

STUDY GUIDE + STREAMING VIDEO



THE  
**ABIDE**

BIBLE COURSE

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*Five Practices to Help You  
Engage with God Through Scripture*

**PHIL COLLINS & RANDY FRAZEE**

SIX SESSIONS

THE  
ABIDE  
BIBLE COURSE

*Five Practices to Help You Engage  
with God through Scripture*

STUDY GUIDE | SIX SESSIONS

PHIL COLLINS & RANDY FRAZEE  
with J.R. Briggs



HarperChristian  
Resources

*The Abide Bible Course*

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# INTRODUCTION

People experience the Bible in a wide variety of ways. Some find it to be a wonderful, joy-infused, life-giving experience which guides their lives and draws them closer to God. But for many, reading the Bible can seem intimidating—a big book with lots of hard to pronounce names written thousands of years ago.

Maybe you find it confusing, overwhelming—even daunting—and you wonder where to begin. Or maybe you're convinced that reading the Bible is a good thing, an experience that can give life, which God uses to teach people of all ages.

Maybe you've experienced those moments of ecstasy and joy, where you've heard from the Lord and felt drawn to dig in to God's Word even deeper. And yet, you've found those moments to be few and far between. After being consistent for a few weeks, you stop reading. Eventually you try to muster up the strength to re-engage with it once again.

And maybe, as a result, you struggle with feelings of frustration or disappointment or guilt that you aren't as consistent as you want to be. You want to be more consistent, but you just don't know how.

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Rest assured, you're not alone. And rest even more assured this study is not some gimmicky approach or half-hearted attempt to lead you down a path of more stops and starts. This study is intended to be different because the approach to the Bible is entirely different.

The primary goal of reading the Bible isn't to know the Bible; instead, it's to *know the God of the Bible*. You have the opportunity to know God first-hand, just as the writers of Scripture knew God first-hand. This study is intended to be different because the approach to the Bible is entirely different. The goal is not for you to merely read the Bible, but actually to engage with Scripture.

It's common to read the Bible only from the neck up. Reading from the neck up certainly has its benefits, but this study encourages you to also read from the neck down. The best way for you to *experience* God through Scripture is to *engage* with it. And to engage requires a willingness to participate in it. It would be easy to watch the videos in this study, jot down a few notes, discuss a few ideas with others, and go home each week. But this is an invitation for you to participate further and engage deeper.

In this study you'll be encouraged to participate in a variety of practices. Some will feel natural; others might feel different or new. Not all scripture engagement practices will be a perfect fit for everyone. There is no one size fits all. But the encouragement is this: press in anyway. Participate—and then see which practices resonate with you and your Scripture engagement “personality.” Pay attention to which ones work and which ones are more difficult—and then lean in farther with where you sense the Lord is meeting you in your time in his Word.

# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

## ***Structure of the Study***

This *Abide Bible Course* is designed to help you experience Scripture with others in a group setting. It may be in a small group or Sunday school class context—or a gathering of friends, co-workers, or neighbors in a living room—physical or digital. If your group or gathering is larger in size, consider breaking off into smaller groupings of five to seven people so that everyone can participate and allow a great opportunity to get the most out of the times together.

## ***Materials Needed***

Everyone in your group will need a copy of this study guide, which includes the opening questions to discuss, notes for the video teachings, directions for activities and discussion questions, and personal studies in between sessions. It would be helpful to use a Bible as well. The translation you desire to use is completely up to you. (If you are looking to purchase a Bible, consider *The Abide Bible*. It was created to help you with these Scripture engagement exercises. See the

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end of this study guide for more information about *The Abide Bible*.)

### **Facilitation**

While everyone will participate in practices together, it is important that your group appoints someone as a facilitator. A facilitator will be responsible for starting the video and keeping track of time during discussions and activities. Facilitators may also read questions aloud and monitor discussions, prompting everyone in the group to respond, and assuring and reminding everyone that each person has the opportunity to participate. If you have been chosen for this role, there are additional instructions and resources available to you in the back of this guide to help you lead your group members through the study.

