



THESE ARE  
**HOLY WORDS**

**GROUP GUIDE  
OCTOBER 2022**

# THESE ARE HOLY WORDS

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### ABOUT THIS SERIES

*You Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

**The Psalmist, Psalm 119:105**

Story is the language of our hearts regardless of the language we speak. A good story introduces us to captivating characters and far-away places. When the rollercoaster of mystery, anticipation, conflict, and resolution meets its end with the final page, somehow our lives are just a little different as a result.

Now what if it was all true?

That's what we think of Scripture. Though the names on its pages may not be our own, we are still part of the story. He who wrote it also authored our lives. The words He gave us matter. They guide us, they delight us, and in them we meet the risen Lord.

These are Holy Words.

## Ground Rules

Here are some guidelines for your gatherings.

### Confidentiality

If the group is going to move towards authenticity, then what's shared in the group should stay in the group (note: for situations that you are not qualified to speak into, use a referral to Cornerstone Counseling).

### Don't Rescue and Don't Fix

Let people openly share without trying to solve their problems. Only give advice if they request it.

### No Crosstalk

People feel valued when we listen. The opposite is true as well: people will feel devalued if they are constantly interrupted. If someone has the floor, no other conversations should be happening.

### Give Everyone a Chance to Share

Everyone has something to contribute and everyone should feel heard. Don't be too quick to provide all of the answers. Give others space to share.

### Use Humor Responsibly

Our conversation should build up rather than tear down. Humor can be a great thing provided it is not used as the expense of others.

### Use 'I' Statements

Groups are an opportunity for self-reflection. We should be quick to reflect on how what we are studying should shape us personally, and slow to tell others how it should shape them.

### Fight for the Relationship

Real relationships only thrive when we commit to 'fight' for the relationship. We will not hide from conflict or disagreement, but will instead discuss them in an open and healthy way.

## Leader Guidelines

Thank you for taking the time to invest in others by leading a group. As a leader, your task is to create an environment where real relationships can thrive. Here are some things to keep in mind as you do that:

### Multiply.

The mission of the church is to multiply disciples. Groups are one of the environments where this occurs. You are involved in the discipleship of each person in your group. We ask that each of our group leaders has someone who they are equipping to be a disciple-maker.

### Create a safe environment.

When we say 'safe', we mean an environment where participants can freely share without feeling belittled or that what they share will get spread beyond the group. When we say 'safe', we also mean a group where participants can encounter Jesus and His plan for their life.

### Recognize that your group is unique.

This booklet is designed to be a general guide, but every group is unique. So when you're planning, take into account what does and doesn't work for your group and shape the session to their personalities and needs.

### Review the ground rules.

Periodically, remind your group about the ground rules for the group.

### Ask lots of questions.

Engaging leaders draw participants into the discussion. Ask many questions and lead your group into self-discovery. Follow the 70/30 rule: your goal should be to talk for less than 30% of the time. If you're going over that, then people in your group are going to feel limited in their ability to engage!

### Get feedback.

Improve your group by asking others for feedback.

### Seek wise council.

There are some questions you won't be able to answer and some situations you aren't trained to handle. That's OK! Know who your wise council is (whether a coach, minister, or another disciple-maker) and turn to them in your time of need.

For more on this topic, check out *Servant-Leadership Training* and the *CCW Group Leader Training 2.0* resource on RightNow Media.

## Before the Session

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**Prepare for the Session:** As a group leader, it's essential to be prepared. Before the group session:

1. **Pray.** God is the one doing the transformation.
2. **Take time to read over the Bible passage.** Write down questions and observations.
3. **Preview the session guide.** Highlight important questions to ask and add your own.
4. **Tap into study resources.** Check outside sources to expand your understanding of the topic. Some recommended resources include: The BibleProject, RightNow Media, and the CCW Resource Center.

## During the Session

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**Share:** Take time to review the content from last week. Use this time to check on:

- **Prayer Requests:** Follow up on any prayer requests that were made the previous session.
- **Application and Challenges:** Take time to provide accountability for any goals that the group set the previous week ('This week, I would like to...').

**Transition:** Introduce the topic (we give you an example each session).

**Read It:** Read through the Scripture passage. If it's a larger section of scripture, break it into smaller sections and ask questions throughout.

**Talk About It:** Make sure the passage is understood by:

1. *Retelling* the story in your own words.
2. *Asking review questions.*
3. *Seeking additional questions.* Check to see if your group has additional questions about the passage.

**Apply It:** The apply it section may have both (a) application questions and (b) challenges. Challenges are real-life ways to put Biblical Truth into effect this week.

**Pray Together:** Find creative ways to engage your group in prayer.

## After the Session

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**Follow Up:** Be present with group members throughout the week by: (1) Reminding them of their application/challenge commitments, (2) Checking in on needs and prayer requests and (3) Finding opportunities to do life together.

