
FALL KICK-OFF WEEK # 2

Week #2: Preparing Our Hearts: Inductive Bible Study



Renovation Groups begin with a return to basics through a study of Philemon that mirrors our LEGIT series concerning Godly character. Paul's plea to Philemon for Onesimus' contains a powerful example of Godly character and the importance of reconciliation. We will also utilize this study to cement some key study skills for Scripture Study.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Read Philemon 1-25.**

Tonight we are going to learn how to study a passage inductively. This means studying the Bible in such a way that the meaning of a passage can be discerned through the use of tools within the text.

2. **Step One: Find the Divisions of the Passage.**

Consider the divisions of the passage you are studying. A good way to discern the division of a passage concern a change of idea, place, or person. For example, Philemon might be divided into three core units: Introduction (vs. 1-7), Plea for Onesimus (vs. 8-22), Farewell (vs. 23-25).

Creating divisions in the passage helps us decide which division is most important in controlling the overall meaning of the passage.

As a group, choose one division of the overall passage to study.

3. **Step Two: Consider Structural Relationships That Offer Meaning.**

Look for contrasts (key word is usually "but"), comparisons (key words are usually "like" or "as"), recurrences (words that are used multiple times in the passage), and cause/effect structures (key words "therefore" or "consequently"). Consider how the structure of the passage governs its meaning. Why did the writer write this way? What is God trying to illumine for us?

What structural relationships do you find in the division of Scripture you have chosen as a group? What clues do these relationships offer about the meaning of the passage?

4. **Step Three: Look for Key Words + Phrases and Discover Their Meaning.**

Look for key words and phrases in the group's division of the Scripture. Mark them in your Bible.

Using a concordance, Bible dictionary, or tools such as the Faithlife Bible or Blue Letter Online Bible, what deeper meaning can be shared about the key words/phrases you have selected for investigation?

Where else are these words/phrases used in Scripture?

Create a listing of your findings about the words/phrases of Scripture you have studied. What does the deeper meaning of these words/phrases contribute to the meaning of the overall division of the Scripture text you are studying?

5. Step Four: Discover Facts about People, Events, and Places.

What are the key events, people, and places in the division of Scripture you are studying?

Using the internet or any other tools available to you, learn more about the people, events, and places in Philemon. Make a listing of your findings.

How does a deeper study of the people/events/places offer deeper meaning about the passage?

6. Step Five: Consider How this Passage fits with Other Passages in the Bible, and other Resources.

Having done a deeper dive into the Scripture you are studying, now consider how it fits with other passages in the Bible. What other passages help offer deeper meaning - both Old and New Testament?

How does this passage challenge your theology and thinking?

7. Step Six: Write a Paragraph (or more) of Your Initial Interpretation

BE THE REVOLUTION

Interpreting the Bible is a lifelong labor of love.

RENOVATING THE HEART

Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, yet for love's sake, I prefer to appeal to you... (*Philemon 8*).