

FOUNDER OF DAUGHTER OF DELIGHT
ELLE CARDEL

She Delights

BIBLE
STUDY

A FIVE-WEEK
JOURNEY TO
FINDING JOY
IN CHRIST





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BIBLE STUDY

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She Delights Bible Study: A Five-Week Journey to Finding Joy in Christ

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Introduction

HI, FRIEND! I'm Elle Cardel (yep, it rhymes), a sinner saved by God's glorious grace, wife to my college sweetheart, Michael, and mom to our sweet little loves, Selah and Aidan. I am also the founder of the online women's ministry Daughter of Delight, which supplies women with daily, Bible-based devotionals and gospel-centered resources to aid them in their faith walk. (Be sure to check out the *Daughter of Delight* podcast!) This study was born from my passion for teaching women Bible literacy. Needless to say, I am so glad you are here.

She Delights Bible Study can be done on its own, but I also wrote a companion book called *She Delights* that will make this experience even sweeter when you read that book alongside this study. I also recommend having your Bible, some pens, and a journal on hand. This is going to be an interactive experience and one that I pray is very rewarding and fruitful for you!

This is a five-week study. Every week, we will begin with a video teaching. Each week will include five days of study, with a two-day break before the next one begins. Video sessions can be found at TyndaleChristianResources.com. Whether you choose to go through this study individually or with a group, here are some tips to get the most out of it:

- Spend time in prayer before and after each session.
- Do what you can to remove distractions so you can remain focused during your time in this study.
- Be willing to be challenged.
- Have some of your favorite snacks on hand!
- If you are doing this study as a group, select someone to help facilitate conversation and keep you focused each time you gather.

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Before you get started, know this: this study and its participants have been covered in so much prayer. We serve a God who makes no mistakes, and I believe it was His intention for you to hold this book in your hands.

It is no secret we live in a world that proudly feasts upon the lie that we can find the fulfillment our souls long for—if we delight in the pleasures of the flesh. A world that tells us the joy and satisfaction we desire in this life can be something mustered from within.

But as a people set apart in Christ, we know this could not be any further from the truth.

The world says we've got things backward and upside down, and you know what? It's right.

But in Christ, having things upside down is a good thing. A set-apart thing. Serving the unshakable, upside-down Kingdom of our righteous and holy God is why we are here.

The irony of Jesus conquering the spiritual forces of evil in order to establish His Kingdom is this: it was the ones He died for who nailed Him to the cross. In Christ, to be a leader means to be a servant. In His Kingdom, the first shall be last, suffering leads to glory, we love our enemies, and we forgive those who offend us—not just once, but seventy times seven times.

Walking in the light of Christ is completely countercultural. It will never make sense in the eyes of the world.

As we seek to be women who live in the world but are not of it, it is vital that we place our delight in the hands and heart of the One who deserves it. The One who took the death we deserve so we could be reconciled to the Father and dwell eternally with Him.

If we are not consistently immersing ourselves in the truths of God's Word and actively practicing the disciplines of delight that we find within it, we will soon find ourselves delighting in the things of this world.

My prayer for this study is that God would increase your desire to know Him and make His name known. That you would grow in your desire for and understanding of the importance of feasting on sound doctrine, imitating Christ, hating what is

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evil, spreading the gospel, and walking in a manner that is worthy of the holy calling you have received.

This study is not a call to perfection. It is a grace-filled invitation to seek first the Kingdom of God in all of life. It is an invitation to participate in the things that are holy and right and good in the eyes of the Lord: the things that will increase your delight in and love for Him and that God will use to fashion you into the likeness of Christ.

Thank you for entrusting me with your time and for the opportunity to lead you. May the Lord use *She Delights Bible Study* to bless you, challenge you, and grow you in your delight of His glorious ways. May God use our time together to convict us and increase our joy in being His daughters of delight.

Soli Deo Gloria!

SESSION 1 VIEWER GUIDE

Pursue Sound Doctrine

Recommended Reading: Chapters 1 and 2 of *She Delights*

notes

PREPARING FOR THE SESSION: As you prepare to get started, reflect on and/or discuss the following questions:

- What role does God’s Word play in your life right now?
- How would you define “sound doctrine”?
- What struggles or questions do you have when it comes to Bible study?

DURING THE SESSION: Use the space above to jot down notes from Elle’s teaching.

TAKEAWAY TIME: What stood out to you most about this session?

PRAY: End your time in prayer, thanking God for the powerful, life-changing gift that is His Word!



Why Sound Doctrine?

“IF YOU’RE PRAYING FOR IT, IT’S GOING TO HAPPEN.”

I was sitting in a coffee shop working on the proposal for my first book when I heard these very words spoken from across the room.

I looked up to see two brothers in Christ sitting in the corner, one encouraging the other with this well-intentioned but spiritually toxic statement.

Now, I’m not one to intentionally intrude on the conversations of others. I may be from the South, but I really *was* minding my own business! For some reason, though, the Lord often uses coffee shops to open my eyes to the need for greater biblical literacy among Christians. The irony here is, I’m often working on biblical literacy resources (like this study, for example) while I’m in these coffee shops. Perhaps it’s God’s way of keeping my flame lit for teaching women how to study the Bible.

In full transparency, there was a lengthy season of my life when I would not have seen anything wrong with the statement I overheard. A time where I would have found a tremendous amount of comfort and encouragement in those words.

I am so thankful this is no longer the case.

This statement is simply not biblically accurate. Perhaps this man was referring to James 4:2, which says, “You do not have, because you do not ask.” If we read this as a stand-alone verse, it is easy to see how we could think it means that God will give us what we want as long as we ask for it. However, reading the verse in context reveals that this is not at all what James is getting at. If you read James 4:1-3, you will see that the people James addressed here were covetous, to the point where they were willing to fight—even kill—in order to get what they wanted. Any prayers from the lips of these people were spoken from a place of selfish gain.

Here’s the thing: just because we eagerly pray for something does not guarantee God is going to give it to us. This is because God does not delight in our selfish

desires; He delights in giving us what He knows we truly need (see Psalm 145:9; Philippians 4:19). Just because something we pray for seems good to us does not mean it *is* good for us. Nor does God invite us to participate in a reward system that determines what He does and does not do for us.

Everything God does—*absolutely, positively everything*—derives from His perfect and sovereign will. This is nothing short of good news for us!

The reality of being human is that our desires do not always align with God's desires. This is the case for me more often than not. Our emotions are fickle things, and if we are honest with ourselves, it can be easier to base the decisions we make on how we are feeling rather than on God's Word.

Thankfully, we do not serve a God who does what He wants based on how He wakes up feeling each day. Unlike our emotions, God never changes. This should offer us a tremendous amount of comfort!

But I get it.

I know how challenging it can be to trust in the Lord over our emotions. Our emotions are not inherently bad. After all, God gave them to us, and He makes no mistakes. Emotions are a very real part of being human. Although they do not belong on the throne of our hearts like our great God does, there is a purpose and place for them. We just have to make sure we don't place them above the Lord.

The more we plant ourselves in the Word, the easier this becomes.

When we are not actively saturating our hearts in Scripture, our desire to live in alignment with God's will begins to fade and, once again, our gaze turns back on ourselves.

But when we choose to fill our hearts with the truths of God's Word, the opposite begins to take place. We start to understand what it means to truly delight in the Lord. We begin to embrace and rejoice in the truth that God only has His best in mind for us, even when it may not appear that way. We find ourselves believing the words of 1 John 5:14-15, which says if we pray with confidence—"if we ask anything according to his will"—"he hears us," and "we have the requests that we have asked of him." This means praying "Thy will be done" from a place of utmost surrender and trust in the Father's heart.

No matter how a situation turns out, our desire for God's will should always take

PURSUE SOUND DOCTRINE

precedence over the temptation to do things our way. For only the One who first breathed life into us—the One who first loved us—knows what is best for His own. And thanks be to God for that, amen?

God has revealed exactly what He wants us to know through His holy, infallible Word. He gave us His Word to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (see Psalm 119:105).

Statements like “If you’re praying for it, it’s going to happen” draw us away from the heart of who God is, not closer.

The best way to be on guard against what sounds good about God but is not true—also known as a sugarcoated gospel—is to take on the responsibility of knowing what Scripture says.

I have said it before and I will say it again and again: in order to know God, we must know His Word.

Biblical illiteracy is not the answer. It simply does not sustain. When I get out of the habit of reading my Bible, nothing good comes from it. I become distracted with myself rather than attentive to the only One who deserves my focus. I become spiritually malnourished. Rather than being guided by the truths of God’s Word, I am guided by my fleeting emotions.

My sister, when we know the Word, we will know the truth God desires for us to live by.

When we know the Word, we will be able to discern whether something that feels and sounds good truly lines up with sound doctrine.

When we know the Word, we will be more equipped to remain steadfast in our fight against the ways of this world.

When we know the Word, we will become more like Christ. For the truth sets us free and changes us from the inside out.

Get to know the God of the Holy Scriptures. Delight in walking in obedience and sharing the Good News of the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ!

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Take a moment to reflect on where you are at in your Bible literacy journey, in addition to any goals you have for your time in this study.

DAY 1:

It Starts with Us

YOU ARE A THEOLOGIAN.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

Years ago, when I was a college student studying theology, if you would have asked me if I agreed with the above statement, I would have said no.

Me? A theologian? No way!

Often when we hear words like *theologian* or *theology*, our minds immediately jump to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, C. S. Lewis, R. C. Sproul, John Piper . . . the list goes on. But as wonderful as it is to glean from their wisdom, not everyone is a scholar.

Did you catch that? You do not have to be a scholar to be a theologian.

The word *theology* comes from combining two Greek words: *theos*, which means “God,” and *logos*, which means “word” or “reasoning.” When you put the two together, you have *theology*, our thoughts and understanding concerning God.

Here is what this means for us: any effort we put in to understand the Bible—spending time in the Word, sitting under the teachings of our pastor, engaging in conversation centered on God—literally anything we do to explore the truths of Scripture contributes to our theological understanding.

Therefore, you, my friend, are a theologian.

The most important question that immediately follows this realization should be “Is my theology rooted in sound doctrine?”

You Are a Theologian

When you hear the word *doctrine*, what comes to mind?

Before you start to feel overwhelmed by this word or roll your eyes at its dry lack of appeal, please let me explain why I believe it is so important—vital, even—for us to engage in the depths of doctrine.

Many people believe they can know God outside of Scripture. I believe we can experience God outside of His Word but knowing Him first starts within it. Too often, we take the wrongful approach of placing the responsibility to know what God's Word says in the hands of our preachers and Bible teachers, but this is not a healthy perspective to have. In fact, it places in the hands of people what only God can do in us through His Word, and this is incredibly dangerous. While there *is* a very necessary and vital role that the church plays in the Christian walk, knowing God's Word first starts with us and our Holy Father. To believe otherwise implies a belief that the Bible is not infallible. It encourages the believer to try to know Christ based on what they have been told by others, how they feel about Him, or how they think He operates rather than understanding who He is through the authoritative lens of Scripture. How are we to learn anything about Jesus at all if we are not immersed in the depth, beauty, and truth of God's Word? If we care about Jesus, we should also care about doctrine and theology. As Jesus says in Matthew 4:4, "People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (NLT).

In Matthew 22:37-38, Jesus says, "You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment" (NLT).

In order to genuinely love and authentically worship God, we must know who He is. We cannot love someone without first knowing them. We cannot be changed by truth if we do not know it. A quote I once stumbled upon by A. W. Tozer says, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."¹

What comes to mind when you think about God? Take some time to reflect on this question and write out your thoughts below. Be honest with yourself. It's just you and the Lord here. (And He already knows and loves you, no matter what!)

The Impact of Our Theology

So how do we love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, and mind? How do we obey the first and greatest commandment?

By picking up our Bibles and planting ourselves in them. By concerning ourselves with biblical theology—the study of the doctrines found in Scripture—and delighting in the opportunity to know God in the ways He reveals Himself to us through His Word. By caring enough to know what we believe and why we believe it as a result of our time in the Word.

In Matthew 22:39, Jesus continues with, “A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (NLT).

Do you know what this means?

Our theology not only influences our understanding and worship of God but the way we love others as well! The more we seek to understand God’s character and be fashioned in His likeness, the better we can love others as God loves us.

My sister, biblical theology is a prerequisite for godly living. It impacts *every* facet of life:

- How we worship.
- How we speak.
- How much time we spend in the Bible.
- How we respond to a needy friend when we are exhausted.
- How we mother our children and tend to our home.

