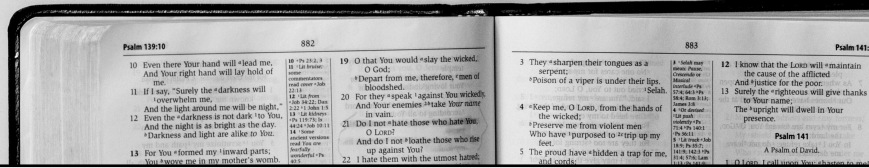


DISCIPLESHIP CLASS

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

WEEK 4



VIDEO NOTES

- At first it may seem like the Bible is full of odd or lacking details and unanswered questions.
- When read as a whole story from Genesis to Revelations, the details combine in beautiful story that fulfills the missing parts and makes sense.
- And this is the literary genius of the Bible. It forces you to keep, reading and then interpret each part in light of the others.
- This dense way of writing forces you to slow down and then read carefully, embarking on this interactive discovery process through the whole biblical narrative over a lifetime of reading and re-reading.
- In Psalm 1 we read about the ideal Bible reader.
 - It's someone who meditates on the Scriptures day and night.
 - In Hebrew, the word meditate means literally to mutter or speak quietly.

The idea is that every day for the rest of your life you slowly, quietly read the Bible out loud to yourself and then go talk about it with your friends, pondering the puzzles, making connections, and discovering what it all means.

As you let the Bible interpret itself, something remarkable happens; the Bible starts to read you.

Ultimately the writers of the Bible want you to adopt this story as your story.

TEACHING NOTES

MEDITATING ON SCRIPTURE

- By "meditation" we don't mean emptying ourselves by chanting mindless mantras.
 - Christian meditation is about filling our hearts and minds with the divine, not emptying ourselves.
- Meditation is the practice of entering into the text by reading and re-reading it out loud, allowing it to speak to us in such a way that we listen and truly hear it.
 - We fix and order our minds around the text until key words, phrases, and ideas jump off the page at us.
 - Then we chew on these words and ideas and begin to form questions that lead us into deeper reflection.

INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE

Nothing is more powerful than the Word of God accurately applied to a situation!

Hebrews 4:12 – “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (NASB)

1. A text cannot mean what it never could have meant to its author or readers.

When considering the Bible, it is improper to suggest that the text means something different to us than it meant in the time it was written. That would imply that we have a conflicting revelation than they received.

3 John 2 - “Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.” (ESV)

Some people in the “prosperity gospel” movement say that this passage teaches that it is God’s will for us to always be healthy and wealthy. Rather, this passage is simply a greeting and a prayer blessing to Gaius from John. He didn’t intend it to be a doctrinal statement and Gaius didn’t perceive it to be a doctrinal statement because it doesn’t fit into the flow or structure of the letter. If it didn’t mean that to Gaius, it cannot mean that to us today.

2. Whenever we share the same (or similar) life situations as the original audience, God’s word to us is the same as His word to them.

Consider 2 John 1:5-6 in which John addresses Christian love. Loving others is a basic Biblical principle that is required throughout Scriptures. The way we express love may be influenced by our culture, but the command to love is relevant regardless of culture.

RULES OF INTERPRETATION

- **Rule of Definition:** Define the words and adhere to their meaning.

- **Rule of Usage** _____: Identify the common usage of the words at the time period written and don't add meanings to already established words.
- **Rule of Context** _____: Context must define terms and how words are used, so don't take words and interpret them out of their context.
- **Rule of Historical Background** _____: Don't separate the interpretation of words from their historical background.
- **Rule of Logic** _____: The words must agree with the overall premise.
- **Rule of Precedent** _____: Use the known and commonly accepted meaning of words, not obscure meanings for which there is no precedent.
- **Rule of Unity** _____: If other documents are used, there must be general unity among them.
- **Rule of Inference** _____: Base conclusions on what is already known and proven.

One rule is left out:

- **Rule of Relationship with the Author** : no amount of linguistic knowledge in ones interpretation of Scripture could replace the need for dependence upon the Holy Spirit as the Bible is read and studied.

HOW TO START

- Ask the Holy Spirit for revelation
- Approach it relationally
- Begin Reading from your current reading plan
 - (discuss in small group how/ add tips)
- Try to put yourself in the text:
 - What emotions are you feeling?
 - What would you think if you were hearing these words for the first time?
 - What words or images jump out at you?
 - Is there a command to obey?
 - Is there an example to follow?
 - Is there a promise to claim?
 - Is there a sin to avoid?
 - Is there a principle to follow?
- Pick a section or specific verse to meditate on

- Recite the text over and over again (or listen to it with a Bible app. We recommend YouVersion's free Bible App).
- Write the text
 - In your journal, on a sticky note on your fridge, planner, back of your phone, steering wheel, mirror, etc
- Sing the text
 - Worship to a song that references your text (play it on repeat) or write your own song
- Pray the text
 - To be clear, "prayerful reading" is not wrapping up our Bible time with general prayers about our lives. It's a specific kind of praying that uses words and ideas from the text to shape a prayer of response. The language and tone of the prayer should reflect the language and tone of the text.
 - For example, if you're reading through lamentations you form a prayer of lament that's filled with grief over all the sin and wreckage in our broken world. Or, if you're reading through Philippians, you form a prayer of thanksgiving that's filled with joy in the midst of suffering using Paul's language.
- Use the S.O.A.P tool
 - Scripture: Write out the scripture
 - Observation: What do you see in the verses that you're reading? Who is the audience? Is there a repetition of words? What words stand out to you?
 - Application: What is God saying to me today? How can I apply what I just read to my own personal life? What changes do I need to make? Is there an action that I need to take?
 - Prayer: Pray God's Word back to Him. If He has revealed something to you during this time in His Word, pray about it. Confess if He has revealed some sin that is in your life.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Do you currently use any of the “How to Start” tools in your quiet time?

What is your first response when you hear the word meditation? What does meditating on scripture mean to you?

Do you find it hard to choose what to read in the Bible? Is there specific tool you use (Bible in a year, devotional, etc) that is more helpful to guide your time?

Describe what you felt when you walked out of the cinema immediately after being totally immersed in a great movie. Similarly, what was it that you experienced after the final page of your favorite novel? Share a moment of personal revelation you had while reading the Scriptures. What was happening? How was Scripture orientating your life and relationship with God and our world?

SMALL GROUP NOTES