

**HOW TO READ THE BIBLE**



**MEETING**

**5**

step **1**

## START GROUP WITH PRAYER

step **2**

## FOLLOW UP

How did you do in abiding with the LORD? If you need, look back at your plan on page 19. Discuss with your group the struggles and successes you had in abiding with the LORD. It's okay to have struggled this time. It takes time to build a habit. Keep putting forth effort. Remember, when you come back next time, everyone needs to be green light. Do whatever it takes!

NAME	RYG	WHAT YOU DID	WHAT GOD DID
_____		_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

NAME	RYG	WHAT YOU DID	WHAT GOD DID
_____		_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

NAME	RYG	WHAT YOU DID	WHAT GOD DID
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NAME	RYG	WHAT YOU DID	WHAT GOD DID
_____		_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

# step 3

## HOW TO READ YOUR BIBLE

### THE CORE COMPETENCIES OF CHRIST – BEING FISHERS OF MEN

A disciple-maker is two things. First, a disciple-maker is a follower. So far, your R3 group has hopefully challenged you to take greater steps of obedience in your walk with Christ. This will continue to happen throughout your R3 experience, as long as you are committed to taking risks. Yet a disciple-maker is not just a follower. A disciple-maker is a fisher as well. This definition is best seen in Matthew 4:19, as Jesus beckoned Peter and Andrew to become his disciples. “And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.’” What does it mean to be a fisher of men? It carries the idea of not just learning how to follow Christ, but being able to train other people how to follow Christ the way you do. So, a disciple-maker is a follower, one who grows in obedience to Christ. A disciple-maker is also a fisher, one who teaches others how to follow Christ the way he/she does. The goal of R3 is to help you become both of these things.

Let’s start talking about how to be a fisher. If you study the life of Jesus, you will find that he trained his disciples to be fishers of men. He taught them certain competencies that were critical to their ability to follow him. But he didn’t just teach them. He also practiced with them. In fact, he trained them so well that his disciples would be able to go out and train others. We’ve identified four essential competencies from the gospel that Jesus taught his disciples. We call them the Core Competencies of Christ. He taught them (1) how to understand his Word, (2) how to pray, (3) how to serve, and (4) how to share the gospel. Then, they practiced these things over and over. Thus, if you are going to be a fisher of men (or women), you will need to know these competencies so well **that you could train someone else**. And that’s exactly what you are going to do together! Throughout this R3 Group, there will be different meetings that cover these competencies. Today, we are going to cover the first competency: How to Read Your Bible.

Jesus taught his disciples how to understand his parables (Mark 4:10-12) and the Old Testament (Matthew 5-7, Luke 24:32). Put that with the New Testament writings, and you have the Bible. God’s Word alone has the power to transform and mold the human heart. Therefore, it is CRITICAL that we are able to read and understand God’s Word. There is no such thing as a mature Christian who does not read their Bible. Before we can go out and change the world, we have to let God’s Word change our heart. You may already know how to read your Bible really well, but remember you have to be able to train someone else in it. Get familiar with the process you are about to see. This competency takes the most practice, so we are starting up front in your R3 Group.

R3 was named after the three main relationships in which we take gospel risks: God, those who know Christ, and those who need to know Christ (3 Relationships → R3). The method you are about to learn for reading your Bible also has 3 R’s: Read, Reflect, Risk (RRR). Go ahead; say it like a pirate...RRRRRR! So, there is NO WAY you should forget RRR after being in an R3 group! Below we are going to walk through what it means to Read, Reflect, and Risk when you are studying God’s Word. Next, you will practice it alone. Finally, in your next R3 meeting, you will practice it together. Our prayer is that this tool will help you (and others) better abide with God daily. Now, let’s start working through this process.

## READ

It seems unnecessary to have a step called Read. It is so rudimentary and obvious. Why even include it as a step? Yet, for reasons that will be explained in the next section (Table 2 below), it is very important that we first observe the passage before we jump to any conclusions. The main goal of Read is to answer this question: What do I see? We accomplish this by doing three things.

## 1. Read the passage in its entirety.

This is the obvious step. We must start by reading the entire passage we are looking at, but we aren't finished here. There is still work to be done.

## 2. Make a few observations for each verse.

Next, we want to write down what we notice in the passage. These little things we notice are called observations. This is a simple, but crucial, step in reading the Bible. The best Bible scholars are the best at what they do because they do this step very well. What counts as an observation? Anything you notice within the verse can count, but a great place to start is asking two questions:

- “What does this verse tell me about God?”
- “What does this verse tell me about man?”

Let's look at the verses below and make some observations.

*<sup>4</sup>But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—  
-Ephesians 2:4-5*

## OBSERVATIONS

### V4

- The “but” contrasts with the previous statement.
- God is the subject of this sentence.
- **God is rich in mercy.**
- **God loved us with a great love.**
- The reason God made us alive was because of the great love with which he loved us.

