

NEVER READ A BIBLE VERSE - INTRODUCTION (Video 10:09)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How is interpreting the Bible a moral and practical issue?
2. Have you ever heard someone misrepresent what the Bible says? How did they misrepresent it?
3. Have you ever misunderstood what Scripture was saying? What did you misunderstand and how did you come to your current understanding of the text?
4. Consider current idioms that you use regularly. Share some of these common idioms and discuss how someone could misunderstand you if they lived in the past, future, or a different culture.
5. Have you ever misunderstood someone from a different culture or different language because you did not know the idioms of their culture? Share your experience.

Digging Deeper: Take some time to read over this Bible Translation Chart together and discuss the philosophies and differences among popular English Translations of the Bible.

<https://hosannarevival.blog/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/translation-article-graph-01-1160x653.jpg>

6. What type of Bible translation do you typically read: Literal (word-for-word), Dynamic Equivalent (thought-for-thought), or Free (impact-for-impact)?
7. An idiom is “an expression whose meaning cannot be deduced on the basis of its individual words or constituents.” Read Luke 22:41 in the NASB or ESV. What is the idiom used in this verse? Discuss what the literal words mean vs. what the intended meaning of the idiom is.
8. Read Genesis 4:1 in the ESV and then read it in the NIV. What idiom in this verse is the NIV explaining thought-for-thought, that the ESV translates word-for-word? Now read Genesis 4:1 in the Message Bible. How does the message give an impact-for-impact translation?
9. A euphemism is “an expression used in place of another expression that is disagreeable or offensive.” Read Matthew 27:52 in the ESV or NASB (Literal Translations) and try to find the euphemism. If you didn’t know this verse had this euphemism in it, how could this passage be misinterpreted?
10. Hyperbole is “the deliberate use of exaggeration for rhetorical and emotional effect.” Read Mark 1:4-5 in the NASB or ESV looking for hyperbole. Contrast these verses with what Luke 7:29-30 says in the NASB or ESV. How does hyperbole help us to correctly interpret these two passages?
11. What are you most hoping to gain from this Never Read a Bible Verse course?

ACTION POINTS:

1. This week, take some time to compare this list of verses in different Bible translations. Make sure to compare between NASB (Literal), NIV (Dynamic Equivalent), and The Message (Free) translations.
 - Philippians 2:6, Matthew 23:27, Matthew 5:1-2, and Proverbs 28:22.

¹ (2016). [The Lexham Figurative Language of the New Testament Dataset](#). In J. R. Westbury, J. Thompson, J. Parks, & K. A. Lyle (Eds.), *Lexham Figurative Language of the Bible Glossary*. Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

² *ibid*

³ *ibid*

NEVER READ A BIBLE VERSE - INTERPRETATION (Video 11:54)**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What was your reaction when Alan said, “Not every interpretation of a Bible verse is equally valid”?
2. How does a Western Existential Worldview make a faulty assumption about what the Bible says?
3. Why is it important to ask, “What does this passage have to do with God and his purpose?” before asking “How does this passage apply to my life?”
4. Why do you think many Christians skip what the author intended to communicate and jump right to the application?
5. What is the difference between the meaning of a text and the application of a text. How many different meanings does a passage of Scripture have? How many different applications does a passage of Scripture have?
6. Let’s investigate what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit’s Role in inspiring Scripture. Read John 14:26, 15:26-27, 16:13-15; Matthew 10:19-20; and Luke 21:14-15. Who is Jesus speaking to in these passages? Are these promises for all believers or for those specific men that Jesus was speaking to? Before applying these verses to our lives, we need to first determine the meaning of the text.
 - The Holy Spirit illuminates the Scripture, which means he “lights it up” so we can see what is already there. The Holy Spirit illuminates the very words he has inspired. He helps us to see things already there in the words themselves, not hidden between the lines.
 - Once you correctly interpret who Jesus is speaking to in the above passages, you can now ask, how do these passages apply to my life. What do you think a good application is, based on your accurate interpretation of these verses about the Holy Spirit?
7. What mistaken interpretations of Scripture have you made in the past?
8. Read 2 Corinthians 4:2; 2 Peter 1:20-2:1, 3:16; 2 Timothy 1:13-14, 4:3. Notice what these verses say can happen to God’s Word and sound doctrine.

