

Having the Right Attitude and Perspective Toward the Bible

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Date: 01 May 2022

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[0 : 00] All right, good morning, everybody. How's everybody doing? So we missed last week, and I'm trying to remember, where were we at? What were we doing? Oh, yeah, we visited family. I'm glad.

Yeah, we had a great time. It'd been two years, over, well, about two years since we'd seen my brother and his family, and all the cousins. My brother has eight kids.

And all the kids are around the same age as ours, and so everybody always has a blast when we get together. You have the teenagers hanging out and doing stuff, and then you've got the little ones running around, like, sword fighting and playing with dolls and everything else.

So it was kind of a madhouse, but it was fun. Then I got to hang out with my brother. I have a twin brother, if you don't know. There's another one of me out there. And so, yeah, I don't think we've seen each other in two years.

We've seen some of the cousins because they've come out. Well, you actually, some of you get to meet them, right? Noah and Ashley, they were out for that pro-life outreach.

[1 : 21] So, well, we're going to start looking at understanding the Bible.

And I kind of titled this Keys to Understanding Scripture or Keys to Understanding the Bible. And it's been something that's been on my mind a lot lately. The Bible is a big book.

And for a lot of people, the Bible is a daunting book to get into. But let's start with a scripture. Proverbs 4.7.

So if you could open up your Bible, we'll look at a scripture. Proverbs 4.7. Proverbs 4.7 says this, Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom.

And in all you're getting, get understanding. Understanding. And so as we read the scriptures, as we approach the scriptures, we want to get that understanding that the Proverbs are talking about here.

[2 : 45] In all you're getting, get understanding. Wisdom is the principal thing. And wisdom we can get from a myriad of places, right? I think I've thrown this out to my kids before.

Where does wisdom come from? It comes from all kinds of sources. You can get wisdom from your parents, from counselors, from all kinds of books. But what does God intend as the main source of wisdom?

His word, the scriptures, right? That's what he gave us for us to grow in wisdom. And so he wants us to grow in wisdom. And to get that, we need the understanding as we read the scriptures.

The Bible's a big book. How many books are in the Bible? Anybody yell out? 66. Great job. Does anybody know how many chapters? All right, I wrote it down because I had to look it up.

There's almost 1,200 chapters in the Bible. You know, this is pretty thick, right? And these pages are kind of skinny, you know?

[3 : 50] Over 31,000 verses. And over three quarters of a million words. That can be pretty daunting, huh?

The Bible contains all kinds of different things. It has history, legal codes, proverbs, poetry, songs, prophecies, spiritual truths, practical instruction.

And so deciphering through all that and trying to understand how all these things fit together can sometimes, we can find it difficult. And studying scripture is a lifelong pursuit.

It's not something that you take a course in college, right? And then you file your book away, right? Anybody do that in college? You know, you get these books. And you study them.

You take the tests. And then maybe you keep the book or maybe you get rid of it. At the bookstore. You trade it in. You trade it in at the bookstore for the next one, for the next class, right? But that's not what we do with the Bible, is it?

[4 : 59] We don't trade that in for the next class. Studying the Bible is a lifelong pursuit. And it's something that, you know, you start slow. And in the scripture somewhere, I'm trying to remember where this is, but it talks about line upon line and precept upon precept.

Just like you learn anything. You start slow. You learn the basics and the fundamentals. And then you grow over time. I don't know that we can ever say that we've arrived, right?

If anybody ever says that they've arrived, they've got it all down. You know, you kind of might look at them suspiciously. But we should constantly, throughout our entire lives, be pursuing understanding of the scriptures.

So some of the things that we're going to look at today. Today we're going to look at our attitude. That's kind of how I'm phrasing it. Our attitude, our approach to the Bible.

The kind of perspective that we should take as we approach the Bible. And then some other things we'll look at is just like the big picture of the Bible. It's so important.

[6 : 06] It's understanding the storyline, the main plot lines in the Bible. Just like any book, the Bible has plot lines. And if you don't understand those and you just jump into details, you'll get really confused, right?