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- How we invest in the church.
- What we prioritize.
- How we express our emotions.
- How we pour into others.
- How we steward our finances.
- How we view ourselves.

The list is endless, isn't it?

What else would you add to this list?

As our love for theology grows and permeates the things we do, let us not forget this:

The call to be theologians is not for the sake of debating divisive subjects or priding ourselves on knowing everything about the Bible. (Note: theology does not hold all the answers to our questions.) It is for the sake of knowing, embodying, and glorifying Christ in all of life. It is for the sake of love. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 8:1, “While knowledge makes us feel important, it is love that strengthens the church” (NLT).

Read 2 Timothy 3:16 and take heart in its truths as you fill in the blanks below:

All Scripture is _____ by God and is useful to _____
us what is _____ and to make us realize what is _____
in our lives. It _____ us when we are _____
and _____ us to do what is _____. (NLT)

PURSUE SOUND DOCTRINE

All of Scripture—not just some of it—is God-breathed, God-inspired, and alive. It was written for God’s glory, our good, and the good of others!

May we be women of God who love Him enough to delight in knowing Him through His Word, who embrace and embody a sound theology that is rooted in truth and love for all the world to see.

Jot down any thoughts, questions, or concerns you have related to biblical theology.

Write down how you would respond to someone if they asked you, “Why is biblical theology important?”

Is there anything holding you back from diving into the depths of God’s Word?

Get excited! Tomorrow we are going to begin exploring the necessary steps for pursuing sound biblical theology. I cannot wait to dive into all the goodness with you!

DAY 2:

How Not to Read Your Bible

I AM CONVINCED THAT SATAN is on a mission to make us believe the Bible is centered on us.

But this could not be any further from the truth.

There is a wrong way to read the Bible, and it is done when we make ourselves the focus of God's Word instead of God Himself. When we do this, the intent of Scripture gets obscured, and our view of God is diminished. We glorify ourselves over the One who deserves all the glory, honor, and praise.

My friend, the Bible is not a self-help book. From its first page to its last, every word of Scripture is about God.

Who He is.

How He operates.

What He longs for us to know about Him.

All these things are found in the gift of His Word to His people.

The truths of Scripture do not always feel good to read. They will often offend the flesh. But as we lean in to seeking God through Scripture in the ways that He intends, my prayer for both you and me is that we would allow the things that don't feel good to humble us and leave us in awe of who He is. For He is perfect in all His attributes and all His ways.

I'm not saying the Bible does not speak to who we are and reveal the path we are called to walk. It does indeed do this! But if we open our Bibles and first look for *ourselves* instead of searching for our Father, we misunderstand the purpose and gift of God's Word. If we first ask "What does this mean for me?" instead of "God, what does this passage reveal about who You are?" we will certainly risk misinterpreting the text.

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Take the story of David and Goliath, for example. If we read this story with only the question of “What does this mean for me?” (see the eisegesis section below), we instantly place ourselves in David’s shoes and view Goliath as the trial in life we are currently facing. If we sling our stones—which represent our faith in this case—we are able to overcome said trial. That doesn’t sound so bad, does it? What it is actually doing, however, is making ourselves rather than God the savior of the story and encouraging us to continue reading biblical narratives in this way.

If we read the story of David and Goliath correctly (see the exegesis section below), meaning we approach Scripture with the question of “What is God revealing about Himself here?,” the outcome is much different. By exploring the historical and literary context of this passage, we learn that many of the events of David’s life foreshadowed the life of Jesus. The story of David and Goliath points to the reality that Jesus is the only one who can prevail against the dominion of darkness and the power of Satan.

Scripture tells us who we are in light of who God is. Knowing God enables us to know ourselves, to recognize how perfect and selfless He is and how depraved and sinful we are.

If our time in the Word is not reflective of this truth, if it does not lead us to behold God’s glory, we are missing the mark. We are being pushed further and further away from the story God has put on full display in Scripture: His plan to rescue His people from sin through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ.

The purpose of reading the stories that fill the pages of Scripture is not just learning from the ordinary people found in them or putting ourselves in their shoes, but rather encountering the One to whom their stories point and reveal—the central character of the Bible and the One our lives should be centered around: Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. I like to think of it this way: the Old Testament points to Jesus, whereas the New Testament reveals Jesus. For example, Isaiah 53:3 prophesies, “He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care” (NLT). The fulfillment of this prophecy is found through the person of Christ, as revealed in John 1:10-11: “He came into the very world he created, but the world

didn't recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him" (NLT). *Everything* is connected to Jesus!

I don't know about you, but I want to read God's Word in a way that asks *How does this point me to my need for Christ?* in such a way that it humbles me and draws me closer to Him and away from myself.

The gospel changes *everything*. May the power of God at work in us and our time spent in His Word be reflective of this truth.

Identifying Eisegesis

Read John 5:16-18 and 5:39-40. Describe what happens.

The Jewish leaders we read of here approached Scripture believing it offered them eternal life apart from Jesus. *Yikes!* This is why Jesus very clearly tells them that all of Scripture points to Him—because they were reading it for their own selfish gain. One commentator puts it like this: “They read it not to search for God but to find arguments to support their own positions. They did not really love God; they loved their own ideas about him.”¹

Describe a time when you misused Scripture to justify how you felt about something, or a time when you witnessed someone else do this. What did you learn from the experience?

PURSUE SOUND DOCTRINE

The word *eisegesis* describes what the Jewish leaders were doing, and what many Christians today continue to do. Eisegesis refers to the practice of inserting one's own ideas into Scripture. The tendency with eisegesis is to interpret Scripture in a way that reflects one's own bias and beliefs rather than what it actually means. When we eisegete Scripture, we force it to give us what we want, to say things it does not really say.

In order to know who we are, we must first know who God is. Let us not miss the mark on this. Eternal life is not found in reading Scriptures with our own bias, like the Jewish leaders believed. It is found through the One whom the Scriptures proclaim! It is found in knowing and beholding our eternal, everlasting, unchanging, and almighty God. The Bible is how God reveals Himself to us. Everything else unfolds from this understanding.

Exploring Exegesis

As we work to refrain from eisegesis, let us focus our efforts on exegesis. Whereas eisegesis gives us what we want, exegesis gives us what we need—and what our Father in heaven wants us to have—the powerful, authoritative truths of His Word.

