

# BIBLE 101 — Week 9

## Reading Each Book the Way It Was Meant to Be Read

*Scripture Focus: Psalm 23:1 · Genesis 1:1 · Proverbs 22:6*

### KEY VOCABULARY — scan this before you watch

Term	What It Means
<b>Genre</b>	The type or _____ of literature — just like sections in a bookstore (history, poetry, biography)
<b>Literary Conventions</b>	The "rules of the _____" for each genre — an unspoken agreement between the author and the original readers
<b>Narrative</b>	Story — teaches truth by _____ what happened, not just telling
<b>Wisdom Literature</b>	Brilliant observations about how life _____ works — not ironclad promises or guarantees
<b>Epistles</b>	Letters full of _____ and instructions, written to specific churches or individuals

### I. THE BIG IDEA: A SKILL YOU ALREADY HAVE

You wouldn't read a \_\_\_\_\_ the same way you read a love letter — one gives step-by-step instructions, the other is about emotion and relationship.

You already switch gears all day long between a text from a friend, a news headline, and an email from your \_\_\_\_\_.

Today we're taking that exact same skill and applying it to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Why it matters:** When you get the genre wrong, you're almost guaranteed to get the \_\_\_\_\_ wrong.

- Like reading sheet music as if it's a \_\_\_\_\_
- Like reading beautiful poetry as if it's a science \_\_\_\_\_
- Like reading a wise proverb as if it's an ironclad legal \_\_\_\_\_

### II. THE BIBLE AS A LIBRARY

Think of the Bible less like a \_\_\_\_\_ you read cover to cover and more like a library — a whole collection of different books.

Each genre plays by its own set of \_\_\_\_\_ to get its truth across.

Literary conventions were like an unspoken \_\_\_\_\_ between the author and the first readers — they just knew how to read a psalm as poetry.

Because we're reading thousands of years later, we have to consciously \_\_\_\_\_ what they already knew instinctively.

### III. THE SIX MAJOR GENRES

GENRE	WHAT IT IS	HOW IT COMMUNICATES
<b>Narrative</b>	_____	Teaches truth by showing what happened
<b>Law</b>	What God _____	Lays out commands and standards
<b>Poetry</b>	Imagery and _____	Communicates deep truth through figurative language
<b>Wisdom</b>	Observations on _____	Shows how life generally works — not guarantees
<b>Prophecy</b>	God's specific _____	Addressed to a specific group at a specific time
<b>Epistles</b>	_____	Full of arguments and instructions to churches or individuals

Every single one of these works in a totally \_\_\_\_\_ way.

#### IV. THE GENRE LENS IN ACTION

##### Example 1 — Psalm 23:1 (Poetry)

*“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”*

— Psalm 23:1 (ESV)

- **Genre mistake:** Reading this as literal \_\_\_\_\_ — thinking God is actually a man in a field with a staff
- **Correct reading:** Embrace the \_\_\_\_\_ — God is like a shepherd: He provides, He protects, He guides
- The image communicates truth \_\_\_\_\_ than any literal description could

##### Example 2 — Genesis 1:1 (Narrative)

*“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”*

— Genesis 1:1 (ESV)

- **Genre mistake:** Treating this like a dry list of abstract \_\_\_\_\_ and ignoring the story itself
- **Correct reading:** This narrative teaches truth by showing us God's creative \_\_\_\_\_
- It teaches by \_\_\_\_\_, not just by telling — the power is in the story

##### Example 3 — Proverbs 22:6 (Wisdom)

*“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”*

— Proverbs 22:6 (ESV)

- **Genre mistake:** Reading this as an ironclad \_\_\_\_\_ — a divine guarantee from God
- **Correct reading:** A proverb is an observation about how life \_\_\_\_\_ works, not a universal contract
- Faithful parenting \_\_\_\_\_ to lead to faithful children
- Recognizing this isn't weakening the Bible — it's \_\_\_\_\_ it enough to read it on its own terms

**II PAUSE & REFLECT**

Think of a verse you know well. What genre does it belong to? Have you ever read it as if it were a different genre — and how might that have changed its meaning?

\_\_\_\_\_

**V. THE THREE-STEP PLAYBOOK**

**Step 1:** Always start by asking the genre question: What \_\_\_\_\_ of writing is this?

**Step 2:** Read the text on its own \_\_\_\_\_. Let poetry be poetry. Let stories be stories. Don't force one to act like another.

**Step 3:** Use your tools — the \_\_\_\_\_ to each book in a good study Bible will tell you the genre. It takes 30 seconds.

**The bottom line:** The Bible is a library of different genres, each with its own way of \_\_\_\_\_ truth. One simple skill — identifying the genre — can unlock a deeper and more accurate understanding of all of Scripture.

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. Why is it so easy to read a proverb as a promise or poetry as a history lesson? What makes genre mistakes so common?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Pick one of the six genres from the chart above. Find a passage in that genre and identify the literary conventions at work. How does recognizing the genre change your reading?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. How does understanding the Bible as a 'library' rather than a single 'novel' affect how you approach your daily reading?

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