

APPROACHING the Bible

What attitude should we have as we read the Bible?

The Seminar Series: The Bible

- **The VALUE of the Bible...***What value should we place on the Bible?*
- **The RELIABILITY of the Bible - Part 1...***Can we trust the Bible?*
- **The RELIABILITY of the Bible - Part 2...***Can we trust the Bible?*
- **APPROACHING the Bible ...***What attitude should we have as read the Bible?*
- **UNDERSTANDING the Bible ...***How do we understand and interpret the Bible?*
- **EXPERIENCING God in the Bible...***How do we experience God when we read the Bible?*
- **PERSEVERING in the Bible...***How do we experience God through the Bible for a lifetime?*

INTRODUCTION: Our value of something greatly affects our approach of it

Ways we often Approach the Bible

...Studying for a test

...Eating fast food

...Critiquing a Movie

...Visiting a Lunch Buffet

Q: *In what ways can you resonate with one of these approaches to the Bible?*

The Proverbs 2 Approach to the Bible

Proverbs 2:1-6 - (1) *My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, (2) turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, (3) and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, (4) and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, (5) then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. (6) For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.*

Q: *What are goals we might have when we approach the Bible?*

Our Goal: _____ & _____ - Verse 5

God's Role: *The Lord* _____ - Verse 6

Q: *How might understanding this affect our approach to the Bible?*

Our Role:

→ _____ - Verses 1-2 Other Scripture: *Psalm 119:12, 14, 105; Hebrews 4:12*

Q: *Practically, what would it look like to approach the Bible in submission?*

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→ _____ - Verse 3 Other Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:10-12; Psalm 119:18, 27

Q: *Practically, what would it look like to approach the Bible with desperation?*

→ _____ - Verse 4 Other Scripture: Ezra 7:10, Psalm 1:1-3, 42:1-2, Philippians 3:12-14

Q: *Practically, what would it look like to approach the Bible with determination?*

Where do I go from here?

→ **REFLECT** on your approach of the Bible

Q: *How would you describe your attitude towards pursuing God in the Bible over the past month? Compare your attitude to the attitudes we should have according to Proverbs 2:1-6.*

Q: *How do you typically respond when you feel "dry" spiritually or just don't feel like pursuing God? What, if anything, needs to specifically change about how you respond?*

→ **BE READY FOR RESISTANCE** - What should you do when you don't feel like approaching the Bible in this way?

2 ways to respond

→ **PRAY** Proverbs 2 type prayers before you approach the Bible. Read "Praying in our Struggle to Study the Bible."

→ **FALL FORWARD** - Commit to immersing yourself in the Bible more and more during this seminar. God wants to communicate to you!

The Psalm 119 experiment - read & pray through Psalm 119:73-96 this upcoming week

→ **LEARN** a method to study the Bible that helps foster this approach

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A Method for a Miner

Why learn a method to study the Bible?

- 1) To help us be a miner

2 Timothy 2:7 - *Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.*

"You can learn more from a book if you stop and ask it questions than if you just read it passively. That includes the Bible too. One of the great problems in Bible reading is that we move our eyes over the words and come to the end of a column and don't know what we've read; we don't feel our minds or spirits expanded because we saw nothing fresh. It was purely mechanical. There was no discovery, no life, no breakthroughs to new insight. One of the best ways to change that is to train yourself to ask questions of the text." - **John Piper**

- 2) To help us understand what we read

2 Timothy 2:15 - *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*

- 3) To help us learn to eat on our own

The O.I.A.M. Method of Studying the Bible

3 Stages

Stage 1: Observation - we answer the question, 'What does it say?'

Stage 2: Interpretation - we answer the question, 'What does it mean?'

Stage 3: Application & Meditation - we answer the question, 'What does it mean for me?'

OIAM is a Way of Thinking

"I study my Bible as I gather apples. First, I shake the whole tree that the ripest might fall. Then I shake each limb, and when I have shaken each limb, I shake each branch and every twig. Then I look under every leaf. I shake the Bible as a whole like shaking the whole tree. Then I shake every limb - study book after book. Then I shake every branch, giving attention to the chapters when they do not break the sense. Then I shake every twig, or a careful study of the paragraphs and sentences and words and their meanings." - **Martin Luther**

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The O.I.A.M. Method of Studying the Bible

WHAT DOES IT SAY? *Observation*

Gather your content so you know what interpretive questions to ask...

C → Context... Take note of what is before and after the passage

5 Archeological Questions of Context - *Who wrote it? When was it written? To whom was it written? In what style was it written? Why was it written?*

S → Structure...

- Break down the passage phrase by phrase
- What words/ideas are emphasized? Repeated?
- Note words like "as", "but", "so that", "therefore"

I → Interpretive Questions... What questions do you need to answer in order to understand the author's intent?

Types of Questions - *Why has the person written this? What concerns or problems is the writer addressing? How does this passage connect with the overall themes of Scripture? Look at the details of the verse... Why are they included? Would it make any difference if they were omitted?*

WHAT DOES IT MEAN? *Interpretation*

Determine what this passage means by determining the author's intent...

- Define key words & look up cross references
- Answer interpretive questions
- Read other translations & consult a commentary to give more insight
- Summarize the passage & what you learned in your own words

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME? *Application & Meditation*

Jesus is the central theme of the Bible

- How is Jesus AND/OR my need for Him seen in this passage?

Why is the Lord showing me this today?

- **The 3 R's** - *Rejoice, Repent, Request*
 - How can I *rejoice* today in light of this passage?
 - What do I need to *repent* of today in light of this passage?
 - What *requests* do I need to make today in light of this passage?