

Five Lenses to See the Bible



Ezra 7:9-10

I told you a few weeks ago that we got to hike through the mountains of Nicaragua, and one of the favorite things I got to do was carry a backpack with me, we would show up to a house, open up the backpack, and after we talked to the people for a little bit, we would pull out a Bible. We got to share what the Bible is, how this is God's Word to them, and how they can read this book and get to know God. It was just amazing to see how grateful these people were to get the Word of God. I think the second house we went to, the lady took it, held it out, and said, "I'm sorry. I can't read because my eyesight is bad and I can't see the words anymore." It sort of broke my heart. As we got done that day, we rallied together with the team, and one of the guys on the trip said wouldn't it be awesome to

go and buy a bunch of reading glasses and took them on our hike tomorrow. That was a great idea, so we went and bought a bunch of glasses. I went to the first home, opened up the backpack and gave her a Bible, and I said, "Can you read John 3:16?" She looked at it and said, "I'm sorry, my eyesight is too bad. I can't see anymore." "Really! That's good news because we are just the people to see you because I have brought glasses with me. Would you like to try on a pair?" She said, "I would love to." I took out three different pairs of glasses. The first pair was to enhance vision just a little bit. She put them on, looked at the Bible verse, and said it was a little better, but it was still blurry. I pulled out the second pair of glasses, which was a little bit stronger. She looked at the text and you could tell she could see a little better, but it was still blurry. I got the third pair out of the bag, and I'll never forget the moment she put the glasses on. She looked down and her eyes widened, and she said, "I can see it. I can read it!" She began to read John 3:16 for us, and we got to tell her what John 3:16 meant and how this is the gospel. Here was a lady who couldn't see the Bible clearly because she needed glasses.

Last week, we talked about how it's important for you to see the world through the lens of the Bible. If you don't look through the Bible to see the world, you're going to be in a bad spot. But in order to see the world through the Bible, we have to first see the Bible. I think for some of us, the Bible is actually blurry when we try to read it, not because we need new glasses, but because we just don't understand how to study and engage it. We're not sure where to start, so the Bible sits on our nightstand collecting dust because it's blurry when we read it. What we're going to try to do during our time is see the Bible more clearly this morning. If we're going to see the world through the Bible, we have to first be able to see the actual Bible. We're going to look at five lenses to see the Bible. We're going to take out five sets of glasses and try them on for size. We are going to see which of these glasses help us see the Bible better as we think about engaging the Word of God. Before we go any further, I want to read from Ezra chapter 7 because I think what Ezra did in this text should be one of the goals for us as believers.

Scripture

"For on the first day of the first month he began to go up from Babylonia, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, for the good hand of his God was on him."

That's a great phrase! That sounds good to have the good hand of the Lord on me to guide and direct me. How did Ezra get the good hand of God on him?

"For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel."

Ezra had the good hand of the Lord on him because he set his heart to get to know God through His Word, to respond to God's Word, and to share God's Word with others.

(Prayer)

Father God, we pray that you would help us as Ezra to set our heart on Your Word, that we would love it, we would delight in it, we would desire it, and You would show us simple ways to study and dig into Your Word so that we become doers and sharers of Your Word. We pray this in Jesus' good name, amen.

Seeing the Bible Starts with the Heart

The first thing we see that Ezra did was to set his heart on the Law of the Lord, so seeing the Bible starts with the heart. If you're going to see the Bible clearly, it has to first be a desire you have in your heart. You have to actually want to see it. If you don't desire to see the Word of God, then your Bible reading, Bible study, your Bible memory is all going to be duty. You're going to do it because you think you have to. You're going to do it because somebody told you that you need to. You're going to wake up and read, and it will just be checking the box. You're going to read thinking I'm

going to read, I'm not going to love it, but I'm going to do it because God will love me if I do this. God will accept me if I read my Bible, so it's going to be a duty. It's not something that you're going to want to do. If that is the case, if reading or studying the Bible is just a duty for you, it will not last. You'll do it for a little while, but you'll stop because it's not a delight. But if you, like Ezra, set your heart to study the Word of God, if you make it a delight, then you're reading the Bible from a different perspective. You're not reading and studying so that God will love you; you're reading and studying because He does love you and because you want to get to know Him more through His Word. If you're going to engage the Bible, you have to love the Bible. You have to delight in the Bible. The good news is the more you delight in the Bible, you start to see it and delight more in it. If you delight in it, the more you get in it, and the more you will delight in it.

