

Through the Bible in 24 Months



WEEK 35 OF 104

Known by Name

Week 35 of 104 • 34% of the way through the Bible

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

General Old Testament	1 Samuel 16–23
Wisdom Literature	Psalms 19
Gospels	Mark 5
General New Testament	Romans 15:8–16:27

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

God keeps noticing people nobody else counts. A prophet works his way through seven impressive sons in Bethlehem before anyone remembers there is an eighth one out with the sheep, and God says He is not looking at what men look at. In a crowd so thick it is crushing Him, Jesus stops and will not move until one woman who touched the hem of His robe is found and called Daughter. David looks up at a sky that speaks without words and then asks God to clean out the faults he cannot even see. And Paul closes the greatest letter ever written with a list of names, twenty-six of them, ordinary Christians we would never have heard of, greeted one by one.

How to use this guide: Read all four passages during the week. Your teacher will take up two of them in class, one in each session. For the other two, work through the “Extended Class Discussion or Self-Study” questions on your own and write your answers in the space provided.

GENERAL OLD TESTAMENT 1 Samuel 16–23

The Lord Looks at the Heart

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

God sends Samuel to Bethlehem, where seven sons pass by before anyone thinks to send for the youngest, who is out with the sheep. After that the story moves quickly: a harp in the throne room, a giant in the Valley of Elah, five smooth stones, a covenant with Jonathan, a spear thrown twice, a wife given as a trap, an escape through a window, bread taken from the tabernacle, madness faked in Gath, a cave filling with desperate men, and eighty-five priests murdered at Nob.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

- 1 Samuel 16:7 says man looks at the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart. Where do our congregations, and our own eyes, still measure people by the outside, and what would actually change if we believed that verse on a Sunday morning?
- David’s speech to Goliath in 17:45–47 never once mentions his own ability. Read it aloud and list what David says the battle is really about. How should that shape the way this account gets taught, to children and to us?

3. Jonathan had every earthly reason to resent David, and instead he went to him at Horesh and strengthened his hand in God (23:16). Talk about what it costs to help someone who is receiving what might have been yours, and where that is being asked of you right now.

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Trace David's movements from 1 Samuel 19 through 23. List each place he goes and who helps him there, and notice how quickly he runs out of safe places.
2. Read 1 Samuel 17:34–37. What had God already done in David's life before he ever saw the Valley of Elah, and why does he bring it up to Saul?
3. 1 Samuel 21:1–6 records David eating the showbread at Nob. Read how Jesus uses the incident in Mark 2:23–28 and explain the point He draws from it.
4. Compare 1 Samuel 18:7 with 18:8–9, 18:12, and 18:29. Name the stages by which Saul's jealousy grew, and mark the point where it became murderous.
5. Psalm 34 and Psalm 52 were written out of these chapters; read their headings. Choose one, read it beside the narrative, then write a short prayer of your own about the hardest place you are in, and pray it out loud with one other person this week.

WISDOM LITERATURE Psalm 19

The Heavens and the Word

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

David looks up and says the sky is talking. There is no speech and no language, and yet its voice goes out to the end of the world. He watches the sun come out like a bridegroom. Then, without warning, he turns from the sky to the Scriptures and stacks up six descriptions of God's law, calling it sweeter than honey and more valuable than fine gold. The psalm ends where honest reading always ends, with a man asking to be cleansed of faults he cannot see.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Psalm 19 has two halves, the sky and the Scripture. Discuss what the created world can tell a person about God, and what it cannot tell him, using Romans 1:20 and 2 Timothy 3:15–17 to sharpen the answer.

2. David piles up six statements about God's word in verses 7 through 9 and then values it above gold. Which of those six do you have the hardest time believing on an ordinary Monday, and why that one?
3. Verse 12 asks, "Who can understand his errors?" and prays for cleansing from secret faults. Which sins are hardest to see in ourselves, and who in your life currently has permission to point one out to you?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List the six names David gives God's word in 19:7–9 along with the six things he says it does. Which of those pairs speaks most directly to what you need this month?
2. Compare Psalm 19:1–4 with Romans 1:18–20 and Acts 14:15–17. According to these passages, what does creation prove about God, and what does it leave undone?
3. Trace the movement of Psalm 19 from verse 1 to verse 14. Why do you think a psalm that begins with the glory of the heavens ends with a personal confession?
4. Psalm 19:13 distinguishes secret faults from presumptuous sins. Read Numbers 15:27–31 and explain the difference the law of Moses made between the two.
5. Verse 14 asks that the words of his mouth and the meditation of his heart be acceptable to God. Pick one conversation you regularly handle badly, and decide now, in writing, what you will say differently the next time it comes around.

