

DEEP



WIDE

BIBLE READING
EQUIP NIGHT
TEACHING OUTLINE



VINTAGE PRESS

Deep & Wide: Sermon Notes

Copyright © 2021 by Vintage Press

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission of the publisher.

Design, layout, and illustrations by Christopher Wilson.

BIBLE READING EQUIP NIGHT

Resources & Media: nola.vcmvmt.com/deepandwide

PART 1: BIBLE 101

BIBLE TRIVIA

Find answers on the last page of this document

1. How many total verses are in the Bible?
2. How old was the oldest human person to live (Methuselah) when he died?
3. Who was the second oldest person to live and how long?
4. How many total verses are in the KJV?
5. What's the last word of the Old Testament?
6. What's the first word of the New Testament?
7. How many total authors included in the Bible?
8. What does the term 'Bible' in Greek literally mean?

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

General info

- The Problem

⁹And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Colossians 1:9-10

I never saw a fruit-bearing Christian who was not a student of the Bible.

D.L. Moody

- Bible 101: Basic Information
 - Books: 66
 - Authors: 40
 - Time periods: creation until New Heaven/Earth—writers span from 15th c. BC to the 60s/70s AD
 - Purpose: God gave us the Bible to learn about Him, come to saving faith in Him and ultimately to guide our walks in Him. It has been given not just for our information but for transformation. The transforming of our minds, attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, the entire perspective we have on existence!
 - What is the overall message/story arc of the Bible?
 - The unifying storyline of the Bible is God redeeming a rebellious humanity back to Himself. We see across the entire story of the Bible! Sinful humanity repeatedly turning from God, sinning against Him, messing up life for ourselves and others, and God pursuing relationship with us ultimately through His Son Jesus Christ.

Genre

- What is genre?
 - A literary genre is a category of literary work that conveys a certain message within a certain set of rules or guidelines specific to that genre.
- Why does genre matter?
 - Newspaper national news vs. sports news section: "The notorious Mr. Willis steals again from Rodney Jackson and runs home."
- What are the main biblical genres?
 - Narrative history, genealogies, chronicles, laws, poetry, proverbs, prophetic oracles, riddles, drama, biographical sketches, parables, letters, sermons, apocalypses
- How can I know which I'm reading?
 - Hard way: Reading through multiple times, writing down literary devices and patterns you notice in the text, setting those devices and patterns in their historical context, gathering knowledge of the author, and then cross referencing with other contemporaneous ancient texts

- Easy way: intro pages in your Bible or commentary
- How can this help me read the Bible better?
 - You can rightly discern what God is saying to YOU today! Growing in reading and understanding the Bible will not only transform you but help answer questions.
- Genre Examples
 - OT Narrative History
 - Narratives are stories—purposeful stories retelling the historical events of the past that are intended to give meaning and direction for a given people in the present.”
 - All narratives have 3 basic parts: characters, plot and plot resolution.
 - Involved in these parts are protagonists (primary character), antagonists (source of the conflict), and agonists (other major characters involved in the struggle).
 - 3 Levels of Biblical Narrative existing in 3 levels:
 - 3rd level metanarrative—ties the entire Bible together, God’s plan for redeeming the humanity that rebelled following creation.
 - 2nd level narrative— the story of God’s redeeming a people for his name constituted first in the OT old covenant sacrificial system and second in the NT new covenant in Christ
 - 1st level narrative—all the hundreds of individual narratives that make up the other two levels
 - Examples of OT Narrative History—Genesis, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Jonah, Haggai; substantial narrative is included in Exodus, Numbers, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Job
 - How to Read Narrative History
 - Read through the segment/passage multiple times
 - Understand how Scene, Structure and Characterization oftentimes operates differently than modern contexts
 - Fast-moving scenes are the building blocks rather than building the story around the character
 - Written originally for hearers, not readers
 - Characterization based in status or position more than visual appearance

