



FUEL

**APOLOGETICS
101**

WORLDVIEW ESSENTIALS



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LIVE: Apologetics

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Getting Started

In this increasingly post-Christian culture, Christians need to be equipped with a clear, solid understanding of biblical truth.

Christianity is not a collection of theological facts to be believed or debated. It is not a series of wise teachings that we can follow or disregard, depending on our feelings each day. It's a changed life, resulting in a renewed heart and a worldview that's built on Jesus.

This series will offer a foundation as you explore the topic of apologetics—the explanation or defense of what the Christian faith teaches.

Series Objectives

1. What: Exploring foundational truths about Scripture and our faith can help establish the groundwork for a lifelong commitment to Christ.
2. Why: Christians face and will face many challenges to what they believe, making a solid foundation essential and vital to the long-term health of their faith.
3. How: Examine foundational topics that will help believers become well prepared to explain, share, and defend their faith.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The field of apologetics is so broad and deep we cannot cover all the nuances of each topic in these lessons. Here are some additional resources that can help you prepare for your conversations with others—and can help you answer specific questions you might have after your group meets.

Books:

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics

The Reason for God (Timothy Keller)

Mere Christianity (C.S. Lewis)

The Bible Handbook of Difficult Verses (Josh McDowell)

The Universe Next Door (James W. Sire)

Online:

reasonablefaith.org

carm.org

apologetics315.com

josh.org

leestrobels.com

equip.org

The Basis of Truth

JOHN 18:33-38

WEEK

1

Objectives

What: As followers of Christ, it's important for us to learn what truth is and how to determine truth.

Why: Simply being told what the truth is does not lead us to a life that recognizes truth.

How: Your students will examine what a truth is and how to determine truth on which they can base their lives.

Every day we ask questions about the world in which we live: *Did you turn off the coffee pot before we left the house? Is it raining outside? Do you really love me?* These questions seek the truth.

When we ask if it's raining outside, we are looking for an answer that corresponds with reality—the actual weather. The answer helps us plan for our day. An unfortunate mistake can lead to a ruined outfit or soggy pair of shoes. When a claim accurately represents the world in which we live, it is a true claim. Truth is simply saying that what is, is and what is not, is not.

Each of us longs for truth. Some of us search aggressively. Others of us search periodically or halfheartedly. Some of us wait passively; hoping truth will walk past and make itself obvious. That search for truth, for meaning, for understanding is shaped by our worldview. Everyone has tendencies and thoughts that they lean toward. Some of the most fundamental questions in life are shaped by what we believe and how we see the world. Questions like: *Who is God? What is reality? How do we know what is true? Why does evil exist?*

A fundamental mistake people make regarding Christianity is to perceive Christianity as a collection of theological facts to be believed or debated. Unfortunately, this robs Christianity of its power in our lives. We need to understand that following Jesus is designed to impact our worldview and can shape the way we see this world. A vast number of people reject Christianity because their personal worldview includes beliefs that are contrary to a biblical worldview. A person's worldview must change if he or she is to live a life that honors God.

***What are reasons that people often reject Christianity?
How do you test if something is true or not?***

With so many claims of truth and conflicting worldviews in our culture, it is easy for us to feel overwhelmed and confused. How do we judge between the claims of different worldviews? How can they test whether or not something is actually true and worthy of belief? In this lesson we will look at truth, why it is important, and how you can test different truths to conclude on which one to develop your worldview.

5-Minute Commentary

John 18:33 Regarding the headquarters, see note on v. 28. King of the Jews has clear political overtones. Pilate's question aims to determine whether Jesus constitutes a threat to Rome's imperial power.

John 18:36 Jesus' description of the nature of his kingdom echoes similar passages in Daniel (e.g., Dan. 2:44; 7:14, 27). See also John 6:15.

John 18:37 Jesus as the truth fulfills the teaching of the OT (John 1:17) and reveals the true God (cf.

WHAT IS A WORLDVIEW?

