

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY SESSION 1: SCRIPTURE

MEETING TIME

Please use this page for notes and to record your thoughts

LESSON

JESUS KNEW THE SCRIPTURES

SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN TO US BY GOD

2 Peter 1:20-21 (NIV)

"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

SCRIPTURE HELPS US GROW SPIRITUALLY

2 Timothy 3:14-17 (NIV)

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

IN-CLASS EXPERIENCE

Please use the Bible Study Sheet

REFORMED PERSPECTIVE

THE ROLE AND PLACE OF CONFESSIONS IN THE PRESBYTERIAN STREAM OF CHRISTIANITY

COMMITMENTS YOU HAVE MADE

Please record here anything you have signed up for on one of the signup sheets.

Host?

Refreshments?

Reformed Tradition?

HOMEWORK SESSION 1: SCRIPTURE

DAILY BIBLE STUDY

1. Choose a book of the Bible that you would like to study and that you would enjoy continuing after the 40 day experience
2. Study that book at least 15 minutes every day:
 - a. Start with the first logical unit (certainly less than a chapter—maybe only a few verses)
 - b. Fill out a Bible Study sheet completely for that unit before moving on to the next. You may stay several days on that one unit. It's not how much you read, but how much what you read becomes a part of you.
 - c. Move to the next logical unit and repeat

ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERS

1. Pray for your accountability partner this week
2. Contact your accountability partner about half way through the week
 - a. Ask how their daily Bible reading is going and share your experience with it
 - b. Share prayer requests
 - c. Encourage one another

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY SESSION 1: SCRIPTURE

OVERVIEW

Tonight's meeting is an introduction to the course. Most participants have attended an interest meeting where they learned the general objectives of this 40 day experience, and the commitment that it will require. Their presence at tonight's meeting shows that they desire to grow in their relationship with Christ and are willing to take on the commitment required. The specific goals for tonight's meeting are:

- Introduce participants to the structure of the weekly meetings
- Provide them with a Bible Study tool which will hopefully do two things: 1) increase their understanding of what they read, and 2) help them to be more personally involved and engaged in their Bible study times.
- Encourage participants to start a regimen of daily Scripture reading
- Assign accountability partners
- Sign the group covenant

PREPARING FOR THIS WEEK'S MEETING

It will be important for you to be very familiar with the passages of scripture in the lesson and the passage that will be used during the activity time. Fill out a Bible Study Sheet for Mark 4:35-41. Of course, go over the lesson and Meeting Plan well in advance of the meeting. Also, since you will be presenting the "Reformed Perspective" segment this time become familiar with the resources listed.

In addition you will need to prepare the slips for the assigning of accountability partners. Basically you will need a container and a set of blue slips and pink slips. In each set there should be three slips with the number 1, and then two slips with 2, 3, 4, etc., so that you have enough slips for the number of men and women present. Women will draw the pink slips, men will draw the blue. Reserve the slip with the third one in case there is an uneven number of either.

SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR THE MEETING

- Recorder
- Name Tags
- Binders
- Cover Sheets for Binders
- Worksheet/Notes page for participants
- Bible Study Sheets
- Resources for *Reformed Perspective* Time

- Book of Confessions
- Book of Order
- About Being Presbyterian
- Any other resources you would like to bring
- Signup sheets
- Apparatus to assign accountability partners:
 - Enough blue and pink slips of paper for each of the men (blue) and the women (pink) to have one slip each
 - A hat or container to put the slips of paper in
- Two Group Covenants for each participant

MEETING TIME

7:00 PM (10 MINUTES) WELCOME AND GATHERING

- Name Tags
- Focus Activity
- Prayer

NAME TAGS

As Participants arrive hand out name tags and ask each to write their first name on them and put them on

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Everyone comes to the meeting tonight from very different circumstances. Some have had a harried day and are still thinking about what needs to be done for tomorrow. Others are distracted by worries about family and friends. Still others have had a great day, are excited to be here, and are ready to go. The Focus activity is designed to draw everyone together and bring them to the same spot emotionally and spiritually. It will prepare them for the meeting to follow. Tonight the focus activity and the prayer will be combined.

PRAYER

Welcome everyone to the group and then explain: **We are all coming here tonight with many things on our minds. We may have just had a fight with our spouse or best friend. Maybe we are worried about what will happen tomorrow—maybe we're even anxious about what tonight holds. Maybe we feel beat down by our job. Maybe we feel great! We are going to start tonight with prayer. I'm going to give you some time in the beginning for silent prayer, and I would like to ask you to do a little exercise. We will close our eyes, and in the silence I would like to ask you to bring each thing that is on your mind to God. As you think of something symbolically hold it in your up turned hands offering it to God. Once you've brought it to him, turn your hands over to signify that at least for the next couple hours you are not going to carry that weight but place it at God's feet and allow him to carry it. Then bring the next item to God and release it. After a few minutes I will close with prayer.**

Give plenty of time for people to go through this mental prayer exercise and then close with a heartfelt prayer for the group and for the time tonight.

