



“Navigating the Bible” is necessary for both personal growth and growth in discipleship relationships with others. The content for this week’s “going deeper” relies heavily upon *One to One Bible Reading* by David Helm. Personal Bible reading is necessary and important. Imagine a life that found Bible reading not just isolated within your morning routine but spread throughout many areas of your life. In order to for this to happen, we need to know how to read and understand the Bible ourselves and also how to read and understand the Bible with others. That’s our goal: to understand the Bible and how it would look to read in the context of relationship.

How to Read the Bible: A Helpful Guide

If you’ve been in or have heard of our Biblical Fluency class here at PLC, we teach a Bible reading method called COMA. Now, before we begin please take note of what David Helm says regarding this method, “we don’t wish to suggest this is some sort of magical key for unlocking the message of the Bible. The only necessary key to understanding the Bible is to approach it with a humble and contrite heart softened by the Holy Spirit, ready to listen to what God says and just as ready to obey Him.” (p.41-42)

COMA stands for Context, Observation, Message and Application. Here is how to use the COMA method:

1. Read a passage of Scripture all the way through.
2. Ask some **context** questions of the text:
 - a. What sort of writing is this? (a letter, narrative, wisdom literature, poetry)
 - b. Are there any clues about the circumstances under which it was written? (retelling history, suffering, sharing wisdom)
 - c. What happened before this? What happens after this?
3. Ask some **observation** questions of the text:
 - a. Are there any major subsections or noteworthy breaks in the text?
 - b. What is the main point or points?
 - c. What surprises are there?
 - d. Are there key ideas or words? Look for repetition!
4. Ask some **meaning** questions of the text:
 - a. How does this text relate to other parts of the book?
 - b. How does this passage relate to Jesus?
 - c. What does this teach us about God? What does this teach us about humanity?
 - d. How could we sum up the meaning of this passage in our own words?
5. Ask some **application** questions of the text:
 - a. How does this passage challenge or affirm my understanding?
 - b. Is there some attitude or belief I need to change?
 - c. Is there some way I need to stop living or begin living?

In groups of 2-3, turn to Ephesians 3, and use the COMA method for verses 1-13.

Now that you've experienced the COMA method for yourselves, let's chat about what it would look like to use COMA in a one-to-one or group setting.

Where do you start?

Pray – Ask God who He wants you to begin reading the Bible with. If you're married or have children, these are obvious relationships to start with.

Invite – This is maybe the hardest step for navigating the Bible with other people - making the initial ask! Keep it simple with something like, "Would you consider reading the Bible with me for a few weeks?" *"The greatest hindrance to inviting someone to read one-to-one will be an unbiblical view that you are not ready for this."* (p.24)

Plan – Pick a time and stick to it.

What would a typical meeting be like?

Praying and reading together

Talking together

Applying what you're reading

Planning your next meeting

Who do you need to invite? Don't leave without deciding.

Additional Resources for Bible Study

One to One Bible Reading by David Helm

Bible Savvy by James Nicodem

NIV Study Bible

ESV Study Bible

jointhebibleproject.com