



GROW IN THE WORD

I Say to You Who Hear

an inductive group study of Luke's "Sermon on the Mount"

The questions in this study are based on the [Grow in the Word Women's Workshop](#) led by Colleen McFadden at Bronx Household of Faith on Sept. 12, 2020.¹ Although some of the questions here are more detailed than those in her handouts, they are largely applications of her threefold emphasis: *Context, Structure, Jesus Christ*.

This study is intended to model one way to apply the approach taught in the workshop, in this case, to a segment of Luke's Gospel. You don't need to answer every question; the goal is to grow in your understanding of the *context, structure, connection to Christ, and application* of the passage you're studying. You can refer to the recording or your notes/handouts from the workshop for clarification or more direction.

By God's grace, your knowledge of and therefore your love for the God of Scripture will grow deeper, richer, and stronger as you seek to understand what he reveals in this "Sermon on the Mount." God bless your study together!

Structure of this Booklet

This booklet will guide you through the study of Luke's account of Jesus's Sermon on the Mount:

The Beatitudes (Luke 6:17–26)

Loving Your Enemies (Luke 6:27–36)

Judging Your Brothers (Luke 6:37–45)

Building on the Rock (Luke 6:46–49)

The study of each section is divided into four parts, except for the last section, which adds one final wrap-up for the whole study. The four parts are:

- Reading the Word in its **context** (A)
- Reading the Word in its **structure** (A)

- Reading the Word in light of **Jesus Christ** (B)
- **Applying** the Word you've read (B)

→**For a 4-meeting study**, discuss all four parts for a particular section in one meeting.

→**For an 8-meeting study**, discuss the first two parts (labeled A above) of a section in one meeting and the last two parts (labeled B) in the next meeting.

Obviously your group is free to adjust this "schedule" as needed. You might also want to spend your very first meeting talking through the introductory notes that start on page v.

Studying as a Group

The most effective approach to using this study is probably for each member to work through the questions individually between meetings, and then to get together with the group to compare notes. If that's not possible you can certainly work through the study together! If you do that, you might find it necessary to only answer the most relevant questions from each part of the session. View the provided questions as suggestions/examples of how to dig into the text.

¹ Some questions are also taken/adapted from David Helm's *One-to-One Bible Reading: A Simple Guide for Every Christian*, 86–87.

Simplifying the Study

One alternative to using this booklet would be to use the more basic questions included in the appendix on page 25. Your group can simply get together, read the passage for the week, and work through those questions together. You could always use the questions in the main part of this booklet as a supplement or for personal study.

Another alternative is to use the same basic framework of this study, but to challenge yourself to rely less and less on the questions in this booklet. You may find [Colleen McFadden's handout](#) helpful.² You could also use some version of the chart on the following two pages for each section of this study (you'll find 4 extra copies of it on pages 27–34).

² https://www.bhof.org/wp-content/uploads/sermons/2020/09/Grow-in-the-Word_2020_Handout.pdf. Some portions of the following chart are adapted from Colleen's handouts.

Passage: _____

Context

We must understand the context in order to see how the original audience understood the text. When we understand how the original audience understood a text, then we can understand how it applies to us today.

Ask:

“What is the *literary* context?” (The genre of writing; the verses/chapters before and after)

“What is the *historical* context?” (The situation of the original audience)

“Why is this text here?” Why is it in this place, in this chapter, in this book?

“How does the context inform my understanding of this text?”

Structure

The structure (or organization) of a text will reveal an emphasis. That emphasis will help to discern the main idea and lead to application.

Ask:

“How is this text organized? What are the parts? Where are the key moments, words, images?”

“How do the parts fit together?”

“What emphasis does the structure reveal?”

Connection to Jesus Christ

If the Bible is all about God's redemptive plan as revealed in Jesus Christ, then we must see how our text legitimately connects to the saving gospel message so we know how to live as Christians.

Ask:

“How does this text point forward to, back to, or up to the person and work of Christ?”

Application

God speaks in his Word. He has purposes for his glory and our good in what he says. We have not fully understood a passage if we do not respond to it.

Ask:

“How does this passage, in light of Christ, apply to me and others in my context and situation? How should I respond?”

Which Sermon Is This?

Scholars debate how Luke 6 relates to Matthew 5–7. Both passages contain very similar material in a very similar context. But Matthew includes a lot that Luke leaves out, and Luke includes some things that Matthew doesn't! Assuming (as this booklet takes for granted) that Matthew and Luke are both recording the same event, what are we to make of these differences?

On the one hand, it doesn't matter that much. Luke intends his account of "The Sermon on the Mount" (or "The Sermon on the Plain," as some have called it, since v. 17 tells us Jesus came down and stood on "a level place") to be read in the context of the rest of *his* Gospel. That is, what Luke includes in his account of Jesus's Sermon can be fruitfully studied using the method outlined in this booklet, without reference to Matthew's version.

At the same time, it can be helpful to compare and contrast the two versions, since Matthew and Luke had two different audiences in view as each wrote his Gospel. Matthew wrote primarily to Jewish Christians; Luke wrote primarily to Gentiles. So Matthew is concerned to present Jesus the Messiah as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, law, and kingship; Luke is concerned to show Jesus's sufficiency and supremacy over the nations—and his care for the outcast and downtrodden.

Since Jesus's sermon was likely much longer than either Matthew or Luke records, each Gospel writer had to pick and choose which parts of the sermon to include. This largely accounts for the differences between the two. Luke had to be selective. He selected portions of Jesus's sermon that give the overall flavor of Jesus's teaching and that are particularly relevant to people like Theophilus (Luke 1:1–4)—a Gentile Christian likely facing pressures from without and possibly conflict within the fledgling church, struggling as it did with disagreements about Judaism's continuing relevance for Gentile believers.

The Gospel in the Gospels: Beware Parachute Readings!

