



Episode 6-12: Scripture Memorization & Bible Reading

Resources:

Songs/Podcasts

[Abide - Aaron Williams](#)

[Principles of Bible Study - Joyful Journey](#)

Worksheet

[Basic Bible Study Principles Worksheet](#)

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[Biblical Counseling Training Conference](#)

Transcript:

Jocelyn: I don't just need to feel better. I need the truth. And ultimately that will make me better.

Janet: I just want to make it as totally simple as possible for ladies to see that the Bible is really applicable to their everyday life.

Jocelyn: When they understand theology, the application flows out of it quickly with joy.

Janet: It is a journey, but even the journey itself is joyful when I'm doing it, holding the hand of my savior and trusting him all along the way. This is the joyful journey podcast, a podcast to inspire and equip women to passionately pursue beautiful biblical truth on their journey as women of God. When you choose truth, you're choosing joy.

Janet: Okay, listeners, welcome back. This is Janet here again with Noelle.

Noelle: Hi.

Janet: And today we're gonna be talking about, really we, in other episodes we've talked about a variety of things and rhythms and part of what we know we need. Is we need to be getting to know God better. So Noelle's gonna lead us in how can we really grow in scripture memorization and Bible reading as we're trying to look more like Jesus.

Noelle: Yes, absolutely. So scripture memorization and Bible reading. Both of those are spiritual disciplines, right?



Janet: Yes.

Noelle: You've probably heard that term, spiritual discipline, before and it might sound a little intimidating, but really we're just talking about things like prayer or fasting, Bible reading, scripture memorization, solitude, thanksgiving, all of those rhythms, like you said, Janet, that help us see God, know God, love God, stay connected to God.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: But before we jump straight into how to do those things, I want us to slow down for just a minute and ask two really broad questions. They're broad, but they're important. So first, Janet

Janet: Uh-oh. Yes.

Noelle: What are the drawbacks? Or maybe a drawback or two of focusing too much on a spiritual discipline?

Janet: I think that can be a way to earn my favor with God. It's a way, sometimes it's my checklist. I feel better about myself.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: I have reviewed my memory verses and I spent 10 minutes in the Bible today and now I feel better about me and I'm pretty sure God's obligated to do whatever it is I need Him to do today.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: At that point, I'm not seeking to know and love God better. I'm just trying to perform so I can get Him to do what He what I want.

Noelle: Yeah. Those are good points. I think personally I struggle with the checklist thing.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: That you were talking about.

Janet: Yes.



Noelle: I can get so focused on doing these things that I forget even why I'm doing the things.

Janet: Right.

Noelle: Okay. Second question, second broad question for you, what could be a potential reward of being intentional with the spiritual disciplines?

Janet: There's a reason that we talk about them a lot because they're the means God gave us to get to know Him.

Noelle: Yes.

Janet: So I would think that as I actually use them, I can get to know God better. I'm gonna start looking more like God. I'm gonna have more joy in being His instead of fleeting joys that come and go, depending on whether I'm getting my way.

Noelle: Oh yeah, absolutely. I can personally attest to the fact that. These specific disciplines, but discipline in general can completely change your life.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: Because like you said, disciplines are meant to draw us closer to God. Not just turn into checklists or pressure filled performances. So holding that tension matters.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: Making sure that you're doing it for the right reason. But.

Janet: And I've had people say to me, I know I'm doing it for the wrong reason and so to not be a hypocrite is not going to do them.

Noelle: Oh.

Janet: And I'm like if you think about that, I shouldn't go to work for the wrong reasons. But until I get my heart right, do I just stop going?

Noelle: Yeah.



Janet: Or do I repent and choose the right reason even if my emotions are screaming I just wanna check the box. Like I don't wait till the emotions are gone. I don't wait, but I can say, regardless, I'm choosing to do this.

Noelle: Right. You can do the right thing even knowing that you're struggling with the motivation.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: And ask God to help you change your motivation.

Janet: That's right.

Noelle: Yeah. For sure. Okay. With that in mind, let's zoom in on our first discipline for today, which is scripture memorization. So why does scripture memory matter?

Janet: Come on. I have it on my phone. I can always access it.

Noelle: Exactly. Or that's such a thing for what's the name? Oh, Awana. That was just such an Awana thing. I don't know if you've heard of Awana.

Janet: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. One of the churches we were in did that.

Noelle: Yeah. Anyway, I would like to submit to you that it's not just a good idea in general, it's actually something that the Bible itself talks about in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, scripture memory, which is pretty cool.

Janet: Yeah. I know in the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 6:6 & 7, these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. Now you could say, it doesn't say you need to memorize it, but it does say it's on your heart. And as a result of that, you shall teach them diligently to your children. So you must know them and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, when you rise, I think it's gonna be really hard to talk about them when you're walking around and when you get up and when you lie down if you don't already know them.

Noelle: For sure.

Janet: Yeah.



Noelle: I was thinking about Psalm 119:11.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: A lot of people probably know that's a common one to memorize as a child. I have stored your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. So again, it doesn't say memorize this or you're gonna sin, but it does say, oh, when you store the word of God in your heart, that's going to help you.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: In your walk.

