



# BIBLE READING GROUPS

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READ • DISCOVER • SHARE





# INTRODUCTION

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All of us want to read the Bible more deeply and more consistently. We long to know God, grow in our faith, and become people whose lives are rooted in Scripture—people who flourish like the tree in Psalm 1, drawing strength and nourishment from God’s Word in every season. Many of us have tasted moments when Scripture came alive, when our hearts burned within us as God opened His Word. We want more of that, but focus becomes difficult when we feel rushed, the passage feels unfamiliar, and so many other things compete for our attention.

That’s where the 5 Questions come in. This simple tool helps you slow down, pay attention, and engage Scripture with clarity and purpose. Instead of turning Bible reading into a task to complete or information to master, the 5 Questions reorient your heart toward communion with the living God. They prompt you to respond, to reflect, and to interact personally with what God is saying. The goal isn’t to produce answers—but to lead to relationship with the living God.

One of the strengths of the 5 Questions is how they help us read the Bible together. They give us a shared language for talking about Scripture, which makes reflection and discussion more natural. When we use the same simple questions, it becomes easier to share what we’re learning, encourage one another, and hold one another accountable. A shared approach strengthens small groups, friendships, mentoring relationships, and even family discipleship. And as we grow more comfortable with the questions ourselves, we are better equipped to help others engage the Bible with confidence and joy.

The 5 Questions work because they are both simple and deep. They teach you to read with the instincts Scripture itself gives us. They help you form a habit of returning to the Bible regularly, noticing what matters, and responding in prayer, worship, and obedience. They work whether you have five minutes or an unhurried hour. And they work whether you’re reading alone, journaling through a passage, discussing it with a friend, or talking it through in a small group. Over time, they train your heart to look for and see what God is revealing and to respond with faith.

Our hope is that this simple tool helps you form strong, life-giving rhythms in the Word—habits that draw you nearer to Christ, deepen your joy, strengthen your relationships, and equip you for every good work. And our prayer is that God’s Word would become to you exactly what God declares it to be: not an empty word, but your very life (Deut. 32:47).

Reading with you,

The Calvary Discipleship Team

# Using The Five Questions

The Five Questions give you a simple way to slow down, make your own discoveries, and respond to God as you read His Word. They are not “steps” to complete or boxes to check—they are starting points that help you engage Scripture with clarity, curiosity, and a relational posture toward God.

## What are the Five Questions?

**ASK:** What is this passage about and what questions do I have?

**PRAISE:** Based on this passage, how should I praise God and why?

**GOSPEL:** Based on this passage, why should I be thankful for the good news of Jesus?

**LIVE:** Based on this passage, how should I live (think, feel, speak, act, repent, change)?

**PRAY:** Based on this passage, how should we pray?

## How to Use Them in Practice

As you read a passage, do the following:

1. Choose one question (or more) and ask it of the passage—either the whole chapter or a smaller section.
2. Write your thoughts in a journal or notebook. A single sentence is enough.
3. Or discuss your reflections with a friend, spouse, or group.
4. Go as deep or as simple as you want. These questions work in five minutes or fifty.
5. Respond to God—through praise, repentance, thanksgiving, or prayer—based on what you discovered.

Over time, these questions will give shape and stability to your reading. They train you to notice what God reveals, to see Christ throughout Scripture, and to respond with faith and obedience.

## Flexibility Is Built In

Think of these as starting points, not rigid categories. Each question can lead to many others—especially in a group setting—and you may even find it helpful to frame them in different ways, such as asking, “What stands out to you in this passage?” For example, the ASK question helps you slow down and see what the passage is actually saying—its details, themes, and main idea—and it often leads to further questions about meaning, like “What did Jesus mean by bread of life?” As you follow these questions, let them open the door to still more—allowing your curiosity to draw you deeper into the text wherever it naturally leads. And if your curiosity takes you so far that you start to feel lost or overwhelmed, simply return to the Five Questions—they will help you regain clarity and keep moving forward.

## A Simple Reassurance

- You do not need to use all five questions every day.
- They are meant to serve you, not burden you—framework, not pressure.
- Some days you may use one question; other days you may use several.
- The goal is not to finish the questions—the goal is to meet with God.

## What's Next? Growing in the Five Questions

The pages that follow give a simple overview of the skills behind each question. You can begin using the Five Questions right away without reading further, but this booklet is designed to help you grow in confidence and skill as you read. Each section will walk you through the instincts, habits, and patterns of thought that make the questions more fruitful over time. Think of the next chapters as coaching—tools that will deepen your understanding of Scripture and help you engage the Bible with increasing clarity, joy, and responsiveness to God.

