**Live in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Better Together**

Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. ([Ephesians 4:3](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Eph4.3))

*The Christian life is never lived alone. When we become a Christian, we’re adopted into God’s family. We’re welcomed into a community. We’re meant to live and grow in faith together. But that takes humility and intentionality. We grow together as we pray and study Scripture together. We bear responsibility for one another by our encouragement and our honoring of those in authority. God is growing us together into one body, one family.*

**Session Overview**

**Study Together**

**Biblical Encounter:** The Bereans Eagerly Search the Scriptures ([Acts 17:10–15](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac17.10-15))

**Outcome:** Grow in faith with others as you engage with the Bible together.

*In this session, we’ll discover the value of growing in our faith with others. The question is, how do we do that? One of the best ways is to engage with the Bible together. This may involve reading and examining what the Bible says. In our Bible passage today, we’ll see Paul, his friends, and believers in Berea engaged with the Bible together. The Bible plays a vital role in our spiritual growth. When we study it in community, we can learn from each other and grow with one another.*

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| ***You Will Need*** *• Wrapped candy, ten pieces* *• Smartphone with timer****Getting Ready*** *• Hide the candy around the room.* *• Optional: Adjust the number of pieces to fit the size of your group*. • ***First time leading* Live *for Youth? Look here for the*** [**Facilitator Guide**](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf)**.** |

*To access session content and videos from a computer, visit:* [***BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads***](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

**Welcome**

*Take this time to welcome everyone, introduce new students, learn names, and thank everyone for coming. Your friendliness here can create a comfort level that encourages student participation later.*

**Opening Prayer**

*Prayer thoughts: Pray that each student would understand that growth is an essential part of their faith. Pray that students will see the benefits of studying God’s Word with others to help them grow.*

**Introduction**

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| **QUESTION**What’s been one of the most fun things you’ve ever done with a group of friends? |

Doing things together with friends can certainly be a lot of fun. Following Jesus is no different. We can enjoy opportunities to learn together too. Let’s face it. Sometimes we need help and encouragement to grow. Whether it’s growing in our character, skill, or faith, there are advantages to doing that with the help of others. Discussing our spiritual life and God’s truths with others isn’t only fun, but is also a great way to grow. This is one reason we take time to discuss the Bible together. But first, let’s do a fun activity.

**Group Activity**

**A Sweet Search**

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| ***You Will Need*** *• Wrapped candy, ten pieces* *• Smartphone with timer****Getting Ready*** *• Hide the candy around the room.* *• Optional: Adjust the number of pieces to fit the size of your group.* |

There are pieces of candy hidden throughout the room. When I say go, you have three minutes to find as much of the candy as possible. What you find it, it’s yours to keep or share. You can find as many pieces as you want before time runs out.

• *Start the timer and play the game.*

Well done! Did you get as much candy as you wanted? In life, we tend to search for things that we like more than for things we don’t. For example, you just searched for the candy, but if I had hidden pieces of broccoli, would you have searched as hard? How about if I’d hidden one-hundred-dollar bills? How would that have impacted your search?

We’re often more motivated by things we value. It’s the same when we’re trying to grow in our relationship with God. As we engage in our discussion today, we’ll be challenged to search for God’s truth. How far we go with the search largely depends on how much we value it. To begin, let’s watch today’s video.

**Watch**

**Consider What the Bible Says**

*Ensure each student has access to a Bible, preferably the same version.*

Imagine driving forty-five minutes to a new place. After you’ve been there for a while, an angry crowd wants you to go back to where you came from. This is sort of what happened right before the story we’ll read about Paul and Silas today. They had traveled together to Thessalonica to tell people about Jesus. Some people believed their message, but Paul and Silas weren’t welcomed by others. So their friend Jason and other believers helped them get to another city called Berea. They could have given up, but instead, they continued to teach about Jesus and discuss the Scriptures wherever they went.

**Paul and Silas Traveled to Berea**

Read [Acts 17:10–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac17.10-11).

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| **QUESTION**What do you think made Paul and Silas keep going after they had been rejected in Thessalonica? |

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| **QUESTION**What does it show us about Paul and Silas that they went straight to the synagogue (a Jewish gathering place for Scripture study) when they arrived? |

Paul and Silas knew the urgency and importance of teaching others about Jesus through the Word of God. The powerful message of Jesus would spread as it was shared by someone. This is true for us today too. Now we have social media, the Internet, and so many other ways to make the gospel easily accessible. This is amazing, but it comes with a downside. We sometimes overlook the importance of reading the Bible together and learning from others. We take God and His Word for granted, and the urgency to share it diminishes.

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| **QUESTION**How does Luke, the writer of Acts, describe the Berean Jews? |

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| **QUESTION**How did the Bereans respond to the teaching of Paul and Silas? |

The Bereans had open minds to listen and learn. We can learn two things from them. First, they listened to what was being taught. Second, they didn’t just accept what Paul and Silas said. The Bereans searched the Scriptures to make sure that what Paul and Silas taught was true. The Bereans understood that they were responsible to search the Scriptures for themselves.

