

Midtown Messenger

Volume 4

March 7, 2021

Issue 10

8 Mistakes We Make When Reading the Bible (continued)

By: Hiram Kemp

Mistake #4: Rushing to Application

How many times have we heard or even said “What is the Bible saying to me?” Or “I want God’s will for my life.” While the Bible does have something to say to us we need to be sure that we first find out what the text is *saying* before we worry about what it is *saying to us specifically*. Consider this principle as it relates to the daily news cycle. A newspaper has some useful information, and many of the articles within its pages can be applied to our lives. However, few people pick up a newspaper thinking that every section directly applies to them. The first goal is to determine what is the story *about*, then to make personal application if possible. I know the Bible is not a newspaper (and God *does* have something to say to us on every page), but personal application is not the first order of business in Bible study. Our rush for present-day application has caused many to make Jeremiah 29:11 about God’s plans for high school and college graduates; many read the Book of Revelation as if it’s about current political figures. Yes, application must be made eventually, but *first* we need to see the text as it was originally intended.

Mistake #5: We are reading someone else’s mail as our mail

We are reading letters and documents that were written to other people in a different time. We should remember that books like 1 & 2 Timothy were written to an individual named Timothy. Luke was writing to a man named Theophilus (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1). The more we can learn about the culture, times, and customs of those originally receiving

these documents, the better our understanding of the text will be. **We should see how things would have been received by those who were the original target audience before we read it through our 21st-century lenses.**

Still, we do make a mistake when we do not see that these messages are for us as well. The inspired apostles and prophets knew that they were writing scripture (1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Pet. 3: 15-16). They wanted their letters circulated and passed along to various congregations (Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27). We read the Bible improperly when we think the message is locked in the first century and has nothing to say to us today (Matt. 28:20). We are jeopardizing our souls when we write off the Bible’s condemnation of specific sins as being relevant only to that particular cultural context. The scriptures must be taught, explained, and obeyed by every generation as we faithfully pass on its message (2 Tim. 2:2).

Mistake #6: Reading for Mere Information

The Bible is a 66-book volume library. There is historical, scientific, and cultural information in the Bible that interest all who open its pages. The Bible is deep enough to confound scholars and simple enough to be taught to infants. However, the purpose of reading the Bible is not to pass some heavenly trivia test. We are not to simply be able to recall where passages are and exactly what they say so that we can impress people or seem intelligent. Memorizing scripture suggests one has spent much time with God’s Word (cf. 1 Cor. 15:2). Still, knowledge puffs

up and love builds up (1 Cor. 8:1). If we know a lot of Bible but are not more kind, loving, and compassionate, we are doing it wrong (Gal. 5:22-23). If we do not hate sin *more* (especially our own) as a result of our study, then we are not reading the Bible carefully enough (Jas. 1:15).

Bible reading should make our love for God soar, our love for humanity increase, and our desire to serve God abound. The authors of scripture, especially in the New Testament, give a lot of information and then they challenge those who receive it to live changed lives as a result (cf. Rom. 12:1-2). If our Bible reading does not improve our family life, work ethic, and treatment of God and others, then we are merely reading for information alone and this is unprofitable (Jas. 1:22-25).

Mistake #7: Read Our “Position” into the Text

As much as we would all like to be unbiased about our reading of the Bible, the truth is we all have biases. We need to be aware of this when we study the Bible. We don't have it all figured out. (For if we did, why bother reading the Bible anymore?) We must not turn the Bible into an echo chamber, telling us that every idea we have is right. We must not bring our preconceived convictions into the text and then manipulate passages so that they agree with us (Mark 7:9-13). If we believe the Bible teaches something, we should evaluate all the relevant passages in their proper context and allow the Bible to speak for itself.

