



Family Night

HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

OCTOBER 18, 2023

The Bible is God's inspired Word: living, active, authoritative, inerrant, sufficient and true. God's Word progressively reveals His person, His purposes and His plan for the world. Every Christian is on a journey of reading, understanding, teaching, preaching, and living out God's Word in his/her life.

The Goal - To highlight and understand the danger and destructive nature of misusing the Bible and provide a way to carefully interpret, understand, and apply the Bible as God intended.

How do we grow at Bible Center?

- HABITS:**
- Have a group
 - Attend regularly
 - Be in the Bible**
 - Invest faithfully
 - Talk with God
 - Share your story

1 A Struggle: We Don't Understand How a Text Fits into the Big Picture of the Bible

Struggle #1: We use unclear and difficult verses over the clear teaching of Scripture.

We use the clear passages of the Bible to help us understand the unclear passages.

My Bible Reading Plan

I will read _____ times per week.
(The Bible Recap, a YouVersion plan, or my own plan)

I will ask _____ to hold me accountable.



JOINING US?
LET US KNOW

The Unforgivable Sin

Mark 3:29 “but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”

Struggle #2: We try to place the pieces of the puzzle without having seen the picture on the box.

Galatians 3:28 “There is neither Jew or Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

- Some take this to mean that there is no difference in gender. When you become a Christian, your gender is no longer taken into consideration in any way.

If you look at the larger picture—the picture on the box—and what all the other verses say, we come to a different conclusion.

- There are distinctions throughout the New Testament between Christian Jews and Greeks (**Romans 9-11**), slave and free (**Colossians 4:1, Ephesians 6:5-9**), and male and female (**Colossians 3:18-19, Ephesians 5:22-33**).
- Yet, in terms of benefits from the Gospel, every individual person is fully saved, forgiven, redeemed, reconciled, and loved by God with the same eternal state of glory and joy (**Ephesians 1-3, Romans 1-8**).
- So big picture: In Christ, everyone receives the same spiritual and eternal benefits of salvation, regardless of station in life or gender. But it doesn't mean that station in life and gender simply goes away...

Struggle #3: We make peripheral core and core peripheral. We can overemphasize minor points and de-emphasize the main points of Scripture.

The main points of creation include: The world and all of creation were made by the Word and power of God—it is all made by Him, for Him, through Him and to Him. Everything exists for His purposes and for His glory. He made man and woman in His image.

But some spend most of their time and energy arguing about and overemphasizing the **length of creation**.

The Length of Creation

Some hold to each “day” of creation being a literal, 24-hour day.

- The verses simply say “day.” The passage describes that “there was evening and there was morning, one day” (**Genesis 1:5**), therefore the timeframe for a day is given to us by God Himself—and this may be the right interpretation.
- It seems to limit God and go against the most natural and obvious reading of the text.

Some hold to each “day” possibly being longer than a literal, 24-hour day.

- **Genesis 1** is poetic in how it is written. Perhaps it is not designed to press the details.
- They would say **Genesis 1:5** describes “morning and evening” before the sun, moons, and stars are made in **1:14-18**.
- Perhaps “morning and evening” was not being measured in the same way before **verses 14-18** than after.
- Day “yom/ יום” is described from God’s point of view in **Psalm 90:4** and **2 Peter 3:8**: “But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.”

The earth either was or was not created in 6 literal days. You likely have a point of view... Great!

Regardless of your point of view on the length of the creation account, we agree to and rally around the clearly taught, non-negotiable realities that:

- The world and all of creation was made by the Word and power of God—it is made by Him, for Him, through Him and to Him. It exists for His purposes and for His glory.
- He made man and woman in His image.

2 *A Truth: Understanding the Bible's Big Picture*

Seeing only the trees and not the forest/laying out the 4 corners of the puzzle.

THE NATURE OF GOD

JESUS

THE GLORY OF GOD

GOD'S REDEMPTIVE PLAN

Everything in Scripture in some way points to these things directly or indirectly.

These things are revealed and clarified over time through progressive revelation. All the other pieces connect to these pieces.