## Question 1



### **ASK: What is this passage about and what questions do I have?**

Asking good questions can move you from noticing the text to understanding it. This skill trains clarity, synthesis, and genuine engagement—always with the aim of aligning yourself with the author’s intent. The Bible invites careful thought. Paul’s charge—“*Think over what I say*” (2 Tim. 2:7)—reminds us that understanding grows as we actively inquire. Asking questions slows you down and draws you into the author’s meaning.

Like all the questions, this question is flexible. The goal is to help you observe and understand the text. Here are several ways you can approach the question: **What is this passage about?**

#### **Observe: What do you see?**

- What captures your attention? What stands out? Pay close attention to the details of the passage—key words, repetitions, contrasts, commands, and anything unexpected. Observation grounds you in what is actually there and provides the raw material for every other step of interpretation.

#### **Summarize: In your own words: What is the passage saying?**

- Restate the passage in your own words. Don’t focus on meaning or application, just tell us what the passage says. Stay as close to its chronological order, logic, and flow as possible. You’ll be shocked how much this exercise helps you become familiar with the text.
- Example: (Mark 4:35-41) *Jesus and the disciples cross the sea during a storm. While the disciples panic, Jesus sleeps. They wake him, and he rebukes the wind and sea. The storm stops, and Jesus questions their fear and lack of faith. The disciples are left in awe, asking who he is.*

#### **Summarize: In your own Words: What does the passage mean?**

- Now move beyond description. Capture the passage’s main idea, the significance of its statements, and how its pieces fit together. Here you begin to articulate the author’s message, not just the content. You can even include some application.
- Example: (Mark 4:35-41) *The passage shows that Jesus possesses divine authority over creation and exposes the disciples’ struggle to trust him, even though he is present with them in danger.*

#### **Authorial Intent: In your own words: What was the author trying to accomplish when he wrote this?**

- Ask why the inspired writer included this section. What understanding, conviction, or response was he aiming to produce? This question anchors your interpretation in the author’s purpose and keeps your conclusions rooted in the text itself.
- Example: (Mark 4:35-41) *Mark wants to deepen the reader’s understanding of Jesus’ identity as Lord over creation and to confront his followers with the question of faith—Will they worship and trust in Jesus, even when life is scary?*

### **Asking Good Questions**

Curiosity is essential for meaningful Bible reading. So you can also come with your own questions. Ask whatever comes to mind—simple questions, hard questions, even questions you cannot answer yet. Good questions open doorways to discovery, highlight what matters in the passage, and remind you that Scripture is deeper than your current understanding. Remember, you can benefit from a text even while holding honest, unresolved questions.

## Question 2



### **PRAISE:** Based on this passage, how should I praise God and why?

We begin with praise because Scripture is about God. Before we consider ourselves, our needs, or our obedience, the first movement of the Christian life is always upward—seeing who God is and responding to Him in worship. Praise trains our hearts to approach the Bible relationally, not merely analytically. It helps us lift our eyes off ourselves and onto the character, works, and promises of the God who speaks to us in His Word.

#### **What to Look For:**

When reading a passage, ask: What in this text leads me to worship? What is praiseworthy about God here? Four categories are especially helpful:

##### **1. God's Attributes**

Look for anything that reveals God's character. This includes His holiness, justice, mercy, patience, faithfulness, sovereignty, love, wisdom, compassion, power, or goodness.

- Example: In Psalm 23, "*The LORD is my shepherd*" reveals His care and guidance.

##### **2. God's Works**

Praise God for what He does in the passage—His saving acts, His judgments, His protection, His provision, His answers to prayer, His guidance, and His discipline. If God did it, and the Bible records it, we should praise Him for it!

- Example: In Exodus 14, God parts the sea—praise Him for deliverance, His power, His creative salvation, His sovereign control over creation.

##### **3. God's Promises**

When a text reveals something God promises, praise Him for His faithfulness and reliability.

- Example: In Isaiah 41:10, God promises to strengthen and uphold—praise Him for His unwavering support and presence.

##### **4. God's Glory and Majesty**

Some passages simply display God's greatness or beauty.

- Example: Revelation 4 displays His majesty on the throne.

