

BTL: Wk 1: Session 1: Finding the Story in Scripture

Welcome to the Bible timeline, the story of salvation. My name is Jeff Cavins, and this first lesson is literally called finding the story in Scripture. I like to begin this session with prayer and ask the Lord to bless our time together. And for the Lord to really open up our hearts to share his amazing story with us in such a way that not only will we enter his incredible story, but our lives will change. So, let's begin with prayer as we begin every lesson with prayer.

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Lord, we thank you today for giving us your word and revealing yourself to us in such a special beautiful way.

Lord, as we begin this epic journey. We ask Lord that you would help us to open our hearts to hear your word. And that by the power of the Holy Spirit we would accurately understand your message to us in such a way that we would know your story, and we would know how to answer your story and live in it in such a way that our lives would be fruitful, and you would be glorified to you be all the glory. In Jesus name, amen. Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Well in this first lesson, we are going to talk about the Bible and kind of get an understanding of the Bible, some of you a little bit more about your materials you've done some homework this week to acquaint yourself with Scripture, with the Catechism, how to move around, but we're going to now look at exactly how we're going to approach scripture in the Bible timeline the story of salvation. The Bible is the number one seller in the world. But being the number one seller in the world that doesn't necessarily mean that it's the most read book in the world, in fact, a lot of times people end up putting the Bible on the coffee table and it becomes a glorified leaf presser, or it becomes a book to store family pictures rather than the book that it is and that is God's word, we want that word to leap off the page into to really transform our lives to get into our heart. Well in this study, we're going to give you a way to make the complex simple because I know that a lot of you who have attempted to read the Bible and found it very difficult and you see the Bible is very, very complex with a lot of foreign names and foreign places, rivers, mountains and so forth. And what we want to do is we want to make the complex, simple. So, in this lesson, I'm going to talk about how we're going to actually go about dividing the Bible up so that we can understand that it'll give us a plan for the rest of our life to study scripture. Now, inside of the Bible is a story, and I have my Bible right here I'm using the RSV Catholic edition. There are 73 books in this Bible, two testaments and Old and the New. And somewhere in this in this Bible is a story, an amazing story. And the question is, how do we get it out, how do we understand that story we're going to look into that in a moment, but I want to focus for just a few minutes on the importance of a story and it is so important in every one of our lives because we all have a story to tell. And when we go to a movie, we read a book, we go to a play, whatever it is, turn on the radio we're constantly looking for stories. When your children are acting in an unruly way one of the best ways to get them under control is to simply say kids. I have a story, listen to the story, and all of a sudden kids who are very rambunctious will settle down and they want to hear a story. Just because we're adults, it doesn't make any difference we still ourselves want to hear a story, because we are hardwired for story. We are hardwired for a plan, and every person, all of you that are watching this DVD are listening by audio, all of us here. We have a desire for a plan to live our lives according to a plan. And here's the good news. **God has a plan.** And the very first paragraph in the Catechism which is one of my favorite paragraphs says, *God is infinitely perfect, and blessed in Himself in a plan of shared goodness and freely created man to make him share in His own blessing life.* For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him to know Him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men scattered and divided by sin into the unity of his family. the church. So, the Catechism starts off and the very first thing it says is, *God has a plan.* He has a plan, and my friends that plan is hidden to a certain degree, concealed in the Bible. There's a plan there. So, one of our objectives in the Bible timeline, the story of salvation is to dig that story out and to understand it in such a way that we can actually a fruitful life. It's not primarily an academic endeavor, but it's more of a pastoral approach of

