



Thirty Days of Bible Study for

Busy Mamas
COLOSSIANS 3

Pam Forster

Doorposts

iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword.....	ix
Introduction: We Need God's Word.....	1
Day 1: Getting Started	5
Day 2: Understanding the Context.....	9
Day 3: Ifs and Thens.....	11
Day 4: Contrasts.....	13
Day 5: Putting Sin to Death.....	15
Day 6: Putting On	17
Day 7: Catch Up or Do an Extra Word Study.....	19
Day 8: Jesus.....	22
Day 9: Death and Resurrection.....	25
Day 10: Why?	27
Day 11: But	30
Day 12: Old and New Men	32
Day 13: God.....	34
Day 14: Catch Up or Look for Jesus in the Book of Colossians ..	36
Day 15: Verse 11	38
Day 16: Holy Living.....	41
Day 17: Word Studies.....	44
Day 18: Everything.....	46
Day 19: Paraphrasing.....	47
Day 20: Meditating and Memorizing.....	50
Day 21: Catch Up Day, plus an Optional Assignment.....	52
Day 22: Giving Thanks.....	53
Day 23: Obeying.....	55
Day 24: Different Translations.....	56
Day 25: Verbs.....	58
Day 26: Past, Present, and Future.....	60
Day 27: Organize and Summarize	63
Day 28: Catch Up or Word Study.....	65
Day 29: Children	66
Day 30: Doing.....	68
Appendix A: Materials for Your Study	71
Appendix B: Ideas for Marking in Your Bible	74
Appendix C: How to Make Time When You Have Small Children ...	78
Appendix D: How to Study More on Your Own.....	80

FOREWORD

I remember waking up almost every morning to my mama reading her Bible on the couch. I was completely fascinated by the whole thing – the special colored pencils, the special black pens that she had a never-ending supply of, the pictures and notes she drew in the margins.

I, of course, aspiring to be like my mama and to do this amazing loving-the-Bible-in-a-hands-on-way thing, wanted to draw my own pictures to illustrate what verses were talking about. I can't believe she let me (I would be way too possessive of this gloriously loved and colorful Bible to let grubby little kids possibly mar it with vague scribbly stick figures).

I love that it wasn't just the example of her reading her Bible every morning, but also her including us as she really loved God's word. She inspired me to love my own Bible (and highlight it within an inch of its life!). Reading and marking and really delving into God's word makes it come alive in a way that really changes us. It's not a book to be just read—it's a book to be lived.

My mama is a beautiful, vibrant lover of God and His Word, and I know she'll inspire you to dig deeper and become more obsessed with the Bible. It will blow your mind.

Susannah Forster



INTRODUCTION

WE NEED GOD'S WORD

*“Come away by yourselves to a desolate place
and rest a while.” (Mark 6:31b)*

Do you have trouble even getting a shower, let alone finding the time to read your Bible? This book is for you!

I know that even fifteen minutes of Bible reading and prayer can be incredibly challenging when the house is brimming with energetic children and sweet babies that interrupt normal nighttime sleep schedules. But it is worth fighting for!

Mothering is a demanding job, and it is easy for life to get out of focus if all we see is the diapers and sticky floors and laundry hampers. It is easy to forget Who we are doing this for, and why we are doing it.

It's very easy to become busy, busy Marthas, “distracted with much serving,” as we devote our time to the many needs of others (Luke 10:40). We can become so preoccupied with all the demands on our time that we neglect to sit at Jesus' feet with Mary. In doing this, we are in effect saying that we can manage without Him. In reality though, we can't handle this life and its demands all by ourselves.

We need to be in God's Word. His Word is food. His Word nourishes us. Mothers know all about people needing to eat. We hear the words, “I'm

Introduction We Need God's Word

hungry," or "What can I eat?" a lot. Sometimes it feels like we spend almost all day planning meals, shopping for meals, cooking meals, serving meals, eating meals, and cleaning up after meals. We need to eat. Without food, we and our families would become weak and unhealthy, and eventually we would die.

Without God's Word we will spiritually starve. We can't just feed on God's Word once a week at church, just like our children can't just eat once a week and thrive. God designed us to need daily sustenance – both physically and spiritually.

There is no way we can raise children who love and follow Jesus if we're not loving and following Him. If we love Him, we'll want to listen to Him. If we listen to Him, we'll love Him even more. And if we truly love Him, that love will spill out onto our children, and draw them to Him in a way that just our words will never do.

A time of prayer and Bible reading acknowledges our dependence on God. Whether we remember it or not, we literally depend on Him for every breath we take. We can't do life without God, so we sure can't be loving, godly mothers without God.