GOSPELS Mark 5

Three People Beyond Help

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Jesus lands on the far shore and is met by a man living in the tombs who cannot be chained and cuts himself with stones. The demons beg for the pigs, two thousand of them drown, and the townspeople ask Jesus to leave. Back across the lake a synagogue ruler falls at His feet for a dying daughter, and on the way a woman who has bled for twelve years and spent everything on doctors touches His clothes. The chapter ends in a bedroom with two words in Aramaic.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Mark 5 puts three hopeless cases in one chapter: a man no one could chain, a woman who had spent everything, and a father whose child was dying. What did their approaches to Jesus have in common, and how were they different?
2. The healed man begs to go with Jesus and is told instead to go home to his own people and tell them (5:18–20). Why would Jesus refuse that request, and where might He be asking you to stay rather than go?
3. Jesus stops a moving crowd to find one woman who had already been healed and could have slipped away (5:30–34). Discuss why He would not let the miracle remain anonymous, and what He gave her that the healing by itself did not.

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List everything Mark tells you about the man in the tombs before Jesus arrives, then everything he is afterward. Which detail in verse 15 strikes you hardest?
2. Compare Mark 5:1–20 with Luke 8:26–39 and Matthew 8:28–34. Note what each writer includes, and work out how you would answer someone who claims the accounts contradict each other.
3. Trace the interruption in 5:21–43. What is happening to Jairus while Jesus is attending to the woman, and what does Jesus say to him at the worst possible moment?
4. Read Mark 5:34 and notice what Jesus calls the woman. Set it beside Luke 13:16 and Mark 3:34–35, and explain why the word He chose mattered after twelve years of being ceremonially unclean.
5. The people of that region asked Jesus to leave (5:17), most likely because He had cost them money. Name what you are quietly afraid Jesus would cost you if He had His way, and say it to Him specifically in prayer this week.

GENERAL NEW TESTAMENT Romans 15:8–16:27

The Names God Remembers

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Paul finishes his argument by stacking up Old Testament passages that show God always intended the nations to praise Him. Then the letter gets personal: his ambition to preach where Christ has not been named, his plans to

visit Rome on the way to Spain, the collection he is carrying to poor saints in Jerusalem, and a request for prayer. Chapter 16 commends Phoebe, greets twenty-six people by name, warns against those who cause division, and ends in one long sentence of praise.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Romans 16 greets twenty-six people by name, and about most of them we know nothing else at all. Why would the Holy Spirit preserve a list like that in Scripture, and what does it tell us about how God regards ordinary Christians?
2. Romans 16:17–18 tells Christians to note and avoid those who cause divisions contrary to the doctrine they had learned. Talk about how a congregation obeys that without becoming suspicious, harsh, or quick to label.
3. Paul says he made it his aim to preach where Christ had not been named (15:20). Where is Christ not named in the circle you actually move in every week, and what would have to change for that to be different by Christmas?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List the four Old Testament passages Paul quotes in Romans 15:9–12. What single point is he making with all four, and why does he need four?
2. Trace what Paul asks the Roman Christians to do for him in 15:24–32. How many separate requests can you count, and what does he expect to receive from them?
3. Romans 16:16 says, “The churches of Christ greet you.” Compare Acts 20:28, 1 Corinthians 1:2, and Ephesians 1:22–23, and write down what the New Testament calls the Lord’s people and why the names we use should be drawn from those pages.
4. Read the descriptions attached to the names in Romans 16:1–15 and write down what Paul commends each person for. Which of those commendations could honestly be written about you?
5. Romans 16:20 promises that the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. Read Genesis 3:15 beside it, then name the specific battle in which you most need that promise, and pray it back to God every day this week.

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