The Word of God for Everyone

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[0:00] Well, we're in our last session, our fifth and final message in this mini-series that we've been doing on understanding the Bible. And I hope it's been a blessing to you. It's certainly been a blessing to me to dig into some things that I kind of knew a little bit, and I've learned a ton, and I hope you have too.

And if you have missed any of the messages, then you can catch up on our brand new shiny sermon page that I'm very proud of. So the first session was the history of God's revelation, and in that we saw that God has very purposefully revealed himself throughout history, and the Bible is his final word to humanity.
And the key point really is that God wants to be known. God wants you and he wants me to know him for the purpose of relationship. And that's very, very important to keep in mind. This is God's proactive communication.
The second part was the history of Scripture, and we looked at how the Bible was written, and we went through the compilation of Scripture, the languages that are used, the key documents, and how they've been preserved.
And there are thousands and thousands of them, a real wealth of manuscripts available to us. And then in the third message, we looked at how we take those thousands of manuscripts and distill them down into, this is the Bible, this is the Hebrew Bible, this is the Greek Bible, which is a process called textual criticism.
[1:30] And then we looked at how we take that and translate it into modern English or whatever modern language we need. And I share that that really is the hardest part, because modern English is so far away from the ancient languages of Koine Greek and ancient Hebrew, that it becomes as much an art to try and interpret.

And I gave some recommendations on that, which we'll come back to a little bit today, actually, because now our attention is going to be how we study for ourselves. And then the fourth session last week was on the nature and the reliability of Scripture, and I showed you a few things on how the canon of Scripture was arrived at.
The key point being that it was not decided, but it was discerned. It was discerned by seeing what is Scripture, and I showed you some fun proofs of the supernatural nature of Scripture.
And today's message, then, is on the Word of God for everyone, the Word of God for everyone. And I really felt it was important for us to spend some time on this, because I was aware that, you know, we talked about some quite academic stuff, which could potentially lead to a sense of, oh man, this is just beyond me.
But this is God's communication to us, and it is for everyone. That is primarily why Scripture is given, for us to have a relationship with God.
[3:02] Not just for the studious and the clever, it is for everybody. So today, I want to spend some time looking at the interdependence of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, and the Bible, the Word of God.

These are inseparable, and as such, the study of Scripture is profoundly spiritual. And so secondly, we'll look at the role of the Holy Spirit in our study.
Thirdly, we'll look at the self-testimony. What does the Bible say about itself, in terms of what it claims to do? What does it claim to do in our lives?
Fourthly, we'll talk about how we engage with Scripture, how do we study it. I have a couple of study techniques that I wanted to show you. So just a couple of things, and we can only really get into it briefly, although I think that will end up being the bulk of our message today.

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And then the final point, really, is the closing point, which is that it is all hinging, dependent on, a willing heart to understand the Scripture.
[4:11] Right, the Word of God. The Word of God, and also the Word of God. John, of course, begun his Gospel with this.

1 John 1, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And there he is opening his Gospel to declare Jesus Christ as the Word of God, the Logos.
The Logos, which means a message, it means an expression, sometimes it means a part of what is spoken, in other cases it means the sum or the complete message. He is the fullness of what God wants to say.
Jesus Christ is the Word of God. The Word of God. He is what God has to say to mankind. And the Word being there in the beginning speaks to his eternality, as of course does the Word was God. But I think that John is deliberately recalling Genesis 1, where the spoken Word created. So, Jesus is the Word, and he's always been the Word of God.
[5:24] And when we come to compare him to the Scriptures, we remember this verse from John 5, 39 and 40, where Jesus himself said, you examine the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life, and it is those very Scriptures that testify about me, and yet you are unwilling to come to me, so that you may have eternal life.

So there again we see that interconnectedness. And we've talked a bit about this before in our messages, because do you remember how I showed you that there are those who want to reject Mosaic authorship of the Torah? Well, Jesus Christ authenticates it.
And the same is true of Isaiah. Isaiah wrote the book of Isaiah, and Jesus Christ authenticates that. And so you end up in a position where you can either accept the Bible as it is, and accept Jesus Christ, or you reject them both.
You cannot have one, you can't have Jesus Christ as Lord, and yet reject portions of the Bible. You just can't. And similarly, you can't accept that the Bible is true, and then reject Jesus as anything other than God.
The Word of God. So the interconnectedness of them. Now, we've discussed that God wants to communicate with us, and be known by his creation.
[6:45] The Bible is God's communication. However, we know that our sins have created a barrier. In Isaiah 59 verse 2, it says this.

