

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

START WITH READING IT

- The first step of reading the Bible is...well...reading the Bible. It might be confusing, strange, comforting, or any number of other emotions, but we must start by reading the Scriptures, then using important tools to help us understand, receive, & practice the Word of God

NARRATIVE READING

- We must remember that the Bible is the story of God. This is not our story. It's not about our faith, but God's faithfulness. It's not about our work, but Jesus' redeeming work. It's not about what we think, it's about the One whose thoughts are higher than ours and whose ways are better than ours (Is. 55:8-9).
- Therefore, an important way to read the Bible is through 'narrative reading,' or seeing how the whole Bible is one story; the story of God. It all comes from, points to, and anchors in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Whether we are in Genesis or Revelation, we must ask ourselves, "How does this fit into the story of God?" Read the Bible as a narrative that points to God and God's story of love, creation, redemption, and His promise to make all things new.

LENS OF JESUS

Jesus is the lens through which we read the Scriptures.

- The Bible is the story of God written through different genres, letters, and books that all find their purpose, meaning, and goal in Christ Jesus.
- Jesus is the Word and He is the fulfillment of the Scriptures. He shows us the full revelation of God, the pathway of salvation and eternal life, the way of living in God's faithful and holy call, and the grace of God that covers, empowers, and leads us.
- We must read the Bible as a narrative that finds its fulfillment in Christ Jesus.
- Although we have many lenses that we bring to the Scriptures, we must read through the lens of Jesus.

WHAT LENSES DO I READ WITH?

- Each one of us reads the Bible through specific lenses. We come to the Word with certain lenses that inform and influence how we read. These lenses can be things like our family history, where we live, our socioeconomic status, our educational background, the media we consume, our political preferences, and many other sources.
- A crucial part of reading the Bible faithfully and accurately is identifying what lenses we are looking through, being aware of their impact, surrendering them, and anchoring ourselves in a Christ-centered perspective that sees the Scriptures as a story that is fulfilled in Christ alone.

EXEGESIS

- Exegesis vs. Eisegesis:
 - Biblical exegesis is the careful, systematic study of Scripture to discover the original, intended meaning of the words of the bible.
 - Biblical eisegesis is the interpretation of a text in the Bible by reading into it one's own ideas.

WESLEYAN QUADRILATERAL

The "Wesleyan Quadrilateral" is a theological framework based on the writings and teachings of John Wesley. The goal of the quadrilateral is to have a helpful tool to discern truth from God's Word through four primary sources: Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience. Using these four sources in our reading of the Bible helps to provide context, give a deeper understanding, and offer helpful insights for faithful next steps in following Jesus.

How can you use it?

- **Scripture:** This is the primary source of authority that leads us to truth. Scripture reveals the core Christian faith and doctrine. Start with the Scriptures by selecting and reading a passage/text.
- **Tradition:** Tradition is the history and wisdom of the church throughout time, including early church writings, commentaries, and Biblical scholarship. Use these resources to help examine the Bible more thoroughly.
- **Reason:** Reason is a divine gift that helps us to analyze and interpret the Scriptures. This includes utilizing philosophical and theological approaches to ensure logical and coherent Scripture reading.
- **Experience:** Experience refers to personal and corporate encounters with God. These experiences help to confirm truth and our understanding of God and His Word.

EXEGETICAL PROCESS

- Exegetical Process:
 - Read the Text
 - Make Observations
 - Examine the Context
 - History (time, culture, author, geography, etc.)
 - Literary (genre, where in the book/letter is the writing located, grammar, themes, etc.)
 - Examine the Content
 - Study specific words and grammar in the original texts (Hebrew and Greek) to find their specific meaning.
 - Examine the Text
 - Read the passage in multiple translations and make observations
 - Look for keywords, themes, repeated phrases, etc.
 - Look for Scriptural connections (Old Testament quotations, similar language used in other passages, etc.)
 - Take all of this information into prayer. Ask the Lord to show you what the text means and, most importantly, how you can live it out according to His call.

BIBLE RESOURCES

You will find that there are many challenging passages to understand and apply to your life in Christ. We suggest the following resources to aid your study and application of Scripture.

- **Scripture Reading Practices:** SOAP, Discovery Bible Study, Lectio Divina, Communal Reading of Scripture
- **Websites:** The Bible Project, Bible Gateway
- **Books:** *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth* by Fee and Stuart, *Seven Things I Wish Christians Knew About the Bible* by Bird
- **Commentaries:** New Beacon, Word, Anchor

WHAT'S NEXT?

Find more at our website: commissionchurches.org and/or explore the "Bible Outline" pages.