Now that you've identified something praiseworthy in the passage, don't stop there—actually praise Him. Take a moment to linger over what you've seen, letting it settle in your heart. Then respond: pray your praise to God, write it in your journal, or even sing it if you're able. Praise is not complete until it is expressed, and these simple acts of worship turn your reading from reflection into communion with the living God.

## Question 3



### GOSPEL: Based on this passage, why should I be thankful for the good news of Jesus?

The whole Bible is about Jesus (John 5:39; Luke 24:27). As we learn to see Him throughout all of Scripture, our hearts will be stirred with gospel-shaped gratitude that is essential to the Christian life. We celebrate the gospel each day because everything in the Christian life—our reading of Scripture, our growth, our protection from legalism, our worship, and our endurance—flows from Christ's saving work. The gospel is not only the beginning of the Christian life but its ongoing power. It anchors our identity, guards us from moralism, strengthens our joy, and sustains us as we face the weighty realities of God's holiness and our sin. As you read, here are four ways to see and celebrate Christ in all of Scripture.

#### Four Ways of Seeing Christ in Scripture

##### 1. Explicit Gospel References

Some passages state directly what Jesus accomplished—his death, resurrection, forgiveness of sins, or saving mission. These are the clearest moments to celebrate the gospel.

##### 2. Anticipation, Foreshadowing, or Reflection of the Gospel

Scripture points to Christ through prophetic promises of a coming Redeemer and through shadowy, anticipatory patterns that prepare us for his saving work. The Old Testament often creates expectation through images, sacrifices, and deliverances that hint at what Christ will one day accomplish; the New Testament then explains and reflects on the fulfillment of these promises in Jesus.

###### Example:

- Look for specific prophecies or events that prefigure Christ's sacrifice—such as the Passover lamb whose blood shields God's people.
- *"Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it."* (Exodus 12:7 ESV)

##### 3. Law and Standards of Righteousness

God's commands reveal his holiness and expose our sin. Whenever Scripture reveals any part of God's law or standards, it is a reminder that we fall short and an opportunity to celebrate the grace of Christ as we strive for obedience.

###### Example:

- When a passage calls for wholehearted love, justice, purity, or faithfulness, acknowledge where you fail and let that need direct you to Jesus.
- *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart..."* (Deut 6:5).

##### 4. Images, Symbols, and Institutions

Scripture often uses images, symbolic themes, and even God-ordained institutions to anticipate and illuminate the person and work of Christ. Concrete pictures such as blood, water, bread, shepherd, and lamb, along with larger institutions like the temple, sacrifices, priesthood, kingship, prophecy, and covenant—all help us understand and appreciate the depth and beauty of the gospel as they find their ultimate fulfillment in Christ.

###### Examples:

- Passover *blood* protects Israel, and Christ's blood saves us as our true Passover Lamb (Exod. 12; 1 Cor. 5:7).
- *Water* from the rock gives life in the wilderness, and Christ is the true Rock who gives living water (Exod. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4).
- Manna feeds Israel in the desert, and Jesus is the true *bread* from heaven (Exod. 16; John 6:32–35).
- The Passover *lamb* dies in place of the firstborn, and Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away sin (Exod. 12; John 1:29).
- God dwells with His people in the *temple*, and Jesus is the true temple where God dwells among us (1 Kgs. 8; John 2:19–21).

## Question 4



### **LIVE:** Based on this passage, how should I think/feel, speak/act, repent/change?

God calls us not only to hear His Word but to live it—“be doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22). Scripture is intended to shape every part of who we are, so a helpful guiding question is: *Now that I’ve encountered God’s Word, how should my life be different?* Application isn’t limited to outward behavior; it reaches the whole person—how we think and feel, how we speak and act, and where we need to repent and change. These categories help us respond to Scripture in a way that engages both our inner life and our lived obedience.

When you’re ready to apply the passage, walk through the categories—how you think and feel, how you speak and act, and where you need to repent and change. If you feel stuck or the passage seems overly familiar, choose just one category and apply it with fresh specificity; the think category is especially helpful for breaking patterns of shallow or repeated application. Write out your application in concrete terms. Aim for clarity, not generalities—something you can name, pray over, and pursue.

#### **Example:**

*“do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 4:6–7 ESV)

#### **THINK**

- This passage challenges the unspoken beliefs that feed my anxiety—assumptions that I must control outcomes, that God may not provide, or that my circumstances dictate my security. This passage calls me to adopt a renewed, biblical mindset: God is near, attentive, and sovereign over all concerns me.

