

SOUP

JOURNALING METHOD





SCRIPTURE

Don't choose a passage at random

Choose a book & read it by paragraphs, or chapters



OBSERVATION

What does the passage say?

Is there anything I don't understand?

What does it say about the character or person of God/Jesus/the Holy Spirit?

What does it say about people/me?

Observe and take notes



USE

How do I need to apply these verses?

Does it highlight a character trait I need to develop?

Is there an example I should follow?

Is there an attitude I need to adjust?

Does it reveal a sin I should confess?

Is there truth I need to believe?

Do I find something I can praise God for?

Should I heed a warning?

Should I avoid a sin?

Is there a promise I should trust?

Is there encouragement I can receive?



PRAYER

Adoration

Confession

Thanksgiving

Supplication

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MAKING THE SOUP



Have you ever noticed how certain soups perfectly complement specific foods or situations? Consider the unbeatable combination of a grilled cheese sandwich and a steaming bowl of tomato soup—it's pure culinary bliss. Or when you're battling a cold, nothing seems to hit the spot quite like a hearty serving of chicken noodle soup. Just as a nourishing soup can provide what your physical body needs, SOUP can do the same for your soul.

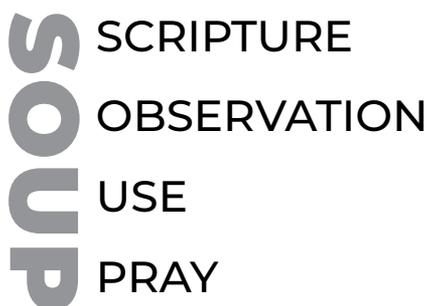
What exactly is SOUP? It's an enriching approach to studying the Bible that employs a four-step journaling process: Scripture, Observation, Use, and Prayer. By following this method, you can uncover profound biblical truths and apply them to your life. SOUP empowers you to cultivate effective Bible exploration habits and foster a deeper relationship with God. That, in turn, will enable you to walk in obedience to God's guidance. Through regular reading and obedience to the Bible, you will come to know its author—God. The Bible, God's reliable and timeless Word, reveals His great love for the world and for you personally.

Embracing the SOUP method not only allows you to contemplate the Bible's message, but also unveils the truth that it is God's personal Word for you. No longer will the Bible be a collection of mere events and stories; it will become a lamp to your feet and a light to your path (Psalm 119:105). As you unlock the relevance and power of God's Word in guiding your life, you'll realize it is not just an ancient book, but a living, active, and applicable roadmap for you (Hebrews 4:12). It becomes your source of truth, wisdom, and direction. As you apply His Word and live in obedience to His commands, you'll discover purpose, fulfillment, and abundant joy.

This profound discovery naturally elicits a response to God—one of praise and prayer. Praising God for who He is and all He has done, and engaging in an ongoing conversation with Him, becomes the natural overflow from encountering His presence. This establishes a spiritual rhythm leading you to actively seek God within the pages of Scripture. You observe truth and hear God’s voice through His Word.

When you embrace this rhythm of hearing and responding to God, you become a living testament to the goodness and work of God for those around you. Your life becomes a shining example, bearing witness to God’s love, grace, and salvation to an ever-expanding circle of people in your life (Acts 1:8). Those who are close to you but far from God will hear of His goodness, love, and transformative power through your sharing what God has done in your life. As you faithfully proclaim God’s work in your life, people around you will respond to God in faith as you once did. Now, you have the incredible privilege of walking alongside new children of God as they embark on their own journey of developing a deep and meaningful relationship with Him. Introducing them to the SOUP method and sharing insights becomes a powerful tool to aid them on their journey with God. As they develop in their relationship with God—and the rhythm of disciple making continues.

Let’s take a closer look at the four SOUP ingredients—Scripture, Observation, Use, and Pray.



SCRIPTURE

The first step is picking a passage from the Bible to read. Choose a book of the Bible and read it through systematically, either by paragraphs or chapter. Reading systematically helps you understand passages in the context of the whole book. If you're a new believer, start with the Gospel of John. Regardless of the book you choose, it's best to select manageable portions of Scripture on which to journal. Often, one chapter in a book of the Bible contains different thoughts or concepts. So, choose verses that complete a thought or concept and journal about them before moving to the next section.

For example, the book of Romans has 16 chapters. Romans 1 includes an introduction (v. 1-7), Paul's desire to visit the church in Rome (v. 8-15), the theme of the letter (v. 16-17), and a discussion about God's wrath on the unrighteous (v. 18-32). Each section of Romans 1 can be journaled separately and the wrath of God section can be broken down into even smaller portions. For a few days, you could journal about v. 1-7 and then move on to v. 8-15 for the next journaling session. You can continue this approach for every chapter in the book.

