

Relating to God through Scripture

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[0 : 0 0] Well, this morning, we are kind of continuing on in a series on building a relationship with God. It wasn't last week, but two weeks ago. We started off asking this question, or kind of making a statement or an observation here.

Many Christians will say about Christianity that Christianity is not a religion, it is a relationship. Right? And while that's not totally true, because Christianity certainly is a religion, it, by pure definitional terms, is a religion, beliefs about God.

But it's not just a religion, and I think that's what most people mean when they say that. Christianity is not just a religion. It's not just a system of beliefs.

It's not just a system of rituals. But Christianity is about, primarily, having a relationship with God. Knowing God.

Today, we're going to look at a specific way in which we can relate to God, and that is through the Scriptures. We can get to know God better through His Word.

[1 : 1 7] You know, there are many ways in which our relationship with God is similar to our human relationships. But, as we talked about a couple of weeks ago, there are also ways in which that relationship is different.

The Bible talks about God being invisible. And in most of our relationships, we relate to people that we can see, that we can hear, that we can touch and handle.

We can give them a great big hug or a nice firm handshake. But with God, it's not that way. At least, it's not right now. Right?

And so, we live a life the Bible calls a life of faith. And there are certain ways in which we relate to God that is different from how we relate to human beings. But, like I said, it won't always be that way.

Peter says this in his letter, 1 Peter 1.8. He talks about how even though we haven't seen God, yet we love Him.

[2 : 2 0] Even though we haven't seen Him, yet we love Him. So, we can have a relationship with God. Even though there is some level of friction, some level of frustration, even, with that relationship.

Because of that faith aspect. Because of the unseen aspect. And it's not as good. It's not even as good as a face-to-face relationship.

There are places in the Bible where, for example, we mentioned about Moses. God bragged about Moses and his relationship with him.

And how it was actually better because he spoke to Moses as a man does face-to-face. And there is coming a day in which all of us who trust in Christ, we will get to be with God forever.

And we will get to see Jesus face-to-face. And be able to interact with him and build a relationship with him. Very similar to how we do in our relationships here on earth.

[3 : 2 6] And it will be a relationship that will last 10,000 years. 100,000 years. Forever and ever. But does that mean that because our relationship is a bit different than human relationships, is it even possible really to have a real relationship with God without being able to see him?

Just based, for example, on... And the two big things that we'll talk about are the written word, the scriptures. And then the other one we'll talk about next week is prayer. Is it really possible to have, like, a real relationship with God just based, for example, today on written communication?

Is that possible? Well, we actually have examples of this, right? Has anybody ever had a pen pal? Somebody that you wrote to that you've never actually met before face-to-face?

Many of us have sometimes, you know, today via email, you know, we can communicate very easily with people that we've never met before. You know, in my line of work, besides being a

pastor and I'm a software engineer, and I work a lot of times with people all over the world. In fact, I work with, even just right now, I work with people who are in India. And now we have, because of technology, I'm able to see them face-to-face. Well, it's not really face-to-face. [4 : 51] I guess I get to see a picture of them through the screen. But, you know, you're building a relationship with people that you're thousands and thousands of miles from.

But over, you know, history, people have, you know, just through letters, built up relationships with people. You know, I think about this also, too, in that there are many kind of one, I call them one-way relationships.

There are people you might consider celebrities, or today we have social media influencers or TV personalities. And if you consume somebody's content or maybe you follow somebody on Facebook or Instagram or TikTok and these different channels today, you can really get to know someone.

Now, they may not know you at all, right? Now, I think about somebody that our family knows pretty well. There's five guys. They go by the name Dude Perfect.

Anybody ever heard of Dude Perfect? All right, I see a couple of people. Some people are too embarrassed to raise their hand, I know. But they have just a fun YouTube channel where they do fun things like try to make a basketball shot from, you know, from towers and, you know, do fun things with ping pong balls.

