



DIG INTO THE WORD

WITH

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DIG INTO THE WORD

If you're anything like me, then you want to read your Bible, but a lot of times feel stuck when you actually start reading. Where do I start? How do I read it? Am I supposed to feel something? So know the hope of this e-course is to come out the other side with a deeper love for the scriptures, as well as with some very practical tools that will get you excited about the Bible.

SESSION 1

The Bible is a fascinating book. It spans 66 books over 1500 years and was written by more than 40 different authors. Let that sink in for a minute. The Bible has a same historical span as our time right now all the way back to the Middle Ages. And it's not really one book but a ton of books. Have you ever thought about that?

When you pick up the Bible, you're picking up a library. And the cool part is, even though they were all written at different times and by different people, they all point to the redemptive movement of God to put heaven and earth back together again like He started in the beginning.



JOURNAL FOR A BIT BELOW

- ▶ One huge way to change our attitude or perspective about something is to acknowledge the reality of the current perspective. If you're honest, what are some words that come to mind when thinking about the Bible? Do you believe it's worth reading?

JOURNAL FOR A BIT BELOW

2 Does seeing the Bible as a diverse library of books change how you see it and engage with it?

3 When something is living rather than dead, what changes about how you interact with that thing? Which way do you see the Bible?



SESSION 2

One thing we don't talk about much is the fact that we are all made in God's image. Meaning we were created to reflect the Creator out into the world, and take the world and make something out of it and reflect it back up to Him. Because of sin though, that reflection has been broken, cracked, and marred. The battle of the human life is now reflecting other things. And when we reflect something, we slowly become like that thing. That's essentially what worship is.

What are we replacing God's image with? A relationship? Money? Power? A lot of us don't like to think of it that way because we like to believe we are in control, but the truth is, we only have choices over what image we will be shaped in, not whether we will be shaped at all.



JOURNAL FOR A BIT BELOW

- 1 ▶ What image are you creating yourself in? (It's usually the thing you give most of your time to, spend most of your money on, or daydream about the most?)

- 2 ▶ Read Psalm 115 a couple times in a row. Journal your thoughts, questions, or anything that stands out to you.

JOURNAL FOR A BIT BELOW

3

What's one practical thing you could change to make the Bible more of a priority in your life? It can be small, like setting an iPhone reminder to read it for 5 minutes at lunchtime everyday, or simply carrying it with you more so you can pick it up during your down time.

SESSION 3

We eat, live, and breathe story; we just usually don't realize it. It's why you can remember the movie you saw five years ago better than you can remember the lesson in class last week. We are story beings. We are created for story, to live a story, and to live in a bigger story. The Bible gives us this very thing. It's best understood not as a manual, a rulebook, or a roadmap to life, but as a narrative. What's a narrative? It's something that has a beginning, an end, a plot, characters, an author, a climax, etc. It's exciting, invigorating, and life-giving.

One thing though that most people don't do well, myself included, is learn the story of the scriptures. The more you get the big picture, or the more you can piece together the story, the easier it is to understand certain passages and live properly as a Jesus follower.



JOURNAL FOR A BIT BELOW

- 1 ▶ If you were to summarize the Bible in a few sentences, how would you do it?

- 2 ▶ After watching the video session, what false idea of seeing the Bible (sword, rulebook, etc.) do you most identify with?



JOURNAL FOR A BIT BELOW

3 One way to trace the story of the Bible is through covenants. After watching this video on YouTube, do you have a better grasp on the story of scripture? What clicked or was helpful?

4 Learning of different “acts” in the story or play of scripture, which ones were newest or most surprising to you? Spend some time digging more into those specific ones.



SESSION 4

When was the last time you felt moved, or compelled, or drawn to something bigger than yourself? It could've been a deep conversation with a friend, a movie you saw that had an incredible message, or something inspirational you read about online. That happened because we were created to be moved. We are human beings that feel deeply.

A lot of times, though, we don't equate scripture with this response. We usually get bored, tired, or confused when reading. But the Bible is exciting! Namely because of the story it tells and that we are called to. In the same way a video camera isn't exciting to look at for me, but when I know how to use it, it becomes incredibly exciting. It becomes a lens to see through and to use to tell a story. But when I first get it, I'm usually confused and not excited. I think the scriptures are a lot like that. The more we learn them, the more we get excited because we are constantly getting a better grasp on them and how to navigate them.



JOURNAL FOR A BIT BELOW

1 Do you believe, like I mentioned in the video session, that life goes well and human flourishing happens when we step in line with God's decrees and commands to us?

2 In the video session, I talk about the Bible not feeling like homework or mundane. One way to help that is to constantly switch up how you engage with it to keep the freshness alive. What are a couple ways you can try consuming scripture that are different from each other?



JOURNAL FOR A BIT BELOW

3

I also talk about matching parts of scripture with the season you are in. What season would you say you are in? One of learning, hurt, lament, temptation of certain sins, etc.? What parts of scripture can meet you most in that need? If it's hurt/lament, maybe read the Psalms for a month straight. If it's certain sins, maybe read Romans 6-8 every day for a week.

SESSION 5

One of my favorite things to do when Alyssa and I have married couples over for dinner is ask them about flagship moments in their relationship. Whether it's their first date or their funniest moment or how they met, I love going back and hearing them recount certain memories. There's something about recounting great moments in the past that naturally seems to spur on and cultivate celebration in the present and future. I think Bible reading is a lot like that, too. I can specifically remember certain times of reading scripture and how impactful it was in my life.