Read Hebrews 4:12 and 2 Timothy 3:16. Based on these verses, why is Bible study important?

What challenges do you currently face in your Bible study? Why do you struggle in those areas?

What excites you most about reading and studying God's Word?

In Christ, we have the wisdom and influence of God's Word and the power of His Holy Spirit in us! We are complete in Him alone. Hallelujah!

That said, our flesh will attempt to tell us otherwise. We must live aware of our nature to seek what is wrong and fleeting. We must always be on guard. A sugar-coated gospel may make us feel good, but it has severe long-term effects. It robs us of greater opportunities to connect with Christ. It robs us of truly knowing God.

May this not be the case for us. May we be women who delight in theology, the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom in Christ!

For the rest of our time together this week, we will explore how to properly read, study, and apply the truths of God's Word to all of life. I am both eager and excited to walk through this together. And get excited because tomorrow is just the beginning!

DAY 3:

Questioning Scripture

WELCOME TO DAY THREE of laying the foundation for a joyful pursuit of sound doctrine! So far, we have explored the need for and importance of this life-changing gift, in addition to what God says about His Word. Our theology—our understanding of who God is, how He works, and who we are in light of who He is and what He has done for us—impacts *everything* we do.

The beautiful gift of sound doctrine offers us so much:

- It encourages and edifies.
- It fashions us in Christ's likeness.
- It instills the glorious hope of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- It offers us a direct line of communication to God the Father!

Over the course of the next three days, we are going to explore some tried-and-true steps for studying and applying God's Word to all of life.

The steps I will share with you are both simple and necessary. Although they are straightforward, they require intentionality and effort. This is where things can start to get a little (or a lot) tricky.

There is no overnight quick fix when it comes to opening our Bibles as much as we would like to. Like anything else, this is a discipline. We must be patient and gracious with ourselves every step of the way and look to the Lord for the strength to remain steadfast.

As we work toward building and implementing the spiritual discipline of intimately knowing our Father in heaven through His Word, I want to encourage you to focus not on your motivation (or lack thereof) as the source of fuel for the journey, but on God's grace and glory.

If you are struggling to get into the Word because the desire to do so is just not there, please hear me when I say you are not alone. This is a very real example of the war raging between our flesh and spirit. There will be days we give in and choose not to pick up our Bible. When this happens, take heart, for God's grace abounds. Praise Him!

Just as the opportunity to know God is a gift, the opportunity to try again when we fail is too.

Be fueled by the Father's grace and glory and how He continues to reveal Himself to you, my sister. His strength is made perfect in our every weakness.

Spend some time writing down the truth-filled words of 2 Corinthians 12:9 on repeat until they feel like a breath of fresh air and a balm to your soul.

Yield your heart to God's and ask that His strength would be made your own as you pick up your Bible and prepare to dive in.

You will have no regrets in doing so. This I promise you. Your Father in heaven awaits your presence!

Embracing Our Questions

I can remember having questions about Scripture and feeling embarrassed.

Even when I was a child, Satan was at war with my mind, trying to convince me that I should know better; that my questions would make me look like I didn't really know my Bible. Insecurity almost always took over and kept me quiet, as my list of questions continued to silently grow over time.

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Whether we show up to the Word unprepared or armed and ready to give our best attempt at undistracted time in His presence, the questions will come.

When they do, know this: God delights in the ways you are searching to know and understand Him. Your questions are a reflection of this truth. Satan wants you to focus on fear and shame—anything that will lead you away from time spent in the Word—but the Lord wants you to feel free to ask whatever it is that comes to mind. He knows your heart, my sister. He wants you near.

The beauty of asking questions and putting time and effort into understanding them through the lens of Scripture is that growth and maturation will follow. The more time we spend in God's Word, the more we will grow in our knowledge of God and the things He desires for us to know—and the more we will be shaped and strengthened by His Word. Our efforts will surely be blessed!

Does this mean Scripture will answer all of our questions? Certainly not. God does not promise us that the answer to every question is found within His Word. Is that a mistake on His part? Certainly not. God has revealed in the Bible exactly what He wants us to know. The truth is, you will likely have unanswered questions for the rest of your days on this side of heaven. (Hey, welcome to the club!)

But one day, when we're face-to-face with Jesus, it will *all make sense*. We may not be able to see the bigger picture right now, but one day we will receive the understanding our souls crave. Peace and joy will flood our hearts in ways that we have not yet known. What a wonderful day this will be!

Take a moment to write down, *shame-free*, any questions concerning Scripture or the character of God you desire to explore.

Keep seeking and asking, my sister. Keep drawing near. The Lord will meet you and bless your efforts.

Speaking of questions, let's take a look at some helpful and important questions

to ask as we spend time studying the Word. These questions will offer both clarity and confidence, and perhaps bring even more questions to the surface in our journey toward understanding Scripture.

The Ask Phase

I recommend asking three types of questions whenever you read Scripture. They are:

1. What is the historical context?
2. What is the literary context?
3. What additional questions do I have about the text?

Context is key when it comes to our Bible study! Say it with me: *Context is key!* Knowing the who, what, when, where, and why of Scripture helps us to understand the original setting it was written in and the original audience it was written to. Knowing the context of Scripture helps us to avoid misinterpreting and misusing it. It paves the way for the Bible to speak for itself. It is only when we understand the originality of a passage that we can faithfully apply its takeaways to the modern day.

The Historical Context

Did you enjoy history growing up? I found it interesting at times but mostly boring, if I am being honest. However, now that I am older, and especially where Scripture is concerned, I get excited about it.

One of the best ways to gain an understanding of the timeless truths of Scripture is to explore the historicity behind it. Each book of the Bible was written at a specific time. Familiarizing ourselves with the historical background is necessary as we journey through Scripture.

The historical context refers to the time a passage was written, who it was written by, who it was written for, where it was written, and what the culture was like during this time period.

Putting in the work to understand the context can feel tedious at times, but it is so rewarding! When we do this, we notice things we would otherwise miss out on.

We learn to see the passage in the ways its intended audience would have received it. And I don't know about you, but I want to know as much about Scripture as there is to know!