### **Personal Studies**

During the week, you can maximize the impact of the course with the personal studies provided for each session. You can treat each personal study section like a devotional and use them in whatever way works best for your schedule. You could do one section each day for three days of the week or complete them all in one sitting. These personal studies are not intended to be burdensome or time-consuming, but to provide a richer experience and continuity in between your group sessions.



## SESSION ONE

# ABIDE IN CHRIST

*I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

JOHN 15:5-8

## WELCOME

Like many large cities in the United States, Philadelphia is home to many wonderful museums. As with most museums, treasured objects and historical artifacts are held behind glass and protected with railings and ropes with posted placards saying, “Do Not Touch.”

But one museum is different from the others. The Please Touch Museum is a widely acclaimed children’s museum where youngsters learn and explore by utilizing all of their senses. Children are encouraged to take things apart, build new creations, pull things off the shelf, try on costumes and uniforms, and gleefully make a mess. Parents are encouraged to participate as well, learning new things and engaging in new activities right alongside their kids.

While traditional museums have merit, there is a holistic kind of learning that happens in the Please Touch Museum. This study is intended to encourage you to possess the mindset as if you were in the Please Touch Museum. You are invited to participate, engage, be active, use your senses, encounter the passages, take risks, and try new things . . . even if some of the practices feel new and a bit different. In other words, *please touch*.

While most study guides use the phrase “Bible reading” or “Bible study,” throughout the Abide Course you will find the phrase that is used is “Scripture engagement.” It’s one thing to *read* words on a page . . . but quite another to *engage* with the text itself. When you engage with Scripture, you aren’t merely reading the words on the page but participating in a relational process where you grasp

## Abide in Christ

*these are the words of God from God himself to his people—to you.*

Just as you would get to know someone relationally by listening, interacting, and sharing experiences together, the same is true of Scripture engagement. As Jesus told his disciples, “Abide in me” (John 15:4 ESV). Some scholars translate that word *abide* as meaning *to remain*, *to dwell*, or *to make your home in*. This is the essence of Scripture engagement.

## SHARE

If you or any of your group members are just getting to know one another, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Then, to get things started, discuss the following questions:

- What interested you to participate in this study?
- What do you hope to gain from this time during the next several weeks?

## WATCH

Watch the video segment for session one. (Play the DVD or see the instructions on the inside front cover on how to access the sessions through streaming). As you watch, use the following outline to record any thoughts or concepts that stand out to you.



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Jesus is our source of life and our source of functioning in our Christian lives. As we *abide* in Christ, we are able to bear fruit. We want to be people who are bearing fruit, knowing God, and loving God.

When we come to the Bible, it's a relational process. We come to Scripture to meet and to know God. It keeps us coming back every day because we want to spend time with God.

Scripture engagement and Bible study are two sides of the same coin. We *study* Scripture so that we understand what a passage means—we need to understand what God is saying to us. But then we come back and also *engage* Scripture so that what we read connects to both our hearts and our minds.

The process of engaging Scripture is one we can learn on our own, but the techniques and practices are also powerful to learn from somebody else. We see this taking place in Acts 8, where the Ethiopian eunuch needed the disciple Philip to come alongside of him to help him understand the Scripture.

## Abide in Christ

There are six basic ingredients that go into the process of Scripture engagement:

**Ingredient 1:** Prepare your heart to be open to the Holy Spirit.

**Ingredient 2:** Read the Bible.

**Ingredient 3:** Meditate on the Bible.

**Ingredient 4:** Talk to God about his Word.

**Ingredient 5:** Talk about Scriptures with others.

**Ingredient 6:** Commit to obey what the Word says.

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Engaging Scripture is the primary way that we meet Jesus. As he said to the disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24, all the Scriptures point back to him. It's through engaging with the Bible that our eyes will be opened, we will know Jesus, and our hearts will burn for him.

