**Session 4- How Best to Read Your Bible**

* **Start with these books**;
  + Gospel of *John*,
  + The book of *Acts*,
  + The book of *James*
    - Why do you think these New Testament books might be a good place to start reading if you are new to studying the Bible?
    - Are there other New Testament readings that you find especially meaningful?
* **Read no more than a chapter at a time.** Craig’s suggestion would be to read only 5 or 10 verses at a time…
  + And then in a journal, or on a piece of paper, write down what God showed you in those few verses.
    - ***Why might it be a good idea to read 1 chapter a day or less?***
    - ***What is your daily pattern for bible reading?***
    - ***Have you ever journaled as part of your devotions? If you have, what benefits did you experience?***
  + Try your best to establish a consistent time each day to do your devotions.
    - Why do you think that would be important?
* **Things *NOT* to do when establishing a routine for studying your Bible.**
  + Don’t just open up your bible and start reading randomly.
    - Why is this not the best way to read your bible?
  + Paraphrase bibles are good for devotions, but not good to study from.
    - Do you remember the difference between a “paraphrase” and “translation”?
* **If after reading your passage for the day a verse sticks out to you, put it on a list and recite daily or create a *memory list*.** 
  + Have you in the past had particular verses that have stood out to you for some reason? What are they?
  + Many people are afraid of memorizing the Bible. Why do you think that is?
  + Do you believe that memorization is gift or a skill?

**The New Testament**

*(In 400 words or less)*

The ministry of Jesus was preceded by the ministry of his cousin John the Baptist, who declared to the Jews that the coming of the Messiah (the Savior) was at hand. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, near Jerusalem, in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophesy. Then Jesus and his parents, Mary and Joseph, moved back to their hometown of Nazareth, in the northern part of the country, just west of the sea of Galilee. There Jesus lived an apparently normal child-hood until the age of 30, when all teachers, according to Jewish custom began their ministry. Jesus began his ministry in Jerusalem, and in the surrounding area of Judea. His ministry was highlighted by authoritative teaching and remarkable miracles.

Because of the opposition to his ministry on the part of the Jewish religious leaders, Jesus went north to the area around the Sea of Galilee, making Capernaum, on the north shore, his home base. Much of his 3 year ministry here on earth was conducted in that area. Eventually he returned to Jerusalem, and because of the jealousy of the religious leaders, he would be crucified. But 3 days after that event, he rose from the dead and he showed himself to his disciples several times over the next 40 days. Then, with his disciples gathered around him on the Mount of Olives, just outside Jerusalem, he visibly ascended into heaven.

He had commissioned his disciples to take this message of salvation to those in the neighborhoods around them and across the world. The church was established in Jerusalem to begin with. The first Christians were Jews. The Church there was overseen by Jesus’ apostles, but the spread of the gospel beyond there is credited primarily to the Apostle Paul, who was not a part of the original group of disciples. After many missionary trips, Paul was arrested and taken to Rome where he was executed for his faith. But of course the message lived on and Christianity has grown to become the dominant world religion.