

The "HEAR" Bible Study Method

The acronym **H.E.A.R.** stands for **Highlight, Explain, Apply, & Respond.** The combination of these four steps will help you to better understand and apply what you are reading as you seek to hear from God through his word.

How it works:

Let's say you are reading Romans chapter twelve. As you make your way through the chapter, be sure to underline or highlight any sections that you find especially meaningful. After finishing your reading, go back and select one of your highlighted sections and utilize the four H.E.A.R. steps.

Highlight: In a journal or notebook, write down the following:

- The passage of Scripture that stuck out to you - **Romans 12:14-21**
- Give the passage a descriptive title - "**Authentic Christian Love**"

Explain: Do your best to write down a few sentences that *summarize* the meaning of the passage. To help with this step, ask yourself the following questions: Why was this written? Who was the original audience? How does it fit with the verses before and after it? What was the author intending to communicate? Be sure to pray over the passage and ask the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and understanding.

Simple Example: *The gospel brings transformation to every relationship. As recipients of God's grace, Christians are called to practice humility and selflessness, treating everyone with love and dignity, including those who hate us and persecute us.*

Apply: Now it's time to apply the truth of God's word to the realities of your life. Ask yourself the following questions: How can this help me? How is this relevant today? What would it look like to apply these verses to my life? Do these verses challenge me to make any changes in my life? Most importantly, how do these verses help me to find rest and refuge in Jesus? As you wrestle with these questions, write down a brief summary of personal application.

Simple Example: *I've been allowing the opinions of other people to affect me too deeply. When people are unkind to me, I find myself wanting to get even with them and shame them. But because Jesus took my shame upon himself instead of getting even with me, my identity is secure in Christ and I can show love and grace to all people, even when they are unkind to me.*

Respond: Now that you've summarized a general application, it's time to get more precise. Leaning on the power of the Holy Spirit, what are some specific ways are you going to respond to this passage of Scripture? Do your best to zero in on one or two responses that are realistic and doable. And always remember, the cross of Christ has already made us right before God. Therefore, we respond to God's word out of *gratitude* for his love and forgiveness, not to *earn* his love and forgiveness. Jesus has already earned everything on our behalf!

Simple Example: *My next-door neighbor has been treating me horribly for months now. But from now on, I'm going to be intentional about responding to him with kindness and grace.*