Once you've selected your passage, it's time to read the text and understand what it says. This is when you read to answer specific questions. Ask questions such as what follows to help you grasp the author's context and purpose:

- Who was the author?
- Who was his intended audience?
- When was it written?
- What was the occasion or historical setting?
- Where was it written?
- What did it mean to the original readers?

The goal of this section is to gather facts rather than interpret the text. Let the text speak for itself.

OBSERVATION

This next journaling step is about moving from what the passage says to understanding what it means. Here are a few questions to help you get started:

- Why did the author write this?
- Are there truths that apply to me as well as the original readers?
- What can I learn about God/Jesus/the Holy Spirit?
- What can I learn about people and about myself?
- Are there repeated words or phrases I should pay attention to?
- Is there anything I don't understand?

(At times, the Bible can reference different customs, measures, and words that are unfamiliar to you. Don't worry if you come across unfamiliar words or phrases. There are many resources available, such as Bible dictionaries and commentaries, that can help you gain a better understanding. Online tools like blueletterbible.org and logos.com can also be useful for studying a passage.)

As you observe scriptural truths, let them sink into your thoughts. Meditate on what you've read throughout the day. To make the Bible a part of your thinking, it is recommended you memorize a verse from the passage. As the psalmist says, "I have stored up your Word in my heart, that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11). Writing down significant verses or summarizing the passage can help you reflect on the Word of God by clarifying your thoughts, as well as help you internalize Scripture. The goal is to get Scripture in the forefront of your thinking.

Don't rush through this section of the journaling process. It's common to eagerly jump to application without giving enough time for the passage to soak in and impact your thoughts and heart. Remember, the Bible is God's love letter, clearly detailing the depth of His love as demonstrated through the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's His declaration of how much He loves you. To truly understand and experience the depth of His love, to slow down and spend time with His Word, taking it all in.

USE

Applying the truth you've discovered in the passage to your own life allows God's Word to permeate your heart, leading to life transformation. God's Word will challenge you to begin examining your own life. When you realize there's a difference between what you've learned about God and your own behavior, you'll face a question: "Will I trust God, take a step of faith, and obey what He has said?" This is where your faith comes alive as His Word begins to shape your heart into increased conformity with His will and ways.

To apply Scripture personally, consider the questions from the acrostic **HEART SHAPE**:

- Does it... **Highlight** a character trait I need to develop?
- Is there an... **Example** I should follow?
- Is there an... **Attitude** I need to adjust?
- Does it... **Reveal** a sin I should confess?
- Is there a... **Truth** I need to believe?

- Do I find... **Something** I can praise God for?
- Should I... **Heed** a warning?
- Should I... **Avoid** a sin?
- Is there a... **Promise** I should trust?
- Is there... **Encouragement** I can receive?

You can ask other questions to help you discover how to personally apply God's Word to your life, but remember—once you know God's truth, you must then choose to obey it. You cannot continue as before if you desire more intimacy and growth in your relationship with Jesus. James 1:22 reminds us, "But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

PRAYER

Prayer is an ongoing conversation with God where you speak and listen to Him. A great way to enhance your conversation with God is to pray His Word back to Him. Allow His Word to inform and guide what you pray about. Use the application steps you identified from His Word in the previous section as part of your prayer time. Praise God for His Word, for speaking to you through it, and for anything you discovered that helps you know Him better. Pray for His help to be obedient to what He has shown you. Seek His guidance to overcome sin, adjust your attitude, believe His truth, and develop your character.

When your prayers flow from your time in the Bible, you'll experience fresh and energizing conversations with God. An energizing prayer life keeps you on your knees before Him. So, keep seeking Him, keep praying, and keep growing in your relationship with Him.

A helpful tool to guide your prayer time is the acrostic ACTS.

Adoration

Praising God for who He is

Confession

Agreeing with God about revealed sin and confessing it to Him

Thanksgiving

Thanking God for all He has done

Supplication

Talking with God about the things on your heart

During the supplication portion of your prayer time, ask God to use you to reveal the truth of the gospel to at least three people you know. As you begin to see God answer those prayers, you can share SOUP with them to help their new spiritual journey.

For more information on creating and leading a SOUP Group, see Appendix A and Appendix B on pages ____.

USE



Highlight a character trait.

Example to follow?

Attitude to adjust?

Revealed sin?

Truth to believe?

Something praiseworthy?

Heed a warning?

Avoid a sin?

Promise to trust?

