



The Bible

A New Men's Ministry

for the men in your congregation

by

Greg Alexander

Director of Disciples Men and

Alex Ruth

Associate Director of Disciples Men



Welcome to The Jesus Way: *The Bible*

The *Jesus Way* equips men to live life in a way that reflects the principles and priorities Jesus himself lived by.

Each man is uniquely gifted by God. God established life principles and priorities foundational to realizing our giftedness. Jesus shows us the way. This ministry takes men on that journey. In this study, the second of *The Jesus Way* study resources, we focus on the Bible as the fundamental resource to discover these life principles and priorities.

The Jesus Way journey will enrich each man's life and the lives of those around him. Each man will rediscover God's unique purpose for his life and what active citizenship in the realm of God can mean for his life.

In 2020, *The Jesus Way* will launch a total of six new studies for men. Webinars on how best to establish *The Jesus Way* ministry in your congregation are available on our website, www.jesuswaymen.net. These resources are designed to establish and enhance a congregation's overall ministry to and with men.

Additional web-based resources are available to assist congregational and middle-judicatory leaders to implement this ministry.

The major developers of *The Jesus Way* are Greg Alexander and Alex Ruth, respectively the Director and Associate Director of Disciples Men.

Disciples Men is a ministry of Disciples Home Missions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the US and Canada.

These are important and exciting times in Men's ministry! We pray you will join us as we journey on *The Jesus Way*!

Content

The Jesus Way study materials are divided into five sections of five sessions each. There are twenty-five sessions in all. The sections are:

- Section 1 – ***What Is It*** – The Bible comes with a lot of cultural baggage. In this section we help set aside some of that baggage and focus on the basics of the Bible and its importance to us.
- Section 2 – ***1st Testament*** – The 1st (Old) Testament is Israel’s faith history, which makes it our faith history. This is the tradition from which Jesus came. He saw himself as the fulfillment of this history, not its replacement. Here, we will spend time gaining a brief historical overview of the 1st Testament and its importance to Christians today.
- Section 3 – ***2nd Testament*** – The 2nd (New) Testament is the story of Jesus and the early church. Here, we will explore the different kinds of literature that make up the 2nd Testament and each type’s importance to our faith development.
- Section 4 – ***A Deeper Dive*** – Here, we will actually take a deeper dive into one of Paul’s letters, *The Letter to the Philippians*, as a way of demonstrating how to actually engage the richness of the Bible to deeper and develop our faith.
- Section 5 – ***The Psalms*** – *The Psalms* is the largest book of the Bible. It’s importance to the faith of Jews and Christians alike is hard to overstate. For centuries the Psalms has been the meditative, go-to resource of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Many use the Psalms as the bedrock texts for daily prayer. Here, we explore the richness, diversity, and power of this treasured book.

Best Practices for Implementing The Jesus Way: The Bible

1. This resource works best in groups of seven to ten men.
2. There is no “teacher.” This is a shared leadership approach. A different man in the group should be invited to lead each session.
3. While there is no “teacher” each group should have a convener responsible for:
 - making sure each man has the necessary materials;
 - notifying each group member of gathering/activity date, times, and places; and,
 - making sure the covenanted amount of time for each session is honored or renegotiated.
4. It is recommended that each man have a personal journey for recording pertinent ideas, insights, etc. throughout The Jesus Way journey. The kind of notebook or journal used is up to each man.
5. The group convener will lead the first session. At the very first session he will spend time at the beginning doing introductions, an exercise for getting better acquainted, and setting the ground rules for the gatherings. Be creative with this time.
6. Each week, when gathered, it is recommended that the leader for the session spend a few minutes for prayer concerns, sharing any pertinent news of those gathered, and offering an opening prayer. Keep this time appropriately brief!
7. The leader for the week will begin the study with “Making Ready” at the agreed upon start time. Please be respectful of each man by starting and stopping on time.

8. Follow the session as presented, sharing reading responsibilities among the men in the group. If a group chooses to read the materials silently, that is fine, just allow for different reading speeds among those present.
9. Take the necessary time to talk through each exercise or topic. Do not be locked into finishing each session in the allotted time. It makes for a great experience if the group chooses to stop at the appointed time and pick up the discussion where left off the next gathering. Do not place artificial time constraints in completing the materials. The richness of this experience is in the dialogue. Allow the conversations and discussions to conclude naturally.
10. The sections are divided in such a way as to allow any man to exit at the end of a section should the man feel led to do so. We pray no man will leave the group but sometimes the need arises. Honor each man's decision.
11. Make it your own! Enjoy the journey!



