

Fall Bible Campaign 2013

BC PRESENTS:



THE BIG STORY

DAILY BREAD

Making the Bible your Daily Source

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

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Introduction

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes... The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

- Psalm 19:7-11 (NIV)

I have never been more excited about a Life Group series. Why? Because I know that the daily Bible reading habit and Bible knowledge is foundational to every other positive thing about being a “Christian”. Bible knowledge and Bible application is the difference between those who profess the label Christian and those who possess the power of Christ in their daily lives. I want to live in the positively charged and positively challenged environment of people who are walking in the word.

The “Daily Bread” small group series definitely has a challenging tone. It is definitely not my desire to come to you in a condemning or critical tone. If you struggle to spend as much time as you should with your Bible, join the club. However, the hurting world around us is begging us to give them a living demonstration of Christ. Christ was called, “the word.” This means the only way people who need Jesus will see Jesus in you and me is if we become people of “the book.”

So don't be condemned, but be encouraged to go deep with God in His word every day. Make the “bread of life” your “daily bread,” and grow into the powerful person that God has created you to be.

Bon Appétit,
Pastor Phil McCutchen

WEEK ONE:

DAILY BREAD FOR UNEXPLAINABLE POWER

“It’s not the good you do occasionally, but the good you do daily that will improve your life.”

KEY PASSAGE

Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.

- Psalm 119:89 (NIV)

THE BIG IDEA

The Bible is too powerful and too important to neglect daily, even when its words don’t excite us.



VIDEO BREAK

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE PATHS OF THE SEA

In the 1800s, Matthew Maury, an officer in the United States Navy believed his Bible. As a Christian he loved to read the Bible. One day Maury was reading about the dominion man was given over the animals in Psalm 8. He was amazed that verse 8 spoke of the fish and all creatures that swim in the “paths of the sea.” “Paths of the sea”— how could this be? He never knew there was such a thing. He was determined to find them. Maury discovered that the oceans have many paths or currents, which were like rivers flowing through the sea. Maury wrote the first book on oceanography and became known as “the pathfinder of the seas”— “The father of modern navigation.” Maury received his idea about ocean currents from reading Psalm 8:8 which was written about 3,000 years ago by King David. David wrote as he was moved by the Spirit of God and could not have possibly had first-hand knowledge of the ocean floor. Psalms 8:8 speaks of fish in the “paths of the sea”. Fisherman all know their most successful fishing occurs in the “paths of the sea.”

THE LESSON

2012 Life Way Publishers Survey of Christians' Reading Habits

- 37% have read The Life of Pi...
- 22% have read Hunger Games...
- 18% have read Game of Thrones...
- 14% have read The Hobbit...
- 19% have read Shades of Gray...

-
- 22% read the Bible once a month
 - 18% rarely or never read the Bible
 - Less than 10% have read the Bible cover to cover

- Psalms 119:89 says that God's word is "eternal."
- Psalms 119:172 says the commands of scripture are "righteous."
- Jesus said in Mark 13:30 that his "words will never pass away."
- Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16 that the scriptures are "God breathed"

"The Bible is no mere book, but a Living Creature, with a power that conquers all that oppose it." - **Napoleon Bonaparte**

"It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and Bible."
- **George Washington**

"Believe me, sir, never a night goes by, be I ever so tired, but I read the Word of God before I go to bed." - **Douglas McAurther**

Our first challenge isn't to find the Bible interesting, but to find it necessary.

1. BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF ABOUT YOUR LIKE OR DISLIKE OF READING THE BIBLE.

2. FACE THE REALITY THAT OUR LACK OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BIBLE IS HURTING US.

3. FIRMLY COMMIT TO A JOURNEY AT WHICH YOU EXPECT TO SUCCEED.

6 Steps to Feeding on the Word of God

1. Pray this prayer, "Dear Jesus, I long for your presence. I sit before you to clear my mind of all the things that battle for my attention.

I humbly sit at your feet asking you to minister to me through your word.” Mention a few things that have happened over the last 24 hours for which you are grateful. Mention a few things you are concerned about and how you would like God’s help.

(Writing the prayer out is helpful for some, but not necessary.)

2. Think through the scripture you have just read in your own words. Listen to the voice of God speak to your heart.

(You can type it out in yours words or write it down if you like.)

