



THE PRACTICE OF
SCRIPTURE

How To Read The Bible Workbook

January 2024

Welcome!

I'm so stoked you've chosen to give your free time to be here tonight! I praise God for how he's working in your life to give you hunger for his word. I have been so blessed by the way others have taught me to dig into the Scriptures in a way that impacts my life and the lives around me. Wherever you're at on your spiritual journey, I'm excited for you to grow in your skills of meaningful Bible reading. I pray this time together pays dividends for years to come as you grow in your ability to feed yourself from the word.
-Pastor Darren

*Give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day.
Teach a man to fish and he'll eat for a lifetime.*

Workshop Overview

Week 1: Jan 16

Introduction: The Story of Bible & The Reading Method

Session 1: Observing

Session 2: Understanding

Week 2: Jan 23

Session 3: Applying

Session 4: Reading Narrative

Session 5: Reading Poetry

Week 3: Jan 30

Session 6: Seeing Christ in all of Scripture

Session 7: Q&A

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Introduction
The Story of the Bible & The Reading Process

Introduction to Reading the Bible

The Bible is one long story centering on the person and work of Jesus. As we read the Bible as a story, rather than a rule book or map for life, we are impacted by it the way God intended, and can begin to live in light of the story we are a part of.

The Story of the Bible

1: _____ (Gen 1–2)

2: _____ (Gen 3)

3: _____ (Gen 3:15–rest of OT)

4: _____ (Gospels–Acts)

5: _____ (Acts–Jude)

6: _____ (Rev 19–21)

The Bible Reading Process

_____ → _____ → _____

Observing: _____

Understanding: _____

Applying: _____

Read rightly, the Bible reveals _____

Session 1: Observing

Importance of Observation

Better _____ —> _____
interpretation —> _____ application

The #1 problem with our Bible reading is

The #2 problem with our Bible reading is

Scripture requires _____ and

How To Observe Well

_____ Down / Zoom _____ / Zoom _____

Zoom In

- Repeated words/phrases/ideas
- Truths & Ideas Presented
- Grammar
- Ask questions: Context? Author? Audience? Speaker?
- Specific way things are said (word-for-word translation)

Zoom Out

- Things that aren't observable in one verse
- General Thrust/Emphasis/Content
- Themes/Motifs
- Tone/Vibe
- Style of writing
- Context
- Placement in the book/Bible

Practice: **Titus 3:1–7**

- Read text thoughtfully, recording observations
- Ask yourself: "Where do I see that in the text?"

Practice Observation: **Titus 3:1–7**

Zoom-In Observations

Zoom-Out Observations

Questions

Session 2: Understanding

Basic Rules for Understanding/Interpretation

(Hermeneutics)

- First goal is to discover what the _____ meant
- The ultimate goal is for the _____
- Getting true, intended meaning: _____
(good)
- Inserting your own meaning: _____ (bad)

Literal

Grammatical

Historical

Christocentric

How To Understand a Text

Plain Sense

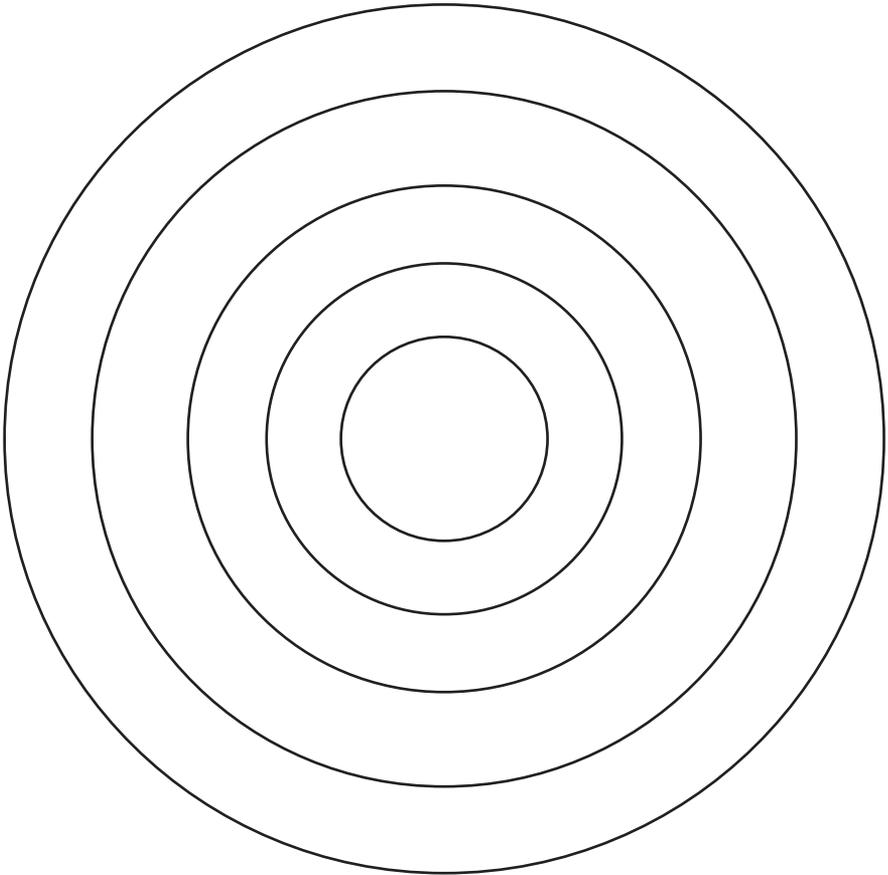
- Don't overcomplicate or seek hidden meanings
- Jesus took OT stories as literal (Jonah, Adam & Eve)