You open up some novel. What's a popular novel? The Harry Potter books, right? Are so popular. At least were. You jump into book three and go to page 245 and you start reading.

And, you know, you might be completely lost. So it's important to understand the plot lines.

Hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is just methods of interpreting really any book.

But specifically we talk about hermeneutics as far as interpreting the Bible. Part of that is figures of speech. And when we get to figures of speech, it's going to be so much fun.

And I've taught this before and it's just really fun. We'll talk a little bit about translations. And did you know that there's almost or there's around 50 English translations of the Bible?

[7 : 07] That's a lot. Which one do you pick, right? Which one do you choose? Do you need to have a copy of each? And, of course, there's many more translations in other languages. And then also study tools.

You know, tools that we can use to study the Bible. And if I think of anything else, maybe we'll throw it in. But that's kind of the framework of where we'll start. But today we're going to look at how should we approach the Bible?

What should our attitude be towards the Scriptures? And I think I've seen over the years that there are certain attitudes that I think are wrong attitudes towards the Bible that have hindered people from sometimes reading the Bible at all, but also to understanding the Bible.

And so we're going to talk through some of those. The first thing we'll talk about, as far as our attitude or our approach, is knowing that the Bible is worthy of our trust.

The Bible is a reliable source of truth. If you don't believe that, then you really won't go to the Bible, right? Some people neglect the Bible because they don't think of it as a reliable source of truth.

[8 : 30] In 2 Timothy, if we'll turn there, 2 Timothy 3. 2 Timothy 3, verse 16.

I'll give you a second to go there. 2 Timothy 3, verse 16. It says this, All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

That word inspiration is a word that means God-breathed. It is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instructions in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

This is a scripture that says that the scriptures themselves are given by inspiration of God, and they're profitable. Now, some people who are skeptical, right?

A skeptic, maybe somebody who's not a believer, might say, Well, are you using the Bible to prove that the Bible is reliable? Isn't that kind of a circular reasoning?

[9 : 40] And it is, right? You read a book, and the book says, Well, this book is a reliable source of truth. Well, how do you trust that? But the Bible as a whole has shown itself over time, especially.

And we've had the Bible not just for 2,000 years, right? We've had the New Testament for roughly around 2,000 years, but we've had the Old Testament for even longer. And today we have all kinds of resource materials that are, we might use the term apologetics, a defense of the reliability of the scriptures.

And you can avail yourself answers in Genesis has a lot of great materials. We have a lot of great materials at our house that show the reliability of the scripture. But one of the things I think about sometimes is that these resources that we have today are fairly new, right?

Just in the last, we'll say, few hundred years. But for most of the history of Christianity, those resources really weren't available, unless maybe you were in some kind of institution of higher learning where you had access to certain of those resources.

But even then, those people, you know, the academics of those days, maybe 500 years ago, I'm even thinking of people like Martin Luther or people like that, didn't have nearly the kind of resources that we have today to look into the reliability of scripture.

[11 : 22] But the scriptures themselves, without any kind of external evidence, I'll say that, are, they kind of have the earmarks of truth.

We'll put it that way. They, the scriptures, taste true. You know how, when you, we as human beings, right, we know how to taste good food and tell the difference between something that's food and something that's not through the taste of it, right?

And you taste something, it's like, this isn't really food, you know? You go to Taco Bell, right? And you put that in your mouth and you're like, this isn't real food. No, I'm just teasing.

But in the same way that we have this ability to taste food and know what's good and what's not, we have this ability to discern truth.

And it, you know, our truth discerner doesn't always work right as it should, especially when you have sin in your life. But there are certain earmarks in the Bible that seem to indicate that this is a true book.

[12 : 41] One of the things that I bring up a lot is the book, the Bible is a book mostly written by what group of people? The Jews, right? The Jews.

And as you open up the Bible and read about this people, the Jews, does the Bible show that the Jews were this amazing people that loved the Lord and always did what was good and right?

No, not at all. And isn't that bizarre that a people group would put together this book of holy scriptures and throughout the book it would show that they were constantly running away from the Lord, falling into sin, following after false gods and false idols, doing all kinds of wicked and evil.