learning God's plan for our life. So, we're going to go deep into that. So, I mentioned just a few minutes ago, everybody is looking for a plan. Everyone is looking for a story. But the problem that we face, particularly as Catholics if you're anything like me growing up in the Catholic Church, is that the Catholic Church is big. It's very, very big. When you're a young nine-year-old boy or a young 10-year-old girl and you walk into Mass on Sunday morning, you're walking into this amazing facility. And you look around and you see everything that's Catholic; you see an altar, you see vestments, a priest, candles, sisters. We have mortal sin, we have venial sin, we have sacraments, we have Heaven, Hell, we have the Blessed Mother, we have the communion of the saints, we have Bingo. We have all of this, and the question is, *How do you put all of this together so that it makes sense? Where does the Bible fit into all things Catholic in our lives as Catholics?* Where does it fit in? The lay apologist by the name of Frank Sheeran once said, *The problem with parochial education is that you go through 12 years of Catholic education, all the way from first grade, second grade, third, all the way through 5,6,7, 11th 12th grade. At the end of that 12th grade, you're getting ready to graduate. You've been going to a Catholic school all these years.* And he said, *You end up all too often with what he calls **a heap of Catholicism**, a great big pile of Catholicism.* How many of you can identify with what I'm talking about *a big pile of Catholicism?* You've been learning for 12 years, you had Mrs. Swanson in third grade, you had Mr. Johnson in fifth grade. But you get ready to graduate and you got a great big pile of Catholicism. And the problem is that when you go from high school to college, and you go to a state college or some University, you end up in a class with some fancy philosophy professor who wants to ask you questions about your faith or you run into a roommate or a friend at the university who asks you a question like, *You're Catholic, right? Yeah, I'm Catholic, graduated from this great Catholic High School, two times state champions Oh yeah, I'm Catholic. Well, tell me, as a Catholic, you guys believe in that immaculate conception thing? What is it, conception? Mary Immaculate. That's the immaculate conception. Where do you guys get that? Where do you come up with that?* And suddenly, Little Johnny or Mary who's in college, is faced with this question and they're looking at the heap, and they're thinking. *That's a good question.* They don't know how it's organized, they don't know how to access all this. All they know is that at some point of life, we talked about the Immaculate Conception. I know mom and dad did, but why don't you go to Father. Father will know. He knows that pile a lot better than I do. And so, we end up with young people, growing up, going off to college, not understanding the plan that God has for their life. They don't understand Catholicism. They don't understand how it all fits together, how the Mass fits with the 10 commandments, how the 10 commandments fit with prayer, and how prayer fits with the Blessed Mother and how our Blessed Mother fits with the Old Testament, the Ark of the Covenant. They don't know how it all fits together and so what we're doing is we are sending young people out into the world without a plan, without a plan for living. And you know what ends up happening? The world offers a plan. The world is happy to give your family, a plan for living. That's what television shows are all about. That's what Oprah is about. That's what Dr Phil's about and Ellen and some of the other shows. They've got ideas, and they are setting a plan out there for you and your young people to live by. But the only problem is this **God did not send the talk shows into the world to give us His plan.** He gave us the scriptures, and the scriptures very clearly present this **plan of God.** That's what we are going to learn this amazing plan. So, with that plan in mind, let's take a look at a tool that God has given us, that is a marvelous tool to help put all things Catholic into some kind of structure. That makes sense. I referred to that tool as the Catechism. It's the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Catechism is a wonderful gift, because the Catechism takes what we understand as all things Catholic, and it puts it into a structure that tells us, not only what we believe, but it also gives us a methodology; even in the order of how we approach the faith. Let me explain. If you take Johnny or Mary's pile of Catholicism, right there, and you want to make sense out of it what we'll do is take that pile, and we will place it in the context of the Catechism, and what the Catechism does is the Catechism divides that pile into four manageable smaller piles, or what the Catechism calls pillars. So, the **Catechism has four pillars** and I'm going to give

