

HOW TO READ YOUR COMPASS

THEOLOGICAL QUESTION

Why should I study the Bible, and how do I do it?

BIG IDEA

The Bible's truth exposes the spiritual realities of our own hearts and of the world around us. Being immersed in God's Word and seeking His glory lights up our life so we can live wisely and share the light with others.

SCRIPTURE USED

Matthew 4:4

But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Isaiah 40:6-8

A voice said, "Shout!"

I asked, "What should I shout?"

"Shout that people are like the grass.

*Their beauty fades as quickly
as the flowers in a field.*

*The grass withers and the flowers fade
beneath the breath of the LORD.*

And so it is with people.

*The grass withers and the flowers fade,
but the word of our God stands forever."*

Psalms 119:105

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.

OPENER

For the opener you will need:

- Magazines for cutting
- Scissors to share
- Glue sticks or tape (optional)
- A timer or stopwatch (optional)

[Leader's Note: If you do not have easy access to several appropriate magazines for cutting—a minimum of one per each student—an alternative is to construct or download your own “silly story.” Have one person read the story and the others fill in the blanks in the story with nouns, adjectives, verbs without any clue as to the greater meaning. MadLibs is the trademarked version of this alternate activity, and is available as a free phone app. There are also free templates online. In this case, you can still ask many of the same discussion questions noted below about words out of context after the silly stories have been read.]

Gather students in a circle and explain that you are going to ask them to “define a phrase” with pictures they select from a magazine. The group will vote on the best “definition” after everyone has had a chance to share (or funniest, or most creative—just let your group decide what needs to be acknowledged!). Explain that when you say “go” everyone can pick up their magazine and start searching for how they will illustrate what they interpret the special phrase to mean. Students are permitted to cut a piece of a picture and paste it to another one if they so choose, but remind them that this is a timed activity (90 to 120 seconds works well). Assure they are ready to begin and then say:

Show me the meaning of “Out of Context,” GO!!

Leader's Note: Students are full of surprises with their creativity. This could be as simple as a car cut out and hastily taped to a picture of a pool: the car is definitely out of context. Your group is bound to come up with some unique—and often quite humorous—examples of their own!

Call time, and ask students to hold up, and then briefly explain their choices. Your questions can be relevant to what your students come up with, but they should focus on getting students to verbalize the potential dangers of understanding something or someone out of the intended context. Then, you can shift the discussion....

TRANSITION

ASK

- **So, we have talked about some of the problems that arise when things are taken out of context in our examples. But now, let's transition a bit. What do you think it means to take Scripture out of context?**
- **Why do you think this happens from time to time?**
- **What happens when we do that to God's Word?**
- **Why is it so important we talk about how to study the Bible correctly and understand its meaning? If it helps us in our situation, isn't that good enough?**