### V5

- **We were dead in our trespasses.**
- **God made us alive.**
- **We were made alive with Christ.**
- **We have been saved by grace.**
- “Alive” contrasts with “dead”.

There are many more observations that could be made about these verses, but we learn quite a lot with these 10. When you do this on your own, you don't need this many. The bolded observations tell us something about God or man. The other observations are given to show you that there are many different kinds of observations, but we won't get into those today. For more observation skills, check out the videos mentioned in the Reflect section.

There is an important distinction to make between an observation and a conclusion. An observation answers the question, “What do I see?” whereas, a conclusion answers the question “What does it mean?” The goal at this point is just to write out what we see. Notice how none of the observations above advance Paul's thought whatsoever. We will delve into meaning when we Reflect. Let's look at the difference between the two. Take the 1st observation under verse 5 above: “We were dead in our trespasses”. This simply repeats what is seen in the verse. A conclusion would be “we were *spiritually* dead in our trespasses”. This advanced Paul's thought beyond what is seen in these verses. Now in this case, it is absolutely correct. Yet if it were incorrect, it could lead to a mistake when we move into the Reflect step. So, in the Read step, we are only trying to write down what we see. It helps us get a better understanding of the passage before moving forward. Eventually, with enough practice, noticing what is in a passage will become second nature and you won't need to write all this down.

### 3. Write down any questions you might have.

The last thing we do in the Read step is write down any questions we have. There may be some passages where you don't have any questions, and that is totally fine. These questions are the who, what, when, where, why, and how questions that come naturally as you read the passage. We will take these questions and try and answer them in the Reflect step. Below are a couple of example questions from Ephesians 2:4-5.

- What does it mean that we were dead in our trespasses?
- How did God make us alive?

## REFLECT

If you notice, we don't go straight from reading the Bible to applying it to our life. It is not Read-Risk. Instead, we add this middle step: Reflect. Why? With most other instructions in life, we read it and then we do it. As a young boy, when my dad told me to "Get ready!" in the morning, I would shower, get dressed, brush my teeth, and sometimes apply deodorant. This is because I understood his command in my context. I didn't have to reflect, because I knew exactly what my dad intended me to do. Yet if I am a soldier on the battlefield and my commander shouts "Get ready!", do I start brushing my teeth? Certainly not! If you came to my air-conditioned house and said, "I need a glass of water", I would calmly proceed to comply. Now, if you came to me in the middle of the desert and said the same thing, there would be nothing calm about my response. So, it is clear that the same words can have different meanings depending on the context in which they are spoken.

COMMAND	MEANING #1	MEANING #2
"Get ready."	Prepare for school.	Prepare for battle!
"Give me a glass of water."	I am thirsty.	I am dying of thirst!

Table 1: Meaning is Determined by Context

When the authors of the Bible (under the inspiration of the Divine Author) wrote the Bible, they only had one intended meaning. This means that when the Bible gives us a command, there is only ONE truth they are trying to convey. I might apply that truth differently to my life than you do to yours, but that truth is the same in the past, present, and future. Yet the Bible was written 2,000 years ago on the opposite side of the world to the people of that day. Do you think it is fair to assume that their context was a little different than ours? People in the past, who failed to read the Bible in its context, justified horrible things using the Bible (i.e. slavery in America). This is so important. Still not convinced? The table on the next page shows the differences between how our modern world and the ancient world read the same words of the Bible.

PASSAGE	WHAT AN AMERICAN HEARS	OUR CONTEXT	INTENDED MEANING	THEIR CONTEXT	HOW IT WOULD SOUND TODAY
<p><i>“For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head.”</i> 1 Cor. 11:6</p>	<p>Paul is trying to control womens hairstyles &amp; what they wear. What a chauvinist!</p>	<p>Our society is hyper-sensitive to the issues of gender equality.</p>	<p>A Christian wife should not convey that she is unmarried or a prostitute.</p>	<p>In that day, a woman who didn't cover her head announced her sexual availability. Long hair was seen as a sexual object, reserved only for her husband. In the city of Corinth, prostitution was extremely common. A prostitute wore no head covering and had short hair. Bottom line: a wife who did these things appeared immoral in that time.</p>	<p>Wives, don't take your wedding ring off when you go in public.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Ladies, don't dress like a prostitute.</p>
<p><i>“You shall not make any cuts on your body for the dead or tattoo yourselves: I am the Lord.”</i> Lev 19:28</p>	<p>God doesn't want people to get tattoos.</p>	<p>All kinds of people get tattoos in America. The vast majority do not get tattoos to appease or worship their god.</p>	<p>As the nation of Israel, avoid pagan practices that characterized the Canaanites.</p>	<p>God had called the nation of Israel to look different than the rest of the world. He gave them the Mosaic Law to explain how they were to be different. The Canaanites were wicked people who occupied the land of Israel before Israel got there. They worshipped many gods, but Israel was to worship only the true God. This meant they could not associate themselves with the worship of false gods.</p>	<p>This command does not apply to us today. We are not under the Mosaic Law. It's okay to have a tattoo.</p>
<p>A husband speaking to his wife: <i>“Your belly is a heap of wheat surrounded by lilies.”</i> Song of Solomon 7:2b</p>	<p>This guy has a death wish. Your wife's belly is not a heap of anything!</p>	<p>Most of us are not farmers. A heap of wheat seems like a negative image. It is not a romantic term! You use that to feed cattle!</p>	<p>Your stomach is soft and touchable.</p>	<p>Israel was an agrarian society. Most people were farmers. Lots of grain was a sign of prosperity. After harvest, grain would be threshed into a heap. This heap was soft enough to fall asleep on (see Ruth 3:7).</p>	<p>You are as soft as silk, and I am at rest when I am with you.</p>