WORLDVIEW – THE LENSE THROUGH WHICH AN INDIVIDUAL VIEWS REALITY AND MAKES SENSE OF LIFE.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

Every religion, philosophy, or worldview makes claims about truth. The issue is developing a keen awareness of knowing what truth is verifiably accurate.

FLAWED METHODS FOR TESTING TRUTH:

What is the flaw with each test of truth?

1) Instinct – “It seems true”

Flaw:

2) Feelings – “I like the feeling I get”

Flaw:

3) Wish Fulfillment – “I want God to be a certain way”

Flaw:

4) Custom – “My family and culture have always believed this”

Flaw:

5) Popularity Contest – “Everyone believes it”

Flaw:

6) Pragmatism – “It works for me, therefore it must be true”

Flaw:

All of those reasons for believing something to be true seem innocent enough, but fall short in determining whether a worldview is really true.

THREE CRITERIA FOR TESTING TRUTH CLAIMS

1) Is it logical? Does a belief make sense? Some claims are self-defeating and cannot be true. The statement “there is no absolute truth,” is self-defeating because the statement itself is an absolute statement.

2) Is it factual? Does the claim correspond to the real world? An accurate worldview must give an explanation to questions like the origin of the universe, free will, and the existence of our minds, as well as give explanation to moral questions that center around the problem of evil.

3) Is it livable? Basically, does the truth-claim work in real-life situations? A spiritualist may believe that the world is simply an illusion but would still use a parachute when skydiving—and would look both ways before crossing the street.

Definition

Verify – Make sure or demonstrate something is true.

Interact

For each truth testing method consider these questions with your students: What is the flaw with this reasoning? Describe a real life example when this reasoning doesn't work.

1) Why? What is guiding your instinct to judge between competing truth-claims?
2) Can feelings be wrong?

3) Can we base truth on what we wish were true?

4) Can they be mistaken? What if family or culture was from a violent or oppressive background?

5) Can everyone be wrong? “Everyone” thought the world was flat.

6) Almost anything can work for a period time. But truth always works.

1:14, 17; 5:33; 18:37; also 8:40, 45–46; 14:9).

John 18:38 What is truth? Ironically, the one charged with determining the truth in the matter glibly dismisses the relevance of truth in the very presence of the one who is truth incarnate (see note on 14:6). Pilate apparently decides that Jesus is a teacher of abstract philosophical questions to which no one can find an answer, and thus decides that Jesus poses no threat to the Roman government. He seeks no answer from the only one who could give him the answer. he went back outside. See note on 18:29. I find no guilt in him. Pilate's exoneration of Jesus, repeated three times (cf. 19:4, 6; cf. Luke 23:4), sharply contrasts with the death sentence later pronounced on Jesus due to extensive

ABSOLUTE TRUTH VS. RELATIVE TRUTH

ABSOLUTE TRUTH

- 1) Whatever is true at one time and at one place is true at all time's and at all places.
- 2) What is true for one person is true for all people.
- 3) Truth is true whether a person believes it or not.
- 4) Truth is discovered or it is revealed. It is not invented by a culture or by people.

Write two examples of an absolute truth?

- 1)
- 2)

RELATIVE TRUTH

- 1) Truth that is true at only one time and at one place.
- 2) It's true to some people and not to others.
- 3) It's true now but it may not have been true in the past and it may not be again in the future. It's always subject to change.
- 4) It is also subject to perspective of people.

Write two examples of a relative truth.

- 1)
- 2)

As a whole, does our culture teach that truth is absolute or that truth is relative? Explain your perspective.

What makes relative truth attractive to people?

Do you find yourself drawn to or pushed away from the idea of absolute truth? Why?

What is the spiritual significance of one view of truth over another when discussing the existence of God?

Example

Absolute Truth

$$2+2=4.$$

I am "insert your height here".

Relative Truth

Chocolate is delicious.

It is hot outside.