Grammar

- Follow flow of main and supporting thoughts
- Jesus & Paul did this (Matt 22:32; Gal 3:16)

Context

- _____ determines _____



Genre: Know what to expect and what to look for

History & Culture

- Customs, events, geography, etc.
- Understand what it meant to original readers

Find The Main Point

- Repeated, given more time/weight
- Most plain things
- Commands

Commonly Misunderstood Texts

Jeremiah 29:11 — For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Matthew 18:20 — where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.

Romans 8:28 — we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Practice Understanding: **Titus 3:1–7**

- Using the observations you already made, go through the questions to help you gain an understanding of the meaning of Titus 3:1–7.
- Be sure to base your answers off of real observations you've made in the text.

Practice Understanding: **Titus 3:1–7**

Who is “them” in v1?

What commands are given?

Who is “we” in v3? Why do you think the author adds we “ourselves”?

What is the basis for living the way the author says to? Is there a motivation?

What ideas seem to be emphasized?

Does the surrounding context help at all?

Moving from Text to Life

For them and for then

For us and for always

For me and for now

Session 3: Applying

How to Apply Scripture to Your Life

Goal = Life Change

- _____ (how I think God reacts toward me when I sin)
- _____ (how I feel about not-yet-Christians around me)
- _____ (give to poor, show hospitality, forgive)
- _____

Get It From The Text

Match the verses with the application that best fits each

1. ____ Proverbs 19:11 — Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.
2. ____ Ephesians 4:32 — Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
3. ____ Mark 10:43–45 — Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.
4. ____ Numbers 23:19 — God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, **22**and will he not fulfill it?

Practical Ways to Get to Application

- Look for commands
- Turn indicatives into imperatives
- Pray the text

Practice Applying: **Titus 3:1–7**

- Get as specific as you can—visualize what it would change in your life
- It should come more from the main idea(s) than from side thoughts

In light of the truths in Titus 3:1–7, how should you...

Think

Feel

Act

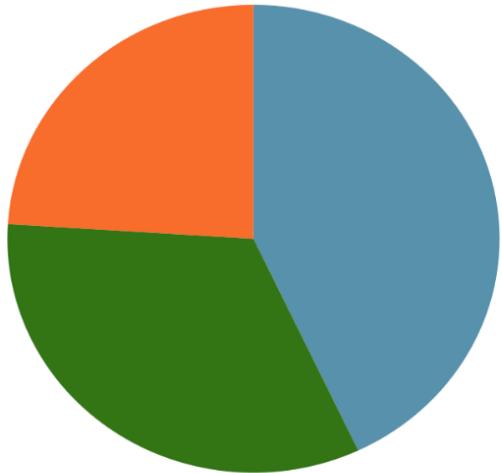
An Introduction to Genre

The Bible contains various styles of literature, and having a basic understanding of how each genre differs can help us properly understand and live in light of what we're reading.

Genres in the Bible

- _____: Stories (history, parables)
- _____: Speeches, letters
- _____: Psalms, wisdom literature, prophecy

Genres in the Bible



Session 4: Reading Narrative

Reading Narrative

Much of the Bible comes to us in the form of stories—historical accounts about things that happened to people in a different culture and different time. Learning to read these stories wisely will help us see why they were written and what they can teach us today—about God, about Jesus, about our world, and about ourselves.