[6 : 14] And they're actually Christian guys, which is really neat. But as you watch their videos, you kind of get to know them. You get to know their personalities, what they're like, the ones who are really extroverted and the ones who are more introverted.

The kinds of things that they're good at and the kinds of things that they enjoy. There's also reality television. Now, most reality television is a bunch of garbage.

But there are some good things out there. We've enjoyed watching a family called the Bates family. What's the name of that show? So, bringing up Bates. It's fun. It's about a family.

They have a bunch of kids. I can't remember how many kids they have. But it's just about them, you know, going, doing just regular things in their life. All their kids as they're getting older.

Finding boyfriends and girlfriends and getting married and having weddings. Those types of things. But over time, you start to get to know these people. Another thing is authors, right?

[7 : 13] You read the book of an author. You know, I really love C.S. Lewis. He's written so many books. Some of them are just about his ideas. And other of his books are about his own life.

He's written biographical books. One about his life, which is called Surprised by Joy. About how he became a Christian. And then there's another one about the suffering that he experienced when his wife passed away from cancer.

And so when you read the book of an author, I've never met C.S. Lewis. In fact, I think he probably passed away before I was even born. But I know him to a certain degree.

Now, he does not know me. One day, in heaven, I'll have an opportunity to meet C.S. Lewis. And I will be so excited. It might take 10,000 years, you know, to get in line, right?

Behind all the people who want to meet C.S. Lewis, right? But eventually, maybe we'll get to have dinner together. And I'll know so much about him because of the books that I read from him.

[8 : 15] And you know what? He won't know anything about me. But I'll have a chance to share my life with him at that time. But you know, when it comes to the Lord, we get to know him through his word, right?

But unlike C.S. Lewis, God knows us intimately. He knows us even better than we know ourselves. So one day, when we get to talk with the Lord face to face, that dinner that we might have with the Lord will be different.

We will know so much about him if we're diligent to learn about him. But he will know so much about us and our lives as well.

But regardless of the friction or the frustration that's involved in building a relationship with God in this brief, mortal life that we have, we ought to be grateful for the relationship that we can build with God.

Now. And do the work to build a dynamic and thriving relationship with God in the time that we have on earth right now.

[9 : 29] And really, that is one of the most important things in all of life. I'm going to go back and read this scripture that we looked at a couple of weeks ago. This is from Jeremiah 9, verse 23.

Thus says the Lord. This is speaking through the prophet Jeremiah. The Lord speaking through the prophet Jeremiah. Thus says the Lord. For let not the wise man glory in his wisdom. Let not the mighty man glory in his might.

Nor let the rich man glory in his riches. But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me. That I am the Lord, exercising loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.

For in these I delight, says the Lord. God wants us to know him. And that is really, I would say, the foundational purpose of our life.

Is to know God. Early on in Jesus' ministry, really before he started his ministry, Jesus went out into the desert and he fasted for 40 days.

[10:34] And he was tempted ultimately at the end of that 40 days by Satan. One of the temptations was to turn a rock into some bread. And Jesus responded to that with a scripture that he knew from the Old Testament scriptures.

And it went like this. He says, Our lives are not just a matter of eating and drinking, of consuming material things.

But our lives are about a different kind of bread. There is a different kind of bread that we ought to consume. And it's a bread that really leads to relationship. He's talking about the word of God.

Getting to know God. God's word. Which, by the way, part of God's word is instruction for how we ought to live. But that's not all that God's word is.

It's more than just instruction. It's teaching us about who God is. Every relationship requires and really thrives on communication.

[11:49] If you're here this morning and you're married, you know that communication is so important to having a good relationship with your spouse. If you stop talking to one another, you're going to drift apart.

So God's word is one of the ways that he communicates with us. The other thing about relationships, whether it's through communication or otherwise, is our relationships actually change us.

Have you ever noticed this about married couples, is that over time they become more like each other? Right? They start to take on each other's habits, sometimes for good and sometimes for bad, right?

And you start to think alike and think the same. And again, it can be good or it can be bad. That's why, by the way, young people, it's so important that you marry a good person.

