

## **Home Group Plan**

### **Reading and Comprehending the Bible**

Warning: this lesson is mostly teaching! Definitely allow some time at the beginning for a few discussion questions to get the topic rolling, but then plunge into teaching. Although this is mostly teaching, it can also be really interactive. Have people look up all the Bible verses and have them read aloud; in the “Ask Good Questions” section have everyone come up with questions; allow everyone a chance to share any “tools” they have for understanding Scripture.

#### **7:00**

Begin with any necessary announcements and then worship. A great song to end worship with would be “One Pure and Holy Passion” because it talks about knowing more about Jesus and growing in truth as a disciple.

#### **7:10**

Move into a short discussion to introduce the topic. A couple of starter questions:

- ✓ Has anyone ever been a part of an in-depth Bible study? What was it like?
- ✓ Do you ever feel frustrated if you don’t understand a part of the Bible? Why?
- ✓ What ways have you found work best for you to study the Bible?

#### **7:15**

Start by explaining that reading and understanding the Bible is so much easier if you have some “tools in your toolbox”. Just like a construction worker couldn’t do much good at the construction site if he didn’t have any tools to work with, neither does a student of the Bible. Explain that tonight you are going to share two “tools” for reading and understanding the Bible.

#### **7:20**

Tool #1: Context

Stress the fact that understanding the historical and cultural context within which Scripture was written makes a HUGE impact on how we understand the Bible. For example, have someone read 1 Corinthians 14:34, but make sure you make it clear that this verse is part of a very specific context and reading it outside of that context changes the way we understand what Paul is intending.

It would be awesome to share the context of another, more in-depth, passage in Scripture. It can be narrative, historical, wisdom literature, a parable, a story about Jesus or one of Jesus’ teachings...anything! Have someone read it aloud. Research the culture this passage was written in. Does your passage come from the Gospels? Learn about what life was like for a 1<sup>st</sup> century Jew. Does your passage have to do with King David? Learn about what was expected of kings in Israel and what a king was supposed to be like. Learning about what’s happening behind the scenes of a passage in the Bible can really make a concept or idea just pop off the page in a way we’ve never seen before.

A good book for understanding the cultural and historical background of a passage, as well as the genre of literature (poetry, historical narrative, wisdom, etc.) is *How to Read the Bible Book by Book* by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart. Also, most study bibles provide some of this information. You really don't need a lot of historical background to get the main point in a Scripture passage. Just a little background will go a long way.

### 7:35

#### Tool #2: Ask Good Questions

Don't we all have to fight the temptation to throw our hands up and exclaim that we just don't get it? Sometimes we think that we never will! Encourage everyone to ask good questions instead of getting frustrated and confused. There are three types of questions:

- ✓ Definitional Questions – these questions ask WHAT?
- ✓ Rational Questions – these questions ask WHY?
- ✓ Implicational Questions – these questions ask WHAT are the IMPLICATIONS?

Too often when we read Scripture we jump right to the third kind of question. Examine a passage, narrative story, chapter or book together and ask all three kinds of questions. It would be a great idea to have poster board or a dry erase board to write the questions on after they have been suggested.

For example, say you were studying Daniel 1. Here's a couple of each type of question:

- ✓ Definitional Questions:
  - What is the meaning of the names (both the Hebrew and the “Babylonian” names) of Daniel and his three friends?
  - What was the royal diet and what was the diet that Daniel ate?
- ✓ Rational Questions:
  - Why was it difficult for Daniel and his three friends to be captive in Babylon?
  - Why did the chief official give new names to Daniel and his friends?
- ✓ Implicational Questions:
  - How did Daniel maintain his integrity in Babylon and what are the implications of that in my life?

Encourage your home group to seek answers to their questions – there are lots of resources! Our pastors and staff, other home group leaders, life group leaders, pastors from home, mentors, friends, parents – and even if they don't know the answers, they can talk through the questions with you or point you to a good book or commentary. Emphasize that Bible study doesn't have to be done alone!

### 7:50

Ask if anyone else has any great “tools” that they have found helpful in their own study of Scripture and what has helped them understand the Bible more and more. Again, it would be great to write these ideas on a poster board or dry erase board.

### 8:00

Done.