Sitting at Jesus' feet in prayer and Bible study is an expression of our love for Him. We want to spend time with those we love.

When we read God's Word we're listening to our Father, the one who knows us better than we know ourselves, the one who knows exactly how we should live our lives.

God is the source of all wisdom. When we ask Him for wisdom (which we certainly need!), He will give it to us – through His Word and through the counsel of other believers who speak the truths of Scripture to us.

The Bible is the source of absolute truth. It defines what is right and what is wrong. Reading, studying, and obeying it equips us for one of our primary jobs as mothers – teaching and training our children.

Steeping ourselves in the Word equips us for teaching and training our children.

Like food does for our physical bodies, God's Word nourishes us and causes us to grow.

Like sleep that refreshes our bodies, the Holy Spirit refreshes our souls as we rest in the promises of His Word. We won't know those promises if we're not in the Word.

God's Word changes us, and that's what a life of faith in Christ is all about.

A time of Bible reading and prayer gives us an underlying peace in the midst of the interruptions, noise, and challenges that often accompany a house full of children.

Time in the word and prayer strengthens and encourages us and keeps our perspective balanced.

It's not easy – getting into the Word while the house is full of little ones who need us twenty-four hours a day.

But it's essential.

The goal of this book is to offer special encouragement and help to busy mothers who need the nourishment of God's Word in their demanding lives. I want to help you learn to slow down and study the Bible, and then obey it. If you learn some simple, basic study methods, adjust your expectations and goals, and think creatively about times and places to study, I believe you'll get hooked. It's exciting – and fun – to discover the riches of God's Word when we start taking some time to really dig into it.

So let's do it! Let's study together! I challenge you to set aside just five to ten minutes a day – even if it's just one minute at a time – to study the Bible. I'll show you how!



DAY 1: GETTING STARTED

We're going to start right out with a month-long series of 5-minute studies on the third chapter of Colossians. For thirty days, we're going to look at just **one** chapter of the Bible and study it, one little step at a time. If you're willing to try for five minutes a day, even if it's in 30-second increments, you will know and understand this one chapter a whole lot better than you did before you started!

1. Gather the supplies listed below and put them all in one place.

- Bible, in your preferred translation
- Notebook, small notepad, or even a single sheet of paper — just something to write on. It doesn't need to be fancy.
- Pen
- A computer, or some other device with Internet access. A few of these studies rely on Bible study tools from the Internet. If you don't have Internet access, you will need *Strong's Concordance* for Day 7 and two or more additional Bibles in different translations for studies 17 and 24.

Other optional supplies:

- *Colored pencils or pens.* Even crayons would work! We will be

Day 1: Getting Started

marking different words in different ways. Different colors are easiest (and awfully pretty), but don't go buy anything special. If you don't have coloring options, words can all be marked in different ways with just one pen.

- *Computer printout of Colossians 3*, if you don't want to mark in your Bible. You can use www.BibleGateway.com or other online Bible study sites for this.
- *Audio version of the Bible* (or at least Colossians 3), if you want to be able to *listen* to the passage on busy days.
 - Download the chapter onto an iPod or MP3 player at www.bible.is/audioplayer.
 - Record yourself reading the passage and then listen to it over and over with the *ScriptureTyper* app.
 - Listen on your computer at BibleGateway.com (choose your translation) or Biblestudytools.com (KJV or NLT)

(See Appendix A on page 71 for more information on pens, pencils, and Bibles.)

2. Think about *where* you want to do (or *can do*) your study.

- Is the *bathroom* the one place where you get a few minutes of peace and quiet? Put everything in a basket in there.
- How about in the *kitchen*? Can you squeeze in just a *little* reading while stirring a pot or waiting for the microwave?
- In *bed*?
- In the chair *where you nurse the baby*?
- In the *car*, while someone else watches the kids?

The goal is to think about the place you are most likely to have **5 minutes to read** (not necessarily all at the same time). *If everything is there waiting for you, you'll be much more likely to do your study.* Be strategic.

Keep a basket of playthings for the children nearby, if you'll be doing this while they're awake.

3. Think about *when* you want to do your study.

This may not be realistic at this stage of your life, but if you *can* designate a time, you'll be more apt to do the study. Remember, you will only need about five minutes a day. If you want to spend more time, you can, but *five minutes a day is more Bible study than no minutes a day!* Take what you can get!

