

{Wk 1} Introduction: Background & Context

Our goal this first week is to begin to become familiar with the overall structure and feel of the book. This is to set our sights on our key purpose in studying: “To behold the reign and rule of God as revealed in his Word, thereby understanding our own place in the Big Story” (from *Women of the Word* by Jen Wilkin, p.59). To do this well, we need to gain a proper perspective, placing “any given text within its original historical and cultural context” (73).

Please note: this week’s assignment includes reading through the entire book 3 times. Do not let this amount of reading discourage you or keep you from completing the lesson (you are human!). Read the book as many times as you are able, even if it’s only once. After this first week, set a goal to read through the whole book once each week to maintain the big picture perspective of the book’s structure and themes.

Day 1

Read through the entire book. Aim to get a general feel for it.

Day 2

Read through the entire book again. This time, watch for background information revealed in the book. Does the author identify himself? Does he identify the audience? Does he describe the circumstances surrounding the letter? Fill in any answers you find to the Introduction study questions.

Day 3

Read through the entire book again. Write down any recurring themes you’ve begun to notice (question #5). These are just a list of ideas that will help you see the continuity of the book as you study it.

Day 4

Read the introduction to the book in a study Bible. Using your notes from days 2-3 and any additional information gleaned from the study Bible, fill in any remaining gaps in the Introduction study questions.

Day 5

Spend some time today in prayer. You could use Philippians 1:9-11 as your guide, or another passage that has stood out to you in your reading this week.