It says that your wrongdoings have caused a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. You could look at Colossians 1.21, where the word alienated is used.
We are alienated from God. Foreigners. In 1 Corinthians 2 verse 14, Paul says that a natural person does not accept the things of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned.
Spiritually discerned. And you could look at Romans 8.7 as well, where it says that the mind set on the flesh is hostile to God. Again, not able to subject itself. Romans 8 verse 7.
And so I'm going to go on to say that the Bible is intrinsically valuable, powerful, and understandable, and given to all to build a relationship with God, to increase our faith, to instruct us on the way that we should live.
[7:58] But that is predicated on the spiritual person, rather than the natural person. And what that means is you have to be saved. You have to be saved in order to start receiving it in this way.

You have to accept the free gift of salvation by believing in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That he came to take away sins. That he offers the free gift of forgiveness received through simple faith.
And you may remember that when Jesus died on the cross, and there was that dramatic tearing of the veil from top to bottom, which was symbolizing the fact that now access to God is available, and there is no longer that dividing wall, that hostility, that alienatedness between man and God.
I also wanted to just remind us of this, that there are things in the Bible that are hidden from those who are rejecting.
Matthew 13, 10 to 13. And the disciples came to him, Jesus, and said to him, Why do you speak to them in parables? And Jesus answered them, To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

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[9:16] But to them it has not been granted. For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance. But whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.

Therefore I speak to them in parables, because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. Jesus is obscuring his teaching from those who have already rejected him.
The Bible is obscured from those who reject Jesus Christ. Now, caveat, that does not mean that the Bible is completely impenetrable to the unsaved.
You know, Paul said in 2 Timothy, 2 Timothy 3, 15, he said that from childhood, you have known the sacred writings, which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.
So Paul was saying, through the reading of the scriptures, you can learn salvation through faith. Right? So the scriptures are powerful to convert.
[10:20] And people, many people do indeed, come to faith through the simple act of reading the scriptures. But what I'm saying is that once you've accepted that, only then do, is it possible to then take further truth and nourishment and value from the scriptures, having passed from flesh to spirit, or from death to life.

Okay, next. I want to look at the role of the Holy Spirit. The role of the Holy Spirit in our Bible reading.
Since the things of the Spirit of God are spiritually discerned, to those without the Spirit, they are foolishness. So I wanted to just remind ourselves how Jesus introduced the Holy Spirit to his disciples in John 14, verse 16 and 17.
He's speaking of his imminent departure. And he says, I will ask the Father and he will give you another helper, so that he may be with you forever. The helper is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see him or know him, but you know him, because he remains with you, and will be in you.
And then verse 26 of that same chapter says, Awesome. That sounds like a good deal.
[11:46] The helper in our New American Standard Bible is the Greek word parakletos, or parakletos, and it literally means someone who is called alongside.

It was used of like a legal advisor, or I guess a lawyer, you could say. And you see that in 1 John 2, 1, where it speaks of Jesus being our parakletos.
He's our advocate before the Father when we sin. But Jesus is saying that the Holy Spirit is also in that role in order to bring understanding. He's going to teach us all things and remind us of what Jesus said.
Also, 1 John 2, 26-27. These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. And as for you, the anointing which you received from him remains in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you, but as his anointing teaches you about all things, and is true, it is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you remain in him.
In this passage, John is saying, he's referring now to the Holy Spirit as an anointing. The Holy Spirit is an anointing received from Jesus Christ, again, for the purpose of teaching.
[13:06] Teaching. One last passage we could look at would be John 16, 12-15, but I think I'll skip that in the interest of time. But it goes on to say how the Spirit of truth will come and he will not speak on his own.