97 them to you and there's a place in your in your notes where you can write this down. And what I'm
98 about to share with you will really act as a structure for you to learn your whole faith that get you
99 excited and want to read the Catechism and by the way, you should **always be reading the Catechism**
100 **with the Bible**, and I'll explain that in just a few minutes. Now the four pillars in the Catechism are:
101 **Pillar #1: THE CREED**: All of us have heard the word CREED before. We are all familiar with what the
102 CREED is. *We believe* and then we start to list what we believe. What a lot of people don't realize is that
103 when they recite the CREED, that CREED is actually following something. St Augustine said, **The CREED,**
104 **is the plan of salvation is a tightly wound form**. In other words, you take the plan that's in the Bible
105 from beginning to end and then you just squish it down into a very concise CREED, that goes from
106 creation all the way to the end. And so, the very first part of the Catechism is the CREED. It is the story of
107 salvation history, what the Catechism calls, **THE PLAN**. So that should tell you something, that as
108 Catholics, if we really want to understand our faith, then one of the first orders of business is that we
109 need to learn God's plan. We need to learn the Bible, because the second, third and fourth pillar, which
110 I'll get to in a moment, all spring from the plan. So, **if you don't know the plan of salvation history, you**
111 **don't know the Bible**, then you are compromised right away with your understanding of the second,
112 third and fourth pillar. So, what's the second pillar. Well, the first one is the CREED, and it is the story.
113 The second pillar is sacraments and liturgy.
114 **Pillar #2: SACRAMENTS and LITURGY**: It's how you get into God's incredible story for mankind. It's the
115 true history of the world, and this is how you get into it through the sacraments, St Peter said that *we*
116 *are born again through baptism*. So, the sacraments aren't some man-made idea, but encounters with
117 Christ that He initiated 2000 years ago so that we can continue to have life with Him. And so, we have
118 the story, #1 and #2, the sacraments and liturgy, how we get in.
119 **Pillar #3: LIFE IN CHRIST**. And then number three is the pillar where we have the CREED, #1. The we
120 have how to get into the story. And then #3, life in Christ. #3 is life in Christ and life in Christ is how we
121 live. **It's your personal script; you're in this story**. If you're baptized, you're in the story and the plan of
122 God. And the question is, how are you going to live. That's been answered, **we are to allow Christ to live**
123 **through us in the world. It's the life of Christ**. So, if you want to know how to live, read that third pillar.
124 You know back in the 60s people were always talking about, *I want to find myself, I need to find myself*,
125 like a bunch of lost people walking around. When I wake up in the morning, I don't need to *find myself*, I
126 know who I am. I am a son of the living God. And I know that I'm in His incredible story and I know that
127 today I need to put on Christ and let Christ shine through me. So, the CREED is #1, Sacraments and
128 Liturgy are #2 and Life in Christ is #3.
129 **Pillar #4: PRAYER**: **Prayer ensures those first three, it ensures our understanding of the story** and getting
130 into the story and participating in it makes our living the life of Christ real. **It is our intimacy with the**
131 **lover of our soul, Jesus Christ**. Prayer is communication, like any marriage. So, the Catechism does a
132 marvelous job of putting these four pillars together, but it teaches us something and that is this, *if you*
133 *want the sacraments and liturgy to come alive if you want the life of Christ in your life to come alive. You*
134 *want prayer to become deep and meaningful. You must know the story*. And that's our objective is that
135 each and every one of you after this study will be able to say, **I know the story**. And now it's a matter of
136 whether I'm going to enter that story and live into it. I was mentioning all along the importance of story
137 and not only with adults is this true but certainly with teenagers. A number of years ago there was a
138 movie that came out that really illustrated my thinking about this need, this hunger, this desire for story
139 or to belong to a story. I mentioned to you that movies, books, television series, you name it, they all are
140 about stories and drawing people into the story, into the drama. Well, this movie came out a few years
141 ago you might have heard about it. It was the number one seller of all time; it's called **The Titanic**. And
142 the movie Titanic, was a blockbuster hit with Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet. Kate Winslet played
143 Rose and Leonardo DiCaprio played Jack. How many of you have not seen this movie? All right. Then I
144 won't tell you the ending, but the story. The plotline is these two meet on a ship and are an unlikely

