Making Disciples

Notes for Group Session Nine

The Bible and How to Read It

Session Goals

1. The disciple will choose what Bible reading plan he wants to use by the end of the session. He or she can change their mind later if necessary.
2. The disciple will describe two ways the Bible is structured.
3. The disciple will express 1 or 2 questions relating to the Bible for discussion in the next session.

Begin the session discussing the previous week's Action Steps. Pray together.

What is The Bible?

Inspired by God.

2 Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God..." Psalm

119:105 "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

A manual for how to live.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 "…and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction and righteousness, that the Man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." NKJV

That will lead to successful living.

Joshua 1:8 "Keep this book of the law always on your lips. Meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it, then you will be prosperous and successful." NIV

© 2023 Catherine Martin - Making Disciples Who Make Disciples – In Small Groups or Online

As important as food.

Matthew 4:4 "Jesus answered, "it is written, man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."

More to be desired than gold.

Psalm 19:8-11 "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart, the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they then gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward."

Written by people moved by the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:20-21 "Knowing this first that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation. Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." NKJV

Given by God to accomplish His plans.

2 Timothy 3:15 "You have been taught the Holy Scriptures from childhood and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus"

Isaiah 55:11 "So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth. It shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."

An imperishable seed.

1 Peter 1:23. "For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God."

How else do we know the Bible is true?

Thousands of early manuscripts exist of the Bible, some written 30 to 60 years after the originals. There are too many independent copies to deny the existence of the originals.

There are other records of New Testament biblical events recorded by Greek and Roman historians.

Many Old Testament and New Testament prophecies have come to pass. Many details of Jesus's life are prophesied in the Old Testament.

The Bible is consistent, despite being written by more than 40 writers in a time span of about 2000 years, God's law and His plan of salvation are themes throughout.

There is now archaeological evidence that supports the truth of events recorded in the Bible for instance of Jericho and some say Noah's ark.

When and how should I read the Bible?

Bible reading should be often.

Romans 10:17 "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

Proverbs 30:5 "Every word of God proves true. He is a shield to those who take refuge in him."

Psalms 1:2 "His delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law, he meditates day and night."

Bible reading should be personal.

2 Timothy 2:15 "Work hard so you can present yourself to God, as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, and who correctly explains the word of the word of truth."

Acts 8:28 "…and on his way home, (the official) was sitting in the chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the Prophet."

Bible reading should be public.

1 Timothy 4:13 "Devote yourself to the public reading of scriptures."

Exodus 24:7 "Then he took the book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, 'We will do everything the Lord has said, we will obey.'"

Nehemiah 8:18 "Also, day by day, from the first day until the last day he read from the book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days, and on the 8th day there was a sacred assembly according to the prescribed manner."

How is the Bible structured?

The Bible is made up of 66 books written by 40 authors. Refer to the Chart provided, "The Old and the New Testament and the categories of the books."

How can you find what you are looking for?

Verses are labeled with the name of the book, then the chapter, then the verse. For instance, John 3:16. The Book is John (the fourth gospel) Find that in a table of contents. Chapter 3(you will see a large chapter number. Then you will look for a small number 16. You will find a very well-known verse.

If you are using your phone, you can type the verse in search or you can simply ask just by naming the book and the numbers.

Many Bibles have a short concordance at the end. Pick a subject and you will see verses related to the subject. Then locate as above or if you ask or type into your phone, for instance, I just said google "show me verses about Bible reading," over 40 verses were listed.

What translations are available?

Choose an easy-to-understand translation. The Bible was originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic in the Old Testament and Greek in the New Testament, so all our Bibles in English are simply translations from the original. Some use very old-fashioned language for instance, The King James Version, but some people will enjoy reading that. A New King James Version (NKJV) is available which is easier to read. The English Standard Version (ESV) is another popular translation. A third commonly used translation is the New International Version (NIV). The Amplified Bible expands each verse with more details than the other translations. You can try out different translations on your phone to see which you enjoy, and many are available in free apps or you can get audio versions that will allow you to listen to the Bible. Having a hard copy is ideal though as you can highlight verses that stand out to you. Having an audio copy is great when you are walking or driving.

Another type of Bible that is available. Is called a paraphrase. These aren't word for word translations, but they help to show the meaning of what the Bible verses are saying. Three common ones are The Living Bible, The Passion Translation (includes all of the New Testament and some of the Old) and The Message.

What is the best plan to use to read the Bible?

There are many reading plans available, use a plan that you think you will be able to stick with. Read every day. Read out loud so that you're saying the words and hearing them as well as reading the words. Think about what you read and how it applies to your life. Write down your thoughts, pray about them and then repeat the process the following day, or a second time on the same day. Don't rush your Bible reading, as you think and pray about it, ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you through it.

1. Start with the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John read 1 or 2 chapters a day and keep going. If you want to read the Bible in a year read 3 or 4 chapters a day. After the gospels go to Genesis and read through the Bible. Or you can alternate between Old and New Testaments.
2. Read two chapters a day from Genesis, and 2 from Psalms, then 2 from the Gospels. Continuing in each location daily you will finish the Bible in under a year. If that seems too much, read 1 chapter a day in each book.
3. After you read the Gospels, read the Bible through from Genesis to Revelation. Read the shorter books as a whole and divide up the largest chapters.

a. Read by time and not chapters, for instance if you want to read the Bible 15 minutes a day or 20 minutes or 30 minutes.

b. Pick the time that best suits you and just read that amount every day.

c. Some people ask the Holy Spirit to guide them and show them what to read daily but if you haven't read the Bible keep track of what you are reading so you eventually read it all.

Many other plans are available online and all sorts of apps to read or listen to. Some free Bible apps for Android are You Version Bible App +Audio, NIV Bible App, Bible Gateway, ESV Bible, and the NKJV Bible App.

Action Steps

- Each disciple will follow their chosen plan for a week, keeping notes on what has stood out to them.

- In the next session share with the group something that you read and applied to your life this week.