

Krystal: Hey, everybody. This week we are celebrating the launch of our newest resource, *Restored*. It is a three-week study on the book of Joel. We all long for restoration in our lives. We live in a broken fallen world, and this study is going to help us to see that true restoration is found in Christ alone.

Shelby: Yes. If you are falling back into your rhythms of Bible study, maybe you got a little off over the summer, this would be a great just three weeks' study for you to jump into. We really love that it's still a minor prophet too. We don't maybe study these books as much, but they're so rich, and we would love for you to pick this one up.

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Krystal: Yes. This study is going to help you to better understand that message that the minor prophets have, and it's going to help you to see how it fits within the story of Scripture. It's also going to remind you how God is faithful to His promises, just as He will remain faithful to you today. It is on sale this week for only 10 bucks, so grab your copy today, and you can visit the link in the show notes to get it.

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Shelby: Welcome to *Daily Grace*. We believe the Bible is true, trustworthy, and timeless, and we want to help women like you know and love God's Word. The Bible shows us who God is, and who he is changes everything. My name is Shelby.

Krystal: And I'm Krystal, and we want to invite you to come join us as we chat about the truth of God's Word in our everyday lives.

Shelby: Hey, everybody. Welcome back to another episode in our summer series, *Mistakes We've Made in Bible Study*. We got a doozy today to talk about. [chuckles] This is a hard one, but one we think we really need to talk about. First, because these are short episodes, we still want to share our favorite things with you, but we are doing it in 15 seconds or less. Krystal, I have my timer ready. Are you ready?

Krystal: Yes, I am.

Shelby: Okay. Ready, set. Favorite things.

Krystal: Okay. My favorite thing is a full body pillow for the tub. It has suction cups, and so it just lays on the tub. It's really soft, and it just makes baths so much better. That was less than 15 seconds. I thought that was going to be hard to explain. Did that make sense?

Shelby: It did, because when you first told me about this pillow for the bath, I pictured a body pillow floating on top of the bath. I didn't know how this felt.

Krystal: Like a pool. [laughs]

Shelby: Like a pool, but you did a good job explaining it there. It sounds really nice.

Krystal: It's super cozy. Highly recommend it. Are you ready?

Shelby: I am ready.

Krystal: Ready, set, go.

Shelby: My favorite thing is a sling back chair. Have you seen these chairs that almost have a slingback, but they're super cute. They've got metal frame. I found it on Amazon so cheap, but it's also cute and comfortable. I love it.

Krystal: Nice. Yes, there you go.

Shelby: [unintelligible 00:02:50] explain that.

Krystal: Hey, in 15 seconds, it's hard to describe a piece of furniture. I think you did that well.

Shelby: It is. I just felt like it was that unicorn of something that I really wanted in my house, that I actually found at a decent price.

Krystal: Yes. It's hard to find.

Shelby: It's really hard to find.

Krystal: Yes, I love it. Well, let's talk about today's mistake that we have made in Bible Study, which is reading with the assumption that our interpretation of a passage is the correct one, and that it's always correct when we read. What we mean by this is that we are maybe unwilling to admit that there are other legitimate interpretations of a passage that we're reading, or maybe we are unwilling to listen to other points of view, unwilling to humbly admit that we just don't know it all. That can be really hard for us to think about, or even that maybe ways that we've heard a passage taught, maybe that's not the correct way.

There are times where we're going to get it wrong. Your pastor might get it wrong, speakers might get it wrong, and so, I think to be able to talk through this, it's going to be helpful for us to remember, "Hey, we're not always going to be right." That's going to inform how we read Scripture. Let's just talk through this. Shelby, what do you think about this? What are your thoughts?

Shelby: Yes. I think that I struggle with this at times. We have different backgrounds. I grew up in the church, and sometimes I've heard a passage taught to me probably dozens of times over 30 years in a certain way, and so I just always assume that that's correct. When I hear someone else say that they have a different interpretation of that passage, my automatic assumption is like, "They're wrong, and I'm right."

I think what we're trying to get at with this episode is we shouldn't have that assumption. Instead, we should really just do the work to figure out like, "Hey, between these two interpretations, which one is the most biblically accurate?" We just be willing to ask that question. Some caveats here in the beginning, so that we don't take this conversation or anyone listening doesn't take this conversation further than we hope that they will.

We do believe in the single meaning principle of Scripture, and that means that every passage of Scripture has one meaning, but many applications. However, there are passages of Scripture where it's disputed what that one meaning is and people have legitimate biblical backing for multiple interpretations. We believe that God has given us everything that we need for life and Godliness. Sometimes that still leaves us with questions.