3 *A Better Way: Rightly Understanding & Applying the Gospels and Parables*

The Gospels – They are about Jesus! The #1 focus of each Gospel is the life, ministry, actions, and words of the Son of God, resulting in faith and worship.

1. **Historical context** is key to understanding the Gospels.

- It will greatly help to understand some Jewish culture and customs, the state of the Jewish nation, the power of the Roman empire, the religious power and posture of the Jewish people, Messianic hope... Books listed on the last page are very helpful to answering these questions.
- It's the same story from different angles. Each Gospel tells the story in different ways, with different purposes, and to different audiences (and each of these are by God's design and for His purpose). It's like having a surround sound speaker system of Jesus' life.

Jesus did not record His sermons and words into a recorder.

Each account will have a different chronological order, and each account will word many of Jesus' statements and sayings in different ways.

In God's wisdom, He gave us 4 accounts with 4 different purposes, occasions, and audiences. The blend of the 4 is the best way to fully understand the life, work, and words of Jesus.

Luke 1:1-2 "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to **compile** an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were **handed down to us** by those who from the beginning were **eyewitnesses** and servants of the Word."

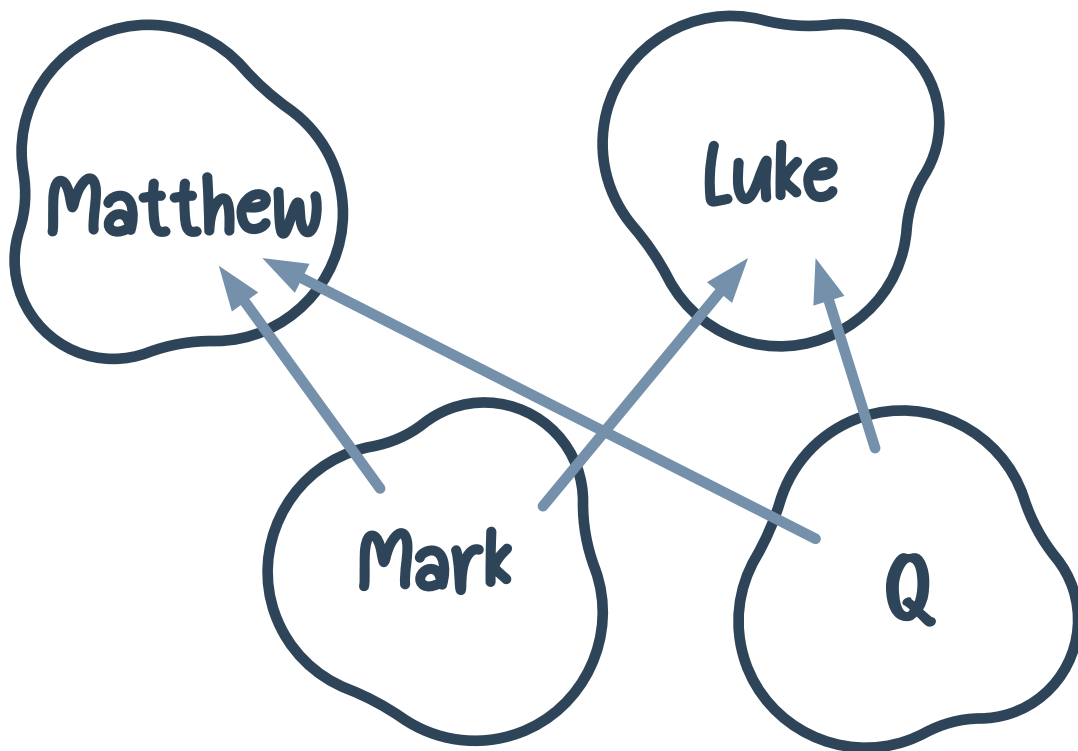
There were "accounts" from "eyewitnesses." The authors would compile and intentionally write out their accounts with an audience and purpose in mind.

- **Matthew** wrote to a Jewish audience. He would often add details and examples that would be understood by a Jewish audience, while the other Gospels often leave these out. He emphasizes Jesus as the Messiah, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. Matthew nicely bridges the Old and New Testaments.
- **Mark** is a quick-paced journey to the cross. Mark does not give an account of the birth of Jesus. He covers Jesus' baptism and the temptation in only 5 verses (**1:9-13**). He uses the word "immediately" many times throughout the book to keep it moving (**1:10, 12...**). Half of Mark is devoted to the last week of Jesus' life. It is the shortest Gospel with the longest account of passion week.

