

Reading for Real Life

How to connect an ancient text to your Tuesday afternoon.

Reading the Bible can feel intimidating. It's an ancient library of history, poetry, and letters from a completely different culture. But the goal of reading it isn't to pass a history test or gather trivia; it's to let the text shape the way we actually live today.

When you read a passage, use these three simple questions to figure out what to do with it.

1. What does this show me about God? (The Mind Shift)

It is easy to read the Bible looking for a quick life lesson, but this book is primarily the story of who God is, not a self-help manual about us. As you read, look for what the text reveals about God's character, what He promises, or how He treats people.

- **Ask yourself:** If what I just read about God is actually true, what false assumption, worry, or mindset do I need to drop today?

2. Where do I see myself in this? (The Value Shift)

People in the ancient world struggled with the exact same fears, pride, insecurities, and misplaced desires that we do today. Scripture often acts like a mirror, showing us our own flaws through the stories of others.

- **Ask yourself:** Which person in this story do I relate to the most right now? What am I caring too much about, and how is this passage inviting me to value what God values instead?

3. What is my next step? (The Action Shift)

Understanding a concept is great, but real growth requires movement. As you wrap up your reading, look for the practical boundary lines. Is there a clear direction to obey? A warning to take seriously? A way to treat others better?

- **Ask yourself:** What is one specific, measurable thing I can do differently in my neighborhood, at my job, or in my home in the next 48 hours because of what I just read?
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A Few Quick Tips:

- **You don't have to get it all at once.** If a verse is confusing or weird, just keep reading. You can always bring your questions to the group.
- **Focus on direction, not perfection.** You won't completely overhaul your life every time you read a chapter. Look for small, steady adjustments.
- **Don't do it alone.** You aren't supposed to figure all of this out in isolation. Bring your questions, your doubts, and your next steps to the group so we can actually support each other.