And he will hear from the Father and he will speak. The Holy Spirit is our teacher. He is the Spirit of truth. He is our legal counselor who comes alongside us to teach us the law, to teach us God's statutes.
He comes alongside. So, hopefully that's clear enough as to why we need him. We've seen in our other studies how there are challenges, right? The Bible is an ancient book written originally in ancient languages into an ancient and foreign culture to us.
And we've seen that the truths that we seek are to be spiritually discerned. And although we do have a call to study and to seek and labor in the Word, to seek understanding, in the end it is a spiritual pursuit more than it is an intellectual one.
And I think when we overemphasize the intellectual to the diminishment of the spiritual, then that is when we end up facing into pride and coming into all kinds of problems.

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[14:19] It is a spiritual pursuit. We need the Holy Spirit in order to successfully understand the Word of God. And he's the author, right? The Holy Spirit is the author.

So he knows what it means. Right. But we are on to part three, the Bible's self-testimony. So as we consider how to engage with the Scriptures in the most fruitful word, I wanted to look at what the Bible says about itself.
And we're going to look at three key passages on this, the Bible's self-testimony. And the first one is this. It's 2 Timothy 3, 16 and 17. And it says, All Scripture is inspired by God and is beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man or woman of God may be fully capable, equipped for every good work.
That is what all Scripture is and what it is beneficial for. Now, in the second message in our study series, we looked at that word, inspired by God.
A single Greek word that means God breathed. And I talked about how God, through his Spirit, has moved through the authors. And he's not taken over like some ghost writer, but rather he has used the gifts and the skills and the personalities even that he has given to them to produce the Scriptures that we have today.
[15:53] And so we have that tension. It is 100% the word of God, and yet it is written through the saints that God called to do it.

But here we read that it is beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness. Beneficial, also profitable, useful, valuable.
Every time we read or we study God's word, there is a benefit. There is value. In 1 Timothy 4, 8, Paul uses the same Greek word to speak of godliness more generally.
And he says that it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come, which I've always just found an incredible thing to say. That as we build in godliness, as we build in faith, as we understand the word of God, there's benefit not only for our lives today, but our lives in eternity as well.
What does that mean? I don't know. What is life in eternity going to be like? Very little is revealed to us, but nobody is going to think, man, I probably spent too much time in the Bible before I got here.
[17:08] It's all going to be beneficial. Amazing. Now, in what ways is it beneficial? Well, there's four, right? Teaching. Teaching, which means clarifying or confirming to us what is true.

Rebuke, which is to say showing us what is false or wrong. Correction. It is a restoration to uprightness. It gets us back on track.
And then training in righteousness. And the word for training is linked to the Greek word for child. And so it's the training that a child receives as part of their maturation, as part of their growing up and maturing.
And when we receive the Bible as a child, as Jesus said that we should, then it becomes, through the Holy Spirit, it becomes our schoolmaster to grow in maturity.
Training in righteousness. And again, this is true of most of Scripture. No, no. All Scripture. All Scripture. This is true. This is characteristic of all the inspired Bible texts.
[18:18] And this connects to last week where we talked about how Scripture was discerned and not decided. They discerned that these things were true and they canonized the word. So, I will summarize that as the Bible is authoritative.

The Bible is an authoritative word. It has authority to speak into our lives for our benefit. Second passage on the Bible's self-testimony is this one, Hebrews 4, verse 12.
Now, this verse is written in the context of sin and disobedience. The Exodus generation are used as this example of a generation who heard the good news.
For them, the good news was, you're going into the promised land. It's going to be amazing. And this was the good news that was preached to them, but it wasn't mixed with faith. So, the minute there was there's giants in the land, there was a hardening of hearts and there was disbelief.
I don't believe God's going to make it. I don't believe God's able to do this. Unbelief. And the writer says, don't be like them. Don't be like them. And somewhat paradoxically, he says, strive to enter God's rest.
[19:29] Anyway, that's enough context. What does it say? Verse 12, Hebrews 4. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, even penetrating as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

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God's word, what God says to us and what he has written is living and active. It's able to perceive our hearts and our thoughts and our intentions. Do we believe?
To what extent do we believe? To what extent do we embrace the gospel message and cease from trying to win God's favour through our own efforts or to save ourselves? The Bible is able to bring, to reveal this, to show this.
And I want us to see that the scripture is dynamic. It is living, living and active. It's not passive. It is transformative. It is intrinsically powerful and it is intrinsically effective.
And again, we do have a call to study, but we mustn't get away from the fact that the Bible is living and active and just to read it and accept it and believe it is powerful.
[20:45] It's powerful. Romans 10, 17 says that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. That simple act of hearing stirs up faith.

