

Refer to THE Users Manual

Reading the Bible with Purpose – Week 3

by Chris Famisaran

Good morning, everybody. How are you all doing? Happy Sabbath. Let's pray. Father in heaven, as we continue in our series on how to read the Bible with purpose, leading guidance in Jesus name, amen.

There once was a man who ordered an Uber. He took the Uber down to the car dealership. And when he got to the car dealership, he bought a truck. When he bought the truck, he drove off the lot to go to Home Depot. And when he got to Home Depot, He purchased a lawnmower. He put it in. He then went to IKEA to buy some furniture. He pulled up to the curb side. They loaded the furniture in. And then lastly, he went to Best Buy. He then also parked in the curb side because his car was full of stuff. He then waited until they brought his new tablet out. And then he drove home. Now. The car, the lawnmower, furniture, and the tablet. What do they all have in common? They all have a user manual, right?

How many of you though, let's be honest, how many of you actually look at the user manual? Some of you, okay, good for you. You should follow instructions. And then there are people like me who we kind of glance at it just to make sure we're hopefully getting it mostly right. And yet there are some things, I like furniture. especially from IKEA and Target, where it is very important you read the instructions. Amen. Otherwise, what could take 20 minutes could take three hours. And that three hours, it's a painful, very frustrating three hours. Over the years, Lisa has bought furniture. And as her faithful husband, I've had to put that furniture together. use user manuals. You know, I find that sometimes it's very tedious to put furniture together. We're trying to figure out how to use a new piece of equipment. Quite frankly, I just skip the user manual. If I can't figure something out, if it's not working, I

just go to YouTube, right? It's so much easier. But user manuals, they're important. You know, why are they important? Well, user manuals provide a measure of safety that depending on what you're dealing with, especially like with the lawnmower or a trimmer, You got to be safe with those kinds of things. Appliances can hurt you. So a user manual provides the instructions, has all kinds of warnings, things to avoid. But also it helps you to understand, makes things to break it down, makes it easier to make sure that it's manageable in putting the product together. Sometimes though, maybe you put your product together, whatever it is, but it's not working. So therefore you need to troubleshoot the areas where possible. Maybe it also have tech support. But then also the user manual also explains the various different functions and aspects of the product. And some manuals, they want to make sure that they are there to help you. And again, like I said, where the manual fails or just you can't seem to find in the fine print, just use YouTube. Okay. Just go to YouTube.

Now there's a young man, Austin Ashton Janty. I think I hope I pronounced his last name right. Uh, Ashton Janty, Ashton Janty, uh, grew up the son, uh, a Naval serviceman. His father achieved the rank of a petty officer. And I don't know exactly what function his dad did, but. in the Navy, but he spent some time traveling as most service members around the world. And in particular, when he was in Italy, he learned how to play football. And so he went to the high school that he went to, would travel around Europe because his dad was based in Italy, playing the different schools on the various bases throughout Europe. But at some point he realized he really wanted to go even further and pursue a career in football. So he asked and begged his parents, please let me go back home to the United States. And it's there that he landed in Texas and he had a very promising career. So much so that he signed a letter of intent to go to Boise State, had a wonderful career there and recently was drafted as a sixth pick in the NFL to play for the Las Vegas Raiders. I know some of you Raiders fans I see you. But in spite of all of that, even despite the fact that he signed a very large contract, okay, he was also at one point considered for the Heisman Trophy. He sat down with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and

this is what he said, ultimate transformation he underwent and how he credits his faith for that change. He says, I like to say that I'm a Christian cleverly disguised as an all-American running back. I've learned that God has blessed me with amazing talents. I've just been able to do a lot of great things with it, but at the same time, not losing yourself in it and understanding that my identity is in Christ. Once I decided to give my life to him and change my ways, it's been an ultimate transformation, he said. You don't have to be perfect to come to God, but all you have to do is trust in him, have faith in him, and he will change your life. I feel that everything that I am doing now is because of that. Obviously, I've been able to do some great things on the field, but beyond that, he's changed my life. He's changed my views, my personality. I felt that I wasn't really a man before. I was just a boy. But now I feel as I'm a man and a man of God.

And where did this transformation come from? Obviously, it was his faith. And many of us wonder, how can I also have that same transformation? Being transformed by God is not just deciding, but to actively pursue God, to know God. One of the things that obviously what we can do to better understand who God is, is to be transformed by God and through God's teachings, God's stories. And where can we obviously find that? Through Scripture. Scripture has the power to transform us.

