

Everyone is at a different place in their walk with God and in their Bible study skill. Because of that, OnTrack is designed to engage four progressive user **SKILL LEVELS**. This guide will help you identify your skill level and how to use OnTrack effectively.

IDENTIFY YOUR PERSONAL SKILL LEVEL

Be honest about your own personal level as you begin! Starting beyond your actual level can lead to unnecessary frustration and discouragement. Some level of frustration is good when learning a skill, but too much may tempt you to give up. Pay particular attention to the approach each user should take based on their current **SKILL LEVEL**.

Level 1: You have spent little or no time in personal Bible study and you have limited knowledge of the Bible. **FOCUS: Key Passage, Devotional Thought.**

Level 2: Most of your experience with the Bible is from church and/or at home. You have been taught from the Bible, but you have not consistently studied it on your own. **FOCUS: Extra Reading, Devotional Thought, answer at least the first two Daily Questions if you can.**

Level 3: You have a bit of experience reading the Bible on your own. Maybe it hasn't always been consistent or you are newer at it, but you are getting comfortable with it. **FOCUS: Extra Reading, Devotional Thought, answer all four Daily Questions.**

Level 4: You have a lot of experience in Bible study and you consistently see solid applications. **Focus: Extra Reading, Devotional Thought, all Daily Questions, and try creating your own questions.**

Every once in awhile, review your current skill level to check whether you should bump it up. You can do this on your own, with an accountability partner, or with a spiritual mentor. Aim to grow!

HOW TO USE ONTRACK

This tool is designed to help you grow your personal Bible study skill as a key part of developing a regular personal conversation with God. You will learn to dig into the text with good questions that lead to understanding and personal life change. To get the most out of OnTrack, follow the progression below:

PRAY. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you exactly what He wants you to see and understand from the Word. If you are in Christ, the Holy Spirit is in you and one of His jobs is to illuminate Scripture for you. He was the person of the Godhead directly engaged in the inspiration of the Word and He knows exactly what He meant when He wrote it.

READ THE WORD. Always start with reading the passage first before reading the devotional thought or any other tools you use to help understand Scripture.

QUICK START GUIDE, CONTINUED

What God has to say is always more important than what anyone else has to say about what God has to say.

READ THE DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT. The purpose of this text is to frame your thinking and to spur good questions, not to tie the passage up with a neat tidy bow.

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS. Some days, the author provides specific questions for you to answer that will help you dig into the text a bit. Other days, you'll see the generic Observation, Interpretation, Application, and Implementation questions. These are days designed to stretch you in the process of creating your own good questions.

ENGAGE OTHERS. One of the key benefits of a tool like OnTrack is that others in your world are working through the same Bible passages every day and engaging the same questions. This provides accountability for you; but more than that, it gives you an opportunity to compare notes and learn with each other. Often, you will see things they did not and vice versa. Bible study can be a team sport! It will help deepen your understanding of Scripture and your relationships.

GET ORIENTED

The following is a quick orientation to a typical OTD day. Use the sample devotional day image on the opposite page for reference.

1. **Header Bar:** It gives you the day of the week, the date, the theme, and the key passage for the day. Read the passage in your Bible BEFORE jumping to the next step!
2. **Extra Reading:** This is the complete text for the day. The key passage from the header bar will be in there, but this covers the context of the passage. If you are ready to bite off the whole chunk of Scripture, go for it!
3. **Devotional Thought:** The daily thought is designed to frame your thinking process AFTER you read the verses and BEFORE you answer the questions. It will encourage you to chew on the verses and ponder what God is telling you through His Word. The thought models for you the method of Bible study you are learning for yourself.
4. **Questions:** Each day will have four questions that help you personally work through the process of identifying what God is saying in His Word, then connecting it to your own life. Each question builds on the one before it.

A FINAL NOTE

Be patient and consistent. It's a process. Go at a comfortable pace. Ask God to grow your skill and to give you the discipline to keep at it. It will take time, but if you stick with it, you will be able to study God's Word for yourself.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

4**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

How do you feel when you think about what it means to be saved? Too often, people seem to be apathetic about their salvation, especially those saved as children. It is almost as if it all seems to be fairly routine to them. What they sometimes miss is the incredible reality of what happened and why it happened. Paul had never gotten over the fact that Jesus Christ had saved him. He stressed that, in spite of his behavior and past, God had, by His grace, changed his life. In verse 16, he explained why God had saved him. It was so his life would be an example to others of what Jesus Christ could do. Even though he was once a "violent man," he was changed by Christ. His own salvation gave hope to other violent men. What difference has believing in Jesus Christ made in your life? How is your life different from those who do not know Christ? Is there someone you know who needs to see and hear the ways in which Christ changed your life? Your life is an example of what God can do. Can the unsaved see it? Circle the words "so that in me" in your Bible to remind you of your mission. Then ask God to use you.

EXTRA READING

1 TIMOTHY 1

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