Janet: Yes. Or Proverbs 7:1-3, my son, keep my words and treasure my commandments with you. Keep my commandments and live. Keep my teaching is the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers. Write them on the tablet of your heart. Yeah, which I think is our, that's a way of saying, you gotta memorize it if it's been written on the tablet of your heart.

Noelle: Right. Yeah.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: And those were all Old Testament things. Then there's the New Testament, right?

Janet: That's right.

Noelle: I think about John 15, I was just reading in John 15 the other day. Jesus is talking about how He's the true vine and how we're supposed to abide in Him. In verse seven says, if you abide in me, and here we go, my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you. So the words abiding in you. That's the part I'm focusing on there.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: But also, wait, ask whatever you wish. A-ha. I have found the solution. The genie in a bottle, Janet.

Janet: Yeah. I think a lot of things with, I have to think about when I look at John 15, there's a lot that applies to us, but I do think we also have to say, who was His initial.



Noelle: Oh, sure.

Janet: This is to the disciples who quite frankly were able to heal people. When they asked God, God healed people. So they did have some abilities there, but the reality is, there's a lot of ifs there. If I'm abiding in Christ, if His words are abiding in me, if those things are true, it doesn't just mean if I know them, abiding, they're at home in me. I am at home in Christ. Then what I want is His kingdom.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: Doesn't mean everything I ask for 'cause I'm limited. I might be asking for something that is a very good thing, but the Lord knows it's not the best thing. But my desires are gonna be far more in line with His. I think it's fascinating when I think about that Jesus' desires were always in line with the Father. Always. And in Gethsemane, He said, Father, could this cup pass from me? He asked the Father for something that was not a wrong thing to ask for, and God said no. Asking in His name is asking on His authority, aligned with His purposes and will, so not a magic formula, but a wonderful guiding principle.

Noelle: Absolutely. And when Jesus was saying those things, He said, if it be your will or I don't remember the exact phrase.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: But there's this idea of we can ask while knowing God might have something better in mind.

Janet: That's right and I love that. I've heard you say that before.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And I love that when we pray for things that we believe are good and right, but we don't know if it's what God wants. I love the heart and the view of God where you're able to say, and if not this, I don't remember how you say it.

Noelle: Or something better.

Janet: Or something better.

Noelle: Yes.



Janet: Because that's what God will do.

Noelle: Yeah, absolutely.

Janet: Is that or something better? I love that.

Noelle: Yeah. And as a side note, I love the song, "Abide" by Aaron Williams, which is primarily based on John 15.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: There's a whole slew of awesome lyrics in that song, so I won't quote the whole thing, but one of my favorite lyrics is be my Strength, my song in the night. And if you listen to the episode on sleeplessness and rest, you know that I personally struggle with nightmares and other sleeplessness issues, which cause me to wake up and sometimes be up a lot in the middle of the night. So this passage from John 15, and then these song lyrics remind me that committing God's words to memory can help including in the middle of the night.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: When I wake up, when I'm afraid, or when I'm just laying there wishing that I could sleep.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: I can't tell you, Janet, how many times passages that I've memorized have helped me not just when I'm memorizing them, but then later on, 'cause they'll just pop into my head. It's the Holy Spirit, but.

Janet: Yes. It's a gift of the spirit.

Noelle: It is. Absolutely.

Janet: Oh, I love that. There's also Ephesians 6 where it talks about the armor of God.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: The word of God is referenced there as a necessary part of what we need to take a stand against Satan's scheme and quite frankly, you're gonna be vulnerable in the night. You're tired.



Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And you're alone. And it's dark. That's a vulnerable time. And to know that would be prime time for Satan. But the word of God is part of what helps you take a stand against that.

Noelle: Yes, absolutely. And beyond just the passages that we've talked about so far. Also, if you just look at Jesus' life, He quoted scripture all the time.

Janet: I know.

Noelle: It's amazing when He quotes it, when He was tempted, when He taught, when He responds to questions. It was living in Him and He is literally God.

Janet: Right.

Noelle: And He was quoting scripture that obviously His listeners would've known. But anyway, I think when you look at all these things, you can agree that it's important, right?

Janet: Yep. Yep.

Noelle: But also, it's hard, Janet.

Janet: I know.

Noelle: So let's give up.

Janet: I know. Okay. I have a phone.

Noelle: Oh, man. So let's get practical for a second. How can we even work on memorizing scripture? There's a lot of ways, and honestly, I could take the cop out, answer first and just say, all right, just find what works for you. Okay. End of episode. Okay. So let's talk about practically, like what works for you?

Janet: For me part of it was just acknowledging that I can do the hard work of it. When I was younger, it just came so much easier. And still for me, if I'm gonna do a long passage, the first four or five verses are easier.

Noelle: Yeah.



Janet: For whatever reason, I don't know. But it gets harder for me.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: So what I will do is pick a passage. Right now I'm working on a Psalm. Last year I had a different Psalm. A Psalm or something that has meaning for me.