3. Ask yourself how the Lord is revealing himself to you. Quietly reflect on the words and phrases the Holy Spirit is revealing to your heart.

(You may want to highlight those words or phrases. You may want to write them down.)

4. Take what you have meditated on, and pray it as a prayer to God. Tell God your praise, confession, gratitude, sorrow and comfort.

5. Examine how you can align your actions, attitudes and choices with the truth of scripture you are reading.

6. Finish with the Lord’s Prayer.

“Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) Share with the group Bible passages and Bible stories that have been important to you. Don’t worry that you may not be able to quote the passages verbatim or remember all the details of the story.

2) Do you recall the time and place a Bible passage or a Bible story became significant to you? Please share those circumstances with the group.

3) Many books of wisdom have been written besides the Bible. Why do we think the Bible is the most powerful? What causes the Bible to stand apart from other writings that claim to be sacred?

4) The Gentiles in Acts 13: 48 & 49 “were glad and honored the word of the Lord.” How do we show enthusiasm or indifference to God’s word? How to we show honor or dishonor for God’s word?

5) What happened in a community when people showed enthusiasm and honor for God’s word?

6) To increase your daily joy in the word, you are being given an exercise to do as in your daily quiet time. If you have the time in your Life Group meeting, finish up by selecting a passage and talk through the 5 steps you are given at the end of the lesson.

WEEKLY BIBLE READING ASSIGNMENT

Use the 6 Steps to Feeding on God’s Word plan (pages 4 & 5) daily or as many times as you are able. Be ready to report highlights of your results to the group.



END LESSON 1

WEEK TWO:

DAILY BREAD AS A HEALTHY HABIT

“It’s not the good you do occasionally, but the good you do daily that will improve your life.”

REVIEWING A WEEK IN THE WORD

- 1) Share with us a passage you read in your own words.
- 2) What is something that the Lord revealed about himself to you as you read the Bible during this past week?
- 3) What is something that the Lord revealed to you about your circumstances and the world around you as you read the Bible this past week?
- 4) Tell us a meaningful meditation that came from your time in the Bible this past week.
- 5) Tell us a prayer that you prayed, praise that you gave or confession you made based on what you read in the Bible this week.
- 6) Name specific actions, attitudes and choices that you intend to change based on what the Lord revealed to you in your Bible reading over the past week?

KEY PASSAGE

I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.

- Job 23:12 (NIV)

THE BIG IDEA

The historically proven first step in putting God and his will first in your life is through daily Bible reading.



VIDEO BREAK

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE LITERARY CONSISTENCY OF THE BIBLE

The Bible contains 66 books written over 1,500 years by 40 different authors of difference backgrounds. They were shepherds, fishermen, doctors, kings, & prophets. The Bible was written in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, on 3 different continents, Africa, Asia and Europe. However these books tell one “Big Story” of the creation, fall, and redemption of God’s people; a common theme- God’s universal love for all of humanity; and a common message- salvation is available to all who repent of their sins and commit to following God with all of their heart, soul, mind and strength. Professor Jason Carlson said, “I challenge you to go to any library in the world, you can choose any library you like, and find 66 books which match the characteristics of the 66 books in the Bible. You must choose 66 books, written by 40 different authors, over 1500 years, in 3 different languages, written on 3 different continents. However, they must share a common storyline, a common theme, and a common message, with no historical errors or contradictions.”

THE LESSON

“So great is my veneration for the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society. I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once every year.”

- **John Quincy Adams, 6th President of the United States**

“I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God. I want to know one thing: the way to heaven. God himself has condescended to teach me the way. He has written it down in a book. Oh, give me that book! At any price give me the book of God. Let me be a man of one book.” - **John Wesley**

1. I SHOULD READ MY BIBLE DAILY BECAUSE IT TELLS GOD EVERYDAY THAT I HONOR HIM AND LOVE HIM.

I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word. - **Psalm 138:2 (NIV)**

I READ MY BIBLE DAILY BECAUSE IT REMINDS ME THAT GOD IS MY #1 PRIORITY IN LIFE.

“My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.” - **Proverbs 2:1-6 (NIV)**

3. I SHOULD READ MY BIBLE DAILY BECAUSE IT COMMUNICATES THAT MY SPIRITUAL APPETITE FOR GOD IS AS IMPORTANT AS MY PHYSICAL APPETITE FOR FOOD.