**Input Group Attendance:** Fill out your Group attendance in the ChurchTeams email that you receive.

# READING

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## Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- What do you think it means for something to be holy? When have you encountered something that you would describe as holy?
- What are some ways that the world views the Bible?
- What are some of the challenges that you've faced in reading the Bible?

## Transition

Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

*The new preaching series, 'These are Holy Words', is focusing on the Bible and how we interact with it. In this first session, we will be taking a look at what the Bible says about itself.*

## Watch It

Watch the BibleProject video **How to Read the Bible** (find it at bibleproject.com or on RightNow Media).

- What is something new that you learned about the Bible from this video?

## Watch It

Watch the BibleProject video **The Story of the Bible** (find it at bibleproject.com or on RightNow Media).

- What does it mean for the Bible to be one, united story?

- How would you explain the Bible's big story to somebody else?

## Watch It

Watch the BibleProject video **Literary Styles of the Bible** (find it at bibleproject.com or on RightNow Media).

- What are the major literary styles that we find in the Bible?
- Which of these styles would you most be interested in reading?
- What are some of the challenges that come from the Bible containing these many literary styles?

## Read It

During this session, you will be reading an assortment of Scripture in which the Bible speaks about itself. After each Scripture, ask the following questions:

- What does this Scripture say about the Bible?
- How should this shape how we approach the Bible?

Scripture reference: **Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Isaiah 55:11; 2 Peter 1:20-21; James 1:22-25**

## Apply It

- What are your key take-aways about the Bible from this session?
- How will this shape how you interact with it this week?

Take time to complete your ChurchTeams group attendance sheet (found in your email).

# MEDITATING

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## Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- What is something that you've spent hours thinking about?

## Transition

Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

*Meditation is the practice of thinking on something; dwelling on it; letting it soak into your mind. As we continue to dig into how we interact with God's Word, we will look at what it means to meditate upon it.*

## Watch It

Watch the BibleProject video **The Bible as Jewish Meditation Literature** (find it at bibleproject.com or on RightNow Media).

- What do we learn about the Bible from this video?
- What does it mean for the Bible to be meditation literature?
- How might viewing the Bible as meditation literature shape how you interact with it?

## Meditate On It

It's time to move towards reading God's Word. Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

*This session is going to be a little different than the previous, because we're going to practice some guided meditation together. This is how it works:*

- *We start with prayer; asking God to speak to us thru what we're about to read.*
- *We will minimize distractions by turning off phones and creating a quiet space (this may include dimming the lights)..*
- *You will close your eyes as I slowly read over the following Scripture.*
- *We will have one minute of silence as we strive to listen to God. Try to hold on to a phrase or idea that sticks with you from what we've read.*
- *I will read over the Scripture a second time.*
- *We will have a second minute of silence.*
- *I will read over the Scripture a final time.*
- *We will go to God in prayer, thanking Him for what He has revealed to us.*

*This may be different than other ways that you have interacted with Scripture, but it's a practice that is firmly rooted in Christian practices throughout the centuries.*

## Read It

*This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.*

**Joshua 1:8**

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

**Philippians 4:8**

## Pray Together

*How can a young man keep his way pure?  
By guarding it according to your word.*

*With my whole heart I seek you; let me not  
wander from your commandments!*

*I have stored up your word in my heart, that  
I might not sin against you.*

*Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your stat-  
utes!*

*With my lips I declare all the rules of your  
mouth.*

*In the way of your testimonies I delight as  
much as in all riches.*

*I will meditate on your precepts and fix my  
eyes on your ways.*

*I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget  
your word.*

**Psalm 119:9 - 16**

### Apply It

- What were some specific words or phrases in these passages that resonated with you?
- What do you feel that God is saying to you through the Scripture that we meditated on?
- How will you live out this message from God this week?

## NOTES

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Take time to complete your ChurchTeams group attendance sheet (found in your email).

# DELIGHTING

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## Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- What is something that you do for the 'pure joy' of it? In that thing, what is it that brings you joy?

## Transition

Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

*The Bible is not just a bunch of information or a list of Laws to read, it's something that we should find joy in as we spend time in it. In this session, we will explore the question: what does it mean to delight in God's Word?*

## Watch It

Watch the BibleProject video **The Art of Biblical Poetry** (find it at bibleproject.com or on RightNow Media).

- According to this video, what are some things we should be aware of when reading Biblical poetry?
- How might we approach Biblical poetry differently than other portions of Scripture?

## Watch It

Watch the BibleProject video **Metaphor in Biblical Poetry** (find it at bibleproject.com or on RightNow Media).

- What are some common metaphors that you have encountered in your life?
- What did you learn about Biblical metaphor from this video?

## Read It

Scripture reference: **Psalm 1**

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,

nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.

In all that he does, he prospers.

The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

## Talk About It

- What stuck out to you as we read this passage?
- How do we see poetic metaphor showing up in this Psalm?
- How does the Psalmist describe the 'blessed man'? What actions does he take?
- How does the Psalmist describe the wicked man?
- What does the Psalmist mean when he says that 'his delight is in the Law of the Lord'?
- How should a Biblical passage like this shape how we live?