I think another thing we also just want to clarify is where we might not want to be so generous with viewing other viewpoints is with primary issues. Primary issues are really like the tenets of the Christian faith, that if any of those you decided to accept a different interpretation, all of a sudden-- Let's say, for instance, you began to believe that Jesus was not God but just a nice man who had some cool teachings. All of a sudden that's outside of Orthodox Christianity, and really this whole, "Hey let's consider other viewpoints," it wouldn't apply to those primary issues because that's really going to change the core of your faith in a big way.

What does this apply to though? Everything else. Secondary issues, tertiary issues, we've talked about those in other episodes. Any passage? Any principle? I think the last thing that I just want to say, because there's probably some people listening and we've talked about this, Krystal, this would probably be us a few years ago. As soon as someone says, "Hey, you should be willing to listen to someone who has a different viewpoint than you theologically," we want to freak out.

Our thought is to be like, "No way." They're going to try and drag me away from the truth and **[unintelligible 00:06:28]** really scared, right? I think the last thing I just want to say before we really get into the meat of this episode is just don't freak out. Krystal, were you taught that? Were you taught not to really entertain thoughts from people who are outside of your theological camp? Maybe even in that question, we need to define what is a theological camp.

Krystal: I think for theological camp, when we say that term, it could be your denomination. For me, I was in a Baptist church for most of college. That's where I learned a lot of my theology and learned how to read Scripture. Then once I graduated college and met people that didn't go to Baptist church, I realized, "Oh, not every church teaches the same thing." That's why denominations have been formed. That's why these camps are formed because people view those secondary, tertiary issues differently.

I think even within the church I was at, the college ministry I was a part of had a different bent. That's just the only thing I knew. It really wasn't until the last 10 years that I started to read articles, listen to sermons outside of what I would consider my theological camp. I think up until then, I didn't think that was an option. It was like, they're wrong, and I'm right. What I've always been taught is this one thing and this is very different. I think it hasn't been until recently that I felt comfortable enough to step outside of my theological camp.

Shelby: Think back to 10 years ago, did you think that what you believed was just theologically accurate 10 years ago?

Krystal: Yes.

Shelby: Now? Okay, the same. Let me ask this question now. Has your theology changed over the course of the last 10 years?

Krystal: No.

[laughter]

Krystal: I found your eyes, you're like **[unintelligible 00:08:11]** It's funny, it's changed a lot in that I think my perspective on how I view others has changed or other perspectives. Whereas 10 years ago I would've said, "You're wrong. Sad for you. I'm right. Good for me." Just not gracious, not humble. I think as I've learned from others, as I've read different perspectives, I may not agree with it, but I can see how they got there. I can see that they are faithful believers wanting to be obedient to His word, which is what I'm also trying to do. We're just seeing it a little bit differently. I think that has where I have changed the most and that's probably where I have been. What about you? What's that look like for you?

Shelby: I think my theology has changed wildly in the past 10 years. Growing up I was always told, "Hey, we do things the right way." Then I entered Bible college and I was given all these tools and resources and methods for studying the Bible. I realized that I was coming to a lot of different conclusions. I think my purpose in asking that is that in the moment we all think, "Man, I am the most correct right now." Yet all of us would probably say, I think 10 years from now, that there are things that I will have changed my mind on because God has worked in and through His word in me to reveal more of Himself. Just having that view, I actually don't know everything today. I think that probably my theology will change even if it's minutely in the next 10 years.

Krystal: I have a journaling bible that I got right when I really started to learn how to read Scripture and how to interpret it. There are passages I love going back and looking at my notes because I have, there's one in particular where I have a note written on the side and then that is crossed out and then something else is written. It just shows even the growth where the Lord has stretched me and has allowed me to see, I don't have all the right answers and that's okay. I remember what the Lord taught me through that. It wasn't, here's the right conclusion, but here's how you can lean on me and how you can learn more of my character, even as you wrestle through how to interpret this passage.

I think what we're trying to say here is that unless you have a perfect theology, which we know apart from Christ, none of us can say that we have a perfect theology. We shouldn't have the assumption that we're coming into a text with the exact right interpretation, that we are always going to be right when we read. That's just not going to be the case. I think that's going to shift how we read, how we have conversations with other people, even if we disagree.