7:10 PM (10 MINUTES) LESSON

Tonight most of the learning will actually come during the in-class experience. Here is a quick over view of the points for tonight:

- Jesus knew the Scriptures
- Scripture is given to us by God
- Scripture helps us grow spiritually

Please explain that the subject for tonight is Scripture. We will look at a few verses and draw out some general information about the scriptures and how we should relate to them as Christians. Let the people know that this will be a brief over view before we dive into studying one scripture in depth.

JESUS KNEW THE SCRIPTURES

It's hard to read the story of Jesus without realizing that Jesus knew the Scriptures. He used them quite forcefully in arguments against the Pharisees. He often asked them, "Haven't you read the scriptures?" Jesus also referenced the scriptures when he taught. And in the wilderness when faced with Satan's temptation Jesus quoted scripture to fend off Satan's attack. Are there some times that stick out in your mind, that you remember, when Jesus used the scriptures? Let people respond. Why is it important for us as Christians to know that Jesus knew the Scriptures?

One of the reasons that Scripture was so important to Jesus is that it isn't simply stories, or men's ideas about God. Scripture is given to us by God—it comes from him. Have the participants turn to 2 Peter 1:20-21 in their Bibles. Then read this passage:

SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN TO US BY GOD

2 Peter 1:20-21 (NIV)

"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

Ask the participants: **What do you think this passage means? Why is it important?** Allow several people to respond.

Summary: The Bible is God's communication to his people. He is the author, but also the subject. God used men to communicate what he wanted to say—but not in some robotic way. The personalities and knowledge of the human authors comes through.

Another thing that it is important for us to realize is that Scripture is a valuable resource to us as we attempt to grow spiritually. Have participants open their Bibles to 2 Timothy 3:14-17. (There are several reasons for asking

the students to actually open their own Bibles: 1) it teaches them the value of going directly to the Bible instead of relying on somebody else's printed scripture, 2) it reinforces that they have direct access to the scriptures, 3) it allows them to see the particular passage in context, and 4) it helps them to become familiar with the Bible.)

SCRIPTURE HELPS US GROW SPIRITUALLY

Please explain that in this passage the apostle Paul is writing to his protégé, Timothy. Timothy had been raised as a Jew even though his father had been Greek. So, Paul encourages Timothy to continue in the direction that Timothy had been taught, first by his mother, and then by Paul.

2 Timothy 3:14-17 (NIV)

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

In this passage there is a wealth of things we could talk about. What stands out to you? Allow several people to answer

7:20 PM (25 MINUTES) IN-CLASS EXPERIENCE

Okay, since Scripture is important to us, since it is from God, and since it can really help us grow and become more like Christ, let's practice digging into a scripture. We are going to use a tool; a tool that will guide us as we study and which can be used on any passage of Scripture.

Hand out a copy of the Bible Study Sheets (Awesome Bible Study). Ask participants to turn to Mark 4:35-41

Then explain: **Notice that Mark 4:35-41 is not a chapter—it's only part of a chapter. Why do you think that we are going to study these verses and not include a verse or two before, or a verse or two after?** Take responses. Hopefully someone will say that this passage is a unit.

The first step in using this Bible Study sheet is to choose an appropriate passage. We need to choose one that is a complete unit—a complete story or a complete thought. If you are using one of the modern translations the editors have done some of the work for you. They often have headings setting off each unit. Unfortunately, in the original Greek there were no paragraphs, no capital letters, no periods or other punctuation. Now, they had other ways of cluing us into their meaning, but it isn't quite as simple as looking for the paragraph breaks.

Because of that, the chapter and verse numbering can be off. A chapter may include many units, or a chapter division may cut a unit in half. So, as we study we don't want to be tied to studying a chapter, but rather studying a unit.

From here on out you will alternate between giving the participants time to read the passage and answer a question. Then gather responses from the group for that question. Follow things up, probe. Help them see something they haven't noticed before. For instance, in this passage we are told that "there were also other boats

with him.” These other boats should show up under the first section: Cast. See how many people included those in the other boats as part of the cast. As you go through the discussion, come back to these on-lookers from time to time. Ask why Mark told us that these other boats were there, etc. Then go to the next section and do the same thing.

Do try to time it so that the group gets an opportunity to write the last section (Application) and they have an opportunity to share their application for their own lives.

As you can see, it will be important to be familiar with this passage. At the end ask if people think this might be a valuable tool for their Bible Study.

7:45 PM (10 MINUTES) REFORMED PERSPECTIVE

Explain that FPC is part of a family of churches. The stream that it is part of is the “Reformed” perspective or movement. Then explain: **Each week we will look at how the reformed perspective views the particular topic we are studying. Tonight I will present that perspective, but in the weeks to come some of you will prepare this segment.**

THE ROLE AND PLACE OF CONFESSIONS IN THE PRESBYTERIAN STREAM OF CHRISTIANITY

In the life of a Christian, Scripture has supreme authority. That is true for the reformed stream of Christianity, as well. However, throughout the history of the Church Christians have written down what they believed. For instance we have the Apostles Creed.

Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell. The third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.

Amen.

In the reformed tradition there are a number of these creeds or confessions. (Confession as in confession of faith.) These Confessions have served a number of purposes.

- Used in Worship
- Defense of orthodoxy
- Instruction (Catechism)
- Rallying-point in times of danger and persecution

- Church order and discipline (e.g. requiring ministers and officers to affirm that they believe what is set out in a particular confession in order to be ordained—we'll talk a bit more about that)

Some of the confessions in the Reformed tradition are:

- Nicene Creed
- Apostles' Creed
- The Scots Confession
- Heidelberg Catechism
- Westminster Confession of Faith

These confessions have authority within the church. When the officers of the church, elders and deacons, are commissioned they are asked a number of questions. Here are three (they are in order, but there are other questions that come before and after):

1. **Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you?**
2. **Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?**
3. **Will you fulfill your office in obedience to Jesus Christ under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions?**

So the confessions have authority. However, they do not usurp the authority of Scripture. For instance the Westminster Confession says, "The Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures."

A section from the Book of Confessions describes it this way: Reformed Christians are put in a difficult position with their self-limiting, self-relativising confessions. On the one hand they are bound: so long as they are faithful members of a Reformed church they are not free to interpret Christian faith and life (or even Scripture itself) however seems best to them personally, but are committed to submit themselves to the authority and guidance of the confessional standards of their church. On the other hand they are free: the very confessions to which they are bound allow—require—them to remember the human limitations and fallibility of their church's confessional standards . . . and to examine critically the church's teachings in the light of further study of Scripture.

Does anyone have something to add? Questions? Comments?

7:55 PM (10 MINUTES) ASSIGN HOMEWORK

- Read the Bible Daily and use the Bible Study Sheets ("It's not how much you read, but how much what you read becomes a part of you.")
- Contact Accountability partner this week and pray for them throughout the week

HOMWORK SESSION 1: SCRIPTURE

DAILY BIBLE STUDY

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ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERS

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8:05 PM (10 MINUTES) ADMINISTRATION

- Covenant
- Signup sheets (host, project, refreshments, Reformed Perspective,
- Assign accountability partners – have them exchange phone numbers and prayer requests

COVENANT

Pass around the covenant; each person is to take two copies. Everyone should have gotten a copy emailed to them, so they should be ready to sign. Don't put any pressure on anyone, but in order for someone to continue they will need to agree to be bound by the covenant. Have them sign both copies and hand one back into you, the leader. File these copies with the other paperwork for this session.

SIGNUP SHEETS (HOST, PROJECT, REFRESHMENTS, REFORMED PERSPECTIVE,

There are three signup sheets to pass around, 1) Host signup sheet, 2) Refreshment signup sheet, and 3) Reformed Perspective signup sheet. Let people know that there will be other assignments and opportunities to volunteer as we go through the 40 days. Make sure that all assignments for week two are taken.

ASSIGN ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERS

1. Make sure there is the correct number of slips for those present.

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2. Pass around the hat (or other container) and ask each man to pick one of the blue slips, and each woman to pick one of the pink slips. If there is an uneven number of either place the extra slip you prepared into the hat. That way one group will have three members.
3. Have them find the person who has the same number that they have. This is their accountability partner.
4. Ask them to spread out, exchange phone numbers, and share one item that the other person can be praying for.
5. Explain that when they are finished they are released to refreshments.

8:15 PM (10 MINUTES) BREAK/REFRESHMENTS

LEADERSHIP TIME

SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR LEADERSHIP TIME

- Curriculum sets
- Story board to brainstorm name of ministry

8:25 PM (35 MINUTES) MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TEAM TIME

- Purpose and goal for tonight's meeting
- Layout of Curriculum
- Name of Ministry

9:00 PM (2 HOURS) CLOSE

Discipleship Ministry Group Covenant

I agree and promise that with God's help I will:

1. Be faithful in my attendance
2. Arrive on time to the weekly meetings
3. Participate fully in the weekly meetings
4. Prepare for and lead one 10 minute segment of a group meeting (signup sheets will be available the first meeting)
5. When I am not able to attend the weekly meetings (see date/dates below) I will listen to the meeting on line and download the worksheets and homework assignments from <http://fpc.growthclass.org/Pilot>
6. Read and study the Scriptures daily (at least 15 minutes per day)
7. Fill out the Inductive Bible Study sheet during my Scripture Study
8. Pray daily—praying for my spiritual journey, for the others in this group, and for the leadership of this group and of First Presbyterian Church
9. Do all of the homework assignments unless, once I am given the full information about a specific assignment I feel the need to opt out of it. (An alternate agreed upon assignment will be given to me.)
10. Participate in the group project. (This will probably take place on a weekend and will take an hour or more. I will have the opportunity to give input into the plans for the group project.)
11. Contact my accountability partner once a week during the length of the program.
12. Seek to live my life as Christ would if he were me.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please list below the date or dates when you will not be able to attend the weekly meeting because of prior commitments.

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