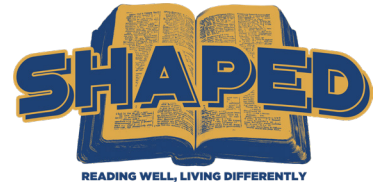


EXERCISE

Learning the Language



Genre shapes how we hear what Scripture is saying. In this exercise, you'll read three short passages across three different genres — and practice letting the type of writing determine the questions you ask.

Reading Across Genres

Work through each passage on its own before moving to the next. Read each one at least twice.

Passage 1 — Poetry

“How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?... But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.” Psalm 13:1–2, 5–6 (ESV)

- What emotion is being expressed in the first half? What shifts in the closing?
- Is there an honest emotion you've been holding back from God? How does it feel to know you can approach God with all of your emotions?

Passage 2 — Wisdom / Proverb

“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”
Proverbs 15:1 (ESV)

- Is this a promise or a general observation about how life tends to work? What's the difference, and why does it matter?
- Think of a real situation in your life right now where this proverb applies. What would a “soft answer” actually look like?

Passage 3 — Letter / Epistle

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” James 1:2–4 (ESV)

- James wrote to real people facing real hardship. How does knowing the occasion of this letter change the way it lands?

- In one sentence, write what you believe James intended his original audience to understand from this passage.

Looking Back Across All Three

Consider discussing your experience with your small group: Which genre felt most natural to read? Which required the most adjustment in how you approached it?