



| **SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDIES** |

WALKING
THE TEXT

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| OUT OF CONTEXT |

SERIES SUMMARY

When we fail to understand the Bible in its original context, we run into all kinds of problems. Not only do we run the risk of misunderstanding the Text, we can also believe things that aren't true, or set ourselves up for disappointment by demanding and expecting things of God that God never intended. In this series, we'll unpack six famous passages and show how understanding them in context unleashes their depth and power in ways we don't want to miss out on!

THIS CURRICULUM IS REALLY EASY TO USE

STEP 1: Click the link in each lesson to watch the video teaching.

STEP 2: Reflect on the discussion questions with your group.

STEP 3: Unleash the depth and power of the Bible!



PART 1 | **I CAN DO ALL THINGS**

VIDEO

Click to Watch

KEY PASSAGE(S)

Philippians 4:13; Philippians 4:10-12

DESCRIPTION

Understanding the original context of a passage unleashes the power of Scripture to transform our lives. “Out of Context” is a new series designed to help us train our minds to ask better questions when we read the Bible by exploring famous passages that are frequently taken out of context. By the end of this episode, you’ll understand why Philippians 4:13 isn’t about God empowering us to do whatever we set our minds to, but rather unlocking the secret of contentment in any situation!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was your biggest takeaway from the teaching?
- Share with your group (or reflect with yourself) on a situation where your words were taken out of context. What happened?
- Name one or two ways evil undermines God’s work in your life by getting you to believe lies. What lies or untruthful thoughts regularly trip you up?
- What are some of the ways you get sucked into “when-then” thinking?
- What are two things you’re grateful for right now?
- What other habits or practices might help cultivate contentment besides eliminating “when-then” thinking and practicing gratitude?
- How will you begin living out the truths of this teaching this week?



PART 2 | **FOR I KNOW THE PLANS**

VIDEO

Click to Watch

KEY PASSAGE(S)

Jeremiah 29:10-14

DESCRIPTION

Jeremiah 29:11 is a crowd favorite! “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Who wouldn’t want these plans? Prosperity, comfort (no harm), a hopeful future – sign us up! And then the bottom falls out, and our faith gets upended because we held God to a promise He never made. Jeremiah 29:11 is not about prosperity and protection. It’s about perseverance in the midst of hardship. Stripped of its context, this passage is catastrophic to our faith journey. But understood properly, it gives us the hope and perspective we need to navigate life’s challenges well.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was your biggest takeaway from the teaching? \
- Consider this quote: “The crisis of faith occurs in the gap between expectation and reality.” Describe an experience in your life when your expectations and reality didn’t align, and you felt disappointed or frustrated with God.
- The exiles were torn between the competing messages of the true prophets (we’re going to be here awhile) and the message of the false prophets (it’s going to be over soon). How do you think God’s people are still torn between those competing messages in our day?
- What is your reaction to the following: “People who run from pain tend to prolong it, while those who persevere in pain often find the purpose to pull through it.”
- When we’re in the thick of hard times, it can be difficult to have perspective. Eventually, we’re able to look back and see that God was up to something bigger. We just couldn’t see it at the time. What have been one or two of those moments in your life?
- How will you begin living out the truths of this teaching this week?



PART 3 | EXAMINE YOURSELF BEFORE COMMUNION

VIDEO

Click to Watch

KEY PASSAGE(S)

1 Corinthians 11:20-33; Luke 7:34

DESCRIPTION

Communion ... out of context ... REALLY? That's not what usually comes to mind when we think about Scripture's instructions on the Lord's Supper. In 1 Corinthians 11, the apostle Paul commands believers to "examine themselves" before taking communion so they don't "eat in an unworthy manner." Pulled from their context, these words are generally used in worship services to invite personal reflection. But Paul was addressing something far more specific and challenging in the life of the Corinthian church that we cannot afford to miss. By the end of this episode, you'll have a new appreciation for the power of meals to bring healing in a divided world!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was your biggest takeaway from the teaching?
- If meals heal, and eating was a central way Jesus embodied God's kingdom, how can we as followers of Jesus be more strategic in the kinds of meals we share? What would that look specifically look like?
- Why do you think meals are such a powerful vehicle for creating human connection?
- What are some of the ways you've seen or experienced the Church reflecting the divisions and polarization of our society?
- What are some of the beautiful and inspiring ways you've seen or experienced the Church reflecting the unity of Christ's kingdom?
- What did you think of the research about the healing power of family meals?
- How will you begin living out the truths of this teaching this week?