Noelle: Okay.

Janet: There's a reason that I'm memorizing this.

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: And honestly as a lazy learner. Repetition, repetition.

Noelle: Yep.

Janet: And as I've gotten older, there was a time when I said, I can't really do it anymore.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And I thought that, and it's harder and I don't do hard really well.

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: So I just thought I was done, but I can't even remember why I started. I think I was doing a Bible study and that was part of it. And I was like I will try. And I was like I got a whole path. I can do this. So I write it down, I review it. For me, when I spend time with the Lord before I even read, I just go over the things I'm memorizing. I do well with a routine structure.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: So it may not happen every single day, but primarily that's how I do it. 'Cause if I give myself too much freedom to do it whenever.

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: Whenever doesn't happen.



Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: So it's okay. So I have a couple of Psalms and a few passages that I continue to review several times a week. I decided I've got them. If you ask me, I could probably recite them so I could go onto something new, but I will lose it.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And I thought, okay, what's more important to me having these really good or doing a bunch of 'em that I can't always remember as well.

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: So for me, it's okay, I've got one passage that it's been a long time. Sometimes I'll just sit down and read my Bible and I'll realize I've just started saying that verse, I'm like, oh, that's funny. It's like right there. But it took me a long time to get it to that point.

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: In the past, I've used an app. It's a free app called, *Fighter Verses*.

Noelle: Okay.

Janet: And it can be fun because you put in the verse and it will then start taking letters away, or it will just do the first, like it'll make it a game for you.

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: Where you have to fill it in. So for some people that really like to be on their phones and stuff. That can be another fun way to do it.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: How about you?

Noelle: I would say for me personally, I like walking. There's actually, I'm a little bit of a nerd and with research, there's research that shows that for a lot of people, if your physical body is moving, your brain works a little bit better. That's not true for all people in all times.



Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: But it has proven true for me with memorization. So if I'm out for a walk and just reciting it and looking down at my index card or my phone or whatever I have it on. That helps a lot. So that's usually what I do. But I've done a couple other things. Oh, I also actually, I write them out and I put it on my mirror, my bathroom mirror.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: 'Cause then I'll go through them in the morning when I'm getting ready.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: And I tell my students. I'm a high school teacher. I tell my students like, tape it in your locker then you're seeing it between every single class.

Janet: Yep, yep.

Noelle: I have used also another app, it was also free, like yours was, it's called, *Versify*.

Janet: Oh, I haven't heard of that one.

Noelle: And *Versify* is, yeah, it's really nice. It has different levels free to work on, and you can choose the version and all of that. I like that. And then there's a website also that I've used quite a lot called biblememory.com. It's also free. Same thing, you can choose your version, all of that, and it gamifies it a little bit, but also it's just nice. Sometimes I need different ways to practice.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: And sometimes I can't, I don't have the time to go out on a walk, but I do have five minutes between class or five minutes here on my computer. Okay. Yeah. I can just go to biblememory.com really quickly and work on a passage. I dunno, the point isn't the method.

Janet: But it's helpful to hear different ways.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: So somebody go, I might do that. Our church right now is memorizing passages together this year.



Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And one of my ABFs, there were some women that were saying, it's hard for them to memorize and some were saying, but they remember the ones that they learned to music.

Noelle: Oh, yeah.

Janet: And like years later, they still remember 'em. And so even on our church's webpage, they have our memory verse to music.

Noelle: Okay.

Janet: So you can, for some people hearing it in music is gonna help them.

Noelle: Yeah. That's funny 'cause obviously I knew that we were doing scripture memory together. I somehow I missed the whole music thing. That's cool.

Janet: We have a whole resource like.

Noelle: Oh yeah, okay.

Janet: Faith slash gospel with all the resources.

Noelle: Okay.

Janet: And it has the memory verse and it has it put to music.

Noelle: That's cool. Yeah. I must have missed that part, but yeah, cool. Alright. Like we were saying, the point isn't the method. The point is hiding God's word in your heart. And it is harder for some people than others.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: But that's not an excuse. You have to still try.

Janet: And I love that you said try.

Noelle: Yeah.



Janet: What if I really work at it and I don't get it word perfect? Okay. Okay. I will tell some ladies who are really intimidated by memorizing or really believe they can't, and maybe they can't. Just review it 25 times a day.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Just do that.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Read it and thank God for the truth in it. 25 times a day, set your alarm, do whatever. 'Cause it only takes, what, 15 seconds to read it. And then so many times a day, think about what it says, and thank God for some truth that's in it. And then when we meet, that's what I'm asking you to do. So I don't ask them to memorize it. I ask them to review it 25 times a day, and I ask them to thank God for the truth in it. And we get back together. If they've done that, usually they at least have it paraphrased.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: And that's okay. And all that time thinking about God's word and His truth, how can that not be helpful?

Noelle: Yeah, absolutely. I have a few friends that have been really integral in my scripture memory, encouragement, and accountability. Over the past, I would say maybe 10 years or so.

Janet: Uh-huh.

Noelle: And I would say accountability is huge for me. So that's another thing I would add. I know everyone's different, but I think most people can probably memorize way more than they realize.

