

6 Ways to Get More Revelation From the Word of God

I created three labs teaching through Matthew 6:24–34 on anxiety. My objective was not just to understand how Jesus helps us overcome anxiety, but also to draw out six lessons for how to read the Bible for ourselves. With this short series, I have methodology, theology and application in mind.

Here are the six lessons I highlighted for Bible reading:

1. The Bible argues. It gives reasons or arguments for what it teaches. That was transformative in my life when I was 22 years old, to discover that the Bible is not a string of pearls, but a chain of linked thoughts. That makes a big difference for how we read.

2. A Bible's unit of thought (or passage) has a main point. Each unit of thought (or passage) in the Bible has a main point. That means everything else in the unit supports that point. It's true of the Bible, and it's true of this article. Look for the main point in everything you read.

3. To truly understand a passage we must figure out how the arguments support the main point. Figuring out how arguments support the main point is what it means to understand a passage or a text. After we have identified a passage's main point and located the author's arguments for that main point, we have to do the harder work of understanding the connections. How does each supporting point prove the main point?

4. Jesus assumes that truth affects our emotions. Jesus assumes that truth—reasons, arguments and facts—affects or influences the emotions. Anxiety is an emotion. It is not a decision. We don't decide to get anxious. It happens to us. Jesus attacks anxiety in Matthew 6 with truth, with facts,

promises, and reasons.

Therefore, He must believe that His word given to our souls will have an emotional, even physical, effect. There are dozens and dozens of commands to the emotions in the Bible, and along with them there are truths to bring about what is commanded.

5. Truth affects our emotions when it is believed. Some will say, “Well, that doesn’t work for me. When I hear truth, it doesn’t have an emotional effect on me. It doesn’t take away my anxiety.” It works where the truths are believed and trusted—where there is faith.

If the Bible’s arguments are not having an effect on you, it’s because you have little faith in what it says. Faith is massively important here. We must trust. We must believe what Jesus says.

6. Pray for faith and meditate on His truth. Therefore, pray for faith in the truth—in the passage’s main point with all of its supporting points—and meditate on that truth, because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ (Rom. 10:17).

Father, grant us wisdom with regard to method. We want to handle Your Word rightly, think about how to read it rightly, and we want to be free from anxiety to honor our heavenly Father, who knows us and all of our needs, and who will meet them according to Your promise. I ask this in Jesus’s name, Amen.

Look at the Book is a new online method of teaching the Bible. It’s an ongoing series of 8–12 minute videos in which the camera is on the text, not the teacher. You will hear John Piper’s voice and watch his pen underline, circle, make connections and scribble notes—all to help you learn to read God’s Word for yourself. His goal is to help you not only see what he sees, but where he sees it and how he found it.

In the three-part series through Matthew 6:24–34 that will follow in the days ahead, John studies these 11 verses with two purposes: 1) Learn how to fight anxiety with God's word and 2) Uncover important principles for personal Bible reading.

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