



## Sermon Discussion Guide

Aug. 23 & 24, 2025

"What's Wrong With Reading the Bible Wrong?"

[Matthew 15:1-9](#)

During this series, we will explore how to make sense of the Bible and why it is still relevant today. Each week, we'll tackle one big question about the Bible, including why it matters and how you can find your place in God's story.

### PRAY & CONNECT

Open in prayer and invite the Holy Spirit into your conversation. Ask God for wisdom and discernment and trust him to guide you. Take time to recap the message or view it on [hopeonline.tv](#). Did you have any ah-ha moments where you felt convicted, compelled, or inspired during the sermon? What's been on your mind this week? Have you been able to apply the message to your everyday life?

### GROW

Read [Matthew 15:1-9](#) – "**Jesus Teaches about Inner Purity**"

- What emotions do you feel when you hear Jesus call out the Pharisees' hypocrisy?
- Why does Jesus insist that human traditions must never replace God's commands?
- Pastor Mike said that when we misuse Scripture, it's like getting on the wrong train. What happens when religious leaders take the wrong train of elevating tradition over truth?
- How can Christian leaders guard against teaching "man-made ideas as commands from God" in today's church?

Read [Romans 12:21](#) – "**A Living Sacrifice to God**"

- When you hear the idea of "overcoming evil with good," what feelings or experiences come to mind for you personally?
- Have you ever struggled with the thought that doing good feels too weak or ineffective against real injustice? How does this verse challenge that assumption?
- Pastor Mike shared the story of Westboro Baptist protesting and Hope responding with breakfast. How does that story illustrate Romans 12:21 in action? What does this reveal about how God transforms situations through love?
- How can Christian leaders model the kind of courage it takes to overcome evil with good rather than fueling cycles of hate?

Read [1 John 4:7-8](#) – "**Loving One Another**"

- What emotions or personal memories come up when you hear the phrase "God is love"?
- Why do you think John makes love the test of whether someone truly knows God?
- How does this challenge the assumption that knowledge, tradition, or religious activity are the main signs of faith?
- Why is it dangerous when churches replace love with judgment, pride, or hostility?

Read [Proverbs 6:16-19](#) – "**Lessons for Daily Life**"

- How do you feel when you read a passage that lists things the Lord "hates"? What does this reveal about his heart toward sin?
- Why do you think this passage focuses on actions (eyes, tongue, hands, heart, feet, mouth) rather than labeling people as irredeemable?
- How should Christian leaders teach passages like this in a way that helps people take sin seriously but doesn't fuel self-righteousness or hate?

### APPLY

Pick one of the applications below to put into practice this week.

- **Check your train of thought.** This week, pay attention to one passage of Scripture you read or hear. Ask yourself: Am I interpreting this in a way that points to Jesus and aligns with the broader story of the Bible? Write down one insight about how the "right train" (faithful reading) changes the meaning compared to a "wrong train" (misuse or cherry-picking).
- **Love in action.** Identify one place in your life where you're tempted to respond with irritation, division, or even hostility. Instead, intentionally practice Romans 12:21: "conquer evil by doing good." Choose an act of kindness toward that person or situation.
- **Teach by example.** Find one person—a child, a friend, a coworker, or someone in your group—and show them what it looks like to read the Bible faithfully. You might walk with them through a "difficult" verse and explore together whether it's contextual or timeless, or simply share how you've been challenged to love more deeply by God's word. Use this as a chance to disciple someone else into a healthier way of engaging Scripture.