Whenever you study a particular section of the Bible, it is important not to lose the forest for the trees—not to "parachute in" to a certain verse or section without noting or remembering the context. Particularly when reading *ethical* instruction in the Gospels, such as the Sermon on the Mount, it can be easy to forget that the main message of each Gospel is *the* gospel: the good news about Jesus—who he is, what he's done, and what he does in the lives of those who respond to him in faith.

When we forget that the main message of each Gospel is *the* gospel, we can lapse into a sort of legalistic, moralistic view of God's Word, seeing it as essentially good advice or good examples or good commands. But while it includes all of these things, the Bible is much more than these things: It's good *news*.

So it's important not to get stuck reading Jesus's teachings without reference to the beginning of Luke's Gospel and the climax of Luke's Gospel: the incarnation of the Son of God at the beginning, and the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ the Savior-King at the climax. Good news, from start to finish.

Again, when we forget or ignore this important context, we can end up living like the primary command of the Bible is to "obey"—when in reality the foundational command of the Bible is *believe*. In other words, we should not read the Bible like Jews read the Torah or like Muslims read the Quran—focused mainly on what

we must do to inherit eternal life. Rather, we read the Bible as *Christians*: expecting to be reminded of what *Christ* has done to *bring* us eternal life, and desiring to *respond* with repentance, faith—and yes, obedience.

Reading the Law Like a Christian

Many commentators have likened Jesus's Sermon on the Mount to the Exodus account where Moses descends from Mt. Sinai with the law of God in his hands—or to the covenant blessings, woes, and lawgiving in Deuteronomy. Indeed, especially in Matthew's version, the parallels are striking! Jesus speaks with the authority of a lawgiver. And he is indeed speaking God's law, God's requirements—but with a new authority and a new depth. While Moses declared God's blessings and curses to God's people with reference to how they responded to God's law written on tablets of stone, Jesus declares blessings and woes to his disciples with reference to how they respond to *his* word and whether or not it takes root in their *hearts*.

Given what we've said about reading the Bible as Christians and not as *legalists*, how can we fruitfully study Jesus's commands here? How can we avoid the opposite error of *license*—the false notion that belief in Jesus saves us *from* a life of obedience rather than *into* one?

Here is one helpful, fourfold approach to reading God's law as a Christian:

Step 1: Let the Law Show You *Our Standard*

In Luke 10:27, here's how Jesus sums up what God requires of his people in his law: "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.*"

Jesus's summary gets to the heart of the matter: God's law is his authoritative revelation of how a human being *should* live and how a human being *will* live if he or she loves God supremely and totally, and therefore loves his or her fellow human beings sincerely.

Any given law or command of God, rightly interpreted, holds up to us this standard of love for God and neighbor.

God's commands, then, are not random; nor should they be burdensome. God's law reveals God's own character. Psalm 19 and Psalm 119, for example, make it plain that God's commands are not arbitrary but rather perfectly pure, holy, righteous, good, and wise. In other words, God's laws are a reflection of God's own holiness and love.

So to obey God's commands as a creature, made in his image, is to image God accurately. *He* is our standard. We are to be holy, as he is holy—and the commands of God show the way.

Unfortunately, that is not the way we have taken.

Step 2: Let the Law Show You *Our Sin*

This side of the fall, we cannot read the law of God honestly without recognizing that by it we stand condemned. We have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We have all broken God's holy law. We do not love him with our whole being. We do not love our neighbors as ourselves. We might become vaguely aware of this by noting our own feelings. But when we compare our thoughts, words, and actions with the clear-cut requirements of God's law, that's when our lack of holiness and love is *really* exposed.

In other words, the law of God is like a picture of perfection—it shows us our standard. Read the Sermon on the Mount and you get a picture of what it would look like to love your enemies and love your brothers.

But the law of God is also like a mirror, complete with lights—it shows us all our *imperfection*, our *sin*. Read the Sermon on the Mount and you get a clear idea of all the ways in which you've *failed* to love your enemies and love your brothers.

Romans 3:19–20 | *Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.*

If this was all the law did—show us our standard and how fall short we've fallen—the Bible would be a depressing book indeed! But God's law does much more:

Step 3: Let the Law Show You *Our Savior*

The law of God points us to Jesus. It points us to him in two ways:

1) The law of God points us to Christ's *atoning death*.

We stand condemned. The law of God exposes the ugly truth and states it outright: I deserve death for failing to love God and live for his glory. The law brings wrath (Romans 4:15). But in the context of the Bible, the law points to gospel, because it points to Jesus.

When we are convicted of our sin in studying the commands of God, we shouldn't stop with conviction. We should let the law of God drive us to the foot of the cross, where we see that God has made a way for our sins to be forgiven: Jesus Christ, broken for our law-breaking (e.g., Colossians 2:13–14).

2) The law of God points us to Christ's *righteous life*.

Jesus fully fulfilled the law of God. Reading the law of God is like reading a biography of Christ. He kept the law of God *from the heart, in every detail, every moment of his life*.

When we study the law of God, whether in the Old Testament or the New Testament, we are studying what Jesus himself embodied and fulfilled. And he did this not just for his own sake, but for ours. 1 Corinthians 1:30 says that in Christ *we* are counted as righteous. In other words, in salvation God counts Christ's perfect obedience to our account. The law exposes my sin, but it describes Christ's righteousness. And if I'm in Christ, that righteousness is counted to me!

