

## READING THE BIBLE WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS

I shared recently with a friend how I realized my view of God was distorted when it came to prayer. I believed I should not tell God my true desires because that would mean he would not give them to me or would distort how I would receive them if I did not ask in exactly the right way. I treated God like a genie out to trick me, and so I approached him with hesitancy for any desires of my own.

*My time in Scripture and our discussion allowed me to see this in myself.*

After we both talked through some of our wrong views of God and the actual truth about him, she suggested that we each share a request and then the other would pray for that request. In doing this we sought to both approach God with confidence in his kindness towards us.

I look back on this moment discussing Scripture when I think about the importance of reading the Bible with other believers. I learned the significance of time in Scripture with others as we grow in our relationship with God, with each other, and with the world around us.

Matthew 8:19-20 says, *“Again I say to you if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them.”*

God encourages us in this verse to seek him with our fellow believers. When we gather with other Christians to spend time in Scripture, we see God at work in new ways with some incredible benefits:

### **Studying Scripture together helps grow our love for God.**

Studying Scripture together creates the opportunity to interpret Scripture together to understand what God is telling us through His Word. We can ask each other the question: “What does this passage say about God?” We point out things that others might not see in their own study. We also find opportunities to correct each other and see blind spots for each other as we seek to learn the truth about God. Instead of allowing our reading to become self-focused, inviting others into our study helps us to maintain an outward focus. We see more clearly the truth God is emphasizing about himself when we come together to read His Word and guide each other through it. Time spent with my friend allowed us both to process what we were learning about God through Scripture and allowed us to see how God was working in both our lives.

### **Studying Scripture together helps grow our love for each other.**

Time in God’s Word with fellow Christians also allows us to grow in relationship with each other. We learn things about each other in a unique way that is centered around the gospel. When we discuss Scripture together, we learn what God is teaching us about Himself and what that means in the context of our lives. As we take time to discuss the teaching of God, we reveal our hearts to one another. This opening up of our hearts creates accountability and friendship that draws us closer to Christ and to each other. As I told my friend my flawed view of God, she reminded me of the truth of his character and encouraged me to practice living out of that truth. In that moment and in the build up of several other small moments we formed a close friendship. Then when we finished our study, we looked back and saw God’s work in both of us. We saw the power of the Spirit shaping both our hearts in new ways.

**Studying Scripture together helps us look more like Jesus in all areas of life.**

When I spend time frequently discussing and reading God's Word with others, I find that Scripture fills my thoughts and influences every other aspect of life. Our time in God's Word with other believers affects the way we view the world around us. When our lives and community are based in Scripture that overflows into the way we approach our relationships with others, our work, and our desires. We see the world through a different perspective than our own and open ourselves to growth and instruction from others as we seek to live for Christ. Therefore, I encourage you to step into God's Word with others. See how God works through His Word in your life as you grow with others in relationship with Him.