Like the time I was reading the Bible in my college library when I was struggling with depression and God gave me a deep sense of His love and care, or the time I heard a certain passage preached in a way that brought it to life. The scriptures are constantly becoming these memory reminders for me. And a huge thing I think of when I come across those passages is how much they've affected me in the present. I wouldn't be the person I am today without the certain moments I've had with scripture in the past.



JOURNAL FOR A BIT BELOW

- 1 Name a few moments or passages that remind you of a very specific moment or season in your life.

- 2 What does it feel like to recount those memories?

JOURNAL FOR A BIT BELOW

- 3 Does knowing that what you read and dig into today will affect you tomorrow help at all with exciting you more about reading scriptures?

- 4 What area of your life would you like to grow over the next 5 years (more kindness, patience, better with money, etc.)? What can you do today to put yourself on the path towards that?



SESSION 6

The Bible is deeply practical. It can radically affect your life and relationships in an instant. The issue is whether or not we will obey it. I remember many times where Alyssa and I have fought or argued and I've had to come to her to apologize because of the conviction I've had while reading scripture.

If I didn't follow the scripture's command for repentance and asking for forgiveness, there probably would've been times where I closed off and got more hard-hearted.



JOURNAL FOR A BIT BELOW

- 1 Read Philippians 2. Are there any areas of your life where you are not modeling the way of Jesus as displayed in that chapter? What are some areas or relationships you can look and to and elevate other's needs/interests?

JOURNAL FOR A BIT BELOW

- 2 ▶ Read 2nd Corinthians 9 (especially verse 7). Paul says we should be a cheerful giver because we are responding to what Christ has done for us. What does verse 13 say can happen when we steward our money well? What does that mean for you?

- 3 ▶ Read Romans 2:4. How should this teach us to interact with others, specifically when telling them about Jesus?

SESSION 7

When I played baseball growing up I was always very timid because I was afraid to fail. I thought if I messed up, I wouldn't be able to play anymore. But the funny thing is, the timidity actually made me play worse! So trying to protect myself and being intimidated actually led to me not being able to play free. I think our approach to the Bible is like this sometimes. Where to start when reading the Bible can be the hardest thing because it's a huge book that looks very intimidating (at least it is for me!).

But know that there is freedom to explore and have fun, because there is no such thing as "failure" when it comes to reading your Bible. God wants you, not your rhythmic, ritualistic obedience. He wants a relationship with you. So it's not about reading to check it off the list, but to get to know more about your Creator, and that's way more exciting than a to-do list! In this session I want it to be deeply practical.



JOURNAL FOR A BIT BELOW

- 1 ▶ What is a good game plan for your life? Do you like to read more in morning or at night? Listen to it on audiobook? Sketch out a few “goals” or plans that you think will fit you best and get you into the word the most.

- 2 ▶ How does seeing the Bible like a diet help your reading?



JOURNAL FOR A BIT BELOW

- 3 Pick a book in the Bible you want to read. Then go to <https://vimeo.com/channels/274009> and find the corresponding video to that book. Watch the five-minute video. Did the video make you more excited to read the book? What did the video help with?

- 4 What are two different ways you can read the book you picked above? (i.e. one way would be to do a chapter a day, another way would be to read it all in one sitting every day for a week, so 7 full reads of it). Put down two ways. Pick the one you think is best.

SESSION 8

One thing that really convicted me many years ago was when someone told me that whatever I prioritize, I will find time for. I didn't want it to be true because I could blame it on something else, or some circumstance. But I realized that everything I prioritize, I never say I'm "too busy" for.

I find the time. I think Bible reading is something that we might sometimes be really busy for and miss a few days, but ultimately, I believe it comes down to priorities. We all have the same amount of hours in a day to divide up into different tasks. For the last session let's dig deep into how we prioritize.



JOURNAL FOR A BIT BELOW

- 1 List the main priorities in your day (school, work, social media, etc.). What do you spend most of your day on? Rank the top 5 things.

- 2 Where do you think the Bible fits best? Where is there margin in your day?



JOURNAL FOR A BIT BELOW

- 3 ▶ Is it hard for you to put your phone away and spend time unplugged? If so, why? What's your plan for doing that? Maybe make a small challenge for yourself like turning the phone off 1 hour each day, and spending that hour journaling and reading instead.

- 4 ▶ Read John 1. Now after reading it, go back and read it in the contemplative way mentioned in the video section. Sit on each word for at least 10 seconds or more. What stands out in the passage when you sit in it for a long time?



BONUS READING PLAN

Yahoo! You finished the workbook!

I hope it was helpful to you. I specifically made a reading plan on YouVersion for you to start off if you need help with starting a rhythm. It's a weeklong reading plan, and hopefully it spurs you deeper into God's word and brings you closer to Jesus. If you don't have the app, just download YouVersion and search for the reading plan that has the same name as this course.

Download The Bible App at
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<http://tinyurl.com/jeffbethkebiblereadingplan>





RESOURCES

SCHOLARS WHO GIVE GREAT CONTEXT

N.T. Wright
Kenneth Bailey
Walter Brueggemann

BOOKS TO READ TO UNDERSTAND THE STORY OF SCRIPTURE

How God Became King: The Forgotten Story of the Gospels, N.T. Wright
Simply Jesus: A New Vision of Who He Was, What He Did, and Why He Matters, N.T. Wright
The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Way in the Biblical Story, Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen

The Bible Project (videos)
The Bible In Five with Tim Mackie (videos)

ONLINE TOOLS

Logos Bible Software
ESV Bible Website
Net Bible