There's even more to the story. In Christ, believers are not only *counted* righteous; we're *being made* righteous. Which leads to the final interpretative step:

Step 4: Let the Law Show You *Our Spirit-Empowered Calling*

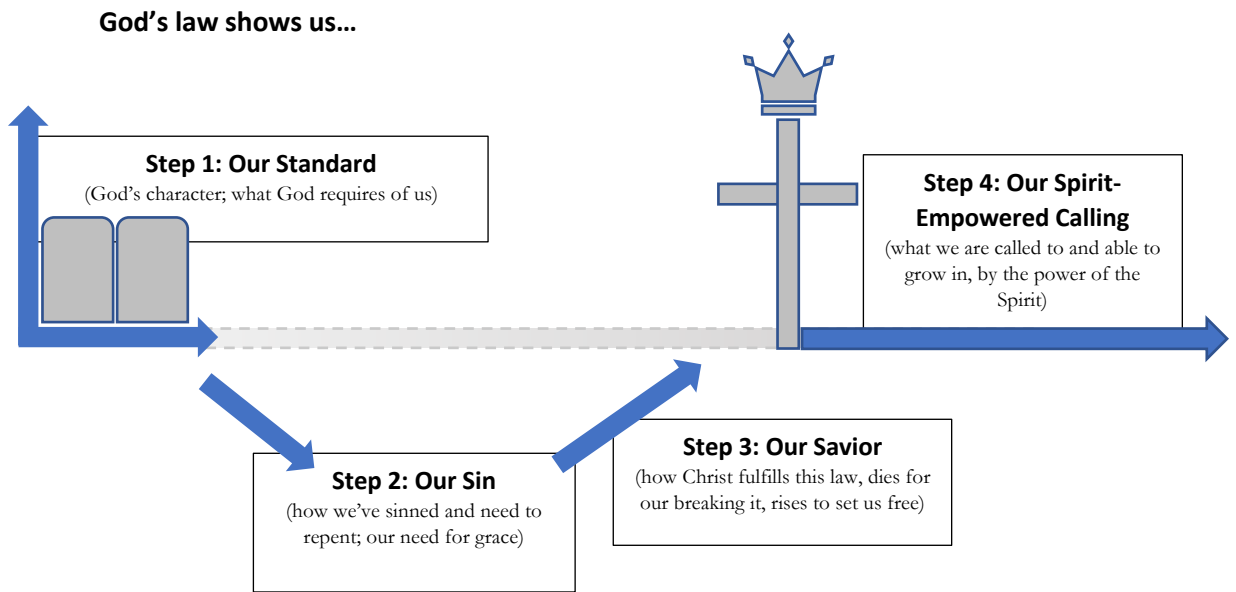
For a Christian, the law of God no longer brings condemnation. But that does not mean we are not to obey it. Our obedience to the law of God is not the basis of our salvation. It is the *fruit* of it!

Through faith in Christ, we do not merely receive *forgiveness*. As Christians we receive a king—and true faith in Christ involves glad submission to his kingly authority. But there's more. From Christ we

receive by faith not just forgiveness and commands—we have also received *the Holy Spirit*. And one of the things God does through his Word and Spirit in the lives of his children is *teach them to walk in his ways*.

In other words, for the Christian, God’s law is no longer a burden to carry along the road—it is the road we’re learning to walk! It is not a stairway to heaven—it is the heavenly way of life God’s Spirit is teaching us to walk right now. It is, as some have called it, “a rule of life.” Because its essence is love for God and love for others, those who are being conformed to the image of God’s Son are called to walk like him. And the commands of God show the way.

Here’s a visual representation of these different facets of God’s law and how it applies to us:



Reading the Gospel as a Son or Daughter

If even the laws and commands of God lead us to Jesus, then we should seek to develop the habit of reading Scripture in the light of God’s grace. Sadly, it’s very easy and therefore very common to read the Gospels and other parts of Scripture as a step removed from God, and therefore as a step or two removed from our particular sins and struggles as Christians.

But this is not the case.

If you’re a child of God, then to read his Word is to hear from your Father. When you study this section of Luke’s Gospel, you are delving into a personal communication from the One who loves you infinitely and intimately.

So always keep in your mind, as you study, that Scripture is given that you might know the triune God speaking to you in its pages. One way forward is to regularly pray, throughout your study, that God would open your eyes...

to the Father’s love,
to the Son’s sufficiency and supremacy,
to the Spirit’s power and presence.

Reading the Gospel as a Worshiper

The ultimate end of all our study, for all our believing, for all our obeying—the end for which God created the world, the end for which he sent his Son to redeem a people, the end for which he sends his Spirit to open blind eyes and give life to dead hearts through the gospel—is that God be glorified.

As you go through this study, ask God to grow you in knowledge, in faith, in love, in obedience and wisdom. But don't pursue these things as ends in themselves. Let the goodness and greatness of God and the gospel of his grace lead you into deeper and deeper devotion to seeking and speaking for God's glory. The only sane response to the law of God and the gospel of God's grace—the ultimate response that brings God the glory he deserves and the good we were created for—is worship.

Romans 11:33–36 | *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*

SECTION 1: LUKE 6:17–26

Pray. Read Luke 6:17–26:

17 And he came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, 18 who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. 19 And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all.

20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

“Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

22 “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! 23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

24 “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

25 “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

“Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

26 “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

Historical and literary context:

- 1) When does this occur in Jesus’s ministry? What are some things his disciples understand about him already? What things are still unclear to them?
- 2) What do we know about the physical circumstances of this teaching? What has happened in the verses and chapters leading up to this event?
- 3) Who is Jesus’s audience? What can we gather about the nature of this crowd and their reasons for being there? Is it a mixed group of some kind? If so, what different types of “hearers” are there?
- 4) What have been some of the reactions Jesus has gotten to his teaching in this section of Luke? Does this shed any light on what Jesus teaches here?
- 5) What are the words, if any, you need to look up? Write down any definitions you find here. (You could look them up in other parts of the Bible or refer to a Bible dictionary or commentary.)
- 6) Read the entire Sermon (through the end of Luke 6). What are the different sections of the Sermon? How does this introductory section bring up issues continued in the following sections? How does it relate to the closing section of the Sermon?
- 7) Are there upcoming sections in the Gospel of Luke that seem particularly relevant or are clearly related to this section of the Sermon on the Mount?
- 8) What are some of the life circumstances Jesus references in this section of the Sermon? (e.g., Who would “the poor” be in his day? What was life like for them? Etc.)
- 9) Given what we know about *Luke’s* context in writing to the early church, might there be additional ways his record of Christ’s teaching here applies to his original hearers in particular?