It stirs up faith. It reveals faith. It is powerful. It's powerful. And so, the second bullet there is active word. The word of God is active. Now, lastly, of the three, is this one, Isaiah chapter 55, verse 11, the certain word.
And again, we could read the wonderful context for this passage. I alluded to it last week. It's the one where Isaiah says, come and, or God says through Isaiah, come and buy milk and buy wine without money.
It's the chapter about salvation by grace through faith. Let the wicked abandon his way. Let him return to the Lord. And in that context, we read this, for as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there without watering the earth and making it produce and sprout and providing seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so will my word be which goes out of my mouth. It will not return to me empty without accomplishing what I desire and without succeeding in the purpose for which I sent it. So, God says of his word that it is like the rain that waters the earth and brings life and growth.
[22:11] The word of God is certain. It is a certain word. It will certainly accomplish God's purposes and desires. And it's about God's desires and God's purposes specifically.

It isn't about man's desires, of course. It is God's wonderful desire which is to save by grace through faith. So, the word of God is intrinsically capable.
So, God's word is authoritative. God's word is active. God's word is certain. One thing I wanted to talk a little bit about but I cut for the interest of time is there's four words there on the screen that come from Protestant theology.
Necessity, sufficiency, clarity, and authority. If you're interested in looking more at what the Reformation did for confirming what we should believe about the scripture, you can Google those four words and you can find some good reading.
But we'll keep moving for now. So, these things are true. However we choose to engage with the word of God, these things are true. It is uniquely authoritative to instruct, guide, and even rebuke us.
[23:21] Active, perceptive, meeting us where we are and it is certain it will accomplish what God has decreed it will do. Now, let's turn to this crucial topic then.

How do we engage with the Bible? Now, I've got five things that I want to run through and then the last one of those five is going to be study, spoiler alert, and I want to talk a bit more about studying the scriptures.
But first, we read it. How do we engage with the Bible? We read it. Funny that. When Jesus was tempted, he said this in Matthew 4.4, he answered and said to the devil, he said, it is written, man shall not live on bread alone but on every word.
that comes out of the mouth of God. And there's a sense in which the reading of the Bible regularly is as essential as daily food and we would do well to cultivate in our hearts a sense of need for it. Daily Bible reading plans are a great way to build that good habit. I personally quite like plans that provide daily readings from different sections of the scriptures.
[24:35] scriptures. I've got one that will look at some Old Testament, some New Testament and some Psalms every day. That's pretty good. I like to think of it as what does this say about me?

I like to think of it as different food groups. And a balanced meal isn't just a plate of potatoes or a plate of meat. That'd be good though. You need vegetables, you need the carbs, you need the meat, you need the protein, you need a balanced meal that's got all of it.

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And the Bible has got narrative, it's got poetry, it's got wisdom, it's got the words of Jesus Christ, it's got the admonition of the apostles. Delicious. So it's good to spend some time reading.
Now I know that depending on the time of life and the pressures that we have, daily reading can be a challenge. And I know that when my children were younger and my work was demanding and I was leading worship and I was occasionally preaching, it becomes difficult.
and I know I slipped into legalism. I must complete my reading otherwise I'm a failure. And that's not what we're called to. That's not what we're called to.
[25:43] The Bible is an invitation to come and sit at the feet of Jesus and hear from him. And sometimes you've just got a few minutes for that and that's okay. And also there are tons of other ways you can listen to the Bible.

Audio Bibles is a great way just to put it on as you do your work or on your commute or whatever. So there's I caution you against unhealthy legalism about reading the Bible but see it as a wonderful invitation and I encourage you to read take a plan as good for getting a good balanced meal.
And again I would remind us that for the vast majority of history owning a personal Bible just wasn't a thing. It just wasn't a thing and it's only really since the printing press was invented that the Bible hasn't cost the same as a house.
And see that as a blessing. We have the words of life available to us. Next. Memorise.
Memorisation of Scripture has been a key discipline of God's people forever.
Forever. And you know when Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8 in that last verse do you think he busted out his scroll or do you think he memorised it? Of course it was memorised.
[27:00] Psalm 119 11 says that I have treasured your word in my heart so that I might not sin against you. You could look at Psalm 40 verse 8 as well where he says the law is within my heart.