Janet: Oh, I think so too.

Noelle: Especially they have someone to do it with or that's keeping them accountable.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: I personally really like taking a chapter or sometimes I've actually done a couple of books too, and working my way through it. I think that helps with my brain. I have done random



passages like we're doing as a church this year. But for me personally, I love taking a chapter or a book and working my way through it.

Janet: So the books that you've done in the past.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Could you remember them? I'm not gonna ask you to recite one right now.

Noelle: Right now.

Janet: Could you remember a lot of it?

Noelle: What I'll say to you is like a book, so for example, I did 1 John probably eight years ago. I can't quote it to you, but I can tell you so many ideas and I referenced so many things from 1 John. Okay, got it. Does that make sense?

Janet: Yep, it does.

Noelle: And I do like to cycle back through those. And so for example, this past Fall, I worked my way back through Psalm 34. I had done it, I don't know, maybe five years ago or something, and then I worked back through it this Fall and then it was easier to work back through it.

Janet: Sure.

Noelle: Does that make sense?

Janet: Sure. Yeah.

Noelle: No, I don't have all of the things perfectly memorized in my brain anymore, but I would say the things that I've worked through in the past, those passages that I've worked through in the past, they are more present. And I referenced them.

Janet: Love it.

Noelle: Much more frequently than other passages in the Bible.

Janet: Yeah.



Noelle: And usually, Janet, when I talk about, mention, like when I mention chapters or books, someone's oh my goodness, that's like a superpower. I literally had someone tell me the other day like, you have a superpower 'cause you have memorized all of, I don't know, it was James or something like that. And I said no. It's not like I am a very average human with a very average brain. But when you put in time, which I had and when you put in the work and I had an accountability partner that would ask me about it. And for me, I had to work on it almost every day.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: Some people, maybe not quite as much. Your brain can do amazing things.

Janet: Yeah. Yeah.

Noelle: And like you said, at the very least, you're paraphrasing it, but I think a lot of people, you could probably memorize a whole chapter even if you think that you can't.

Janet: Oh, I think that's probably true.

Noelle: And I don't think it would ever be a waste of time.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: There's value in working hard to memorize scripture regardless of how well it ends up sticking in your brain.

Janet: That's exactly right, and I love that 'cause all that time spent thinking about God and His word, that probably would've been spent on something meaningless.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: What's gonna help me think and love like Jesus better.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: Yeah. Absolutely, man. Okay, hopefully we've convinced you that scripture memory is important, or hopefully the word of God convinced you that scripture memory is important and



giving you some practical ideas on how to do that. But let's shift gears here a little bit and move on to our second discipline, which is Bible reading. So first and foremost, I would like to say just read.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Read what you can. Read as much as you can.

Janet: And can I say read a version you understand.

Noelle: Yes, please do.

Janet: Because I think, as a counselor I've gotten to work with a variety of people and some of them have a preference for some versions over others, and that's fine. But I was working with one counselee and when I counsel, people, I don't know, people have opinions about this, but that's okay. When I counsel, I frequently use the the NLT.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And because it's more understandable.

Noelle: It is. Yep.

Janet: And I was doing this with a counselee and she looked at me and she goes, what version are you using? Because I understand that.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And I'm like, oh.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Have you not been on? Okay, so let me show you. So you could say, and here's what I know about NLT. They have done some interpreting for me.

Noelle: Sure.



Janet: And I think it is solid. And if I'm really studying, I'm gonna study out of two or three versions and I'm gonna look at what words mean. And there are a few places that I had already studied that when I read 'em in the NLT, I went, oh yeah, they've interpreted that differently than I would.

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: That's gonna happen.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: But the big picture, if you don't understand it, you might as well be reading it in the Greek or the Hebrew.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And you don't know what you're, so read and read something you understand.

Noelle: Absolutely. Yeah. Fill the gaps of your day with scripture. You know, what if we reached for scripture more than we reached for our cell phones?

Janet: Now you're being ridiculous.

Noelle: Just say on your phone you can look at how many times you pick it up in a day. Did you know that?

Janet: I don't want to know that, but I have heard that.

Noelle: Yeah. And I just wonder, what if I kept track of how often I picked up my Bible.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: That's convicting for me. I'm sure it's convicting.

Janet: Right. Oh, for all of us.

Noelle: But at the same time, like even while talking about this, we do need to recognize that different seasons of life allow for different intensities.



Janet: Yes.

Noelle: With Bible reading. And so some of what I'm talking about today might not be a realistic for everyone.

Janet: Right.

Noelle: The reading part. Yes. But some of the different methods.

Janet: How much, yeah.

Noelle: Exactly. So I think. It's okay to be realistic.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: As long as it does not become a reason for laziness.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: Which you and I have talked about in the past. Like you have to know yourself and you have to know, have some people in giving input into your life about what decisions you're making and what's laziness.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: And what's not.

Janet: But I love recognizing that because again, the goal is to get to know God better. And I'm gonna have to know His word.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: But you can do that in a lot of different ways. And I can remember when I had real little children saying to Brent, I don't even know. I literally don't know when to do this.