Take Revelation 3:17, for example. Referring to the city of Laodicea, Jesus calls them "blind and naked." Laodicea was a city known for its fine linens and eye salves. This city was prospering, and its residents had a high view of themselves. Jesus struck at the heart of their pride, saying that although they might have the clearest vision and be the best dressed physically, spiritually they were the most blind and naked people He knew. They were in need of what only He could offer them.

It would be impossible to make this connection without first learning about Laodicea during the time Revelation was written.

No matter what part of Scripture we study, we can discover implications like these when we seek the historical context.

When we come to a historical passage, it's helpful to ask the five Ws: who, what, when, where, and why.

- Who wrote this?
- What was the culture/political climate like during this time?
- When was this written?
- Where was this written?
- Why did the author write this?

Perhaps you are thinking, *These are fine questions and all, Elle, but how do I find the answers to them?*

Ah, I'm so very glad you asked, my friend!

Answering these questions without the proper resources can feel *very* overwhelming and nearly impossible (and understandably so). Here are some resources I recommend having on hand as you immerse yourself in the historical context pertaining to a specific passage of Scripture.

- study Bible
- Bible dictionary

- Bible encyclopedia
- commentaries

If you can only invest in one of these things, I highly recommend researching and purchasing a good study Bible. Fun fact: you can likely access the remaining resources through your local library, and you can also access many of them online for free.

Once I have my resources ready to go, I refer to the book introduction in my study Bible to gain a baseline understanding of the historical context of the book I am about to read.

Let me add—*and it is important I say this*—I only utilize resources like commentaries, study Bible notes, etc., after I have first prioritized hearing God’s voice. That means I first spend time in Scripture and prayer. I admit my need for help and ask the Spirit to reveal the wisdom and truth the Lord has in store for me as I read His Word. During this time, I make note of any words, phrases, places, questions, or connections I make along the way. Commentaries, study Bibles, and all other biblical resources are great things to have on hand, but they remain closed during this time. This is because I never want to prioritize the voice of man—no matter how scholarly, easy-to-read, wise, and helpful it may sound—over the voice of God.

The Father’s faithful, unchanging voice comes first. *Always.*

The Literary Context

Next, let’s dive into the literary context. The Bible is filled with a variety of literary styles and utilizes many literary techniques, including figurative language, imagery, allusions, and foreshadowing. To ensure a thorough understanding of a passage, it is very important to familiarize yourself with biblical genres and literary devices. The primary categories of biblical genres are narrative, law, poetry, wisdom, prophecy, gospel, letter, and history. When we understand the genre in which the passage we are studying was written, we are able to more accurately interpret and apply it.

Knowing the literary context also offers us the support needed to refrain from participating in the dangers of eisegesis. (Please refer back to day two for more on this subject.)

PURSUE SOUND DOCTRINE

God made no mistakes in organizing Scripture the way He has. It is not meant to be read one random passage at a time, but in a more methodical way. Here's why: from start to finish, the Bible tells one cohesive story made up of history books, letters, songs, and poetry—all composing a complete work centered on who Jesus is and what He has done. There is meaning in every word of every verse on every page. It all works together, in unity, to tell the story of redemption from beginning to end. Let us do our best to read and study God's Word in ways that put this beautiful truth on display.

THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION

“What is the point?” is the most important contextual question to ask when looking at Scripture.

To get a solid grasp of the literary context, it is important that we understand the genre of the book of the Bible we're reading and read the passage within its entire context.

Here is what I mean: Do not just read the passage you desire to better understand. I encourage you to read the entire book if possible. If it's a lengthy book or you don't have time, read the chapter that the passage is in, along with the chapter before and the chapter after it. This will help you understand the setting, themes, and broader idea of the passage as well.

When we place value on literary context, it becomes harder to make God's Word about us. And that's a good thing, wouldn't you agree?

Literary context is the key to understanding the role your passage of study plays in the story of Scripture. It will also help open your eyes to why it is placed where it is within God's Word.

THE LOVE CHAPTER

Let's explore the need for grasping literary context through the “love chapter.” If you have been to a wedding or if you are married, you likely know exactly what chapter I am referring to: 1 Corinthians 13.

If you have a study Bible, grab it and open up to this chapter. If you do not, you can access an introduction to 1 Corinthians on the website Blue Letter Bible (blueletterbible.org), a resource I personally love and recommend.

SHE DELIGHTS BIBLE STUDY

Spend some time familiarizing yourself with the historical background of this letter. Note your observations below.

Once you have a good grip on the historical background of 1 Corinthians, it's time to saturate yourself in it. Take your time reading through this letter. (It is okay if you have to do this in more than one sitting, but this step is important.) Write down any themes you spot, observations you note, and questions you have along the way.

Now that you have read 1 Corinthians all the way through, read chapters 12–14. Continue to make note of anything that stands out to you (words, phrases, places) and additional questions.

Finally, plant yourself in 1 Corinthians 13. How do you feel when you read this chapter? Why?

It is likely 1 Corinthians 13 makes you feel hopeful, warm, comfortable, and secure. But did you know that this chapter was not intended to be read at weddings or featured on a Valentine's Day or anniversary card? It is easy to misunderstand Paul's intent if we neglect the context surrounding this passage.

If you read the chapters that sandwich 1 Corinthians 13, you will discover that the Corinthian church was becoming divided over matters related to spiritual gifts. Paul wrote this letter to them not to take a side but to make the point that they should pursue love despite their differences.

Paul is not writing about how love *feels*. He is conveying what it looks like when it's lived out. His point is that true love is demonstrated by actions, not mere words. In fact, the Greek word for "love" he uses here, *agape*, refers to love that is rooted in "self-denial for the sake of another."¹

Although we use this passage at wedding ceremonies, its true contextual purpose is to encourage reconciliation in the church fueled by love in action.

Additional Questions

As alluded to earlier, it is impossible to study Scripture without having questions. But do not shy away from them. Embrace them by laying them at the Father's feet as you seek His understanding. Here is a list of questions that may be helpful to refer to as you study. Be sure to add your own as they come to mind!

- What is going on in the passage?
- Who are the main characters?
- Whom can I identify with and why?
- What is the sequence of events?
- What is the main conflict of the text? What caused it?
- What type of change does this text demand of me?
- How can I see God's sovereign hand at work in this passage?
- Are there any prophecies or parallels to Christ?
- Are there any connections to this text elsewhere in the Bible?
- What are the takeaways of the text for the audience, then and now?