Focus particularly on verses 20–26.

- 1) Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the text? Are there key connecting words (for, therefore, but, because, so that, etc.) that indicate the logical connections between ideas or sections?
- 2) Make a mini-outline of the structure of this section. Where are the main breaks? What are the overall points? Is there a key verse, as far as you can tell? If so, how can you tell?
- 3) Are there any key words or ideas (words that are repeated, words connected to major themes elsewhere in Scripture, words that refer to essential, foundational, saving realities)?
- 4) Are there any major *indicatives*? (An *indicative* is a statement about fact/truth—a statement that *indicates* something you should know—as opposed to a command. For example, “His divine power has given us everything we need” is an *indicative*. The most important indicatives in Scripture relate to *what God does*.)
- 5) Are there any major *imperatives* in this passage? What are they and how are they related to any indicatives, either before or after? (An *imperative* is a command/instruction—a statement about something you should do. For example, “Remember your creator in the days of your youth” is an *imperative*.) Even if there are few direct commands, are there any others *implied*?
- 6) What verb tenses (past, present, perfect, future) are used? How do the tenses affect Jesus’s message?
- 7) What surprises or “twists” are there, if any?
- 8) What is the main point or points? What is Jesus’s main goal for his hearers? In other words, what is the Jesus trying to get his readers to *know? believe? value? turn from or avoid? do?*
 - a. Try to summarize it in one sentence (e.g., “Jesus wants...”)
 - b. Does he say *why* he wants this? Does he say *how* they can do it?
 - c. Try to give this section a title of your own.

- 1) What does this passage show us about *Jesus*, the one speaking these things? (Consider Luke’s presentation of who Jesus is, for example, in 3:22 and 4:16–21).
- 2) Are there any direct references to the gospel—the person and work of **Christ**? The power and work of the **Holy Spirit**? The goodness and plan of the **Father**? List out some of these things if they’re present in the text. Which aspect of the gospel seems most prominent?
- 3) How might Jesus’s tone inform how we listen and how we think about how God relates to us?
- 4) How does this teaching highlight or relate to our need for Jesus? Jesus’s work in us? Jesus’s work for us?
- 5) How is this passage a *proclamation/explanation* of the gospel (telling the Good News) and/or an *application/implication* of the gospel (what the Good News means we should do or be)? What would be different about reading this passage if salvation were not only through faith in Christ alone?
- 6) If this passage is mainly an *imperative* about what you should do for Christ, how is that grounded in the *indicative* of who Christ is for you?
- 7) Fill out the Law-Gospel chart below with some preliminary observations (you can get more specific in the Application step).

How does this “Law” show us...			
our standard? (what God requires of us)	our sin? (how we’ve sinned and need to repent; our need for grace)	our Savior? (how Christ fulfills this law, dies for our breaking it, rises to set us free)	our Spirit-empowered calling? (what we are called to and able to grow in, by the power of the Spirit?)

- 8) Try to sum up the meaning and application of this passage with reference to Christ by using the following phrase to get started; include Christ in your summary sentence:
“Jesus wants you to see that he...and to respond by...”

Reflect on and then discuss answers to some or all of the following questions:

- 1) How is my/our own situation similar to or different from those being addressed?
- 2) How does this passage challenge (or confirm) my understanding?
- 3) How might this passage particularly help a Christian who is...
 - a. straying?
 - b. idle?
 - c. fainthearted?
 - d. weak?
 - e. suffering?

(These categories are mostly drawn from 1 Thessalonians 5:14.)

Which is most relevant to you right now?

- 4) How does this passage lead me to trust God and his promises in Jesus?
- 5) How does this passage call on me to change the way I live, think, or feel? The way I pray?

What are ways I can pursue this?

- 6) What promises or pictures does it use to motivate trust and obedience? What promises or pictures does it use to warn of disobedience?
- 7) How does this passage inform or direct how I relate to...
 - my church?
 - other believers?
 - the world?
- 8) What are ways my church community should be challenged and/or encouraged through this? How can I/we contribute to making that happen?
- 9) How does this passage lead me to worship?

Pray.

SECTION 2: LUKE 6:27–36

Pray. Read Luke 6:27–36

27 “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. 29 To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic[b] either. 30 Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. 31 And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

32 “If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. 35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. 36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

1) *Literary context:*

- a. How does this passage relate to what preceded it?

Is there any logical connecting word used (e.g., “for,” “therefore,” etc.)? If so, what relationship does it indicate?

Is this passage a new and unrelated topic?

Is it expanding on what came before (more detail/information)?

Is it giving reasons for what came before?

Is it building on what came before?

- b. Does this section compare/contrast with any previous section in particular?

- c. Are there other New Testament or any Old Testament passages, themes, or key doctrines alluded to? What part do these allusions play in the section? (background information? supporting evidence? fulfillment of prophecy? illustration? etc.)

- d. What have been some of the reactions Jesus has gotten to his teaching in this section of Luke? Does this shed any light on what Jesus teaches here?

- e. What are the words, if any, you need to look up? Write down any definitions you find here. (You could look them up in other parts of the Bible or refer to a Bible dictionary or commentary.)

- f. Are there upcoming sections in the Gospel of Luke that seem particularly relevant or are clearly related to this section of the Sermon on the Mount?

2) *Historical Context*

- a. What are some of the life circumstances Jesus references in this section of the Sermon related to the historical context of first-century Israel?

- b. Who is Jesus speaking to in this sermon? Is it a mixed group of some kind? What are some of the different types of hearers in his audience that he may be addressing in different ways through this same teaching?

- c. Given what we know about *Luke's* context in writing to the early church, might there be additional ways his record of Christ's teaching here applies to his original hearers in particular?