So, how are we going to delight in our bibles? How are we going to love our bibles? A few nights ago, my kids were a little restless. They didn't want to go to sleep and I was ready to leave their room, and one of my boys said, "Dad, will you read the Bible to us?" That's kind of code for my kids for 'we know we've got dad when we ask him to read the Bible. He's going to stay and he's going to read! If all else fails, he's not going to read another story, he will read the Bible to us.' I've known from being a youth pastor for many years that when you go to camp with kids, you start reading the Bible to them at night and they all fall asleep. It's a great approach. So I thought, where should I go...Psalm 119; that's a long, long, long psalm. I'm going to put my boys to sleep; that was my goal. As I began to see with a flashlight that in trying to put my boys to sleep, God woke me up. I began to see Psalm 119, a psalm all about the Word of God, my delight began to increase for the Word of God. I'll read a few verses that hit me. *"Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart... With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you... I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word... Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out*

of your law... Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways... for I find my delight in your commandments, which I love... The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces... Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day... I rise before dawn and cry for help; I hope in your words... I long for your salvation, O Lord, and your law is my delight... I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil." Here is a guy who is pouring out his heart to the Lord that the Word of God is his delight and the more I read, the more I began to delight in the Law, the Word, and who God is.

A couple of days later, I was going for a jog and I decided to listen to Psalm 119 because it just got my heart stirred. Sometimes when you listen to a portion of Scripture, you get things that you don't necessarily see when you read it. So, I'm listening to it and what stuck out to me was not the word, or precepts, or laws. If you hear Psalm 119, you know it's all about the Bible; it's all about the word. It is repeated in every single line, something about the word, commandments, or precepts. I knew that already, but when I went for a jog, the pronouns stuck out. I had missed them. It never says the word, the commandments, the precepts, or the law; it never says that alone. It always says Your word, Your precept, Your law, or Your commandments. The reason the writer is delighting is (he's not delighting in just some dead words) he's delighting in God's words. This is God's very words to him. That's why he's delighting in them, because they're the words of God. You can't miss the pronoun.

Know God through His Word

There's a God behind the Bible, and we read the Bible to get to know Him. The goal of Bible reading is to know God through His Word. It's not to answer trivia; the goal of the Bible is to know God through His Word. Philippians 3:8 says, "Indeed, I count everything as lost because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." Reading the Bible, studying the Bible, getting in the Bible is about the surpassing worth of Jesus. It's getting to know Him. How do we do that? We come to the Bible with a little bit of different perspective. The first perspective is we come to the Bible more as a window than a mirror. A lot of times, we come to the Bible as a mirror, we open it up and ask God what we need to do, how we

should need to change, and we look for ourselves in the scriptures. The Scripture does talk about us some; it gives us a mirror to look at. But the Bible, primarily, is not a mirror to look at ourselves; it's a window to see the glory of God. I went on a train ride with my kids through the Smoky Mountains over Christmas, and I sat right next to the window. I didn't want to look at them, or me; I wanted to look out the window because there is a river running through the Smoky Mountains, there are mountains, there is snow, and my whole point is to behold the glory outside. As we go to the Bible, we're trying to look through a window to see God. As we come to the scriptures, it's more about getting lost in His big story than finding all the details of our small story. It's about seeing Him and His goodness. As we read, we will delight in it like Romans 11:36, "For from Him, through Him, and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen." The whole Bible is about God, and it's from God and it's to God. We need to find His big story as we look in the scriptures.