couple. Kate Winslet plays Rose (she's up on top and having the time of her life) and then you have Jack (who works down below). They meet and fall in love but then tragedy strikes, and the ship hits an iceberg and begins to go down in the cold North Atlantic. And the first part of the tragedy is that Rose saves Jack's life but then the climax of the story is Jack saving Rose's life. You remember that scene where there's a makeshift raft after the ship has gone down and Rose is on top of that raft shivering and shaking in the cold Atlantic, and they're hanging on to the rafters, Jack and Rose. He reaches out to try to grab it, but she says, *Jack. Don't go.* And every girl in the audience is crying, tears flowing down their cheeks and Jack ends up saving Rose's life. Now I was curious because I knew this was a blockbuster hit but why would so many girls between the ages of 13 to 18 see this? They went not once, not twice .not three times, but four or 5,6,7 times. So, we did a survey from California to New York and from Minnesota all the way down to Florida to find out why teenagers in our culture would go over four times to see the Titanic. And you know what the results were? The results showed that young girls in our culture, ages 13 to 18, went to see the Titanic over four times and the reason was - young girls in our culture are really, really into boats. It's true. They are into boats! It's an amazing phenomenon and you want to grab the heart of that one and do a movie about a boat, and they will flock to it. I noticed that some of you are writing that down but that was actually a joke. Okay. That is not the truth, but the stock of Carnival Cruise went through the ceiling. When Titanic came out the stock went through the ceiling. Imagine that, here you just see a movie about people sinking in the cold Atlantic on a cruise ship and the first thing you do is you say, *I need to go on one of those because I like cold water.* What is it? Why? Do you know why people would even risk their life to go on a cruise after seeing the Titanic? Because they would take the chance to possibly meet someone who'll love them like Jack loved Rose. My friends, we have a better story. We got a better story than Hollywood and our story isn't the story of one man rescuing a woman at sea, but our story is the story of God loving us so much that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should have eternal life. It's an amazing story but if we don't know the story and we don't live the story and we don't pass it on to our children, then what story are we living, whose story are we living? So, we need to approach the Bible knowing that #1 there's a story, but we also must have an attitude of humility when ***we approach the Bible with an attitude of humility.*** One of the great doctors of the church St Augustine said, *My swollen pride was unable to endure its humble style (speaking of scripture), nor could my sharpest wit penetrate into its depths, yet it contained a wealth of wisdom that would grow in little ones, but I just strained to be a little one. Being puffed up with pride appeared great to my own eyes.* So, St Augustine talks about how he had to become like a child to receive this incredible story, and frankly that's one of the hardest things for us to do. So often we want to approach the Bible with such sophisticated eyes, rather than the eyes of a child looking for the story and looking for God's love for us and what's my purpose in life. And I can tell you that many people have tried reading the Bible, and there is a problem with reading the Bible for some. Many people get really excited. Perhaps you have been in a program like this where you get really excited about reading through the whole Bible. Ever seen programs like this? You can go to a Christian bookstore, go to a Catholic bookstore and the cover says, *I have this read through the Bible in a year.* And you think yourself, *I'm going to do it.* Maybe you've tried before, and you gave up. You have to do it this time. So, you're going to read through the Bible in a year so the very first thing you do is go out and buy a brand-new Bible, that new leather really smells nice. And you get that brand new Bible, because the old one doesn't work, and you get a nice notebook to keep track of your notes and then you get a nice pen to write down your thoughts on not a Bic pen. A Montblanc. A Waterman pen, a pen worthy of your thoughts, a pen that will accurately write down your true feelings. So, you get all excited. Maybe it's October or September and you get your brand-new Bible and everything and what do you do now? You got to wait till January 1, because we're Americans, and we all start January 1 and you pick up and start reading in Genesis, and you go to Genesis through Genesis and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and Joseph and then into Exodus with Moses and then right about March, you quit. Why? You're in Leviticus

