

# Building the Skill of Reading Biblical Prose Discourse

The Skill Builders Podcast

## Background Knowledge:

*Building this skill will allow you to remove negative behaviors such as:*

- Reading the letters and the law in the Bible is boring
- You have a hard time understanding the letters and the law in the Bible

*Building this skill will allow you to implement or improve positive behaviors such as:*

- Biblical literacy: able to rightly read and understand Biblical laws and letters
- Reading Biblical laws and letters is fun

What is discourse? Discourse is a coherently-arranged, serious, and systematic treatment of a topic in spoken or written language.

What is prose? Prose is ordinary language that follows regular grammatical conventions and does not contain a formal metrical structure.

What is prose discourse? A coherently-arranged, serious, and systematic treatment of a topic in spoken or written ordinary language that follows regular grammatical conventions. (Speeches, talks, essays, etc.)

What is the purpose of prose discourse? Prose discourse uses the logical part of our brain to help us see the rationale behind a set of instructions or arguments or to help us understand a set of instructions or arguments.

People will write in prose discourse for ease of understanding, to help you see clearly and directly what you should be doing, and to help you see clearly and directly why you should be doing something. Imagine if someone only spoke to you in metaphors. Imagine if someone only talked to you in stories. It would be hard to clearly know what you should be doing.

Why this skill matters | Direct Communication: Because of its conversational language, prose discourse often feels like its instructions are directed toward us (unlike the metaphors in poetry or the plot conflicts in a story). But the instructions aren't. They are directed toward someone else. But we sometimes read other people's commands as if they are ours. While this can be the case, it is not always the case. The better we get at this skill, the better we will be able to sift through what is described to help us know what is prescribed.

Why this skill matters | The problem of cultural relativity: "The big issue among Christians committed to Scripture as God's word has to do with the problems of cultural relativity – what is cultural and therefore belongs to the first century alone and what transcends culture and is thus a word for all seasons." The better we get at this skill, the better we will get at solving the problem of cultural relativity. We can have more confidence in discerning what is timeless in the Bible and what belongs in a particular culture.

## The System for Reading Biblical Prose Discourse:

*Simplified: RUSS (Just remember your favorite Russ :) Russell Wilson, Russell Brand, etc.)*

1. **Recognize**
2. **Understand**
3. **Shape**
4. **Sift**

### *Filled Out*

1. **RECOGNIZE** Prose and the type of Prose: Letters, Law, and Wisdom
2. **UNDERSTAND** the points of persuasion or instruction.
3. How would this information have **SHAPED** the audience's view of God?
4. **SIFT** through what's *described* to find what's *prescribed*.

## The Mechanics of Reading Biblical Prose Discourse:

### 1. *How do we RECOGNIZE Prose and the type of Prose: Letters, Law, and Wisdom*

#### a) Certain Books

- i. Laws = instruction manual for allowing unholy Israel to live in fellowship with holy YHWH
  1. Leviticus
  2. Deuteronomy
- ii. Wisdom = how to be good at life. Wisdom literature in the form of prose discourse is trying to persuade you on how to live a good life.
  1. Ecclesiastes
  2. James
- iii. Letters = The author wants to persuade you to believe and live a certain way.
  1. Basically, the moment you leave Acts, you are reading prose discourse letters.

#### b) Conversational language (you and I pronouns more abundant, 1st and second person)

#### c) Logical connector words and phrases: Words and phrases that connect two big ideas.

- i. Therefore
- ii. In conclusion
- iii. Because of this
- iv. For this reason
- v. This
- vi. And so on...

#### d) List of Instructions

- i. Do this.
- ii. Don't do that.

e) Narrative vs. Prose Discourse

Narrative	Prose Discourse
Describing an event to you	Persuading or possibly commanding you to do something (I am the Lord your God is a very persuasive statement) or see things in a certain light  Shedding light and wisdom on a certain topic
Written in 3rd person	Written in 1st and 2nd person
Looking plot conflicts and their resolution	Looking for logical conclusions
	Listing of Instructions

**2. How do we UNDERSTAND the points of persuasion or instruction**

- a) Know the author and audience.
  - i. Who is trying to persuade or instruct whom?
  - ii. Often found at the beginning of chapter 1.
- b) Review and understand the previous points made at connector words (*if applicable*).
- c) Understand the point being made in the current section.
  - i. Ask the questions “what’s the point?” or “what problem is the author trying to solve?”
- d) Summarize the points.