Jewish pressure (cf. John 19:12–16) and is an example of John's skillful use of irony. See also note on 5:31–47.

John 14:6 Jesus as the one way to the Father fulfills the OT symbols and teachings that show the exclusiveness of God's claim (see note on 3:18), such as the curtain (Ex. 26:33) barring access to God's presence from all except the Levitical high priest (Leviticus 16), the rejection of human inventions as means to approach God (Lev. 10:2), and the choice of Aaron alone to represent Israel before God in his sanctuary (Num. 17:5). Jesus is the only "way" to God (Acts 4:12), and he alone can provide access to God. Jesus as the truth fulfills the teaching of the OT (John 1:17) and reveals the true God

YOUR WORLDVIEW SHAPES HOW YOU DEFINE TRUTH

The word truth is often avoided in our culture. Many people say there is no such thing as ultimate or absolute truth. When it comes to God, the basic motto of our culture is "Whatever! You can believe whatever you want and do what works for you."

Read John 18:33-38

What is the significance of Pilate's question to Jesus in verse 38?

What are five specific truths Jesus declared in this passage?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Pick two of the truths Jesus declared and explain why they are powerful or meaningful.

- 1)
- 2)

What are the consequences of developing a worldview based on what Jesus says in verses 36-38?

Jesus' responses turned attention toward the attitude and motivation we have when searching for truth. Jesus was essentially saying that the condition of our heart—whether pure or corrupt—is revealed by our response to who he is.

Read John 14:6.

What claims did Jesus make in this Scripture and why are they important in your life?

Read John 1:14, 17 and John 5:31-40

Why was it important that John testified to Jesus being the truth?

JESUS WAS AND IS TRUTH,
SO HOW WE RESPOND TO HIM REVEALS MORE ABOUT US THAN ABOUT HIM.

Interact

At Jesus' trial, Pilate asked some significant questions. We can't read Pilate's mind, but the way he phrased things could mean he already had his mind made up about Jesus before he started asking the questions in this passage.

(cf. 1:14, 17; 5:33; 18:37; also 8:40, 45–46; 14:9). Jesus alone is the life who fulfills the OT promises of "life" given by God (11:25–26), having life in himself (1:4; 5:26), and he is thus able to confer eternal life to all those who believe in him (e.g., 3:16). This is another "I am" saying that makes a claim to deity (see note on 6:35).

John 1:15 bore witness. Witnesses to Jesus (1) John the Baptist: 5:32–36; cf. 1:7–8, 15, 19, 32–34; 3:26

John 5:32 The Jews may think another refers to the Baptist (cf. vv. 33–35), but Jesus is talking about

NOW WHAT?

Describe three ways that absolute truth matters in your daily life?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

How do the three criteria for testing truth claims help you in your daily life?

How do the specific truths that Jesus claims in John 18:33-38 change the way that you live?

How does our response to Jesus' claims about himself reveal the condition of our hearts?

GOING DEEPER

Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

What do the Scriptures have the potential to give you?

How does God use the Bible to shape truth?

How does this prepare and equip you to do good work?

Describe the connection between relative truth and the flawed methods that are often used to determine truth.

God the Father (v. 37).

John 5:33 the truth. See note on 14:6.

John 5:35 Jesus' characterization of the Baptist as a burning and shining lamp echoes Ps. 132:17, where it is said that God has "prepared a lamp" for his anointed. John the Baptist was a "lamp," but not the light (John 1:7-9); his witness was small (though important) and of a temporary nature. The past tense may imply that John is now dead or at least in prison. See also notes on 3:28-30. On "lamp," see note on Matt. 25:3-4.

SUMMARY

This week we launched a study of apologetics. The purpose of this study is to help us think critically, concerning what we believe about God, to understand why we believe it, and to learn how to defend our faith amid a culture that pulls us in all directions.

