

Handling the Word

How to Study the Bible Faithfully

Lesson Two Leader Guide

The Right Heart - Prayer, Humility, and Obedience

Private leader document

Use this guide alongside the participant notes. Keep the session calm, gentle, practical, and grace-filled.

Lesson Overview

Main question	How should I come to God's Word?
Main idea	Faithful Bible study begins with a teachable heart - prayerful dependence on God, humble reception of His Word, and willingness to obey.
Key text	Psalm 119:18
Supporting passages	James 1:21-25; Is 66:1-2; John 7:16-17; James 4:6-8
Suggested length	60 to 75 minutes. Keep the pace gentle, but do not let the session become a lecture.

Intended outcomes

- He sees Bible study as dependence on God, not self-confidence.
- He learns to pray before reading Scripture.
- He sees humility as coming under God's Word, not self-hatred.
- He understands that hearing should lead to doing.
- He leaves with one simple prayer practice.

Leader emphasis

- This lesson is about heart posture more than method.
- Correction from God is care, not rejection.
- Obedience is response to grace, not a way to earn love.
- Ask more than you tell.
- Keep returning to the passages in front of you.

Helpful phrase to repeat

Needing help with Scripture is not failure. It is why we pray. We come with confidence that God is willing to teach His people.

Recommended Session Flow

Time	Section	Purpose
5 min	Welcome and check-in	Begin with grace if the week was uneven.
2 min	Opening prayer	Model dependence on God.
8 min	Review pre-reading	Let him share what helped, challenged, or felt difficult.
5 min	Today's question	How should I come to God's Word?
8 min	Psalm 119:18	Ask God to open our eyes.
12 min	James 1:21-25	Receive the Word with meekness and obey it.
10 min	Isaiah 66:1-2	Humility, contrition, reverence.
8 min	John 7:16-17	Willingness and understanding.
8 min	James 4:6-8	Grace to the humble; draw near to God.
5 min	Pull together and practise	One summary, one simple weekly prayer, closing prayer.

Leader posture

Because this lesson deals with humility, correction, and obedience, lead with care. Keep the distinction clear: humility is not self-hatred. It is coming honestly before God and receiving His Word as true.

1. Welcome, Prayer, and Pre-Reading - 15 minutes

Aim: Begin relationally, remove pressure, and let him speak honestly before moving into the passages.

Prompts: How has your week been? How did you go with the Lesson One practice? What stood out from the pre-reading? Would you be comfortable sharing the short prayer you wrote?

Listen for / draw out

Shame if he did not complete the practice; any simple desire for God's help; fear of being corrected; confusion around humility or obedience. A small beginning is still a beginning.

Suggested prayer: Lord, open our eyes, that we may see wondrous things from Your Word. Help us come humbly, receive what You say, and obey what You show us. Amen.

2. Today's Question - 5 minutes

Aim: Introduce the focus: How should I come to God's Word?

Ask: What kind of heart should we bring to the Bible? Why does prayer matter? What is the difference between reading to be taught by God and reading to win an argument?

Brief teaching summary

The right method matters, but the right heart matters first. We come prayerfully, humbly, and willing to obey. We are not putting ourselves above the Word. We are sitting under it.

3. Read **Psalm 119:18** - Prayerful Dependence

Aim: Show that we need God to open our eyes when we read Scripture.

Ask: What does the writer ask God to do? What does this teach us about needing God's help? What might "wondrous things" suggest about God's Word? Try turning this verse into a short prayer.

Pastoral note

This verse is a direct encouragement for someone who feels unable. It does not say, "Open your own eyes." It teaches us to ask God to open them.

4. Read **James 1:21-25** - Receive and Obey

Aim: Show that the Word is to be received with meekness and obeyed in practice.

Ask: How should the Word be received? What warning is given about hearing without doing? What picture does James use? What could being a doer of the Word look like this week?

Summary and pastoral note

God's Word is not only to be heard. It is to be received and obeyed. Keep obedience concrete and small: pray, apologise, tell the truth, forgive, stop feeding a sinful habit, or return to Scripture tomorrow.

