

## *Guidelines for Those Who Are New to Our Bible Study*

We all feel the need to talk, to share, and to ask questions, as well as to simply listen and be spoon fed. This class lets you both share and listen—or just listen, if you are not in the mood to talk. Because we would like to have the benefit of your insights into the Bible, we encourage you to study on your own before coming to class. Our Bible study has four distinct parts:

**(1) Home Study.** Every woman receives a handout each week with a few questions centered on the Bible passage we will be studying. To get the most out of this Bible study, we suggest that you read the passage and jot down the answers which seem right to you. A short, well-thought-out answer is best. **DO NOT FEEL THAT YOUR ANSWERS MUST AGREE WITH EVERYONE ELSE'S.** Enjoy your Bible study and don't make it into an unreasonably difficult task. As you study, ask God to help you learn what He wants you to learn from the Scripture. Please avoid relying on commentaries. We are interested in what *you* are learning—not the opinions of others. Feel free to use modern translations and a Bible dictionary.

**(2) Discussion Groups.** In this, the first part of the actual class time, women share what they have learned in small discussion groups. The group is led by a discussion leader whose task is to keep the conversation and exchange of ideas moving. She, too, is a learner and may not have the answers to all your questions! She is there to **LEAD** the group, not teach it. She is there to assist the group members in finding answers for themselves. The group meeting lasts about 50-55 minutes.

**(3) Lecture Period.** In the lecture period the discussion groups come together to hear a 25-30 minute wrap-up of the passage of Scripture we have studied. The teaching leader or one of the other leaders will give the lecture. It is intended to tie up loose ends, help clear up difficult points requiring background information, and provide practical applications for all of us.

**(4) Still Have Questions?** If you still have unanswered questions at the end of the lecture period, we give you about five minutes to ask them. The lecturer will attempt to answer them at this time. Please save long, complicated subjects for private discussion with the lecturer after the rest of the ladies are dismissed.

**REGISTRATION:** When you register for the Bible study you will be asked to fill out a registration card or to register online. You will then be assigned to one of the discussion groups. ***Please note that women are not permitted to choose their discussion leader or the discussion group that they will attend!*** If you are a newcomer, however, we will try to place you with a friend, as long as the group she is in is not full. You may come as a visitor the first time, but please do not register for the Bible study unless you are prepared to give it at least a six-week trial. If you bring a friend as a guest for one week, please be sure to stop at the registration desk for a nametag for your guest.

**NEVER STUDIED THE BIBLE BEFORE?** For those who have never studied the Bible before, two other handouts are available for extra help: "How to Read the Bible" and "If You Have Never Studied the Bible Before." Please pick up copies of them before you leave today.

**PRAYER ROOM:** We have an optional prayer room available for your use from 9:10 to 9:25 each week. A leader will be there to pray with you. (You will not be asked to pray aloud.) Please take advantage of this for your urgent needs, since prayer time in the groups is very brief.

**GROUND RULES FOR OUR STUDY:** This is a non-denominational group. We ask you to observe the following rules:

- (1) Do not discuss your church or denomination, or ask others what church they attend, if any. Women, including leaders, come from several different churches. Accept people as individuals.
- (2) Do not discuss politics. Lately, a number of topics have become politicized. These include mask wearing and vaccinations. We respect each person's right to choose. We won't discuss these topics, and we won't criticize others for their choices.
- (3) Do not distribute any literature to other class members in the groups.
- (4) Do not use the Bible study as an opportunity to sell products or solicit business.
- (5) Do NOT contribute answers to the discussion group unless you have done your questions. You are always welcome, however, as a listener.
- (6) Please leave cell phones and other electronic devices muted during class time and during the lecture period.
- (7) We are a perfume-free study, out of courtesy to many who have allergies. Please leave perfume and strong-smelling sprays or creams at home—although deodorant is always welcome!

**REGULAR ATTENDANCE** is important if you are to gain maximum benefit from your studies. We will email PDF copies of the lessons each week to those who have registered and shared an email address. If you are absent and *usually receive already printed copies of your lessons*, your leader will mail questions to you the first two times. After that, please provide your leader with a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you wish to continue to get your questions. *Let your leader know if you will need a lesson sent through regular mail.* If you are absent from class more than three times in succession without communicating with your leader, we will assume that you will not be returning, and your place in the group may be reassigned to a newcomer.

**HANDOUTS** to accompany the lesson are sometimes provided during the lecture period. We will usually email handouts *after* the lecture. The Bible study secretary will have a few printed handouts for those who don't receive them by email.

**OFFERING:** We do take an offering to help with such expenses as child care, printing costs for questions, any fees for use of facilities, Zoom licenses, and other needs. The offering is purely optional; we don't charge any fees. You may also give online at [WomantoWomanBibleStudy.com](http://WomantoWomanBibleStudy.com), or you may mail a check (made out to Woman-to-Woman Bible Study) to Barb White, 1726 Faulds Rd S, Clearwater, FL 33756.

**YOUR FAITHFULNESS AND PERSEVERANCE MATTER!** If you are new to Bible study, please don't become discouraged if others seem to understand the Bible better than you do. We are all learners together, and all had to start somewhere! Women in the Bible study are at many different levels of learning. Many are newcomers to Bible study each year. If you don't understand some questions, leave them blank. **BUT TRY!** Don't feel intimidated. Remember "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13, NKJV). "For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him" (Philippians 2:13, NLT). Your group leaders will do their best to get in touch with you briefly once or twice a month. Please share your feelings, criticisms, problems, or prayer requests with them. They care about you and pray for you regularly.