### DISCUSS

As you consider what you just watched, use the following questions to discuss these ideas, their basis in Scripture, and their application in your life with your group members.

1. What has your relationship with the Bible been like in the past? Using two or three adjectives, how would you describe that relationship?
2. What would be two or three adjectives that you would *want* to use to describe your relationship with the Bible? Why?

## Abide in Christ

3. Have you ever engaged with Scripture in a way that was deeply transformative and personal as described in this week's teaching? If so, what was it like? What did it feel like? How did it form and shape you?
4. In your own words, how would you articulate the difference between Bible reading, Bible study, and Scripture engagement?
5. Read Psalm 123:1-2. How does this passage describe the way you should approach Scripture? How might that level of focus impact how you engage with the Bible in the weeks ahead? And, in doing so, how might it impact your everyday life?
6. In the teaching, you learned about the six basic "ingredients" for Scripture engagement. Have you engaged in these ingredients before? Are there any elements that have been absent from your approach to Scripture? Explain.

## The Abide Bible Course

### **RESPOND**

Take a moment to briefly review the notes you took from the teaching. What was one important point that stood out to you?

What is the most important element you learned or thought about for the first time?

What is one thing you can do outside of this group to lean in further with this approach?

## Abide in Christ

### PRAY

As you end the session, ask for four people who would be willing to pray briefly and specifically about the following elements:

- *Person 1:* To thank God for bringing together each person in this group and to ask that he would reveal himself to each person.
- *Person 2:* To thank God for the gift of Scripture—and that each member of the group would see it as the precious gift it is.
- *Person 3:* To ask God to surprise you—individually and as a group—during the next several weeks in new, fresh, and exciting ways.
- *Person 4:* To ask God that together you would approach Scripture with expectant hearts, attentive eyes and ears, and a posture of anticipation—and then to have the faith to obey what his Word says.



## SESSION ONE

# *Personal Practices*

Now that you've been introduced to the five Scripture engagement practices that you will be covering during this study, it's time to act on what you've learned. Starting this week, and continuing in the weeks that follow, you will be given five daily exercises to help you participate in the specific Scripture engagement practice that was discussed during your group time. When everyone gathers together again each week, there will be time for you to share briefly what you learned or experienced during this personal time of interaction with God's Word.

In the video teaching for this week, you learned there are six key “ingredients” that go into the process of Scripture engagement. There are different ways to mix and match these ingredients, but the basic core should always be the same:

1. Prepare your heart to be open to the Holy Spirit.
2. Read the Bible and pay attention to what God wants to say to you.
3. Reflect or meditate on what you are reading.



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4. Pray—simply talk to God—about the passage.
5. Discuss with others how you are experiencing God in Scripture.
6. Obey what God is instructing you to do through his Word.

To help you get a better understanding of the rhythms of Scripture engagement, the framework of these six ingredients will be used as the structure for this week.

### DAY ONE

#### ***Prepare your heart to be open to the Holy Spirit.***

Take a moment to be still. Open your hands and lay them on your lap in a posture of receiving from God. Close your eyes and take a few slow breaths. After a moment, whisper:

*Lord, I am here to listen to  
you today. Speak to me.*

Take a few more slow, full breaths. Then whisper again:

*Lord, I am here to listen to  
you today. Speak to me.*

#### ***Read John 15:1-8 and pay attention to what God wants to say to you as you read.***

Read it slowly and, if your environment is appropriate, consider reading it aloud.

## Abide in Christ

### **Reflect/meditate on what you are reading.**

Consider some of these questions as you reflect:

- *What word, thought, or concept sticks out to me?*
- *Is there anything that I need to be reminded of or that I am noticing for the first time in this reading?*
- *What does this passage reveal about the nature or character of Jesus?*

Write down your responses in the space below.