**3. How would this information have SHAPED the audience's relationship with God?**

- a) Everything written in prose discourse is meant to both, directly and indirectly, shape your relationship with God and your view of God.

**4. How do we SIFT through what's described to find what's prescribed?**

- a) Remember the initial author, audience, and situation.
- b) How do I know when God is prescribing something to me? For most passages, it is fairly intuitive. What was described to the audience is often what God is prescribing to you. But for passages where one is uncertain, here are some guidelines:
  - i. Stay within the constant themes of the Bible
    1. The fruit of the spirit
    2. The sermon on the mount
    3. God is good
    4. People are made in the image of God
    5. Sexual purity
    6. Is it repeated in the old and new Testaments?
    7. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8
    8. The 10 Commandments
    9. Etc.
    10. Does it help you love God more and Love people more? (If you are brand new to the Bible and don't know the above references)

- a) What is the purpose of the Bible? To help people love the true God more and love other people more completely (A summary of St. Augustine).
  - i. Allow the constant themes of the Bible, the traditions of the church, your elders, and your community to refine your prescriptions.
  - ii. Follow the principle of the passage if the particulars of the passage are unable to be understood or followed.
  - iii. It's ok to feel like God isn't prescribing you anything in a passage
  - iv. God speaks to us in our days in our ways. We all follow God in our days and our ways, whether we know it or not
    - 1. Giving US dollars
    - 2. Greeting one another with a handshake or hug instead of a kiss
  - v. BAD DOCTRINE IS BAD! I'm not promoting progressive to the point where you go outside the boundaries in the Bible. Ex. Homosexuality. If you allow the themes mentioned earlier to guide you, you should be ok.
    - 1. The text can never mean what it never meant.
- c) Individual communication is different from corporate communication. What God prescribes to you may not be what He prescribes to the Church.
- d) This portion of the skill helps us stay within the boundary lines of the story of the Bible while also helping us discern God's voice for our day.

**Final Tips:**

- Understand the purpose of the book before coming to hard conclusions.
  - Read the entire book (Romans, Galatians, etc.) first, then finalize your thoughts and opinions.
    - It's hard to come to strong conclusions about a movie when you are only familiar with preselected clips from the movie.
- Be flexible. The more you learn, your opinions and understanding of passages may change.

# Rep #1

## How to recognize Biblical Prose Discourse

Part 1 | Underline the list of instructions in the passage.

### Numbers 28:1-10

#### Daily Offerings

**28** The Lord said to Moses, **2**, “Give this command to the Israelites and say to them: ‘Make sure that you present to me at the appointed time my food offerings, as an aroma pleasing to me.’ **3** Say to them: ‘This is the food offering you are to present to the Lord: two lambs a year old without defect, as a regular burnt offering each day. **4** Offer one lamb in the morning and the other at twilight, **5** together with a grain offering of a tenth of an ephah<sup>[a]</sup> of the finest flour mixed with a quarter of a hin<sup>[b]</sup> of oil from pressed olives. **6** This is the regular burnt offering instituted at Mount Sinai as a pleasing aroma, a food offering presented to the Lord. **7** The accompanying drink offering is to be a quarter of a hin of fermented drink with each lamb. Pour out the drink offering to the Lord at the sanctuary. **8** Offer the second lamb at twilight, along with the same kind of grain offering and drink offering that you offer in the morning. This is a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the Lord.

#### Sabbath Offerings

**9** “On the Sabbath day, make an offering of two lambs a year old without defect, together with its drink offering and a grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah<sup>[c]</sup> of the finest flour mixed with olive oil. **10** This is the burnt offering for every Sabbath, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.