The word heart is lev in Hebrew lev and of course the concrete meaning would be the beating heart but the abstract connotation is the consciousness the inner person the soul.
when you survey scriptures and if you get the notes you'll see a whole ton of scriptures you'll see that the heart is used to mean our desires and our inclinations it is the place where our emotions are based it is the place where our conscience dwells David speaks about his heart striking him 2 Samuel 24 verse 10 it is the place where knowledge is stored and it is the place where understanding and discernment happen so again all that's in the notes I know I've just whizzed through it oh and the heart is also the thing that Jeremiah says is desperately wicked in the natural person and how we need a new one from God not a healing but a replacement now when we are memorizing scripture we are placing the word of God into our hearts and therefore it will impact on our desires and our emotions and our conscience and our knowledge and our understanding and discernment and wisdom and that sounds pretty good to me to have those things impacted that sounds okay so memorization of scripture is a great discipline if you've memorized scripture it can never be taken away it can never be stolen and you can ponder on it 24 7 and as I prepared this yesterday I thought man I need to get back into that because it's one of those disciplines that sadly I have let lapse for a little while I did want to commend this little app to you that I have used and
I resumed usage yesterday remember me is an app that you can get on your phone you can use it on the computer at that website there what it does is it's basically electronic flashcards so it allows you to put your verse in and then it will prompt you to remind them periodically so I commend that to you as a tool if you're looking for one now I wanted to just say one other thing about memorization which I know this isn't going to be for everyone but obviously you are going to memorize your verse in English I'm going to go ahead and take for granted that you're not going to memorize the Hebrew or the Koine Greek but I've told you that no English translation is perfect so which verse am I going to understand which one will I memorize well what I wanted to say was it is worth taking the time to study and understand the verse first I want to memorize this verse it's a great verse okay cool make sure you've understood it as fully as you can read a few
English versions read the footnotes read the commentaries read an exegetical guide and come to an understanding of the best way of rendering that Hebrew or Greek in English and then memorize that now I know I know many people are like whatever I like this version I like that version I'm just going to stick with that fine you know I'm not saying that's wrong what I am saying is there is a value and there's a richness in the original languages and memorizing on that basis is super powerful in Colossians 3 16 we are instructed to let the word of Christ richly dwell within us I thought yeah the richness of the word the richness is found in that understanding it's found in that understanding so I share that with you I know it's it's not for everyone but something that I have learned to value myself

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next third how to engage with the Bible meditation meditation and this is very much related a verse for it would be Joshua 1 8 this book of the law shall not depart from your mouth but you shall meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it for then you will make your way prosperous and then you will achieve success now this is not the eastern definition of meditation which is about emptying one's mind it is not that it is a in fact it's the opposite of that is a filling of the mind with the scriptures it is a filling of the mind actually if you do a word study on the

[31:36] English word meditation you will find that there are two Hebrew words that sit underneath it the first one which is the one used here is a word that means mutter to read it in an undertone and just sort of you know just going over it and chewing over it it is connected to memorization then in that it is the sense of verbally repeating it to oneself to help embed it in your mind and actually the new English translation the net Bible which I commend as he recently does say memorize you shall memorize it day and night for Joshua 1 8 and then the other word that you see translated as meditate is a word that means rehearsing or repeating it either internally or verbally so quite similar you know and it made me think you know sometimes when you've had a frustrating conversation or you're anticipating a difficult conversation and you're replaying it over in your mind as to how you wish it had gone or how you want it to go it's kind of like that you are rehearsing it but it's scripture you're rehearsing the scripture to yourself so meditation is about repeating the word embedding it internally or verbally and you know and sometimes when I am alone I will speak the verse out loud because