### **Talk to God about the passage.**

Take a few moments to share with God what you are experiencing as you engage with this passage. It may be thanksgiving or praise. It may be a prayer of confession or asking for help. You may want to use these prompts as conversation starters with God:

- *Lord, as I read this, I am feeling . . .*
- *Father, I am being reminded of . . .*



## The Abide Bible Course

- *Holy Spirit, I sense you want me to step into the truth of this passage by . . .*
- *Jesus, thank you for revealing this to me . . .*

### ***Discuss with others how you are experiencing God in Scripture.***

While this is a personal study, is there someone in proximity to you with whom you could share how you experienced this passage—a spouse, child, roommate, friend, or coworker? If so, share one way you experienced this passage in a new or fresh way.

### ***Step out into obedience based on what you've read.***

Again, the goal isn't to merely read and learn new information. Instead, the goal is to take what you have gleaned and put it into practice. Answer this question:

*If I were to lean into the truth of what I received from this passage in one specific and practical way within the next twenty-four hours, what would that look like?*

Write down your response in the space below.

## DAY TWO

***Prepare your heart to be open to the Holy Spirit.***

Open your Bible (or Bible app) to Psalm 86. Place one hand on the place where this passage is found on the page (or on the screen). Put your other hand over your heart. In that posture, take a moment to ask the Lord to move what is on the page to inside of your heart and soul.

***Read Psalm 86:11-17 and pay attention to what God wants to say to you as you read.***

Read the passage. Then read it a second time, just slightly slower than the first time.

***Reflect/meditate on what you are reading.***

Consider some of these questions as you reflect:

- *What do I notice?*
- *How does this passage make me feel?*
- *Which verse or line do I believe the Lord wants me to receive today?*
- *Why that particular line or verse?*

Write down your responses in the space below.



## The Abide Bible Course

### ***Talk to God about the passage.***

Share what's on your heart and mind based on what you read. Don't overthink this or "edit" your prayers. God can handle your honesty . . . even if it is raw and messy.

### ***Discuss with others how you are experiencing God in Scripture.***

In the space below, record what you have gleaned.

When you gather as a group again later this week, consider sharing what you wrote down.

### ***Step out into obedience based on what you've read.***

Answer this question:

*After engaging with this passage, if I  
were to join with Jesus today at home,  
at work, or at play, it would be by . . .*

Write down your response in the space below.

## DAY THREE

***Prepare your heart to be open to the Holy Spirit.***

Find a quiet place in your home or office that is free of distraction, noise, and interruption. Close the door. Turn off your screens and put your phone on airplane mode. Then say aloud:

*Lord, I am fully yours in this moment.*

***Read 1 Samuel 3:1-10 and pay attention to what God wants to say to you as you read.***

If you are in a quiet, private, and conducive place, read the passage aloud.

***Reflect/meditate on what you are reading.***

Consider some of these questions as you reflect:

- *What did my ears hear my mouth saying?*
- *Did anything strike me or help me to take notice of a verse or word or phrase?*
- *What must that experience have been like for Samuel to hear God's voice?*
- *Who do I relate to the most in this story?*

Write down your responses in the space below.

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### ***Talk to God about the passage.***

Just as young Samuel was instructed to say by the priest Eli, say aloud, “*Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.*” Take a few moments of silence to listen to God. As you hear from him, echo back to him what you sense you received. Consider recording it in the space below.

### ***Discuss with others how you are experiencing God in Scripture.***

Consider calling someone in your group and sharing what you gleaned or experienced from your engagement with this passage. Share with them what stuck out to you, or even questions that still remain in your mind. Ask them what they experienced in this passage as well. Write down your responses in the space below.

## Abide in Christ

### **Step out into obedience based on what you've read.**

Answer these questions:

- *What is the invitation from the Lord in this passage in order to join him further this week?*
- *What does that joining together with him look like moving forward today?*

Write down your responses in the space below.