Digging Deeper: *We need to realize...*

1. You can’t **distort** something unless it has a **specific, correct meaning** that can be twisted.
 2. You can’t **retain the standard of sound words** unless the words are the standard.
 3. You cannot have the same **sound doctrine** for everyone that protects us from myths if each individual can get his own personal message from the text.
 4. When someone finds their own **private meaning** in a verse that was written to teach something else, and they justify their personalized message by saying “The Holy Spirit gave me this verse,” they’re **twisting, distorting, and adulterating** the Word of God.
9. Describe a time in your life when the Holy Spirit illuminated a passage of Scripture by showing how that passage applied to your life.

ACTION POINTS:

1. Here are some practical tips to help you correctly interpret what Scripture says.
 - Look for repeated words and phrases.
 - Find out who the human author was of the specific book you are studying.
 - Find out who the original audience of a specific book of the Bible was written to.
 - Find out when the book was written and the historical context.
 - Ask, what does this text say (interpretation) before you jump to asking what does this text say to me (application).
2. Practice these tips while reading John 15:1-11
 - What words are repeated in this passage?
 - Who wrote the book? Who is speaking in this section of the book?
 - Who was this book written to/for (hint...read John 20:30-31).
 - Who is being spoken to in this passage? Who was the immediate audience who was told these words? (hint...look at John 13:1-5, 13:26-30, 14:31b)

NEVER READ A BIBLE VERSE - CONTEXT (Video 11:42)**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why do so many people read Bible verses as if they were fortune cookie parables?
2. What Bible verses have you read out of context in the past? How did a wrong interpretation/application of those verses affect you?
3. Just as the word “Buck” can have multiple meanings based on context, so can the word save/saved. Often Christians use the word save/saved to mean go to heaven when they die, be saved from hell, become born again. However, if we read the word save/saved in Scripture and always define it in this way, we will be led to false interpretations of Scripture. Luke, referring to Paul and himself says, “From then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned.” (Acts 27:20b). Is Luke claiming that he and Paul lost hope in going to heaven when they die? Read the entire context (Acts 27:14-20) and discuss what Luke is referring to when he uses the word “saved.”
4. Reading the Bible out of context often leads to a wrong application. For a popular example of this, read Philippians 4:13. How have you seen people apply this Bible verse to their lives? Now, read the context of this verse by reading the whole passage of Philippians 4:10-19. Discuss what Paul is talking about and what 4:13 means in context.
5. Read 2 Corinthians 10:5b. How have you seen this verse be popularly applied to Christian living? Now Read the entire context, 2 Corinthians 10:1-6. What does 2 Corinthians 10:5b mean in context?
6. Read the parable in Matthew 13:44. How has this parable often been applied to discipleship? To gain a correct interpretation, we should figure out who the man represents, what the treasure is, and what the field is. When we read this parable in context, we get a clue to one of these things. Read the parable before this one (Matthew 13:36-43). Notice what is mentioned in 13:37-38a. How does this context help you to interpret the parable in 13:44?
7. Another aspect of reading the Bible in context is to ask who a particular book was written to/who is the original audience? Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-2. Who is the audience that Paul is writing this letter to? Now Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-4. Knowing who the audience is, what can be deduced about the conduct of Christians in 3:1-4?
8. What are some practical steps that you can take to read the Bible in context?

ACTION POINTS:

1. This week, read the entire book of Philippians. After reading the book in context, list four applications for your life. Come ready to share them at the next meeting.

NEVER READ A BIBLE VERSE - HISTORY (Video 11:42)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What four applications did you find by reading the book of Philippians in context last week?
2. What kinds of tools do you use to study about the history of biblical places, customs, and events?

Digging Deeper: For a list of great New Testament and Old Testament background history resources, please visit this link: <https://www.logos.com/grow/best-resources-for-studying-new-testament-backgrounds-and-context/>