Like if you were going to write a book, right? If you were going to make up a book of scriptures about you and your family, is that what you would do? I wouldn't do that, right?

And so just looking at that one thing, there's an earmark that only somebody who's actually writing the truth would do that. We've been going through the books of Kings and Chronicles and reading about all the kings, right?

[13 : 59] And you think, well, the kings, right, if they're going to make sure that a scribe writes about their reign, that they're going to write about all the best things that happened.

And as you read about the kings, is that what you read, that they were all awesome and wonderful? No, it's just all kinds of sin and those kinds of things.

Yeah, Pastor Mark. One of my favorite quotes, I recall from Dr. Lewis Barrett Schaefer, who was the founder of Dallas Theological Seminary.

He said, the Bible is a book such as man could not write if he would, and would not write if he could. I like that. Can I repeat that for those who couldn't hear? And correct me if I'm wrong. So Lewis Schaefer, Lewis Sperry Schaefer said, the Bible is a book that man could not write if he would, and would not write if he could.

[15 : 04] Right? Think that through. It's pretty profound. Yeah, it is profound. Well, I'll have to write that down. Somebody write that. One of my kids, write that down for me, so I can remember that. That's great.

Another thing, too, I've brought a book here. I actually have a required reading list for my kids, and this is a book that's one of them. I've actually never read it, but my older kids, I bought it for my older kids, and they read it, and they said, Dad, this is a really great book.

So I was like, okay, we'll make sure everybody reads this. They gave me the overview. But it's a book called Seeking Allah and Finding Jesus. Has anybody ever read this? Anybody else? Okay, a few.

And this is a guy. He used to work with Ravi Zacharias Ministries, and he actually passed away from cancer not too long ago. He wasn't with the ministry for very long. He was actually pretty young.

I don't know how old he was, but maybe at the most in his 40s. But it's about this guy. His name is Nabeel Qureshi, and he's a Muslim. And this book is about him seeking after truth, and he was exposed to Christians, and my kids can correct me if I'm wrong.

[16:16] But as he was exposed to some Christians and started reading the Bible, one of the things that just shocked him almost with the Bible is some of the things in the Bible, for example, where Jesus said, you should love your enemies.

And to especially a Muslim, and really to anybody who's not a Christian, to Christians that seems like a, you know, that's a common thing, right? Love your enemies. Every Christian knows that. That's what you ought to do. But for somebody who's not a believer, that idea is wild.

It's bizarre. Why would you love somebody who hates you? That doesn't seem like a natural thing. But that idea arrested his attention.

It shocked him. And it actually drew him in to the Bible to see what else was in there because of that one thing, love your enemies.

And so the Bible has this taste of truth. It has these earmarks of truth that there's something about it that's not like any other book. Another thing, you know, we have, over the last few hundred years, had this tremendous, all these archaeological advancements where we've discovered all these cities and civilizations that are thousands of years old, things that, you know, we didn't have 500 years ago.

[17:45] And if you, you can read about the, how certain things were found and lost cities and all these things. But what you found, because a lot of this started happening back maybe around the 1800s, people would take a Bible.

And a lot of times, these people were not Christians. They weren't believers. But they'd take a Bible and they'd use it like a treasure map. And they'd study about these cities of the plain talked about in Genesis or the Egyptian civilization talked about in Exodus.

or other books in the Bible. And they'd use it like a treasure map and, you know, see where this city said it was over here and these people have these things.

And they'd use those and they'd go out into these areas and they'd find these cities exactly where the Bible says that they were.

And this happened over and over and over again. And people use the Bible as like this treasure map because the Bible is a... They found the Bible to be a reliable source of truth for these more practical matters, where things are located, right?

[19:08] And so, the Bible has been found to be reliable by many people. And of course, there's plenty of skeptics today. But I find their arguments to be somewhat wanting.

The next... So, the Bible's worthy of our trust. If we don't start with that, right, you're not going to go to the Scriptures to look for truth.

