

BIBLE STUDY

Session 5

Formational

This is the fifth session on Bible Study. Up to this point we have been looking at primarily “informational” ways of doing Bible Study. Now we will turn our attention to “formational” Bible Study. With formational study, we are seeking scripture to help transform our lives and our relationship with God at a much deeper level. We read it formatively with the intention of being changed. We still may utilize informational methods, but we move from the information about the text to the “so what” moment of how it applies to our current lives and struggles.

Opening Activities



Centering Moment

Light a candle and observe 30 seconds of silence as a reminder of God’s presence among us.



Romans 12:2

“Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”



Reflect

Paul exhorts us to not only present our bodies unto holiness as a spiritual act of service to God in the previous verse (Rom 12:1), but our behavior should reflect that by not following the world’s system of thinking, values and beliefs. How adapted are we to the world? How attached are we to the teachings and ways of Christ? What changes do we see in our own lives that have happened or still need to happen?



Opening Prayer:

Gracious Lord, this world pulls us into its ways. We forget to love our neighbor and instead demonize and scapegoat those whom we are called to love. Transform our hearts and minds so that we may love the stranger as you have called us to do. Amen.



Music (optional)

Sing or listen to “Take My Life and Let it Be”



Share

Share with one another any thoughts from last weeks' exercises or session.



Watch: Bible Study - Formational



Discuss

- Which type of Bible Study are you most comfortable with? Information or formational? How can you see informational being able to inform your formational study?



Group Bible Study - Informational vs Formational

Luke 4:14-30

Informational study questions. What information will help us hear the story as Luke tells it?

- What was Jesus' point saying "the spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me..."
- What did Jesus mean by "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing?"
- What did Luke want readers to understand about Jesus and his mission by telling this story?

Historical/Contextual notes: (*Notes from the New Oxford Annotated Bible*)

- Jesus not only worshiped in the synagogue but he preached/presented his message there.
- Procedure in the synagogue was for a scroll to be handed to the preacher by the attendant of the synagogue. The preacher typically sat in what was known as the "Moses" seat. They would stand to read, but would sit to preach.
- Jesus is quoting and defining his mission according to Isaiah 61:1-2 with some variations. (why do you think Jesus added the restoration of sight to the blind and omitted "and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn")
- The people become hostile toward Jesus (Why does he antagonize them?)
- The widow and Naaman were not Jews, and yet they knew God's help when Israel did not.

Formational Questions:

- How is God speaking to you in this passage?
- What message does God have for you?
- What is God calling you to do and be through this passage?
- How am I called to change or respond by this passage?
- Where does this passage invite us to go deeper?



Closing Prayer

Choose a prayer style that you have learned about to close.



Exercises To Do At Home

Acts 8:26-40

Informational Study (*you may need to google the answers*)

- What was a eunuch?
- Why were court officials to queens typically eunuchs?
- What is the relationship between Israel and Ethiopia?
- What rules applied to Eunuchs (Deuteronomy 23:1) in relation to the temple?
- How would the Eunuch have seen Isaiah 56:3-5 as a word of hope?

Formational Study:

- Read this as you would ponder a letter from a friend. What is God seeking to say to you through this story?
- How do you feel about what is being said in this passage?
- Why are you feeling the way you do? Why are you having the response you are having? What's going on inside you?
- Reflect on what your reactions tell you about yourself--your attitudes, habits, perspectives, and relationship with God.
- Record your reflections down in your journal.

Genesis 3:1-13

This is a story about the challenges of paying attention to God.

- Consider what the story reveals about the qualities of relationship that God desires or blocks that we experience in listening to God.
- What words or images speak to you?
- How has God been walking in the garden of your life?
- How do you respond to God's call, "Where are you?" - especially when you feel ashamed?
- What gets stirred up within you when God asks, "What have you done?"
- Record your reflections down in your journal.

Psalm 81

Informational questions: Who is speaking? Who is being spoken to? What's the situation in Israel at the time of this writing? What is this Psalm about? What does this Psalm reveal about the heart of God vs. the heart of his people?

Formational questions: Pause to listen to the voice of your own heart. What is the character of your heart when it is stubborn, and what have been the consequences? What is the character of your heart when it is listening, and what difference would a listening heart make in your life?

Read Genesis 32:22-32

This story is about Jacob's going to the river where he wrestles with God and is changed.

Informational: Why is Jacob going to the river? What is Jacob's struggle in this story?

Formational: How are you able to find alone time with God? In what ways do you relate to Jacob? What struggles do you have with God? How are you changed by your struggles?

Read Mark 10:17-22

This is a story about a man who wanted to know what he had to do to obtain eternal life.

Informational: What limited this man from becoming a follower of Jesus? How did he view Jesus in general? Does Jesus seem angry about the man's response of walking away? What does this tell us about Jesus?

Formational: What keeps you from fully living your life as a follower of Jesus? What's the one thing you lack? What is Jesus saying about the one thing you lack? (*Be sure to remember - Jesus loves you, nonetheless.*)