Piecing It All Together

Ready to complete the Ask phase of the Bible study process? I've got a challenge for you! Turn in your Bible to James 1:22-25 and practice implementing the Ask phase in the space below. (See page 20 for a reminder of what this phase looks like.)

Great job, friend! I hope you are starting to feel equipped, encouraged, and excited to take what you learn and dig deep.

Tomorrow we will explore the second and third phases of the Bible study process: analyzing Scripture and applying what we learn to everyday life.

Until then!

DAY 4:

Analyzing and Applying Scripture

IF YOU KNOW ME, you know I love to read and write.

My love for reading was a result of being introduced to the Nancy Drew books as a child. I could not put them down, and truth be told, I cannot wait to read them with my daughter when she is old enough.

Writing, however, came a little later in life. I discovered my love for it during high school, but it really began to blossom during my college years.

My major (theology) was centered around writing more than anything else. I loved this because multiple-choice *anything* was my academic enemy.

While studying theology, I learned how to write lengthy papers focused on God's Word. One of my greatest academic accomplishments was the seventeen-page paper I wrote on the Lord's Supper.

My time learning how to research and write these papers fostered a love for doing more and more of it outside of the classroom.

Now here I am, getting to share these very tools with you! What a precious gift.

Today we are going to walk through the Analyze and Apply phases to connect the truths of Scripture to everyday life.

Are you as excited as I am? Maybe not, and that's okay! Either way, the goal is to feel more confident approaching Scripture, which is what matters most. So let's get to it, shall we?

Analyzing Scripture

First, let's talk about analyzing. This phase comes *after* we have spent time seeking and listening to God through Scripture. It also comes after we have noted any questions or things that stuck out to us when we read and reflected on the passage.

This step consists of exploring third-party resources to help us answer questions and consider the context and meaning of Scripture. These resources include commentaries, study Bibles, Bible encyclopedias, Bible dictionaries, and any additional materials (sermons, articles, podcasts, books, etc.) that you might find helpful in coming to a deeper understanding of your selected passage.

Today, I want to take an in-depth look at Matthew 18:20: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” Go ahead and grab your Bible, study Bible, and computer or phone.

The book of Matthew is a firsthand account of Jesus’ life, ministry, death, and resurrection. It comes to us some 400 years after the end of the Old Testament. Throughout it, Jesus teaches people what it looks like to be part of His Kingdom, “the Kingdom of Heaven.”

As we prepare to study Matthew 18:20, let’s spend some time familiarizing ourselves with this Gospel and its author. To do so, go to blueletterbible.org on your computer or phone. Once you have arrived, click on “Study” at the top of the page. From there, look for the section titled “Bible Reference” and click on “Introductions to the Bible.” Scroll down until you find Matthew, then click on “BLB | The Gospel of Matthew.”

Spend some time reading through Blue Letter Bible’s introduction to Matthew and note what you find helpful in the space below.

My Key Takeaways

- Matthew’s original name was Levi (Mark 2:14). He left everything he knew in order to follow Jesus.¹
- Only once, while listing out the twelve apostles, does Matthew refer to himself as a tax collector (10:3). His former name, Levi, is used more often than the name Matthew to reference his sinful past.²

PURSUE SOUND DOCTRINE

- It seems as if Matthew wrote this Gospel with Jews in mind and with the goal of proving and proclaiming Jesus as the Messianic King of Old Testament prophecy. He does so by quoting passages from Old Testament prophecies more than sixty times.³
- The term “Kingdom of Heaven” appears thirty times in Matthew and nowhere else in the rest of Scripture.⁴

Now that we have spent time familiarizing ourselves with this Gospel, let’s turn our attention to Matthew 18:20 and explore its meaning for the time he wrote it and now.

Read Matthew 18:20. What implications and/or questions arise from reading this verse on its own?

My Questions about This Passage

- Who is Jesus speaking to?
- Why did Jesus say this?
- Why would it be necessary for two or three to be gathered in prayer in order for Jesus to be present?
- Isn’t Jesus already present in the life of each individual believer?
- Since Jesus refers specifically to a group of two or three, would this apply to groups larger than that?

When we read Matthew 18:20 as a stand-alone verse, it is easy to misunderstand it. Many modern-day Christians use this verse to affirm the value of small prayer meetings or church gatherings.

However, is this what Jesus is actually getting at? The simple answer is no, but let's implement the proper steps to faithfully and confidently determine this for ourselves.

Read Matthew 18:15-20 two to three times. Jot down any questions and observations you have as you do so. Once you finish, type "Matthew 18" in the search bar of blueletterbible.org and scroll until you get to Matthew 18:20. From here, click on "Tools" beside the verse. Then click "Commentaries." Spend time reading what different commentators have to say and note what you find helpful in the space below.

My Questions about This Passage

- What does Jesus mean when He says, "let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector" (verse 17)? Interesting how Matthew, the author of this Gospel, used to be a tax collector himself.
- In the context of church discipline, what does it mean to bind and loose (verse 18)?

My Observations about This Passage

- Jesus is talking about church discipline (confronting sin and resolving disputes to keep the church in obedience to God). He emphasizes that this responsibility should not be on the shoulders of just one person but shared by two or three.
- Here's the church discipline process, as outlined by Jesus:

STEP 1: Private confrontation. Prayerfully go to the offending brother or sister on your own first, with the motive of reconciliation.

STEP 2: Expand the circle. If the person listens, receives what you tell them, and repents, the problem has been resolved and there is reason to rejoice. If

PURSUE SOUND DOCTRINE

the person continues to live in unrepentant sin, it is then time to involve a few others.

STEP 3: Bring it before the church. If the two or three involved have spoken to the unrepentant person and he or she remains unrepentant, they are to continue in prayer and make church leadership aware. This could ultimately result in the unrepentant brother or sister being removed from the gift of fellowship (the church). But those involved in this difficult decision can (and should) take heart, knowing that it is honoring to the Lord and Jesus is with them as they continue to pray that God will work in this person's heart and ultimately restore them to the church.

What differences did you notice when you read Matthew 18:20 as a stand-alone verse compared with reading and studying it as part of the whole of Matthew 18:15-20? Note your key takeaways below.

Applying Scripture

Now it is time to piece it all together. Reflect on what you have learned and take some time to answer the questions below to embrace and apply your new understanding of Matthew 18:20 to your faith walk.