I'm reading it and it's not going into my head and I can't quite get my head around what it says and so I will read it out loud and I find that the act of reading it out loud helps me to wrestle with it I don't know if you find the same and this is this is meditation this is that repeating it ruminating on it and I believe this is what God has in mind when he speaks of transforming and renewing our mind he wants us to be letting the word of God permeate that way you could read or jot down Proverbs 6 verse 20 to 23 where you have a similar commandment from in the context there it is actually the father to the son but it's the same thing God is our father and you would do well to look at that and think about that and it says how God will talk to us when we practice this kind of meditation God will speak to us amazing next discuss it fourthly how do we engage with the Bible we discuss it meditation is about talking to yourself discussion is talking to others one of the things I love about Thursdays when Linda comes over and you could look at

Deuteronomy 6 verse 6 to 7 if you want to look at this one but I was drawn to this verse when I was pondering discussion I don't know that I've ever seen anyone connect this verse in this way Acts 17 11 says now these people were more noble minded than those in Thessalonica for they received the word with great eagerness examining the scriptures daily to see whether these things are so it's a famous verse the Berean call is based on this verse and the Bereans are noble minded because they are examining the scriptures every day to see if what the gospel that Paul has preached is true but the thing that struck me is they're doing it together they are doing it together examining is a plural present active verb they are doing it together and I just imagined the fruitful conversations they must have had together as they were wrestling with it is this do you think this is true how what about this what do you think that means and I thought amazing and that discussion that mutual examination brought fruit and many of them came to faith amazing so discussing the Bible together is indeed a wonderful way to engage with God and again with Colossians 3 16 which we looked at let the word of God dwell richly it goes on to say how well then we would teach and admonish one another it's the community or the communal aspect of

Bible study awesome and now lastly this one study it how do we engage with the Bible study the studious pursuit of truth in God's word now the Bible says of itself that there are some things in it that are hard to understand 2 Peter 3 16 also this verse which is 2 Timothy 2 15 where Paul says to Timothy that he should be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a worker who does not need to be ashamed accurately handling the word of truth there is a call to diligence for the purpose of being able to accurately handle God's word Proverbs chapter 2 it urges us to incline our hearts to understanding to seek wisdom as silver and as for hidden treasures there is a call to study so how do we do that then well I've got a couple of things I want to talk about the first one is inductive Bible study inductive Bible study now this is something that's worth writing down and then I'm going to go and Google that later or watch however many

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YouTube's on it there's a lot of resources out there on how to do an inductive Bible study but the heart behind inductive Bible study is to have a step-by-step or a simple approach to the scriptures so that the Bible will speak for itself so rather than reading a verse and going I don't know what that means reading a commentary going oh it must mean that it's about saying I want the Bible to speak for itself I want to as far as possible let the Bible speak to me from its own words rather than as opposed to finding out what somebody else says or as opposed to using it to support what I already believe so there's three steps I'll throw them up on the screen for you now actually the three steps to inductive Bible study are observe interpret apply so observation is about asking and answering questions so you read the verse and then you think who where when what why who's the author who is he is he writing to who is he writing about who are the characters who are the players where where is the author writing from where are the events taking place when when was this going on when was it written what was the culture like at the time when in
[37:57] Paul's life or when in Peter's life did he write this letter for example what what are some of the key words that are used and what precisely do those words mean what are the key events that are happening what appears to be the primary message that the author is conveying so making observations writing down those observations highlighting keywords is a key part of inductive study as well this word keeps coming up over and over again I'll highlight it huh it comes up a lot in this book so that's step one step two is to interpret interpretation and this is where you ask the why question why why did the author write this bearing in mind what I know about who and where why did he write it what what would have been the intention of the author it's tricky to establish that if it's not told but it's important to think about that to avoid trying to misapply the text or or to impute some motivational purpose that was not intended this is to avoid you know coming up with some new or novel understanding why was it written how would it been understood by those first readers why did God see fit to put this in the Bible for us you know when you think about how much of the

