

WEEK THREE: STYLE MATTERS

Poetry is comprised of the poems, songs, and sonnets of the Bible. Emotion and imagination are on display in the poetic sections of Scripture. Metaphors and figurative language are common and purposeful. You want to be cautious in taking poetic sections of the Bible too literally or necessarily affirming everything you read.

Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations

Wisdom Literature is just what it sounds like – literature that is wise and principled. But wisdom literature shouldn't be interpreted as promises or in many cases, even doctrinal in nature.

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and parts of James.

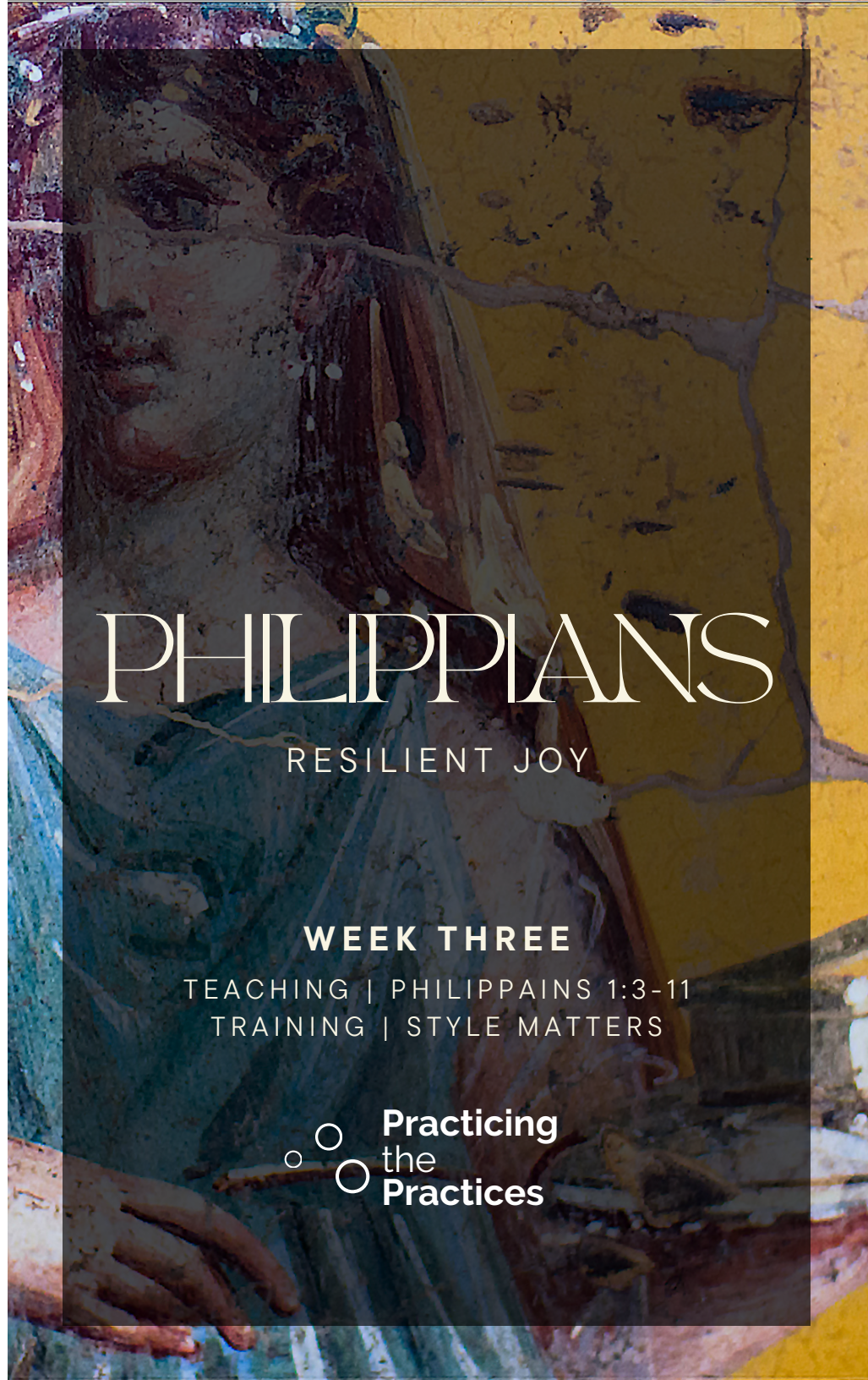
Prose are sermons, letters, and discourses recorded in the Bible. One of the reasons these are some of the most read portions of scripture is because they are generally the easiest to interpret and apply. When the Apostle Paul writes, "Be kind one to another..." we don't have to spend a lot of time dissecting what he meant. He meant "be kind to others".

Luke, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John, and Jude.

Here is the main principle to take away: **"All Scripture is important. All Scripture is true, but not all Scripture is meant to be read in the same way."**



Bible



Refresh (Weeks One & Two)...

Week One: A Philosophy for Reading the Bible

Key Principle: The Bible was written **for us**, but it is not **about** us.

Week Two: A Theology for Reading the Bible

Key Principle: The Bible is a collection of sacred writings telling one unified story from beginning to end. This plot of this grand narrative comes in 4 distinct “acts” or parts: Creation, Fall, Redemption and Restoration.

Week Three: Style Matters

A few basic facts...

- The Bible, in its original writing, was comprised of three languages. Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, with small portions being written in Aramaic. The New Testament was recorded in Greek – more precisely “Koine Greek” – the common language of the first century.
- The “Canon” of Scripture - that is the 66 books that comprise our Bible, were written down over a period of 1,400+ years, on 3 different continents (Asia Africa, Europe) by more than 40 human authors.
- The human authors of Scripture were diverse in background, age, and demographics. They were Kings, peasants, physicians, fishermen, poets, and scholars.
- The human authors penned the ONE STORY with **different literary expressions**.

You walk into a bookstore...

Bookstores are making a comeback...when you walk into a bookstore, each aisle will contain different genres of literature: History, poetry, sciences, fiction, self-help, and so forth.

Each of those types of literature incorporates unique expressions of communication, that inform how you read it. For instance, you wouldn't read poetry the same way you read a science textbook.

It's helpful to think of approaching different sections of the Bible in the same way. We approach each part of the Bible with a unique lens depending on the type of literature. Because **Style matters**.

There are Four Main Categories (or styles) of Bible Literature: **Narrative, Poetry, Wisdom Literature, and Prose.**

Narrative includes the Bible writings that record history, stories, biographies, and so forth. The purpose of the narrative style is to tell a story. The stories will have different flavors and writing styles because they have different authors writing with different personalities and in distinct eras. For example, the narratives of Luke and Moses are in the same style category, but read very differently.

Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Daniel, Jonah (and in smaller sections throughout most of the prophets), Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts.

**Some texts that are predominantly narrative in nature will include other forms of literature. i.e. Philippians contains a poem in chapter 2.*