Table 2: The Need for Reflection

## 1. Answer your questions using the surrounding context.

When you are trying to determine what a word, phrase, or idea means within a passage, something you can do is read the verses that are before and after your passage. The goal of our reflection is to get into the author's head. By doing this, we are able to trace the logic of the author. Remember, we want to know what he intended the passage to mean. Then we can determine what it would sound like today. Let's look at my question from Ephesians 2:4-5: "What does it mean to be dead in our trespasses?" Well, context really helps us out here. In 1:1, we learn that Paul is talking to Christians who are in Ephesus. In 2:1, Paul says "you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked". From this, we learn that this death was in their past. They were dead, but they are no longer. Is Paul describing God physically raising people from the dead here? The answer is no because physically dead people don't do anything. In verses 2:2-3, these dead people are doing actions (walking, following, and carrying). Thus, if we put this together verses 2:1-5, we can conclude that Paul is probably not talking about being physically dead. If it's not a physical death, then what is Paul talking about? The next tool will help with that!

## 2. Cross-reference to help understand a word or phrase.

If you want to understand what a word means in the Bible, the best place to look for a definition is the Bible, not a dictionary. The dictionary is going to define terms in our context, but the Bible is going to shed light on how a word or phrase was used back then. In our case, as we try to understand what "dead" means in Eph. 2:5, we can work smart not hard. Instead of searching the whole Bible, it may be helpful to just look at how the New Testament uses the word "dead". Or, better yet, how Paul uses it. You might be thinking, "That is all well and good, but I don't have time to read all of Paul to find out where he uses a word!" Do not worry! There is a powerful tool we can use called the **Blue Letter Bible**. You can access this tool at [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org), or you can download the app. After choosing ESV as your preferred translation (your answers won't match mine unless you do), follow these steps:

1. Type “dead” in the search bar.
  - a. If you are on the website, it is the first thing you see.
  - b. If you are using the app, click the Magnifying Glass (fourth icon from the left on the bottom).
2. Change your Search Range to “Pauline Epistles” (this is everything Paul wrote).
  - a. If you are on the website, click on “Adv. Options”.
  - b. If you are using the app, click on “Search Range”.
3. Perform the Search.

If you left the search range as The Whole Bible, there would have been 307 occurrences to wade through. But, when you refined your search to just Paul’s writings, there are only 44 occurrences. This is much easier! From a *quick* scan of these verses, two definitions arise:

1. It most often refers to the physical death of the body.
2. It sometimes refers to a hopeless spiritual separation.

Romans 6:11 and Colossians 2:13 were especially helpful in coming up with this second definition. It was evident from Ephesians 2:1-5 that a physical death was not being described. In reading the surrounding context of these new verses, it became apparent that Paul is describing the human condition. All of us are sinful. We are enslaved to sin, to do what is contrary to the things of God. This separates us from God and destines us for hell. Paul uses the word “dead” to depict our spiritual inability to rescue ourselves. Dead people can’t save themselves. They can’t do anything. They are dead. Thus, there is a hopelessness to our dilemma. We needed a savior. Paul in verse 5, says that God has made us alive with Christ by grace. God sent Jesus to be that Savior. This matches perfectly with what is seen in Ephesians chapter 1 (as you will see in Step 4).

This is how you can make use of a cross-reference. It is a powerful tool, especially when you get to a tricky passage. There are more advanced skills you can learn and practice for both Read and Reflect. Each of these skills have been explained in a video for you to practice on your own time, if you’d like. These videos provide instruction, an example, and a passage for you to practice that skill on (with answers!), just like you will have in Steps 4 and 5. These videos can be accessed by clicking on the link, “Advanced Bible Study Tools” in the online content of Meeting 5. If you keep up with INFUSE, which you will be encouraged to do at the end of this meeting, these videos will pop up periodically on there as well.

## RISK

After reading and reflecting, you now have a much better grasp on what the Bible is trying to teach you. The goal of Bible Study was never to just gain more knowledge. The goal and intention of reading God’s Word is to leave changed. We don’t just gather God’s commands in our brain and do nothing with them. We respond to the Truth we have just encountered by taking a personal risk to bring the gospel to every relationship. So, we now want to apply the passage we have just read to our relationship with God, with other believers, or with the lost. This isn’t an easy task. Fortunately, you are in an R3 Group. This group is all about coming up with and taking personal risks. You are well on your way toward taking great risks! But since you are only on your 5th meeting, let me give you a basic guide towards turning God’s Truth into your risk.