- Take care to discern 'implied meaning' where applicable ('reading between the lines')
 - Implicit teaching is that which is clearly present in the story but not stated in so many words.
- How NOT to Read Narrative History–Beware of...
 - Decontextualizing: removing a passage from its literary/historical context to make a point it isn't meant to make
 - False appropriation: attempts to bring in a modern concept/perspective that is foreign to the narrator's purpose and contrary to his point of view
 - Monkey see, monkey do: taking a text that describes a certain person or group's actions in history and applying it to one's personal ethics today
- Wisdom Literature
 - Wisdom is the ability to make godly choices in life...it is something that exists only when a person thinks and acts according to the truth when making the many choices that life demands.
 - How to Read Wisdom Literature
 - Understanding Proverbs (old-fashioned and basic rules of life)
 - Focuses on practical wisdom through helpful attitudes and behaviors that, when obeyed, generally lead to a flourishing life
 - Not everything here is written to always be taken literally–the same way we know 'practice makes perfect' or 'curiosity killed the cat' isn't to be taken literally but draws our attention to a general principle to help govern our lives in wise ways
 - Understanding Job
 - Employs 'speculative wisdom' which wrestles with God and tough realities in life, ultimately arriving at God's ultimate truth
 - The question the book raises is, why is Job suffering? Who is right? Job or his friends?
 - Understanding Ecclesiastes
 - Employs 'speculative wisdom' which wrestles with God and tough realities in life, ultimately arriving at God's ultimate truth
 - Ecclesiastes works on the hard questions of life in a sober and oftentimes cynical tone

- It's important to note that the book ends with a statement calling for us to follow God and know that He is the ultimate judge of each of our lives
- "...even if the only real certainty about this present life is the certainty of the grave, one should still live life, hebel as it is, as a gift from God. Joy in this life does not come ultimately from "getting" (securing profit from what one does), but in the journey itself, the life that God has given. In such a world, joy and satisfaction are to be found in living the rhythms of life without trying to be in control or to "make gain" of what is merely transitory."
- How NOT to Read Wisdom Literature
 - Reading in bits and Pieces, missing the overall message
 - Misunderstanding wisdom terms, categories and styles leading to misinterpretation
 - Failing to follow the line of argument (esp. Job, Eccl.)
- Parables
 - An earthly story with a heavenly meaning intended to lead the audience toward greater knowledge of God, and so adjust their heart and behavior (Examples: Parables of the Good Samaritan, Prodigal Son, Soils)
 - How to read Parables
 - Understand there are many kinds
 - True Parable: a story with beginning, middle, and end that should expose how we fall short and expose our need for renewal or action or both (ex. Good Samaritan, Lost Sheep, Prodigal Son, Great Banquet, Workers in the Vineyard, Rich Man and Lazarus, 10 Virgins etc.)
 - Similitude: illustrations from everyday life that Jesus used to make a point (ex. Yeast in the Dough)
 - Epigram/Simile/Metaphors: sayings (usually parabolic)
 - Primary function
 - Story parables function not as a means to teach doctrine but rather calling forth a response on the part of a hearer
 - The trouble with interpreting these parables lies in how they would've been heard
 - To get this feeling, you have to understand the points of reference within the parable as well as the unexpected turn

- Understand what the audience at the time would have heard and understood, and THEN apply that to our lives
- Who is the audience?
 - Understanding any parable must begin with understanding who is in the setting with Jesus
 - Knowing the audience helps us determine who all Jesus is going after and where we might fit in amongst them
- How NOT to read Parables
 - Modernize before exegesis: if we hastily make a parable into modern day terms without exegeting what Jesus was getting at, we might miss the main 'point' of what He was getting at
 - Absolutize parabolic language: the kingdom of heaven isn't literally a mustard seed
 - Allegorize stories: allegory has a subtle difference to parable in that everything has a symbolic or deeper meaning in a story, but in a real parable you discover the deeper meaning working backwards from the point that Jesus is making

PART 2: EXPERIENCING GOD IN SCRIPTURE

Look over these passages in Scripture to learn about a Biblical heart posture toward Scripture. Ponder these passages and use the questions to reflect on them and how you experience Scripture.

⁹⁷*Oh how I love your law!
It is my meditation all the day.*

Psalm 119:97

¹⁰³*How sweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth!*

Psalm 119:103

¹¹¹*Your testimonies are my heritage forever,
for they are the joy of my heart.*

Psalm 119:111

- How did David experience Scripture?

- How do you experience Scripture?

*¹²I have not departed from the commandment of his lips;
I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food.*

Job 23:12

- How did Job experience Scripture?

- How do you experience Scripture?

¹³And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

- What did the Thessalonians believe about God's Word?

- Do you really believe the same?

