

CHRISTIANS BIBLE READING CHEAT SHEET

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

As you work through the text, note any questions you have.

Read the entire text for comprehension. Read again, this time marking:

- Key words
- Times, locations and people
- Repeated words, ideas and phrases
- Transition words (but, therefore, because, likewise, if/then ...)
- Lists
- Contrasts and comparisons
- Commands

Read again, marking major themes such as:

- Gospel Truths
- New Self / Identity
- The Great Commission
- The Great Commandment
- The Church
- Redemptive Promises
- "Types" of Jesus

Use the dictionary to look up key words, note appropriate meanings and related words.

Consult different translations of scripture.

Look up related cross-references.

INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

- What would the original hearers have thought?
- How does this passage fit within the greater story of the Bible? (Creation-Fall-Redemption-Restoration)
- Paraphrase: Rewrite the text in your own words.
- Consult reliable commentaries.

APPLICATION: HOW DOES THE TEXT CHANGE ME?

- What does this passage tell you about who God is?
- What does this passage tell you about your sin and need for a Savior?
- How can these truths transform your life today?
- Remember that all actions begin as thoughts and desires of the heart.
- How do these truths transform what you love, worship and value most?
- In turn, how will these renewed desires change the way you respond to God and others?

- Are there practical things God is leading you to do differently as your heart changes?
- What might these truths look like in action?
- Is the Holy Spirit bringing to mind specific people, circumstances, conversations or sins to mind for prayer, repentance or reconciliation?

If possible, discuss your process and what you're learning with a group of believers. Even the most mature believers have questions after studying the Bible in this way. Discussing themes, questions, observations and conclusions with can illuminate things you missed and challenge hidden biases.

GOSPEL TRUTHS:

What does the text say (explicitly or implicitly) about the gospel message? Look for statements about God's holiness, man's sin, redemption through Christ, and our future hope in the full restoration of creation.

NEW SELF / IDENTITY:

What does the text say about who we are in Christ, after we are filled with his Holy Spirit and living free from the penalty of sin? Often, this is seen in context of our "old self," in passages that compare and contrast qualities of a believer versus an unbeliever.

THE GREAT COMMISSION:

What does the text say about Jesus' command to go and make disciples of all nations? ([Matthew 28:16-20](#)) Where and how does this text encourage us to love our neighbor, witness to unbelievers, and help other believers mature in the faith?

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT:

What does the text say about loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength? ([Matthew 22:37](#)) What does this love look like and how do we obtain it?

THE CHURCH:

What does the text say about God's establishment of, purpose for, and mission for the church (globally and locally)? It's sometimes helpful to note where a passage is speaking to the church (general), the church (specific), or a believer (as an individual).

REDEMPTIVE PROMISES:

What does the text say about God's promises to us as redeemed followers of Jesus? What can we look forward to, be confident of, and have unchanging hope in? "TYPES" OF JESUS: How do the main characters or themes in the passage point back – or forward – to the person and work of Jesus? (As the Jesus Storybook Bible says, "Every story whispers His name.")

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