I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.
- **Job 23:12 (NIV)**

4. I SHOULD READ MY BIBLE DAILY BECAUSE IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO INCREASE MY FAITH.

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
- **Romans 10:17 (NKJV)**

5. I SHOULD READ MY BIBLE DAILY BECAUSE IT DECREASES THE CHANCE I WILL MISS SOMETHING IMPORTANT GOD HAS TO SAY TO ME.

The mighty One, God, the Lord, speaks and calls the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. - **Psalms 50:1 (NIV)**

6. I SHOULD READ MY BIBLE DAILY BECAUSE IT'S THE BEST WAY TO GROW IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH.

As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby... - **1 Peter 2:2 (NKJV)**

7. I SHOULD READ MY BIBLE DAILY BECAUSE EVERY WORD OF GOD IS POWERFUL AND SIGNIFICANT.

Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. - **Proverbs 30:5 (NIV)**

Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts. I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey your word. - **Psalm 119:97-101 (NIV)**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Are there people in your life who often seem very interested in what you have to say? How do you feel about those people?
- 2) How do you feel about people who communicate that they aren't at all interested in what you have to say?
- 3) How do you think God is feeling right now about the importance you are placing on what he has to say?
- 4) What is the message you are sending to God when you make daily Bible reading a top priority in your life?
- 5) Of the 7 reasons for reading the Bible daily, which ones stand out to you and why?
- 6) What are some other ways that God will speak to you daily other than through the Bible? Why is it so important not to replace the Bible with another way of hearing from God?
- 7) We speak of being fed by God's word. Describe a time in your life when a thought, story, or passage from the Bible filled you with meaning, a sense of purpose, joy, hope, a sense of direction or some other powerful emotion.

WEEKLY BIBLE READING ASSIGNMENT

Take a picture of the place or places where you are doing your Bible reading and prayer during this series. Bring that picture to the group next week. Pray over the picture of one another's "alter area".



END LESSON 2

WEEK THREE:

DAILY BREAD AS A JOURNEY TO JOY

“It’s not the good you do occasionally, but the good you do daily that will improve your life.”

REVIEWING A WEEK IN THE WORD

- 1) Share with us a passage you read in your own words.
- 2) What is something that the Lord revealed about himself to you as you read the Bible during this past week?
- 3) What is something that the Lord revealed to you about your circumstances and the world around you as you read the Bible this past week?
- 4) Tell us a meaningful meditation that came from your time in the Bible this past week.
- 5) Tell us a prayer that you prayed, praise that you gave or confession you made based on what you read in the Bible this week.
- 6) Name specific actions, attitudes and choices that you intend to change based on what the Lord revealed to you in your Bible reading over the past week?

KEY PASSAGE

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

- John 15:9-12 (NIV)

THE BIG IDEA

God has amazing moments of life-changing revelation occasionally for those who show up daily. A normal day in God’s word is good, but a special day in God’s word is an experience that can’t be surpassed.



VIDEO BREAK

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

STRENGTH IN THE NUMBER OF BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPTS

The New Testament is constantly under attack, and critics often contest its reliability and accuracy. If the critics want to disregard the New Testament, then they must also disregard other ancient writings by Plato, Aristotle, and Homer. This is because the New Testament documents are better preserved and more numerous than any other ancient writings. Because they are so numerous, they can be cross-checked for accuracy... and they are very consistent. There are presently 5,686 Greek manuscripts in existence today for the New Testament. If we were to compare the number of New Testament manuscripts to other ancient writings, we find that the New Testament manuscripts far outweigh the others in quantity. There are 49 copies of the writings of Aristotle, 7 copies of the writings of Plato, 10 copies of the writings of Caesar, 643 copies of Homer and 8 copies of the writing of Demosthenes.

There are thousands more New Testament Greek manuscripts than any other ancient writing. The internal consistency of the New Testament documents is about 99.5% textually pure. That is an amazing accuracy. In addition, there are over 19,000 copies in the Syriac, Latin, Coptic, and Aramaic languages. The total supporting New Testament manuscript base is over 24,000.

