

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Second Quarter 2026: *Growing in a Relationship With God*

#### Lesson 5 “How to Study the Bible”

#### Read for this week’s study

John 15:1–8; Mark 1:35; 1 Chronicles 16:11; Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 50:4; Isaiah 55:1–13.

#### Memory Text

“ ‘So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it’ ” (Isaiah 55:11, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Time
- III. A Place
- IV. Deep Bible Study
- V. A Double Blessing
- VI. ‘Tis So Sweet!
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. In a relationship with someone you can’t see, hear, or touch, who you are talking to it critical to the relationship. Fortunately, in the Bible, God has taken the initiative to reveal who he is. That revelation is anecdotal and is often misunderstood, but with patience and diligent effort, we can truly get to know the God of the Bible. The goal of this week’s lesson is to explore the role of the Bible in developing a living relationship with God. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Graham Maxwell used to divide the Bible into two types of literature: statements or claims, on one hand, and stories on the other. How would an understanding of these distinctions affect the way one reads the Bible?
3. Read Psalm 55:11. According to this text, God’s word “shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it”. What, in your view, is the purpose, that “thing”, for which God sent

His Word? How would you define it in your own words? (Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson)

4. In the book *Steps to Christ* (page 90), Ellen G. White said: "There is but little benefit derived from a hasty reading of the Scriptures." What is she talking about? How would you go about reading the Bible more slowly and carefully, while not succumbing to spiritual boredom? Certainly, reading the Bible in the Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic would slow down the speed of our reading. Are there other techniques for close reading you can think of that don't require knowledge of the original languages? How do you reconcile the need to read slowly with the need to understand the Bible as a whole?
5. Read John 15:1-8. What does it mean to "abide" or "remain" in Him? How do you do that in practice? (Sunday's Lesson)
6. Jesus is our perfect example in all things. What does Mark 1:35 tell us about Jesus' devotional life? What can we apply from Jesus' practice to our own lives? What does 1 Chronicles 16:11 add to that? (Monday's Lesson)
7. What role can writing things down in a spiritual journal or diary play in our own deepening understanding of the Bible? "Whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths" (CWE 38-39). Read Psalm 119:105. What do the analogies of "lamp for my feet" and "light for my path" mean to you? (Tuesday's Lesson)
8. There are many ways one can go about studying the Bible. One can read the Bible word by word (looking up each word in a Bible dictionary or lexicon), verse by verse, book by book, a chapter at a time, one can trace themes through the Bible as a whole or a single book in particular (using a concordance). One can listen to the reading of the Bible while out for a walk. What are the pros and cons of each approach? Which is your favorite and why? Just as we keep friendships alive by planning new adventures, what can one do to "spice up" our walk with the Bible? (Wednesday's Lesson)
9. Read Isaiah 50:4. What does this verse tell us about relationship with God? Can this verse apply to everyone? Is there really such a thing as a "morning person" or an "evening person"? (Wednesday's Lesson)
10. Read Psalm 119:103-104. How would you apply the "sweeter than honey" metaphor to the Bible? What do you think the Psalmist means by gaining understanding through God's precepts? Read Isaiah 55:1-13. What do you learn about the devotional life from this chapter? (Thursday's Lesson)
11. Some concluding words from Ellen G. White on the subject of our relationship to the Bible: "How shall we search the Scriptures? Shall we drive our stakes of doctrine one after another, and then try to make all Scripture meet our established opinions? or shall we take our ideas and views to the Scriptures, and measure our theories on every side by the Scriptures of truth? Many who read and even teach the Bible, do

not comprehend the precious truth they are teaching or studying. . . . Many give the words of Scripture a meaning that suits their own opinions.”—Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 36. What implications does this statement have for your own study of the Bible? (Friday’s Lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: Talking about the Bible and trusting the Bible, what do you say to a person who says “Look, I just want to take the Bible as it reads! And when I read in the Bible that (as for example in Romans 11:33 in that doxology that Paul concludes with) ‘God’s ways are inscrutable. How can anyone know the mind of God?’ Now, if I just accept the Bible, why can’t I just accept that statement and say, ‘Why have conversations about God? How can we even know God? I’ll just believe the Bible.’”

Graham: Depending on the person who is saying this, one might reply differently, but let’s assume this is a very devout person. He really does accept the Scriptures. I would want to make the most of that. I would want to say, “Well, what about these other places in the Bible? Do you accept those too? Or do you just accept this one?”

Lou: What other places?

Graham: Like places in Romans chapter one that say God can be known. In fact, this individual is accepting one verse in Romans and skipping another one. If that doesn’t work, then I might turn to a place that says, “Give wine to the poor, that they may forget their misery,” and verses like that, until maybe he is shocked into realizing you can’t take “here a little and there a little.”

When you say you accept the Bible, you accept it all the way through. And probably that’s what he meant when he said, “I accept God’s word—if it says it, I believe it, and that’s all there is to it.” Then I would want to point to these other verses that say that God can be known. And if He can’t be known, why all this content of Scripture? Why did Christ come to make His Father known? So this use of one little verse can lead us down all kinds of pathways I’m sure he wouldn’t want to go.

Lou: So you are saying that the basic attitude of “I want to accept the Bible as it reads,” is a good attitude provided it takes the Bible as a whole, all sixty-six books, the total message of Scripture.

