# How to use *Redemption Bible Studies* in Small Groups

The Bible study series called *Redemption Bible Studies* was written initially for prisoners. It consists of 26 topics, one for each letter of the alphabet. They can be used in any order. They can be printed or done on-line. They are intended to be flexible. Together they include popular scriptures on important foundations of Christian living. They cater for low literacy levels and so could be used as a tool for developing literacy skills.

There are 10 scriptures to each study and three questions for each scripture:

1. Look up the scripture and copy it
2. Answer a simple observation question
3. Answer a slightly more challenging interpretation question.

At the end of each study are two questions about your personal application of that study. To complete the whole series involves answering 26 x 32 = 832 questions. Quite a big achievement, leaving you with a good grounding in what the Bible has to say on important areas of your Christian life. It will also be a good reference source for you.

Apart from being useful for personal Bible study these studies can also be used for small group discussion. Members of the group agree on which study they will each complete in their own time, before they meet together to discuss their findings.

Meetings should always begin with a prayer inviting the Holy Spirit to ‘lead you into the truth’[[1]](#footnote-1) and that through scripture He will teach you, correct you and guide you in right living.[[2]](#footnote-2) Then share how your application to the previous study went. Do you have any challenges or victories to report?

Then discuss the study itself. If the members are new to this type of exercise it would probably be best to discuss verse by verse in turn. So, one member reads the first scripture and their answers to questions B. and C. Then if anyone else has something to add they can share also.

The next person does the same with question two and so on around the group. Once all 10 scriptures have been discussed this way each member shares their application. To conclude the meeting pray for one another and especially for applications.

If each question took five minutes or a little more, a meeting could last one and a half hours. If discussion on a point gets lively the leader may let it run figuring it is better to have active discussion on important matters rather than completing the study. Alternatively, if the discussion gets too far off track the leader should steer it back to the topic of the meeting.

In making this call it is important to keep in mind that the study material is only a tool. The important thing is to build people up and equip them for effective lives. So saying, some structure and continuity helps maintain the cohesion of a group along with a sense of accomplishment. Remember that discussing God’s word in a community setting is like sowing seed. It can germinate and grow outside the group setting in each person’s life.

A second way of conducting a Bible study discussion group would probably be more suitable for those more experienced with bible study. Each person could be invited to share a five-minute talk on the topic being studied, taking points for their talk from the scriptures and from their answers to the questions.

This is a little more challenging but great training in sharing a short message from scripture on a topic. They can make their own emphasis, and quote their selected scriptures to make their points. They not only get fed and informed from scripture but also have a tool for sharing with and discipling others.

In summary *Redemption Bible Studies* can be used for:  
1. Personal Bible study   
2. Small group discussion.   
3. Building Christian Community.

I was introduced to Bible study in a Navigator’s student ministry. Everyone did a series of Bible study books and we met and discussed them in small groups. It was like a curriculum is to an educational attainment. It built a common identity and a shared set of beliefs and practices. We all grow best in Christian community. Unity is built as we share a common set of truths together.

Other groups do the same. YWAM has their DTS (Discipleship Training Schools). Alpha has their video series. Elijah House has four week long schools. Each group has a body of teaching from scripture related to their particular call. The goal is the same, to make disciples, which is the Great Commission given by Jesus to His twelve disciples before He was taken up to heaven.[[3]](#footnote-3)

These *Redemption Bible Studies* are designed to be flexible and fit into people’s day to day lives rather than be an intensive school. Application is the primary goal rather than knowledge alone. Scripture is given for the purpose of changing lives.[[4]](#footnote-4)

When the complete set is finished, they can be bound together into a booklet with a title page and a certificate of completion. You can print off a certificate from the website and adapt it for your own use or your organization. This can be issued by the leader and presented formally. Celebrate the accomplishment.

Bible study is great. I remember the day I did my first personal Bible study after becoming a Christian. I had taken a job on a hill station inland from Fairlie in South Canterbury. I woke up the first morning at 5am to the beautiful setting of sheep grazing around my farm worker hut, green grass and a stream with willow trees. I started to write notes on Mark 12:29-31.  
 “Jesus answered, *‘The most important commandment is this: Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbour as yourself’. There is no commandment greater than these.”*

That first day on the tractor, breaking in virgin soil, I was thinking about what I had learned. I did the same the next day. I needed no alarm clock; I just woke up and did Bible study. I loved it. I kept this up every morning for several years. This laid the foundation of my new life as a young Christian.

I did contract fencing for a few years, then dairy farming. That posed a problem because 5am is milking time. I applied for a job on a development dairy farm on the banks of Rakai River. I wanted to continue to do Bible study so, at the interview, I asked the boss if he could make some time in the day for that. I was quite sure that request would end my chance of getting that job. Not so, I got it and my boss gave me the afternoons off from lunch time till afternoon milking. I asked him why he gave me the job. He had no Christian leanings at all. He said, “You were the only applicant who knew where you were going. Everyone else was just drifting.” He kept to his promise. God is good.

I learned how to study a passage of scripture for myself by listening to messages preached by the late John Stott. I borrowed these from a lending library. In those days they came on a cassette tape. I took notes on each message, observed the structure of each message then used that structure to do my own study.

What are the benefits of doing Bible study?  
 The longest chapter in the Bible is Psalm 119. The writer goes on and on about why study of scripture is so good. It is like he gets on a roll and can’t stop as he thinks of more and more reasons for Bible study:

V 1 It brings blessing  
 9 It keeps a young man pure  
 14 It gives joy  
 25 It preserves your life  
 28 It strengthens you  
 32 It sets your heart free  
 41 It invites God’s unfailing love  
 43 It gives hope  
 52 It gives comfort, and so on.

Let me encourage you to study God’s Word, the Bible. It will bring many benefits to your life. It will see you through the tough times and put you on the path to victory. It has done so for me and it will do so for you as well.

Let me put out a challenge. Find some others to join you. Form a group to meet weekly or fortnightly. Make a plan. Set a goal. Print off a study from the website and go for it. You will be blessed. It will change your life. If you are a Christian who used to do bible study but have lost the habit, then set the challenge to use the second way of meeting. Each person comes ready with a 5-minute talk based on their study. You will be surprised and blessed to find that each member has a slightly different emphasis from the same set of scriptures. This will enrich you all. When and if you manage to complete the whole set of 26 *Redemption Bible Studies*, issue a certificate. Hold a ceremony. Mark the occasion. Give a presentation. Set a new goal for those who completed the studies to start and facilitate a new group of those who are new to bible study.

As you study the bible you will not only be blessed, but you will have the deep satisfaction of knowing that you are caught up in the Great Commission of Jesus to Make Disciples of all Nations.

God bless you as you study the Bible.

Paul Duncan  
[www.redemption.org.nz](http://www.redemption.org.nz)

1. John 16:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2 Tim 3:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Matt 28:19,20 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. James 1:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)