All the mistakes we've been talking about in the series, it could be hard to spot when we're making it. I don't think 10 years ago we would've thought this was a mistake. We were doing it right, or so to speak. How can we know if we're making this mistake?

Shelby: Yes. I can only speak from personal experience here, but here's how I know or have been able to detect when I'm making this mistake. I think when I skim or skip a passage because I assume I know what it means, but I've never actually dug into it on my own and I'm just relying on, "Oh yes, totally got that one down. I know it." Rather than digging into it in the same way I would a passage that I think I'm not sure the meaning of this one.

I think another is when my reason for interpreting a passage a certain way is, "Oh, my pastor, this author, this speaker told me," rather than doing the work for myself. I think another one is just being unwilling to be curious about other orthodox viewpoints. I think curiosity just goes a long way. If you're unwilling to be curious, you may be just under the assumption that you're always correct, it's not even worth it to view these other viewpoints.

The last one I'll just say is, I notice I'm making this mistake when I have a crippling fear that I'm going to fall down a slippery slope that will lead me away from truth if I just am curious and begin to explore other interpretations.

Krystal: That has been it for me. I think that's what I've identified over the last 10 years is just the fear of the slippery slope. I think sometimes we're taught that, honestly. That's why we feel more comfortable in our camp because what happens when we read something else? What's going to happen? I think the slippery slope that you just mentioned, I think I've struggled with that a lot once I started learning more about different ways to interpret certain passages. I thought if I ever heard a sermon or read a book that wasn't 100% aligned with what I've always heard, what I've always believed, then I was going to be led astray.

In fact, I feel like reading other people's perspectives, other interpretations that I wasn't familiar with has one, helped me to be more gracious, which I mentioned earlier, but two, it also really forced me to know what I believed and why. Because before, I just believed it because this pastor told me or this author said it. I just assumed if the very small group of people that I've always trusted, they said it, then it was true. If they didn't say it, then other people must be wrong. I think it's helped just to really make me look at what I believed and why. Is it a biblical understanding or is it just because someone else told me? That's what it was. What would it look for us to not assume that our interpretation is always 100% correct when we read?

Shelby: I think we should come to the Word, and here's what I think it looks like in me. It's just coming to the Word assuming that today is the day I'll learn something new. I don't assume that I'm always right, but today I'm right. [laughter] For me, my kids **[unintelligible 00:13:32]** I'm good right now. Just with that assumption that today could be the day that I learned something new.

At that same time, I would say that this kind of approach also doesn't mean that we're going to adopt a new interpretation the very first time that we hear it, it means that we should wrestle with it, we should sit with it, we should hold it up to other portions of scripture. We should discuss it in community. It's just that willingness to wrestle through those things. I think another thing this looks like for me is just not fearing other theological camps. I don't need to get angry when I see them post their viewpoint on social media. I don't need to feel like I have to defend myself against

them. I can actually see them expressing their viewpoint as an opportunity, like you just said, to explore what I believe and why I believe it, and really have like, "Well, look, that's a good argument that they have."

What's the good argument for my interpretation? Do I know that and can I explain that to someone else? I think just trusting that my salvation does not rest in me getting it right theologically. My salvation rests in the work of Christ. I don't hang my hat each night knowing that, "Okay, I haven't made any theological missteps today, and so I can go to bed tonight knowing that God is pleased with me." I actually probably make theological missteps every single day, but it's the gospel, it's Jesus and his sacrifice that puts me right with the Lord, and that's the only thing.

Krystal: I think it's very freeing too, that allows us to engage in our curiosity when we open the Scriptures because I believe in re-passages that I've read many times have heard **[unintelligible 00:15:07]** times and be like, "Yes, this is what it means," and not ever engage my curiosity, why is this what it means? How do I know this is what it means? I think that's where the Lord meets us. That's when we grow, that's when we stretch, and then we know why we believe what we believe, because for many years I just relied on other people.

I know that is something we've talked about quite a bit in other episodes. It's like getting in the word for ourselves, lining everything up with the **[unintelligible 00:15:32]** Scripture, and not just because someone on the stage or someone on the podcast said it, right? We always want to make sure that everything comes back to what Scripture has said.

Shelby: Yes. If we're not careful we can begin to almost idolize our theological camp or even just idolize being theologically right, and that becomes this thing. That's what we're trying to achieve and it becomes a total aisle and I likely believe it is to **[unintelligible 00:15:57]** our salvation, our salvation is in Christ alone.