Graham: Right. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #3 with Lou Venden, “All God Asks Is Trust” recorded January 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/3MMCAG>

Well, these two letters are so similar, Ephesians and Colossians. What impressed you most with these two? Let me mention one thing for a start. I think the most important thing when reading the Bible is to have read the Book of Revelation before reading the other sixty-five. That's a privilege we have that the early Christians didn't have. The generation that knew the apostles was all gone by then. Revelation was written in the 90's, and only John was left. And John was given this larger view of the war up in heaven, and that our predicament is just part of a much larger one. And to see that larger view makes so much greater sense and significance out of everything else we read in the Bible. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Ephesians and Colossians, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/67MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/67MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. "Come now, and let us reason together" is the Creator's invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}

You must learn the simple art of taking God at His word; then you have solid ground beneath your feet. {ML 10.8}

The command to love one another had a new meaning in the light of His self-sacrifice. The whole work of grace is one continual service of love, of self-denying, self-sacrificing effort. During every hour of Christ's sojourn upon the earth, the love of God was flowing from Him in irrepressible streams. All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another. {DA 677.2}

There is no comforter like Christ, so tender and so true. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. His Spirit speaks to the heart. Circumstances may separate us from our friends; the broad, restless ocean may roll between us and them. Though their sincere friendship may still exist, they may be unable to demonstrate it by doing for us that which would be gratefully

received. But no circumstances, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always there, one given in Christ's place, to act in His stead. He is always at our right hand, to speak soothing, gentle words, to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer. The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul. This Spirit works in and through every one who receives Christ. Those who know the indwelling of this Spirit reveal its fruit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. {TMK 171.5}

In the divine arrangement God does nothing without the cooperation of man. He compels no man's will. That must be given to the Lord completely, else the Lord is not able to accomplish His divine work that He would do through the human agency. Jesus declared that in a certain place He could not do many mighty works among the people because of their unbelief. He wanted to do for them in that place just what He knew that they needed to have done, but He could not because unbelief barred the way. The potter cannot mold and fashion unto honor that which has never been placed in his hands. The Christian life is one of daily surrender, submission, and continual overcoming, gaining fresh victories every day. This is the growing up into Christ, fashioning the life into the divine Model. . . . {TMK 55.4}

Christ brings all true believers into complete oneness with Himself, even the oneness which exists between Him and His Father. The true children of God are bound up with one another and with their Saviour. They are one with Christ in God. {SD 293.5}

He who places himself unreservedly under the guidance of the Spirit of God, will find that his mind expands and develops. He obtains an education in the service of God which is not one-sided and deficient, developing a one-sided character, but one which results in symmetry and completeness. {1SM 338.2}

All who receive Christ as a personal Saviour are to demonstrate the truth of the gospel and its saving power upon the life. God makes no requirement without making provision for its fulfillment. Through the grace of Christ we may accomplish everything that God requires. All the riches of heaven are to be revealed through God's people. "Herein is My Father glorified," Christ says, "that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples." John 15:8. {COL 301.2}

All who come to Christ for a clearer knowledge of the truth will receive it. He will unfold to them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and these mysteries will be understood by the heart that longs to know the truth. A heavenly light will shine into the soul temple, and will be revealed to others as the bright shining of a lamp on a dark path. {COL 35.3}

The Bible contains a simple and complete system of theology and philosophy. It is the book that makes us wise unto salvation. It tells us of the love of God as shown in the plan of redemption, imparting the knowledge essential for all students—the knowledge of Christ. . . . {CT 422.1}

The Bible was not written for the scholar alone; on the contrary, it was designed for the common people. The great truths necessary for our salvation are made as clear as noonday,

and none will mistake and lose their way except those who follow their own judgment instead of the plainly revealed will of God. {LHU 130.6}

By beholding we are to become changed; and as we meditate upon the perfections of the divine Model, we shall desire to become wholly transformed, and renewed in the image of His purity. It is by faith in the Son of God that transformation takes place in the character, and the child of wrath becomes the child of God. He passes from death unto life; he becomes spiritual and discerns spiritual things. The wisdom of God enlightens his mind, and he beholds wondrous things out of His law. As a man is converted by the truth, the work of transformation of character goes on. He has an increased measure of understanding. In becoming a man of obedience to God, he has the mind of Christ, and the will of God becomes his will. {HP 103.2}

In all ages God has given human beings divine revelations, that thus He may fulfill His purpose of unfolding gradually to the mind the doctrines of grace. His manner of imparting the truth is illustrated by the words, "His going forth is prepared as the morning." He who places himself where God can enlighten him, advances, as it were, from the partial obscurity of dawn to the full radiance of noonday. {ML 109.4}

Peace comes with dependence on divine power. As fast as the soul resolves to act in accordance with the light given, the Holy Spirit gives more light and strength. {TM 518.1}

The truths of God's word are not mere sentiments, but the utterances of the Most High. He who makes these truths a part of his life becomes in every sense a new creature. He is not given new mental powers, but the darkness that through ignorance and sin has clouded the understanding is removed. {CT 452.2}

God delights to give. He is full of compassion, and He longs to grant the requests of those who come unto Him in faith. He gives to us that we may minister to others and thus become like Himself. {COL 141.1}

It is a law of the mind that it gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is trained to dwell. If occupied with commonplace matters only, it will become dwarfed and enfeebled. If never required to grapple with difficult problems, it will after a time almost lose the power of growth. As an educating power the Bible is without a rival. In the word of God the mind finds subject for the deepest thought, the loftiest aspiration. The Bible is the most instructive history that men possess. It came fresh from the fountain of eternal truth, and a divine hand has preserved its purity through all the ages. {PP 596.2}