

Week Six: The Bible

Scripture references:

Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:18-21; 30:6-11

Psalms 19:7-9

Matthew 5:17-18; 22:34-40

Luke 4:20-22; 11:27-29

Galatians 3:1-26

2 Timothy 3:14-17

2 Peter 1:18-21



Points to take away:

1. The Bible is our scripture — our sacred story and source.
2. The Bible is authoritative in matters of faith and faithful living.
3. The Bible is both our family history and God's reaching out to us in words: it is the unique meeting of our ancestors and our God and our selves.
4. The Bible is a way to consult authority, find comfort, and continue our growth when we are separated from Christian community, or feel separated from our God.
5. The Bible is foundational for our faith journey and our spiritual formation: it shapes us.
6. The Bible is not the Word — Jesus is the Word.

A very few resources for further exploration:

The Bible itself. Not because it is self-reflective (except in 2 Timothy), but because it is so rich and layered.

Books on reading the Bible:

- § Alan Reynolds, *Reading the Bible for the Love of God* (Brazos Press: 2003). Reynolds treats reading Scripture as an exploration of relationships: our relationship with the text, our relationship with our ancestors, our relationship with God. He is on the liberal end of Bible-lovers, seeing in it both the beauty and the glory of these God-inspired words and the humanity of their authors.
- § Marcus Borg, *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time: Taking the Bible Seriously But Not Literally* (Harper San Francisco: 2001). Borg reads the Bible historically and metaphorically. His book is an excellent corrective to those frustrated with literal readings (he is arguing against literalists). Borg's work is less helpful to those struggling to find a devotional perspective, or to those yet unable to claim the Bible's authority.
- § Rick Warren, *Rick Warren's Bible Study Methods* (Zondervan: 2006). Warren begins from a conservative, devotional and authoritative perspective, and provides 12 approaches for reading (and understanding) Scripture. This is a practical, workbook-style book.
- § Goss and West, *Take Back the Word: A Queer Reading of the Bible* (Pilgrim Press: 2000). One of a great number of books that intentionally and admittedly reads the Bible through a specific lens (feminist, womanist, African-American, liberationist, etc.). This is a collection of essays designed to provide the reader with a new perspective, one that is affirming of LGBT experience and that helps LGBT Christians reclaim the Bible as their/our holy book.