Genesis covers thousands of years of history and God distilled it down to 50 chapters so every chapter has a very God has deliberately included it why good question to ponder and consider and then the last step is to apply this is where you say well so what what does it mean to me us what does it mean to my church how should I live as a result and often this is the most difficult and it's hard for me to say much about this in a general sense because it really depends and you need to work through an example but this is where we must depend all the more on the Holy Spirit's guidance the Holy Spirit is the author he knows why he wrote it the word of God is living and active so it's a great place to pray and say Lord I want to know the intention and how this verse applies to me and I put a link there to preset ministries they do a lot of materials on inductive Bible study and they're well worth a look if you want to get started what they what you what they do is they help you and guide you to ask the right questions based on the book or passage you're studying so useful now the last thing was word study and I thought I would do a little example if you'll indulge me how do you do a word study how do you go huh I keep seeing this word I want to dig into it and know what it means and there are ways and there are ways that you can do it for free using tools on the internet so I thought I would do a quick example I hope this is useful and it might encourage you if you've never done your own word study this might encourage you to have a go if you're in the home group you may remember recently in Genesis 16 12 where you found that discrepancy is Ishmael going to live to the east of his brothers or is he going to live in the presence of his brethren and that turned out neither one of those is true and a word study is how you would get into how you might break that down what word is used what does it mean and often a discrepancy like that is a good hint I should probably do a word study so I thought I would take an example from
Ephesians chapter 2 you're reading Ephesians chapter 2 and it says for by grace you are saved you think I'm saved by grace what does grace really mean I want to study that word so what you do is you find a tool and this this is the blue letter Bible the blue letter Bible is a website that you can use online it's been there for a very very long time blue letter Bible dot org you don't need to log in you don't need an account you don't need any personal details just need a computer with the internet and you can go here and you can browse the Bible and there's a whole bunch of tools and I'll walk you through how you would do a word study from blue letter Bible so here we are I've gone to the Ephesians chapter 2 and I've highlighted verse 8 there for by grace you have been saved through faith awesome what do you do next well the next thing you do is you click on the word tools next to that verse and you will then land on a screen that looks like this and now we're looking at the English with the interlinear the Greek is underneath how exciting and we need to find the word that

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we want to do a study on and the word for grace or by grace is right there and it is hadis hadis Greek word for grace and then how do you drill into that well you also see there that there is a little and if you can see it just there is a little g 5 4 8 5 and that is called the Strong's number for the word what does that mean what's a Strong's number well it's named after this guy
James Strong did the church such a wonderful service when he released his exhaustive concordance of the Bible in 1890 and what he did was he he created a numbering system a reference system where he painstakingly went through every single one of the thousands of Greek and Hebrew words used in the Bible he indexed them all and he gave them a Strong's number a Strong's number I don't know if he gave them a Strong's number he might not been that proud but they have come they have come to be known as the Strong's numbers and I bless him for his diligence in doing that I think it took him a decade I read and he produced his exhaustive concordance of the Bible which is exhausting to just even think about the work he put into it and it is now out of copyright and freely available on the Blue Letter Bible and many other places as well and his his system of numbering became standard so if you use a different Bible dictionary or concordance then you can use the Strong's numbers as well anyway back to our study so what we would do is we would click on that
Strong's number that we saw there click and then you will land on the you just get a huge amount of information a huge amount of information which we can't go into in any detail now but what I wanted to point out is you have dictionary definitions and you will see there's a little box there that says the outline of biblical usage which is to say how does the Bible use this word hadis throughout the New Testament so helpful so useful on the far right there you have got all of the different verses with context of where that word is used including the very first one where you learn that the first time hadis is used is Luke chapter 1 verse 30 where the angel says to Mary you have found favor with God you have found grace amazing and what you are looking at now is I guess the results of a lot of study from professors and people much smarter than me but what this does do is it lets you do your own review you can look at different dictionaries you can look at different places in the Bible and let the
[45:23] Bible speak for itself how that word is used so I hope that that is something that you might consider doing if you haven't done it before and you might say hey I'm going to try that on the word faith in that same verse and see what you can learn and again it's a free tool to use and personally I can't not say this I personally use this logos Bible software which I have done for many many years anybody who's serious about this and has a good computer I would encourage the investment because it is super helpful I find it so helpful for this kind of thing but you can do it for free online right last thing the last thing I wanted to share with you all today is this the word of God for everyone we need to have a willing heart to understand and when you hear the word understand I want you to flip that and think I need to be willing to stand under the teaching of the word and there's a brilliant picture of this in in Nehemiah chapter 8 where the the Jewish exiles have returned from their captivity and they before they start to rebuild Jerusalem they gather together in the public square and there's this wooden podium that's been constructed and they all stand under while the word of God is read and it says that Ezra who was the the priest conscribed Ezra opened the book within the sight of all the people he was standing above all the people and when he opened it all the people stood up then Ezra blessed the Lord the great God and all the people asked it amen amen with the raising of their hands they kneeled down and worshiped the