- 1) Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the text? Are there key connecting words (for, therefore, but, because, so that, etc.) that indicate the logical connections between ideas or sections?
- 2) Make a mini-outline of the structure of this section. Where are the main breaks? What are the overall points? Is there a key verse, as far as you can tell? If so, how can you tell?
- 3) Are there any key words or ideas (words that are repeated, words connected to major themes elsewhere in Scripture, words that refer to essential, foundational, saving realities)?
- 4) Are there any major *indicatives*? (An *indicative* is a statement about fact/truth—a statement that *indicates* something you should know—as opposed to a command. For example, “His divine power has given us everything we need” is an *indicative*. The most important indicatives in Scripture relate to *what God does*.)
- 5) Are there any major *imperatives* in this passage? What are they and how are they related to any indicatives, either before or after? (An *imperative* is a command/instruction—a statement about something you should do. For example, “Remember your creator in the days of your youth” is an *imperative*.) Even if there are few direct commands, are there any others *implied*?
- 6) What verb tenses (past, present, perfect, future) are used? How do the tenses affect Jesus’s message?
- 7) What surprises or “twists” are there, if any?
- 8) What is the main point or points? What is Jesus’s main goal for his hearers? In other words, what is the Jesus trying to get his readers to *know? believe? value? turn from or avoid? do?*
 - a. Try to summarize it in one sentence (e.g., “Jesus wants...”)
 - b. Does he say *why* he wants this? Does he say *how* they can do it?
 - c. Try to give this section a title of your own.

- 1) Two thousand years of church history have tried and proven the truth of Christ’s teachings. What are similarities and differences between the situation when Jesus first taught this and where we stand as Christians after his death, resurrection, and ascension?
- 2) What does this passage show us about *Jesus*, the one speaking these things? (Consider Luke’s presentation of who Jesus is, for example, in 3:22 and 4:16–21).
- 3) Are there any direct references to the gospel—the person and work of **Christ**? The power and work of the **Holy Spirit**? The goodness and plan of the **Father**? List out some of these things if they’re present in the text. Which aspect of the gospel seems most prominent?
- 4) How might Jesus’s tone inform how we listen and how we think about how God relates to us?
- 5) How does this teaching highlight or relate to our need for Jesus? Jesus’s work in us? Jesus’s work for us?
- 6) How is this passage a *proclamation/explanation* of the gospel (telling the Good News) and/or an *application/implication* of the gospel (what the Good News means we should do or be)? What would be different about reading this passage if salvation were not only through faith in Christ alone?
- 7) If this passage is mainly an *imperative* about what you should do for Christ, how is that grounded in the *indicative* of who Christ is for you?
- 8) Fill out the Law-Gospel chart below with some preliminary observations (you can get more specific in the Application step).

How does this “Law” show us...			
our standard? (what God requires of us)	our sin? (how we’ve sinned and need to repent; our need for grace)	our Savior? (how Christ fulfills this law, dies for our breaking it, rises to set us free)	our Spirit-empowered calling? (what we are called to and able to grow in, by the power of the Spirit?)

- 9) Try to sum up the meaning and application of this passage with reference to Christ by using the following phrase to get started; include Christ in your summary sentence:
“Jesus wants you to see that he...and to respond by...”

Reflect on and then discuss answers to some or all of the following questions:

- 1) How is my/our own situation similar to or different from those being addressed?
- 2) How does this passage challenge (or confirm) my understanding?
- 3) In what ways does this passage lead me to consider my need for Christ? How does this passage point me to Jesus's sufficiency for me? How does it point to his authority over me?
- 4) What is Jesus calling me to...
 - believe?
 - repent of?
 - feel or do?

What do I find particularly hard about this calling? What particular relationship in my life does this passage most directly address?

- 5) How does this passage lead me to trust God and his promises in Jesus?
- 6) How does this passage call on me to change the way I live, think, or feel? The way I pray?
- 7) What truths, promises, or pictures does it use to motivate trust and obedience? What promises or pictures does it use to warn of disobedience?
- 8) How does this passage inform or direct how I relate to...
 - God through Jesus?
 - my church?
 - other believers?
 - the world?
- 9) What are ways my church community should be challenged and/or encouraged through this? How can I/we contribute to making that happen?
- 10) How does this passage lead me to worship?

Write a prayer in response to these things, about the specific response you see God calling you to.

Pray.

SESSION 3: LUKE 6:37–45

Pray. Read Luke 6:37–45

37 “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; 38 give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

39 He also told them a parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? 40 A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. 41 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 42 How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

43 “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, 44 for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. 45 The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

1) *Literary context:*

- a. How does this passage relate to what preceded it?

Is there any logical connecting word used (e.g., “for,” “therefore,” etc.)? If so, what relationship does it indicate?

Is this passage a new and unrelated topic?

Is it expanding on what came before (more detail/information)?

Is it giving reasons for what came before?

Is it building on what came before?

- b. Does this section compare/contrast with any previous section in particular?

- c. Are there other New Testament or any Old Testament passages, themes, or key doctrines alluded to? What part do these allusions play in the section? (background information? supporting evidence? fulfillment of prophecy? illustration? etc.)

- d. What have been some of the reactions Jesus has gotten to his teaching in this section of Luke? Does this shed any light on what Jesus teaches here?

- e. What are the words, if any, you need to look up? Write down any definitions you find here. (You could look them up in other parts of the Bible or refer to a Bible dictionary or commentary.)

- f. Are there upcoming sections in the Gospel of Luke that seem particularly relevant or are clearly related to this section of the Sermon on the Mount?

2) *Historical Context*

- a. What are some of the life circumstances Jesus references in this section of the Sermon related to the historical context of first-century Israel?

- b. Who is Jesus speaking to in this sermon? Is it a mixed group of some kind? What are some of the different types of hearers in his audience that he may be addressing in different ways through this same teaching?

- c. Given what we know about *Luke's* context in writing to the early church, might there be additional ways his record of Christ's teaching here applies to his original hearers in particular?