THE LESSON

“I believe that the one chief reason that I have been kept in happy useful service is that I have been a lover of Holy Scripture. It has been my habit to read the Bible through four times a year; in a prayerful spirit, to apply it to my heart, and practice what I find there. I have been for sixty-nine years a happy man; happy, happy, happy.” - **George Muller**

“The longer you read the Bible, the more you will like it; it will grow sweeter and sweeter; and the more you get into the spirit of it, the more you will get into the spirit of Christ.” - **Romaine**

1. THE JOY OF HEARING FROM GOD

When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God Almighty.

- **Jeremiah 15:16 (NIV)**

2. THE JOY OF UNDERSTANDING

The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. - **Psalms 119:130 (NIV)**

3. THE JOY OF BEARING FRUIT

Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

- **Joshua 1:7-8 (NIV)**

4. THE JOY OF EXPERIENCING REWARD

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. - **Hebrews 12:11 (NIV)**

5. THE JOY OF STABILITY IN THE STORMS OF LIFE

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. - **Matthew 7:24-29 (NIV)**

People who daily immerse themselves in scripture have the same problems and issues that everyone else does, but a life that is built on scripture will be ready for the storms of life.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead.

- **Isaiah 43:2-3 (NIV)**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) Do you trust that reading the Bible will become a pleasurable experience? Do you fear that reading the Bible will be a boring obligation? Why do you feel that way?

2) Do you trust that the directives in God’s word will take you to a place of happiness, or do you fear they will take you to a place of loss or sorrow? Why do you think you feel that way?

3) Can you think of either historical figures or people you know who seem to get great joy from reading and studying the Bible? What do you think their secret is? (Feel free to include yourself)

4) Explain why you think Jesus made a connection between obeying the Father’s commands and joy. Don’t we generally associate being commanded with negative emotions?

5) Explain why you think Jesus made a connection between obeying the Father’s commands and being in love with God and people. Don’t we generally associate being commanded with a lack of love?

6) How can you relate the 5 types of joy promised to us for following God’s word to your own life? Give a personal experience if possible.

7) In what area of your life might you be avoiding God’s word because you fear that God’s counsel couldn’t possibly bring you the results you want? Why might we say that way of thinking is irrational?

8) Is your concept of God big enough for his word to work?

WEEKLY BIBLE READING ASSIGNMENT

Memorize Isa. 41:10: “Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.” - **Isaiah 41:10 (NLT)**

Look up the meaning of “afraid,” “discouraged,” “strengthen,” and “victorious.” Think about them daily.



END LESSON 3

WEEK FOUR:

DAILY BREAD AS A PAUSE FOR CLEAR THINKING

“It’s not the good you do occasionally, but the good you do daily that will improve your life.”

REVIEWING A WEEK IN THE WORD

- 1) Share with us a passage you read in your own words.
- 2) What is something that the Lord revealed about himself to you as you read the Bible during this past week?
- 3) What is something that the Lord revealed to you about your circumstances and the world around you as you read the Bible this past week?
- 4) Tell us a meaningful meditation that came from your time in the Bible this past week.
- 5) Tell us a prayer that you prayed, praise that you gave or confession you made based on what you read in the Bible this week.
- 6) Name specific actions, attitudes and choices that you intend to change based on what the Lord revealed to you in your Bible reading over the past week?

KEY PASSAGE

For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life. - Proverbs 6:23 (NIV)

THE BIG IDEA

“Lord our hearts are prone to wander, prone to leave the God we love.” A daily shower of God’s thoughts through the Bible curbs our natural inclination to go astray.



VIDEO BREAK

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

ARCHEOLOGY AND THE RELIABILITY OF THE BIBLE

“No archeological discovery has ever overturned a Biblical reference.”
 - Nelson Glueck, “Rivers in the Desert”

The amount of archeological support for the Bible continues to grow, year after year. Today, well over 50,000 digs at 30,000 different locations have been excavated. These finds continue to provide substantial support of the Bible’s written record. Belshazzar, King Darius, and King Cyrus are mentioned by name. What were once thought to be mythological empires mentioned in the Old Testament, like the Hittites, have been found to exist after all. King David’s reign was found recorded on ancient Egyptian inscriptions, evidence of the Regal House of Nebuchadnezzar, and a stone tablet bearing Pontius Pilate’s name.