Mistake #8: Forgetting the Main Point
The main point of the entire Bible is Jesus. Jesus said the whole Old Testament pointed to Him (Luke 24:44). This does not mean we should allegorize the text to death and make every single verse somehow about Jesus. Still, it does mean that in the end, the Bible's main message is pointing to the Christ. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for their search of the scriptures, which involved a lot of things but left Him out (John 5:39-40). When we read the Bible, we should be saying, “What is this teaching me about Jesus?” How does this passage

help me be more like Jesus? If we are in the Old Testament, we should be looking for ways that the book we are reading prepares the way for Jesus to come or foreshadows His coming. The star of the Bible is Jesus, and when we read the Bible and fail to see this, we are making a huge mistake. The Bible is the book that teaches us about God, and if we read it and do not come away with more knowledge of Him and more love for Him, then we are missing the point. May we come away from our Bible reading exalting Christ and praising Him for His amazing grace.

Bible reading is a great thing. I am glad we can read the Bible and study it as often as we would like. Let's honestly search our hearts and realize we all sometimes make mistakes as we read God's Word. Let's be better students so that we can come to know God better.

Finding Peace In The Storms of Life

When we are battered by the storms of life, we may be tempted to give in to feelings of hopelessness. But if we will look to our sovereign Captain (Hebrews 2:10 KJV) and commit our way to Him (Psalm 37:5), we will find peace even in the midst of great turmoil. We can trust Him to bring us through the storm (Mark 4:36-41).

*Master, with anguish of spirit
I bow in my grief today;
The depths of my sad heart are troubled;
O waken and save, I pray!
Torrents of sin and of anguish
Sweep o'er my sinking soul!
And I perish! I perish, dear Master;
O hasten, and take control!
The winds and the waves shall
obey Thy will, Peace be still!
Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea,
Or demons, or men, or whatever it be,
No water can swallow the ship where lies,
The Master of ocean and earth and skies;
They all shall sweetly obey Thy will,
Peace be still! Peace be still! —Palmer
-Selected-*

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of March 7, 2021

subject to change

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Kevin Sheeran
Scripture Reading: Fred Scherffius

Lord's Supper & Offering:

Communion: James Cammock
Offering: Bryant Siegel

Prayer:

A.M. Opening: Clifton Rutherford
A.M. Closing: Ron White
P. M. Opening: James Cammock
P. M. Closing: Fred Scherffius

Song Leaders:

Sun. A.M.: Rick Bass
Sun. P.M.: Kevin Sheeran
Wed. P.M.: Isaac Jobes

Ushers: Allen Clifton

Greeters: Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devo: Kevin Sheeran

Open/Close Building:

**Sermons are available on our website
www.midtowncoc.org**

**MidTown's Bible Classes and Worship services
can be viewed livestream on YouTube. Search
MidTown church of Christ Victoria.**

New Class Quarter Begins Today!

The Spring Quarter starts today. Thank you to the teachers that work so hard to bring these Bible class lessons to us all! A list of classes and their teacher is on the hallway bulletin board.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Mary Jo White who had a mild stroke last week.
Rod Tate, Gospel preacher in Alabama, who was diagnosed with cancer. Doug Jobes' aunt, Kathy Benson, who had a heart attack last week.

Happy Birthday: Samuel Pantel (7); Curtis Scherffius (7); Isaac Jobes (10)

Upcoming Events:

MidTown's Spring Gospel meeting is tentatively scheduled for April.

2021 Pocket Directories are available on the foyer back table. Two per family please.

*****FRIENDLY REMINDER TO CONTINUE
PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING*****

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS:

Jeff Cannady
Les Daltry
Ken and Sandra Marie
Wayne Martin
Ann Pantel
Veronica Serenil
Clark Withers

SHUT-INS:

Dee Gilpatrick
Faye Henderson
Charlie Mabe
Sandy Malone

If you would like to add or remove a name on the "Keep in Prayer" List, please see Nina Siegel.

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MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Elders:

Mark FitzSimmons
Ronnie Scherffius
Ron White

Minister: Ronnie Scherffius
Secretary: Nina Siegel

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class: 9:00 AM
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00 AM
Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Class: 7:00 PM

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Week of February 28, 2021

A.M. Bible Class.....46
A.M. Worship.....61
Sunday Evening Worship.....46
Wednesday Bible Class.....49
Offering :\$3,782

Reading for this week:

"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers--it is to him you shall listen--just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.'"

Deuteronomy 18:15-16

SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli
Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore
Southwest School of Bible Studies - Anthony Scherffius

GO PAPERLESS!

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