- 1) Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the text? Are there key connecting words (for, therefore, but, because, so that, etc.) that indicate the logical connections between ideas or sections?
- 2) Make a mini-outline of the structure of this section. Where are the main breaks? What are the overall points? Is there a key verse, as far as you can tell? If so, how can you tell?
- 3) Are there any key words or ideas (words that are repeated, words connected to major themes elsewhere in Scripture, words that refer to essential, foundational, saving realities)?
- 4) Are there any major *indicatives*? (An *indicative* is a statement about fact/truth—a statement that *indicates* something you should know—as opposed to a command. For example, “His divine power has given us everything we need” is an *indicative*. The most important indicatives in Scripture relate to *what God does*.)
- 5) Are there any major *imperatives* in this passage? What are they and how are they related to any indicatives, either before or after? (An *imperative* is a command/instruction—a statement about something you should do. For example, “Remember your creator in the days of your youth” is an *imperative*.) Even if there are few direct commands, are there any others *implied*?
- 6) What verb tenses (past, present, perfect, future) are used? How do the tenses affect Jesus’s message?
- 7) What surprises or “twists” are there, if any?
- 8) What is the main point or points? What is Jesus’s main goal for his hearers? In other words, what is the Jesus trying to get his readers to *know? believe? value? turn from or avoid? do?*
 - a. Try to summarize it in one sentence (e.g., “Jesus wants...”)
 - b. Does he say *why* he wants this? Does he say *how* they can do it?
 - c. Try to give this section a title of your own.

- 1) Two thousand years of church history have tried and proven the truth of Christ’s teachings. What are similarities and differences between the situation when Jesus first taught this and where we stand as Christians after his death, resurrection, and ascension?
- 2) What does this passage show us about *Jesus*, the one speaking these things? (Consider Luke’s presentation of who Jesus is, for example, in 3:22 and 4:16–21).
- 3) Are there any direct references to the gospel—the person and work of **Christ**? The power and work of the **Holy Spirit**? The goodness and plan of the **Father**? List out some of these things if they’re present in the text. Which aspect of the gospel seems most prominent?
- 4) How might Jesus’s tone inform how we listen and how we think about how God relates to us?
- 5) How does this teaching highlight or relate to our need for Jesus? Jesus’s work in us? Jesus’s work for us?
- 6) How is this passage a *proclamation/explanation* of the gospel (telling the Good News) and/or an *application/implication* of the gospel (what the Good News means we should do or be)? What would be different about reading this passage if salvation were not only through faith in Christ alone?
- 7) If this passage is mainly an *imperative* about what you should do for Christ, how is that grounded in the *indicative* of who Christ is for you?
- 8) Fill out the Law-Gospel chart below with some preliminary observations (you can get more specific in the Application step).

How does this “Law” show us...			
our standard? (what God requires of us)	our sin? (how we’ve sinned and need to repent; our need for grace)	our Savior? (how Christ fulfills this law, dies for our breaking it, rises to set us free)	our Spirit-empowered calling? (what we are called to and able to grow in, by the power of the Spirit?)

- 9) Try to sum up the meaning and application of this passage with reference to Christ by using the following phrase to get started; include Christ in your summary sentence:
“Jesus wants you to see that he...and to respond by...”

Reflect on and then discuss answers to some or all of the following questions:

- 1) What is most challenging/convicting about this section of teaching? What is most encouraging?

- 2) How does this parable challenge or confirm my understanding (of God, the gospel, salvation, humans, sin, etc.)? What are some questions I have?

- 3) In what ways does this passage lead me to consider my need for Christ? How does this passage point me to Jesus's sufficiency for me? How does it point to his authority over me?

- 4) What is Jesus calling me to...
 - believe?
 - repent of?
 - feel or do?

What do I find particularly hard about this calling? What particular relationship in my life does this passage most directly address?

- 5) How does this passage lead me to trust God and his promises in Jesus?

- 6) How does this passage call on me to change the way I live, think, or feel? The way I pray?

- 7) What truths, promises, or pictures does it use to motivate trust and obedience? What promises or pictures does it use to warn of disobedience?

- 8) How might this passage particularly help a Christian who is...
 - straying?
 - idle?
 - fainthearted?
 - weak?
 - suffering?

(These categories are mostly drawn from 1 Thessalonians 5:14.)

Which is most relevant to you right now?

- 9) How does this passage inform or direct how I relate to...
- God through Jesus?
 - my church?
 - other believers?
 - the world?
- 10) What are ways my church community should be challenged and/or encouraged through this? How can I/we contribute to making that happen?
- 11) How does this passage lead me to worship?

Write a prayer in response to these things, about the specific response you see God calling you to.

Pray.

SESSION 4: LUKE 6:46–49

Pray. Read Luke 6:46–49:

46 “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? 47 Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. 49 But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

1) *Literary context:*

- a. How does this passage relate to what preceded it?
 - Is there any logical connecting word used (e.g., “for,” “therefore,” etc.)? If so, what relationship does it indicate?
 - Is this passage a new and unrelated topic?
 - Is it expanding on what came before (more detail/information)?
 - Is it giving reasons for what came before?
 - Is it building on what came before?
- b. Does this section compare/contrast with any previous section in particular?
- c. How does this serve as a fitting conclusion to the sermon as a whole?
- d. Are there other New Testament or any Old Testament passages, themes, or key doctrines alluded to? What part do these allusions play in the section? (background information? supporting evidence? fulfillment of prophecy? illustration? etc.)
- e. What have been some of the reactions Jesus has gotten to his teaching in this section of Luke? Does this shed any light on what Jesus teaches here?
- f. What are the words, if any, you need to look up? Write down any definitions you find here. (You could look them up in other parts of the Bible or refer to a Bible dictionary or commentary.)
- g. Are there upcoming sections in the Gospel of Luke that seem particularly relevant or are clearly related to this section of the Sermon on the Mount?