In our first lesson, we examined how to determine truth. It's a challenge to think about the origin of truth. Each person's background (the environment in which they grew up, and their family unit) helps shape what they find to be truth. It is difficult to remove personal preferences from our perception of truth. However, truth provides a foundation upon which to base our lives.

Here are some questions that could help fuel great dialogue at home or with your friends:

What are some good, appropriate ways for Christ-followers to respond to our culture's attitude toward absolute truth?

When do you find it most difficult to trust in an absolute truth, and why?

Have a wonderful week!

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Romans 12:2

John 5:39 The study of Scripture does not by itself impart life. The Scriptures rather bear witness to the One who gives life, namely, Jesus (cf. vv. 46–47). Consequently, the study of the Bible ought to result in genuine faith in Jesus, followed by obedient action and transformed lives, not merely acquisition of Bible knowledge. It is they that bear witness about me. People who (like Jesus' Jewish opponents) read the OT without seeing that it all points to Jesus fail to understand its message. See also Overview of the Bible.

REAP

DAY

JOHN 14:6

1

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What did Jesus claim?

How are his claims different from any other religious leader?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

JOHN 8:44

2

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What does this Scripture say about Satan?

How can Scripture be used to uncover Satan's lies?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

2 TIMOTHY 2:14-19

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

In the passage what untruth was being spread?

How does correctly understanding Scripture help a believer?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

EPHESIANS 6:14-17

4

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What weapon did the belt hold?

How can God's Word be an offensive weapon?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

5

1 THESSALONIANS 5:21

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why is it important to test everything for truth?

Why is it important to discard false teaching and untruths?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

MATTHEW 12:34

6

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why is it important to be mindful of what you allow to fill your heart?

Prayerfully consider what you allow to fill your heart. What needs to be changed?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2 TIMOTHY 1:6-14

7

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Describe how this passage encourages you to live out what you believe.

When do you have to guard against false teaching and untruths?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

You and Your Worldview

LUKE 9:18-20

WEEK

2

Each of us has a lense through which we see the world. Our lense is developed through our experiences and relationships, and it has the ability to enhance or hinder how we see God and our role in God's purposes and plans.

While the worldviews held by many people have been developed unintentionally, we don't have to follow the same path. We can have a solid understanding of what a worldview is, and can develop a strong, biblical worldview that will give us a foundation for a God-inspired life.

*What are some specific ways that camera filters distort or enhance a photo?
How can you recognize God at work in your life?*

We live in a world filled with reminders of the wonder and glory of God. However, similar to photo filters, our worldview becomes a filter through which we either see or miss God's presence, beauty, and work in every aspect of our lives.

Our worldview impacts every thought, decision, and relationship we have. That's why it's so important to understand what a worldview is and how we can establish a biblical worldview.

Objectives

What: As followers of Christ, it's important for us to learn what a worldview is and how to develop a Biblical worldview.

Why: Simply knowing facts about Jesus or Christianity does not lead us to a life that honors God—being transformed by God leads us a life that honors him.

How: Your students will examine what a worldview is, how to develop truth on which they can base their lives, and how to allow God to shape or reshape their worldview.

5-Minute Commentary

Luke 9:18–20 Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ. praying alone. For Jesus praying before important events, see Introduction: Key Themes. Here he may have prayed that his disciples would truly grasp who he is. John the Baptist. The disciples repeat the same possibilities mentioned in vv. 7–8 (cf. note on Matt. 16:14). But who do you say. "You" is plural and is emphasized in the Greek. Peter, spokesman for the disciples, answered, "The Christ of God." (On Peter's confession, see notes on Matt. 16:16 and Mark 8:29b–30.) Jesus' identity as the "Christ"—confessed by angels (Luke 2:11); by the Gospel narrator (2:26); by demons (4:41); and by Jesus himself (4:18)—is now confessed for the first time by the Twelve. For "Christ," see note on 2:11. Even with this confession, the disciples still have

EXPERIENCES IMPACT YOUR WORLDVIEW

In the space below write out the definition of a worldview from the previous session.

