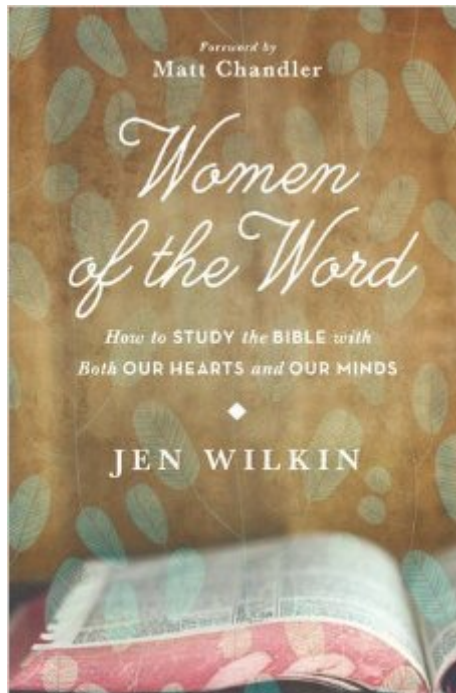


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# Women Of The Word: How To Study The Bible With Both Our Hearts And Our Minds



## Synopsis

We all know it's important to study God's Word. But sometimes it's hard to know where to start. What's more, a lack of time, emotionally driven approaches, and past frustrations can erode our resolve to keep growing in our knowledge of Scripture. How can we, as Christian women, keep our focus and sustain our passion when reading the Bible? Offering a clear and concise plan to help women go deeper in their study of Scripture, this book will equip you to engage God's Word in a way that trains your mind and transforms your heart.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Once bitten, twice shy. That pretty much describes my response to most major marketing campaigns by Christian publishers. So often I've found that the best books are the ones that appear with the least fuss, and that the ones carried in on the back of a major marketing wave prove to be disappointing. But not always. Jen Wilkin's *Women of the Word* has been the beneficiary of some major marketing efforts. It was the talk of this year's Gospel Coalition National Conference for Women and has been pushed heavily in the blogosphere. And I'm glad to say that it proved my skepticism wrong—it is an excellent little book. Wilkin loves God's Word and she loves to teach others to love it as well. Her book is designed to awaken that same love in others, and especially in other women. It is, after all, meant to call women to the Word so they can be women of the Word. She opens biographically, telling about her growing passion for the Bible—for reading it, for knowing it, for teaching it to others. She explains that the book's purpose is to teach you not merely a doctrine, concept, or story line, but

a study method that will allow you to open up the Bible on your own. It intends to challenge you to think and to grow, using tools accessible to all of us, whether we hold a high school diploma or a seminary degree, whether we have minutes or hours to give to it each day. Before she gets to a method of studying the Bible, she tells about two turnarounds she had to make in her life, where she replaced backward approaches to Bible study with better ones. The first was to allow the Bible to speak of God. She had been approaching the Bible as a book about her, a book answering the question "Who am I?" more than "Who is God?" The second turnaround was thinking that she should allow her heart, rather than her mind, to guide her study of the Bible. She let her feelings dictate what she read and how she read it instead of first allowing it to transform her mind. She wants her readers to know that they cannot love what their minds do not know. With those foundations in place, she makes a plea for biblical literacy and follows it with a five-part method meant to bring it about. Her description of this method, along with examples of it in action, consume the bulk of the book. She teaches her readers to study with purpose, perspective, patience, process and prayer. This method is simple enough to be practical, but significant enough to lead to deep understanding, reflection, and application. She closes with some guidance for teachers and a final call to a commitment to the Word. While I am not the target audience for the book (I don't ever anticipate being a woman of the Word), I found it very enjoyable nonetheless. I read it at a good time in life—a time in which I am thoroughly enjoying reading God's Word—and it fired up my love for God, and his Word, all the more. While Wilkin's method is sound, I also enjoyed her emphases on approaching the Bible intellectually ahead of emotionally, of training the mind to train the heart. This is a missing emphasis in too many books on reading the Scriptures and, in particular, books targeted at women. The point is not that everyone who reads the Bible ought to be an outright intellectual, but that Bible-reading cannot bypass the mind. *Women of the Word* is a helpful little book that I cheerfully commend. (And, I should add, one Aileen read before I did and enjoyed every bit as much.)

