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BY THE BOOK

Truth In A
Tumultuous
World

WEEK 2 | How to Read the Bible

PRAYER

Gracious Lord, you have caused all holy scriptures to be written for our learning: help us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that, encouraged and supported by your holy Word, we may embrace and always hold fast the joyful hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

from "Australian Prayer Book"

WARM UP

(OPTIONAL)

What book, other than the Bible, has changed the way you think about your life? How did that book change your life?

NOTES

WORD

- ¹² Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes!
¹³ With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth.
¹⁴ In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches.
¹⁵ I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.
¹⁶ I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.
¹⁷ Deal bountifully with your servant, that I may live and keep your word.
¹⁸ Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.
...
⁶⁵ You have dealt well with your servant, O Lord, according to your word.
⁶⁶ Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe in your commandments.
⁶⁷ Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word.

[PSALM 119: 12-18, 65-67](#)

“Because the Bible is God’s Word, it has eternal relevance; it speaks to all humankind, in every age and in every culture... The problem with a “free” translation, on the other hand, especially for study purposes, is that the translator updates the original author too much...On the one hand, these renditions often have especially fresh and vivid ways of expressing some old truths and have thus each served to stimulate contemporary Christians to take a fresh look at their Bibles. On the other hand, such a “translation” often comes very close to being a commentary, but without other options made available to the reader. Therefore, as stimulating as these can sometimes be, they are never intended to be a person’s only Bible; and the reader needs constantly to check particularly eye-catching moments against a true translation or a commentary to make sure that not too much freedom has been taken...

Whether one likes it or not, every reader is at the same time an interpreter. That is, most of us assume as we read that we also understand what we read. We also tend to think that our understanding is the same thing as the Holy Spirit’s or human author’s intent. However, we invariably bring to the text all that we are, with all of our experiences, culture, and prior understandings of words and ideas. Sometimes what we bring to the text, unintentionally to be sure, leads us astray, or else causes us to read all kinds of foreign ideas into the text.”

Gordon D. Fee, [How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth](#)

GUIDE QUESTIONS

(NUMBERED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DEPTH AND READINESS TO SHARE)

1. On a scale from 1-10 (1 being never/not at all and 10 being always/extremely) how would you rate your ability to correctly interpret things communicated to you? Why have you rated yourself this way
2. Do you believe that the Bible is the “Word of God”? Why/Why Not? Where you can, give instances from the Bible that cause you to have this opinion?
3. For those of you who read and believe the Bible to be the Word of God: interpreting Biblical passages from their context (ie history, geography, language etc.) and within the genre that they are written in are important for interpretation. Why do you think this might be? Do you interpret the Bible this way, as you see what you can learn for you life?
4. For those of you who do not read or believe the Bible? Is there another philosophy, text or reference that you use to centre your life around?
5. If the Bible’s central figure is Jesus Christ and not us, we who read it are then challenged to not become self centred in our reading of the Bible, but to trust the Author at his very word, and to learn His wisdom from his word. Do you trust God and his word? If yes, how do you display this trust in every day life? If you do not trust God, why might this be?
6. Would you like to trust God the author of the Bible with your life, and start a relationship with God through Jesus? Ask your lifegroup leader to lead you in prayer to receive Christ. You can pray this prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Saviour. In Jesus name, Amen.