2) *Historical Context*

- a. What are some of the life circumstances Jesus references in this section of the Sermon related to the historical context of first-century Israel?
- b. Who is Jesus speaking to in this sermon? Is it a mixed group of some kind? What are some of the different types of hearers in his audience that he may be addressing in different ways through this same teaching?
- c. Given what we know about *Luke's* context in writing to the early church, might there be additional ways his record of Christ's teaching here applies to his original hearers in particular?

- 1) Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the text? Are there key connecting words (for, therefore, but, because, so that, etc.) that indicate the logical connections between ideas or sections?
- 2) Make a mini-outline of the structure of this section. Where are the main breaks? What are the overall points? Is there a key verse, as far as you can tell? If so, how can you tell?
- 3) Are there any key words or ideas (words that are repeated, words connected to major themes elsewhere in Scripture, words that refer to essential, foundational, saving realities)?
- 4) Are there any major *indicatives*? (An *indicative* is a statement about fact/truth—a statement that *indicates* something you should know—as opposed to a command. For example, “His divine power has given us everything we need” is an *indicative*. The most important indicatives in Scripture relate to *what God does*.)
- 5) Are there any major *imperatives* in this passage? What are they and how are they related to any indicatives, either before or after? (An *imperative* is a command/instruction—a statement about something you should do. For example, “Remember your creator in the days of your youth” is an *imperative*.) Even if there are few direct commands, are there any others *implied*?
- 6) What verb tenses (past, present, perfect, future) are used? How do the tenses affect Jesus’s message?
- 7) What surprises or “twists” are there, if any?
- 8) What is the main point or points? What is Jesus’s main goal for his hearers? In other words, what is the Jesus trying to get his readers to *know? believe? value? turn from or avoid? do?*
 - a. Try to summarize it in one sentence (e.g., “Jesus wants...”)
 - b. Does he say *why* he wants this? Does he say *how* they can do it?
 - c. Try to give this section a title of your own.

- 1) Two thousand years of church history have tried and proven the truth of Christ’s teachings. What are similarities and differences between the situation when Jesus first taught this and where we stand as Christians after his death, resurrection, and ascension?
- 2) What does this passage show us about *Jesus*, the one speaking these things? (Consider Luke’s presentation of who Jesus is, for example, in 3:22 and 4:16–21).
- 3) Are there any direct references to the gospel—the person and work of **Christ**? The power and work of the **Holy Spirit**? The goodness and plan of the **Father**? List out some of these things if they’re present in the text. Which aspect of the gospel seems most prominent?
- 4) How might Jesus’s tone inform how we listen and how we think about how God relates to us?
- 5) How does this teaching highlight or relate to our need for Jesus? Jesus’s work in us? Jesus’s work for us?
- 6) How is this passage a *proclamation/explanation* of the gospel (telling the Good News) and/or an *application/implication* of the gospel (what the Good News means we should do or be)? What would be different about reading this passage if salvation were not only through faith in Christ alone?
- 7) If this passage is mainly an *imperative* about what you should do for Christ, how is that grounded in the *indicative* of who Christ is for you?
- 8) Fill out the Law-Gospel chart below with some preliminary observations (you can get more specific in the Application step).

How does this “Law” show us...			
our standard? (what God requires of us)	our sin? (how we’ve sinned and need to repent; our need for grace)	our Savior? (how Christ fulfills this law, dies for our breaking it, rises to set us free)	our Spirit-empowered calling? (what we are called to and able to grow in, by the power of the Spirit?)

- 9) Try to sum up the meaning and application of this passage with reference to Christ by using the following phrase to get started; include Christ in your summary sentence:
“Jesus wants you to see that he...and to respond by...”

Reflect on and then discuss answers to some or all of the following questions:

- 1) What is most challenging/convicting about this section of teaching? What is most encouraging?
- 2) How does this parable challenge or confirm my understanding (of God, the gospel, salvation, humans, sin, etc.)? What are some questions I have?
- 3) In what ways does this passage lead me to consider my need for Christ? How does this passage point me to Jesus's sufficiency for me? How does it point to his authority over me?
- 4) What is Jesus calling me to...
 - believe?
 - repent of?
 - feel or do?

What do I find particularly hard about this calling? What particular relationship in my life does this passage most directly address?

- 5) How does this passage lead me to trust God and his promises in Jesus?
- 6) How does this passage call on me to change the way I live, think, or feel? The way I pray?
- 7) What truths, promises, or pictures does it use to motivate trust and obedience? What promises or pictures does it use to warn of disobedience?
- 8) How might this passage particularly help a Christian who is...
 - straying?
 - idle?
 - fainthearted?
 - weak?
 - suffering?

(These categories are mostly drawn from 1 Thessalonians 5:14.)

Which is most relevant to you right now?

- 9) How does this passage inform or direct how I relate to...
- God through Jesus?
 - my church?
 - other believers?
 - the world?
- 10) What are ways my church community should be challenged and/or encouraged through this? How can I/we contribute to making that happen?
- 11) How does this passage lead me to worship?

Pray.

- 1) Jesus's Sermon on the Mount in Luke 6 starts with blessings and woes:

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" (v. 20).

"But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation" (v. 24).

Write a long list of blessings and woes that includes those from Luke 20:20–26, but add more based on the next sections of Jesus's Sermon on the Mount. Be sure to include not just the pronouncement (e.g., "Blessed are," "Woe to you/those"), but also the reason for it (e.g., "for you/they will...").

Try to keep in mind the following goals:

- Use creativity in *structure* if you want, but not in *content*—make sure the things you commend and warn against are drawn from the passage.
 - Don't lose sight of the gospel—are your blessings and woes ones that would lead us to Jesus, to his cross, to his gift of the Spirit?
- 2) Think of someone who might be encouraged and helped by your list of blessings and warnings. Consider sharing what you've come up with them, including a brief note of introduction and encouragement.
 - 3) Write a prayer of adoration, confession, thanks, and supplication to God your Father based on this Sermon you've studied.

Pray.