To come up with a risk from your reading of Scripture, remember SPEC. SPEC represents 4 questions you can ask to extract some marching orders for you to follow. They aren’t perfect, nor are they the only questions you can ask, but they will certainly get you started in the right direction. The four questions are:

- Is there a **SIN** to avoid?
- Is there a **PROMISE** to trust?
- Is there an **EXAMPLE** to follow?
- Is there a **COMMAND** to obey?

This is simple enough. Let's apply SPEC to **Ephesians 2:4-5**.

Is there a <b>SIN</b> to avoid? • N/A	Is there a <b>PROMISE</b> to trust? • N/A
Is there an <b>EXAMPLE</b> to follow? • God loved me when I was his enemy. I can follow this example by loving those who don't always love me back.	Is there a <b>COMMAND</b> to obey? • N/A

## HOW TO READ THE BIBLE – RECAP

**READ** WHAT DO I SEE?

**REFLECT** WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

**RISK** HOW DO I RESPOND?

step **4**

# PRACTICE READING YOUR BIBLE ALONE

This step is to be completed by each R3 member before they come to Meeting 5.

So now you have some tools to read and better understand the Bible! It's time for you to practice. You are about to go through the RRR process for Ephesians 1:3-14. I have done this process and have shown my work in Appendix C. Try going through the whole process yourself before looking at my notes. There are many possible answers, especially for the Read section, so don't feel the need to match what I have. Use my work as a reference if you get stuck.

## Read

Let's get started. Start by reading the entire passage below.

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup>even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup>he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup>which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup>making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ <sup>10</sup>as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

<sup>11</sup>In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, <sup>12</sup>so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup>In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup>who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

-Ephesians 1:3-14 (ESV)

Do you see why it is important to read the whole passage?! Verses 3-10 are one sentence in the original Greek, making it the longest sentence in the entire Bible. If you don't read the whole passage carefully, you will get lost in all the pronouns and clauses. Making observations REALLY helps us get a handle on this passage.

So, what do you see in the verses above? **Since we are just starting off, only write down what you learn about God and man.** Don't worry about getting everything. Just try and get at least one or two per verse. Reference my observations if you get stuck.

## Observations

V3-4
V5-6
V7-8
V9-10
V11-12
V13-14

**GREAT JOB!** Did slowing down your reading and jotting down some observations help you better understand this long passage? As you read through this passage, what questions did you come up with? I have given you a few here (again, the rest of mine can be seen in Appendix C). If you were unsure of who a pronoun was referring to or how some of the pieces of this long sentence fit together, include these as questions.

1. What does it mean to be predestined for adoption?
2. What does redemption mean?

## REFLECT

Now that you have a better handle on the passage, do your best to answer your questions in context. First read 1:1-2 and 1:14-2:10. Give it your best shot. Remember, we are just starting here. Compare with my answers after you give it a swing in the space below.

Let's see where else Paul uses the word "redemption". Let's practice our cross-referencing skill. Pull up Blue Letter Bible on your phone or computer. Set your version to ESV. Type in "**redemption**" into the search bar. Set your range to be The Pauline Epistles. Execute the search. If you did it right, you should have 6 occurrences of redemption, all from the writings of Paul. If you didn't, you would have 26 occurrences.

What did you learn about the meaning of redemption from looking at other passages? How does Paul use this word?

Using this search and the surrounding context of Ephesians 1, what do you think redemption means in 1:7?

## RISK

Come up with a risk to follow by answering SPEC for this passage.

Is there a <b>SIN</b> to avoid?	Is there a <b>PROMISE</b> to trust?
Is there an <b>EXAMPLE</b> to follow?	Is there a <b>COMMAND</b> to obey?

What is one risk that you could take away from this passage? Take one principle (something you ought to do) from SPEC, and make it something you want to do. Then answer WHEN and HOW you want to do it, just like you do in a normal R3 meeting.

NAME	What You Want to Do	Make It Measurable
_____	_____	When: _____
_____	_____	How: _____
_____	_____	_____

**GREAT JOB!** This is a lot to take in for one sitting! It might seem overwhelming, but a lot of these steps are common sense and they will become second nature with practice. As you set out to stick to your plan for abiding with God, try applying RRR to your daily reading of Scripture. It is a tool to use when you need it. You don't need to do a cross-reference search for each passage.

Yet do be familiar with these tools. Be so familiar with them that you could teach someone else. This is exactly what you will be doing when you become an R3 Leader!



## PRACTICE READING YOUR BIBLE TOGETHER

*This step is to be completed during Meeting 5 as an R3 Group.*

### DISCUSSION

- Start the group off by discussing what you thought while reading the Read, Reflect, Risk process (Step 3).
- How did your solo practice go (Step 4)? Was it helpful for you?
- Were you able to implement RRR into your daily reading of Scripture?

**Read** Now we are going to practice RRR again as an R3 Group. Go through James 1:19-27. Ephesians 1:3-10 was heavy on theology, but this passage is very practical. There will be a lot of commands. Compare your work with mine, which is found in Appendix C.

<sup>19</sup>Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; <sup>20</sup>for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. <sup>21</sup>Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

<sup>22</sup>But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup>For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup>For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. <sup>25</sup>But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

<sup>26</sup>If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup>Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

*James 1:19-27 (ESV)*

What do you learn about God in the verses above? About man? Try and get at least one or two per verse. Reference my observations if you get stuck.

### Observations

V19-20
V21-22
V23-25
V26-27

As you read through this passage, what questions did you have? Write these down in the space below.

## Reflect

Now that you have a better handle on the passage, do your best to answer your questions *in context*. See my answers if needed.

Let's see where else the Bible uses the word "meekness" by practicing our cross-referencing skill. Pull up Blue Letter Bible on your phone. Type "meek" into the search bar. Set your range to be The Whole Bible. Execute the search. If you did it right, you should have 5 occurrences of meekness in the Bible.

Have each member of the group look at one of the other 4 verses where meekness is used. What does meekness mean in these verses? You may have to read the verses before and after them to get the context.

Which of these 4 is going to be the most helpful in determining the meaning of meekness in James 1:21? Why?

What do you think the meaning of meekness in James 1:21 is?

## Risk

Come up with a risk to follow by answering SPEC for this passage.

Is there a <b>SIN</b> to avoid?	Is there a <b>PROMISE</b> to trust?
Is there an <b>EXAMPLE</b> to follow?	Is there a <b>COMMAND</b> to obey?

What is one risk that you could take away from this passage? Take one principle (something you ought to do) from SPEC, and make it something you want to do. Then, answer WHEN and HOW you want to do it. If you want to, add this on top of your pledged risk in Step 6.

NAME	What I Want to Do	Make It Measurable
_____	_____	When: _____
	_____	How: _____
	_____	_____

## Advanced Bible Study Skills

As mentioned in Step 3, there are many more skills you can learn for how to better Read and Reflect. These are simply tools in your belt to pull out when you need them. Each skill was put into a video and can be accessed under Meeting 5's online material. If you want to do them all, it is recommended that you go in order. Our prayer is that they will better enrich your time of abiding with the Lord.



## RISK TIME

For this meeting, everyone's risk is going to be the same. **You are going to continue to abide with God in the Word and through prayer according to the plan you developed in Meeting 4.** Since practice makes permanent, **you are going to apply RRR to your time in the Word.** You don't have to do every step (like going to Blue Letter Bible or writing down all your questions) each time, but think through Read, Reflect, and Risk for each passage you cover.

If that sounds too complicated or confusing to you, we have something at The Heights that will help you better Read, Reflect, and Risk. It is called **INFUSE**. Each day, INFUSE goes through a passage using the Read, Reflect, Risk method. You can open it up in The Heights App each day or you can have everything emailed to you (recommended). You can subscribe to the INFUSE emailing list by clicking on the appropriate link provided in Meeting 5's online material.

**Remember, everyone must be green light** on this risk! Get serious about this! If you don't have time, make time. Abiding with God is the only fuel that sustains us on mission.

Practice RRR by doing INFUSE for the next two weeks.

R



## END GROUP WITH PRAYER

## NEXT MEETING OBJECTIVES

You have nothing else to complete before next week besides your risk.

# APPENDIX C ANDREW'S ANSWERS FOR MEETING 5

## step 4

### EPHESIANS 1:3-10

#### READ MY OBSERVATIONS

##### V3-4

- God the Father is the God of Jesus Christ.
- God the Father is the Father of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus Christ is our Lord.
- God the Father has blessed us in Christ
- God the Father has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm.
- God the Father chose us in him.
- God the Father chose us before the foundation of the world.
- We were blessed with spiritual blessings so that we should be holy and blameless before God

##### V5-6

- God the Father predestined us in love.
- God the Father predestined us for adoption to himself as sons.
- God the Father predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ.
- God the Father predestined us according to the purpose of his will.
- Our predestination for adoption is to the praise of God the Father's glorious grace.
- We have been blessed with God's glorious grace in the beloved.

##### V7-8

- In the Beloved, we have redemption.
- We have redemption through the Beloved's blood.
- Our redemption is the forgiveness of our trespasses.
- Our redemption is according to the riches of God the Father's grace.
- God the Father lavished grace upon us.
- God the Father lavished grace in all wisdom and insight.

