

MOVEMENTS

THE ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

MOVEMENT 1: BACKWARD

Queue up the 10-minute video, "Movement 1," available online at fbclodi.org. You may want to have someone from the group read aloud 2 Chronicles 34:1-21, then push play.

Discussion Questions for Moving Deeper:

1. In the story of Josiah from 2 Chronicles 34, we learn that for some period of time Israel either did not have access to, or they didn't use, the "Bible" they had available to them.

Imagine, for a minute, a world without the Christian Bible. What would society look like if the written scriptures simply didn't exist? What would have changed? How, just from your group's understanding of history and culture as we live it, has the presence of scripture impacted the world around us?

2. Now let's ask that same question, but from a more personal perspective. What would your life look like if you had never had access to the Bible? How has scripture impacted your life?

3. Read 2 Tim 3:14-16. Which "sacred writings" would Paul be referring to here? Just from these verses, how important do you think scripture was to the early community of God?

4. In what ways can our community group take 2 Tim 3:14-16 seriously? In other words, how can we "move backward?" How can we create the space within our shared time together to make God's story in the Bible a central part of our community?

5. What did you think of the idea of "the 5th act" as described in the video? Does this way of thinking about the Bible help you as you think about putting "a story" into practice?

Questions for Moving Deeper Still

(Don't worry about these if you are out of time or have other things to do as a group.)

6. Have you ever heard someone refer to "the authority of the scripture?" What does that mean to you?

7. Does the Bible's "authority" make it in some way capable of causing damage to the world or individuals? How? Why? Are you aware of ways in which this has happened?

8. The analogy of scripture as a "5 act play" is found In N.T. Wright's *Scripture and the Authority of God*. For Wright, the first four acts are our **authority** for working out the fifth act. He says the following about scripture's "Authority."

"Authority in the church, then, means the church's authority, with scripture in its hand and heart, to speak and act for God in his world. It is not simply that we may say, in the church, 'Are we allowed to do this or that?' 'Where are the lines drawn for our behavior?' Or, 'Must we believe the following 17 doctrines if we are to be really sound?' God wants the church to lift up its eyes and see the field ripe for harvest, and to go out, armed with the authority of scripture; not just to get its own life right within a Christian ghetto, but to use the authority of scripture to declare to the world authoritatively that Jesus is Lord."

How does this view of "scriptural authority" change things?

Moving Beyond

(Getting even deeper on your own or with your group)

Take some time to study the following passages on your own. What, exactly, is "The Word of God?" Next to each passage, write a short phrase that summarizes how the "Word" is viewed in each context.

The Word of God for Israel:

Deut. 30:11-14

Psalms 33:1-9

Jeremiah 23:23-29

Isaiah 40:8; 55:10-11

The Word of God for the early church:

1 Thessalonians 2:13

Hebrews 4:12

Matthew 4:3-4

James 1:17-18

How, with these views in mind, are we supposed to "read" the Word of God?