Somebody who has the right ideas in life. Somebody who loves the Lord and wants things like goodness and truth in their life.

[13:05] But the Bible actually warns us about who we walk with, who we build relationships with. In the book of Psalms, Psalm chapter 1, the very beginning of Psalms, it says this, Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither, and whatever he does shall prosper.

Who you walk with, who you relate to matters. If you walk with and hang out with sinners, the seat of the scornful, the ungodly, those who reject God, they will influence how you live your life.

But if we relate to God through his word, which is what he's talking about here, then we will be transformed to be more like who?

To be more like God. In Ephesians 5, 11, Paul says this, And have no fellowship, or relationship, right, with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

[14:29] Don't hang out with people who are living in the dark, who are living an ungodly life. 1 Corinthians 15, 33, Paul says this, Do not be deceived.

Evil company corrupts good habits or good character. When you keep company with those, you build relationships with those who are evil, who do evil things, that will ultimately have an impact on how you live your life.

In Proverbs 13, verse 20, whoever it is, I'm not sure if it's Solomon, probably, says, He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.

When you walk with the wise, you will walk in wisdom. If you walk with fools, you will become a fool yourself. You know, some people think that the only way to be transformed by the Bible is through the instructions in the Bible.

Don't do this, do this, and just following those things. But do you know that the Bible actually teaches that that doesn't actually work very well?

[15 : 42] That's what you call the law. The Bible calls the law. You have a system of rules in which here are the instructions for you to do. And when you do what is good and what is right, you become righteous.

And when you do what is wrong, you become unrighteous or guilty before God. Now, those laws, those rules, those regulations, those instructions, the Bible say, are not bad in and of themselves. Here's how Paul puts it in Romans 8, chapter 3. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, our flesh, the law failed because of why?

Because of itself? No. The instructions failed because of us. Because we were sinful. We weren't really, a lot of times, interested in doing what was right.

But it finishes up this way. God, excuse me, let me start over again. Romans 8, 3. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, our flesh, God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh on account of sin.

[16 : 50] This is the story of Christmas, right? God rescued us from ourself, not by giving us more rules to follow, but by coming himself in our likeness.

Because of sin, because of our sin, it says this, And that little phrase there at the end, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, you know what that's talking about?

It's talking about building a relationship with God. When you walk according to the spirit, the spirit is just another term for the Lord. God is spirit. So when we walk with God, when we build a relationship with him, what happens is, those instructions that were given to us on how we ought to live, we more naturally keep those and do what those instructions teach.

Why? Because they're written down in black and white, threatening to condemn us if we don't, through threats or maybe some kind of reward. No.

It's through the relationship that we have with God that we are transformed to be more like him. That is the Christian life.

[18 : 17] And the Bible says, teaches us that through that relationship, through knowing him, we can be changed. And what does that look like practically?

What does it look like to be changed by knowing God? Well, as we read through the Bible, we find out, for example, in the book of beginnings, we find out that God created all things.

Well, how does that change us? Well, it leads us to live a life of humility. Right? God is the creator and I am the creation.

So we kind of can get off of our high horse and thinking too much of ourselves. Knowing, for example, we read in the Bible that he is a righteous judge, that one day he will judge the world in righteousness.

And there are acts of judgment that he has done. We think about the flood in the past. And that leads us to live a life in awe and respect of God.

[19 : 20] Also knowing that he created us different from the rest of creation. The Bible says that he created us in his image and in his likeness.

And you know what that leads to? Leads to us understanding that we have worth and value beyond other created things because God created us to be like him.

Knowing that he has great power, that he is almighty, gives us confidence in life. You know, we don't have control over everything, even as much as we'd like to. But we can rest in confidence that ultimately, at the end of all things, God has the power and he will make everything right.

Knowing his wisdom, as we read through the Proverbs, those are, that's the wisdom of God. And not just in Proverbs, but elsewhere in the Bible, it leads us, right, to living lives of wisdom.