So I want to look at a couple of passages today. I'd like to go to **2 Timothy chapter 3 verses 16 and 17**. 2 Timothy 3, 16 and 17. Now to be fair, we did review this passage I think last year at some point. It's always a good reminder. So 2 Timothy 3, 16 and 17. All right, we all there? All right. It says three, 16 and 17. All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

If you want to be transformed by God, it's important that we take the time to go through the scriptures, through the Bible. What lessons does God have for us? And there's plenty of lessons. When you start from the beginning of Genesis one all the way to Revelation, there are important life lessons found in

scripture and not just life lessons, but lessons that can also give us hope that may challenge us, may even provoke us to think bigger, to build a deeper faith and ultimately to be transformed. Now we understand you, okay? The Bible is written based on the inspiration that the writers received from God. I want to go to another passage real quick as well. Just keep your thumb in 2 Timothy 3. We're going to come back to it at some point. But Peter also, I'd like to just really briefly at **2 Peter chapter 1**, 2 Peter chapter 1, as we read scripture, if we want to be transformed by God, we also have to understand that as we read scripture, starting at **verse 20**, chapter 1, verse 20, says, Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things.

A prophecy never had its origin in human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Spirit. And so the words in the Testament, the teachings of stories that we find in Scripture are inspired by God, written by people. Whether it was a direct a direct writing down of what God said to God, inspiring and then writing what they felt that were impressed by what God was trying to tell them. But as we read scripture, okay, as we read the Bible with purpose, we have to understand that as we read scripture, **scripture must be read and understood in the time and the context that it was written in.** so God certainly through the Holy Spirit, inspired the writers of the Bible, but they wrote down as it was relevant to them, okay, thousands of years ago. And sometimes it's important to recognize that what was written down doesn't necessarily always have a direct correlation to the time that we live here in 2025. And so we have to understand what was the purpose behind this? What was the overarching theme, the lesson?

Now, one of the things that we look at the life of Jesus, okay? How did Jesus teach the disciples and the people that he came across? He used stories, he used parables. But if you look at the parables, do they easily translate today? Yes, in a way, but what did he primarily use? He used illustrations such as farming, fishing, agriculture. things that were very relevant to them. And he used these stories to provoke them, to plant a seed that maybe they're not

going to get right away, but in a week or six years later, all of a sudden, boom, oh, that's what Jesus meant. So Jesus, spends time, he informs them, and we as followers of Jesus, we can look back and take these same lessons. and apply to our lives.

But again, one of the challenges though that we experience is that sometimes there's not always a direct correlation. There are things that we deal with today that we don't necessarily have a direct answer in scripture. So what do we do? What was the overarching emphasis? What is the Bible trying to teach us? Does it help us grow in our faith? Does it help us to treat one another lovingly, fairly, kindly? Are we growing in Christ? Does it teach us to be empathetic? So **the Bible provides principal lessons that we can apply to our lives as we learn and deal with challenging situations.**

As a child, I was baptized. That was many years ago. And the one thing that I will say though, so I've been reading the Bible for many years. And as I have read the Bible, I realize the less I know and the more time I need to spend in Scripture. Because I think the nice thing is that the Bible is so big, I'm always going to have questions. Should we be thinking about having the Bible as something that we should aspire to know everything and we'll be able to attain that knowledge at one point? Or is it a lifelong study? The lifelong study. I read the Bible professionally, if that makes sense. That's my job. And even after all of this time, just as last week I was going through something and I realized, huh, I had never thought of that story from this perspective. The beautiful thing about scripture is there's always something to learn. And when we think that we know the Bible, I feel that's a dangerous precedent that can be scary. Because I don't want to ever think that I know everything. You ever know, ever run into somebody who thinks they know everything? Do they really know everything? Generally, they don't. If anything, they don't have a very good concept of what they tend to be talking about or think they know, right? They're really annoying. And so I want to encourage you, as you move forward, as you read the Bible with purpose, have the humility to say, I don't know everything and ask questions.

