



Quick Start Guide



“There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.” - Luke 10:42 NLT

What Is “One Thing.”?

The Bible and some church surveys tell us that engaging God’s Word is critical to growth in our Christian faith. So, given this, we have decided to make our church focus for 2015 to be equipping and encouraging our church in regular, meaningful Bible engagement. Spending time meeting with the Lord through reading and reflecting on the Bible is a primary way in which we strengthen and grow in our relationship with Jesus.

Jesus said spending time with Him is of first importance when He affirmed Mary’s decision to spend time sitting at His feet and listening to His teaching. Luke records this interaction and responds to Martha’s concerns by saying, “but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:42 ESV, emphasis added)

It was Jesus’ response to Mary which has prompted us to name this church focus: One Thing.

We are asking each participant to commit to meet with the Lord and meaningfully engage the Bible at least 4 times a week.

“One Thing” Is More Than A Bible Reading Program

At first glance, you may think we are just trying to get everyone to find and stick with a Bible reading plan. You will need to be reading your Bible, but more importantly we want people to read it and not put it down until they get something out of it. Each Christian has a relationship with the Lord. Relationships involve spending time together and conversing with one another. God speaks to us through the Bible via His Holy Spirit who He has put in each one of us. Slowing down to engage the Bible helps us learn about God and His

ways. In doing so, God will show us how that knowledge applies to us and our lives.

You Need a Plan

Hopefully, you wouldn't start on a vacation trip without some sort of planned route for where you are going. In one sense, engaging the Bible is no different. Spending time with the Lord at least 4 times each week is going to take some intentionality. You will need a plan. The remainder of this booklet is designed to help you follow a simple plan to spend time with God. If you already have a plan and you are having meaningful regular times with God in the Bible, then stick with it. However, if you have a plan and are not working that plan consistently, or if you are not getting much out of your times spent in God's Word, then please consider trying the plan we are describing here.

Let's Get Started!

You've got some decisions to make to get started. You need to treat your devotional times with the Lord like you are having an appointment with God. You need to decide the WHEN and WHERE of this appointment. Use the space below to state exactly when (days & specific times) and where (living room rocking chair, kitchen table, etc.) you will have your time with God.

My Appointment With God...

For example, one such commitment might be...

"I will spend time reading God's Word each day from 7 to 7:20 am. I will do this in my living room."

What You Will Need

To make the most of the time you are spending with God, you will need:

1. A Good Study Bible

It is important that you have a version of the Bible that you can easily read and understand. A study Bible, though not required, is recommended because study Bibles have notes, cultural, and geographical background information that can be very helpful. These additional helps will aid you when you are reading Bible passages and are unsure about what certain words mean, who certain people are, or even alternative interpretations of some hard to understand passages.

A couple of the best study Bibles on the market today are the ESV Study Bible and the HCSB Study Bible (Holman Christian Standard Study Bible). The ESV is written at a 10th grade reading level and the HCSB is written at a 7th- 8th grade reading level. Both are excellent translations of the Bible.

You may already have a good study Bible in a version that you like. However, if you do not have one or are looking to replace yours, these are two very good options. You can look at the Bible text for these different versions on BibleGateway.com to see what the wording is like. To see what the additional notes and helps look like you will need to head to the publisher's websites or go to your local Christian bookstore.

For the HCSB go to <https://www.mystudybible.com/> or <http://hcsb.org/>

For ESV Study Bible go to <http://esvstudybible.org/video/>

Currently, when you purchase either of these in a print version you get an access code to the online version of the study Bible as well!

One last thing about these study Bibles. The Bible text and study notes for both the ESV and the HCSB are available for reading in many popular digital Bible study software (for example, Logos Bible Software or The Bible Study App by OliveTree). This means they can be read on most smartphones and tablets.

2. A Journal / Notebook

Please don't let the word journal or notebook scare you. But if you are going to remember, reflect on, and share with others what God is teaching you then you will need to record that information somewhere. Obviously, if you are using a paper notebook or journal, then you will need a pen or pencil handy when having your time with God. There are also a ton of apps out there for your smartphone or tablet that allow you to store and organize your notes. Many people have felt using pen and paper to record what they are learning helps them slow down and reflect on what God is teaching them.