And then when we read the instructions, those are useful, they're helpful for us living a fruitful Christian life. Knowing God's future plans for the world and for us can lead us to live a life of hope and confident expectation for the future.

[20 : 43] And then knowing his character and his love leads us to emulate him, to also live lives of character and love. You know, in Ephesians, Paul was writing to the Ephesians and he was talking to them about his prayer for them.

He says, when I pray for you, this is what I pray. And he actually wrote it down. And it's so interesting. Of all the things that Paul might pray for some new believers, what is he going to pray about? And this is his prayer.

Ephesians 3, 14. For this reason, I bow my knee to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant to you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, to understand with all the saints, what is the width and the length and the depth and the height, to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

He was praying that they would grow to understand the height and the depth and the width and the breadth of God's love for them. Because that ultimately is what will transform their lives.

That is what will fill them with all the fullness of God. Now, what I want to do next is just to talk about some very practical things.

[22 : 22] One, as we read the Bible, what are our expectations as we read the Bible? What are we expecting to get out of it as we read the Scriptures? And then the other big thing is just some practical tips for how to make this part of our relationship with God as a healthy part of our daily life.

First, talking about expectations. You know, as you read through the Scriptures, there are going to be things in there that are confusing that you won't understand.

Now, the Bible is actually meant to be a book that is understandable, a book that is comprehensible. Now, some of you might think, well, that's news to me. You know, as you read through the Bible, especially as a young Christian, or maybe you're not even a Christian yet, you read through the Bible and there are things in there that are kind of difficult to understand.

Now, lots of things, I think, are fairly simple for anybody, especially the narratives, the accounts, the stories, and some of the Proverbs. Usually those are pretty easy to understand.

But then there are other parts that are more difficult. I just want to let you know, hey, confusion, some amount of confusion anyway, is just a normal part of reading the Bible.

[23 : 39] You're not going to understand everything that you read. But as you keep at it, just as with studying a textbook, looking into nuclear physics, for those of you who are interested in that, if you read a book on nuclear physics, most of it, if you're brand new to the topic, is just going to go right over your head.

But as you continue to read, as you continue to study, things will start to click. And you'll understand more and more and more.

And eventually, you become an expert. And the same thing happens as we read the Bible. As we stick to it, as we continue to read, our understanding will continue to grow.

And by the way, that is the reason why we read the Bible. It's for understanding. It's not purely for the, to get maybe points with God, or religious credit.

That's not why we read the Bible. It's not just a religious exercise that we do. God gave us His words so that we can understand Him. And so when we go to the Bible, our expectation is that we should grow in our understanding of Him.

[24 : 57] Now, again, it takes time. We're not going to have this amazing comprehension of God when we first start reading the Bible. But it will grow. And we should expect that understanding to grow.

And one of the things that you might need to do is you might need to slow down your reading as you're reading through the Bible. Not just try to get through, I've got to get through three chapters before I head off to work.

That's probably not as helpful as just, hey, I'm just going to read a few verses. I only have so much time. I just have a few verses. Let me read through so I can understand what I'm reading. The other thing I think that we can tend to have expectations about is when we read the Bible, we need to have something that we can apply to our life right now as we read through the Bible.

And so sometimes, you know, we might, you know, find a devotional or something, a devotional for moms or a devotional for dad or a devotional for dentists or whatever it might be, right?

Something that is going to only have things that apply to us. And that's not really a great approach to Scripture. When you have a relationship with a husband or wife, do you only want to talk about things that relate to what's happening right now?

[26 : 12] No, we want to hear about our wife's dreams and aspirations for the future and her past and her history and what her family was like growing up. All of those things help build our relationship. And that's when we read the Bible, we're just finding out more about God and building that relationship with Him.

Okay. So now some practical tips. And before we get there, I just want to talk, you know, the first message that we had about building a relationship with God was supposed to be most, you know, pretty aspirational or inspirational, trying to inspire us to pursue a relationship with God and even some of the things that we've talked about this morning.