Lord with their faces to the ground that is a picture of understanding it is standing under the word standing under the word leading to worship as well as that contrition and that contractness before the Lord I thought that's a brilliant picture and that needs to be our disposition to when we come to the Bible a familiar verse I'm sure on the subject of standing under the word James chapter 1 verse 22 we are urged this but prove yourselves to doers of the word and not just hearers who deceive themselves for if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer he is like a man who looks at his natural face in the mirror for once he has looked at himself and gone away he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was but one who has looked intently at the perfect law the law of freedom and has continued in it not having become a forgetful hearer but an active doer this person will be blessed in what he does the Bible is God's message to mankind to you and to me it is given for us to know him not just know about him and that knowing him necessitates change conformity to Christ we are changed and and and our desire to believe and obey is far more important than the desire to understand some deep new mystery or or or some amazing thing like that you know there

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are there are deep hidden mysterious things in the Bible
Proverbs 25 2 says that it is the glory of God to conceal a matter but the glory of kings is to search out a matter and indeed there are and I and I showed you some hidden things last week didn't I about that you'll find in the scriptures and again Matthew 13 Jesus used parables to conceal the truth for from those who were not prepared to believe and obey Jesus said in John 7 16 he said my teaching is not my own but his who sent me if anyone is willing to do his God's will he will know about the teaching whether it is of God or whether I'm speaking of myself so again the willingness comes before the knowledge the willingness to stand under it comes before understanding it we must be prepared to stand under it as the authoritative active and certain word of God I wasn't really sure how to conclude today you know I feel like we've covered so much ground in these five sessions and I know in many senses I just feel like I've skimmed the surface but I hope what I've done if I've done nothing else is encourage you to that we can trust the Bible and it is worth your time and effort to seek God in its pages so what I want to do is just remind us God wants you to know him he loves you he wants a relationship with you and he wants that relationship to grow deeper through a more full and rich understanding of who he is and what he has done and the Bible is God's primary method to communicate to us the Bible is miraculously preserved library of sacred books and it contains the very words of God even though they are written through the saints and while we don't have the original documents we have every reason to be confident in what we have today all of the areas that are questionable nearly all of them are trivial and again
God has cleverly distributed the doctrine throughout the whole book so that nothing is in doubt and the main challenges understand to our understanding is the translation aspect and that's why I commend to you formal equivalence Bibles for your study I commend to you word studies and doing inductive Bible studies to really come to grips with what's said and dynamic equivalent Bible fine for devotional reading commentaries great as well but you must remember these are interpretations and the word of man only the word of God has these things true that is authoritative and certain the Bible is spiritually discerned Jesus left his Holy Spirit as our advocate as our helper as our teacher he is given to all of us not just me all of us have that anointing that Holy Spirit who is with us yes God raises up people to teach the word but you cannot fully outsource your Bible study you you can't you shouldn't and you don't need to you have the Holy Spirit and there's a blessing in personal study and then reading to understand to stand under the authority of the Bible be willing to let it change how you live to change how you prioritize to change how you think let it be teaching reproof correction and training in righteousness and I conclude with Psalm 119 verse 18 where the prayer is simply this open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from your Lord amen thank you Lord praise you Lord for these things Lord we are just so grateful for your word we are so grateful Lord for your rich and and fulsome provision that we might know you
Lord how blessed we are in this generation to have such access to your words to have your Bible in our hands to have access to these wonderful tools that let us engage with your scriptures thank you Lord for your Holy Spirit who is given to to aid and lead and guide our understanding Lord we want to understand by which I mean we want to stand under your word Lord we confess that you are God and you have full authority to speak into our lives and sometimes Lord you say things we don't want to hear we stand under your word you are fully authoritative and your word is certain and you have said that these things are for our blessing and our benefit and our building up that we might be fully equipped for every good work we believe that Lord and so we believe your word even when it when it says things we wish it didn't hallelujah Lord thank you for all for how richly you have furnished us and provided for us in Jesus name amen amen oh god bless you guys and

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