



MEMBERS' GUIDE FOR THE STUDY QUESTIONS

The goal of The Cornerstone Scripture Study is to get you into God's Word every day in order to help you discover His will for your life and develop a personal relationship with Him. Doing the Lesson is not supposed to be a tiresome chore, a boring homework assignment or something to get through as quickly as possible. Answering the questions is a way to spend time with the Father every day. The following is one way to do the study questions and listen for God's answers with your heart. There are three steps: 1. Pray and Read 2. Pray and Listen 3. Pray and Obey.

- First, PRAY AND READ. When you sit down to do your Lesson each day—begin with a short prayer. “Lord, here I am. Help me come into Your presence. Help me to be open to what You want to teach me. Help me to understand Your Word.” Then, read through the passage slowly, maybe a couple of times until you think you have an understanding on what it says. There is the temptation to jump right in and begin searching for the answers to the questions. Then you miss an important step—you do not see the overall message; instead, you see only parts and pieces. As you read ask yourself the following questions: What is God really saying here? What does it mean? Why is it important? Then before you begin the questions, sit quietly and give God an opportunity to speak to you through the feelings, thoughts and insights that come into your mind.
- Second, PRAY AND LISTEN. Pray again before you begin the lesson. “Lord, as I answer the questions, show me what it is You want to teach me. How do these words apply to my life? How do You want to change me? Where do You want me to go? What do You want me to do?” In this frame of mind, start on the questions. With each one you are not looking for the “right answer”, but for the words or message God has for you. Try to take the time to listen for the heart-message rather than the head-knowledge.
- Third, PRAY AND OBEY. After you have finished all the questions for the day, you will come to the Connection Question. This is truly the most important question—the question that more or less sums up the Lesson for the day—the question that leads you into prayer...a prayer asking God to make you obedient—a prayer asking God to help you use what He has taught you to change your behavior, your thoughts, your opinions, your words—a prayer to challenge you to become the godly person He has created you to be. This is God's time to speak to your heart and it is something you do not want to miss.

Answering the Study Questions is a way to develop a personal relationship with God as you learn to pray, to listen and to obey. The following are a few other suggestions that may help make this year's study a wonderful heart-trip:

1. Try to set aside the same time each day to do your Lesson in order to establish the habit of spending time with the Lord. Choose a place that is quiet where you will not be interrupted.

Set up your study area with everything that you will need: Bible, the Lesson, pencil, paper, a dictionary and possibly an appropriate map.

2. In order for this study to be a heart trip, it may be helpful to personalize it. The Bible is not just a historical account of God's people from Adam to the Apostles. It is the story of your own spiritual journey. So, every time you come across the names: Ruth, Hosea, Moses, the Israelites, the Chosen People, David, Mary, Peter—or whomever—insert your own name there to make the story your own.
3. It's important not to get hung up on the difference between facts and truths. There are parts of the Bible that are not provable facts, but every word in the Sacred Scriptures teaches us God's truths. If you spend time worrying about the contradictions, or trying to figure out the exact "what, where, why and when," instead of listening for the message God is trying to teach you, you may miss the whole message.
4. Many of the questions will refer you to other books of the Bible. There are several reasons for this. 1., It will help you get familiar with the whole Bible. 2., It will point out God's underlying truths that are repeated throughout the Scriptures. 3., It will help you see the relationships between the Old and New Testaments. (Just a helpful hint—they are usually referenced in order.)
5. Each week, look for a TAKE-HOME message. This is the point of the first question of each week's study. It is the one that asks something like, "What thought from last week's Spiritual Reflection or commentary was most helpful or inspiring for you?" That is your "Take Home" message for the week. This is where you can apply what you have learned by asking yourself the following questions. "What from the lesson, commentary or Spiritual Reflection stands out to me?" "What difference can it make in my daily thoughts, words and actions?" "How can it help me become more a person of God?" If you get to the end of this study and you are exactly the same as when you began—you have missed out on a wonderful opportunity. We are a people of conversion and it is God's purpose to transform us into the image and likeness of His Son.
6. Because the questions were written using the New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (NRSVCE) it may be helpful to use this version when doing the Lessons.
7. The questions are not meant to be a test. There is a mix of simpler and more difficult questions aimed at Bible students at all levels. Many of the questions are designed to be easily answered. They are simple and repetitive in order to help you become more familiar with Scripture and to draw your attention to every small detail in God's inspired Word. The more challenging questions are designed to help you stretch and grow. If you get bogged down—skip the questions you find difficult to answer and come back to them at a later time.
8. Always remember—there are NO wrong answers—just the answers you received during your time with God. They are the right answers for you! Even "I don't know" is a perfectly good answer. You may find that God has something to teach you through an answer someone in your small group shares. You are never asked to share with the small group your answers to any personal questions, but you will find that some soul-searching and writing the answers may be of great value to you in your personal spiritual growth.