### Exodus 30:1-16

#### The Altar of Incense

**30** “Make an altar of acacia wood for burning incense. **2** It is to be square, a cubit long and a cubit wide, and two cubits high<sup>[a]</sup>—its horns of one piece with it. **3** Overlay the top and all the sides and the horns with pure gold, and make a gold molding around it. **4** Make two gold rings for the altar below the molding—two on each of the opposite sides—to hold the poles used to carry it. **5** Make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. **6** Put the altar in front of the curtain that shields the ark of the covenant law—before the atonement cover that is over the tablets of the covenant law—where I will meet with you. **7** “Aaron must burn fragrant incense on the altar every morning when he tends the lamps. **8** He must burn incense again when he lights the lamps at twilight so incense will burn regularly before the Lord for the generations to come. **9** Do not offer on this altar any other incense or any burnt offering or grain offering, and do not pour a drink offering on it. **10** Once a year Aaron shall make atonement on its horns. This annual atonement

must be made with the blood of the atoning sin offering<sup>[b]</sup> for the generations to come. It is most holy to the Lord.”

### **Atonement Money**

**11** Then the Lord said to Moses, **12** “When you take a census of the Israelites to count them, each one must pay the Lord a ransom for his life at the time he is counted. Then no plague will come on them when you number them. **13** Each one who crosses over to those already counted is to give a half shekel,<sup>[c]</sup> according to the sanctuary shekel, which weighs twenty gerahs. This half shekel is an offering to the Lord. **14** All who cross over, those twenty years old or more, are to give an offering to the Lord. **15** The rich are not to give more than a half shekel and the poor are not to give less when you make the offering to the Lord to atone for your lives. **16** Receive the atonement money from the Israelites and use it for the service of the tent of meeting. It will be a memorial for the Israelites before the Lord, making atonement for your lives.”

**Part 2 | Recognizing the conversation: Underline all the “I’s” and “you’s” you see in the following passage.**

### **Philippians 1:1-12**

**1** Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,  
To all God’s holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons<sup>[a]</sup>:

**2** Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Thanksgiving and Prayer**

**3** I thank my God every time I remember you. **4** In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, **6** being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

**7** It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. **8** God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

**9** And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, **10** so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, **11** filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Part 3 | Connector Words: Underline all the connector words in the following passages.

## Ephesians 2

### Made Alive in Christ

**2** As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, **2** in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. **3** All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh<sup>[a]</sup> and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. **4** But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **5** made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. **6** And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, **7** in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. **8** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— **9** not by works, so that no one can boast. **10** For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

### Jew and Gentile Reconciled Through Christ

**11** Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)— **12** remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. **13** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

**14** For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, **15** by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, **16** and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. **17** He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. **18** For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

**19** Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, **20** built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. **21** In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. **22** And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

## Ephesians 3

### God’s Marvelous Plan for the Gentiles

**3** For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

**2** Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, **3** that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. **4** In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, **5** which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. **6** This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

**7** I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. **8** Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, **9** and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. **10** His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, **11** according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. **12** In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. **13** I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

### **A Prayer for the Ephesians**

**14** For this reason I kneel before the Father, **15** from whom every family<sup>[a]</sup> in heaven and on earth derives its name. **16** I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, **18** may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, **19** and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

**20** Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, **21** to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

**Remember, every book past Acts is written, at least in part, in prose discourse.**



## Rep #2

Build the skill of reading Biblical Prose Discourse by reading a chapter of Discourse

### Philemon

**1** Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,  
To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker— **2** also to Apphia our sister and  
Archippus our fellow soldier—and to the church that meets in your home:  
**3** Grace and peace to you<sup>[a]</sup> from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Thanksgiving and Prayer

**4** I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, **5** because I hear about your  
love for all his holy people and your faith in the Lord Jesus. **6** I pray that your  
partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of  
every good thing we share for the sake of Christ. **7** Your love has given me great joy  
and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's  
people.

### Paul's Plea for Onesimus

**8** Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to  
do, **9** yet I prefer to appeal to you on the basis of love. It is as none other than Paul—an  
old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus— **10** that I appeal to you for my son  
Onesimus,<sup>[b]</sup> who became my son while I was in chains. **11** Formerly he was useless to  
you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me.  
**12** I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. **13** I would have liked to keep  
him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the  
gospel. **14** But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you  
do would not seem forced but would be voluntary. **15** Perhaps the reason he was  
separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever— **16** no  
longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but  
even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord.  
**17** So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. **18** If he  
has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. **19** I, Paul, am writing  
this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self.  
**20** I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my  
heart in Christ. **21** Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do  
even more than I ask.  
**22** And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to  
you in answer to your prayers.  
**23** Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. **24** And so do  
Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.  
**25** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

**Understanding**

Who is the author? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is the audience? \_\_\_\_\_

If applicable, what was the point being made before the logical connector word(s)?