The second point is the Bible is meant to be read. Now, that might seem like overly obvious, right? But for many people who are religious, even Christians, the Bible is treated not as something that we ought to read, but more of like a holy relic that we just kind of honor.

You know, some people, they have Bibles in their homes. Maybe it's a family Bible, right? Maybe it's something you even put on a prominent display on a coffee table or up on a bookshelf somewhere. But that's not what the Bible is for.

The Bible's not meant for... to be displayed. Even a friend of mine told me a story. He used to be Catholic. And when he was younger, he started reading the Bible. And I can't remember exactly, but he was...

[20:19] He had a question about the Bible and he went to his Catholic priest. And he said... He had this question, spiritual question.

And he says, well, what does the Bible say? And he says, well, let's go find a Bible. And so they went and they looked in all the different rooms in the Catholic church or parish or whatever.

I can't remember. I'm not sure what it's called. And they couldn't find a Bible anywhere. And finally, finally he says, oh, I know. And so they went, you know, to like we have right over here, right in the front of the church.

They found the Bible that sits in the, right in the front of the whatever. And they opened it up and found the scripture, you know, that they were looking for. But that was just kind of an indication, right?

And not all Catholic churches are that way. We have friends that are Catholic and they study the Bible. They actually have Bible studies, you know, in their Catholic church, which is great. They ought to do that. But there are plenty of churches out there, right, that the Bible is not something that is encouraged to read.

[21 : 26] It's just something that's kind of honored, which is good. We ought to honor the scriptures, right? But that's not the purpose of the Bible, just to honor it. in 1 Thessalonians 5.27, and we won't necessarily turn there, but this is at the end of 1 Thessalonians.

Paul's writing a letter to the Thessalonians and he says this, I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren. It wasn't just something, a letter to be read among the leaders.

it was to be read among everyone. When I find somebody who is maybe a new Christian or maybe somebody I've shared the gospel with and maybe I'm, you know, maybe our church, right, isn't nearby because I, you want people to get involved in a church, right, if they're a young believer or a new believer or even if they're just, you know, don't have a church and they've been a believer for a long time.

But especially for young believers, I'll try to recommend, I want to recommend that they go to church but that's kind of a risky thing, right? There's a lot of churches out of there and some of them are wolves, right?

And so what do you tell somebody when you're recommending what church to go to? You know, is it church with a steeple on it? You know, is that what they're looking for? Is it a certain denomination?

[22 : 53] Is that what we should do? Well, you know, sometimes certain denominations can be hit or miss. And so what I tell people is go to a church where people bring their Bible.

Go to a church where people bring their Bible and where the pastor teaches from the Bible. And I think that's just a good general rule of thumb of what a good church is where people bring their Bibles.

Now today we have like these things, you know, sometimes you don't know are people scrolling through Facebook, you know, at church or are they actually reading the Bible? So it's, I think, harder in our more technical age here.

Grace Bible Church, that's the name of our church, right? We have Bible in the name because that's a huge emphasis and it should be, right? Reading, studying the scriptures should be an emphasis for any church.

We are a Bible church. As we read the Bible, one of the things I think that is another, can be a concern, is there are some people who read the Bible simply as a devotional book and, or put another way, as like a self-help book.

[24 : 10] We read the Bible as, well, how can I, how can I read this to kind of improve my life? You know, if you go to a bookstore, right, and there's less and less bookstores these days, everything's online, but if you go to a bookstore, a lot of times, you'll see the different sections, right?

You'll have like history and theology maybe and literature, but then there's always a self-help section, right? It's about how to run a better business or how to have a great marriage and all these things.

And the Bible actually is a self-help book, isn't it? Does it have, does it tell us how to have a better marriage? It actually does, doesn't it? But I think there's a risk if we only approach the Bible as a self-help book, if that's the whole of how we approach the Bible.

There was a, there was a book series, I remember when I was young, probably 20, 25 years ago, called, there was, it was a book originally called Chicken Soup for the Soul.

Anybody remember that? I think they still have them. And it, it was so popular that they had, well, Chicken Soup for the Mother's Soul, right?