According to verse 15, what is the purpose of going and telling “your brother” his sin? What are some reasons why you should first pursue private confrontation regarding another believer’s sin?

SHE DELIGHTS BIBLE STUDY

Describe what loving confrontation looks like.

What is your typical reaction when someone sins against you? Do you ignore them? Retaliate? Harbor your hurt? Do you take time to prayerfully consider how to respond?

Have you ever witnessed church discipline in action? If yes, reflect on how it was carried out in light of Matthew 18:15-20. If not, jot down some reasons why the practice of church discipline may be lacking in churches today.

How can you apply what you have learned about Matthew 18:15-20 to your faith walk?

My Key Takeaways

- On its own, Matthew 18:20 can sound as if Jesus is speaking about His presence during the prayers of small-group gatherings. This might make the reader wonder whether or not He is present for the private prayers of each individual Christian and the prayers of groups larger than three people.
- When read within its proper contextual setting, this verse begins to unfold in a whole new way. It is not about having the correct number of people to pray but how to discipline an unrepentant brother or sister in Christ in a way that honors God and His vision for the church.
- Although Jesus is present in every believer's life, here He is not speaking to His presence in our prayer meetings or church gatherings. He is referring to His presence in the context of church discipline.
- Here in Matthew 18, Jesus refers to an Old Testament law (Deuteronomy 19:15) that says an accusation from one person is not enough to establish a case against someone. Two or three witnesses who are in agreement, however, are able to bring a charge. But whereas this Old Testament law is about action within a human court, the words of Jesus here in Matthew 18 refer to the "heavenly court." This is why Jesus assures us He is with the two to three who have gathered in His name: because executing discipline within the church is both necessary and right in the eyes of the Lord. As we do so, we can take heart in the truth that no matter how difficult discipline may be, Christ is with us every step of the way.
- Considering that Jesus spent a lot of His time with Gentiles and tax collectors (see Matthew 9:10-13), His call to let the unrepentant sinner "be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector" demonstrates that we should still love the person under discipline, even if they are no longer part of the church community.
- Binding and loosing: Jesus gives the local church authority to make binding decisions when it comes to church discipline. This means church leadership has the right to bind—or forbid—an unrepentant member from church fellowship. In addition, the local church has the authority to loose—or permit—a member to stay or return when they have a repentant heart.

A Message for the Church

The message of Matthew 18:15-20 is just as applicable for Christians today as it was for those Jesus first spoke these words to. Confrontation is not comfortable, which is why we tend to avoid it at all costs or put it off for as long as we can. But there is a way to go about it that honors the Lord: finding our comfort and confidence in Christ and confronting the other person out of love. When we do this, we begin to care more about the person's soul than we do our relationship with them.

Church discipline may not be easy, but God has sanctioned it as good and fruitful for the health of His church. It is hard to call out sin in others, and it hurts to have sin called out in us. But the accountability that comes from this act is meant to be fruitful and edifying.

This passage is a powerful reminder to all Christians that we were not made to do this life alone. We were made for community and at the heart of a healthy church body is accountability and discipline. As we seek to follow the guidelines for discipline in this passage, we can rest assured, for Jesus promises His presence when we are gathered in His name.

Why is it important to read the Bible in context?

Name the types of context we should explore when studying a Scripture passage.

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In what ways do you find it difficult to confront others about their sin?
How does Matthew 18:15-20 speak to this?

DAY 5:

Light in the Darkness

I DO NOT LIKE THE DARK, but I am not a big artificial light person, either. Natural light, however? I'll take it *all*, please! If I need extra light, I either pull the curtains back or fill the room with warm light offered by the lamps I have all over the house.

My favorite type of light is offered once a day at dusk, or golden hour. There is something special about this window of time that makes me pause to savor the beauty of the setting sun. The golden hues of its rays paired with the warm palette of the evening sky often takes my breath away.

This lovely time of day brings me a warm and welcome peace that points me to the greatest Light of all: my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

As we make our way through the final day of our week focused on pursuing sound doctrine, we do so with a special focus on the light of life—that is, the light of Christ. When we follow Jesus, we become daughters of light. Jesus' light leads and illuminates. It helps us to see and understand things we couldn't otherwise. It enables us to recognize our sin and helps us put it to death. It allows us to understand the message of the gospel and bear witness to it. There is no other light but His, and it will never go out.

Read and record below the words of John 8:12.

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When you picture the light of life, what do you see?

Through Jesus, the light of God's presence shines. This light is the purest light there is and will ever be.

Read 1 John 1:5. What does it reveal about God's light?

How blessed are we to belong to a God who is pure and perfect in all He does, who cannot be touched by darkness, whose light shines straight through the darkness! How blessed we are to be beacons of this light.

Read John 1:6-8. Whom do we meet in the passage? What do we learn about him?

John paved the way for the coming of Christ with the light bestowed on him by the Lord. He knew he was not *the* light but an instrumental witness to it. Like John, we have a responsibility to bear witness to the light of Christ. We live in a lost and dark world that yearns and searches for hope in all the wrong places.

Read Matthew 6:22-23. What is the lamp of the body?

Describe what happens when the eye is healthy.

The Greek word for “healthy,” *haplous*, translates to “simple” or “single.” The implication here is that when the eye is healthy, its vision is sharp and clear rather than doubled and blurred.

Describe what happens when the eye is bad.

The Greek word for unhealthy, *poneros*, translates to “evil.” Jesus’ use of it here implies inner darkness and the lack of Jesus’ light. It is no wonder Jesus proceeds to say, “If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” (Matthew 6:23).

Jesus sandwiches His reminder of the eye being the lamp of the body between two very important passages. Let’s take a look at them.

Read verses 19-21. What does Jesus warn against?

Reread verse 21. What is the reason for Jesus’ warning?

Lasting Treasure

All too often, I am tempted to believe the transient treasures of this world will satisfy me. That their promise to deliver what I am looking for is exactly what I need. But the truth is, the promises of transient treasures will always come up empty.

The treasures of this world do not last. They can be replaced, destroyed, or stolen. They do not satisfy. They lose their shine. Most importantly, they hold no eternal value.

Storing up the treasures of this world in our hearts—the things we idolize and value more than the Lord (money, comfort, free time, material possessions, etc.)—will only feed our sin and corrupt us. The more we pursue these things, the more we will be pulled away from our yearning for Christ and drawn to ourselves, and the more we will lose sight of our need for Christ and believe we are our own masters.