⁶³It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

John 6:63

- What did Jesus teach us about His Words?

- Do your habits with the Bible reflect this?

¹²For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

- What does the author of Hebrews teach about the Bible?

- Do you experience this?

- Write down a few words to describe how you have been experiencing Scripture lately.

When we are in an information-gathering mindset, we are analytical in our approach and at times even critical and judgmental.... When we are in this mode, it is exceedingly difficult for us to hear anything new because we have so many unconscious defenses in place.

Ruth Haley Barton, *Sacred Rhythms*, 49

Consider Isaiah 29

*⁹Astonish yourselves and be astonished;
blind yourselves and be blind!
Be drunk, but not with wine;
stagger, but not with strong drink!*

*¹⁰For the LORD has poured out upon you
a spirit of deep sleep,
and has closed your eyes (the prophets),
and covered your heads (the seers).*

¹¹And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." ¹²And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot read."

¹³And the Lord said:

*"Because this people draw near with their mouth
and honor me with their lips,
while their hearts are far from me,
and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men,*

¹⁴*therefore, behold, I will again
do wonderful things with this people,
with wonder upon wonder;
and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,
and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden."*

Isaiah 29:9-14

Now read the day when the Lord redeems Israel

¹⁸*In that day the deaf shall hear
the words of a book,
and out of their gloom and darkness
the eyes of the blind shall see.*

¹⁹*The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD,
and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.*

Isaiah 29:18-19

And so, let us move toward that sweet joy that David and Job described, that great supernatural power which Paul and the Thessalonians experienced, and that life and spirit that Jesus taught us would all be gained from humbly coming to the Word of God and being penetrated by it.

- Write down a few words to describe how you have been approaching Scripture lately.

LECTIO DIVINA¹

"Lectio Divina or hearing of Scripture requires an open, reflective, listening posture alert to the voice of God. This type of reading is aimed more at growing a relationship with God than gathering information about God."

Silencio

- Put yourself in the presence of God. Become quiet and offer yourself to God.

Lectio

- Read [whichever passage of the Bible] out loud, slowly allowing the words to resonate and settle in your heart. Linger on the word or phrase that catches your attention and lights up for you. Sit with the word or phrase and savor it as a word of God for you.

Meditatio

- Read the passage again and listen to where the word connects with your life right now. Enter into the scene in your imagination. Imagination is a God-given gift. Envision the scene. Carefully watch the people. Listen to how they interact. What do you hear and experience as you watch and listen?

Oratio

- Read the passage one more time, listening attentively. Has God addressed you in this Word and invited you to respond? Allow the Scripture to lead you into a prayer response. Do not censure your thoughts or requests. Let them flow out spontaneously and freely before the Lord who loves you. Hold nothing back. Respond to God's invitation to you.

Contemplatio

- Deeply receive God's Word and rest in his presence and love. Give yourself some time to wait and be still before you reenter life as usual. Take God's Word to you with you throughout the day. Return to it and remember it all day long. Stay with God until you feel prompted to leave.

TWO OTHER WAYS TO PRACTICE DEVOTIONAL READING²

- In your Bible reading, ask God to give you a prayer response to his Word. As a word or phrase lights up for you, consider the prayer God may be calling you to pray. Then pray that prayer for the coming week.
- Before reading Scripture, open yourself to the presence of God. Say something like "Here I am Lord" or "Open my eyes to see wonderful things in your Word". Read slowly until a word or phrase lights up for you. When you sense a word lighting up for you, attend to this word. Do not read any further. Listen to your feelings and God's nudging around this word. Let this word summon you into prayer. Reflect on this word throughout the day.

BIBLE TRIVIA

Here are the answers for the Bible Trivia questions. How many did you get correct?

1. How many total verses are in the Bible?

• A: 31,173

2. How old was the oldest human person to live (Methuselah) when he died?

• A: 969 years

3. Who was the second oldest person to live and how long?

• A: Jared–962

4. How many total verses are in the KJV?

• A: 788,258

5. What's the last word of the Old Testament?

• A: Curse or Destruction

6. What's the first word of the New Testament?

• A: The

7. How many total authors included in the Bible

• A: 40

8. What does the term 'Bible' in Greek literally mean?

• A: From Greek term 'biblia' which means 'books'

REFERENCES

¹Adapted from *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, pp. 187–190.

²Ibid.