Krystal: Absolutely. I was telling you earlier that I read this article by Gavin Ortlund, and we'll link it in the show notes. He says, we should be careful not to acquaint doctrinal fidelity with spiritual vitality. I read that and I was just **[unintelligible 00:16:14]** so true, you think if we know the right things, then we're good and they're like, I have the right interpretation, I've read the right books but if we're not leaving it out, if we're not loving other people and loving the Lord with what we're learning in Scripture, it's a clinging symbol.

We want to make sure that we're always coming back to when we're learning something in Scripture, how does this inform how I live out my faith, how I love others, how I love the Lord? What do you think is the answer to this problem or this mistake that we're making? How do we avoid making the mistake and what should we do instead?

Shelby: Yes. I was trying to think how to explain this because it's like an attitude of the heart but the phrase that kept coming to mind and this might sound familiar to some of you, is the phrase reformed and always reforming. I want to explain why I think that applies in this situation. If you're not familiar with this phrase and kind of where it comes from, it comes from that protestant reformation that happened in the

16th century. Basically, the reformers at this time confronted traditions and beliefs in the church that were unbiblical. There's a ton of great info, I'm not going to go in all the stuff about the protestant reformation. You can go to Google search.

Krystal: That was a short episode.

Shelby: A short episode. [laughter] **[unintelligible 00:17:22]** This interesting episode, I'm like at some point but that's not today, but this term reform that was used because it talked about being formed again by Scripture. What had happened is there were like cultural ideals that had formed the church in the reformation, really their cry was like for the church to be formed again by Scripture. This phrase reformed and always reforming, it's just this idea, their hearts and minds were changed by Scripture but that wasn't a one-time thing. It was like one time they had this big aha moment, "Oh, I think we're getting this wrong," and then they never again had to come back to Scripture to be formed and reformed again and again. This phrase reform and always reforming just kept coming to mind, just constantly bringing our hearts before God's word and allowing it to shape and reshape and reshape who we are.

Krystal: Yes, I love that. I was going to pull up Romans 12 to read really quick because I think something else we might even think as we're talking about this is, "Okay, does that mean we just don't ever think about having the right interpretation?" That's not what we're saying either. We really should care deeply about how we read scripture, how we interpret it. We just want to make sure we're doing it in the right way and in the right posture that we don't come to the conclusion that we think, "Yes, I think this is the biblical accurate view," but not saying, "I'm so smart, I'm an elite Christian." We kind of almost put ourselves in a really prideful position when other people may be having even **[unintelligible 00:18:49]** on where they-- I mean there's still things I'm wrestling with. I really don't know where I land on this and so we just want to make sure that we have the right posture even as we are interpreting passages for ourselves.

I wanted to read Romans 12:1 and 2. It says, "Therefore brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. This is your true worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God." It doesn't mean your theological camp isn't going to be right. We want to make sure that we're at a church that we're aligned with. That we're listening to people that we align with, but we don't want to be in an echo chamber. We don't want to ever just ignore the curiosity of coming to God's will for ourselves and letting it transform us. It doesn't say that we go to our pastor and let that transform us, we are renewed by going to God's word, learning his will, and then living it up.

Shelby: Yes, absolutely. I love this verse so much and we're all about practically equipping you to do this and so as I was thinking, dude, what has helped me the most just practically come to Scripture not with the assumption that they've got it all right but with the assumption that like I'm in the process of putting the pieces together. Honestly, for me, that's been reading the Bible cover to cover in a year for several years in a row because what that has done is caused me to not have such a

narrow interpretation of a couple passages but to put them in light of the whole council of Scripture. That is mind-blowing at times and will totally change just how you interpret some of these passages.

We have tons of resources that can help you read the Bible in a year. We have two study series that will take you through one chronologically and one cover-to-cover. We also have our year in the Bible podcast which is a phenomenal resource. It's just a quick everyday podcast that's going to explain the year in the Bible reading so you can read the Bible any year with us and then go to the podcast to get an explanation of, "Hey, what connections can I be making from the passage today?"

Krystal: Absolutely. We are big fans of reading through the Bible in a year. You just gained so much year after year and reading in context like you said so helpful. Thank you all for joining us for this episode. As we talked about yet another mistake that we've made in Bible study we have another one coming your way. If you have enjoyed these episodes, we encourage you go back, check out other ones, and we'll have resources linked in the show notes that we have mentioned. Until then come join us over on Instagram at Daily Grace podcast. We'll see you next time. Goodbye.

[00:21:24] [END OF AUDIO]