#### **FEEL**

- Emotionally, this text invites me to bring my unrest to God—not be ruled by it. The command to prayer and thanksgiving will cultivate peace, gratitude, and a settled confidence that God cares for me. My feelings are not unimportant, but negative emotions remind me to pour my heart out to God.

#### **SPEAK**

- My speech should reflect this turn from anxiety to dependence. Instead of rehearsing fears in my conversations, I can verbalize gratitude, speak truth about God’s faithfulness, and share my requests in ways that strengthen others rather than spread worry.

#### **ACT**

- A practical step is to pause and pray when anxiety rises—naming specific concerns, expressing thanks, and entrusting each one to the Lord. I may also need to adjust habits that feed anxiety (news intake, overcommitment, isolation) and cultivate rhythms that create space for prayer.

#### **REPENT**

- God is calling me to turn from patterns of unbelief and prayerlessness as well as the tendency to complain or worry.

#### **CHANGE**

- Positive change means taking a clear step of obedience that expresses trust. Tomorrow morning I’m going to get up, list my anxieties before the Lord, and pray through each one with thanksgiving.

## Question 5



### PRAY: Based on this passage, how should we pray?

Praying the Bible draws you into genuine relationship with God by letting His words shape the conversation instead of your own limited thoughts. Scripture keeps your prayers grounded in God's character, promises, and priorities, which deepens communion and guards you from drifting into self-focused or shallow patterns. It ensures that prayer becomes a living dialogue—God speaks through His Word, and you respond to Him personally and truthfully. Prayer is where Bible reading becomes communion. Scripture gives you an unlimited supply of things to pray for.

This skill has three movements: (1) pray in line with the text, (2) pray anything the text brings to mind, and (3) add your regular prayer categories to the passage.

#### 1. Pray in Line with the Concerns of the Text

Let the passage guide what you pray for—praise where it reveals God's character, confession where it exposes sin, petition where it displays a need or promise. This keeps your prayers aligned with God's will and rooted in what He is actually saying.

- Example: "I shall not want" (Ps 23:1) *Lord, provide what I truly need. Teach me to be content with what you have given me and satisfied in your presence.*

#### 2. Pray Anything the Passage Makes You Think Of

As you move line by line through a text, speak to God about whatever surfaces in your mind, even if it isn't directly in the passage. This widens prayer, makes it personal, and turns Scripture into a living conversation.

- Example: "He makes me lie down" (Ps 23:2) *Father, I've been exhausted; help me rest well tonight.*

#### 3. Add Your Prayer Categories to the Passage

After responding to the text, bring your ongoing burdens—family, church, mission, personal growth—and pray for them through the lens of the passage. Scripture sharpens these prayers and keeps them spiritually grounded.

- Example: "The Lord is my shepherd" (Ps 23:1) *Lord protect my kids; teach them to trust Your care.*
- Example: "The Lord is my shepherd" (Ps 23:1) *Lord, I pray that you would lead and guide Calvary. May we know your presence and follow your leading. Make us a church grateful and excited about the gospel—that Christ, the Lamb, was slain for us.*

# Tips for Using the 5 Questions

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## Expect To Make Exciting Discoveries For Yourself

You can understand the Bible. This is true because God has given you His Spirit to guide you. While some parts of Scripture may be challenging, you don't need to grasp every detail to benefit from God's Word. 5 Questions are designed to help you start with the text itself, noticing what is actually there, before you reach for outside tools. Although commentaries, study Bibles, and other resources may be valuable for deeper exploration, we encourage you to see what you can discover on your own first—without outside resources.

## Start Small

Just because there are five questions doesn't mean you need to use all of them every time. You can focus on just one or two questions for a given passage, or apply them to only part of the passage—a paragraph, a scene, or a short section. It's far better to use a few questions well than to rush through all five. This also means the questions can serve as a starting point when you feel stuck or unsure how to begin. If a passage feels overwhelming, simply pick one question and let it guide your attention. The questions give you a way to focus and take the first step.

## Give it Time

Like any new practice, the 5 Questions take time to feel natural. At first the method may feel overly simple, or maybe even clunky but don't let that discourage you. The more you use it, the more intuitive and fruitful it becomes. Focus on building a steady habit—set a realistic rhythm of reading and reflection, even if it's just a few times a week. As you return to Scripture regularly, you'll find that the questions deepen your attention, sharpen your insight, and help you notice things you would have overlooked before. The method works best when you give yourself time to grow into it.