[25 : 21] And then Chicken Soup for the Father's Soul. And it just, I mean, they kept running that thing. Finally, you know, today we have Chicken Soup for the Dentist's Soul.

I mean, it just got, they just took it way everywhere. I mean, they, they, they, they squeezed everything that they could out of that. but I remember as a young man picking up those books and reading through them and, you know, thinking, there's really not a lot of meat here.

You know, there's a lot of things from the, from the scriptures that are inspiring and those things are good. I don't want to diminish those things but it's not sufficient.

The Bible isn't just a book of inspiration. You go to a Christian bookstore and a lot of times you can get like posters or things you put on your wall. Wonderful, encouraging, motivational scriptures and we should put those things on our wall but we can't let that be the whole of our approach to scripture.

Does anybody have a favorite Bible verse? A Bible verse you think is, this is my favorite Bible verse. I think a lot of us do, right? And, I have taken, to, sometimes we'll ask, you know, what's your favorite Bible verse or share it?

[26 : 45] Joe, did you have something? Romans 8:28 is Joe's. Okay, what does that say? All things work together for good to those who love them. That's a great Bible verse.

I've taken, over the years, to, when people ask me or when I'll share what my favorite Bible verse, my favorite Bible verse, do my kids know my favorite Bible verse? What is it? It's 1 Samuel 15:33.

And my daughter, Shiloh, I'm sorry, was this for Christmas? For Christmas. She painted me a beautiful picture for Christmas with my favorite Bible verse on it.

And it was so sweet. And it's 1 Samuel 15:33. And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal. Very inspiring.

And it's got a beautiful sunset and rolling hills. And, you know, it's set in fun, right? That's my favorite Bible verse.

[27 : 55] But it's a little bit shocking, right? And it's a way to kind of like, you know, people look at you funny when you, they look it up. I'll say, oh yeah, 1 Samuel 15:33, you should look it up.

And they'll come back later and say, are you sure that was the right verse? But, it's used to demonstrate that the Bible isn't just a book of inspiration and motivation and wonderful stories and quips and proverbs.

Though it is that. But the Bible is a book and it's not just a book of how to live your best life now, right? The Bible is a book of true history.

It's a book of wrath and violence and suffering and pain. Also, wisdom and beauty. Romance and love and sacrifice.

It's a book that tells us about God and who he is and what he's like. Not just his holiness, forgiveness, and love, his goodness, his righteousness, but also his wrath and his judgment.

[29 : 04] It's a book about us and what we're like. About our sin and our failure, but also of our worth before God. Our potential in him.

It's a book about our past and about our future. And how many people are really interested in their future. It's a book about who lives and who dies.

You ever thought about that? The Bible is a book about who lives and who dies. It's a book about reality. A book about the way things are, and that's so important in this day and age, right?

A lot of people like to live in their imaginations today. But it's a book about the reality of how things are. But not only that, but it's a book about the way things ought to be.

The way they ought to be. And so, we should read the Bible for all of its worth. Here's another book I brought. This is a book called by Greg Kokel.

[30 : 10] He's a Christian apologist. And it's called The Story of Reality. A great little book. But the emphasis of this book is the Bible is not, because so many people, people who are not Christians, they look at believers, they go to their homes, they see these inspiring quotes on the wall, let's say.

They maybe pick up a devotional book and they see, you know, sweet sayings and all those kinds of things. And they think Christianity and the Bible is a book about trying to improve your life so that life is not so hard.

And that's a huge kind of viewpoint that a lot of non-believers have of all religions. Any religion, you can just pick which one suits you best, whichever one makes you feel good.

That's the way they view religion. This book says the Bible is the story of reality, how things really are. The Bible's not a book to just try to make you feel good.

Does the Bible always make you feel good? Not at all. And so, another good book I'd recommend. But, yeah, the Bible is a book about reality.

[31 : 26] We need to read the Bible, the good, the bad, the ugly, right, to understand reality, truth, what God wants us to know. The third point, the Bible is for everyone, not just the experts, not just the professionals, not just the academics.

And this is something that's been an issue for thousands of years in Christianity. There's a video series, or not a series, I think it's just a single video, called The Forbidden Book.