193 and you're reading about end trails and kidneys and livers and monthly cycles and, and you're sitting
194 there thinking yourself, where did this story go? Where did it go, you lost it and you do what a lot of
195 people do, when they pick up a book and they cannot follow anymore. They quit, or they're in a movie
196 and they can't figure out what's up or down, they walk out. People do not have long patience for stories
197 that make no sense, or they can't enter. So, you give up, and you go and buy another book that you can
198 get your mind around. Now there's a lot of good books out there but, my friends, God has called you to
199 read the Bible, **ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ** the Catechism says in paragraph 133, a
200 quote from St Jerome. So, if that doesn't work, we sometimes we go to this other method. Now don't
201 email me because I know that God can speak this way, but you have to ask yourself, *Is this the way God*
202 *intended His Word to be read?* and that's this is called Canada. And then you begin, *Oh Lord, you can do*
203 *better than that.* And so, you go until you find something that's familiar, and you read a little bit. But to
204 be honest if you read *Gone with the Wind* or you read some other epic story that way, would you ever,
205 ever understand the story? No. Oh, after 25 years of reading like that you might know a little bit about
206 Solomon, you might know a little bit about Moses, a little bit about David, a little bit about Jesus, and
207 Mary and Paul and Peter. But you wouldn't know the story. You see the problem that we run into is that
208 when we approach the Bible, one of the biggest problems we run into is that people think that this is a
209 book. We say, *Wait a minute, that does look like a book.* I know it looks like a book. I know it smells like a
210 book and I know it feels like a book. But that's the problem. It's not a book. It's not a book in the sense
211 of a story like *Gone with the Wind* that starts on page 1 and goes to page 687. **It looks like a book but**
212 **it's not a book. It is a library. The Bible is a Canon, it is a library of 73 books,** and the Bibles that we use
213 in our Catholic Bible studies have 73 books, Protestant Bibles have 66 books, and we may have a chance
214 to talk about that a little bit later but know that there's a difference in that the Catholic Bible has 73
215 books. Now the problem that we run into is that those **73 books are not in chronological order.** In fact,
216 as we get on with our study, you're going to be amazed at how many of the books that belong in the
217 very beginning are actually in the end, the prophets that were supposed to be read earlier on, are clear
218 back at the end of the Old Testament. So, the problem that we face is that it's not in chronological order,
219 but the Bible is ordered by types of **literature genre.** So, what you have in the Bible are **historical books**
220 **stitched together, you have poetry books stitched together, wisdom literature is stitched together,**
221 **prophets stitched together, gospels stitched together, you have the epistles stitched together.** And so,
222 at the end you have all these various types of literature stitched together and it looks like a book, and
223 everybody thinks, *Well I'm going to read it.* So, they start at the beginning and go to the end. And you
224 never get the story out of it that way. So, what I want to do in this first lesson, I want to introduce you to
225 the methodology of the Bible timeline the story of salvation, I want to show you how we're going to
226 make what seems so complex and big, simple and manageable. I want to encourage you that you can do
227 it. I've been teaching this Bible for over 30 years, and I have seen so many lives transformed. And I've
228 seen so many people who said, Jeff, *I don't understand. I'm not a good student. I don't study. I have a*
229 *hard time remembering.* I have seen those people become some of the best students over the years.
230 You know why? Because God's story is accessible, and He wants to be known. and he wants you to know
231 him. And so, what we're going to give you **The Keys** to understanding this incredible story and the tracks
232 that we're going to follow for the rest of our study. I have the Bible timeline behind me, and you
233 certainly can look at that or you can look at the one that's in your packet which is a miniature of the one
234 behind me. We're going to start off by dividing the Bible into 12 periods. We're going to take this
235 massive story of salvation history from beginning to end and we're going to simplify it by dividing it up
236 into 12 periods. And as you can see behind me those 12 periods are color- coded. Each of the 12 periods
237 are color-coded and I'm going to go through those 12 periods with you throughout this entire study. And
238 as I go through the naming of those 12 periods, I want to encourage you; don't be discouraged at this
239 point and think, *I don't even know what that means those 12 periods.* Forget it. Don't worry about it.
240 We're going to pick everybody up and we're going to go on together in this story. Those 12 periods, as