If you're going to be a person who is actually going to get in the Word, it has to start with your heart. You have to want to get to know God more. If you don't want to know God more, you're not going to read the Bible or engage the Bible. Let's just say for a moment that you have a heart that does want to know God more, but you're looking at the Bible with blurry vision. You want to know God through the Bible, but every time you read it, you don't understand it. You get confused and just don't know how to engage the Bible. If that's you, I want us to look at five different glasses, or lenses in order to see and interact with the scriptures.

- 1. Study**
- 2. Pray**
- 3. Chew**
- 4. Read**
- 5. Hear**

Those are the five different glasses we are going to put on when it comes to engaging the scriptures. We're going to learn how to study the Bible, pray the Bible, chew the Bible, read the Bible, and hear the Bible.

Study

Before I begin, this is going to be as simple as I can possibly make it. There are more complex ways to study the Bible. If you have your appetite just whet this morning, but you want more than that, you want to know hermeneutics, background, and dig into the scriptures in a really significant way, then Right Now Media is one of the things the church offers for free. Go to our website and get the link to that. David Platt has a four hour video on how to study the Bible, but I'm going to give you the fifteen minute version. It will hopefully be a simple method you can easily do. If you want to join a group, we have Precept Bible studies that are fantastic places to learn how to study the Bible. In August, we're going to launch men's discipleship groups and it will be a great place for men to come and learn how to study the Bible. We have options, but today will be for our whole group. No matter where you're at, you can grab a text and begin to study the Bible. It's a method you've probably heard before.

O-OBSERVE

I-INTERPRET

A-APPLY

It's a very simplistic way to study the Bible. You will observe the text, interpret the text, and then apply the text to your daily life. I used that for many years, but then Tony Merida actually added a step to this that I think changes everything. I think it changes the whole game. He doesn't call it this, but we're going to insert the word gospel. So it is now:

