

Book of Books: How to Study Pt. 1 – Week 6

INTRO

Canon: (Greek) – The list of books which orthodox Christianity recognizes as scripture; the very words of God.

- **1 Peter 1:21** - *...men spoke from God as they were carried along by the H.S..*

How did the books we have come to be recognized as scripture?

The process of canonization, recognizing which writings were authoritative scripture was slow, organic, and handled with great scrutiny.

1. God came as Jesus, so we could know Him through His teachings, & passion.
2. The apostles gave witness to His resurrection and wrote His teachings.
3. The Sub-Apostolic fathers attested to which writings the apostles wrote.
4. The Early Church Fathers defined & defended Christianity against heresy.
5. The Church Fathers canonized the books of the Bible.
6. Given political power, church leaders became corrupt & suppressed scripture.
7. The Reformers called Christianity back to scripture & made the Bible accessible to all.

HOOK

E.g. Video of lady complaining about her pizza which she opened upside down.

- Sometimes we don't get into God's word correctly.
- **How do we open the Word of God so that it opens up to us?**

First let's remember the point. The power of the Bible doesn't come from moving rhetoric, wise advice, motivational anecdotes, or even profound life application. **The power of the Bible comes from its Author's identity and its Author's purpose.**

- We've spent 5 weeks discussing who its author was – the King of Creation.
- And 16 weeks talking about His attributes, and we just scratched the surface.
- **What is its purpose?**

The Bible has two purposes. It is His self-revelation to:

1) To glorify Himself; 2) To reveal Himself to us, so we can know Him.

- How does the Bible fulfill the second purpose?

BOOK

Context: Sin divides man from holy God, the creature from the Creator, the art from the Artist, the beloved from Life. Looking forward to the cross, God made a forerunner covenant with His people to have their sins forgiven regularly through their obedience in making substitutionary sacrifices. These sacrifices would temporarily make them holy to be in communion with God. That covenant was kept in a gold box called the Ark of the Covenant. On the lid of that box sat two molded, golden angels with their wings stretched toward each other called the Mercy Seat. Between the wings of the angels was where God's holy presence was manifested on earth. This represented the throne from which God bestowed mercy on His people in response to their faithfulness and was called the Mercy Seat. It was set apart within the tabernacle/temple and only one could enter and once a year, the high priest. And he, being a sinner, had to go through a series of rituals to get his heart right before entering the presence of God or the presence of God would kill him. His job was to make an offering on behalf of the sins of the nation by sprinkling the blood of the substitute on the Mercy Seat.

Hebrews 10:16-22 – *“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,” then he adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.” Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.*

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

- Jesus was the fulfillment of those images. He was the final and perfect substitute for sin to all those who repent in faith.
- The veil of the temple was torn, symbolizing that all God's people had access through Jesus.
- God's manifest presence would be with His people and He would sit on the thrones of our hearts – our hearts are the ones now sprinkled with blood.
- **Why did God do all of this? Why go to such great lengths?**

Consider this statement: *“My son and I are getting closer as he gets older.”*

The distance is not one of miles but of relationship.

They've lived together all the boy's life with hardly a day separated. What the father means is that his son is "getting to know Him more intimately with deeper understanding. The barriers in thought and feeling are disappearing and they are becoming more united in mind and heart." – A.W. Tozer

- God's desire for us. To be more united in mind and heart.

God has reached out to us with great love, expressed in great sacrifice, but some believers still leave the veil up in our hearts.

Student makes a commitment to Jesus - "I don't feel any different."

You're standing in the stern (back) of the ship. Today you have tossed off the mooring lines (ropes to the dock) and are now 12" from the dock. Of course the shore still looks the same. Go to the bow and look out to where Christ is leading you. Let Him begin to steer and convict you. Allow Him to fill you with wisdom and purpose. Then one day you'll look back and no longer see the old you, the shore.

James 4:8a – *Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.*

- **Where do we draw near to Him?**

John 6:63b - *The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.*

This is a lifelong process that will require something of you – it will require all of you. After all, you gave your life to Jesus.

Let's open the pizza box of God's words right-side-up by remembering the purpose of the Bible is 1) To glorify God; 2) & reveal Him to us so we can know Him.

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE – (only one tip tonight.)

Tip #1: Read for the author's intent.

Exegesis - Searching to understand what the author intended for you to learn.

Eisegesis – Searching for what it means to you. *dangerous

The author was writing to a specific audience with a specific message. That message is still unchanging today. But, if you're like me, you might be tempted to: "understand the author's mind through the colored eyeglasses of your own worldview, assumptions, beliefs, categories, ideologies, or prejudices.

[...] He (the author) is trying to communicate something new to you, something you did not know before; your job is to receive it intact, as fairly and objectively as possible.” – Handbook of Christian Apologetics

STOP asking, “what does this mean to me,” and start asking, “what is the author saying to me.”

- Yes, it is God’s Word.
- Yes, He speaks to us through it.
- Yes, it covers everything you need to know.