you can see on the Bible timeline chart, are each color coded and you can see early world patriarchs, Egypt in Exodus, the desert wanderings, the conquest and judges, the royal kingdom, the divided Kingdom, the exile and return, the Maccabean revolt, the Messianic fulfillment and The Church. Those are the 12 periods, and they are color-coded. And that color coding is really a **mnemonic¹ device**. There is also a little bookmark that you have in your Bible that is for the purpose of remembering those 12 periods. ~~The designer jewelry that you're wearing on your wrist is for the purpose of remembering those 12 periods.~~ You don't even have to know what those 12 periods mean, at this point. And then the next thing we do is take the 73 books (of the Bible) and we're going to pick out the 14 books that are **narrative in nature** (left hand side of chart)

Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, 1st and 2nd Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1st Maccabees, Luke and Acts.

Those 14 books are to be read in the context of the 12 periods and **if you will read those 14 books, you will get the basic storyline of salvation history**. However, we have a problem and that is, we have 59 other books. So, we're going to show you as we go through in **chronological order of this story**, we're going to show you where those 59 books fit into the story. Notice I didn't say when they were written, but where they would fit into the story to make the story come alive. So, if you look at your Bible timeline chart, you will see that story laid out in chronological order from beginning to end. By the time we're done not only will we go through the 12 periods and go through those 14 books, but you'll know where the other 59 books fit in.

As we visit every major character, every major event in salvation history, and once we know the basic story, we have the basis to approach the Scriptures with a lifetime of study. You've got the keys to do it and let's talk just for a few minutes about the place of the Bible in the Catholic Church in your homework. This week, you were to read (Genesis) paragraphs 50 through 141. I'm going to briefly review some of the things that you read this week about the place of the Bible in the Catholic Church, so I'm not going to go into them in great detail because you already read this week.

1. **Relationship between tradition and Sacred Scripture.** The Church teaches us that we are not primarily People of the Book; we are People of The Word, where people have The Word, and specifically the Word incarnate, Jesus Christ. 2000 years ago, Jesus proclaimed the truth. Some of it was written down. Some of it was passed on orally, through Tradition. **It's important for us to read it to realize that the fullness of the Word of God is both a combination of the Written Torah, the written Word of God, and Sacred Tradition, so you have Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. They come from one common source, two distinct modes of transmitting God's word; one source. Thus, there are basically three distinct ways. The term Word of God is used as the Son of God, God's revelation handed down to us in Scripture and Tradition as authentically interpreted by the Magisterium, that's the Holy Father in union with the Bishops and Holy Scripture as containing The Word in an entirely unique way.** Now the Scriptures that we have and that we're going to be looking at have something else that's very unique and very distinct about them that separates them from all other books in the world, and that is the Word of God is inspired. To use that word, **inspired means that God is the author**, as it says in the Catechism paragraph 105. God inspired people to write Scriptures. God is the author, but He also inspired people to write as it says in paragraph 106 of the Catechism, and that's going to become really important to realize that that there are human authors here. It's going to be important when it comes to interpreting scripture, because that's something that we have to pay attention to and that is the intent, **the original intent of the human authors who wrote the inspired books and would teach the truth without error** (Paragraph 107 of the Catechism) and the Catechism goes on in paragraphs 109 to 114 and it gives us some criteria for interpreting scripture, so that once you know this amazing story, then it comes time for you to start digging in and reading and interpreting the Scripture. And some people become really afraid at this point, but I want to encourage you. Don't be afraid. You know you're not going to hurt the Word of God; God can take care of Himself. He wants you to come in and enjoy His

Word, so don't let fear be a part of your vocabulary when it comes to studying God's Word. There are three criteria for interpreting scripture in paragraphs 112, 113 and 114 of the Catechism. Paragraph 112 says, *Be attentive to the content and the unity of the whole scripture*. In other words, there is a unity by virtue of the unity of God's plan between the books. So, you can't take one book of the Bible or one verse in the Bible and pull it out of the context of the whole Bible, you must take it all together. You can't take one verse out of one place in the New Testament and say, *See, this is what God says*. When there's another verse somewhere else in the Bible that seems like it's saying something else, you have to take it all in context.