Some of the finds include Egyptian Chariot Wheels in the Red Sea. Numerous chariot wheels have been discovered in the Red Sea near the place where the Israelites crossed. Horses’ hoofs were also found even though horses have been absent from this area for thousands of years. Archeologists have discovered four, six, and eight spoke wheels that match those used by the Egyptians during the Exodus time period and there were hundreds of human bones found in this same area. The chariot wheels, the horses’ hoofs, and the bones date from around 1446 B.C., the time in which the Exodus took place.

THE LESSON

“I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take this entire book that you can by reason and the balance by faith, and you will live and die a better man. It is the best Book which God has given to man.”

- Abraham Lincoln

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes... The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. - **Psalm 19:7-11 (NIV)**

By taking a daily break to spend time in God's word ...

1. YOU CAN GET PERFECT DAILY DIRECTION IN AN IMPERFECT WORLD.

“The Law of the Lord is perfect ...” - **Verse 7**

2. YOU CAN BE SPIRITUALLY RESUSCITATED EVERY DAY.

“... reviving the soul.” - **Verse 7**

3. YOU CAN DAILY BE REDIRECTED TO THINK & DO THE RIGHT THING.

“The precepts of the LORD are right ...” - **Verse 8**

4. YOU CAN HAVE YOUR JOY RENEWED DAILY AT THE DEEPEST LEVEL.

“... giving joy to the heart.” - **Verse 9**

5. YOU CAN BE BRILLIANT AND BLESSED WITH CLEAR SEEING.

“The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.” - **Verse 9**

“All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.” - **Psalm 139:16 (NIV)**

6. YOU CAN BE CONFIDENT & CLEAN.

“The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous.” - **Verse 10**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) Does the culture we live in have reliable and accurate messages for the important decisions of life? Why or why not? Give examples.

2) What are some of the messages of movies, commercials, music and news media that conflict with your Christian values?

3) Are our emotions reliable guides for our thoughts and decisions in life? Give examples.

4) Are the thoughts and opinions of friends & family always helpful in showing you the best course to take in life?

5) Give some examples of a time in your life when you really believed something was right and true, but later you found out it wasn't. If possible, tell the group a time when a thought or passage of the Bible corrected your thinking.

6) Do you ever feel overwhelmed by all the voices in the world telling you what to think, feel and do with your life? How can the Bible become your reliable shelter from the storm of information coming at you every day?

7) Ever hear the statement, “don't think apart from God?” What do you think it means? What daily habit will help us to consistently think with God?

8) What is the reward of taking a break to “think with God” and what are the consequences if we don't? What are you currently doing to make sure you daily take a “clear thinking break”?

WEEKLY BIBLE READING ASSIGNMENT

Identify a message you hear from a public figure, a media personality or a celebrity that disagrees with scripture. Identify a message in a song, a television show, a movie or an advertisement that disagrees with scripture.



END LESSON 4

WEEK FIVE:

DAILY BREAD AS A CONNECTING LANGUAGE & ULTIMATE TRUTH

“It’s not the good you do occasionally, but the good you do daily that will improve your life.”

REVIEWING A WEEK IN THE WORD

- 1) Share with us a passage you read in your own words.
- 2) What is something that the Lord revealed about himself to you as you read the Bible during this past week?
- 3) What is something that the Lord revealed to you about your circumstances and the world around you as you read the Bible this past week?
- 4) Tell us a meaningful meditation that came from your time in the Bible this past week.
- 5) Tell us a prayer that you prayed, praise that you gave or confession you made based on what you read in the Bible this week.
- 6) Name specific actions, attitudes and choices that you intend to change based on what the Lord revealed to you in your Bible reading over the past week?

KEY PASSAGE

The Bereans received and examined the scriptures EVERY DAY to see if what Paul said was true. - Acts 17:11 (NIV)

THE BIG IDEA

The Bible provides language and belief, the two great unifiers of humanity. So the benefits of the church are dependent on a people’s relationship with scripture.



VIDEO BREAK

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

FLAT VERSUS ROUND

For thousands of years people believed the earth was flat. If one went too far, he would fall over the edge. This was taught in both Hindu and Buddhist scripture. When the first ship sailed around the world in the 1500s it proved them wrong. But the round earth was recorded in the Judeo Christian Bible long before man scientifically knew this. The prophet [Isaiah \(40:22\)](#) spoke of the “circle of the earth.” Solomon wrote, “He [God] set a compass [circle] upon the face of the deep.” ([Proverbs 8:27](#)). In our century, Arabs spoke of infidels being pushed over the edge into space, but 3000 years ago the Bible said the world was round.