Encouragement to receive?

PRAY

ADORATION _____

CONFESSION _____

THANKSGIVING _____

SUPPLICATION _____

NOTES _____

Pray for 3 Three people far from God but close to me who I am asking God to let me share Christ with.

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②

③

SAMPLE READING + MEMORIZATION PLAN

The following sample reading plan guides a SOUP participant through the life of Jesus in the book of John, through the formation of the early church in the book of Acts, and to Paul's letters to some of those churches. Feel free to use this plan to guide you or find another plan to suite your needs.

Week 1 John 3:16

- Day 1: John 1
- Day 2: John 2
- Day 3: John 3
- Day 4: John 4
- Day 5: John 5
- Day 6: John 6

Week 2 John 10:27-28

- Day 1: John 7
- Day 2: John 8
- Day 3: John 9
- Day 4: John 10
- Day 5: John 11
- Day 6: John 12

Week 3 John 14:6

- Day 1: John 13
- Day 2: John 14
- Day 3: John 15
- Day 4: John 16
- Day 5: John 17
- Day 6: John 18

Week 4 Acts 1:8

- Day 1: John 19
- Day 2: John 20
- Day 3: John 21
- Day 4: Acts 1
- Day 5: Acts 2
- Day 6: Acts 3

Week 5 Acts 4:19-20

- Day 1: Acts 4
- Day 2: Acts 5
- Day 3: Acts 6
- Day 4: Acts 7
- Day 5: Acts 8
- Day 6: Acts 9

Week 6 Acts 13:38

- Day 1: Acts 10
- Day 2: Acts 11
- Day 3: Acts 12
- Day 4: Acts 13
- Day 5: Acts 14
- Day 6: Acts 15

Week 7 Acts 16:31

- Day 1: Acts 16
- Day 2: Acts 17
- Day 3: Acts 18
- Day 4: 1 Thessalonians 1
- Day 5: 1 Thessalonians 2
- Day 6: 1 Thessalonians 3

Week 8 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4

- Day 1: 1 Thessalonians 4
- Day 2: 1 Thessalonians 5
- Day 3: 2 Thessalonians 1
- Day 4: 2 Thessalonians 2
- Day 5: 2 Thessalonians 3
- Day 6: Acts 19

Week 9 1 Corinthians 2:9

- Day 1: Acts 20
- Day 2: Acts 21
- Day 3: 1 Corinthians 1
- Day 4: 1 Corinthians 2
- Day 5: 1 Corinthians 3
- Day 6: 1 Corinthians 4

Week 10 1 Corinthians 9:24

- Day 1: 1 Corinthians 5
- Day 2: 1 Corinthians 6
- Day 3: 1 Corinthians 7
- Day 4: 1 Corinthians 8
- Day 5: 1 Corinthians 9
- Day 6: 1 Corinthians 10

Week 11 1 Corinthians 13:1

- Day 1: 1 Corinthians 11
- Day 2: 1 Corinthians 12
- Day 3: 1 Corinthians 13
- Day 4: 1 Corinthians 14
- Day 5: 1 Corinthians 15
- Day 6: 1 Corinthians 16

Week 12 Galatians 2:20

- Day 1: Galatians 1
- Day 2: Galatians 2
- Day 3: Galatians 3
- Day 4: Galatians 4
- Day 5: Galatians 5
- Day 6: Galatians 6

Week 13 2 Corinthians 5:15

- Day 1: 2 Corinthians 1
- Day 2: 2 Corinthians 2
- Day 3: 2 Corinthians 3
- Day 4: 2 Corinthians 4
- Day 5: 2 Corinthians 5
- Day 6: 2 Corinthians 6

Week 14 2 Corinthians 10:5

- Day 1: 2 Corinthians 7
- Day 2: 2 Corinthians 8
- Day 3: 2 Corinthians 9
- Day 4: 2 Corinthians 10
- Day 5: 2 Corinthians 11
- Day 6: 2 Corinthians 12

Week 15 Romans 3:23

- Day 1: 2 Corinthians 13
- Day 2: Romans 1
- Day 3: Romans 2
- Day 4: Romans 3
- Day 5: Romans 4
- Day 6: Romans 5

Week 16 Romans 6:23

- Day 1: Romans 6
- Day 2: Romans 7
- Day 3: Romans 8
- Day 4: Romans 9
- Day 5: Romans 10
- Day 6: Romans 11

Week 17 Romans 12:1-2

- Day 1: Romans 12
- Day 2: Romans 13
- Day 3: Romans 14
- Day 4: Romans 15
- Day 5: Romans 16
- Day 6: Acts 22