O-OBSERVE

I-INTERPRET

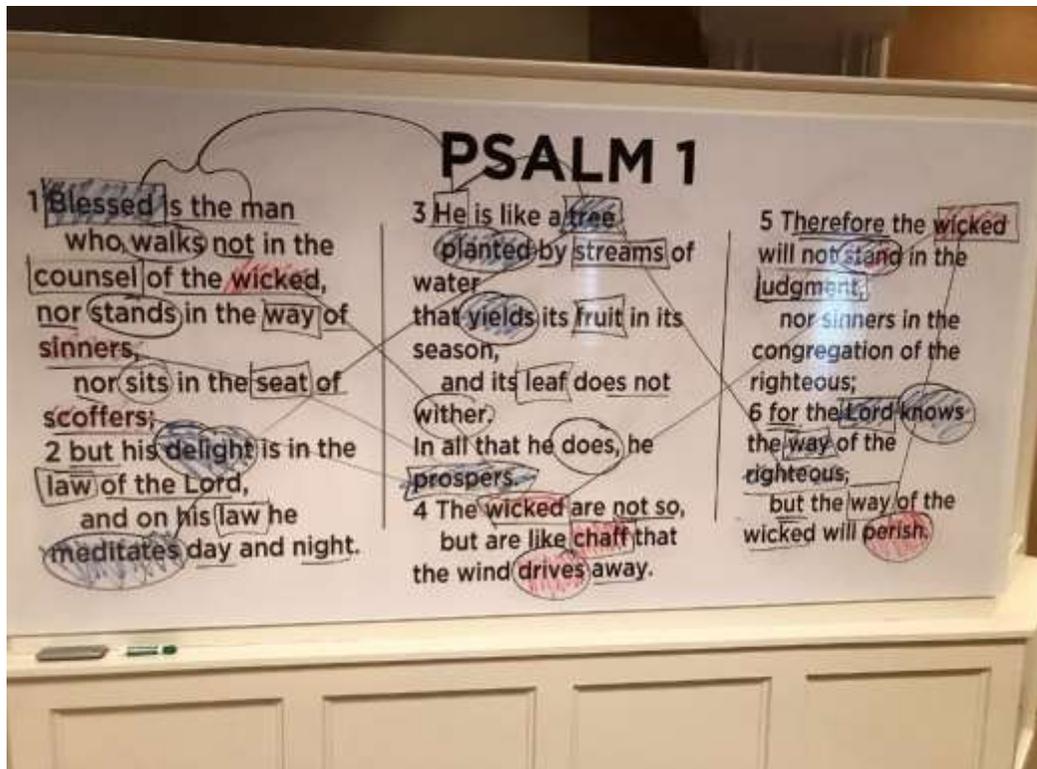
G-GOSPEL

A-APPLY

Observe and Interpret

- **Skin** – Words
- **Bones** – Structure
- **Heart** – Meaning

It inserts gospel after observe, and interpret. We're going to ask gospel questions after every single text so that we make sure we don't miss the actual point of the text. We don't become Pharisees who obey the Law, but Christians who follow Jesus. So how do we do this? How do we observe and interpret a text? It is the nitty gritty of how to study the Bible. Ramesh Richards, who is a professor at Dallas, came up with a way to think about the Scripture that I thought was very helpful. We're going to use his metaphor illustration. When you look at a text, a paragraph you want to study, your first look at the words. The words are the skin of the text. We're going to imagine you're looking at the text like a human body. When you look at a human body, the first thing you see is skin. Skin is obvious. Skin is the things you can see and know. They are just blatant. As you know in a human body, we have something under our skin, and that is bones. There is a skeleton structure. The bones are really important; take out our bones and we would be a gooey mess. You can't see our bones unless something really bad happens. So, when we look at a text, we see a bunch of words, which are the skin, and as Bible student, we have to try to figure out what the bones are behind the text. What is the structure? What is the writer trying to communicate? As we get to know the bones, the structure of a text, then we will ultimately look for the heart. In a human body, the heart is the most important. The heart is the part that beats, the part pumping our blood. So, when you look at a text, we see a bunch of words and sometimes we get lost, but we're going to try to find bones and a heart. We're going to use a simple method of squares, circles, lines, and some highlighters. Grab pens and highlighters as these are your tools for studying the Bible. The second thing I would encourage you to do is to actually print off the text you're going to study. Why is that? As you're going to see, you're going to mark up the text quite a bit because you're trying to find bones and the heart. We are going to study Psalm 1. We're going to do this together. Let's find the bones and the heart.



You see words, which is the skin. As you read it, you might not really be sure what the point is or what the writer is trying to communicate. I put squares around important words, big bone words, things that jump out, things that look important, but also don't move, like subjects and indirect objects. I put circles around the things that move, verbs, actions, commands. Then, I put lines around other smaller words we want to pay attention to, the little bones. I know you're already confused...let's walk through this and I promise it will get easier. Read through the text first, and then identify those keywords.

(See above picture for the marking references.)

Blessed is a pretty big bone word. That's an important thing. 'Blessed is the man.' That gets my interest peaked. I want to know who this blessed man is. What is he doing? How do you get blessed? 'Blessed is the man who walks.' That's a moving word. He's doing something. We're going to underline 'not.' That's an important little bone word. 'Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked.' So, a blessed man is going to