Every person has some type of worldview. An individual's worldview becomes the driving force behind every emotion, decision, and action. Therefore, it affects how you respond to every situation in your life. It shapes how you perceive science, theology, economics, and politics. It informs what you believe about God.

EXPERIENCES THAT SHAPE A WORLDVIEW

- Family we were born into.
- The environment and culture we were brought up in.
- The spiritual beliefs of the people surrounding our lives.
- Normal life experiences that include happiness, pain or sorrow.
- Significant crisis experience.

Think back to some of your most life-shaping moments. Write about one specific moment—what it was, how it affected you, and how it continues to shape the way you see the world.

Through the course of life, a person's worldview can change.

Read Acts 7:59-8:3.

According to this passage, describe three characteristics that defined Saul?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Read Acts 9:1-9, 17-19.

Like Paul, in many cases the actual change is triggered by a significant event—often a crisis of some kind. Helping people see the importance of their worldview and leading them to recognize the logic and truth in the biblical worldview is one of the chief objectives of apologetics.

Read Philippians 1:20-26.

How did Jesus impact Paul's worldview?

Definition

Worldview - the lens through which an individual views reality and makes sense of life.

Point to Make

We cannot underestimate how much our worldview affects our lives.

Interact

Discuss how the following examples could shape a person's worldview:
Family traditions and beliefs.
Living in a country that is constantly in a war.
Best friend's beliefs.
Death in the family.
Natural disasters.

more to learn about the kind of Messiah Jesus will be, as the next passage shows (9:21–22). What the disciples do understand at this point is that Jesus is more than a prophet—that is, that Jesus' role as the Messiah is central to the inauguration of the new era of the kingdom.

Acts 9:17 Ananias's laying his hands on Saul was a physical symbol of the invisible power of the Holy Spirit coming to heal Saul from his blindness and dwell within him in new covenant fullness.

Acts 9:18 something like scales fell from his eyes. This physical event was also a symbol that Saul's spiritual blindness had been overcome and he could now see and understand the truth (cf. 2 Cor.

How did Paul's changed worldview affect how he viewed others?

How does seeing the transformation in Paul's life offer you encouragement as you talk to people who aren't followers of Jesus?

Read Joshua 24:14-15.

How does what you believe about God impact the decisions you make?

WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT GOD IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT YOU.
—A.W. TOZER

Why is it important to know God for who He truly is, rather than what our culture believes He is?

YOU CAN DEVELOP AND DISPLAY A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

Knowledge is essential in making decisions. We don't simply hope that a brain surgeon knows how to operate on someone's brain; we trust that a brain surgeon can perform such a behavior. We don't rely on our hunch about whether we will need to wear a coat; we turn to a meteorologist who has studied the weather patterns and makes an educated prediction. The same is true in our faith.

How we understand God shapes the critical decisions we make. To develop a strong worldview, we must come to understand some things as true—not merely trust a hunch or believe by hearsay. Developing a biblical worldview will move an individual past just understanding facts about Jesus, to encountering Jesus in a vivid way on a daily basis.

Read Ephesians 4:17-24.

According to this passage what are the results of living with a worldview that is contrary to God?

Look at verse 22—what does this practically look like in your life?

Point to Make

He was willing to give his life so that others would become Christ-followers and grow up in their faith.

Point to Make

Like Paul, people can change. God provides an example of someone with a drastic change to provide hope for us.

Point to Make

Help students understand that Gentiles means unbelievers in this context.

3:14 for a related image). was baptized. Through baptism Saul made an immediate public declaration of his faith in Jesus as the Messiah.

Phil. 1:21 Paul's life is not a matter of seeking his own comfort or advancement. It is all about seeking the advancement of Christ's kingdom: to live is equivalent to serving Christ. In fact, to die should be seen as gain, because it would mean that Paul would be freed from his trouble-filled life on earth to rejoice in Christ's presence.

