

Here is some Pre-Reading to do before Session Four

Session 4 - Context: Never Read a Verse Alone

Main Thought

Every verse belongs somewhere.

A verse belongs in a sentence, a paragraph, a chapter, a book, and the larger story of Scripture. Context simply refers to the surrounding verses that help us understand what God has actually said.

When we read without context, we can make a verse say something the writer/holy spirit did not mean. But when we slow down and read what comes before and after, the meaning often becomes clearer.

This matters because we want to hear the Word faithfully, *not* just find a phrase that seems to support what we already think.

A Word of Encouragement

Context is not about making Bible study complicated. It is about **listening clearly**.

You do not need to know everything about history, language, or theology before you can begin. Start with the simple things: read the surrounding verses, ask who is speaking and who is being addressed, and notice the flow of thought.

The Lord has given His Word to lead us in truth. As we read carefully, prayerfully, and humbly, we are learning to let Scripture explain Scripture.

A Few Simple Context Questions

When you read a verse, ask:

- What comes before and after this verse?
- Who is speaking, and who is being spoken to?
- What situation or problem is being addressed?
- What is the main point of the paragraph or section?
- How does this fit with the wider message of Scripture and point us toward Christ?

Please Read These Passages Before Session Four

1. **Philippians 4:10-13**

As you read, simply notice:

- What situation is Paul speaking about?
- What Paul says he has learned.
- How the surrounding verses help explain **verse 13**.

2. **Jeremiah 29:10-14**

As you read, simply notice:

- Who is being addressed?
- What situation are the people in?
- How the promise fits into God's larger plan for His people.

3. Matthew 7:1-5

As you read, simply notice:

- What warning does Jesus give?
- What He says to do before correcting someone else.
- Whether the context forbids *all* judgment, or hypocritical judgment.

4. Romans 8:28-30

As you read, simply notice:

- Who the promise is given to.
- What is God's larger purpose in the surrounding verses?
- How do verses 29-30 help explain verse 28?

5. Luke 24:44-47

As you read, simply notice:

- What parts of Scripture does Jesus mention?
- How the Scriptures point to Him.
- How the whole Bible helps us read individual passages more faithfully.

One Simple Thing to Bring next time we catch up.

Before Session Four, **choose one** of the passages above and write one sentence in response to this:

Reading the surrounding verses helped me notice...

It does not need to be deep or impressive. Just notice one thing that became clearer when you looked at the context.

Closing Thought

Good context helps us listen before we speak. It protects us from using Scripture carelessly and helps us receive what God has actually said.

The goal is simple: do not lift a verse out by itself. Read around it, think carefully, and let the Word of God speak in its proper place.