Intro to Reading Narrative

- Stories in the OT and NT (not direct instruction)
- Pay attention to story elements (plot, character, setting)
- Find place in the larger story of section or book
- Find place in the larger story of whole Bible

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Making an _____ between the story and your life
- Not relating the story to _____
- Making yourself the _____
- Allegorizing or Moralizing

Practice w/ **1 Samuel 17**

Observations

Summary

Interpretation

According to his own words, why is David offended by Goliath and what seems to be his motivation for fighting Goliath? (see vv26, 36, 37, 45–47)

What do you think the author wanted his audience (the ancient Israelites) to know/do from reading this story?

How does this story fit into the larger story of the Old Testament and the Bible?

How can themes or events in this story point us forward toward the Messiah (Jesus) who was to come?

Given your observations, what do you think is the main truth this story illustrates for God's people?

Application

Given your answer to the previous question, how does God want this story to influence your life and relationship with God?

Why would the application of: you can slay the “giants” in your life not fit with what happens in the story?

How might God be calling you to think, feel, or act differently in light of this story?

Session 5: Reading Poetry

Introduction to Biblical Poetry

Whether you're into poetry or not, the Bible is loaded with it. The biblical authors often use poetry to paint imaginative pictures of life with God. Just like reading New Testament Letters or narratives, reading poetry comes with its own set of rules and expectations.

An example of narrative turning into poetry

Exodus 14 — Narrative	Exodus 15 — Poetry
vv5–9	v9
vv21–22	vv7–8
vv26–28	vv4–5, 10, 12

General Things To Know

- Metaphorical language
- Structure is intentional
- Appeal to emotions and imagination

Reading the Psalms

- Prayer book of God's people (songs or poems)
- Incredible range of emotions. Raw honesty
- Beautiful in composition and structure
- Different types: Lament, Thanksgiving, Praise
- Often turning from problems to praise
- Meant to be experienced more than picked apart

Practice: Psalm 13 or Psalm 100

Reading Proverbs

- Ch1–9 are speeches. Ch10–31 are short, wise sayings
- Center on “wisdom” (life skill according to God’s design)
- Not promises, but principles of how life usually works
- Require contemplation and meditation
- Different structures: Opposing ideas or reiterating same point (parallelism)
- Christ is wisdom incarnate (Col 2:3), so find him in proverbs

Practice: Proverbs

10:1 — A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.

12:9 — Better to be lowly and have a servant, than to play the great man and lack bread.

13:20 — Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

Session 6: Seeing Christ in All of Scripture

Seeing Christ in All of Scripture

Since the entire Bible is one story centering on Jesus, it's vital we learn to read the Bible with him always on our minds. Jesus, and the Bible itself, tell us to come to Scripture looking for him. Every single portion of Scripture must be seen and understood in light of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

How _____ Understood Scripture

- *1 Peter 1:10-12*
- *Galatians 3:8*
- *Acts 8:26-35*

How _____ Understood Scripture

- *John 5:39, 46*
- *Luke 24*

How to Find Christ in All of Scripture

- Start with clear NT examples/references
- Cross-references
- Connect text to overarching story of Scripture
- Types and shadows
- Like or unlike Christ/the gospel
- Themes
- Stories of deliverance
- Images
- Christophanies

Practice: Finding Christ in the OT

Numbers 21:4–9 —> John 3:14; 1 Cor 10:9

Genesis 22 (Abraham and Isaac)

Psalms 22

2 Kings 5:1–14

Practice Passages

Practice: Finding Christ in the OT

NT Letters Practice: **1 Peter 1:13-21**

Observe

Understand

Who is writing? Who is he writing to? (v. 1)

What are the main ideas of the passage? (Look for commands, repetition, and appositives)

What reasons does the author give to support/explain the commands? (Look for logical connectors)

What is Peter's point to his original audience?

What theology does this passage teach - about God, Christians, Christ, the gospel?

Apply

NT Narrative Practice: Acts 8:26–40

Observe

Summary

Understand

Why do you think Luke (the author) goes out of his way to show that the man Philip spoke to was an Ethiopian? (see Acts 1:8 for some help)

Looking at how Philip gets his directions in this account, who is Luke portraying as the one in control of these events?

What do vv32–36 (especially v36) teach you about Philip's view of how to rightly understand the Old Testament?

How is this short story a fulfillment of Jesus' words in Matthew 28:19, 20 and Acts 1:8?

Apply

Do you think this story is just a historical account for us (not something we are to expect or emulate), or is it recorded to teach us things about what we should look for and expect from God in our lives today? Why do you think the way you do on that?

What are some things Christians can learn from the example of Philip?

Are there any other things you think this story is meant to change in your thoughts, feelings, or actions?

