

EQUIP: BIBLICAL LITERACY

- Arguably one of the most important topics as a follower of Christ
- In the Bible Belt, it assumed everyone has Biblical knowledge
- Return to our purpose: John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

2 THINGS I MISSED GROWING UP IN THE BIBLE BELT BEING SURROUNDED BY SCRIPTURE:

1. I missed that the Bible is one big story and all the little stories fit and have their place in the big story.

2. I thought it was a latter goal to know Scripture well, the end goal. But it is not the end goal, it is the foundation because:

- It tells us the truth of who God is and what Jesus did
- It continues to work in us and shape our understanding of God

point of realization: seeing new believers' thirst for scripture vs my own. They truly grasped *the Bible is God revealing himself to us.*

READING AND STUDYING SCRIPTURE:

- 5 Ps (Jen Wilkin [Women of the Word](#))
- Summit Institute Bible Study Principles

1. STUDY WITH PRAYER

EPHESIANS 1

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21

- Paul was praying for the Church in Ephesus to have the eyes of their hearts enlightened! Not that we would just know things, but that it would sink into our hearts and radically change my heart as a result of the gospel. We are not just pursuing knowledge, we are pursuing God.
- We also see what Paul is praying that the church will know... – the hope to which he has called us, the riches of his glorious inheritance, the greatness of his power toward us

who believe. We know these things through Scripture. How do we have our eyes and hearts enlightened? We ask the Father to draw us near and reveal these things to us. We know from Hebrews 11 that scripture is alive and active and able to discern and reveal. We need to be asking for the Lord, just like Paul did for the Ephesians church, to reveal the truths of the scripture to our heart and mind.

2. STUDY WITH PURPOSE

This P is about understanding that from Genesis to Revelation, the entirety of Scripture is the story of God's rule on earth.

1. Every small story in Scripture has its place in pointing to God's big story, the story of how he saved us.

I think I used to get confused and not be able to place where and why Joseph or Ruth or David fit in the big story. I knew the independent stories but it didn't fall into my understanding of the big picture. The overall theme or story that every story points back to is **creation – fall – redemption – restoration**. So all other stories in the bible need to be viewed in light of these overarching themes.

2. Viewing the whole bible as having an overarching theme or story also affects how we view characters in the bible:

When we look at different characters I used to view them independent from Christ. So when Abraham is commanded to sacrifice Isaac, I always admired their faith. This is important, but more than that we see an picture of the substitute sacrifice when God provides the ram. This is pointing to Jesus. Jonah was story that I knew very well and is often told in Sunday school and is entertaining, but never saw the picture of how Jonah was just the shadow of the greater Messenger, or rather Message, that was to come, Jesus.

HOW TO SEE IT AS ONE LARGE STORY?

- make a timeline
- outline
- C2C – Creation to Christ
- Jesus Storybook Bible to get a clear and simple picture of how these stories all point to Christ.

3. STUDY WITH PERSPECTIVE

Middle and high school English study skills.

NEED TO KNOW THE HISTORY AND INFO ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE

- Who wrote it?

- When was it written?
- To whom was it written?
- In what style was it written? Genre: poetry, parable, letter, narrative
- Why was it written?

LOOK AT THE ENTIRETY OF THE BOOK AND THE SURROUNDING SCRIPTURE, NOT JUST LOOKING AT VERSES OR EVEN CHAPTERS.

When reading a book series, you would never skip from the first series in the book to the last. You would miss information that keys you into various themes or conflicts and you would miss out on lots of character development. You also would not just take one chapter and be able to conclude adequately what the entire book or series is about. The same applies to scripture.

** The 4th and 5th P are in my opinion intricately linked. You really cannot study with process unless you study with patience.

4. STUDY WITH PATIENCE

We need to recognize is that we are living in a society that is fast paced and achievement driven. In almost every area of life. Studying scripture is no exception. We all know we are supposed to be in the word daily and so it can be easy to slip into a check list mentality when we are studying the Bible. If we do this, we are returning to the very thing Jesus saved us from, good works. The Goal is to know God though his word, not simply get through a chapter.

I think it does take discipline and accountability to slow down, but I also believe we need to be praying that the Spirit would remind us every day that **what** we are reading and studying is how God has actually chosen to reveal himself.

Studying with process also helps slow us down.

5. STUDY WITH PROCESS –

The idea of studying with process is that we are moving through stages of understanding. 3 stages of understanding:

1. COMPREHENSION – WHAT DOES IT ACTUALLY SAY?

Because of when Scripture was written there are historical, cultural and linguistic gaps that exist between the Bible and its readers.

Skills to help with comprehension:

- Repetitive Reading

- Annotation (marking up scripture). Look for key words, ideas, transition words, noting confusing ideas, different attributes of God, etc.
- Outlining – gives categories and helps to understand the whole book or chapter you are reading.
- Sometimes using different translations can be helpful. Sometimes a word choice in one translation can help clarify the meaning more than another translation.
- Paraphrasing: used to do this in English class to study – put complex literature into a phrasing that I could understand and remember

2. *INTERPRETATION – WHAT DOES IT MEAN?*

- It is important to interpret a Scripture passage in conjunction with **its original context**, what was the intended meaning to the original audience.

Example:

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Jeremiah isn’t promising to God’s people who were in exile that they would have happiness in this life, as it is often used in our context, rather, he is promising happiness in the coming kingdom.

- Cross references: **Scripture interprets Scripture**
- Consider **Biblical framework**, who God is and what we know is consistent of him throughout scripture, and then attempt to interpret the passage in light of this. In doing so, we are ensuring the Bible is shaping our framework rather than us shaping our interpretation of the Bible.
- **Commentaries:** Experts in Language, theologians. Provide checks and balances to our own prejudices and biases we bring when interpreting. ***In the comprehension and interpretation sections:
 - Lots of waiting, patience
 - Lots of questions
 - Lots of time

3. *APPLICATION – HOW SHOULD IT CHANGE ME?*

Scripture is about God and what he has done, who he is. Knowledge of God always comes with knowledge of self. We see how holy he is and how sinful we are. We see how faithful he is and how forgetful we are. Scripture is living and active and able to reveal these things.

Hebrews 4:12 For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Following this, in verse 13 it says:

¹³And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

- Participating in deep scripture study is laying yourself bare for the Lord to work in you. Reading scripture opens our minds and hearts to be changed.
- When we truly know the bible, it changes us in a big way. We are better equipped to:
 - Fulfil the great commission (Matt 28) because we can teach all that is commanded because we know what was commanded
 - Understand and move on to solid food and understand complex doctrine and concepts (Hebrews 5:12)
 - Gain discernment (Romans 12:2)
 - We will truly abide with the Lord (John 15)
 - Have Faith (Romans 10:17)

CONCLUSION

***Biblical literacy is not the end game, it is what allows us to do the will of God, the things he commands and wants for our life.

Jen Wilkin – “When women grow increasingly lax in their pursuit of biblical literacy, everyone in their circle of influence is affected. Rather than acting as salt and light, we come bland contributions to the environments we inhabit and shape, indistinguishable from those who have never been changed by the gospel.”

Take the converse of this. When we are not lax in our pursuit of biblical literacy, we will act as salt and light, we will be bold contributions to our circles and very radically different from those who do not know the gospel. And I think all of us here want to be salt and light and bold contributions with our time that we have on earth.