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| **QUESTION**What do you think it means to search the Scriptures? |

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| **QUESTION**Who has shown you the importance of knowing Jesus through reading the Bible? |

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| **QUESTION**How can discussing the Bible with others help us grow in our faith? |

The Bereans were a community of people willing to learn more about Jesus. They were willing to dig deeper into the Scriptures. They were eager to learn and research in order to know God’s truth. This is a great example of what we should strive for as believers, too. Part of our responsibility is digging deeper in the Scriptures for ourself. Like the Bereans, we can grow in our faith as we study the Bible with other believers.

**Did You Know?**

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| During Paul’s day, Berea was one of the oldest cities of Macedonia and served alongside its sister city, Mieza, as a center of education for the nobles and princes such as Alexander the Great. This helps us understand why the members of the synagogue of Berea were so eager to study what Paul taught them in light of the Old Testament. It appears that study was an ingrained part of the city’s culture. |

**The Jews from Thessalonica Stirred the Crowds**

Read [Acts 17:13–15](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac17.13-15).

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| **QUESTION**How do you think Paul, Silas, and the Bereans felt when they discovered that the Thessalonian Jews had come to stir things up? |

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| **QUESTION**Why do you think that the Thessalonian Jews traveled to Berea to cause trouble? |

Sadly, not everyone is supportive of us knowing God’s Word and standing up for who Jesus is. There will always be people who attempt to distract us or limit our understanding.

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| **QUESTION**What distractions do you encounter when it comes to reading the Bible? |

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| **QUESTION**How can we continue to study the Bible when distractions or resistance come our way? |

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| **QUESTION**What would make it easier for you to study the Bible more often with others? |

Paul and Silas had built relationships with the Bereans. Everything seemed to be going well. They were spreading the good news of Jesus effectively, the Bereans were learning and searching the Scriptures, and the gospel was spreading. Then those from Thessalonica who were against the message of Jesus decided to go to Berea to stir things up and prevent what God was doing.

Immediately, the family of God started to help Paul and Silas. This interruption easily could have been a distraction, but the resistance experienced from the Thessalonians didn’t stop Paul and Silas from continuing to share the truth. We can learn a lot from how the Bereans responded to that truth. After they heard the message of Paul and Silas, they didn’t break away to come up with their own conclusions. Instead, they tested it together by looking to the Scriptures.

**Reflect**

**Grow in faith with others as you engage with the Bible together.**

The beauty of this story is how the Bereans dug deeper into God’s Word together. When we study together, it encourages growth and accountability. It lets us share what we know and learn from what others know. And ultimately, it allows us to grow in our faith and trust in Jesus together as we find out more about Him and His truth.

God’s Word can cause you to look at life in a completely different way. Studying the Bible is vital to feeling alive spiritually. Just being taught about God isn’t enough. What gives you endurance in tough times like Paul and Silas faced is studying and knowing His Word.

**Listen to God**

Let’s take time to consider how our life demonstrates a real trust in the Bible. These questions are meant to serve as a conversation between you and God. Sharing your responses with the group is completely voluntary.

• *Pause for a few moments of silent reflection after reading the questions. Then ask students if they want to share. Sharing your personal response may also be helpful to the students.*

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| **QUESTION**Would you say you have a hunger to study God’s Word? Why or why not? |

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| **QUESTION**How might God describe your study of His Word in order to live by His truth? |

**Activate**

This week, challenge a friend to do all five devotions in the Bible Engagement Project app. Consider doing at least one devotion together. You can do this in person, on the phone, or by video chat.

**Conclusion**

We need God’s Word to be alive in us. It’s not enough to appear to have read or studied the Bible. Knowing the Word is necessary because, as we learned from the Bereans, we can grow in faith as we study it.

One purpose of our discussions is to learn to examine the stories of the Bible and learn all we can through them together. As we read and discuss with others, we can learn things from others that we may have never discovered if we only read the Bible on our own. Community, when centered around the Bible, is a great way to grow as a follower of Jesus.

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| **Salvation Opportunity***Include this if you think there may be some in the group who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.*Studying God’s Word comes alive when we have a relationship with Jesus. When studying to discover the truth about Jesus, the Bereans grew in their belief in Him. Perhaps our discussion has made you want to know more about Jesus too. Today, I want to offer you an invitation to begin a relationship with Him.**Is anyone here that we can pray for who doesn’t have a relationship with Jesus or wants to renew their relationship with Him?***Take a moment to acknowledge those who respond, and thank them for their desire to make things right between themselves and God. Pray with them as you close in prayer or after the group time is over. Following group time, talk more about where they are in their walk with God and how you might be able to help.* |

**Prayer**

God, thank You that You have given us Your Word and the Holy Spirit to help us in life. Help us to have a greater hunger for the Bible. Help us to examine and listen to You as we read its words. Speak to us as we dig deeper into the Bible. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

**Dismissal**

Remember the challenge to study God’s Word together with someone and go through all five devotions this week. I can’t wait to hear how it went. See you next time.