## DAY FOUR

### **Prepare your heart to be open to the Holy Spirit.**

Find a place to sit and place your palms on your lap facing up in a posture of openness and receptivity. Say a simple prayer:

*Lord, I am ready to receive what  
you have for me today.*

### **Read Hebrews 4:14-16 and pay attention to what God wants to say to you as you read.**

Read the passage in a whisper. Then read it a second time in a low voice. Then read it a third time in your regular volume.





## The Abide Bible Course

### ***Reflect/meditate on what you are reading.***

Consider some of these questions as you reflect:

- *What does this passage say about the character or nature of Jesus?*
- *How does it make you feel that this is who Jesus is?*

Write down your responses in the space below.

### ***Talk to God about the passage.***

Take a moment to praise God for who he is and how he has worked through his Son, Jesus.

### ***Discuss with others how you are experiencing God in Scripture.***

Who could you share with what you learned during this time? When could you share it with them this week? Write down some thoughts in the space below.

## Abide in Christ

### ***Step out into obedience based on what you've read.***

Based on who God is and what you know about his nature, what could it mean for you to approach his throne of grace with confidence (see Hebrews 4:16)? Record your thoughts.

## DAY FIVE

### ***Prepare your heart to be open to the Holy Spirit.***

Hold your Bible (or Bible app on your phone) in your hands. Breathe slowly and in your spirit ask the Lord to speak to you through his words today.

### ***Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and pay attention to what God wants to say to you as you read.***

If you are able, read the passage aloud.

### ***Reflect/meditate on what you are reading.***

Consider some of these questions as you reflect:

- *Why do you believe God wants his people to be so intentional with his words?*
- *Is there any line or word that you believe is the most important portion to pay attention to in this passage?*



## The Abide Bible Course

Write down your responses in the space below.

### ***Talk to God about the passage.***

Share with God what you are thinking and/or feeling as you read these words. You could also write a brief prayer in the space below.

### ***Discuss with others how you are experiencing God in Scripture.***

Who could you share your experience in this passage with today?

## Abide in Christ

***Step out into obedience based on what you've read.***

What is one way you could join with Jesus today based on what you experienced in this passage? Write your thoughts on this in the space below.



# FIVE INNOVATIVE WAYS TO READ THE BIBLE

Do you feel guilty that you don't read your Bible every day? When you do sit down to study the Bible, do you find yourself easily distracted and feeling like you're missing something? Are you looking to connect with God's Word in a fresh way that makes you look forward to your daily time in Scripture? If so, *The Abide Bible Course* is for you!

In this study, a professor and a pastor—Dr. Phil Collins and Randy Frazee—will walk you through five innovative practices that will take you beyond just reading and help you deeply engage with Scripture in a way that fits your unique personality and learning style. In each session, they will explain the practice and walk you through each one—with practical examples—so you can try it out for the upcoming week. These practices include:

- **Praying Scripture:** praying with the words of the Bible instead of your own
- **Engage Through Art:** looking at works of art to help you see a passage in a new way
- **Journal:** writing out your thoughts and feelings on a passage to give you greater clarity
- **Picture It:** putting yourself into the stories of the Bible to experience them firsthand
- **Contemplate:** deeply reflecting and praying through a passage in God's Word

Jesus instructed his followers to “abide” in him so they could lead fruitful lives (see John 15:4). *The Abide Bible Course* will equip you to establish a daily, lifelong habit of abiding in God's Word so you can hear his voice.

## THIS STUDY GUIDE INCLUDES:

- Individual access to six streaming video sessions
- Video notes and a comprehensive structure for group discussion time
- Daily exercises to help you engage in each practice during the week
- A guide to best practices for leading a group

## Sessions and video run times:

- |                               |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Abide in Christ (19:00)    | 4. Journal (19:30)     |
| 2. Praying Scripture (20:00)  | 5. Picture It (20:00)  |
| 3. Engage Through Art (18:00) | 6. Contemplate (17:00) |

## Streaming Video Access Code Included\* WATCH ON ANY DEVICE

DVD also available, sold separately.



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