Phil. 1:22–26 In light of v. 21, Being with Christ now would be more attractive for him, while remain-

Look at verse 23—why are renewed thoughts and attitudes essential to having a biblical worldview?

Read 1 Peter 1:13-16.

What is the connection between a biblical worldview and not slipping back into old, destructive ways of living?

How does having a biblical worldview change your heart and mind?

How does having a biblical worldview change your outward behavior?

WHAT WE THINK, WHAT WE ALLOW TO DWELL IN OUR HEARTS,
AND OUR ACTIONS HAVE THE ABILITY TO HONOR OR DISHONOR GOD.

How does a biblical worldview get diluted?

Here is the big problem. Non-biblical worldview ideas don't just sit in a book somewhere waiting for people to examine them.

How do non-biblical ideas from television, film, music, newspapers, magazines, books and academia get incorporated into an individual's worldview?

IF WE DON'T REALLY BELIEVE THE TRUTH OF GOD AND LIVE IT,
THEN OUR WITNESS WILL BE CONFUSING AND MISLEADING.

Read Psalm 119:9-16.

By diligently learning, applying and trusting God's truths in every area of our lives — whether it's watching a movie, communicating with our family and friends, or in our workplace — we can begin to develop a deep comprehensive faith that will stand against the unrelenting tide of our culture's non-biblical ideas. In the end, it is our decisions and actions that reveal what we really believe.

Point to Make

We live in a selfish, fallen world, these ideas seductively appeal to the desires of our flesh, and we often end up incorporating them into our personal worldview. Sadly this happens without us even knowing it. Many of us go through life not recognizing that our personal worldviews have been deeply affected by the world.

Example

1 Thessalonians 4:3 and other Scriptures that command us to avoid sexual immorality, but how often do Christians fall into lust or premarital and extramarital sexual sin? Is it simply because they are weak when tempted, or did it begin with their worldview?

ing alive (in the flesh) would enable him to help the Philippians further on their own spiritual journey.

Josh. 24:15 God must be served with exclusivity (Deut. 5:7), pointing to the exclusivity of commitment to Christ as the one way of salvation (Matt. 6:24; 10:34-39; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 10:21-22).

Eph. 4:22 put off your old self. As Christians seek to do this, God makes it a reality, as seen in Col. 3:9-10. Even Paul's Gentile readers can be part of the new creation in Christ. People need inner transformation because their hearts are "deceitful above all things, and desperately sick" (Jer. 17:9).

NOW WHAT?

Read Romans 12:1-2.

This passage is all about developing a biblical worldview. When we have a biblical worldview, our lives will be lived to honor God.

How does a biblical worldview lead you to a life of worship?

Verse 2 tells us to allow God to transform us by changing the way we think. How does God do this—how does he change your way of thinking?

When do you find it most difficult to follow a biblical worldview, and why?

How does your perception of people who aren't Christians change when you see them through the lense of a biblical worldview?

How does your worldview impact the way you treat people in need?

GOING DEEPER

Read Jeremiah 9:23-24.

What actions would flow from a worldview based on wisdom, power, or riches?

What are the three things mentioned in this passage that God delights in?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

When have you recognized God doing one of the items listed in the previous answer?

Eph. 4:23 Christians sometimes distinguish between knowledge of head and of heart, but the Bible shows that they should love and serve the Lord with all that is in them, including their minds, at all times (Deut. 6:5; 10:12; 13:3; Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27). The "renewal" or "transformation" of the mind (Rom. 12:2) is a process in which believers begin to think in new and right ways as they meditate on the truths of God's Word.

Eph. 4:24 put on the new self (lit. "man"; see note on v. 22). Believers are created anew in Christ (see also 2:10). Created after the likeness of God further shows the connection with the original creation in Genesis, where "God created man in his own image" (Gen. 1:27; cf. 1 Cor. 15:49).

SUMMARY

This week we talked about how our experiences impact our worldview. As individuals, we have the opportunity to take those experiences and how they impact what we believe about God.