But you know, there are limits to inspiration to motivate us to do the things that are good for us. It's actually quite difficult to live our lives completely off of inspiration.

You know, this is true for marriage, right? When you first get married and you're so in love with each other and you just love spending all of your time, day and night together, and then you get married and you think, this is how our lives are going to be all the time.

We're just going to talk to each other and stare into each other's eyes day and night. And then life happens, right? And the cares of life. And kids come and you've got dirty diapers to change and crying kids and sickness in the family and you get laid off of work.

[27 : 46] One thing after the other. And all these things come in and they can separate you apart. They can get in the way of your relationship if you don't have habits and routines and structures in your life to continue to maintain that relationship on a regular basis.

By the way, the other thing that doesn't really help really well is guilt trips. And that's one of the things especially pastors like to do when it comes to, you need to read your Bible, you just lay on the guilt really heavy and see if that'll work to get people to actually read their Bible.

And you know what? It doesn't actually work that well. So what do we need to do? We need to have a plan. Just like in a marriage, if you don't have those regular date nights or maybe those evenings where you and your husband or wife connect about your lives, if you don't have those kinds of structures in your life, you will find yourself drifting apart.

It's the same way with our relationship with God. We need to have a plan for how we are going to relate to God through the scriptures.

The first thing I want to speak to as we pray is our attitude, excuse me, not as we pray, but as we read the scriptures is the attitude that we come.

[29 : 12] We need to come to God's word with a spirit of humility. We are here to learn about him. And so before we read the scriptures and whether you do this out loud or you just have this as kind of your heart attitude is praying, God, I want to know you more.

I really want to grow to know you more. What can you teach me today? Not necessarily about how I can have a better marriage or things like that, but I want to know you.

And those are part, how to have a good, healthy marriage is a part of knowing God. It is. But it's not the only thing. So ask God what he can teach us today about himself and how we can be changed by his word.

To those of you who might be new, and this might be adults, right, who are new Christians, or this might be young people who grow up in a Christian family but are still trying to figure out how to have a healthy life in the scriptures, just a few different tips.

One is start small. When it comes to reading the Bible, start small. Don't think, oh, I'm going to read through the whole Bible in three months. Or I'm going to read my Bible for one hour every day.

[30 : 35] Now those are great things to do, right? But if you're, especially if you're brand new, you are just setting yourself up to fail, right? Come up with something reasonable.

Maybe it's just five or ten minutes in the morning. I'm just going to open up the scriptures and I'm going to read for five or ten minutes. The other question you might ask is, well, where do I start? Where do I start? Do you start at the very beginning of the Bible and then just make your way all the way to the end and then you start over? Is that the best approach? Well, that is actually one approach and it's certainly a valid one.

But there are many ways that you can read through the scriptures. Some people might just have books that they're interested in and you can just start really wherever you want.

But I would say that there is value in getting an understanding of the full breadth of the Bible. So one of the things that's popular for many people to do is to read the whole Bible in one year.

[31 : 38] Has anybody in here ever done that? I see a few hands, yeah. And what a tremendous way to kind of get a great overview of the Bible. Some people I know have read through the Bible every year for the last 20 or 30 years.

It's incredible. Now, I haven't done that and I'm not saying that everybody has to do that. But what a great way to get to know God through His Word. Some people, I remember meeting somebody and they said, I'm a new Christian and what I'm really interested in is what happens at the end.

And so they wanted to start at the end of the book. And by the way, I have people in my family, some of my kids, when they read a book, they actually read the end of the book first to see if it's worth reading. Anybody know anybody else like that?

But anyway, some people really want to see what happens at the end. Now, I wouldn't recommend that. The book of Revelation is especially challenging to understand. There is no necessarily wrong place to start, but there are some kind of wise approaches.

You know, we are almost at the new year. And one of the things that a lot of Christians do at the beginning of a new year is they will have some kind of a Bible reading plan. It can be going through the Bible in a year.