Sure, the things of this world may hold some earthly value, but they will *never* be more valuable than the One who died the very death we deserve so that we might live. The One who offers us the true treasure of eternal life, light, and love in the heavenly Kingdom that awaits us, a Kingdom that holds more eternal value than our minds could ever comprehend.

As we focus on heavenly treasures, we come to recognize that the value we long to find in the things of this world can be found in Christ alone. What was once extremely appealing starts to lose its shine. These transient treasures become dull, rusted, and meaningless when our eyes are opened to the truth that nothing shines brighter and nothing holds more value than the truest treasure of all, Christ the King.

My dear sister, I implore you to invest in the treasure of the Kingdom of Heaven offered to us in Christ. It cannot be replaced, destroyed, or stolen. Losing everything here on earth would be well worth it in exchange for what awaits us in heaven. Thanks be to God!

SHE DELIGHTS BIBLE STUDY

The heart wants what we feed it. Take some time to reflect on what currently holds your interests. Transient treasures or Kingdom treasures?

Spend some time in prayer, asking the Lord to identify what your treasure is. How can you store up treasure in heaven and shift your focus to eternal things?

Now let's take a look at the second passage that sandwiches Jesus' description of the eye being the lamp of the body.

Read Matthew 6:24. Describe the two masters mentioned and which one belongs to a healthy eye versus a bad eye.

Can we serve two masters?

We think we can serve two masters, but Jesus makes it clear that our attempts to do so are worthless. Our hearts and service can only belong to one.

It is important to note that the Greek word Jesus uses for "serve," *douleuō*, refers

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to the work assigned to a slave. The implication here is that a slave belongs to one master. His loyalties cannot be divided.

The same is true for us as Christ's disciples. We cannot serve Him—we cannot shine our light into the darkness—if our devotion belongs to another master, whether that's our career, our wealth, our image, you name it.

In order to serve Christ as our Master, our vision must be clear and set on Him and Him alone.

Describe a time you tried to serve two masters. What happened?

Jesus does not want half-hearted, superficial devotion. He wants every ounce of our devotion. For He alone is worthy of it all! When we serve another master, we rob ourselves of the freedom and fullness of life Christ came to give.

The Lord knows we need Him. This is why He is jealous for us (see Exodus 34:14). He does not—and will not—share the throne with another, for He knows only He satisfies us.

May we know God for who He is and love Him with all that we are (see Colossians 1:16, Matthew 22:37).

Let's put it all together! Read Matthew 6:19-24. What did you learn about light? What are some key takeaways from your reading?

Sound doctrine is important because it affects how we live. It helps us to please our Father in our faith walk. When understood properly, how should Matthew 6:19-24 impact our lives?

Only Jesus is worthy of the throne of your heart. How can you ensure this is the case in your own life?

One Final Charge

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

MATTHEW 5:14-16

In Christ, we have the great privilege and honor of sharing His light in this dark and hurting world. What a beautiful truth to consider: that God would use us to extend glimpses of Christ's light and love into the lives of others.

We are beacons of the one true hope!

But we must not forget that we cannot keep our lights lit on our own. It is

through Jesus, the One who dwelt among us to dispel the darkness of this world, that we are offered the invitation to walk in the light. Second Corinthians 4:6 says that God “has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ” (NLT). Knowing this, it is important that we examine ourselves often and tend to the dark and dusty corners in our lives that the light reveals. This way, Christ’s light in us can shine from the inside out.

We must be mindful of the treasures we are storing in our hearts to ensure the light that shines from within reflects the truth that we belong to Christ and not the world.

First John 1:6-7 tells us, “If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

To shine the light of truth and life faithfully as daughters of the Most High King, we must walk in step with Him. How do we do this? By reading, studying, knowing, and living out the truths of His holy, infallible Word. For His Word is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path (see Psalm 119:105).

God did not breathe life into your being so that you would dwell in the shadows and blend in with the crowd, my dear sister. God breathed life into you so that you would be set apart; so that you would reflect the glory, light, and love of Christ Jesus; so that you would point those around you to the One above you.

Will everyone understand? Certainly not. In fact, many will criticize and mock you. When this happens, remember that the Lord your God has gone before you and is with you *every* step of the way. The Lord has proven His love for you by sacrificing His one and only Son so that you might be reconciled to Him and able to dwell with Him in eternity. This life is but a breath compared to Christ’s coming glory. He is worth the cost!

When the bills pile up, when the doctor delivers unexpected and frightening news, when the media shares one dark report after the next, let us not despair or seek our comfort outside of Christ. Let us instead shine light into these situations with the hope-filled truth and power of King Jesus.

SHE DELIGHTS BIBLE STUDY

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:6, “God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” What does this verse tell us about Jesus as the Light of the World?

Read John 14:7. What do you think Jesus meant when He said if people know Him, they also know His Father?

Make a list of five ways you can practically “let your light shine” in this season of your life. (Hint: Shining your light will not always feel big. In fact, it will likely happen in little but incredibly meaningful ways. For example, it can be as simple as sharing a smile with a stranger in passing.)

For all women who desire to live as daughters of the Most High King, my prayer is that our feet would remain firm on the truths of God’s Word so that we would not be disillusioned by the world around us. Instead of letting the world steal our light, may we be bold beacons of the Kingdom light this dark world is searching for. As

PURSUE SOUND DOCTRINE

we delight in God's truth and dwell in the shelter of our holy and mighty God, may the light in us shine brighter and brighter for the whole world to see.

My sister, as we arrive at the end of this session, know this: God loves us *deeply*. So much so that in His love and goodness, He gave His one and only Son so we could be reconciled to Him. He gave us the gift of doctrine so we could grow in our knowledge and understanding of who He is and please Him in our walk. May we rise to the beautiful and bold call of our faithful Father to know His Word and shine His truth and light. As we come to know Him more, may our delight in Him increase. May our joy in the opportunity to carry the hope of Christ into the hopeless places of the world grow all the more as we embrace the call to live as His daughters of delight!

How does pursuing sound doctrine equip us to delight in the Lord?

Describe what delighting in the Lord looks like for you in this season.

Spend time in prayer, asking the Lord to reveal how you can increase your delight in Him and grant you opportunities to faithfully share His Word and shine His light.