##### V9-10

- God the Father made known the mystery of his will when he lavished grace upon us.
- God the Father made known the mystery of his will according to his purpose.
- God the Father set forth his purpose in Christ.
- God the Father set forth his purpose as a plan for the fullness of time.
- God the Father's plan was to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

##### V11-12

- We have obtained an inheritance in God the Father.
- We have obtained an inheritance because we have been predestined.
- We were predestined according to the purpose of God the Father.
- God the Father works all things according to the counsel of his will.
- The first to hope in Christ received an inheritance for the praise of God the Father's glory.

##### V13-14

- We were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit in God the Father.
- We were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when we heard the word of truth and believed in God the Father.
- The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance.
- The Holy Spirit is our guarantee until we acquire possession of our inheritance.
- The Holy Spirit is our guarantee to the praise of his glory.

## MY QUESTIONS

1. What is every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm?
2. What does it mean that we were chosen in him before the foundation of the world?
3. What does it mean to be predestined for adoption?
4. What does redemption mean?
5. Who is the Beloved?
6. What is our inheritance?
7. What does it mean to be sealed by the promised Holy Spirit?
8. How is the Holy Spirit the guarantee of our inheritance?
9. When will we acquire possession of our inheritance?

## REFLECT

### MY ANSWERS (CO-RELATE IN NUMBER TO MY QUESTIONS)

1. I don't know what all of them are, but Paul mentions many of them in this passage. God choosing us, predestining us for adoption, redeeming us through Christ, and sealing us with the Holy Spirit are examples of these spiritual blessings.
2. God knew we were going to be saved before he created the world.
3. God knew that he was going to send Jesus to the Cross before he created the world. Because of sin, all of us were destined without hope for hell (cf Eph 2:1-4). God predestining us does not mean that Christ only died for a certain portion of the human race (some refer to this portion as the elect). Christ's death and resurrection was for all mankind (2 Cor 5:15). God does not delight when the wicked die (Ezk 18:23, 32), but rather he desired for all men to be saved (1 Tim 2:4). Our predestination then is God making a way for us be rescued. Without Christ, all of us are justly doomed to hell. Praise be to God that he sent his one and only Son!
4. See my Cross-Reference search below for this answer.
5. The Beloved is Jesus. Jesus is the one who shed his blood. It's a little confusing with the pronouns. If replaced the pronouns with what they represent, verse 7 would read this way, "In God the Father, believers have redemption through Jesus' blood, the forgiveness of believers' trespasses, according to the riches of God the Father's grace".
6. This is another word that would be great to cross-reference. A quick search on Blue Letter Bible, this time using the whole New Testament as the search range, turned up 17 uses. From these usages, we see that it is often used to describe what is passed down to the children after a parent dies. This however is not how it is used in v11. Inheritance is also used to refer to what we shall receive in heaven through our faith in Christ (1 Pet 1:3-5). It is the full realization of our salvation. Theologians call this glorification. We are made perfect, and we exist in a perfect place with God for eternity. This definition fits very well with the context of Ephesians 1.
7. The Holy Spirit is the covenant seal of our assured inheritance. When we got saved, the Holy Spirit indwelt us. He does many things, but one of his jobs is to testify to us that we no longer belong to this world but rather we belong to the Kingdom of God.
8. The Holy Spirit was placed in us as God's down payment. It demonstrates his intention to bring us into heaven, which will happen for all who believe through faith in Christ.
9. Usually, the one who dies gives away an inheritance to someone who remains. Ironically in Ephesians 1:11, the one who dies receives the inheritance. When we die, we will receive this inheritance.

# MY CROSS-REFERENCE FOR "REDEMPTION"

Here is what I found:

There are six times that Paul uses "redemption" in his writings. This redemption is in Christ Jesus (Rom 3:24, 1 Cor 1:30, Col 1:14). This redemption happened when Christ died on the Cross and rose from the grave. This redemption was of our bodies (Romans 8:23). Romans 3:24 makes redemption synonymous with justification.

This is what it means in 1:7:

Justification is a term that Paul uses a lot. When Paul uses it, he is referring to what happens when a person believes that Jesus is their Lord and Savior. It is a legal term. To be justified is to go from a position of accusation to a position of righteousness. We all stood accused before God because of our sin. The punishment levied against us was the wrath of God. When Christ died on the Cross, the Great Exchange took place. He took the punishment for our sin, and we received his righteousness. We did nothing to deserve it, that is why it is called grace.

Redemption has a very similar meaning. Instead of being a legal term, this is a marketplace term. To redeem something is to pay the price to purchase it. On the Cross, Christ purchased our salvation. The cost was his blood. Redemption in 1:7 is referring to Christ purchasing our salvation on the Cross through his blood. This salvation is received through faith.