## Keep Looking

One of the primary values of this method is discovery. We want you to experience what it is like to make new and exciting discoveries about God for yourself. Often this means you simply need to just keep looking. Like examining a diamond from lots of different angles, use the question bank to examine the passage from various angles. Sometimes the best question to ask isn't a new question, but "what else?"

## Avoid Vague Generalizations

Many readers find their Bible reading shallow because they stop short—settling for vague observations or surface-level applications: "God is good," or "I should trust Him more" are true observations but need to be taken one step further. Name something concrete the passage is showing. What particular aspect of God's character is highlighted here? What specific human pattern is exposed? What definite action or belief does this text call you toward? The more precise your words, the more grounded and compelling your application becomes—for you and for anyone you discuss it with.

## Clarify Your Thoughts

Writing forces clarity. As you work through the 5 Questions, take a moment to express your reflections in simple, complete sentences. This slows your mind, helps you identify what actually matters, and turns vague impressions into graspable truths. You don't need long summaries—just a few clear lines in your own words. Clarity is the bridge between noticing a truth and genuinely understanding it.

## Read with a Friend

Share what you're learning with a friend. One of the greatest benefits of having a shared approach to Bible reading is how naturally it invites accountability and mutual encouragement. When you share your discoveries—whether by texting a simple insight, sending a picture of your journal, or meeting briefly to talk—you help each other see more of what God is saying. Scripture is meant to be enjoyed in community, and even small moments of sharing can deepen understanding, strengthen faith, and keep one another encouraged as you follow Christ together.

# Bible Reading Group Facilitator's Guide

A **Bible Reading Group** is a simple way to gather with others and experience **Bible in Community**. Different from a traditional Bible study, a reading group focuses on hearing God's Word, asking good questions, learning from others, and responding together. The goal is not to cover every detail of a passage but to engage the text meaningfully and encourage one another toward faith and obedience. This guide serves as a practical companion to the Bible Reading Group Handbook and should be used together with it as you lead.

## Step 1: Getting Started

**Leader Objective:** Help the group get oriented to the passage (Time: Approx. 10 min.).

- Begin with prayer, asking God to speak through His Word.
- Read the passage aloud together (one person or divided among several).
- Provide or ask participants to share just enough context to get everyone on the same page (author, audience, setting, big picture, what's happening in the story).
- Invite participants to summarize what they heard in their own words.

**Sample Questions:**

- *"What's going on in this passage?"*
- *"How would you summarize this in your own words?"*

## Step 2: What Do You See?

**Leader Objective:** Use the first guiding question — *"What is this passage about, and what questions do I have?"* — to spark observations and curiosity (Time: Approx. 10 min.).

- Encourage people to share freely what they notice or find interesting.
- Invite honest questions without rushing to provide answers. Spend most of your time discussing what is clear and most important for understanding the text.
- You can approach the text through a few different methods: popcorn-style sharing, chunking by sections, or walking through chronologically.

**Sample Questions:**

- Q1: *"What's the passage about?"*
- *"What insights or ideas stand out to you?"*
- *"What questions does this raise for you?" "Is there anything confusing, surprising?"*

## Step 3: Engage the Questions

**Leader Objective:** Use the remaining four questions to guide deeper discussion. The heart of this step is **shared discovery**—help participants experience the joy of seeing new things about God together. Encourage them to keep looking at the passage, like examining a diamond from many angles. Sometimes the best prompt isn't a new question but simply asking again: *"What else do we see here?"* (Time: 30-45 min.).

- Spend most of the group's time here.
- Use the four questions (Praise, Gospel, Live, Pray) as anchors—each explained in detail in the Bible Reading Group Handbook—while allowing for natural discussion.
- Keep pointing people back to the text—help them look again and see more.
- Encourage both big insights and small observations.

### Essential Questions:

- **Q2: PRAISE** – Based on this passage, how should I praise God and why?
- **Q3: GOSPEL** – Based on this passage, why should I be thankful for the good news of Jesus?
- **Q4: LIVE** – Based on this passage, how should I live (think/feel, speak/act, repent/change)?
- **Q5: PRAY** – Based on this passage, how should I pray?

## Step 4: Key Takeaways (Optional, if time)

**Leader Objective:** Encourage participants to highlight what was most meaningful to them before the group ends (Time: Approx. 10 min.).

- Give a few minutes for reflection at the end.
- Invite people to share one key takeaway—whether it's an insight, an application, or something new they learned.
- Keep this light and encouraging, not pressured.