Has anybody ever seen that? It's a video called The Forbidden Book. Oh, it's a great, I think we have a copy of it. I'll have to maybe bring it in. Maybe we'll actually watch it, because I think it's probably 45 minutes.

Maybe we can actually watch it sometime in the Sunday school class. But, it tells about the history of the Bible, and how for most of the history of Christianity, most of the history of Christianity, the Bible was forbidden, not just by the secularists, but by the Christian church itself.

If you had a copy of the Bible, and you weren't authorized, your life could be on the line. There were people that would hide Bibles. I had the experience being a missionary in Vietnam, and in Vietnam, the Bible is a regulated book.

[32 : 50] You're allowed to have copies that are printed by the government. I was just reading a couple years ago, the Chinese, they do the same thing, the communists, they like to do this. And they would print their own Bible, their own version of the Bible, their own copies of the Bible, and distribute a limited amount, right?

Because they want to be tolerant and accepting of all religions, but only to a certain degree. But they'd actually, they started changing the stories in the Bible, changing the accounts.

Isn't that wild? And I don't know how they, I guess it works to some degree, but, and the gall to do that, right?

But the Bible has been a book that for many, many generations, thousands of years, was not available to people in their own language. And there's another great video series called the Reformation Overview.

In fact, I think we might have a copy in this church. and a big story of the Reformation is getting the scriptures into the language of the common people.

[33 : 58] Because for many, many, many, many years, you could only have access to the Bible if you could read Greek, Hebrew, or Latin. And if you didn't read those languages, or know those languages, you couldn't read the Bible for yourself.

Is that what God intended the Bible to be for? For the academics? For the experts? And then they could explain it to everybody else, right? But that's been the attitude for thousands of years.

I'm the expert. I'll read it. Because it's hard to understand, right? I mean, it is, right? The Bible's difficult to understand. I'll read it, I'll understand it, and then I'll explain it to you.

Now, does the Bible say that God has set teachers in the church? He has. Teachers are good. It's good for people to explain the scriptures. But it's also good for those who are being explained to, to open up the Bible for themselves, and to confirm.

Is what they're saying true? In Acts chapter 17, verse 11 and 12, I'll read this. It talks about the Bereans, right?

[35 : 07] Paul was going through talking about Jesus Christ and what Jesus Christ had done, and what the scriptures said about the Messiah and what he would do. And it says this, these, talking about the Bereans, were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness and they searched the scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

Therefore, many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men. But the focus there, they searched the scriptures. scriptures. And were they criticized for doing that?

Why don't you just believe me? I'm the expert, right? Paul was the expert. He received all this revelation. You know, he had the understanding. Why would you search the scriptures?

Just believe me. Even today, right, we have authorities. You know, just believe me. Trust me. I'm telling you what's true.

Joe, did you have something? We have the Berean Bible Society now that apply that Bible verses there to rightly divide the word of God.

[36 : 14] So if you want a source of interpretation or divide the word, the Berean Bible Society has usually got it right. Yeah, the Berean Bible Society, well, their whole purpose and intention is to get people, individuals, everybody, to study the Bible for themselves, right?

And provide tools and resources and teachings to help explain. But we need to study the Bible for ourselves. Another great group that's been around for many years is the Gideons. And the Gideons, the whole purpose of that group, I think we have some members, or I don't know, was John a Gideon?

Yeah. And was, yeah, anybody else with the Gideons? Anyway, the Gideons, their whole purpose is to get Bibles out into the hands of the people so that people can read the Bible for themselves. I know, I've talked to so many people or heard stories from many people. They came to Christ just by reading the Bible. They opened it up, they started reading, they found the gospel, and they got saved.

The Bible, for some people, is considered a dangerous book. To the communists, the Bible is a dangerous book, right? Because it competes, right, for the affection of the people. The communists, they want the affection of the people to be towards the state, the homeland, the motherland.

[37 : 28] But the Bible says, where should people's affections be? Toward God, their creator. And, you know, the professionals, those who are Bible teachers, aren't, you know, aren't always trustworthy.