## RISK MY SPEC CHART

<p>Is there a <b>SIN</b> to avoid?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	<p>Is there a <b>PROMISE</b> to trust?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God has given me all I need to be holy and blameless before him.</li> <li>• I have been adopted into the family of God.</li> <li>• <b>My right-standing before God is no longer determined by what I do because Christ redeemed me at the cost of his own blood.</b></li> <li>• The Holy Spirit dwells in me and reminds me that I am going to heaven when I die.</li> </ul>
<p>Is there an <b>EXAMPLE</b> to follow?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	<p>Is there a <b>COMMAND</b> to obey?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>

This passage is HEAVY on theology. The commands to obey and sins to avoid don't start coming until later in Ephesians. But this means there are many promises to trust. The bolded principle is the one I am going to choose to take a risk on. This will be a risk in my relationship with God.

# MY RISK:

NAME

Andrew

WHAT YOU WANT TO DO

Trust that God's love for me is not dependent on my actions.

MAKE IT MEASURABLE

**WHEN:** When I sin

**HOW:** By approaching God as a Father, not a Judge



**JAMES 1:19-27**

**READ MY OBSERVATIONS**

**V19-20**

- The beloved brothers (man) are to know this.\*
- The beloved brothers are to let every person be quick to hear.
- The beloved brothers are to let every person be slow to speak.
- The beloved brothers are to let every person be slow to anger.
- James does not say "never be angry".
- Man's anger does not produce the righteousness of God.

**V21-22**

- The "therefore" is an inferential conjunction that connects the previous sentence with the following sentence. Verse 21 makes a conclusion based off of verse 19-20. (See video on conjunctions for more information.)
- The beloved brothers are to put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness.
- The beloved brothers are to receive the implanted word with meekness.
- The implanted is able to save souls.
- The "but" is a contrastive conjunction, contrasting what precedes with what follows.
- The beloved brothers are to be doers of the word.
- If the beloved brothers are only hearers of the word, then they deceive themselves.

**V23-25**

- "For" in v23 & v24 are explanatory conjunctions, answering why the command in verse 22 needs to be obeyed.
- If a man only hears the word, it's like forgetting what you look like after looking in a mirror.
- "But" in v25 contrasts what a hearer is like with what a doer is like.
- If a man is a doer of the word, he will be blessed in his doing.
- The law mentioned is perfect and a source of liberty.
- A doer is one who looks and perseveres.
- A hearer forgets.
- A doer acts.
- There are three distinct responses to the Word of God: hearing (19b-20), receiving (21), obeying (22-25)

**V26-27**

- A man who doesn't bridle his tongue can think he is religious.
- This kind of man deceives his heart.
- This kind of man's religion is worthless.
- There is a religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father.
- Pure religion for the beloved brothers is to visit orphan and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

## MY QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean that a man's anger does not produce the righteousness of God?
2. What does meekness mean?
3. What is the implanted word?
4. How does the implanted word save souls?
5. Why is it that someone who is a hearer only deceives himself?
6. What is the perfect law?
7. How will a doer be blessed?
8. Why is a man who can't bridle his tongue deceiving himself?
9. What does it mean to visit orphans and widows in our day?
10. What does it mean to keep oneself unstained from the world?

## REFLECT

### MY ANSWERS (CO-RELATE IN NUMBER TO MY QUESTIONS)

1. A man's anger is not consistent with God's character if it is not slow. Does this mean there is no kind of righteous anger? Yes and no. Yes, righteous anger exists. Yet righteous anger looks nothing like what we think it should. The Christian response should never be to fight fire with fire. Notice James doesn't say never be angry. In the Old Testament, when God is described as "slow to anger", the literal translation is "God has a long nose." When you get angry, your face starts to turn red. It starts with your cheeks, goes throughout your face, but the last thing to turn red is your nose. It's like God is saying he won't act on his frustration until it gets to that point. Righteous anger looks a lot more like overcoming good with evil (Rom 12:14-21). Righteous anger produces an earnestness to bless, seek peace, and trust that God will avenge ALL wrongdoings.
2. See My Cross-Reference below.
3. The word is God's Word. The implanted word is God's Word which has been written on one's heart. This is not referring to the gospel (see iv).
4. Whenever you see the word "save" in the Bible, you must always ask, "Saved from what?". If you assume that all uses of "save" mean salvation that leads to heaven, you will be wrong more often than not. Context tells us that James' audience already believes in Christ (1:1-2, and use of "brothers" or "beloved brothers" throughout the book). Once a believer is justified, they don't need to be justified (or saved unto heaven) again. Thus, a different kind of deliverance is taking place here. By obeying God's Word, believers can preserve (save) themselves from the consequences of their sin. According to Constable, "The ultimate consequence of sin for a believer is premature physical (not eternal) death (cf. 1:15; 5:19-20; Prov. 10:27; 11:19; 12:28; 13:14; 19:16; Rom. 8:13; 1 Cor. 11:30; 1 John 5:16). This fits the context very well, for 1:12 speaks of persevering in obedience to God in order to obtain a crown of life. Disobedience leads to the opposite.
5. James carries a strong tone against hypocrisy. He asserts time and time again that a believer's knowledge should be matched by his obedience to that knowledge. Therefore, one who thinks God is pleased with him for simply hearing God's Word is a hypocrite and he is self-deceived.
6. Constable states that "the perfect law to which James referred is the revelation of God's will contained in Scripture." It is not the Mosaic Law. Believers in Christ are members of a new Covenant, not the Old Mosaic Covenant (Hebrews 8:6-7, 13). We know this because liberty is used to describe it. This falls in line with the "law of Christ" which gives liberty according to Paul (Gal 5:1, 6:2, cf. Matt 11:30)
7. This definitely doesn't mean obedience yields to earthly prosperity. Jesus' promises persecution in this life for obedience (John 15:18-20). James also infers that believers will go through trials of many kinds (1:3, he says "when" not "if"). Blessings for obedience will be rewarded in the next life undoubtedly. God will bless us in this life for our obedience, but the manner in which that blessing comes remains mysterious. What can be said is that this blessing will entail a greater and deeper relationship with Him.
8. This is an example of a self-deceived hypocrite. See answer v.
9. Constable writes, "Taking care of 'orphans' and 'widows' (conduct) is a duty that lies close to the heart of God (cf. Exod. 22:22-24; Deut. 10:18; Isa. 1:17; Jer. 5:28; Ezek. 22:7; Zech. 7:10)." In that day, there was no government plan to financially support the poor. The needy were absolutely dependent on the community. Also in that day, a woman's financial stability was dependent on her husband (Ruth 3:1). If a woman wanted a stable future, she needed a husband. Therefore, a widow would die unless she received the generosity of the community or remarried. It was the same with orphans. It is hard to fathom in our day a widow or orphan dying of starvation. The command is to take care of those who have nothing to offer you in return. True religion is caring looking after the marginalized. In our day, orphans, widows, single-parents, foster kids, the poor, prisoners, etc. could fall under this category.
10. The reasonable response to the justification we have received by the blood of Christ is to not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but rather we are to be transformed by the renewing of our mind to better understand God's will. This is our proper form of worship (Rom 12:1-2).

