



- **What is one of your favorite books? How has this book impacted you?**

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12 (NIV)

I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

Psalms 119:16 (NIV)

- **What are some of the things that keep you from reading and studying the Bible like you should? How can you overcome these distractions?**
- **What are one or two important truths that you have learned from reading the Bible? Have you put these truths into action in your life?**
- **In what ways have you seen your life transformed as a result of your reading and studying the Bible?**

Discuss: There are four elements of an effective Bible study: observation, interpretation, application and transformation. With your group or during your own quiet time, study the following passage and use these four elements of an effective Bible study to answer questions about this passage.

In your Bible, read **Mark 10:17-31** and then answer the following questions:

Observe

(The goal of observing is to be a reporter and uncover the facts of the story.)

- **Who is this passage about?**
- **What happens in this passage?**
- **When these events occur?**
- **Where did these events occur?**
- **Why did these events occur?**
- **How did these events occur?**

Interpretation

(The goal of interpretation is uncover the meaning behind the facts that you have already observed. Sometimes what the passage meant when it was originally written might be different from what it means today, but the principle still applies to us today. When interpreting, it is often a good idea to use such tools as a Bible handbook, commentary or encyclopedia. There are also several online tools you can use on the Internet that are listed on the next page.)

- **What did this passage mean at the time it was written? (What do you think this story meant to the average person living in Jesus' day?)**
- **What does it mean now? (Although our modern context is different, God's truth is timeless. What does/do the principle(s) teach us today?)**

Application

(The goal of application is simply to understand how you can apply the meaning of this passage to your everyday life.)

- **Is there a command I need to obey?**
- **Is there an example I need to follow?**
- **Is there a prayer I need to pray?**
- **Is there a sin I need to confess?**

Transformation

(The goal of transformation is to take the most important step of Bible study, which is to allow the passage to transform our heart and our life.)

- **What truth(s) must I begin to believe?**
- **What promise(s) must I claim?**
- **What habit(s) or thinking pattern must I allow God to change?**

Final Thought: Don't just read the Bible simply for information or for application. Instead, allow it to transform every area of your life so that you can become the person God desires you to be.

Group Challenge

If you have not already done so, plan a group activity in the next few weeks that will enable your group to demonstrate the reliability of the Bible to others in your community. Some possible activity ideas include feeding the poor, helping an elderly neighbor, paint someone's house or adopt a family idea. Be creative and seek out needs in your community that your group could help meet.

For Further Study

To use this resource, simply select one or two questions from each category below that you think will help your group discussion. Alternatively, you can use these questions and Scriptures in your own personal devotions during the week.

Open

- How does it make you feel when a person is caught doing what they tell others not to do?

Explore

Read James 1:19-27.

- What instruction did James give about the relationship between speaking, listening, and anger? (1:19)
- What should a Christian clean out of his or her life? (1:21)
- What is the relationship between listening to God's Word and doing it? (1:22)
- What analogy did James use to describe a person who does not do what the Bible says? (1:23-24)
- What promise did James give to the person who studies God's Word and practices it? (1:25)
- What does the Bible give to people? (1:25)
- How is a person's speech related to the credibility of his or her faith? (1:26)

Reflect

- How can being quick to speak and quick to anger get you into trouble?
- How do displays of anger and temper affect the witness of a Christian?
- What attitudes and habits can inhibit our growth as disciples of Christ?
- How have you experienced freedom by doing the Word of God?
- In what ways can the world pollute us?
- How can we keep ourselves from being polluted by the world?

Apply

- Whom will you help this week in obedience to God's Word?

Reading Resources

1. How We Got the Bible by Dr. John H. Sailhamer
2. The Book : A History of the Bible by Christopher De Hamel

(These books are available at most Christian bookstores and online retailers.)

Online Resources

www.youversion.com

An online version of the Bible that enables community and collaboration like never before. Post comments and links regarding passages of Scripture that are important to you.

www.biblegateway.org

A free service for reading and researching Scripture online--all in the language or translation of your choice.

www.bibles.com

Making the Bible available to every person in a language and format each can understand and afford, so all people may experience its life-changing message.