They don't always, sometimes they make mistakes. Sometimes they're wolves, right, that, you know, play fast and loose with the scriptures. But even for those who are doing their best, right, don't always get things right.

So, all of us should always check for ourselves. All right, the, I think this is number four. I lost count. Are we on number four today? Anybody writing this down?

Four. The Bible is not, is meant not just to be read, but to be studied. Right? You can read the Bible, and that's great, and we ought to.

But we also ought to dig into it. Studying is about digging in, exploring, wrestling with the scriptures. In 2 Timothy 2, verse 15, it says this.

[38 : 29] This is the New King James Version. It says, Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. That scripture just came up. The King James says, Study.

It uses the word study to show yourself approved. We ought to study. We need to dig in. We need to wrestle with the scriptures. We need to seek to understand them. We can study by ourselves.

We can study in groups of people, and we ought to. Deuteronomy 11, verse 18. Turn to there real quick. Deuteronomy 11, verse 18. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 11, verse 18. It says this. Therefore, you shall lay up these words of mine.

This is talking about the law that was given to Israel. Therefore, you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul and bind them as a sign on your hand. And they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

[39 : 39] You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them.

And so, this is really about families, right? And making the scriptures a priority, teaching them, talking about them. But this works not just with our close-knit family, our immediate family, but with the family of God, right?

We can talk about the scriptures when we rise up, when we sit down, when we're walking along the way, when we're having dinner, when we're hanging out with friends. Talk about the current events of the day.

Well, what does the Bible say about that? There's this war in Ukraine and Russia. And does the Bible say anything about some of the things that are going on and about maybe what's a just war? What are the kinds of reasons why you should wage war?

Does the Bible talk about that? Those are good things that we can talk about and consider and wrestle with. There's another verse in Romans 4, 3 where Paul is talking about kind of philosophy, but then he says, what sayeth the scripture in Romans 4, 3?

[41 : 07] And that's a question we ought to ask ourselves over and over and over again throughout all our lives. And sometimes, it's even things, I try to do this, especially among my family, with things that we've done for years.

A lot of times, it's a tradition for I think a lot of Christian families. When you sit down for dinner, you pray, right? But what does the Bible say? Is that something the Bible says we ought to do?

Or is it just a tradition? Is it something the Bible says that we should do, that we can do, that we must do? And, you know, you can open up the Bible and find places.

We were talking the other night of what does the Bible say about, you know, a lot of times we have a tradition of when we pray, we bow our heads, fold our hands, right? Does the Bible say we ought to do that?

Or does the Bible talk about other kind of modes of prayer? I see John saying, raise your hands, right? I think it's in James, talking about lift up your hands, praying to the Lord, and in other places. [42 : 09] And so how come we don't do that when we pray? You know, is that required? Is it not? So, a lot of good questions, but we have lots of traditions and things that we do, and it has to be that way, right?

We can't study the Bible about every single little detail we do in our lives, right? A lot of things we just grew up with or kind of caught through the way things are done at our church or whatever. But it is always good to just say, well, what does the Bible say? Because sometimes there are things that I've been doing for years. In fact, one of them is this guy, Greg Kokel.

I remember I was listening to a radio program and he said something and it shocked me. He says, you know, a lot of us, we pray and at the end of our prayer, we say, in Jesus' name, amen. I said, yeah, that's what we did.

That's how you end a prayer, right? And he says, well, that's nowhere in the Bible does it say you should end a prayer in Jesus' name, amen. The Bible talks about praying in Jesus' name, right? [43 : 12] But that doesn't mean that you end your prayer saying in Jesus' name. It just means when you pray, you're doing it in his name, in his authority, right? And I was shocked because I'd been doing that my whole life.

I still do it today just out of habit. And it's not like it's wrong to say in Jesus' name, amen, right? It's not wrong to do that. But, you know, is that something that the Bible teaches?

Is there any prayer in the Bible that ends within Jesus' name? There actually isn't. So, always filtering our whole lives what sayeth the Scripture.