# MY CROSS-REFERENCE FOR "MEEKNESS"

Here is what I found from each verse:

VERSE	USAGE OF "MEEKNESS"
<b>PS 45:4</b>	Meekness is something that a king should fight for, along with truth and righteousness. It is very positive, and the fact that the king is fighting denotes strength not weakness.
<b>2 COR 10:1</b>	Paul compares this with gentleness. Humility is seen in the same verse as well. Meekness was an attribute of Christ.
<b>COL 3:12</b>	Meekness is something that ought to be put on by God's people. It is associated with compassion, kindness, humility, and patience. This is a very positive attribute. It stands right next to humility. This means Paul is either distinguishing humility and meekness or he is emphasizing the importance of humility by repeating it with a synonym.
<b>JAMES 3:13</b>	The manner in which believers are to conduct themselves is in the meekness of wisdom. Thus, it is wise to be meek. 3:13 is contrasted with 3:14. So, we see that "bitter jealousy" and "selfish ambition" are antonyms of meekness. 3:15 states that meekness is from heavenly wisdom, but jealousy and ambition are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic.

**Which of these 4 is going to be the most helpful in determining the meaning of meekness in James 1:21? Why?**

James 3:13 is the most helpful verse amongst those listed above. How James uses the word meekness may differ from another author (i.e. Paul). If we want to know how James uses it, the most helpful usages will be contained in his writings.

**What do you think the meaning of meekness in James 1:21 is?**

Meekness can be defined as synonymous to humility. Other translations use humility here (NIV, NLT, NET, NASB). Humility is not a weak adjective. It is not thinking of oneself less. It can be defined as aggression for God. Pride is aggression for self. This is why James 4:6 says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." To be meek is to use your strength to pursue to God's will, not your own. The unselfishness of meekness perfectly contrasts the bitter jealousy and selfish ambition seen in 3:14.

<p>Is there a <b>SIN</b> to avoid?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We should not be impatient or ungodly with our anger.</li> <li>• We are not to be hearers only of the Word of God.</li> <li>• I should not speak without filtering my words through God's desire for what ought to be said.</li> </ul>	<p>Is there a <b>PROMISE</b> to trust?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If I obey the Word of God, then I will somehow grow deeper in my relationship with him.</li> </ul>
<p>Is there an <b>EXAMPLE</b> to follow?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am to be like the man who looks into the law of Christ, perseveres in it, and obeys it.</li> </ul>	<p>Is there a <b>COMMAND</b> to obey?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are to be quick to listen.</li> <li>• We are to be slow to speak.</li> <li>• We are to put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness.</li> <li>• We are to receive with humility God's Word.</li> <li>• We are to obey the Word of God (the law of Christ).</li> <li>• I am to keep myself from valuing the sinful things that the world values.</li> </ul>

**MY RISK:**

**NAME**

Andrew

**WHAT YOU WANT TO DO**

I want to be quick to listen

**MAKE IT MEASURABLE**

**WHEN:** each time I talk with my wife.

**HOW:** by listening to my wife first & asking follow up questions



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