

BIBLE STUDY

Session 1

Introduction to Bible Study

This is the introductory session on different approaches to reading scripture. When we approach scripture, we many times forget that the Bible is not actually a book - it's a library and a collection of different voices, different styles, and different time periods throughout history that all have unique ways in which they talk about their encounter with the Divine. How we approach scripture deeply shapes the way in which we understand it. The Bible is a complex collection of writing and even with good translations, the language and imagery are often unfamiliar to us thousands of years later. Thus much care and attention should always go into how we engage with God's living word. The interpretive guide of others, who may or may not be experts, is an imperative part of the process. The Bible is given to the whole church and therefore we must open ourselves up to the wisdom and experiences of others.

Opening Activities



Centering Moment

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



Psalm 119:97-105

Oh, how I love your law!

It is my meditation all day long.

*Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies,
for it is always with me.*

*I have more understanding than all my teachers,
for your decrees are my meditation.*

*I understand more than the aged,
for I keep your precepts.*

*I hold back my feet from every evil way,
in order to keep your word.*

*I do not turn away from your ordinances,
for you have taught me.*

*How sweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth!*

*Through your precepts I get understanding;
therefore I hate every false way.*

*Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.*



How have you typically approached reading scripture? Are you a “just open it and see what it has to say that day” type of scripture reader? Do you read it cover to cover or chronologically? What is your favorite Bible story or passage? Reflect on why and how you came to cherish it. What role has it played in your life and how has God spoken to you through it?



Opening Prayer:

Gracious Lord, you give us your Word as a gift. In particular, you have given us your Word in the person of Jesus Christ. It is your divine revelation to us so that we may better understand and know you and your will for our lives. Help us to approach it always with an open heart and an open mind to hear what you are saying to us today. Amen.



Music (optional)

Sing or listen to “Thy Word”



Share

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



Watch: Bible Study Introduction



Discuss

- Pastor Rebecca may have introduced some concepts and ideas you had not heard or considered before regarding approaching scripture. What, if anything, surprised you?
- In what ways can (has) scripture be (been) used for harmful purposes?
- Pastor Rebecca utilizes the image of scripture being like a “rainbow” of meaning. How might this help you when you encounter different understandings of scripture?
- Read John 1:1-18. “The Word became flesh and lived among us.” What does it mean to you that Christ is God’s “living word” or “Word made flesh”?



Closing Prayer

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



Exercises To Do At Home

1. **Read Psalm 1.** This psalm was placed at the beginning of the Psalter to be a preface and to convey a promise: those who study God's law and live by God's Word will be "like trees planted by streams of water." Sketch a picture of two trees, one on each side of a page. Make one tree a depiction of your life as it is. Make the second a tree a depiction of your life as it could be. Beneath and between the trees, list or write out two or three passages of scripture that have been for you streams of nourishment and growth. Reflect on what God is saying to you.
2. **Read 2 Corinthians 3:1-6.** Paul calls his faithful disciples, "a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God...on tablets of human hearts." What word from Christ would the Spirit like to write on the tablet of your heart for all to read?
3. **Read Hebrews 4:12.** What does it mean for God's Word to be "alive and active" in your life? In your journal, write about how God's Word has been "alive and active" in your life.
4. **Read James 1:22-25.** How would you describe your spiritual life right now? What do you think it means to be only "hearers of the word" vs "doers of the word"? How are you a doer and not just a mere hearer?