PART 4 | WHERE TWO OR THREE GATHER

VIDEO

Click to Watch

KEY PASSAGE(S)

Matthew 18:15-20; Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 16:18-19

DESCRIPTION

At Christian gatherings, you'll often hear a leader say, "Jesus is present because he promised that 'whenever two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them.'" Now, there's nothing wrong with reminding people of Jesus's presence. The problem comes when we quote Scripture thinking it means something it doesn't. Jesus wasn't talking about church gatherings. He was talking about church discipline (yay, everyone's favorite topic!). Or more specifically, being uniquely present during painful and difficult conversations when followers of Jesus are discerning what to do (yes, relevant to us all). Once you're familiar with the original context, you'll never hear these words the same way again!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was your biggest takeaway from the teaching?
- How would you describe the difference between "attempting to win someone back" and "trying to prove someone wrong" in a confrontational conversation?
- What do you find compelling in Jesus's model for navigating conflict?
- What do you find challenging in it?
- When have you seen conflict in the Christian community handled well? What did the people specifically do to handle it well?
- How will you live out the truths of this teaching going forward?



PART 5 | DO NOT JUDGE

VIDEO

Click to Watch

KEY PASSAGE(S)

Matthew 7:1-5; John 8:10-11

DESCRIPTION

“Do not judge or you too will be judged.” These well-known words are quoted by Christians and non-Christians alike, often as a shield to prevent others from speaking into their lives in ways that feel critical. “If you’re a hypocrite, you don’t get to point out my flaws! And since we’re all hypocrites, no one gets to point out anybody’s flaws!” But is that what Jesus really intended with these words? Not even close. By the end of this episode, you’ll discover how confronting our own hypocrisy and condemnation of others empowers us to speak more effectively in each other’s lives!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was your biggest takeaway from the teaching?
- What are some of the most common judgments/condemnations you catch yourself harboring towards others?
- If it’s true that the things we find most irritating in others are often a reflection of what is most broken in ourselves, what do your most common judgments/condemnations reveal about what needs to be healed in you?
- Have you experienced the gift of being confronted without being condemned? What did that look like? How did it impact you?
- Exercise: Choose a judgment/condemnation you harbored toward another person at some point in your life. (Or, better yet, choose one you’re harboring currently.) Take the next 2-5 minutes to close your eyes and imagine sitting across a table from Jesus. Now, imagine plopping your condemnation of this other person/people down on the middle of the table. Take a few moments to observe Jesus’s response? Does he do anything? Say anything?
- How will you begin living out the truths of this teaching this week?



PART 6 | **MY GOD, MY GOD (MATTHEW 27:46)**

VIDEO

Click to Watch

KEY PASSAGE(S)

Matthew 27:45-46; Psalm 22; John 19:30; Luke 23:46

DESCRIPTION

During Holy Week, people all over the world remember Jesus's words on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Did God really abandon Jesus on the cross? Or was Jesus quoting these specific words at this specific moment for a specific reason? In this final episode of "Out of Context," we unpack Jesus's use of a rabbinic technique called "remez" to make a bold claim about his supreme confidence in God's faithfulness. Once you understand the context of these powerful words, you'll be inspired by the knowledge that even in our darkest moments, God doesn't leave us or abandon us!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was your biggest takeaway from the teaching?
- In Jesus's darkest hour, he grounded himself in the Text. Are there any passages of Scripture you cling to when life gets tough? (What are they? How do these passages bring you comfort and hope?)
- God didn't abandon Jesus in his darkest hour, and He doesn't abandon us in ours either. How have you experienced God's Presence in some of your darkest hours? What did that look like?
- By quoting Psalm 22 on the cross, Jesus suffered faithfully and with confidence. How have you seen others suffer with faithfulness and confidence?
- How will you begin living out the truths of this teaching this week?



FOR FURTHER STUDY

Click on the Titles below for links to each of these resources.

- *The Most Misused Verses in the Bible* by Eric Bargerhuff

- **Episode 185 - Pt 1: I Can Do All Things**
 - *Paul in Roman Custody* by Brian Rapske - Chapters 9-12
 - *Live No Lies* by John Mark Comer
 - *The Soul of Money* by Lynne Twist - Chapter 6

- **Episode 186 - Pt 2: For I Know the Plans**
 - *Book of Jeremiah* by BibleProject
 - *The Restoration of All Things (Sermon)* by Brad Gray

- **Episode 187 - Pt 3: Examine Yourself Before Communion**
 - *A History of Rome (The Great Courses)* by Garrett G. Fagan - The Shape of Roman Society (Lecture 37)
 - *A Meal With Jesus* by Tim Chester
 - *Subversive Meals* by R. Alan Streebt
 - *The Benefit of Family Mealtime (Article)* by Harvard Graduate School of Education
 - *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church* by Alan Kreider

- **Episode 188 - Pt 4: Where Two or Three Gather**
 - *Release to Receive (Sermon)* by Brad Gray
 - *"Where Two or Three are Gathered"... in Context (Article)* by Lois Tverberg
 - *Jesus and the Forgiveness Standard (GCBI 108.06)* by Dr. Randall Smith

- **Episode 189 - Pt 5: Do Not Judge**
 - *Matthew 1-7: Volume 1 (International Critical Commentary)* by W.D. Davies & D.C. Allison
 - *The Story of God Bible Commentary: The Sermon on the Mount* by Scot McKnight



FOR FURTHER STUDY

Click on the Titles below for links to each of these resources.

- **Episode 190 - Pt 6: My God, My God**
 - *Rabbi Avika's Death*

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