Now, how can we read the Bible with purpose? Y'all know what soap is, right? To clean ourselves, right? Not in this context, okay? It's an acronym. **Soap can stand for scripture.** When you go to the Bible, take a passage of scripture, okay? And I would encourage you this week, okay? If you're not going through a reading program or anything, if you're trying to wonder what to read, I want to encourage you to go to one of the Gospels like John, partially because it's one of the easiest to read or maybe go to Proverbs or or maybe pick one of Paul's writings in the New Testament. Go to the Genesis account or go through the Genesis, but pick a passage. And as I as you read, I want you to **observe**, ask the who's in this passage. What is happening? Where is it taking place? Why is this important? And then next, how can I apply, how does this **apply** to my life? How can I apply it? Jesus talks about loving your neighbor, even when they're really rude. What's the good in that, Jesus? I don't want to be nice to my neighbor who's been rude to me, who built a fence up or just let their dogs run wild. Or maybe you pick whatever you're dealing with with your neighbor, right? Or the boss who is just obsessively working on the little things and is totally not looking at the big picture. And by not looking at the big picture, it's going to affect us, could affect our bottom line and thereby maybe even affect my employment. So how does this apply to me? Is it good to love others? Yeah, because if you hate others, what kind of path are you going to be on? Not a good path. We're called to be loving, to be kind, even to the difficult people. How does this apply? And ultimately, I want you to **pray**. What is this passage talking about teaching? What can I learn and how can I apply? And pray that. Pray that prayer of, God, how does this apply to my life? Just real quickly, okay? Let's go to, no, let's go to Matthew five, okay? I wasn't planning on doing this, but let's just do this. Let's go to Matthew five real quick. All right, let's see, let's go to. All right. Let's go to Matthew 5 and let's look at verse 38. Verse 38. Okay. You have heard it was said, an eye for what? An eye and a tooth for a tooth. Okay. You hit me, I'll hit you back. You cut me, I'll cut you. But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, Turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go

one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you and don't turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. There's a lot of stuff that we can just unpack, okay? And it's talking about, how do we deal with people who disrespect us? And if think about it, Ben, can you come on up here real quick? I have not asked Ben to do this, okay? Now. If I were to slap Ben. I'm not going to slap you. In the New Testament time that Jesus written about, would I want to slap him with my left hand? No. Because this would be considered what? Would be ceremonial unclean. However, it has been said, an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. But I tell you, do not resist anyone, an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them also the other cheek. Okay? Now, if I were to try to slap Ben, Okay. Am I asserting my dominance? Am I right? No. What do I look like? I look like I don't want to get, you know, I got to say, can't say certain words, you know, I'm going to look like a fool and really mean by doing so. I'm actually showing that number one, I'm not in control of my emotions. Do people respect people who lose their temper? Can you follow somebody who loses their temper and screams at you? Nope. Okay. Thank you, Ben. I can't slap him, he's an employee. I don't wanna deal with HR, so. I'm kidding. love and thank you. Thanks for being a team player.

If we truly want to live well, okay, we take this. Okay. But then it says, if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. And here's what, if anyone forces you to go a mile, go with them two miles. Okay. Give to the one who asks you and don't turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. Oh, this is difficult. Okay. This is difficult. Now, is Jesus saying just roll over and let them abuse you? No. Jesus is actually being very intentional that the one who slaps is actually somebody who is not in check and is actually revealing who they truly are. And if you truly want to understand somebody, don't just walk with them a mile. Truly, if you want to know somebody to truly understand them, walk in their shoes, see it from their perspective. And we don't like that because once we start to get in their shoes, we're going to realize that, know what, they're actually probably a lot, we have a lot more common beliefs. It's just, I don't like you. And I don't want to admit that because then that would mean that I am wrong. So take scripture,

observe it. What's, what is key about this? What's happening? Who's in this passage? Why is it important? Where is it taking place? And how can this apply to me? And then I want you to pray about it.

Now, just because for instance, you know, next week we're gonna be celebrating our graduates and we think that, yay, graduation, I have arrived. Those of you who have realized when you graduate from high school, college, post-college, kindergarten, what's common? Do you know everything in the whole, about the whole world? You don't know anything. The older I get, as I've said before, the older I get, the more questions I have and the less I realize, the less I know. Life, **just because you graduate doesn't mean you stop learning**. Peter Drucker once said, can accept the fact that learning is a lifelong process of keeping abreast of change and the most pressing task is to teach people how to learn. Learning is a lifelong pursuit. Again, like I said before, do you want to be, if you have to go into surgery. Do you want to be operated on by somebody who graduated in 1983 and never took a continuing education course or read a book? Or do you want to deal with somebody who has recently graduated and is more up to date? More up to date person, right? Life requires a lifelong learning. When we stop learning, we begin to regress. You could be 90 years old, 105 years old. Never stop learning. And there you're learning. There's plenty of lessons that we can take of love, of hope, of wisdom, how to treat one another, how to deal with conflict, of stewardship, of leadership.