not walk in the counsel of the wicked. 'Nor stands,' we are going to circle stands because it's something he's doing. 'In,' we're going to put a box around 'the way of sinners'. 'Nor sits,' that's another thing that he's doing. Nor sits in what? 'The seat of scoffers.' We're trying to make the words pull apart, come together, so that we can begin to see some patterns, and try to get what the writer is talking about. In verse 2, we have a 'but.' But is one of those really important little words, but, for, because, therefore are words that kind of scream to us, we we're going to put two lines under that. 'But,' there's going to be a comparison, a contrast, 'His delight is in the law of the Lord.' So this law, which we're going to see is kind of an important thing, he does what? 'He meditates day and night.' We're trying to figure out what this text is saying, what the big words are we can pull out, and how we can circle the action and put squares around the big word. So, 'Blessed is the man,' doesn't do this; who does this. Then, we come over to verse 3. We have 'He,' is like what? 'A tree.' Who is like a tree? We have a blessed man. The blessed man is like a tree. Now we're making some connections. The blessed man is like a tree, but what's so special about a tree? Well, let's read and try to make some highlights. 'A tree is planted by streams.' Streams of flowing water have nutrients and sustenance. What is the tree doing? It 'yields fruit.' It's planted by streams, it's yielding fruit, and 'its leaves do not wither.' Why are its leaves not withering? It's because 'in all he does,' (it's an action) 'he prospers.' This is good. My heart is starting to turn to say I want to be a tree. Then we see a comparison, a contrast. Now, we have 'The wicked.' We've seen that word before in verse 1. So now we're seeing some connectors, it's being repeated. 'The wicked are not so, but (one of those important little bones) they are like chaff.' What happens to chaff? 'The wind drives away.' They're not planted, they're not yielding, they're not prospering; instead, the wind is driving the wicked away. Now, we see 'therefore.' That's one of those little bone words that is really important. 'Therefore,' because of all this, something is going to happen. Then we see 'wicked' repeating, and we connect it to the others. What's going to happen to the wicked? 'They will not stand in the judgment.' First you have, don't stand with sinners, but why? It is because they are not going to stand in the judgment, so you're starting to put some things together, 'nor sinners in the

congregation of the righteous.' Then verse 6 says 'for the Lord.' That's actually an important word. 'For,' or because, 'the Lord knows the way of the righteous.' 'But,' what about 'the way of the wicked?' what's going to happen to the way of the wicked? They 'will perish.'

We've just tried to read through a text and identify how we can pull out some words, make some connections, and see a little bit more of the structure behind what is actually happening. Then, what I love to do is grab the highlighters. In this, I see 'wicked,' and 'righteous.' Those are two different things, so I'm going to look at this text and make some color markings to bring these two in better view. I'm going to put 'blessed' with a blue highlighter. What does a blessed man do? A **blessed** man, or woman, **delights** in the law of the Lord. They **meditate** day and night. A blessed man or woman delights and meditates. What is this person like? They are like a **tree**. What is a tree like? It is **planted** by streams. It **yields** fruit. Its leaves does not wither. In all that he or she does, they **prosper**. So now, we see it's going back to the wicked; let's see if we have anything that's connected to this other person. Now we see the Lord **knows** the way of the righteous. Who are the righteous? They are the trees that are blessed, that are planted, that are yielding, that are prospering because they are delighting and meditating on the law of the Lord.

Now we have another group. It's the 'wicked' that has come up over and over we are going to highlight in red. We have the counsel of the **wicked**. We have the way of **sinners**. We have the seat of **scoffers**. We see the opposite of this; what's going to be the outcome of the wicked? They are like **chaff** that the wind **drives** away. What happens to the wicked? They **do not stand** in judgment, but instead, they way of the wicked will **perish**.

We're beginning to see these connections. We are beginning to see the way that this text is laid out and what the writer is trying to communicate. There is a compare and contrast between the blessed man or woman and the wicked. The wicked are not like this. Ok, so what's the point? What's the heartbeat? Now you're starting to ask questions. What kind I do with this text? How do I find the heart of what's going on? Ok, who is the blessed man who is delighting and meditating? Who is the one planted by the tree? We see in verse 6 that it's the one the Lord knows. The one that

