

LIFE|group Leader's Guide

THE BIBLE PROJECT "How to Read Your Bible" VIDEOS 17 & 18

For the Leader: This guide is intended to help you, not dictate to you. Please don't read from this page verbatim. For you to best lead your group, this has to come from *your voice* in *your words*. So read this ahead of time and let it guide you where it's helpful. You know your group better than I do. Use the questions you think will best help facilitate conversation. Feel free to skip some (there's a lot), add some, or simply follow the natural direction of your group (within reason). We trust you to discern that.

Before you jump into the videos, set the stage and convey the heart behind this series. That will help people focus and engage the videos.

HEART: Interacting with God's word is one of the most central aspects of living life with God. But reading the Bible can be really difficult, even for longtime Christians. These videos will help you come to the Bible with greater confidence and will help you UNDERSTAND what you're reading.

PREFACE: There is a lot of information covered in these short videos. If it's too much to follow, that's ok. Listen and see what sticks out to you.

Video #17: "New Testament Letters: Historical Context"

1. What stood out to you in this video? What did you learn?
2. How often do you think about the Historical Context when you read the Bible? Do you know how to find information on it?
3. The video listed 3 aspects of Historical Context. What were they?
4. How does understanding the historical context of biblical letters help us read them?
5. In what ways did the cultural values of early Christianity clash with those of Rome? What can we learn from how they dealt with the broader culture back then?
6. Can you think of any specific cultural issues that are addressed in the NT letters?
7. BIBLE: Read **1 Corinthians 11:1-6**. How might historical context help us read this passage?

Video #18: "New Testament Letters: Literary Context"

1. What stood out to you in this video? What did you learn?

2. Have you ever read a NT Letter all the way through in one sitting? How does that change the way we understand them?
3. Did the process of letter writing in the ancient world surprise you at all? How does it change the way you see the NT Letters?
4. Have you ever taken the time to analyze the structure of a NT Letter before you read it? What was that like?
5. BIBLE: Let's read a fun passage: Read **Galatians 5:2-6**. How might understanding the structure of the letter, or reading the whole thing in one sitting, help us make sense of this passage?
6. Suppose I'm reading a paragraph in the middle of a New Testament letter. What can I do to see how it fits into the whole? (Summarize the main point of each paragraph, look for transition words and repeated ideas, identify the main theme of the whole letter).
7. What are some practical things we can do to consider the literary context of a letter as we read it?

NEXT STEPS:

If we really want to be growing in our faith, we have to keep taking steps forward. So think about a NEXT STEP you can take over the next couple weeks...

1. Here are some **SPECIFIC** ideas:
 - a. Read more about the Historical Context of the Roman 1st Century world and Jewish culture.
 - i. You can find A PHENOMENAL RESOURCE on the LIFE|groups Webpage, or here: <https://bibleproject.com/other-resources/study-notes/how-to-read-the-bible/>
 - ii. The description of those cultures start on page 14.
 - b. Re-watch the Literary Context Video and make note of the structure of Ephesians. Then read the whole book of Ephesians (in one sitting if you can).
 - i. As you read, revisit the structure.
 - ii. Write out passages that may be confusing, or seem to not fit very well.
 - iii. Write how the structure may help clarify some things.
 - iv. Write down any insights you may receive.
2. Here are some **RECURRING** ideas: (Same every week)
 - a. **Learn more about the BIBLICAL NARRATIVE by watching more videos from the Bible Project:**
 - i. Overview of the Old Testament - <https://youtu.be/ALsluAKBZ-c>
 - ii. Overview of the New Testament - <https://youtu.be/Q0BrP8bqj0c>

- b. **Check out an app called, “READ SCRIPTURE”** - This app is designed to help you read the Bible in terms of the Grand Story. The first day shows a video overview of Genesis from the Bible Project and helps guide you through a “quiet time.”

3. What NEXT STEPS are you going to take over these next couple of weeks?