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If applicable, what point is being made after the logical connector word(s)?

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Summarize the discourse up until this point.

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**Shape**

How would this information have shaped the audience's view of God?

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**Sift**

Sift through what's described to find what's prescribed. (review your summary above)

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## Rep #3

Build the skill of reading Biblical Prose Discourse by reading a chapter of Discourse

### Exodus 20

20 And God spoke all these words:

2 “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3 “You shall have no other gods before<sup>[a]</sup> me.

4 “You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7 “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

8 “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

12 “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

13 “You shall not murder.

14 “You shall not commit adultery.

15 “You shall not steal.

16 “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

18 When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance 19 and said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.”

20 Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.”

21 The people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.

**Idols and Altars**

**22** Then the Lord said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites this: ‘You have seen for yourselves that I have spoken to you from heaven: **23** Do not make any gods to be alongside me; do not make for yourselves gods of silver or gods of gold.

**24** “Make an altar of earth for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats and your cattle. Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you. **25** If you make an altar of stones for me, do not build it with dressed stones, for you will defile it if you use a tool on it. **26** And do not go up to my altar on steps, or your private parts may be exposed.’

**Understanding**

Who is the author? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is the audience? \_\_\_\_\_

If applicable, what was the point being made before the logical connector word(s)?

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If applicable, what point is being made after the logical connector word(s)?

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Summarize the discourse up until this point.

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**Shape**

How would this information have shaped the audience's view of God?

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**Sift**

Sift through what's described to find what's prescribed. (review your summary above)

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# Rep #4

Build the skill of reading Biblical Prose Discourse by reading a chapter of Discourse

## Leviticus 1

### The Burnt Offering

**1** The Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting. He said, **2** “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When anyone among you brings an offering to the Lord, bring as your offering an animal from either the herd or the flock.

**3** “If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, you are to offer a male without defect. You must present it at the entrance to the tent of meeting so that it will be acceptable to the Lord. **4** You are to lay your hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on your behalf to make atonement for you. **5** You are to slaughter the young bull before the Lord, and then Aaron’s sons the priests shall bring the blood and splash it against the sides of the altar at the entrance to the tent of meeting. **6** You are to skin the burnt offering and cut it into pieces. **7** The sons of Aaron the priest are to put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. **8** Then Aaron’s sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, including the head and the fat, on the wood that is burning on the altar. **9** You are to wash the internal organs and the legs with water, and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the Lord.

**10** “If the offering is a burnt offering from the flock, from either the sheep or the goats, you are to offer a male without defect. **11** You are to slaughter it at the north side of the altar before the Lord, and Aaron’s sons the priests shall splash its blood against the sides of the altar. **12** You are to cut it into pieces, and the priest shall arrange them, including the head and the fat, on the wood that is burning on the altar. **13** You are to wash the internal organs and the legs with water, and the priest is to bring all of them and burn them on the altar. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the Lord.

**14** “If the offering to the Lord is a burnt offering of birds, you are to offer a dove or a young pigeon. **15** The priest shall bring it to the altar, wring off the head and burn it on the altar; its blood shall be drained out on the side of the altar. **16** He is to remove the crop and the feathers<sup>[a]</sup> and throw them down east of the altar where the ashes are. **17** He shall tear it open by the wings, not dividing it completely, and then the priest shall burn it on the wood that is burning on the altar. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the Lord.

### Understanding

Who is the author? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is the audience? \_\_\_\_\_

If applicable, what was the point being made before the logical connector word(s)?

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If applicable, what point is being made after the logical connector word(s)?

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Summarize the discourse up until this point.

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**Shape**

How would this information have shaped the audience's view of God?

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**Sift**

Sift through what's described to find what's prescribed. (review your summary above)

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## Rep #5

Build the skill of reading Biblical Prose Discourse by reading a chapter of Discourse

### James 4

#### Submit Yourselves to God

**4** What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? **2** You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. **3** When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

**4** You adulterous people,<sup>[a]</sup> don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. **5** Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us<sup>[a]</sup>? **6** But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

“God opposes the proud  
but shows favor to the humble.”<sup>[a]</sup>

**7** Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **8** Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. **9** Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. **10** Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

**11** Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister<sup>[a]</sup> or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. **12** There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?