Week 18 Acts 26:17b-18

- Day 1: Acts 23
- Day 2: Acts 24
- Day 3: Acts 25
- Day 4: Acts 26
- Day 5: Acts 27
- Day 6: Acts 28

Week 19 Ephesians 2:8-9

- Day 1: Ephesians 1
- Day 2: Ephesians 2
- Day 3: Ephesians 3
- Day 4: Ephesians 4
- Day 5: Ephesians 5
- Day 6: Ephesians 6

Week 20 Philippians 2:3-4

- Day 1: Philippians 1
- Day 2: Philippians 2
- Day 3: Philippians 3
- Day 4: Philippians 4
- Day 5: Colossians 1
- Day 6: Colossians 2

Week 21 Colossians 3:13

- Day 1: Colossians 3
- Day 2: Colossians 4
- Day 3: 1 Timothy 1
- Day 4: 1 Timothy 2
- Day 5: 1 Timothy 3
- Day 6: 1 Timothy 4

Week 22 2 Timothy 2:2

- Day 1: 1 Timothy 5
- Day 2: 1 Timothy 6
- Day 3: 2 Timothy 1
- Day 4: 2 Timothy 2
- Day 5: 2 Timothy 3
- Day 6: 2 Timothy 4

SHARING YOUR JOURNEY THROUGH A SOUP GROUP

SOUP Groups are a great way followers of Jesus can share the insights they are learning from God's Word while connecting with and strengthening one another. They also provide a training ground to develop leaders who can guide others through a SOUP Group.

Here are a few recommended SOUP Group essentials:

- Groups should consist of 3-4 people of the same gender.
- Groups should meet once per week, with meetings lasting no longer than 1.5 hours.
- Though one person may serve as the group organizer, a rotating schedule should be developed allowing each group member to drive the main discussion.

Sample meeting format:

Prayer (2-5 minutes): Invite Jesus to guide the meeting, ask Him to help each group member boldly share their insights, struggles, etc.

Share & celebrate (20-25 minutes): Share insights from what you journaled over the past week, focusing specifically on the "Use" step. How is God speaking to your group members and how are they being obedient to what He is revealing?

Scripture memory (3-5 minutes): Ask each member to recite by memory (if possible) that week's assigned memory verse.

Accountability (15-20 minutes): Ask each group member to share honest confessions about his or her victories, struggles, or opportunities to invest in others over the past week. Use the following questions to help guide your discussion:

How have you fed your flesh this week?

- Have you had any flirtatious or lustful attitudes or thoughts?
- Have you exposed yourself to any explicit materials that would not glorify God?
- Have you allowed any person or circumstance to rob you of your joy?

How have you fed your soul this week?

- Have you spent time daily in Scripture and in prayer?
- Have you cared for your body with exercise, proper eating, and sleeping habits?
- Have you been above reproach in your finances?

How have you fed others this week?

- Have you given quality time and effort to your family and friends?
- Have you been truthful in all your dealings with people?
- Have you given your best effort at your job, school, etc.?
- Have you lied to us on any of your answers today?

Plan ahead (2-5 minutes): Assign the coming week's Scripture passage, memory verse, and group leader.

Pray (8-15 minutes): Share requests and pray for each other, commit to pray for each other through the week, and pray for others with whom you want to share the gospel.

SOUP GROUP CHARACTERISTICS

The growth that a disciple of Jesus can experience through a SOUP Group brings praise to God. Healthy SOUP Groups will exemplify the following characteristics:

Prayer: Group members pray together, pray for each other, and pray for the lost in their individual areas of influence.

Reading and reflection on God's Word: Group members are reading through the Bible together every week. Members agree on a reading plan that has 10-20 chapters each week. Members will use the SOUP journal strategy to help process the Bible. At weekly meetings, members share insights from journals.

Application: How did we live out what we learned from the Word last week? How can we live this out in the coming week? Part of the application process is to memorize one verse per week from the weekly reading.

Intentional accountability: Authentically share with the group your successes and failures in having an intimate relationship with Christ, living an obedient life, and sharing the gospel.

Shared responsibility: Create a rotation schedule so each group member can lead the group. Shared responsibility intentionally prepares each group member to lead their own SOUP Group in the future. Intentional leader development by the group leader should follow the pattern of:

I do, you watch, we discuss.

I do, you help, we discuss.

You do, I help, we discuss.

You do, I watch and celebrate, we discuss.

You do, someone else watches, you discuss.

Evangelism: Pray specifically for three lost people you know and ask Jesus to use you in sharing the gospel with them. Report weekly progress, opportunities to share, etc. with your group.

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