the Lord knows is the blessed man or woman who is planted by streams of water, who is delighting and meditating in His Word. Because they are delighting and meditating, all these things are happening. They're planted, they're yielding, they're prospering, they have fruit, and they're by streams of water. Because they're known by the Lord, it's causing them to want to know the Lord, engage in the Scripture, and meditate day and night on His goodness and His law. So, what do we try to do when we get to the heart? What is the main message here? If you want to be a blessed man or woman, don't spend your time walking in the counsel of the wicked, standing in the way of sinners, or sitting in the seat of scoffers. What is that? It is being influenced by all of the world around you. Walking, standing, sitting is a progression. These things are slowly getting more influential over your life to where now you're to just sitting in a seat taking in all the world has to tell you. What does the writer say? If you want to be a blessed man or woman, don't get your primary influence on the world around you; instead, get your primary influence from the Word of God. Delight and meditate on who God is, and you'll be a tree that prospers rather than chaff that the wind drives away. Why would you want to do that? It is because you're known by the Lord. Those who the Lord knows are the ones who love His Word, who meditate on His Word, and who grow in His Word. The chaff are the ones that the way of the Lord; He is not looking at them, He is not in a relationship with them; instead, they're going to perish.

So, we see a real easy way. There are no rigid rules. It's just trying to take a text that looks like a whole bunch of words and you're just trying to pull those big bones out to say these words are important, these words are important, how do they fit together. What are the patterns? What is being repeated? What is the compare and contrast? Then, from all of these words, what is God trying to communicate? I need to get my influence from His Word, not the world. That's the heart behind Psalm chapter 1. It's just an easy way, hopefully, to dig into God's Word. OIGA: Observe, Interpret, Gospel, Apply.

Gospel

Now, what about that gospel piece. We talked about observing and interpreting, now let's bring in the gospel. Do you mean all I have to do is just read, meditate on the gospel, and I'm good, I'm going to go to Heaven? Now you've got to bring the gospel in. How do we come into relationship with God? How do we become this person who the Lord knows? It's not through reading our bibles; it's through coming to Christ in repentance and faith. It's by faith we are known by the Lord. It's by faith we come into a relationship with God, so by faith in Jesus, we get a relationship with God, and then we become those who love the word of God. You've got to add that gospel piece. If not, you're just going to say if I read my Bible every day, I'm going to go to Heaven. No, that's not true. That's not true at all. It is if you know Jesus, you're going to want to love your Bible. That's going to be evidence that you have a relationship with Him. You've got to bring in the gospel to every text to make sure the gospel informs your interpretation and your response. I'm going to love my Bible because I know Jesus, because He died and rose again, and I love Him so much I want to read my Bible.

Apply

How do I apply this? It's pretty simple. I'm probably going to put down my phone more and I'm going to read my Bible more. It's a pretty simple application. Because I do a lot of scrolling, walking, and sitting around all of the world's influence, but I don't pick up my Bible near enough, I'm going to do less of that and more of this. I'm going to start meditating on the scriptures day and night because I want to know who God is. That's application. What do I do? That's the dig into Scripture method. This is not the way I study the Bible every day. This is the way I would start sermon prep. This is the way I would start studying a text that I'm interested in studying. This is not the way I daily interact with God's Word.

I want to give you an even simpler way to interact with the Word of God. When I daily interact with God's Word, I do what we're going to call journaling. It's really easy.

Journaling

- **Highlight**
- **Write**
- **Respond**

Every day, you're going to open up a text of Scripture, read it, write a few comments about it, and then you're going to try to respond to it. It's a very simple method. We've been going through the F260 Bible reading plan, and some of you have been tracking with that. We've been in Genesis. We read about the story of Joseph last week. One of the things in our discipleship group that Michael brought out was how much it says that God was with Joseph. He highlighted that and we began to talk about that being one of the secrets of that whole passage that God was with him. I began to notice that Joseph had been in a pit, in a prison, and in a palace, but all three places he has been ok. Why? Because God was with him. What am I taking away? God, you are with me, whether I'm in a pit, prison, or a palace, You are with me. So that's what I wrote down, "God, you are with me today. No matter what I go through, you are right there with me." One of the best ways to interact with God on a daily basis is to open His Word, read it, highlight a few key points, write some of those points down, and then just respond. What has God shown you from His Word? If you don't understand, we have great study bibles. The ESV study Bible is a great resource. When you get tangled around a verse, read what the study Bible says, grab a commentary; there are ways to untangle Scripture on your own.