APPENDIX: SIMPLIFIED QUESTIONS

(Adapted from *One-to-One Bible Reading*, by David Helm, pp. 88–89)

For each segment of the study, you can use the following questions to guide your personal or group study:

Context:

- What can you learn about the person, people, or situation to which the Gospel of Luke is written/to which the Sermon on the Mount is addressed?
- Are there any clues about the circumstances under which it was written?
- Are there any relevant details about the circumstances under which Jesus gave this Sermon?
- What was the main point of the passage immediately before this one? Are there logical or thematic connections to the passage you are reading?

Observation:

- Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the text? Are there key connecting words (for, therefore, but, because) that indicate the logical flow of the passage?
- What images or metaphors does the author use? What do they indicate about God or the other people in the text? What might they indicate about modern readers?
- What surprises are there?
- What are the key words? What words or ideas are repeated?
- What is the main point or points? What supporting points does the author make?

Meaning:

- How does this text relate to other parts of the book?
- How does the passage relate to Jesus?
- What does this passage reveal about who Jesus is and what he came into the world to do?
- What does this teach us about God?
- How could we sum up the meaning of this passage in our own words?

Application:

- How does this passage challenge (or confirm) my understanding?
- Is there some attitude I need to change?
- How does this passage call on me to change the way I live?
- What does this passage teach me about being a disciple of Jesus?
- How does this passage point you to Jesus's sufficiency for you? How does it point to his authority over you?

Passage: _____

Context

We must understand the context in order to see how the original audience understood the text. When we understand how the original audience understood a text, then we can understand how it applies to us today.

Ask:

“What is the *literary* context?” (The genre of writing; the verses/chapters before and after)

“What is the *historical* context?” (The situation of the original audience)

“Why is this text here?” Why is it in this place, in this chapter, in this book?

“How does the context inform my understanding of this text?”

Structure

The structure (or organization) of a text will reveal an emphasis. That emphasis will help to discern the main idea and lead to application.

Ask:

“How is this text organized? What are the parts? Where are the key moments, words, images?”

“How do the parts fit together?”

“What emphasis does the structure reveal?”

Connection to Jesus Christ

If the Bible is all about God's redemptive plan as revealed in Jesus Christ, then we must see how our text legitimately connects to the saving gospel message so we know how to live as Christians.

Ask:

“How does this text point forward to, back to, or up to the person and work of Christ?”

Application

God speaks in his Word. He has purposes for his glory and our good in what he says. We have not fully understood a passage if we do not respond to it.

Ask:

“How does this passage, in light of Christ, apply to me and others in my context and situation? How should I respond?”

Passage: _____

Context

We must understand the context in order to see how the original audience understood the text. When we understand how the original audience understood a text, then we can understand how it applies to us today.

Ask:

“What is the *literary* context?” (The genre of writing; the verses/chapters before and after)

“What is the *historical* context?” (The situation of the original audience)

“Why is this text here?” Why is it in this place, in this chapter, in this book?

“How does the context inform my understanding of this text?”

Structure

The structure (or organization) of a text will reveal an emphasis. That emphasis will help to discern the main idea and lead to application.

Ask:

“How is this text organized? What are the parts? Where are the key moments, words, images?”

“How do the parts fit together?”

“What emphasis does the structure reveal?”

Connection to Jesus Christ

If the Bible is all about God's redemptive plan as revealed in Jesus Christ, then we must see how our text legitimately connects to the saving gospel message so we know how to live as Christians.

Ask:

“How does this text point forward to, back to, or up to the person and work of Christ?”

Application

God speaks in his Word. He has purposes for his glory and our good in what he says. We have not fully understood a passage if we do not respond to it.

Ask:

“How does this passage, in light of Christ, apply to me and others in my context and situation? How should I respond?”

Passage: _____

Context

We must understand the context in order to see how the original audience understood the text. When we understand how the original audience understood a text, then we can understand how it applies to us today.

Ask:

“What is the *literary* context?” (The genre of writing; the verses/chapters before and after)

“What is the *historical* context?” (The situation of the original audience)

“Why is this text here?” Why is it in this place, in this chapter, in this book?

“How does the context inform my understanding of this text?”

Structure

The structure (or organization) of a text will reveal an emphasis. That emphasis will help to discern the main idea and lead to application.

Ask:

“How is this text organized? What are the parts? Where are the key moments, words, images?”

“How do the parts fit together?”

“What emphasis does the structure reveal?”

Connection to Jesus Christ

If the Bible is all about God's redemptive plan as revealed in Jesus Christ, then we must see how our text legitimately connects to the saving gospel message so we know how to live as Christians.

Ask:

“How does this text point forward to, back to, or up to the person and work of Christ?”

Application

God speaks in his Word. He has purposes for his glory and our good in what he says. We have not fully understood a passage if we do not respond to it.

Ask:

“How does this passage, in light of Christ, apply to me and others in my context and situation? How should I respond?”

Passage: _____

Context

We must understand the context in order to see how the original audience understood the text. When we understand how the original audience understood a text, then we can understand how it applies to us today.

Ask:

“What is the *literary* context?” (The genre of writing; the verses/chapters before and after)

“What is the *historical* context?” (The situation of the original audience)

“Why is this text here?” Why is it in this place, in this chapter, in this book?

“How does the context inform my understanding of this text?”

Structure

The structure (or organization) of a text will reveal an emphasis. That emphasis will help to discern the main idea and lead to application.

Ask:

“How is this text organized? What are the parts? Where are the key moments, words, images?”

“How do the parts fit together?”

“What emphasis does the structure reveal?”

Connection to Jesus Christ

If the Bible is all about God's redemptive plan as revealed in Jesus Christ, then we must see how our text legitimately connects to the saving gospel message so we know how to live as Christians.

Ask:

“How does this text point forward to, back to, or up to the person and work of Christ?”

Application

God speaks in his Word. He has purposes for his glory and our good in what he says. We have not fully understood a passage if we do not respond to it.

Ask:

“How does this passage, in light of Christ, apply to me and others in my context and situation? How should I respond?”