So we go back to 2 Timothy 3, 16 and 17. All scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching. Scripture is useful for teaching. Now it says rebuking. When it says rebuking, do you then just say, well, the scripture says here, so bam. Do you lovingly rebuke people with pompous words and saying, you're wrong? Or do we come to them with love and just ask, hey, how are you doing? You don't seem normal. Is everything okay? Or maybe, hey man, you know, I noticed you've been dealing with X, Y, Z. Is everything okay? I'm concerned. When you come to somebody and say how they're wrong, if somebody comes to you, and maybe yelling with a really strong voice saying how you messed up. Are you ready and willing and want to receive that information right away? No.

Because then what do you want to do? You want to dig your heels in even further, 10 times harder and say, well, I'm going to prove this person wrong. Now you may be wrong, but if you want to make a difference, okay. If you want to make a difference and positively help this person grow, just ask questions. Hey, or maybe sometimes when somebody does something wrong and I told them to go do it, but they did it wrong. I have to ask myself, where did I fail to convey either the importance or the instructions? How did I, did I fail in this? And oftentimes I'll say, you know what? Hey, I'm sorry. I wasn't clear or I didn't do a good enough job. Give them the opportunity to grow and say, hey, okay, well, here's my questions and then work with them. But to come up and just say with a mallet, you know, a mallet of truth, you're wrong, get it right. It doesn't leave a very positive feeling. And that can be from your boss. could be even, dare I say, even as a parent, be careful how you talk to your children because they're going to remember that. And oftentimes what you teach, what happens, it gets passed down. So love your children, love your neighbor, love your spouse, love your employees, love your boss, and treat them with respect and decency. Lead with questions. Teach loving, correcting, and training in righteousness. Reading scripture will help prepare you for life. There's so many lessons, especially leadership lessons that I have taken from scripture.

And as you grow, I want to land the plane with this quote. C.S. Lewis, one of the things that I really took away from his book, Mere Christianity, was this. Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. first, perhaps you can understand what he's doing. He's getting the drains right. He's stopping the leaks in the roof and so on. You know that those jobs need doing and so you're not surprised. But when he starts to knock on the house, knocking on the house about in a way that hurts abdominally and doesn't seem to make sense, what on earth is he up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of. Throwing out a new wing here, putting an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were going to be made into a little decent cottage, but he is building up a palace. He intends to come and live in

himself. So as you reflect, when the Holy Spirit works and seeks to change and to help you grow, Sometimes God goes about it in a way that is unexpected and sometimes even painful because if you want to grow, it means dealing with situations or aspects about yourself that maybe you have been avoiding because you're scared. You don't want to change. But if you truly want to be transformed, you have to allow God to do God's work in you, to take the lessons. And sometimes that's not easy. But as you go through life, as you continue to read the scriptures, as you continue to refer to the user manual and understand the user manual, where there are areas that can help troubleshoot your life, to give you support, to give you instructions, basic instructions and life, your life will be that much better.

So this week, as you reflect, **has the Bible in any way transformed your life? And if not, What is holding you back from letting it influence you?** Has the Bible in any way, are there any stories that stick out to you that have changed your life? And if you haven't read the Bible or just don't care, what is holding you back from letting it influence you?

And this week, **I want you to choose a book of the Bible that you're not well versed in, that you don't know very well.** And I want you to apply the soap principles, okay? Scripture, what do you observe about it? How can it apply to your life? Pray about it. And then record these lessons you have learned and then go and apply those lessons to your life. Can we do that? Amen. So read with purpose, be transformed, refer to the user manual that your life may be well.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to gather together once again as a church family. Help us, Lord, to move forward with purpose as we read scripture. and that Lord, the user manual of life will help us to better understand you, to be in better relationship with you, to grow in relationship, but also with one another. Give us words of wisdom, courage, and Lord, give us opportunities to minister for you. In Jesus' name, everybody said. Amen

Grace and peace, everyone.