



Cover photo: Students from the University of Auckland Navigators group

ENGAGING WITH THE BIBLE

‘Deep engagement with and obedience to the Scriptures as the Word of God’ is the way our Navigators vision describes the place of the Bible in our lives. What comes to mind as you think about engaging with God’s Word?

Recently I read Psalm 119 and underlined phrases that reveal the Psalmist’s response to Scripture focusing on how God enabled engagement and obedience to his words. Ideas and images such as cling to, run after, guard, keep watch, delight in and love describe the writer’s response to God’s Word. I see a determined intent to engage with the Bible and with God.

Alongside this active engagement, the Psalmist clearly looks to God for help. The Bible describes God as our teacher and the one who enlightens, restores, guides and enables us to live according to truth. God does not ask us to engage with and obey His Word on our own.

I love how the Psalmist describes a life lived according to God’s truth saying, ‘I will walk about in a broad space.’ (Psalm 119:45)

The Bible is the precious resource God gave to help us to connect with Him, experience transformation and live fruitful lives.

This issue of Navigate explores the challenge of having a high view of the Bible in terms of our beliefs and practices. The stories illustrate ways the Bible helps us to experience God and bring Jesus and his kingdom into our own lives and the lives of people around us.

Simon

Simon Cayzer
National Director





The Bible has fallen on hard times over the past two hundred years in western culture. Once held in high esteem culturally and amongst believers, this is no longer the case. Along with decreasing Biblical literacy, this perspective has led to the words of Scripture being taken as “good advice” at best, rather than “good news.” According to our

culture, the Bible offers suggestions on how to live but is not directive.

Karl Barth, viewed as a prominent 20th century theologian, reflected this perspective with a “low” view of Scripture. He suggested the Bible was a pile of dung containing diamonds and that theologians were to discern the dung from what was actually worth holding on to. While Barth did not find many diamonds, he did hold to a “high” view of Jesus. He was able to live with the tension of maintaining a high view of Jesus and a low view of the Bible, something most of his students could not.

Holding to a non-authoritative—or a low view—of the Bible is enticing as it relieves the inevitable tensions from holding it to an authoritative viewpoint. Whether the seemingly archaic laws of Leviticus, the genocides of Joshua, the prohibition of certain sexual practices, or the exclusivity of Jesus for salvation, people want to be released from views that are currently at odds with culture. A low view offers a potential way out, an avenue to relieve the strain. Yet this low view has a cost. How do we discern what is dung and what are diamonds without doing so arbitrarily?

Ultimately, it requires humility to hold to an authoritative or a high view of Scripture. Rather than gloss over the tensions, we are required to embrace them and acknowledge that God’s perspective is greater than we can perceive. Deuteronomy 29:29 reminds us that the visible things belong to all of us and there are secret things that belong to the Lord. We do not have the view or knowledge God possesses and so we have to trust what he has revealed. When Job and his friends believed they had the vantage point to judge God and call him to account, God sternly reminds Job that there is so much he does not grasp (see Job 38-41). God challenges Job to recognise humanity’s limitations and trust that God is at work in this complex and chaotic world.

In the same way God is asking, “Do you trust me? Can you stand with me despite the pressure of the culture around you?” It requires humility to accept the voice of the Lord, acknowledge our limited understanding, and trust him in areas where we experience tension or disagreement. This recalls Jesus’ words in Matthew 18:3-4, *“I tell you the truth, unless you turn around and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven! Whoever humbles themselves like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven!”* Pray then that we can be like that child and heed the words God reveals to us in the Scriptures.

- Stowe Campbell -

AWESOME BIBLE RESOURCE



The Navigators Backpack is a Bible resource that will help you in your journey with Jesus. Written for our New Zealand context, each module invites participants to read and discuss Scripture. You can use this great foundational resource with a friend or in a small group. Download the free pdf or order a hardcopy of the Backpack for \$15 from the Resources section of the Nav website: www.navigators.org.nz

Additionally on the Navigators website there are Life Modules Bible studies on a variety of topics relevant to daily living and are available to download.

A GIVING OPPORTUNITY

The Navigators develop people in gaining a high view of the Scriptures. In October there is a live-in Leader Gathering for emerging leaders.

Will you consider investing in the development of our future leaders? Please see the included response card.

Hannah and Angel Duran realised people in their Spanish-speaking community in Hamilton needed to get into reading the Bible. Although their friends expressed faith in Christianity, they came from traditions that do not emphasise reading the Bible personally.

Now, every Monday night, these friends gather to catch up and study the Bible using the Navigators Backpack, which Hannah and Angel translate into Spanish before they meet. Studying the Bible together has opened up opportunities in just a few weeks that a few months of gathering socially had not created.

Angel and Hannah had thought that they would be helping people grow in their faith, but discovered they are actually interacting with people from different faiths. One woman said she believes she's a Christian but can't believe the gospel. Another has grown up in the Catholic Church but has never read the Bible for himself. One man is a Jehovah's Witness and is studying the Bible for the first time.

People have commented that, "We've never opened up the Bible to see what it says." The members of the group have benefitted from the study so much that two have begun to bring their mothers to the group. Hannah says, "There's something about the Bible or the gospel or being in a group where the focus is Jesus that makes people feel safe."