# ENCOUNTERING

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## Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- Who is a famous person that you have encountered? What was that meeting like?

## Transition

Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

*In the Bible, we encounter God and Jesus. This encounter isn't merely reading a description of them - Scripture allows us to wrestle with, learn from, and be challenged by them. In this session, we will ask the question: how do we encounter Jesus in Scripture?*

## Watch It

Watch the BibleProject video **Plot in Biblical Narrative** (find it at bibleproject.com or on RightNow Media).

- What is plot?
- Why is it important to attempt to understand the larger plotline as we read God's Word?
- What may happen if we take a point of plot out of its larger context?

## Watch It

Watch the BibleProject video **Character in Biblical Narrative** (find it at bibleproject.com or on RightNow Media).

- How does the Bible present and describe characters?

- Why might the Bible emphasize the failure of its many characters?

## Watch It

Watch the BibleProject video **Setting in Biblical Narrative** (find it at bibleproject.com or on RightNow Media).

- How does God's Word use setting to tell the story?
- What are some other types of setting that the Bible uses beyond location?

## Read It

Scripture reference: **Luke 4:1 - 15**

## Talk About It

- What is the plotline of this story? What might the Biblical writer be attempting to convey through the plot?
- What characters do we show up? What can we learn about them from how they are described in this passage?
- What is the setting of this story and what might it emphasize?
- Taking plot, character, and setting as a whole, what do you think that the Biblical writer was trying to tell us?
- How can a passage like this lead you to encounter Jesus in a more real way?
- How might what we talked about today reshape your approach to Scripture?

## Pray Together

# LIVING

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## Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- What fictional movie or book has had the most impact on how you live your life?

## Transition

Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

*While the Bible is full of intriguing stories and challenging ideas, its ultimate goal is to shape the way that we live. In this session, we'll explore the question: How does interacting with the Bible change our actions and behaviors?*

## Watch It

Watch the BibleProject video **Design Patterns in Biblical Narrative** (find it at [bibleproject.com](http://bibleproject.com) or on RightNow Media).

- How might you explain Biblical design pattern to someone else?
- How might learning how to recognize these design patterns shape how we interact with the Bible?

\*If you'd like to learn more about Biblical design patterns, check out the BibleProject app (Journey tab).

## Read It

Scripture reference: **James 2:14 - 26**

## Talk About It

- What question is James trying to answer in this passage (14)?

- What example does James give to show that faith without works is dead (15 - 17)?
- Which does James believe speaks louder: words or works (18)? How do the demons fit into this argument?
- James uses the story of Abraham as an example. How was Abraham justified by a combination of faith and works (20 - 24)?
- James then uses the story of Rahab as an example. How was she justified by works (25)?
- What does James mean by, 'faith apart from works is dead' (26)?
- How should this passage shape how we interact with Scripture?
- How would you make the argument that reading God's Word should change how we live and behave?
- What example would you provide to show that faith and action go hand-in-hand?

## Pray Together

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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- **RIGHTNOW MEDIA**

Get a free RightNow Media account to get access to thousands of study resources. Some potential resources include:

- **How to Read the Bible** (Tim Mackie): This series explores the origins, content, and purpose of the Bible. Here you'll be introduced to some of the basic skills necessary for reading the Bible effectively..
- **How to Read the Bible** (Michael Defazio): In this series, Michael DeFazio (New Testament faculty at Ozark Christian College) will help you hear God's voice by learning how to read the Bible more effectively.
- **How to Read Your Bible** (Jennie Allen): Does the Bible feel too intimidating and complex? Does understanding it feel impossible, so you don't even try?

In this six-week study, we want to help you understand why the Bible is the greatest tool we have. We want to open your eyes to the way the Old Testament and New Testament connect and show you the purpose of each book of the Bible. Through this study, featuring teaching videos from Jennie Allen, Bianca Juárez Olthoff, and Jo Saxton you will:

Understand that the Bible is relevant for you here and now.

Uncover what each book of the Bible is about and how they all connect.

Discover a method to breaking down Scripture in order to better comprehend it.

Have new confidence in understanding the Bible and a hunger to know it more.

- **What's in the Bible?** (Phil Vischer): Buck Denver and his friends take your children through the WHOLE Bible. Perfect viewing for the entire family—laugh and learn together. In his first new project since VeggieTales, Phil Vischer has set out to teach kids (and parents!) the story of the Bible—God's great rescue plan! We know the stories of Moses, Noah, David, and Jesus, but in this groundbreaking new series, we learn how they all fit together to tell one big, redemptive story. Vischer's signature wit shines through with his all-new cast of characters, fast-paced flash animation, and catchy tunes. This is one journey through the Bible you won't want to miss!

- **THE BIBLE PROJECT** ([www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com))

The Bible Project offers a variety of amazing resources. These videos expand on many of the ideas that we have touched on in this series.