5. Read **Isaiah 66:1-2** - Humility and Reverence

Aim: Explore humility, contrition, and reverence before God and His Word.

Ask: What does God say about heaven and earth? What kind of person does God look upon? How would you describe a humble heart? What does it mean to tremble at God's Word?

Pastoral note

Humility is not saying, "I am worthless." Humility says, "God is God, His Word is true, and I need Him." A contrite heart is not crushed away from God, but drawn to Him honestly.

6. Read **John 7:16-17** - Willingness and Understanding

Aim: Show the connection between willingness to do God's will and understanding God's teaching.

Ask: Where does Jesus' teaching come from? What connection does He make between willingness and understanding? Why is obedience part of Bible study, not just something that comes later?

Brief teaching summary

Jesus shows that willingness matters. We do not come to Scripture merely to inspect it from a distance. We come willing to do the will of God as He reveals it.

7. Read James 4:6-8 - Grace and Drawing Near

Aim: Show the promise of grace to the humble and nearness to those who draw near to God.

Ask: What does God give to the humble? What does He resist? What are we called to do? What promise is given when we draw near to God?

Pastoral note

Let both the comfort and the call stand. God gives grace, and He calls us to draw near, resist evil, and purify our hearts. Point him back to grace if he feels discouraged.

8. Pulling It Together and This Week's Practice - 8 minutes

Ask him to finish: "When I come to the Bible, I want to come with..." Then ask for one simple prayer he can pray before reading Scripture this week.

Practice: Before reading Scripture this week, pause and pray Psalm 119:18 in his own words. Then look for one small way to receive and obey what God shows him.

Closing encouragement

End with encouragement, not pressure. The practice should feel like a doorway into Scripture, not a burden he is afraid to fail.

If He Gets Stuck

Situation	Gentle response	Next step
I did not do the reading.	That is okay. We will begin here together. This is not about shame.	Read one passage and ask him to notice one simple thing.
I do not feel humble enough.	Humility often begins by telling God that honestly.	Turn Psalm 119:18 into a one-sentence prayer.
I feel corrected and discouraged.	Correction from God is not rejection. It is part of His faithful care.	Ask what God may be inviting him to turn from or toward.
I do not know what obedience looks like.	Let us make it small and concrete.	Name one simple step for this week.
I do not deserve to come to God.	We come because of Christ, not because we feel worthy in ourselves.	Use James 4:8 or Hebrews 4:16 if helpful.

Key truths to reinforce

- We need God to open our eyes to His Word.
- Prayer before Bible study is dependence on God.
- Humility is not self-hatred. It is coming under God and His Word.
- The Word is to be received with meekness and obeyed.
- Correction from God is faithful care, not rejection.
- God gives grace to the humble and draws near to those who draw near.

What to avoid

- Turning humility into self-condemnation.
- Making obedience sound like earning God's love.
- Using guilt if he did not complete practice.
- Making "tremble at God's Word" sound like terror without hope.
- Moving too quickly into study methods.
- Overloading the lesson with extra cross-references.

Optional Extra Scriptures

Use only if the conversation naturally opens up. Do not overload Lesson Two.

- **Proverbs 2:1-6** - The Lord gives wisdom to those who seek it.
- **Psalms 25:4-5** - A prayer for God to show His ways and teach His paths.
- **Matthew 7:24-27** - The wise man hears Jesus' words and does them.
- **Luke 11:28** - Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it.
- **Hebrews 4:16** - Come boldly to the throne of grace for mercy and help.

Suggested closing prayer

Father, thank You for giving us Your Word. Please open our eyes, humble our hearts, and help us receive what You say with faith. Correct what is false, strengthen what is weak, and teach us to obey You in simple and faithful ways. Thank You that You give grace to the humble and draw near to those who draw near to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Leader Reflection After the Session

What encouraged him? _____

Where did he seem unsure, anxious, or confused? _____

What should I follow up next time? _____

Preparation for Lesson Three

Lesson Three will focus on observation: What does the text say? If he struggles with the practice, begin next time with grace. Then help him take the next step: slowing down, noticing what is actually written, and answering from the passage.