- Can you get up just *five minutes earlier* each day?
- Can you talk your *husband* or an *older child* into watching the kids for five minutes sometime each day, or could you do your study right *after the children are in bed* (before anyone thinks about needing a drink or going potty)?
- How about reading *before checking email* or going online?
- Or can you catch five quiet minutes during the *baby's during-the-night or early-morning feeding*?
- Could you start a *quiet time* in the afternoon with all the children on their beds with books or quiet activities? Before you start housework or any other tasks during this time, grab your Bible and do your study!
- Or how about a short "*blanket time*" each morning, with little ones playing quietly on their own individual blankets while you study for a few minutes?

One of my favorite approaches when our children were little was to have everyone else pull out their Bible storybooks and have *their own "Bible time"* while I had mine.

Or better yet, *invite your older children to join you!* Read aloud for them, and let them watch you highlight words, or if you're brave, let them do the marking for you!

Day 1: Getting Started

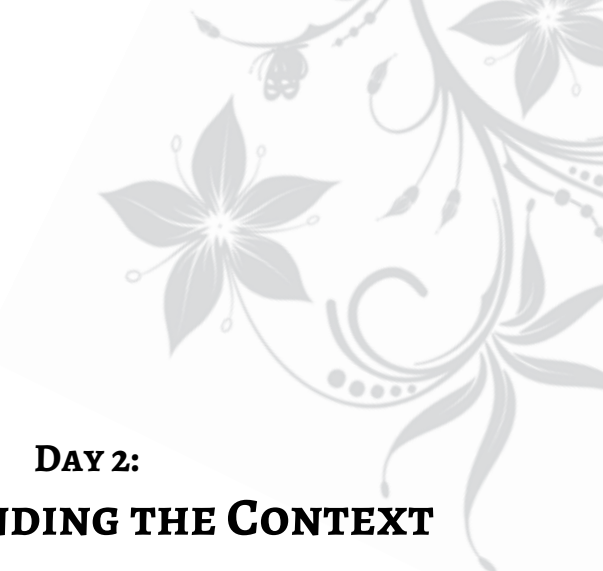
How about putting digital clocks in the children's rooms? Post a card with "7:00" written on it on a wall near the clock. Explain to your children that when the clock says the same thing the card says, they can get up. Until then, except for trips to the bathroom, they should stay in their beds. Then make sure you start studying by 6:45!

If you can't do it any other way, try to grab your five minutes in *smaller snatches*, and put your study materials in the place you're most likely to accomplish that. Do whatever it takes!

OK! We're ready!

You have your materials gathered, you know when and where you would like to do your study.

Tomorrow we start reading!



DAY 2:

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

Context is important! If we tried to read just one chapter in the middle of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, we would not be able to understand the whole story. We could totally miss out on Aslan, or we might think the White Witch was actually good while she was talking to Edmund. We would definitely miss out on the whole triumph of good over evil.

If we try to read just one chapter of Paul's letter to the Colossians without reading the entire letter, we won't understand the whole story either. We'll miss out on much of what Paul is saying to the people of Colossae and to us. This letter was written while Paul was in prison, probably in Rome. He addresses teachings that posed dangers to the church and devalued Christ, and he encourages believers to pursue holy, obedient lives in Christ.

Don't worry when you see today's assignment. We're starting out with the *longest reading day* of our entire 30-day study. It may take a little more than 5 minutes, but it's only *four chapters long*. After today, we will only be reading Colossians 3 each day.

Don't get discouraged. If you can't carve out enough time to read the entire book all in one sitting, *divide it up*. Read one chapter in the bathroom when you first get up or while you're drying your hair. Read another chapter while you nurse the baby, and another right after you

Day 2: Understanding the Context

get the kids in bed. Ask your husband or one of the kids to read you a chapter while you cook dinner, or listen to the entire book on your computer or MP3 player as you go through the day. (See Biblegateway.com, Biblestudytools.com, or bible.is/audioplayer). Be creative!

If you don't manage to read the entire book, don't get discouraged and give up after the first day. *We're doing battle here.* Keep fighting. Just *finish reading the book tomorrow*, and then do tomorrow's assignment if you have time. If you get behind, just *keep working*. *We will have a "catch-up" day every week*, so you'll have a day to catch up! If you get several days behind, just jump forward and join us where we are. The more you can do, the more you'll get out of it. But *do what you can*, and don't give up!

Assignment:

Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you understanding and then *read the entire book of Colossians*.

Try to get an overall feel for the *entire message* of the book. What is Paul saying to the Colossians? What is his main message?

If you have time, *assign a title to each chapter* of the book and record it in your notebook. This will help you summarize the main message of each chapter.

Tomorrow we'll start looking in detail at Chapter 3!