THE LESSON

“Suppose a nation in some distant region should take the Bible for their only Law Book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts there exhibited! Every member would be obliged in conscience, to temperance, frugality, and industry; to justice, kindness, and charity towards his fellow men; and to piety, love, and reverence toward Almighty God... What a Utopia, what a Paradise would this region be.”

- **John Adams**

Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. - **Acts 17:11-12 (NIV)**

BARRIERS TO MAKING THE BIBLE OUR CONNECTING LANGUAGE AND OUR ULTIMATE TRUTH

1. WE MUST OVERCOME THE BARRIER OF IGNORANCE.

The Bereans received and examined the scriptures EVERY DAY to see if what Paul said was true. - **Acts 17:11**

2. WE MUST OVERCOME THE BARRIER OF WILLFULNESS.

These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe ...

- **Deuteronomy 6:1-9 (NIV)**

(Command: to require authoritatively; demand)

3. WE MUST OVERCOME THE BARRIER OF MISTRUST.

These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. - **Deuteronomy 6:1**

4. WE MUST OVERCOME THE BARRIER OF APATHY TOWARD ONE ANOTHER.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship. - **Acts 2:42**

5. WE MUST OVERCOME THE BARRIER OF PERFECTIONISM.

We don't have to be in perfect agreement about every single passage of scripture or every single principle of scripture. 2 Timothy 2:15 sums up this matter of ongoing effort to understand God's word very succinctly:

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." - **2 Timothy 2:15 (NIV)**

6. WE MUST OVERCOME THE BARRIER OF LAZINESS.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. - **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**

"Here, then, is the real problem of our negligence. We fail in our duty to study God's Word not so much because it is difficult to understand, not so much because it is dull and boring, but because it is work. Our problem is not a lack of intelligence or a lack of passion. Our problem is that we are lazy." - **R. C. Sproul**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) What is the value of being connected in unity and truth with other Christians?

2) Why is it so important to have a document such as the Bible that a community of Christians (a church) comes into agreement around?

3) What document has been the glue for the United States of America to stay together for over 200 years, and how does the Bible function the same way for Christians?

4) When is the last time another Christian used specific scripture to encourage, advise, challenge or correct you? What was your response?

5) Do you think Paul was annoyed at the Bereans for checking out his claims to see if they lined up with scripture? Do you use the scripture as the measure of all things? Why or why not?

6) Of all the barriers mentioned in the lesson, which one do you think most keeps Christians from coming into agreement around the scripture?

7) One of barriers for making the Bible our connecting language and ultimate truth was “perfectionism.” How do you respond to the logical objection that there will always be some things in the Bible that sincere Christians will disagree on? Should this make us abandon the Bible altogether? What should we do?

8) What do you think it would be like for a group of Christians to wholeheartedly embrace the Bible as their standard for all things?

9) The Bible says we are to “speak the truth in love.” Is it possible to have unity with other Christians that is not built on truth? Is that a problem? Why or why not?

WEEKLY BIBLE READING ASSIGNMENT

Think of an important core value or standard you deeply feel and see if you can find one or more passages of scripture to support it. All research tools are fair, including internet search engines.



END LESSON 5

WEEK SIX:

DAILY BREAD, THE WAY OF MAKING GOD'S STORY YOUR STORY

“It’s not the good you do occasionally, but the good you do daily that will improve your life.”

REVIEWING A WEEK IN THE WORD

- 1) Share with us a passage you read in your own words.
- 2) What is something that the Lord revealed about himself to you as you read the Bible during this past week?
- 3) What is something that the Lord revealed to you about your circumstances and the world around you as you read the Bible this past week?
- 4) Tell us a meaningful meditation that came from your time in the Bible this past week.
- 5) Tell us a prayer that you prayed, praise that you gave or confession you made based on what you read in the Bible this week.
- 6) Name specific actions, attitudes and choices that you intend to change based on what the Lord revealed to you in your Bible reading over the past week?

