

What is the Bible?

Jan. 6, 2019

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW as followers of Jesus.
- CG Mission Statement

Worship: Psalm 119:97-104

(Here is a psalm/song to help your group as you worship.)

Read through this passage aloud in your group.

Icebreaker

Who introduced you to the Bible?

Text for Discussion: 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

The point of reading the Bible is to know God better and to experience Him more deeply. The more we come to know God through the Bible, the more we will come to cherish the Bible for the beauty and wonder it contains. For as we begin rooting ourselves in God's word, meditating on His promises will become an indispensable daily habit.

Why should we listen to the Bible? Quite simply, we should honor the Bible because Jesus did. It is God's supernaturally given, written revelation of His character and purposes. This is what gives the Bible its authority and relevance throughout time. It is God's unfolding story of why He created the world, what went wrong, what He has done to set things right, as well as what humanity's place is in the unfolding narrative.

Our holy scriptures are of divine origin, "breathed out by God" upon its human authors. The personalities the authors were taken into account; they wrote the words. Which helps explain the wonderful diversity of the Biblical literature. The Bible, like Jesus himself, is therefore both fully human and fully divine. Just as Jesus was fully man yet completely free from sin, so Scripture is a human product yet infallible in all that it teaches as it illuminates the glory of God.

Our confidence in the Bible is rooted in the character of our Father who gave it. We trust God because of what He's shown about Himself in these pages. Ultimately we read the Bible for communion with Him, for if we want to be the disciples of Jesus – Who is called the Word – our lives must be rooted in the Word of God.

Why don't we read the Bible? Perhaps one of the main barriers is that we don't see the value in it. We don't read the Bible (or have stopped reading it) because we don't get anything out of it. Or if we do, it is a sense that we are being rebuked. Nobody likes being reprimanded, but that's one way to know we are actually listening to what God is saying. It pushes against our sensibilities... and wouldn't that make sense if God was actually speaking to us? Our Father's way is first to wound and then to heal, so we are never going to get serious about digging into God's word unless we are desperate for change in our lives.

How can we read the Bible with more deliberateness so it won't seem stale? One of the hardest things about the Christian life is its repetitiveness. Getting into spiritual shape – to be mature and strong in our faith – requires persistent, diligent exercise. And two core exercises of the Christian faith are prayer and Bible reading. To improve in one, we must learn how to use both together. Studying God's word leads to prayer, and

prayer should be rooted in God's word. By practicing them in tandem, scripture will become a burning bush out of which the living God will speak to us.

Guiding Question of the Week

(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)

What basic questions of life does the Bible answer?

Questions for Discussion

(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)

- Discuss the different beliefs people have about the Bible? Which position do you hold to and why?
- Discuss why we don't cherish and utilize the Bible more?
 - What things do people depend on for authority and guidance in life?
- What basic questions of life does the Bible answer?
 - What question of life has the Bible answered for you?
- In what way is the Bible like a "window in Malibu"?
- All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training. Give an example of how a passage of scripture has benefited you in one of these four ways?
- In your own words, how would you describe the Bible and its value to someone who does not own one?
 - Do you have an extra Bible that you could give to someone who does not have one? Ask God to show you who that person is and give it to them.

Prayer

Martin Luther wrote a letter to his barber telling him what he did personally when he prayed. The letter is titled *A Simple Way to Pray* and can be found online. In the letter, Luther compared prayer to a "garland of 4 twisted strands" each strand representing a question he asked himself when reading Scripture. Use the four questions below as you read and pray through Psalm 119:33-40.

1. Instruction: What does this passage teach me?
2. Gratitude: What in this passage causes me to give thanks?
3. Confess: What in this passage causes me to feel a need for confession and repentance?
4. Petition: What in this passage is God asking me to do?

Experiment of the week

(A suggestion for engagement in following the way of Jesus this week)

As a group make a New Year's Resolution to be with God by reading His word, either by yourself or with others. Download the Read Scripture app from theBibleProject.com to start a reading plan that will take you through the Bible and praying the Psalms this year. Included in the reading plan are short animated videos designed to help you better understand what you are reading. You can even download and print posters for each video on the website.

Reading Scripture is to love the Lord. Sharing Scripture is to love your neighbor. Share what you received from your Bible reading with your neighbor this week. Ask God who that neighbor might be. It may be someone in your family, in your community group, or literally in your neighborhood.