

One Unified Story That Points Us to Jesus

2 Peter 1:19-21 NLT - 19 Because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. You must pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place--until the Day dawns, and Christ the Morning Star shines in your hearts.

John 5:39 NLT - 39 "You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me!

John 20:31 NLT - 31 But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

The story of the Bible is centered on Jesus. From Genesis to Revelation we see the relationship God wants to have with us, how sin has destroyed that relationship, and the love God extended by sending Jesus to die in our place and make a way back for us to join in God's eternal love story once again.

The way we approach reading the Bible should be influenced by the underlying goal of the Bible; to point us to Jesus and restore a relationship with God. But it is easy to slip into a frame of mind that misses the point. Have you ever found yourself reading the Bible to “check that off your to do list”? Do you skim through the Bible quickly just to get to the end of the passage? Have you ever completed reading your Bible and immediately forgotten what you've read? These problems are all too common.

What are some of the things that help you fully receive from God when you read His word?

- **What time of day do you get the most out of reading the Bible?**
- **Where do you do your reading and is it distraction-free?**
- **How do you open the channel of communication with God as you prepare to read His Word? music, prayer, quietness**
- **What would you say is the biggest hurdle you have faced in regularly reading the Bible?**

“The Bible” Deeply Rooted week #2

INTRODUCTION

This week we will discover more about the Bible. The Bible is a gift from God to us because He wants us to hear from Him. But where did we get the Bible we use today? What kinds of literary styles are in our Bibles and how does that affect the way we read and apply them to our lives? What makes this book different from other books on theology or religion? Reading the Bible can challenge us at times, but don't be discouraged. It is well worth the struggle to receive the gift.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH

THE BIBLE –

We believe in the plenary [absolute] inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, by which we understand the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith.

MEMORY VERSES

2 Timothy 3:15-17 NLT - 15 You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. 17 God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORD

We read the bible to be formed and transformed, not merely to gather information. Reading of the scripture in this way requires unhurried time and an open heart. Only God's Spirit can fully interpret God's Word, and as you meditate on His Word, the Spirit has the opportunity to give you personal insight. We can break it down into four parts

- reading - This is a reflective, gently paced, one-bite-at-a-time kind of reading. As you read, ask God, "What are you saying to me just now?"
- meditate- Let's be clear, this is not an Eastern religious practice, it is our taking time to reflect on the passage and repeat it in our minds, and throughout our day. Speak it out loud, find ways to incorporate it into the thoughts, feelings and experiences of your life
- pray – a natural product of meditating on God's Word will be to communicate with God. As we find God addressing us directly through His Word, our hearts cry out to Him. Perhaps we feel joy and gratitude, or repentance and pain. But as God's Word penetrates our lives, our response will be heartfelt prayer.
- Rest – as a result of spending time reading, meditating and praying through God's Word, you can come to a place of sabbath-time rest in God's presence. Simply receive from Him by being with and near to Him.

Share with the group what God has shown you in this week's passage.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – THE BIBLE

2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIV - 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The Bible is a collection of 66 books, written by more than 40 authors over several thousands of years. The Greek word Paul used to describe the Scripture is *theopneustos*; a compound word from God (*theo*) and blow or wind (*pneustos*). Some translations call this God-Breathed, others call it inspired by God. Paul is telling us that by His Spirit, God guided the very different writers and editors, so that the books they produced were the books God intended his people to have. Some books were written as narratives; stories of history, parables and biographies. About a third of the Bible is poetry using imagery and metaphor to convey God's intention. Many of the books of the Bible contain prose in the form of letters, speeches, and essays.

While we want to take the Bible seriously, but it is impossible to take every word literally, like the metaphors in Isaiah 55:12b ...*The mountains and hills will burst into song, and the trees of the field will clap their hands!* So, we need to recognize several things about the passages as we read- what genre is it, who was the audience and what were the circumstances of the writing? These things help us make sense of what we read.

- **What books of the Bible do you tend to read most frequently?**
- **Why do they appeal to you and how does God use them to speak to you?**
- **Are there certain areas of the Bible you tend to avoid? If so, what is it that you dislike about them?**