encourage, and equip each other to do what God has called us to in the places we are planted. With an estimated 250,000 Bible-believing, Christ-following military women, we believe together we can impact an entire globe for Christ because we truly span the globe from Georgia to Germany, Kansas to Korea, and Alaska to Afghanistan. Through our website and social media channels, we bring together a worldwide community of military women to encourage each other to grow in our faith. We also join with other military women for connection, encouragement, Biblical teaching, worship, and Jesus at events.

ANDREA PLOTNER

Andrea Plotner is the author of Beyond Brave, a six-week Bible study published by Planting Roots. Andrea and her family live and work at Spring Canyon, a Christ-centered camp and conference center ministering to military families in the Colorado Rockies. Andrea encourages women to get into God's Word. As for hobbies, Andrea is a bit of a fun junkie, always on the lookout for everyday adventure.

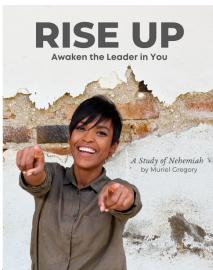


OUR BIBLE STUDIES



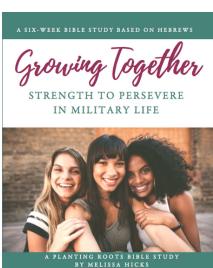
Planting Roots: Finding Strength To Thrive in Military Life

We're everywhere. Uniformed women and military wives are found around the world. As much as military life can be a fabulous adventure, it can also be a place where uncertainty feels normal, fear lurks, and community appears impossible. Through this seven-week study, we find the answers to questions our soul asks. But even more importantly, we learn how we can find these answers for ourselves over and over again.



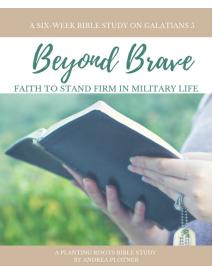
Rise Up: Awaken the Leader in You

In this six-week study, you will dig deeply into each chapter of the historical book of Nehemiah, finding God's faithfulness on every page and realizing that we all have a place at the wall. You will also examine themes such as prayer, integrity, leadership, justice, and worship. Content and application questions will help you mine the depths of this important book of the Bible.



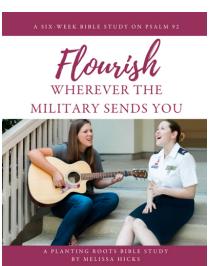
Growing Together

The Bible calls us to persevere, but that is easier said than done, especially when life gets tough. How do you persevere when inconsistency is your constant, and your closest friends are thousands of miles away? Growing Together answers that question and more. Using the book of Hebrews as a backdrop, explore issues such as spiritual drifting, encouragement, holding fast, and the need for intentional community.



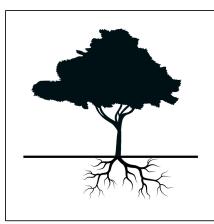
Beyond Brave

Whether you are a seasoned Bible veteran or a new recruit to God's Word, you will learn fresh concepts and God's good plans for you to live in spiritual freedom. With lessons and examples applied to military life, Beyond Brave will show you how to stand firm on God's truth, even in the challenges of military experience. Go beyond the battles you face today and be brave in the good fight of faith.



Flourish

What does the Bible say about flourishing? Based on solid principles from the word of God, this study of Psalm 92 teaches: How to show gratitude when all you want to do is complain; how to praise God for who he is, not just what he does; how to spend time in God's presence even when life is hard; and how to love others when military life stresses you out and wears you down. Journey through Psalm 92 and begin to live the flourishing life Jesus promised.

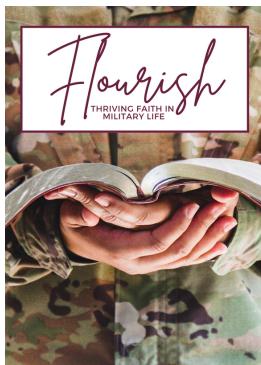


DEVOTIONALS



Moments with God for Military Life

Whether you are a woman in uniform or a military family member, life in the military can be challenging. Free to Be Brave is moments with God written by military women for military women. Discover the blessings when we live in Christ's freedom to be brave, authentic, grateful, and expectant. Together let's embrace our freedom and enjoy this military life!



Flourish: Thriving Faith in Military Life

Does your military adventure leave you feeling more like you're floundering than flourishing? You are not alone. Military life brings unique challenges for both women in uniform and military wives. The operational tempo and the stress of frequent transitions can leave you spiritually depleted. But God's plan for you is far greater than simply surviving. He wants you to flourish. Find ways to do just that in this devotional just for you.



Bible Boot Camp for Military Women

Written by and for women in the military, this 45-day devotional booklet helps women understand the Bible. It includes 45 short, personal stories showing faith-forward examples from the lives of women in uniform, as well as military wives, family members, and retirees. This is a vital book for new believers and for those who want a better understanding of God's Word. Designed for women on-the-go, each lesson is short and to the point.

