



TRANSIT

THE BIBLE | GROUP GUIDE | MESSAGE BY CHAD BRUEGMAN

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer this question:

Do you like to read? If so; what and why? (Fiction, non-fiction, spiritual formation, news, celebrity magazines, history, shopping, home, etc.)

SHARE

Welcome to “Transit.”

We all want to go somewhere. To get there, we have to make a purposeful decision to begin the journey. When we travel, we take different vehicles – cars, planes, subway systems, buses, bikes, etc. Each of the vehicles serves a distinct purpose in moving us closer to where we want to go. As we purposefully take a journey together through “Transit,” the hope is that we can discover how we can grow closer to God through prayer, studying God’s word, relationships, serving, giving, and sharing our story about what Jesus Christ has done in our lives. As we talk about and experience these spiritual disciplines, we hope you realize that the power is not in the vehicles themselves, but in the subject of our affection, which is Jesus Christ. We can’t do anything to earn God’s love or salvation, but there are real ways we can cultivate a thriving relationship with God.

The truth is that God is the one who finds us, but he also promises in his word, that if we are serious about seeking him, He will be found (Jeremiah 29:13-14). No matter where in the world we might be, there is God. God is omnipresent, meaning he is “everywhere at the same time.” So there is no situation here on earth in which we cannot turn to God in our time of need. He will be there. David understood this and precisely why he proclaimed:

Psalm 139:7-10

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

If you have a relationship with Jesus Christ, God is with you and the Holy Spirit lives inside of you. You are an adopted son or daughter of the King and your identity is found in Christ Jesus, not in past mistakes or failures. With this in mind, we can boldly approach God and cultivate a closer relationship with Him. Whether you are brand new in your relationship with God or have been following Christ for decades, we hope this series can remind you of God’s incredible love and the ways we can ignite or re-ignite a more authentic relationship with God and each other.

This week, we are talking about the Bible. The Bible is the account of God's action in the world, and his purpose with all of creation. The writing of the Bible took place over sixteen centuries and is the work of over 40 human authors. It is an amazing collection of 66 books with very different literary styles from narratives, dialogues, proverbs, parables, songs, poems, allegories, history, and prophecy. It is God's revelation to us about Himself. Yes, it is full of wisdom, history, standards of conduct, principles for living with purpose each and every day, but even more than that, it is God making himself known to us. The Bible is inerrant, meaning it is without error.

When we read the Bible, we should read it more like we are on a date than we are in a class, allowing God to speak to us about our lives and in turn; we get to know the God of the Bible. As we set aside time to pray and read God's word, let's remember some important things. A Christian writer, Jen Wilkin wrote, "Think of the Bible as a savings account rather than a debit card. Rather than viewing it as a declining balance you draw on to fill an immediate need, allow it to have a cumulative effect over weeks, months and years." We may struggle some days on understanding passages or some meanings will seem to elude us, but all those days of reading makes deposits and God in his timing will illuminate the meaning. We just need to faithfully pray and study God's word and trust God will speak to us in his perfect timing.

Do you have a set time or place that you read the Bible? If so, what works well for you as far as establishing a habit of reading?

Do you have a study Bible? If so, has it been helpful for you to understand the culture, context, audience of what you are reading?

Where do you struggle when trying to read the Bible?

GROW

In this week's message, Chad mentioned that the Transit series should not be viewed as a "new believer class," but simply a "believer class." Each of us who call ourselves followers of Jesus Christ must always return to the basics, the fundamentals of our faith. And for those who are new to the faith, let's begin to implement time in God's word into our lives on a daily basis. In Revelation 2, we see the church in Ephesus commended for many things. They were vigilant when it came to doctrine, perseverance, discernment, work ethic, and purity. Yet, given all the maturity they were commended for as believers, they forgot one of the most important foundations of their faith ... the love relationship with God. Some scholars think they lost their love for each other. Most think they lost their love for God. Either way, love for God and others are related and God desires for them to return to him despite their commendable outward appearances of maturity.

Let's read Revelation 2:1-5

When you came to Christ and decided to follow Him, can you remember the things you "did at first?" What types of things did you do?

The church in Ephesus did some extraordinary things. How can even good things take precedent and get in the way of loving Christ?

If you have had a relationship with Christ for many years, have you ever experienced a time

when your faith became less about a relationship with God and more like a moral duty, religious behavior or just an intellectual pursuit? If so, how do you think that happened and how would you encourage newer believers to not repeat the same mistakes?

MOVE

As we meditate on scripture in private, it will be hard to hide in public. Public life is nothing more than a direct reflection of your private life. When we read God's word, it actually reads us. It reads us because as we go through it, the Spirit of God will guide, convict and counsel us. God's Word is sharper than any double-edged sword and judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. If we were all honest, we would agree that our hearts are deceptive. Scripture tells us this. We can spend so much time lying to ourselves about what is really going on. Be encouraged if that is you, for God wants to set us free from the lies and speak truth to us. Spending time in the word of God is essential to a healthy walk with Christ. Let's take a look at what the Bible says about the word of God.

Let's read 2 Timothy 3:16, Isaiah 55:10-11 and Ephesians 6:10-17

All of Scripture is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training so that we can be thoroughly equipped for the things God has for us to do. How have you experienced this?

The word of God never returns "empty," or void, but it accomplishes what God desires, much like rain that waters the earth and makes things grow. How should this spur us on to get to know God's word?

In the Ephesians passage, what is the one offensive weapon that we have? Why is a sword important in a battle? If we have all the armor on, but no sword, how does that change the fight?

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles that we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

TO GO

Let's remember, don't be dismayed, God will strengthen us to do what we are called to do!

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Additional Resources on How to Study the Bible:

How to Study Your Bible: Discover the Life-Changing Approach to God's Word by Kay Arthur, David Arthur, Pete De Lacy

How to Study the Bible by John MacArthur