### Sample Questions:

- *"What is the main way God has impacted you through his word?"*
- *"What stood out to you as most helpful or encouraging?"*
- *"What's one way you hope to respond to this in the coming week?"*

## Step 5: Prayer

**Leader Objective:** Use the passage and the discussion to narrow in on a few aspects to pray as a group. Pray specifically for one another as you pray the passage back to God.













Passage: \_\_\_\_\_ Question: \_\_\_\_\_

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Passage: \_\_\_\_\_ Question: \_\_\_\_\_

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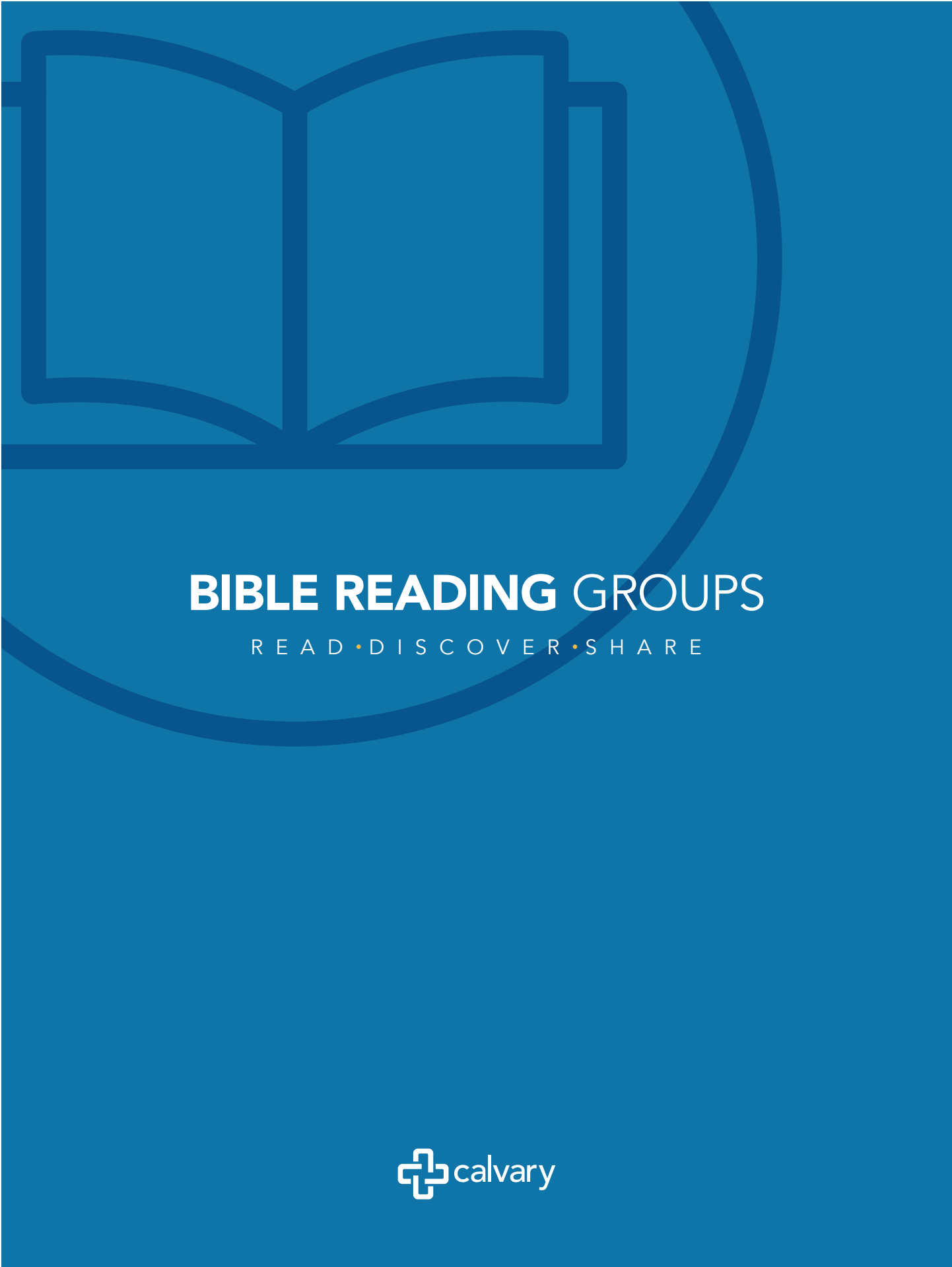












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