Pray

The second way we're going to learn how to interact with the Bible is to pray the Bible. We've done study through OIGA or journaling, either one is the way to study the Bible, but now we're going to pray the Bible. It's a real simple way that Donald Whitney teaches on how to engage the Bible. It's simple, just pray the Bible. This is a great thing to add to your journaling. As you journal daily of what God has shown you, then you respond in prayer back to Him. We've just gone through Psalm 1. How can we pray this back to God? "God, I want to be a blessed man. Help me not to walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor sit in the seat of scoffers, but help me to delight on the law of the Lord. I want to meditate day and night. I want to be like a tree that is planted that prospers and yields. God, I want to make sure I know You, and as You know me, I want to get to know You more because I want to live with You forever. I don't want to be like the chaff. I don't want to give myself to worthless things. God, help me to meditate on Your scriptures and be a tree today." What you have learned, pray it right back to God in response to Him. It's one of the best ways to have a relationship with the Lord. Read what He says, respond to it, and pray it right back to Him. It will be a way you can grow and walk with the Lord in a very dynamic way every single day. I would build a pattern in it. For me, I wake up earlier than I have to so that I have fifteen to thirty minutes every morning of uninterrupted time with the Lord. I have to make a little bit of sacrifice to make it a rhythm and a habit.

Chewing

I was going to say Bible memory, but everybody runs when I say that, so this will be chewing on the scriptures. It's a real simple practice. Get some notecards. That will be your tool you're going to use. When you find a verse that sticks out to you, write it down on a notecard, and take it with you all throughout the day. Pull it out at random times, and look at it, read it, meditate on it, think about it, and pray to the Lord over it. This will be a way you can interact with the Lord all throughout the day. I found the best way to do mine is to put it with my phone in my back pocket. Every time I pull my phone out for one of those tic habits, the Scripture is

there, and the phone goes back, the Scripture comes out, and you can read, meditate, and think on God's Word, not just all of the counsel and influence the world is screaming at you. You can have a pattern of getting into God's Word through notecards. If you meditate on your scriptures long enough, you'll memorize it as a byproduct.

Read

The next way that we are going to engage the scriptures is by just reading the scriptures. That is one way you can put on a pair of glasses and engage God's Word. I'm going to use a Kindle as our tool. I love the Kindle because I can download the reader version of the Bible that doesn't have any verses or chapters. It's just straight reading. I love the Kindle because it's not connected to the internet. I can't surf anything; it's just a book. So for me, I take this at night whenever I put the kids and laying there for a few minutes. Rather than surfing on my phone, I go to this. We're reading through the Old Testament right now as a church, so I've got the New Testament on my Kindle that I'm just reading. I might read a few chapters or a whole book. I'm just constantly trying to read the Bible just to see the big picture of the forest, how all things are fitting together. Maybe for you, it's a Saturday morning; you're just going to read the Bible. You're not stopping, you're not contemplating, you're just reading the Bible to get to know God and His big picture even more. So, have a plan for reading the Bible. Maybe that would be an easy way for you to engage the scriptures.

Hear

The last prop I'm going to give you is a pair of headphones. This is how we can actually hear the Bible. We live in a really neat age when it comes to interacting with the Bible. Most of us actually have the Bible on our phones. For some of us, we don't have time to read, but we have an hour long drive to work every day. So, someone has already recorded the Bible, and they will read it to you! All you have to do is download the podcast, hook your Bible App up, put the headphones in, and click play. This is a great way that we can redeem those mundane tasks of our commute, laundry, mowing the yard, doing dishes, whatever you have to do. Stick your headphones in and listen to chunks of the Bible. The Old Testament

was written for an oral culture. It was written to be listened to. People were reading the Bible when people were gathering around. So one of the best ways to interact with the Old Testament can actually be listening to it, because when you listen to it, you hear the patterns you sometimes miss when you just read it. I encourage you to add listening to the Bible into one of the ways you engage with the Word.

Another way to listen to the Word of God is by gathering as the saints on Sunday and hearing the preached Word of God. It's one of the ways that God has ordained for us to do as a church. We come and we hear the word of God preached. That is an activity that we don't just do; it's something that forms us and holds us.

We've give you five lenses, five pairs of glasses you can put on to read the Bible. Now, don't put all five on at the same time because that's going to be really awkward and weird. Just take one. If you're not reading the Bible at all, just start with reading. If you're reading, start with journaling. If you're journaling, start with OIGA Bible study. If you're doing all that, add some notes in your back pocket to chew on. Add praying that Bible into your routine. Mix it up. It's ok to be ADHD with Bible reading! Just do a lot of different things at a lot of different times. Just interact with the word of God to get to know God. That's the goal, not that you do a certain thing, but that you get to know God.

Do and Share

You're not just reading the Bible, as we read in Ezra; you want to do and share the Bible, "...and to do it and to teach His statutes and rules in Israel." You're not just reading it for yourself; you want to actually do it, apply it, and then share it with others. You don't want to be just a hearer of God's Word; you want to be a doer of God's Word. You're applying it to your life.

Minimize Distractions

The last tip I want to add is to minimize distractions. A lot of times, we say that we're a really busy culture. That is true, but I think more than that, we're just a distracted culture. None of us has to grow our own food to

survive; we go to the grocery. There were people before us who really had to put in a hard day's work just to live. We distract ourselves with a lot of things. Sometimes we don't engage the Bible because we're too distracted. We can remove some of the distractions. I want to point out that probably the biggest distractor of all...our phones. I want to encourage you to think of how distracted we can get on our phones. I love this, Psalm 119:37 "Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things and give me life in Your ways." If that verse doesn't speak to the thing we have in our back pockets more than anything, it's turn my eyes from worthless things. You might have to make a plan for your phone so that you're not on it all the time. On average, we're about three to four hours every single day scrolling through our phone, and sometimes way more than that. How can you make a plan to be distracted less on your phone? Maybe you need to take a drastic measure. That's what I had to do this month. I made my phone to be a lot like a dumb phone. My home screen has zero apps on it. The only thing it has is call and text. That's what my phone is now used for. The internet is off of it, I can't look up anything, buy anything, and no social Medias. I'm not telling you to do that; I'm just saying that's what I had to do because this verse hit me. I look a lot at worthless things. I scroll a lot, and I have a habit of just picking my phone up when I'm bored and just looking at random things. For me, I want to replace that with the Word of God that is going to last forever. I don't know what it looks like for you. Maybe it's not taking away social media, but making it only thirty minutes a day and then you get off of it. Put your phone away at a certain time at night because you want to think, process, read, and pray.

We want to get back to loving and cherishing the Word of God. That's what this is getting at...don't walk in the counsel of the wicked all day, or stand or sit in the seat of scoffers, but instead, delight in the law of the Lord. I think sometimes we are so distracted by the world that we don't ever get in the Word. I don't know what your action step needs to be, but I hope you have a desires to see the Bible. In seeing the Bible, you're seeing God. In seeing God, you can interpret the world. For some of us, our vision is blurry because we're not sure how, but hopefully we've given five tips, five pairs of glasses that you can take and apply to seeing the Bible more clearly. Let's minimize distractions and have a heart that is set on studying

the Word of God because we have the hand of the Lord on us. We want to do God's will and we want to share God's Word, so let's be the people who love and delight in God's Word.

I will never forget that girl's face when she looked for the first time and could actually see the Bible. I'm hoping that in this moment, there have been a few of you that the lightbulbs have clicked on and you said yes, I think I could do that. I think I could engage the Bible in that way. Now, let's go and do that because we have a great God. If we will fix our eyes on Him, we'll love Him more, worship Him more, and grow in Him more and we will learn how to relate to the world around us.