Noelle: Yeah.



Janet: Because for me, I have no idea what I'd be diagnosed with if somebody took the time to diagnose me, but I really struggled to focus.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: So Brent and I rarely would even like do our Bible reading in the same room. If somebody else is in the room, I'm distracted.

Noelle: Interesting. Okay.

Janet: So I sit where I'm alone. It is just this what I do. So I've got kids.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Even when they're napping, I hear them.

Noelle: Oh, yeah.

Janet: Because they're making noises. And I'm like, what was I just reading? Okay. No. I probably only got 10 more minutes. Oh my word. I've only got 10 more minutes. What was I? And so I told Brent, it's like I can say that I read it. I did not think. I don't know how to, and I don't know how to handle this. And I remember him saying, instead of trying to find 10 minutes a day, why don't we find an hour a week?

Noelle: Yeah. Yeah.

Janet: And where you can be away.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And you can dig and think and then he said, then the rest of the week you meditate on what you've already studied.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: So you can vacuum and remember what you were reading and think about it. You can work on a memory like you can do, but I can't do my study. It happened again when we had kids from Safe Families. My kids were older, so I was in a better routine. And then I had these little



guys again taking naps and I'm like, you would think while they nap, I should be able to do this. But I can hear, I'm not, I'm waiting, and I thought, oh my word.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: I'm back here again. And so to realize the goal is how do I get to know God better and know His word.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And for me for a little while, that's what it was.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And then I could review it when the kids are napping. I've already thought it through. I've already, so I can review it and I could do that much, but I couldn't like really think about what something means.

Noelle: Sure.

Janet: With all the distractions.

Noelle: Yeah. I have a really good friend that told me she lives in a different state, but she has five kids. She told me something that was a blessing to her was a lady in her church that was an older lady, I don't know, in her sixties. Oh my goodness.

Janet: Wow. In her sixties.

Noelle: What I mean is she didn't have young kids in the home.

Janet: Hey, empty nester like me. Yes.

Noelle: I recanted my adjectives.

Janet: No. It was, it's totally accurate

Noelle: That didn't work and outside the home, and she did not have a ton of ministry responsibilities in the church. What she decided her ministry was to moms with young kids. She



would go and watch their kids for an hour to a week so that the mom could leave and do a deeper Bible study.

Janet: I love that. I love that. And that is a huge blessing.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Like that matters.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Wow. I love it.

Noelle: It's interesting how much we can say, oh, I don't have time for this. I don't have time for God. Maybe you just need to be a little bit more creative, but.

Janet: Right. And we need to help each other.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Just like that woman was.

Noelle: Right. Yeah, absolutely.

Janet: And that wasn't every day.

Noelle: No.

Janet: And it's okay, something is always better than nothing. Elizabeth George quote. So, if I'm where I was in that season, and you could say, and it was a weakness on my part. I could have gotten up before the kids. They got up pretty early, but still I could have gotten up earlier. But even then, I'm waiting for them to, it's funny how I just, I'm like tensed.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: What's gonna happen next? I can't focus as well. I could have grown in focus. We could say all those things. They're all true. And there was a way for me to keep growing in that season.



Noelle: Absolutely. Yeah. One of my brothers told me something recently that I can't stop thinking about. He said, it's ironic when we say I don't have time for God, because he is literally the creator of time.

Janet: Oh, funny. Yes.

Noelle: I was like, oh my goodness. That hit me. Like even when my schedule is truly full and when it's full with good things. You're talking about you with your kids. I don't have kids, but when my schedule's full with my work as a high school teacher.

Janet: Yep. You have all those kids.

Noelle: Yeah, I do. I have 200 children. And I say I don't have time to be in the word. What am I actually saying?

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: I think that there are solutions to be found there and Bible reading can look different depending on the season.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: For example I'm personally, I'm super excited 'cause I'm about to start a challenge where I read the Bible cover to cover in 90 days, which I know is crazy. It's wild. I've actually done it once before, it was about two and a half years ago. And Janet, it changed my life. It totally changed my life. And actually I didn't finish it exactly in 90 days last time.

Janet: What? Failed.

Noelle: No. Failed

Janet: Loser.

Noelle: Oh my goodness. I think it ended up being more like 111 days. But reading the Bible that quickly was so different for me than any other way that I've experienced it and what it did for me.

Janet: See, I feel like I don't have time to think about it if I'm reading it that quickly.



Noelle: Yeah. Let me tell you.

Janet: But you're getting the big picture.

Noelle: Yeah. What it did for me is it helped me see the entire story of scripture.

Janet: I love that.

Noelle: And themes started jumping out everywhere. And I saw God's character repeated through the generations. And this sounds funny, but reading the Bible helped me fall in love with God in a new way.

Janet: I love that.

Noelle: And it was a huge time commit. It was about, I would say, on average 45 minutes to an hour a day, which is a lot.

Janet: Yep. Did you listen to it or It was all reading?

Noelle: I read it.

Janet: Okay.

Noelle: I know people that have done the listening version too. I would say it was totally worth it. And I don't have that time ,all of the time, and also, just to be super clear, I had heard about that challenge many times before.

Janet: Yeah, I've heard before too.

Noelle: Before I finally did it. So please do not say, oh, Noelle, you have a superpower. I don't. I don't have a superpower. I just finally said yes and did it with a friend, and then I mostly stuck with it. I didn't do it in the 90 days, but I did it and I'm really glad I did.

Janet: That's really cool.

Noelle: Now on the other end of the spectrum, sometimes we read so much like you were saying. But then we don't slow down enough to actually study. So what if all I ever did was read the Bible for an hour every day.



Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: And I never spent time digging deeper.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: So let's talk about Bible study too, not just like Bible reading. What do you think about that?

Janet: Yeah. Because both are valuable.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: You don't read the Bible in 90 days over and over. But you benefited from it.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And some, I still love hearing John Piper say that he has always struggled to read, which is why the only book that he reads all the time is the Bible.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Like for some people, they read a lot. He knew that he struggled more to read, so he focused on the Bible. So some struggled to read and comprehend and they're gonna read it a lot more slowly.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Which is fine.

Noelle: Yes.

Janet: Because again, the goal is to get to know God better. In previous episodes, you've heard on this podcast that our goal is to represent or reflect God's characters and values to others. I have to know them if I'm gonna do that, and I want to be in awe of those and His love for me in that.

Noelle: Yeah.



Janet: So that's the goal, not the method.

Noelle: Absolutely. I was thinking as I was preparing for this episode, there are things within Bible study that sometimes we're intimidated by, and so I wanna talk about those for a little bit now. Especially some that were helpful to me. I was in a course in the MABC, I've said before I've taken some MABC courses through Faith Bible Seminary, and one of the courses that I took was called, "Principles of Bible Study". Obviously I can't go through everything that we learned in the course because it was a lot of material, but there are a few things that I can hope I can summarize fairly quickly that could really help any person that's listening today that's interested in, hey, I haven't really done Bible study. What does that look like? It looks like a lot of different things, but let's just talk about a couple of things.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: First of all, before we talk about those things, I will say I have beef with some Bible scholars, not all of them, but some of them. They use fancy schmancy words and then the rest of us don't understand those fancy schmancy words.

Janet: I know Brent used to, I would read books of Brents while he was in his PhD, and I would say, what does that even mean? And then he'd tell me and I'd go, why didn't they just say that?

Noelle: Yeah. Yeah. I really appreciate that each of my MABC professors have used language or made language more accessible to me like within Bible study.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: So I'm gonna try to do that here today too. And you can stop me if I say anything that you think, what is that? Yeah. So when I hear scholars talk about Bible study, I, one of the most common words that I hear is hermeneutics, which is really a crazy word, hermeneutics.

Janet: I know.

Noelle: So for anyone out there like me that had no idea what the word hermeneutics means I want to tell you, it's basically just a fancy word for proper interpretation.

Janet: Yeah.



Noelle: It's the glasses that you put on when you're asking what does this text actually mean. So obviously hermeneutics applies to Bible study because when we study, each of us is a scholar, so earlier I said, oh, bible scholars. Really that should include.

Janet: That's us.

Noelle: Yeah, that's us. We need to be able to read and interpret what the text is saying, we can't just read it. We also have to study it and learn and.

Janet: And we can do it.

Noelle: Yes.

Janet: We did a previous podcast with Sandy Esgar and she did principles of Bible study. And I'm gonna make sure that we link, she has a sheet of paper that you can go through with any passage of scripture to help you answer questions and learn how to read.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: So we will link that with this as well.

Noelle: Yeah, absolutely. Okay, so let's talk about three different things that I learned in this class, Principles of Bible study. Three different things that I think anyone could really look at. The first one is called circles of context, or, and I think they're within, I think the word is concentric circles, but it's circles that are within each other, right? So you have a really tiny one in the middle, then a slightly larger one, then a slightly larger one than a slightly larger one. So when you're studying, you'll start small and work outwards. So the tiniest circle, the one in the middle is the verse, and then the next one is the passage. Which could be the chapter, but it's just the passage that it's related to. And then the third one would be the whole book.

Janet: Okay.

Noelle: The fourth would be other books by that same author. And then the fifth would be the New Testament or the Old Testament.

Janet: Whichever testament.

Noelle: And then finally the entire Bible. Okay. So when you look at circles of context, you can better understand, you can better study. So Philippians 4:13, let's take that as our verse. Okay.



This is a great example of why context matters because you could look at Philippians 4:13 and say a whole lot of things.

Janet: Yes. Yes. I can say I can do all things through Christ, so I could be a basketball player through Christ if I just believe it.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: It doesn't matter. I'm 5'1, I'm 60 years old, but I have faith. I don't think that's actually what it means. I think about what you're basically saying is look at the context.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: And you're doing it in circles.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: But it's just the same as if I wrote you a long letter and you pulled out one sentence near the end and said, I think she means this by it, but it doesn't fit with the whole rest of the letter. I wouldn't be happy. That's not fair to do that with my words. So if I'm gonna understand what Paul meant in Philippians, I gotta read the whole letter. So I have to look at that verse and what you're saying is, look at the whole chapter. What's chapter four about? What's the whole book about? How does Paul write when he uses those phrases in other books? It's basically just saying, how do I look at the context? Because the author had an intent.

Noelle: Right. Absolutely. You might have heard this phrase before. I heard it in the class, but I've heard it outside of that too. A passage cannot mean what it never meant to the original audience.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: So that's super important when we're talking about the Bible. A passage can't mean what it didn't originally mean.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: So I don't know how to explain that better except for to say, we can't say, oh, this means this to me today. When it didn't mean that to them then.



Janet: Again, go back to if I wrote you a letter, I meant something specifically when I said it. You don't get to say, now that I read it again, today, it means this to me.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: I think she meant this today and this is what it means. It's always a red flag when it's to me.

Noelle: Yes.

Janet: Here's what it means to me.

Noelle: To me, yeah.

Janet: It's no, I wrote the letter and I meant what I meant. That can be a challenge sometimes to determine, which is why you look at all the context and we do the things, but we don't get the right. I can remember when I was in college, I was a new believer and was doing a bible study with all students, so there wasn't someone really leading us.

Noelle: Okay.

Janet: And we went around and we would read a passage and everybody would say what it meant to them.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And so I said what it meant to me, and here's what they went, oh, that's really good. And I look back and I'm like, I didn't even know what I was talking about.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: That's a danger.

Noelle: Yeah, absolutely.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: Okay. Alright, so circles of context was the first one. Okay.



Janet: Yes.

Noelle: Second one, another helpful study tool is looking for repetition. Okay. And this is one, it's a little bit easier but it's just being aware of repetition. So Genesis 1 is a really good example for this because over and over again we see and we read and God saw that it was good.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: So i'm talking about Genesis 1:4 talking about the light, and God saw that it was good in verse 10, talking about the land and the seas, and God saw that it was good. Verse 12, talking about vegetation, and God saw that it was good. Verse 18, referencing the sun, moon, and stars, and God saw that it was good. Verse 21, talking about the birds and the sea animals, and God saw that it was good. Verse 25, talking about the land animals, and God saw that it was good. And in verse 31, referencing everything that He had made, which included at that point, human beings. And God saw that it was very good.

Janet: I love that. No and we see, okay, apparently God really wants us to understand that it was good.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: He's emphasizing that point over and over. Yeah.

Noelle: So just pay attention to that. So that's that second tool. Repetition is fairly simple, I would say, but like just take it seriously. And it might be.

Janet: And then you get to ask why.

Noelle: Exactly.

Janet: Why would that be important to the Lord? And now there may be differing, but at least now I'm thinking about why did God say it that way?

Noelle: Yeah, absolutely. The third one, it takes a little bit more time and effort, but I think it's still something that anyone can do. And that's understanding the historical situation of a book. So this goes back to the circles of context. It's just a specific thing.

Janet: Yeah.



Noelle: So the historical situation of a book. So let's go back to Philippians since we were talking about Philippians 4:13.

Janet: Sure.

Noelle: When you look at Philippians 4:13 and you can know the verse, the passage, the book, other books that Paul wrote, but really looking at the historical context can help you understand a lot about Philippians.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: So I've done some studying on this. I've listened to some sermon series and did some personal study on it, and it's really changed the way that I've seen Philippians. So let me just share a couple of those things.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: So that first of all, it's written by Paul.

Janet: Okay.

Noelle: We know that to the church in Philippi. And studies show that this was written about 10 years after the church began.

Janet: Okay.

Noelle: Okay. Philippi itself was a Roman colony filled with proud Roman citizens.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: Okay. I think they actually, one pastor that I listened to his sermon on Philippians said that it was like they prided themselves in saying that it was like a miniature Rome.

Janet: Okay.

Noelle: Philippi was like that and the church itself started in a pretty unconventional way, which is super interesting. There was three people mentioned Lydia, a business woman.



Janet: Yep.

Noelle: And then we had a Roman jailer.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: Who came to faith. And then the third one was a slave girl who was mentioned to have been demons possessed and then healed.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: So we have these three people. It's oh my goodness. This is not what we think of when we think of a church planting team.

Janet: And think about Lydia, a Jewish business woman and a Roman jailer and a slave.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: Three cultures that don't really get along with each other are the beginning of this church.

Noelle: Right.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: And I think, I'm pretty sure it's Acts 12, where Philippians is taught about more. So you can look that up, but how could knowing that information change the hermeneutics.

Janet: Ooh.

Noelle: The interpretation. How could knowing that information about Philippians help you as you read and study Philippians?

Janet: I think I understand the better the culture he was writing to and the variety of people in the congregation. And then I think about just in Philippians 2, where he is gonna talk a lot about the humility of Christ. And you think, wow, humility would be so necessary.

Noelle: Yeah.



