



# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## “By the Book” – How to read the Bible, part 2

### GETTING STARTED

What is one thing you are thankful for this week and what is one thing we can pray for you this week?

Remind each other of our simple expectations for meeting together

What do we mean by saying that we can all too easily “cherry pick” verses in the Bible? How do people who are not Christians do this, how can we as Christians do this?

### QUICK REACTIONS FROM THE MESSAGE

How would you summarize/paraphrase the message in your own words?

What point/idea resonated most with you? Why?

Why is it important for you and me to have a better understanding of how to read and interpret the Bible?

### DIG IN TO THE MESSAGE

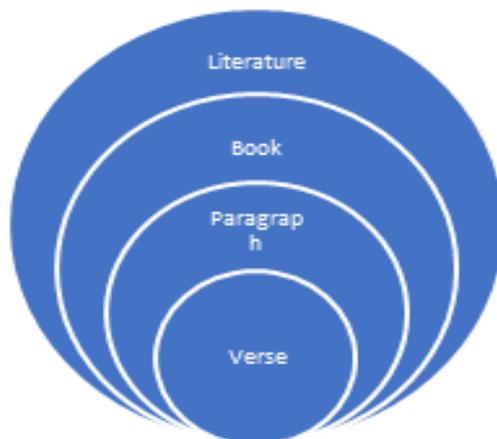
Dave gave one additional rule that will help guide us in reading and interpreting the Bible...

#### #3 Never read a Bible verse

In order to understand the meaning of any single verse, we must understand it within the greater context of:

1. What kind of **literature** am I reading
2. What themes/ideas is the **book** addressing
3. What idea is the author developing within the **paragraph**

The graphic below illustrates that meaning of a verse comes top-down, or bigger picture to the smaller picture



*We know from Scripture that all Scripture is inspired by God while at the same time given to human authors. These authors then use the tools of communication (norms of language) that we can understand. However,*

***this means we must take seriously simple rules that help guide us to understanding what the author meant in the time and place that he wrote it.***

? How does the graphic above help us to understand the meaning of Scripture?

Talk through each of these important questions for understanding the meaning of Scripture...

### **1. What kind of literature am I reading?**

Some of the types of literature in the Bible include these main ones (there are others) –

- Law (like Leviticus/Deuteronomy)
- History (almost all of the Bible contains some history, but Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Acts are predominately history.
- Wisdom (includes short principles that teaching the meaning of life and how to live) Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job
- Poetry (includes song lyrics, prose and parallelism to illustrate meaning) – Song of Solomon, Lamentations and Psalms
- Narrative (includes the gospels which are biographical narratives about Jesus, includes Ruth, Esther, Jonah)
- Epistles (a letter usually in formal style. 21 letters in NT written to various churches and individual for specific reasons)
- Prophetic/Apocalyptic (Isaiah – Malachi and Revelation)

? Why would it be important that you consider what type of literature you are reading is important to understanding and interpreting the Bible? What is the difference between reading a poem, verses reading a history book?

### **2. What themes/ideas is the book addressing**

Pick a book of the Bible as an example. (e.g. Genesis) Have someone identify from their study Bible, or if no one has a study Bible, google the background of the Book. Read the description of the book then have a conversation about what you think are the major themes/ideas of the Book.

? How can you see this is important when you are studying a particular chapter or verse in the same book?

? What big ideas, background is important to remember when you read from this book?

### **3. What idea is the author developing within the paragraph**

#### **NOW TRY IT AS A GROUP**

Pick a verse of Scripture from any book of the Bible. Pull out your phones, or study Bible then walk backwards from identifying the type of literature, to identifying the major themes/ideas, then reading the specific verse you picked out within context of the chapter and paragraph you are reading.

Now ask, what did the author intend to mean in the verse?

How can we apply that idea/principle etc... to our lives?

#### **APPLY WHAT WE LEARNED?**

What can you stop or begin doing to better to read, interpret and understand the Bible?

How can we pray for each other?