The Bible—What Is It

1.1 The Word of God

Take some time to get know each other a little better. As a suggested way to do that, try to recall your first time you remember hearing the Bible read. Who read it? Do you remember anything else about hearing it read that first time?

Gathering Together

1. Do you have any Bibles in your house? Where do you keep them?
2. What is the first Bible you ever owned?
3. Has anyone ever given you a special Bible?

A Reading

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

Reflection

The Jesus Way is a journey to live our lives in better ways, with greater sensitivity to how God has called us to live as men in today's world. This journey is designed to refine the skills and sharpen our practice of being Christians. This process will take time and it will be hard work for your group. The Jesus Way is about being ready to do what's needed when the task needs to be done and following simple instructions. Those who strive to live the Jesus Way don't just follow instructions — they apply their knowledge in order to develop their skills. It will take knowledge of the Bible. The Bible is a gift from God so that we can understand God's will for our lives. It is also a big book of old stories about believers (and lots of non-believers, too!) who lived in other places and other times. They can seem very far away from our lives. The Bible is not easy to read, but it is a gift from God.

Some Christians today treat the Bible like it's a sacred object. It isn't. A Journeyman knows that the Bible is a tool — a very special tool, but just a tool. We must be careful not to confuse the Bible with God; only God is worthy of worship, and the Bible is a tool for the worship of God. Knowing the Bible is a step toward a stronger Christian life, but it's only a step.

The Bible is God's message. Sometimes we call it the word of God. But it's a big message. Actually, it is more like a library of books organized into two big parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is more than twice as long as the New Testament. There are 66 books in all.

Some of the books are complete stories written by one person at one time, but some of them are more like collections themselves. Each book is divided into chapters and verses. (Well, a couple of short ones have only one chapter, but those are the exceptions.) When someone refers to a Bible verse, they will say something like "John 3:16." That means the book of John, chapter 3, verse 16. Your Bible — any Bible — will have a table of contents in front, and there will probably be a list in alphabetical order. That's how you can find the book of John. Then find chapter 3, then look for verse 16.

Some of you may have the books of the Bible memorized, in order. That's great, and it will save you time and give you confidence down the line. But the table of contents works just fine too!

Why do you think the Bible is so important for Christians?

Have someone get a Bible and read out loud Luke 8:4-8. (This is a story that Jesus told.) Now stop and talk about what this means. It may be difficult.

In fact, if you read ahead to verses 9-10, you'll see that it's supposed to be difficult!

Now have someone read Luke 8:11-15. Here, Jesus explains the parable. (Don't get your hopes up — most things in the Bible don't have such easy explanations!) The point here is that the word of God is like a seed. It's not a magic seed. It takes a willing listener. Seeds are only good when they grow, and in the same way the Bible is useful only when you read it and listen to it, take it inside you, and let it grow. Bible knowledge can help you be a better Christian, but it will take time and practice. And remember that the point isn't just to have lots of impressive Bible knowledge — the point is to let the Word of God live in you, the Jesus Way!

Jesus said that sometimes God's truth comes in parables, so that believers will be able to know the secrets while others don't (Luke 8:9-10).

Is the Bible like this? Will knowing the Bible take hard work, a gift from God, or both?

Sometimes, people who know a lot about the Bible use their knowledge to make other Christians feel stupid or inadequate.

Has this every happened to you? Briefly tell about that experience.

Think again about what Jesus said about the word of God in the parable told in Luke.

How should we use our knowledge of the Bible?

Connecting with Jesus

Close your session with prayer. Thank God for each man's life in the group. Ask God to open your mind and heart to the wonders and challenges of the Bible.

Living the Jesus Way

1. During the week, spend a few minutes each day with your Bible. You can download a Bible app to your cell phone or on your browser go to a site like www.bible.oresmus.org. It is a free and feature rich app. (Note: There are many Bible translations. Unless noted, all Bible readings will come from the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV] of the Bible. This is our recommended translation to use.)

2. Study the table of contents of your Bible to familiarize yourself with the names of the books.
3. Go through your house and find all the Bibles you have. Compare them and see how they are alike and different — old and new, traditional and modern. Where did each one come from?

Next lesson: Inspiration

(Don't forget to bring a Bible!)

Field Notes: