

QTC556. How to make the Bible your 'hobby' - Part 2. 30 January 2025

How to make the Bible your 'hobby'. Part 2 - Do Some Digging | Malcolm Cox | Quiet Time Coaching Episode 556

Introduction

In this series, we explore how approaching our Bible study as a hobby can make all the difference.

1. Historical Context

It's one thing to know a verse in the Bible. But it's another thing to understand it in its historical and cultural context. Our enjoyment of Scripture is directly connected to our understanding of its background. It's the difference between 2-D and 3-D (or even virtual reality). It's the difference between outline drawings and photo-realistic colouring.

As an example, consider the parable of the Samaritan in Luke 10.25-37. If you don't know the background, it looks like a sweet story about a compassionate person. However, when you understand the historical background and the long-standing animosity between Jews and Samaritans, the story takes on an entirely different hue.

Getting to know the historical and cultural context can make Scripture come alive and feel more like a mystery to unravel.

Tip: Bible Dictionaries can help with digging. Here's a [link](https://www.ivpress.com/the-ivp-bible-dictionary-series) to some good examples from IVP: <https://www.ivpress.com/the-ivp-bible-dictionary-series>

2. Themes and Connections

The Scriptures are not a collection of standalone verses or isolated stories. They are all connected to God's big story. Some people think that grace is a New Testament idea. But it is not. It is all over the Old Testament if you know where to look. The book of Acts is inspiring, but it only makes sense when connected to the gospels. Revelation is much more inspiring when compared to the first few chapters of Genesis.

Or, take the theme of shalom (peace). Trace the existence of shalom in the garden, then how it was disrupted in the fall, offered to Israel through the law and covenants, prophesied by the prophets, revealed by Jesus, lived by the Christian community and anticipated in Revelation.

Studying themes and connections helps Scripture become more than just a collection of individual verses—it becomes a powerful, compelling story that draws you deeper into the heart of God.

Tip: Useful resources include "[The Bible Project](#)", "[How to Read the Bible Book by Book](#)" by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, "[The Bible Jesus Read](#)" by Philip Yancey.

Question

How do you feel about studying themes and looking into the historical background? Does it feel academic and dull? What would help you to feel excited about these ideas?

Suggestions

Take some time to think about the hobbies you enjoy. What is it about them that attracts you to them? Can you see any relevance for your own Bible study?

Conclusion

Next week, I will offer some further inspiration to help you make the Bible your hobby.

Your brother, Malcolm

Please add your comments on this week's topic. We learn best when we learn in community.

Do you have a question about teaching the Bible? Is it theological, technical, or practical? Please send me your questions or suggestions. Here's the email: malcolm@malcolmcox.org.

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By the way, this series was inspired by John Miles' video, which can be viewed at https://youtu.be/Jcll0RcUXo0?si=_d5QhLwOqk2k9cwG.