

FEELING DIZZY
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They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood.

—Nehemiah 8:8

INTRODUCTION

Do you ever have to shake your head to clear it after you read a passage of the Bible? Sometimes things don't make sense! For example, in Matthew 15:21–28, a Canaanite woman asked Jesus to help her daughter, who was possessed by a demon. Jesus' reply was, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." Huh? What in the world did he mean by that? Passages like this can be hard to figure out, but it's important that you understand what the Bible says. So today we're going to talk about some ways you can get help making sense of confusing Scripture passages. Oh, by the way—Jesus meant that the things he had come to give to the Jews weren't meant to be given first to people who weren't Jews. And he wasn't really calling non-Jewish people "dogs"; he was referring to what other people called them. Does his answer make a little more sense now?

Today's devotion is based on Nehemiah 8:8, which says, "They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood." The devotion is called "Feeling Dizzy."

DEVOTION

Standing near first base, Jordan put his forehead on the end of a bat and started spinning. His Little League team was at the minor-league baseball field, watching the game. It was between innings, and Jordan was doing the dizzy bat race. At third base, one of his teammates was spinning too. After ten turns Jordan tried to run to second base. He stumbled sideways and fell. Trying again, he staggered in the other direction. Across the infield, his teammate was also struggling. As Jordan's dizziness faded, he steered himself onto the base path. Then he sprinted toward the goal, reaching it two steps ahead of his opponent.

Sometimes the Bible is hard to understand. It can make your head spin! But there are study guides to help make its meaning clear. Also, your parents and Sunday school teachers can help explain things to you. Most importantly, the Holy Spirit will help you comprehend God's Word. Don't give up trying to understand the Bible. You can't walk straight in life when you're dizzy and confused about what it says!

PEOPLE IN BIBLE TIMES

An Ethiopian was reading part of the Scriptures. It spoke of a man being sacrificed like a lamb. The Ethiopian couldn't figure out who it meant. Philip explained that the passage was about Jesus. (See Acts 8:26–38.)

QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of a Bible verse or passage that you didn't understand at first, but after someone explained it to you, you understood it a lot better? Who helped you understand it, and what did they tell you that made things more clear? In general, how can God use people like parents and Sunday school teachers to help kids understand what the Bible says?
2. How does the Holy Spirit help people understand what the Bible says?

For a clue, either have children look up John 14:26, in which Jesus said, "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you," and John 16:13, in which Jesus said, "When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth," or read these verses to them.

3. Can you name some of the different kinds of study materials that help people understand the Bible better?

Answer: *Bible dictionaries*, which explain the meaning of words in the Bible; *Bible atlases*, which give information about places in the Bible; *concordances*, which help you find words and phrases in the Bible; and *commentaries*, which give insight into Scripture passages and suggest how the passages can apply to our lives. *Study Bibles* also have footnotes with information about Scripture verses, cross-references that show where related verses can be found, and articles that provide even more insight. Many of these study materials come in versions made especially for children.

4. How does understanding a Bible verse help you memorize it? How does understanding *and* memorizing a Bible verse help you apply it to your life so that you can live the way God wants you to live?
5. In what ways can God use *you* to help other people understand the Bible better?

One answer is: you could explain what you know about a Bible passage to a younger brother or sister, a friend, or a classmate.