So, God doesn’t need to change the meaning of what you’re currently reading so it applies to your life like a Christian fortune cookie. It’s a dangerous belief – which some of you have – that scripture can mean different things to different people at different times. Why is that dangerous?!

- How disunifying when everyone believes it says something different?
- How easily can we stumble into heresy?
- How tempting is it to make it say what we want it to say to do what we want?
- What an avoidance to God teaching us something we don’t want to hear?
- **Isn’t this remixing Christianity to be our own convenient religion?**

NO. God’s truth - which the author is communicating to us - is static, the same yesterday, today, and forever. It’s unchanging, and it’s clear.

If you overlook what the author is saying in an attempt to make it about yourself, you rival God for being the focus of the Bible. It’s grabbing the telescope of scripture which was trained on Him (for us to see Him) and turning it around to be focused on ourselves. It’s the difference between scripture giving a high view of God, and scripture giving a high view of man. Most of the time it’s innocent, but all the time, it’s self-centered. It’s making ourselves the gods of the Bible. **That’s opening the pizza box upside down.**

E.g. First date: The purpose is to begin getting to know each other.

- Her: “I’m really spontaneous. I love new experiences.”
- Him: (eisegesis) “So, what you’re saying, is you want to go to bed immediately?”
 - He has an opportunity to learn about her, to be intentional on how to treat her in a way she wants to be treated.
 - But he’s only hearing her say what he wants to hear.

- E.g. Corrupt preachers - Abusing scripture to ask for money.

E.g. “Love your enemies...” – Jesus

- Eisegesis – “What this means to me is... Well, the best way I can be loving is to avoid them, so I don’t say what I actually want to say to them.”
- Exegesis – Context: “pray for them... do good to them... who is my neighbor?... the one who crossed the road to his enemy.”
 - This is allowing the word of God to speak to us instead of our yelling over it what we want it to say.
 - This is where life-changing “washing of the Word” comes from.

Tip #1 = We must read it to understand the Author’s intent.

- When we do, we glorify God, AND we get to know Him through what He’s revealed.
- When we do, we are drawing close to Him who has already made the way through Jesus to be close to us.

E.g. **Story of a Jr. high boy who stole 6 softballs** from the store where he worked.

- The Tardy Oxcart, Swindoll, pg. 205

- Discipline, teaching, restoration, grace.
 - He and his father became closer. In distance? No. In heart.
 - **For us to spend the rest of our lives watching the barriers disappear and becoming more united with Him in mind and heart.**

TOOK

Random Miscellaneous Tips

- Get a Bible translation you can understand.
- If you’re beginning the adventure of reading the Bible, don’t start in Rev.
- You may not want to begin in Genesis either. Begin with Jesus (a gospel).
- Don’t open it in a random place and point and begin reading there.
- Begin at the beginning of books. Get a feel of the main point the author is trying to get across so you can see how what you’re reading applies to that.
- Ignore chapter breaks. They aren’t always helpful. Read in chunks of complete thought.
- How to divide up the Bible (recap).

BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR SPENDING TIME WITH THE LORD

Prayer – A.C.T.S.

- **Adoration** – worship and awe for who He is
- **Confession** – and repentance
- **Thanks** – praise for what God has done
- **Supplication** – prayer requests

Bible Study – S.O.A.P.S

- **Scripture** – Read a passage of thought several times to understand it.
- **Observation** – Immerse yourself in it. Does it make any connections to other places in the Bible? What am I supposed to learn? How am I supposed to respond? What does this teach me about God?
 - To be further unpacked next week.
- **Application** – “How can I apply it?”
 - John 14:15 – “If you love Me, you’ll obey my commandments.”
 - Bonhoeffer – “Faith and obedience go hand in hand. If someone says they have lost their faith, I tell them they have stopped being obedient.”
- **Prayer** – Pray scripture back to Him. Pray about what you’ve learned and where to apply it.
- **Share it** – Think of something simple and clear you could share with someone else from the truthy you studied.

Meditation

- **Be still and quiet.** Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you. It’ll never be contrary to His word.
- **Journal:**
 - What you are thankful for
 - A prayer request
 - The main truth you learned in your study
 - What God is speaking to you in your listening.

FURTHER INQUIRY

What are the principles for studying different genres of Biblical literature?

- Poetry, history, law, wisdom, theology, gospel, etc.

RECAP

- The Bible's two purposes are to glorify God and to reveal Him to us.
- Through Jesus, we can have relationship with a known God.
- We must read the Bible to understand the author's intent: exegesis
- When we do, we learn what He's revealed and we grow closer to Him.
- **Prayer = A.C.T.S. + Study = S.O.A.P.S. + Meditation**

Challenge 1: For three days, model every prayer after A.C.T.S.

Challenge 2: Have a legit Bible study this week which includes a short journal entry.

Soli DEO Gloria

eGroup Questions /// Title

Pray.

Scripture:

Questions:

1.

Ask for prayer requests. Pray.

Fill out student contact sheet in your folder.