3. A Bible Reading Plan

It is good to have a plan for where you will be reading in the Bible. Just skipping around is not good because you don't really get a good sense for the flow of the Bible text. You will find a variety of Bible reading plans on our church website (<http://www.darbycreek.org/resources/biblereading>). Some people choose to use a devotional that has a Scripture to read and some commentary including a question or two for application. If you choose to use a devotional

guide for your Bible reading, it would be good if you choose one that takes you methodically through various books of the Bible. A couple of those devotionals are mentioned on our church website, too. Use the space below to write down what Bible reading plan or devotional guide you will be using:

My Bible Reading Plan...

4. A Plan for Your Time

What now? You've got your Bible, journal, pen, and a reading plan or devotional. So what does this time with God look like? You may already have an approach you use that works for you. If you do, stick with it. If not, here's a simple plan for engaging the Bible in a meaningful way. It follows the simple acronym S.O.A.P. which Pastor Wayne Cordeiro mentions in his book The Divine Mentor.

After praying for the Lord to speak to you through His Word, read the assigned Scripture for the day according to the reading plan or devotional you are using. Now follow the process described below.

S — Scripture: As you read the Bible, often there will be a verse or two that really stand out to you. Write that verse down in your journal word for word. Writing the verse out word for word, like a scribe, helps you slow down and it helps you focus on what the Scripture is saying.

O — Observation: As you think about the verse(s) you wrote down, write down what sticks out to you. Take into account the context, the setting, and the situation. Make an observation of what's happening, who's affected, what's taking place. What does God seem to be impressing upon you from this passage?

A — Application: After you've carefully observed what the text says, take some time to write out how you plan to put into practice what God has just brought to your attention. How will you seek to be different today as a result of what you've just read? Application answers the question, "How does this verse or thought apply to me?"

P — Prayer: Lastly, Finish your time in the Word by writing out a prayer to God. Ask Him to help you apply what you've just learned. This may feel awkward at first, but writing this out helps you really express your heart to God.

To help you get a better sense for this S.O.A.P. process, below is an example of a journal entry that someone might have written had they read Genesis chapter 6 in their reading plan for January 6th.

1/6/2015 Noah Walked with God

S — Scripture: Genesis 6:9 HCSB

"These are the family records of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among his contemporaries; Noah walked with God."

O — Observation: In the NLT version it says, "he [Noah] walked in close fellowship with God". Noah stood out amongst his fellow man as one who was upright / holy and one who had a close walk with God.

A — Application: I want to be a person who this could be said about. I want to pursue the habits that will help me develop a closer walk with the Lord. Scripture intake and prayer need to saturate my soul more.

P — Prayer: Lord, work on me so that by this time next year, I'm walking more closely with you and more holy than I am now. I want to keep having these daily quiet times with You so that will become a reality. Amen.

If you are interested in learning more about this S.O.A.P. journaling method, check out Pastor Tom Short's video explaining it. If you want to avoid typing the web address below, a link to the video is on our church website.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2KyucqsSlw>

Make the Commitment!

If spending time at the Lord's feet listening to His Word is the one necessary thing, then why not make a formal commitment to doing that today!

A commitment card has been inserted into this booklet for you to sign and turn in at our next Sunday worship service. Feel free to put it in the offering basket or drop it in the mail to the church.

If there is no commitment card included with this booklet, then you will find one on our church website where the One Thing resources are found. To help keep your commitment, it is a good idea to tell someone else that you've made this commitment. Think of another believer and tell them you've made this commitment and give them permission to ask you how your Bible reading is going. Write that person's name in the space below.

My Accountability Partner...

The Blessings of Being in God's Word

As you spend time in God's Word, let the following Scriptures be an encouragement to you to stick with this commitment. The verses from the ESV below speak about the incredible blessings of God's Word.

God's Word...

...Helps me overcome sin: Psalm 119:11 — I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

...Gives me direction: Psalm 119:105 — Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

...Leads me to success in God's eyes: Joshua 1:8 — This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

...Helps me grow spiritually: 1 Peter 2:2 — Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation

...Equips me to accomplish His purposes: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 — 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.

...Comforts me in my troubles: Psalm 119:50 — This is my comfort in my affliction, that your promise gives me life.



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