People are encountering God through the Bible and that message is moving through family networks because of Angel and Hannah's simple actions of opening their home to read and discuss the Bible with their friends.



Angel (left) and Hannah (top right)

EXPERIENCING GOD IN THE BIBLE

The cornerstone of my walk with God is regular times reading the Bible, listening for God's voice and speaking with him. I love Psalm 5:3, "Morning by morning, Lord, you hear my voice; morning by morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation." I'm learning to rest and wait before the Lord, to simply be in his presence, and then to hear from him.

Earlier this year, I was very aware of feeling "thin," like Bilbo in *The Lord of the Rings*, and asked the Lord to deepen my relationship with him. In March, I had unexpected heart surgery which left me feeling very vulnerable during recovery. Each night in hospital God brought Psalm 63:6 to mind, "On my bed I remember you, I think of you through the watches of the night". He exposed and intensified a bodily sense of longing for him as in Psalm 63:1, "My soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water" and rich fulfillment as he met that longing—Psalm 63:5, "My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of food". God has answered my prayer by bringing new depth in my relationship with him through verses I learnt long ago.



- Chris Molloy -

SETTLERS BIBLE STUDY APPROACH

The Navigators Settlers ministry works among individuals who have been in the criminal justice system or who have struggled with addictions. A simple and practical approach to the Bible is helping those involved with important themes such as community building, mission and accountability built into the questions.

As group members grow in familiarity with this style of relating to one another and the Bible, they begin to lead the discussions themselves. Each Settlers group meeting follows the same pattern:

Looking Back:

- What are you thankful for this week?
- What are you struggling with and how can we help?
- What needs have you noticed among your friends or in your community?

- What did you find helpful from our last meeting?

Looking Up:

After the group reads a passage on a specific topic:

- What do you like about this passage?
- What do you find difficult to understand?
- What does this passage tell you about God and your relationship with him?
- How does it help us answer our question about the topic?

Looking Forward:

- What is one thing from today's discussion that could help you going forward?
- How could you make sure you don't lose this thought but put it into action?
- Who else in your circle of friends could benefit from this?



Faithful attentiveness describes Juliet Cayzer's interactions with her co-workers. That, and a steady fruitfulness from years of investment in her personal walk with God and in her friendships. Juliet got involved with the Navigators as a student at Massey University and found faith through that ministry. During those years she developed patterns of daily Bible reading, studying the Bible and memorising verses. Of Scripture memory Juliet says, "I didn't realise at the time how valuable that would be."

In her workplace, Juliet has sought to pay attention to what God is doing among her co-workers and to take initiatives as opportunities arise. A friendship developed with one of her co-workers, Fiona*. After Fiona's mother died when Fiona was in her early 20s, she had become angry with God and had not forgiven him. Although Juliet would sometimes talk about faith and God with Fiona, she was not very open until Juliet lent her the book, *The Shack*. Reading the book transformed Fiona's perspective on who God is and what he is like. She did not feel ready to read the Bible with Juliet, but at a particularly difficult time in Fiona's life, Juliet responded to God's prompting by writing a verse on a card and gave it to Fiona. Fiona eagerly received the card and put it in front of her on her computer where she could see it constantly.

Juliet decided to write new verses for Fiona regularly. As Fiona collected these verses, she would choose a new one at the start of each day depending on how she felt. Through this daily practice, Scripture was sinking into her life. One day Fiona chose a verse and put it on Juliet's desk. This really encouraged Juliet; it was like God was speaking directly to her and Juliet was able to experience the power of someone giving her a word from God.

Over time, Juliet had an opportunity to read the Bible with Fiona and another friend, Jan*, who considers herself spiritual but not Christian. One night Juliet could not sleep and a verse from her student days came to mind to pray for Jan. When Juliet shared that verse with her, Jan appreciated it and commented that it was something she had recently read herself. Juliet reflects on how the verses she memorised as a student and in her young adulthood have continued to come to mind today.

Juliet has learned the importance of developing relationships of trust with her co-workers and friends. Praying for her friends and for opportunities to read the Bible with them is something she asks God for regularly.

THANK YOU, KATHRYN



After over 40 years of service with The Navigators, Kathryn Taylor has stepped down from her most recent administration role. Kathryn first encountered the Navigators in 1974 when a young woman led her to Christ and helped her grow in her faith. Since 1977, Kathryn has been on staff with the Navigators, serving in various administrative capacities. Kathryn has been motivated to serve the staff as they served the people.

Kathryn says, "In 1974 I started reading the Bible, studying God's word, memorising verses, sharing God's word with others and building relationships. In 2018 I will continue to read my Bible, study God's word, memorise verses, build relationships and share my faith with others.

Thank you, Kathryn, for your faithful and enthusiastic service over so many years. We thank God for you.

NATIONAL GATHERING 2018 - CHRISTCHURCH

Don't miss out! Navigators International President Mutua Mahiaini will inspire you with his messages on *Living by Faith*.

Choose from a wide range of *Faith Bites*: short talks delivered by dynamic speakers on a range of topics.

Register at www.navigators.org.nz