[32 : 54] You can buy a Bible that is specifically meant for going through it in one year. Or you can just get a plan. Sometimes it's a printout that you can go through. You check the box after you read this for the day.

There are apps that you can get on your phone that will help you go through those reading plans. And there's all kinds. You can go through the whole Bible in one year. You can go through in two years. Some people, there are plans where some people will go through the whole Bible in just three months, which is pretty crazy.

But just so you know, if you do have an aspiration to go through the Bible in one year, here's about what it takes. It takes reading through about three or four chapters a day, which takes most people about 15 to 20 minutes.

So that's not too bad. Not too bad. But it does require commitment each and every day. And sometimes life throws all kinds of crazy things at us. You know, some people get really discouraged.

They're in December and they're only like 70% of the way through their Bible reading plan. And they just get so discouraged. Or maybe it's July and they're only 20% of the way through. You know what?

[34 : 00] If it takes you 13 months or 18 months or 20 months or 30 months to get through a one-year reading plan, but you get through it, that is success.

Because there's value to that, right? So, don't be discouraged. I would say the other thing, though, reading through the whole Bible has its value.

But as Christians, the things in the Bible that are the most relevant to us are the New Testament parts. And especially the epistles of Paul.

The writings that he's writing to the church, the body of Christ, which is us. So it never hurts, and I tell people a lot, it never hurts to spend most of your time in Paul's epistles, reading the instructions specifically to us.

But there is so much great content in Genesis, for example, about creation, and there's so many things about who God is and what he's like that we can find all throughout the Bible.

[35 : 05] The other thing, as far as tips, are, oh, okay, habits, routines. It's important for us to be consistent, right?

In a relationship with a spouse or friends, we need to have those regular touch points, right, of communication. It's the same way with the Lord. When life gets crazy, having those routines in our life can help ground us and create consistency, especially when the inspiration kind of fades.

And so, find a consistent time each day that you can engage with God and his word. For some people, that works best in the morning. But not everybody.

For some people, maybe their lunch break at work is the time when they read through a few chapters of the Bible. For others, it's at night. Some people, their life is just so jam-packed with responsibilities that it's hard for them to even find the time to read the words on the page.

But you know what they can do? They can pull up the Bible on audio through an app on their phone or a CD or whatever it is and listen on the way to work or running errands or something like that.

[36 : 19] And that's certainly a legitimate way to not just read but listen to God's word. There's a concept, there's a book that I've read that's really great, by the way, about building habits in your life.

It's a secular book. It's called Atomic Habits. But one of the things he talks about in there is this idea of habit stacking where you have established habits you already have in your life. You brush your teeth every morning.

Maybe you have coffee and you read the news in the morning or something like that. Well, you have that coffee that you have in the morning and you can stack on another habit on top of that. So that's the time when I'm having my coffee where I'm going to read through the scriptures.

Another tip here for parents is we need to build these habits in our life but it's our responsibility as the parents to also build habits, form habits in our children's lives.

And so we should take the opportunity to teach our kids to build these habits around God's word when they're young. And you know what? When they become adults it'll be so much easier for them to just continue the habits they've already learned.

[37 : 29] A few more kind of tips and this has to do with kind of study aids. what happens when you come to things that are confusing or like I said if you don't have a lot of time to read through the text on the page.

Or you know there are some people that are just really it's really difficult for them to read. Well, I mentioned this already but audiobooks are a great resource. Not audiobooks but audiobooks. audio Bibles.

And there are all kinds with all kinds of voices. If you want to hear the Bible in a British accent you can get that. If you want to hear an Australian accent you can get that. And most of them are free that you can find online through apps.

Another aid that you can have is sometimes there are just things in the Bible that you don't quite understand. And so one aid that you can use is a study Bible.

And a study Bible is just a Bible with annotations and notes in it interspersed throughout. Many Bibles have cross references right? So if there is a verse and maybe it's a quote from the Old Testament or some kind of an allusion to something in the Old Testament or maybe somewhere else in the scripture it'll have the reference so that you can look those up if that can help your understanding.