Most of us are aware of the importance of the Bible - that it is the way to know God and to be transformed into His image; that it's the way to have peace and joy in the midst of trials; that for a healthy Christian life, we need to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Having a daily quiet time is Christianity 101. And yet, an astounding proportion of Christians are failing Christianity 101, struggling to read the Bible and struggling to understand what we read. Bad preaching and false teaching abound, but many Christians do not have the biblical literacy to discern truth from error. Wife, mother, speaker, teacher, and Bible study leader Jen Wilkin has

written *Women of the Word: How to Study the Bible with Both Our Hearts and Our Minds* to equip women to study the Bible. Wilkin begins in Chapter 1 by sharing some of her personal story in relation to the Word of God. She highlights two things that she had gotten backwards: 1) She failed to understand that the Bible is a book about God, instead reading it as if it were all about her, who she is, what she should do; 2) She erroneously believed that her heart should guide her study, when in fact the mind should lead the heart. These errors are very prominent, and Wilkin's insights here are foundational for a right perspective on the Bible that will fuel a right handling of the Word. To further set the stage for the book, and illuminate the dire situation, in Chapter 2 Wilkin presents a case for Bible literacy. She highlighting six awful ways that we tend to read the Bible and demonstrates what is wrong with these approaches. For anyone whose primary approach to reading the Bible consist of one of these methods, Wilkins's book is a must-read.

1. The Xanax Approach treats the Bible as if it exists to make us feel better.
2. The Pinball Approach: read whatever you happen to turn to.
3. The Magic Eight Ball Approach: Ask a question, turn to the random verse, and see if the answer is "yes."
4. The Personal Shopper Approach: topical reading.
5. The Telephone Game Approach: reading books about the Bible instead of reading the Bible itself.
6. The Jack Sprat Approach: picky eating.

Then in Chapters 3-7 Wilkins devotes a chapter to each to what she calls the "Five P's of Sound Study": purpose, perspective, patience, process, and prayer. In Chapter 8 Wilkin draws everything together by demonstrating the "Five P's of Bible Study" with the Epistle of James. The book concludes with a chapter for teachers where she encourages women who might have a teaching gift and provides many helpful tips and suggestions for a budding Bible study leader. Wilkin also gives three reasons why women need women teachers. I would have loved to see a chapter (or even a few pages) on Scripture memorization. Wilkin does mention it in passing, but I think more attention on it would have been helpful. Not only does memorization (and thereby continued meditation) bring something extra to study and Bible literacy, but it is also a way to continue taking in Scripture in seasons that do not permit rigorous in-depth study or even reading (which Wilkin mentions in chapter 5). She mentions that in those seasons of her own life, sermons and podcasts were her lifeline. I am so thankful for our incredible access to online sermons and podcasts; but how much better would it be to be able to meditate on the Scriptures previously written on your heart in seasons when you cannot spend extended time in reading and studying the Word?

The above is a very minor quibble. *Women of the Word* is a stellar introduction to studying the Bible well, not as an end in itself but for the purpose of knowing God and being transformed evermore into His image. It's full of biblical wisdom presented in a candid, accessible, and practical way. This book should be given to every new female believer (along with a

Bible, of course!). However, though this book is written at an introductory level, it would be a mistake to think that it's only for young believers. Many long-time Christians do not know how to study the Bible, so really, this is a great book for any Christian struggling with this vital component of the Christian life and looking for help from a quick, easy read. And though this book was written for women, most of the content is gender-neutral; men can benefit from this book as well!\*I received a free copy in exchange for an unbiased review\*

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