2. **Read scripture within the living tradition of the whole church.** So, you have to take into consideration the **tradition** (Paragraph 11). You can't come up with some interpretation of the bible that's contrary to the tradition that has been passed on to us since the beginning.

3. **Be attentive to the analogy of faith.** In other words, there is a coherence of truths, they all fit together. So, three criteria for interpreting scripture, and we will look further into this next point as we go along in our study, but I wanted to mention this to you that in paragraphs 115 to 119 of the Catechism, it talks about what are called the **Senses of Scripture**. We're not going to make this overly complex at this point, but I do want to share it with you that when we study the Bible, we do have the three criteria for interpretation, but we're also looking for something. The whole Bible is **Christo Centric or focused on Christ**. And that tells us that when we read a text, whether it's the Old Testament or the New Testament, it tells us that we need to be paying attention to, first of all, what the Catechism calls in paragraph 1165,

1. **Literal Sense:** What was the intended meaning of the author. So, we begin to study the words of the author, *What did they mean in their context? What did they mean within their culture?* and the Catechism gives us more information about how to do this and then once we find the Literal Sense that becomes the foundation for something else, and that is the

2. **Spiritual Sense:** Like an onion with many layers, the Bible goes deeper and deeper and deeper. So, once you know the basic literal sense now you have to ask yourself, three questions, **three aspects to the Spiritual Sense,**

Allegorical Sense: How does this text relate to Christ? The gospel writers did a great job of telling us the *Allegorical sense* of the old testament texts

Moral Sense: How does this relate to my conduct in my everyday life? How does this text relate to me on earth? Paul does a great job of telling us the *Moral Sense* of how it applies to our lives.

Anagogical Sense: Looking forward; how does it relate to the future?

So those are three things we need to always be asking ourselves: How it relates to Christ, how it relates to me, and how it relates to the future. We will visit those throughout our study, and I will give you some examples, but before we end in the last 10 minutes or so, I want to talk about some very practical things when it comes to getting started in our Bible study together.

1. Get a Bible and use it. I mentioned to you that we're using the RSV Catholic edition. It's very readable and it is also used in the Catechism of the Catholic church that's the scripts the text is used in the Catechism. The NAV, the new American Bible, is also a wonderful translation and it's used in the Liturgy in the Mass in the United States. Whichever one you land on is fine. I'm I use the RSV and so if you don't have one yet, I encourage you to buy an RSV and start studying along with us. But, whichever you choose, make it a home for you. What I mean by that is, become comfortable with the Bible, get a Bible that you can live in, get a Bible that you can mark in underlining and highlighting some of your favorite scriptures. I have some pencils and some pens here that I wanted to show you that I use. When you highlight or mark your Bible, you are accomplishing a few things. **1. You are providing a quick way in the future to recall meaningful texts.** As you go through this massive study, there's going to be certain texts where you can say, *I can't forget that. That's so good!* Marking your Bible is a way to not forget. So, provides a quick way to recall meaningful texts. **2. It provides visual markers when you are teaching or**