- **Luke** “to give an orderly account” for Theophilus (**1:1-4**). Luke-Acts can really be viewed as one large book in two parts. Luke emphasizes the hurting and the poor. Luke is primarily written to a Gentile audience.
- **John** “these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ” (**20:31**). John spends a lot of time on Jesus’ dialogue and less time on His miracles. He appeals to a Greek thought emphasizing dualistic thoughts like: light/darkness, life/death, below/above, flesh/spirit... John’s Gospel is evangelistic in purpose and nature.

2. **Literary context** is unique and interesting in the Gospels.

- The Gospels (and Jesus Himself) use a wide variety of genres (narrative, parable, hyperbole, similes, metaphors, poetry, questions, irony, and even prophecy).
- Each communication method could receive its own section of explanation.



Looking horizontally to parallel passages (recognizing the authorial intent of each account) will increase our depth in understanding and applying Jesus’ message.

- 3. Parables** – A story with a **primary audience** and message in mind. Designed to be understood using examples from the audience’s daily experience with a moral (or punch line) in mind.
- It is very difficult to understand a parable without an understanding of the original audience, the cultural references, and the frame of mind of those actually hearing it for the first time.
 - Parables are not allegories, which means the details are not figuratively alluding to a higher or more spiritual meaning.
 - Some parables have a storyline and a plot; others (similitudes) are illustrations taken from everyday life (“The Parable of the Sower” and “The Parable of the Mustard Seed”).
 - Parables are more than illustrations. It is a form of speech designed to call forth a response of shock from the hearer (like a well told joke). Studying every component of a parable is like studying every component of a joke—by doing so one can miss the point.
 - A clue to the main point of the parable will be found in the end point’s emphasis. Who is the last one to speak? How does the statement tie everything together? Who in the audience would have most related to the last statement?
 - Don’t simply conclude the meaning of a parable without some help from your Study Bible or a commentary.

The Prodigal Son - Context Luke 15:2, 7

Luke 15:25-32 - Who is emphasized at the end of the parable? Why? To whom was the parable directed based upon the context and the ending emphasis of the parable?

We often use this parable to personally align with the prodigal son or to describe God as the father who runs to the lost son. As we determine the context, original audience, and the emphasis of the parable—the parable was told with the intention of poking and instructing the Pharisees.

Homework:

What do you learn about the purpose and focus of each Gospel from each intro?

Matthew 1:1 -

Mark 1:1 -

Luke 1:1-4 -

John 1:1-2 -

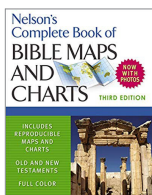
The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

What is the main point (punchline) of the parable?

To whom in the audience was the parable directed? How would they have been poked and challenged that day?

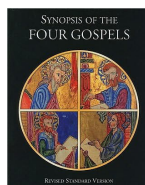
How should it challenge us today?

Books:



Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts

Does a great job overviewing the historical context and occasion of each book.



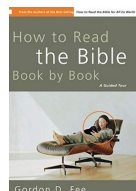
Synopsis of the Four Gospels by Kurt Aland

The Gospels are placed in columns with parallel passages beside each other—a great way to compare and contrast.



How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth by Fee & Stuart

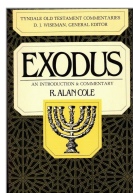
Walks through understanding the historical and literary context of a book.



How to Read the Bible Book-by-Book by Fee & Stuart

Each book of the Bible is discussed individually, incredibly helpful.

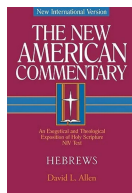
Commentaries - Below are commentaries that are in-depth, yet very accessible for every reader.



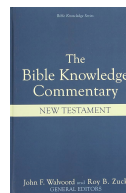
Tyndale Commentary Series



NIV Application Commentary Series



The New American Commentary Series



The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Walvoord & Zuck



and a study Bible