Number five. This is number five. The Bible is meant to be read, it's meant to be studied, but it's also meant to be understood. The Bible is meant to be understood.

And this is something that I see a lot of people don't get. They think the Bible is meant to be a mystery. And are there mysteries in the Bible? There are.

[44 : 15] There are mysteries in the Bible. There have been. We talk in this church, right, about the mystery. things that were hidden in ages past that have now been revealed. And I think there are still some mysteries.

There's a lot of things that today, through the New Testament, through the epistles of Paul, that have been revealed. But there are still certain things about the future. You read the book of Revelation, there are certain things revealed and certain things that are pretty mysterious. But overall, by and large, the Bible is a book of revelation, not a book of concealment. The Bible's not a mystery book.

The Bible is a book that's meant to show us what God is like, all about Him, what He's like. There's a Bible verse that is referenced a lot. I hear it quoted, and I don't know that many people know what the context is.

But people will, you know, experience something, and they'll say something like, oh well, you know, we don't understand God. You know, the Bible says His ways are not our ways, and His thoughts not our thoughts.

[45 : 25] And because we're running out of time, we won't go over that. That's a reference to a passage in Isaiah. And it says this, For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. And if you read that just by itself, you might think, well, you know, God just, He thinks beyond what we do.

And is that true? Right? God is smarter than us. He's wiser than us. That's all throughout the scriptures. But this is a scripture that is not teaching that, well, we can't understand the ways of God.

We can't understand the thoughts of God. God. It's a scripture about the wicked. That's who it's about. The wicked who are perverting justice.

And is perversion of justice the ways of God? No. This isn't talking about believers. This is talking about unbelievers, about the wicked, about the, maybe among the Israelites too, but those who are

rejecting God.

[46 : 35] But here's what it says in 1 Corinthians 2. And in fact, we'll turn there. 1 Corinthians 2. In verse 16.

We'll start with verse 15. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no man. Verse 16. For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?

And that's, that's actually a quote from the Old Testament. Who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

It's true. If you don't study the scriptures, you won't know God's mind. You won't know what God is like. But if you do study the scriptures, it'll be revealed to you.

You can know what God is like. You can know what we're like. You can know more about yourself. And that's what the Bible is intended to do. To reveal to us who God is.

[47 : 53] What he's like. So that, you know, a common thing that I see among Christianity is that we look at our circumstances, the things that's going on around us, and we try, like in witchcraft, where you, where you pour out the chicken entrails, where you have, and try to discern, well, what's this telling us about my life?

Right? That's what they do in witchcraft, where you have the tarot cards, and you turn them over, and you try to, from that, decide, you know, what's my future?

Or the tea leaves. All these things. And we look at our circumstances like they're tea leaves, and we try to discern, well, what does this mean? What is God trying to say to me? What is God doing?

And is that how we should try to discern what God's like, what he's doing, what his plan for my life is? No. We open up the Bible. And we can see what God's plan for my life is.

What God is trying to do in my life from the scriptures. Number six. Is it number six? The last one. The Bible is meant to transform us.

[49 : 12] The understanding, the studying, the reading, it's not just an academic exercise. It's not just something we do just to check off a box. God wants to transform us.

Quickly, Romans 12, 2 says this, and do not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

As we grow in understanding and knowing God's will for our life, not by trying to discern it from circumstances, but by reading the scriptures themselves, we will be transformed. We transform to be like him.

And that's ultimately God's goal for us is that we be like him. Philippians 2, 5 says, let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

We look at the scriptures, we see what God's like, we see what God did through his son, Jesus Christ, and we take that mind and make it our mind and have our lives transformed.

[50 : 14] And that's the ultimate purpose of studying the scriptures, of understanding the scriptures. ultimately, that we would be like him. Amen? All right.

Let me pray and then if there's any final comments or questions. Father, thank you for the scriptures. Thank you for your word. We want to be transformed. We want to be like you and we don't want to be ignorant of the scriptures.

Thank you for teachers and those you put in place positions to teach and help us to grow. but Father, help us individually, each one in this room, Father, to open up our eyes, to understand the scriptures, to understand what you would have us to know.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen.