



Midtown Messenger

Volume 4

February 28, 2021

Issue 9

8 Mistakes We Make When Reading the Bible

By: *Hiram Kemp*

Christians must read the Bible. It lights our pathway (Psa. 119:105). When the Word of God is ingested and applied to our lives, it keeps us from sin (Psa. 119:11). If we are going to live as God wants us to, we need to remember that we do not “live by bread alone” (Matt. 4:4). However, we should be mindful of the fact that God wants His word not only to be read but to be handled properly (2 Tim. 2:15). Not only does this involve deep reverence and respect for God’s Word, but also the proper interpretation and application of it (Prov. 30:5-6; Mark 7:9; Rev. 22:18-19). With more translations and formats (electronic and paper) for reading the Bible than ever before, we need to be cautious that these conveniences do not incline us to mishandle God’s Word. I do not claim to be an expert on how to approach the Bible (and I confess that I too make these mistakes), but I want to be better about it. Observe these eight mistakes we make when we read the Bible and try to avoid making them as you read and study scripture.

Mistake #1: Ignoring the Context

We often do not appreciate the context of the book or the verse we are reading. The *context* refers to the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea. When we are reading a chapter of the Bible, we should ask ourselves questions like:

What book am I reading?

What covenant was in effect when the events of this book took place?

What has been said previously in this book?

What will follow?

How does it fit into the overall context of the Bible?

Also, what role does this book play in the entirety of scripture?

Taking verses like Philippians 4:13 as ammunition for passing a math test or climbing Mount Everest may be inspiring, but Paul didn’t have these things in mind. Using Colossians 2:20-23 as a passage to suggest we should abstain from certain things is in direct opposition to what is being discussed in that chapter. Furthermore, when James speaks of being quick to listen in James 1:19, he is not referring to taking good advice, as important as this is (check out Proverbs 12:15; 19:20). More precisely, he is in context speaking of being quick to listen to the word of God (Jas. 1:18-25). Ignoring the context makes our agenda more important than the Holy Spirit’s agenda as He inspired men to write the messages they wrote. Get God’s point out of the text because **His position is the most important.**

Mistake #2: Not Reading the Text Thorough Enough

Sometimes we read the Bible and claim we did not get anything out of it. The problem, however, is not with the Bible but with us. God never promised anyone that they would learn *all* that they need to know just by a cursory reading of a few verses or a book. The scriptures call for us to meditate and rehearse the truths contained in God’s Word continually (Josh. 1:8; Psa. 1:2, 119:97). **While reading through an entire book in one sitting is a good and helpful practice, we should add to this that reading**

through in one sitting several times is better. What we think is correct the first time we read a passage may be cleaned up as we go back through several times (cf. Prov. 18:17). Kings in Israel had to copy the word of God and then study it repeatedly (Deut. 17:18-20).

Instead of quickly rushing from one book to the next, try to saturate yourself with one book of the Bible—learning it in and out—then move on. Read the same chapter several times for a few weeks and do so in various reliable translations as you allow the text to grip your thoughts. Then the central theme becomes apparent (Psa. 119:15-16), and **the excitement happens when you start noticing things you never saw in the text before.** The Bible was not written so we can hurriedly accomplish our daily devotional goal; it was written to be *digested* and *internalized* as we allow the Spirit to transform us.

Mistake #3: Failing to Pray Before and After

Recently there has been a lot more talk about praying before reading the Bible (especially the Psalms), and this is a good idea. Sometimes in our haste to read and dig out the truths from God's Word, we fail to pray to Him before and after we have read. Bible study is not merely an academic exercise where we are trying to cram and learn mere facts. Bible study, when done correctly it increases our faith and strengthens the inner man. We should pray that the posture of our heart be humble and ready to receive the Word so that we can comply with its teachings (Jas. 1:21). We should pray that our prejudices and preconceived ideas be laid aside as best we can so we can see things through God's lens (Psa. 119:18). Before and after we read we should thank God that we can understand His word, that He has preserved it for us, that we have it in our language and can read it freely (Psa. 119:164). Not everyone has been as blessed as we are today (1 Pet. 1:10-12). We must not take the Word of God (nor our access to it) for granted. We need to take the words of Scripture and

pray them back to God as we learn to pray for things in accordance with His will (1 John 5:14-15). Going into Bible study without prayer is like exercising without stretching: the intentions are good but you might get hurt in the process.

(continued next week)

Hiram Kemp serves as the preacher for the South Florida Church of Christ, Lakeland, FL

Time

Our lives are based on time. Everything we do is on a schedule. We all have limited time, we waste time, we spend time, we invest time, we make time, the world is on a clock. God has the title of the Creator.

He created you, me, the world, the Galaxy and the Universe. He was and is and ever will be, the Alpha Omega beginning and end. He is the God of history, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is God of the present, and God of the future. God is the originator of time; He invented it, it's His.

Here are three quick thoughts to consider about this precious commodity.

Money and time share similarities.
Don't waste it. Spend it wisely.
Invest it in the future.

All good things come to an end but
thank God that the best thing,
heaven, will never end.

With the proper perspective we can
clearly see that we're all on
God's time.

What will we do with the time God gave us today?

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. - 2 Peter 3:8

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PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of February 28, 2021

****subject to change****

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Kevin Sheeran

Scripture Reading: Isaac Jobes

Lord's Supper & Offering:

Communion: Lupe Escojido

Offering: Clifton Rutherford

Prayer:

A.M. Opening: Steve Randle

A.M. Closing: Mike Atkinson

P. M. Opening: James Cammock

P. M. Closing: Isaac Jobes

Song Leaders:

Sun. A.M.: Rick Bass

Sun. P.M.: Fred Scherffius

Wed. P.M.: Fred Scherffius

Ushers: Allen Clifton

Greeters: Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devo: Mark FitzSimmons

Open/Close Building: The Whites

Membership Survey

On January 29, there was an email sent out with a link to fill out an online membership survey. If you would like to have a physical copy of the survey, please contact Kevin Sheeran. Please turn them in by today.

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.**

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Please continue to pray for those who have been affected by the Texas Winter Storm.

Happy Birthday: Patsy Cope (2); Meagan Stryker (2); Libby Jobes (4)

Upcoming Events:

March 5th & 6th: Graeber Road church of Christ in Rosenberg is hosting an evangelism workshop with Rob and Nicole Whitacre of Jacksonville, AL. More details are posted on the bulletin board in the hallway.

*****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.

MidTown Church of Christ

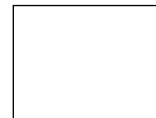
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MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

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 21, 2021

A.M. Bible Class.....	56
A.M. Worship.....	71
Sunday Evening Worship.....	48
Wednesday Bible Class.....	45
Offering :	\$4,429

Reading for this week:

And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them,
"Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak in
your hearing today, and you shall learn them and be
careful to do them."

Deuteronomy 5:1

SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli

Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore

Southwest School of Bible Studies - Anthony
Scherffius

GO PAPERLESS!

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