#### Boasting About Tomorrow

**13** Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” **14** Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. **15** Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.” **16** As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. **17** If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

**Understanding**

Who is the author? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is the audience? \_\_\_\_\_

If applicable, what was the point being made before the logical connector word(s)?

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Summarize the discourse up until this point.

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**Shape**

How would this information have shaped the audience's view of God?

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**Sift**

Sift through what's described to find what's prescribed. (review your summary above)

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## Rep #6

Build the skill of reading Biblical Prose Discourse by reading a passage of Discourse

### Matthew 6:19-34

#### Treasures in Heaven

**19** “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. **20** But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**22** “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy,<sup>[c]</sup> your whole body will be full of light. **23** But if your eyes are unhealthy,<sup>[d]</sup> your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

**24** “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

#### Do Not Worry

**25** “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? **26** Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

**27** Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life<sup>[e]</sup>?

**28** “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. **29** Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. **30** If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? **31** So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ **32** For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. **33** But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. **34** Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

#### Understanding

Who is the author? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is the audience? \_\_\_\_\_

If applicable, what was the point being made before the logical connector word(s)?

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If applicable, what point is being made after the logical connector word(s)?

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Summarize the discourse up until this point.

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**Shape**

How would this information have shaped the audience's view of God?

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**Sift**

Sift through what's described to find what's prescribed. (review your summary above)

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# Rep #7

Build the skill of reading Biblical Prose Discourse by reading a chapter of Discourse

## 1 Timothy 2

### Instructions on Worship

**2** I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— **2** for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. **3** This is good, and pleases God our Savior, **4** who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. **5** For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, **6** who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. **7** And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles.

**8** Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. **9** I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, **10** but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

**11** A woman<sup>[a]</sup> should learn in quietness and full submission. **12** I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man;<sup>[b]</sup> she must be quiet. **13** For Adam was formed first, then Eve. **14** And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. **15** But women<sup>[a]</sup> will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

### Understanding

Who is the author? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is the audience? \_\_\_\_\_

If applicable, what was the point being made before the logical connector word(s)?

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If applicable, what point is being made after the logical connector word(s)?

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Summarize the discourse up until this point.

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**Shape**

How would this information have shaped the audience's view of God?

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**Sift**

Sift through what's described to find what's prescribed. (review your summary above)

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## Rep #8

Build the skill of reading Biblical Prose Discourse by reading a letter from Paul

### Titus 1

**1** Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness— **2** in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, **3** and which now at his appointed season he has brought to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior,

**4** To Titus, my true son in our common faith:

Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

#### Appointing Elders Who Love What Is Good

**5** The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint<sup>[a]</sup> elders in every town, as I directed you. **6** An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe<sup>[b]</sup> and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. **7** Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. **8** Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. **9** He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

#### Rebuking Those Who Fail to Do Good

**10** For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group. **11** They must be silenced, because they are disrupting whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. **12** One of Crete's own prophets has said it: "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons."<sup>[c]</sup> **13** This saying is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith **14** and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the merely human commands of those who reject the truth. **15** To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. **16** They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

### Titus 2

#### Doing Good for the Sake of the Gospel

**2** You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. **2** Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

**3** Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. **4** Then they can urge

the younger women to love their husbands and children, **5** to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

**6** Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. **7** In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness **8** and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

**9** Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, **10** and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

**11** For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. **12** It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, **13** while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, **14** who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

**15** These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

## **Titus 3**

### **Saved in Order to Do Good**

**3** Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, **2** to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone.

**3** At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. **4** But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, **5** he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, **6** whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. **8** This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

**9** But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. **10** Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them. **11** You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned.

### **Final Remarks**

**12** As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there. **13** Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they

need. **14** Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives.

**15** Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith.

**Understanding**

Who is the author? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is the audience? \_\_\_\_\_

If applicable, what was the point being made before the logical connector word(s)?

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If applicable, what point is being made after the logical connector word(s)?

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Summarize the discourse.

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**Shape**

How would this information have shaped the audience's view of God?

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**Sift**

Sift through what's described to find what's prescribed. (review your summary above)

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