Q & A

Appendices

Appendix A: Bible Study Tools

Books

- Physical Bible: word-for-word translation (ESV, NASB)
- Study Bible (ESV, HCSB)
- Commentaries by trusted authors
- Books by trusted authors

People

- Christian friends
- Mentors/disciplers
- Growth Group members and leaders
- Pastors at your local church

Online Study Tools

- Logos
- NET Bible
- Olive Tree Bible
- Blue Letter Bible
- BibleHub

Websites for Articles & Videos

- The Gospel Coalition
- Desiring God
- Got Questions

A note on how to test the legitimacy of a study resource

When reading a commentary or study resource the main test of whether the resource is doing a good job is: can you see in the text where they are getting their interpretation from?

Appendix B: Glossary

Authorial Intent: The meaning the original author had in mind when writing. This is the idea that the true meaning of a text lies not in what “it means to you,” but in what it meant to the author.

Christophany: God the Son appearing in some sort of physical form before the incarnation where he took on human form. This happens in the Old Testament.

Eisegesis: Incorrectly reading your own ideas, thoughts, and definitions into the text.

Epistle: A letter. New Testament letters are often called ‘Epistles’.

Exegesis: Digging into the text to discover the original meaning the author meant for the original readers—mining the true meaning out of the text.

Genre: The form and style of writing, which impacts how we rightly read, understand, and apply the text. The main genres in Scripture are: narrative, poetry, and prose-discourse.

Hermeneutics: The rules of interpretation someone uses to study, understand and apply a text of Scripture.

Parallelism: A common literary device in ancient Hebrew poetry, with two lines that help make the same point.

Appendix C: A Guide to Bible Translations

How can we trust the Bible if there are so many different translations?

The reason for different translations has nothing to do with uncertainty about what the original documents said, but rather has to do with different philosophies of how to bring ancient writings into modern-day language.

Some translating committees stick as close to the original words and sentence structure as possible, and go for a “word-for-word” approach. Others aim for more readability with a “thought-for-thought” approach, allowing the modern reader to have an experience of easier reading, like the original readers would had.

Rather than thinking about one translation as “better” than another, it’s more helpful to see the strengths of each different type, so you know how to use different translations. I like reading chunks of the Old Testament in my NLT, but I would not use it for deep study, nor would I preach from it, or pay close attention to specific words or their order.

The need for different and new translations is due to the ever-changing nature of language in culture. We change how we use and understand words, so translations are sometimes helped by updates.

It’s also worth knowing that any legitimate translation is done by teams of scholars who have devoted their lives to studying and translating from Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic.

Opposite is a guide to some major translations and how you can best utilize them in your study, as well as a spectrum that shows where each falls on how strictly they translate.

English Standard Version (ESV)

Word-for-word translation that is extremely accurate to the original languages. Like other word-for-word translations, this one tries to translate each individual word and preserve word order whenever possible. At Grace, we use ESV for everything.

King James Version (KJV)/ New King James Version (NKJV)

Word-for-word translation with old language. These are very accurate, but it's generally agreed upon that they are not quite as accurate as the ESV or NASB.

(Sadly there is a small movement of "KJV only" people who think passionately that the KJV is the only legitimate translation....just in case you ever run into this).

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Another word-for-word translation. Similar to ESV but slightly less smooth in sentence structure. This is the translation I grew up with and what I was reading when I was in college and fell in love with Scripture and Jesus.

New International Version (NIV)

A popular thought-for-thought translation that is also very accurate to the original languages. Takes more freedom than a word-for-word approach when it comes to word order or phrasing, but aims for the overall thought of the sentence or clause to come across as accurately as possible.

New Living Translation (NLT)

A hybrid thought for thought/paraphrase. To me, it's extremely readable while being surprisingly accurate.

The Message (MSG)

Less a translation and more a very loose paraphrase. Not wrong to use, but it's not all "the very words of God."

Paraphrase

Word-for-Word



MSG NLT NIV CSB NKJV ESV NASB

Appendix D: Bibliography

Christ from Beginning to End by Trent Hunter & Stephen Wellum

Exegetical Fallacies by Don Carson

Grasping God's Word by Scott Duvall & Daniel Hays

How To Read the Bible for All It's Worth by Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart

How to Read Proverbs by Tremper Longman III

Interpreting the New Testament Text by Darrell Bock & Buist Fanning

Interpreting the Psalms by Mark Futato

Living by the Book by Howard Hendricks

Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem

The Bible Project: How To Read the Bible Video Series

What is Biblical Theology? by James Hamilton

Women of the Word by Jen Wilkin