3. Let's practice by looking at the history surrounding a biblical passage. For this, all you will need is your Bible, but for other historical inquiry it may be helpful to get some biblical history resources.
 - Read Matthew 1:18-19 and ask the question, what would happen if Joseph divorced Mary as he intended to in these verses.
 - For historical background on this issue, Read Deuteronomy 22:13-21.
 - If Joseph would have divorced Mary, even secretly, what would have happened to her according to the Law?
 - Read Matthew 1:20-25.
 - In light of Matt. 1:20-25, re-read Deuteronomy 22:13-19.
 - Who brought evidence of Mary's virginity to Joseph? How does this correlate with Deuteronomy 22:13-19?
 - How was Joseph's reputation wrapped up in this scenario?
 - In what ways did Joseph act righteously through this whole situation?
4. Let's look at another passage and the history surrounding it.
 - Read Genesis 16:3-4 and Genesis 30:1-13.
 - Why were Sarai, Rachel, and Leah all willing to give their maids to their husbands to procreate with?
 - Archeological discoveries have uncovered laws and customs from the time of the Biblical Patriarchs.
 - The Nuzi Tablets from Northern Mesopotamia are dated to 1,500 B.C. (a little after the time of Abraham).
 - One of these tablets says "If Gilimninu (the wife) will not bear children, Gilimninu shall take a woman of Lulluland (i.e. slave girl) as a wife for Shennma (the husband)."
 - How does knowing this custom inform what was happening in Genesis 16:3-4 and Genesis 30:1-13?
 - Digging Deeper: Biblical Description or Biblical Prescription?
 - The Bible describes many behaviors of human beings. But just because the Bible describes or records what people did in the past doesn't mean that the Bible is prescribing us to repeat the behavior.
 - God does not condone what Sarai, Rachel, Leah, Abraham, and Jacob did with their servant surrogates. Jesus is clear that marriage is to be between one man and one woman, who become one flesh, for one lifetime (Matthew 19:4-6).

ACTION POINTS:

1. This week, look at this website about the Nuzi Tablets and see how these common cultural customs inform us about some of the behaviors of the Patriarchs in the Old Testament.
 - <https://www.biblia.work/sermons/thenuzi-tablets-reflections-on-the-patriarchal-narratives/>

NEVER READ A BIBLE VERSE - GENRE (Video 12:33)**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Let's apply all that we have learned through this course. Read Matthew 12:1-8.

1. What genre is Matthew 12? What is the context of this passage? Specifically, what time in history is this, and how does the Law of Moses pertain to Jesus' context?
 - To understand the argument Jesus is making, we need to understand the historical background.
 - For background on the law of the Sabbath, read Exodus 31:13-14, 35:1-3; Ezekiel 20:20. (An additional principle about Sabbath and food can be found in Exodus 16:22-30.)
 - For background on plucking grain to eat, read Deuteronomy 23:25 and Ruth 2:2.
2. What did the Law command about the Sabbath?
3. Did Jesus and his disciples break this Law? Why or Why Not?
4. Why would Jesus' statement "Have you not read" (Matthew 12:3) be insulting to the Pharisees? (See also Matthew 19:4, 21:16, 21:42, 22:31)

Let's now look at how Jesus argued his position with the Pharisees. Re-read Matthew 12:3-4 to see Jesus' first example.

1. Now read 1 Samuel 21:1-6. What genre of literature is this passage?
 - Read Leviticus 24:5-9 for historical background on the consecrated bread.
2. Ahimelech had one requirement of David and his men. He asked that they were ritually clean regarding sexual contact. Read Leviticus 15:18 for historical background on this.
3. Why did Ahimelech give David and his men the consecrated bread if it was unlawful?
4. What point is Jesus making by using this example?

Re-read Matthew 12:5-6 to see Jesus' second example.

1. Now read Numbers 28:1-10 for historical background (especially note verses 9-10). What genre of literature is this?
2. How does Numbers 28:9-10 conflict with Exodus 35:1-3?
3. Were the Priests performing work? What about the fire?
4. What point is Jesus making by using this example? What is Jesus saying in Matthew 12:6?

Re-read Matthew 12:7-8 to see Jesus' third example.

1. Read Hosea 6:1-7 (especially notice verse 6). What genre of literature is this?
2. What point is Jesus making by using this example?
3. What is Jesus declaring about himself in Matthew 12:8?

Digging Deeper: *It is interesting to notice that Jesus' three examples come from three different genres of the Hebrew Bible. 1 Samuel is historical narrative, Numbers is law, and Hosea is prophecy. Jesus amazingly shows that across all different types of Hebrew literature, he is justified in allowing the disciples to pluck and eat grain on the Sabbath. This reinforces the strength of his statement "Have you not read?" Let's be people who are well versed in Scripture and interpret it correctly.*

ACTION POINTS:

1. This week, pick a section of Scripture to study. Look for the context, who the original audience was, the historical setting, and the genre of literature. After, and only after doing all of this work, ask how this passage applies to your life. Remember to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate how the passage (after correctly interpreting it) applies to your life.