Janet: In a situation like that. And why that would be so beautiful. He wasn't talking to a bunch of homogenous people who are gonna hear about humility. He was talking to people who needed that in order to get along.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And to think, you've said it maybe a little harder to get that, but really online.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: You can get things like that so easily.

Noelle: Yes.

Janet: Or any kind of commentary is gonna have a section on what's the book about or I have a theological study bible so that at the beginning of sections of letters and each letter that's gonna give me that kind of background. So it's really not that hard to find now.

Noelle: Yeah. One of the resources.

Janet: But very helpful.

Noelle: Excuse me. Yeah. One of the resources that was recommended to me was a website called blueletterbible.org.

Janet: Yes.

Noelle: So.

Janet: I do that for Bible reading. Do they have also commentaries and stuff too?

Noelle: They do, yeah.

Janet: Okay.

Noelle: It's awesome.

Janet: And so that's free.



Noelle: Yeah, totally free. So that's blueletterbible.org, and you can look up lots of different things there. I love it.

Janet: Yeah.

Noelle: All right. So those are three tools. We have circles of context, repetition, and then historical context. Obviously there's way more than that, but those are some tools that you can use with Bible study. What are some other helpful things with Bible study you wanna make sure that we talk about today?

Janet: I think, even to just get started, we said read. So it's okay. Yes. And if you don't, under, I love Michael Rydelnik. I listen to him a lot. And whenever somebody says to him, I don't understand what this passage means, his answer is keep reading.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Because it's normally if you read more, you'll go, oh, now I get it. Not always.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: But keep reading and then see if more context helps to bring clarity. So that's for sure. But even just saying, okay. How should I be thinking about this if the Bible is a book, one story over lots of little books within it, but it's one major story that I would say is God's plan.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: So if that's the case, I can be reading and be thinking through what am I seeing about the big picture. My husband, I think has his students whenever they're reading something, the Bible is about God, man, and God's plan.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And so whatever I read, what am I learning about God? What am I learning about man? How do I see this fitting into God's plan of redeeming humankind?

Noelle: Yeah.



Janet: And I found that helpful. Years ago, I just went through saying, what do I learn about God? What do I learn about man? As I've read through the book of Jeremiah, first of all, can I say depressing?

Noelle: Yep.

Janet: About man. How many times was this saying over and over foolish, depraved, going back to the same thing, not keeping their word. Like I felt like I was just repeating myself, but what did I see about God and you do. I came away from that going, why in the world would I fear people?

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Are you kidding me? I just spent all this time seeing what God is like, what man is like, and I'm choosing man.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: What in the world? So that can be helpful. Just what am I learning about God? What am I learning about mankind? And where do I see God's plan in that?

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: So that can just be one way or for me, when I have people reading through the Gospels because we wanna get to know Jesus. The best place to get to know Jesus are the four gospels that talk about His life.

Noelle: Yeah. Yeah.

Janet: Now He's all over the Bible. I get that. But there's His life.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: And so I will have people read through Matthew, a chapter at a time. Each chapter from what I just read, what am I learning about Jesus and what He's like? Why should I trust Him based on what I'm seeing of His character?

Noelle: Yeah.



Janet: And just do that. I had somebody say once, no, why did you pick Matthew of the four gospels? And I said, because then we're gonna do Mark next. We're just gonna do 'em all. Let's not because Matthew's better. It's 'cause let's do 'em all. Let's just saturate in what is Jesus like. And why should I trust him? Because don't we all know that if we're gonna follow God, He's gonna ask us to do some hard things.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: So getting to know what Jesus is like and why I should trust Him is a great foundation for that.

Noelle: Yeah, I love that. I love that.

Janet: So just a few ways that I've asked people to read, especially when they're just getting started.

Noelle: Sure. Yeah. I'm hopeful that the listeners today have heard these things and just thought, oh maybe I can try that. We've talked about.

Janet: Yes. One thing.

Noelle: A lot of things today.

Janet: Yep.

Noelle: So maybe choose one thing 'cause the truth is that whether you're memorizing scripture or reading huge portions of the Bible, or slowly studying a smaller portion, the goal is always the same. And that's to know God and love Him more.

Janet: Amen. On that, I think we can say, why don't we just pray to end this episode.

Noelle: Yeah, I would love that.

Janet: I would like to do that. Oh, Father, thank you for giving us your word. Thank You that You know us perfectly and You sent Jesus to die for us so we could know You. So I pray for any of our listeners here who might not be sure that they even know You. We are more wicked than we even realize and more loved than we can imagine.

Noelle: Yeah.



Janet: And your word is where we learn that You gave us Your word so we could learn about You. So would You help us? Help us find community where we can do this together, where we can lock arms together to get to know You better.

Noelle: Yeah.

Janet: Help us, Father, to find a way to learn Your word. Hide it in our hearts. Get to know You through reading so that. We would know You better, we would reflect You better. We would have more joy in knowing and being known by You, and thank You that you care about that and that for those of us who do know You, Your spirit within us will help us to do that. And so I thank You for that and I can pray confidently because of Christ and what He's done. And so we pray this in His name. Amen.

Noelle: Amen.

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