explaining the Bible to others. And I do hope that you go on after your study and you start teaching in your church and you teach CCD; oh, we need good teachers. When you go back to your Bible after the study, you're going to see place markers so that you can teach in the future those key texts. **3. It provides a journal for your own walk with God.** I know that in one of my old Bibles, I have three, that I use consistently, in that first Bible I have all kinds of notes that I wrote in there about experiences in life with my wife having our daughters and when we had big events in our life. Just beautiful things, and I go back over that now I think, *Wow. Just look what God has done in my life.* I suggest that you use something that's not going to bleed through the paper, that very thin paper. I use colored pencils to mark my Bible and I also have a very fine tip pen. That's not a gel but just a pen that won't bleed through the paper. And I really encourage people not to come up with an overly complex system. I use yellow just to highlight verses that I want to pop off the page, I might use another color like purple or blue or red to underline that yellow, and that might mean something special. Just come up with a system that's simple. Maybe scriptures that relate to Christ would be one color. I'm not going to impose a particular system on you but use something and keep it simple, and then use a very fine pen write in the margin, maybe cross references to the Catechism or other scriptural references or quotations things that will jar, your memory but remember to keep it simple. So, by the way, I had someone ask me, *Why do you have three Bibles?* and I said, Well, sometimes I just wanted to start over in a fresh one. *And I wanted to start marking that new and like a fresh and to hear God, fresh. Do you know why I have three? I have three daughters and one day I hope that I will be able to give one to each of my daughters; a copy of the Bible that I lived in, the Bible that I struggled with life in, that I wrestled with God in, that they will be able to see a diary of their dad's prayer, their dads struggle with life's victories.* That's why I have three. I want to pass something on to my family and I hope that you'll do that too and that your family one day will look at your Bible and say, You know what, mom loved God, dad loved God, not only did he study, not only did she study but they put it into practice in daily life. So, by the time we are finished with this study, you're going to learn:

1. How to read the Bible, but also, you're going to learn how to study the Bible as a Catholic; study the Bible with 2000 years of rich tradition behind you. You will stand on the shoulders of great men and women the doctors of the Church. You will see scripture from a new standpoint. We're going to learn to **be attentive to the content and unity of the Scripture** by reading the Bible in light of the whole story of the Old and New Testament.

2. We're going to read the Bible through the living tradition by going into the Catechism, and the Church documents, and we're going to see how the Church interprets and how the Church handles certain scriptures. You're going to look for the *literal in the spiritual sense* but most of all, you're going to **become familiar with God's amazing story. You're going to become familiar with His voice, because as you learn to read the Bible, you are going to understand that God is revealing Himself to you. He reveals Himself in Word and Deed.** So, as you spend time in Scripture, you're going to read about the deeds of God in the words of God, and off of that page will come a new understanding of who God is and who you are in relationship to God and what God is requiring of you in your life. You're about to enter into *the greatest story ever* told and know this, **you are not alone.** You stand with the church, and the Holy Spirit will be with you. **Prayer is going to be so important in your study. As you study, God will speak to you and as you pray, you will speak back to God. It's a conversation that you are learning to develop as you study the Bible.** So, I want to encourage you to start every one of your studies with prayer and ask the Lord to open up your heart and show you great and magnificent and wonderful things that you did not know before. Every one of us is starting this study at a particular place. Maybe you're facing particular problems or struggles in your life right now and certain words from God will pop off the pages and someone will say something in your small group that you'll think, *Wow, that was for me.* Make sure that in your notes and in your Bible, you have a way of marking down, highlighting those things that God is saying to you because now He wants to give you a fresh word. Two years from now, three or four

years from now, the Lord Terry's, you will be reading the Bible again and God will have a new fresh word for you then. And so, we are beginning now to **develop a deposit of understanding of God's Word** personally and corporately with one another as we study God's word together. But I want to conclude by saying this. **Don't be afraid**. If you get behind in a study, do not give up. Everybody gets behind at one time or another. Just because you are a little bit behind is not a reason to abandon your journey with God. You'll catch up. You'll get there. You'll understand. If you've never had any Bible study before, you're going to do just fine in the Bible timeline: The Story of Salvation. You know the Catechism says that the response to Revelation is **what faith, faithful mess**. Our response to this incredible revelation isn't. *Wow, I know more, but it's, Thank you, Lord, I must respond to you now.* And that is where life changes. When you respond to the Word of God.

Let us pray. In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Lord, I thank you for your word and I pray for all of my brothers and sisters here. Those who are watching the DVD. Lord, we are all in the same boat and that is that we have been created, not of our own well placed on this earth not of our own well. But here we are. And Lord we know that we are meant for a story, and it's yours. As we now approach your word, open your word in a magnificent way to us so that we can understand it, and live it, and pass it on to you be all the glory. In this study, in Jesus. father.

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¹ Mnemonics Device: **a memory technique that can help increase your ability to recall and retain information.**