[38 : 51] Another is just online tools. If you have a question about a verse that you're reading you can just Google it. Now sometimes people might think well that's dangerous what if Google's wrong or what if they give me the wrong information?

Well Google's job is just to give you a smattering of what's out there on the internet the information that's out there some of it will be wrong and some of it may be right maybe there's nothing right on the internet regarding that anyway.

You know what I've actually come to really appreciate these days is AI. Anybody use an AI? A few people but AI is just this way basically these new AI tools are a way to take all of the information on the internet and turn it into this way that you can ask questions in natural language just like you would a person like any expert and get an answer back now these answers are programmatic and it's it's just a computer right there's not a real person on the other side and they call it artificial intelligence for a reason it's not real intelligence it's artificial but for example if you have a question about a passage and this is the way that I use it hey here's this passage and I don't quite understand what are a variety of explanations of what this passage means and it will give you a list here are three different views and and they're things that people have written about that's where the information is coming from it's things that people have written about

Bible scholars some of them might be very liberal or from people who don't take the Bible literally in a literal way and others might be from more conservative teachers and so but you can kind of get an idea of what people think and that can help you with your understanding the other thing that you can use is marking up your Bible use a pen to underline things that really maybe stand out to you that you maybe want to remember or use a highlighter or you can annotate write notes in the margins another thing that some people do is have a Bible journal where you have with your Bible you have a journal and as you read you think about well what did I learn today you can just write down a few sentences about what you learned then the last thing as far as a Bible tip is you know we have a personal relationship with God right and reading the Bible is part of that personal relationship but that doesn't mean that that relationship has to be totally private that it's just me and

the Lord and I never talk to anybody else about my relationship with God is that how we treat our other relationships where it's like well my wife is over here but I'm not going to talk to anybody about you know my relationship with her because that's private no we now there are certain things we do keep private right and that's important but in general

I talk to my friends and my kids about my relationship with my wife and what I think about her and her past and what her you know hopes for the future are all those things are great and so as Christians an important part of living the Christian life and building our relationship with God is interacting with one another about what we're finding out about God what we're learning about him we can talk to her spouse your siblings your friends you can talk about what you're learning from the scriptures in your small group for example you can do it face to face you can call somebody call up a friend and say hey I just read this in the Bible what do you think or send a text hey here's this verse I read this really made my day and having those conversations with other people can one be an encouragement to them but also sometimes the back and forth can help provide clarity or perspective on things things that you may not have considered I want to wrap up you know that verse in Jeremiah talked about how that above riches and power and wealth that knowing God is the most important thing

[43 : 12] Paul put it this way this is in Philippians we just finished studying Philippians he said this Philippians 3 yet indeed I also count all things as loss loss he means useless for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord everything else in life I just count it as nothing as loss when it comes to comparing it to knowing my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for whom he says I have suffered the loss of all things and I count them all as rubbish I count everything else as garbage not that everything else is garbage right there are important other important things in life but when it comes to knowing God everything else in relative terms is just garbage that's how important it is to know God again building a relationship with God is not something that just happens overnight you don't read through the Bible one time and now you have this amazing relationship with God it's actually something that takes time and investment there's friction there that we've talked about and sometimes frustration and you're confused and there's understanding that you're missing but if we keep at it day in and day out reading God's word opening it up learning more about him over time and through patience we will grow and we will grow to have a vibrant and dynamic and strong and healthy relationship with the Lord and that's what we all should want that's what God intends for us to have amen amen let's pray and ask the Lord to help us in this regard

Father we thank you for your word that you gave us so that we can know you and we ask you Lord to work in us to help us to build these habits in our lives that we might know you more and more every day that our relationship with you would grow into something that we might not even now be able to imagine you have something for us that if we'll work at it we'll work with you at this that we can have a relationship with you that is strong and full and like I said beyond what we can even imagine and we thank you for what you offer to us in Jesus name amen as