

Following Jesus - Scripture

Week 1 - OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE BIBLE

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OVERVIEW (someone read aloud)

If we're honest, many of us take issue with the Bible, or what Jesus referred to as "the scriptures." Even for those of us who are trying to take the Bible seriously, we face problems.

Maybe we're puzzled or bored by it. Its language is sometimes strange, complex, and difficult to comprehend. Perhaps we've tried reading the Bible many times before, but come away from each reading more confused than when we started. It feels like there is some good stuff in there, but it's bogged down by lots of long, boring stories, genealogies, and religious codes.

Maybe we don't trust it. How could an ancient, millenia-old book possibly speak to the everyday realities of living in the 21st century? Perhaps we see the Bible's teachings as archaic at best, and morally reprehensible at worst.

Maybe we're scared of it. If we actually decide to read the Bible, what questions might arise? What new doubts will I have to face? What will be asked of me if I take it seriously? Or perhaps the Bible has been weaponized against you and you fear that it could happen all over again.

And yet, if we look at the life of Jesus we see a life deeply entrenched in the Hebrew scriptures, or what we call the Old Testament. Jesus quoted the scriptures, meditated on the scriptures, wrestled with the scriptures, interpreted the scriptures, found his identity in the scriptures, built his ethics on the scriptures, and framed his world in the story the scriptures tell.

So how do we reconcile all of this baggage we have with the Bible with our desire to apprentice under Jesus of Nazareth? It would seem that the first step is honesty, to acknowledge before God and others what we truly think and feel about the scriptures.

This week's Practice: To have an honest conversation with your small group about the Bible and its current place in your life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (25 – 30 MINUTES)

1. How were you introduced to the bible? (Parents, your church, a class, a friend)
2. What role did the Bible play in your earliest experiences and how do you think that shaped you?
3. What does your practice of scripture reading look like right now? How did you get to that point?
4. What difficulties do you face when it comes to the Bible (fear, confusion, boredom, skepticism, etc.)?
5. What do you think Jesus is inviting you into through this Practice?

CLOSE IN PRAYER (10 MINUTES)