KEY PASSAGE

If only you fully obey the LORD your God and are careful to follow all these commands I am giving you today. For the LORD your God will bless you as he has promised, and you will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. You will rule over many nations but none will rule over you. - Deuteronomy 15:5-6 (NIV)

THE BIG IDEA

Through a relationship with God’s word, and obedience to it, we are in the center of whatever God is doing in the earth.



VIDEO BREAK

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

WHAT HOLDS THE EARTH UP?

Three thousand years ago the Hindu scriptures recorded the earth was resting on the backs of several huge elephants. The elephants were resting on the back of a very large turtle that was swimming in a sea. Greek mythology claims that the god Atlas was holding the earth on his shoulders. But our Bible says in Job 26:7 – “[God] hangeth the earth on nothing.” What a remarkable statement of fact. The earth is suspended in space and is held up by nothing. The book of Job was written about the same time the Hindu Scripture was written. How did Job know this scientific fact? Only God could have revealed this to Job. The Old Testament prophets wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).

THE LESSON

“Sink the Bible to the bottom of the ocean, and still man’s obligations to God would be unchanged. He would have the same path to tread, only his lamp and guide would be gone; the same voyage to make, but his chart and compass would be overboard!” - **Henry Ward Beecher**

Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book. - **Revelation 22:7**

What does it mean to “keep the words of the prophecy in this book”?

The Greek word for “Keep” is “tereo” and is translated “observe,” “reserve” and “preserve.”

1. TO OBSERVE SCRIPTURE IS TO READ, STUDY, ANALYZE AND MEDITATE ON.

Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the LORD swore to give your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth. - **Deuteronomy 11:17-21 (NIV)**

2. TO RESERVE IS TO MAKE A PLACE FOR.

If you reserve a table at a restaurant for someone, you are making a place at the table for them. You are treating them with deference and respect.

3. TO PRESERVE IS TO KEEP SAFE FROM CORRUPTION.

The result will be that through the power of the Holy Spirit that lives in you, your life will be the story of God showing up in the events that make up your days. You will look back at a history of answered prayer and divine intervention. You will live presently in the knowledge that your very life is a God script being written for all to read.

“You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.” - 2 Corinthians 3:2-3 (NIV)

The Bible is, among other things, the record of lives that were inter-twined with God. So your life is supposed to be a continuation of the writing of scripture.

“When you read God’s Word, you must constantly be saying to yourself, ‘It is talking to me, and about me.’”

- Søren Kierkegaard

THE FEAR OF EXCLUDING OTHERS

Currently there is a great fear that we might align ourselves with a religion that excludes others. To claim exceptionalism & exclusivism is considered to be a modern social sin. So talking about a destiny that differs from others may in fact be a turn-off to some. Because of this, many find it uncomfortable to hold up the scripture and claim that within it’s pages is the correct revelation that everyone should follow.

Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline and understanding. - **Proverbs 23:23**

Ephesians 4:15 sums up our assignment perfectly. It says we are to be “speaking the truth in love.”

Welcome to the rest of your “Big Story,” discovered by you continually as you feed on God’s daily bread.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Someone said, “If we fail to plan, we plan to fail.” How do you plan to daily “observe” your reverence for God’s word and “reserve” a place for the Bible?
- 2) Have any of your attitudes toward the Bible been challenged in this series? If so what are those areas of challenge and how do you feel about that?
- 3) What do you think we mean when we say, “make God’s story your own story?”
- 4) Do we need to guard the scripture from being distorted or displaced? How do you feel about becoming a defender of scripture?
- 5) Do you worry about excluding others that don’t believe in the Bible as you do? How do you plan to include those who do not choose to believe the Bible in your life without letting them dishonor the word you believe?
- 6) Could 2 Cor. 3:3 relate to living a Bible centered life around those who don’t believe or agree that the Bible is God’s word?
- 7) Are you afraid God will judge you if you don’t read the Bible, or excited that you are going to make God’s story your own?
- 8) What are some of the exciting miracles that may occur because you become a partner with God through his word?
- 9) What are some of the ways that even your difficulties will take on special significance and meaning because you strive to live biblically?
- 10) Do we agree to make our daily relationship with the Bible one of the ways we measure our relationship with God?

WEEKLY BIBLE READING ASSIGNMENT

Call, text or email someone in the group this week to share with them something that you believe God showed you from the word. Agree who you are going to contact before you leave the meeting.



END LESSON 6

DAILY BREAD

Making the Bible your Daily Source

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

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