The foundation that makes up our worldview will alter our actions.

If we capture and embrace more of God's worldview and trust it with unwavering faith, then we begin to make the right decisions and form the appropriate responses to life's difficult questions and circumstances.

Here are some questions that could help fuel great dialogue at home or with your friends:

How can Paul's story of transformation in the Bible encourage you as you interact with people who aren't followers of Jesus?

When do you find it most difficult to follow a biblical worldview, and why?

Have a wonderful week!

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Romans 12:2

1 Pet. 1:13 set your hope fully. The fullness of grace and its complete work will come only when Jesus returns, and believers are to long for that day. They do so by thinking rightly about reality and by living sober-minded and sensible lives in this present evil age.

1 Pet. 1:14–15 While living on this earth, Christians have to fight the desires of sin, so they are called to be obedient children, separated from evil in all that they do. They are to be holy (cf. Lev. 18:2–4), for that accords with the character of God who is holy and has called believers to himself.

REAP

DAY

GENESIS 22:1-19

1

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why was Abraham willing to sacrifice his only son Isaac?

What is one promise of God that you can believe and how will it affect your decisions?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

EXODUS 14:1-31

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What caused Moses to trust God to help the Israelites cross the Red Sea?

What do you believe about God that can help you face your fears?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

HEBREWS 11:1-40

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to this passage, what is faith?

How does faith in God shape your worldview?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

ACTS 9:20-22

4

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What did Paul believe about Jesus that caused him to be so bold?

How did this belief about Jesus change Paul's lense through which he viewed reality?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

5

ROMANS 1:16-17

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What did Paul believe about the Gospel that shaped his worldview?

How can this truth help you to be more confident when sharing the good news of Christ?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

EPHESIANS 4:17-24

6

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What does the fact that they are "darkened in their understanding," in their view of reality?

What does it mean, "to be renewed in the spirit of your mind"?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18

7

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to the Scripture, what is happening to "our outer self," or "the things that are seen"?

How does this understanding of the world impact the way you make decisions?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

Basic Biblical Worldview

COLOSSIANS 2:6-8

WEEK

3

Objectives

What: As followers of Christ, it's important for us to learn the basics of a biblical worldview.

Why: Students need to be equipped with core beliefs to be able to interpret the world around them correctly.

How: Your students will examine the basics of a biblical worldview.

This lesson will have a lot of scripture and teaching points. Involve students by having them read terms, scriptures, and significant questions. Although the content is difficult, be very careful to not "preach" this lesson to them. Encourage questions and discussion. The purpose for this lesson is to give students a basic summary of what it is that they do believe that they can use as a reference in the future.

Why don't we all see life the same way? Why are there so many philosophies and religions that confront the same questions but answer them so differently? Sometimes it's pretty confusing listening to all the views people have about the ultimate questions of life. Their views are more than opinions. They are convictions that people live for, and sometimes die for.

How do we sort through all these views so they make some sense? All of these perspectives of life arise from what is called a worldview. Each of us has a lense through which we see the world.

Similar to the picture on top of the jigsaw puzzle box that shows you how all the pieces fit together, a biblical worldview will help you understand how the pieces of your life fit together.

***Describe the most difficult puzzle that you have ever put together?
What are the parts of your life that are difficult to piece together?***

The most important attitude to have about worldviews is this: don't find a worldview that fits you; find the worldview that fits the world. Don't be fooled by imitations. Find truth.

Let's take time to look at the basics of a biblical worldview. What we will find is that a biblical worldview makes sense of this life and world in which we live.

5-Minute Commentary

Due to the significant amount of scripture and theology, there is not adequate space to include commentary for each Scripture listed in this lesson. Please refer to your personal study Bible. For an additional study www.biblestudytools.com.

Col. 2:6-7 you received Christ Jesus the Lord. Paul calls the Colossians back to the foundational teaching passed on to them by Epaphras when they first became Christians. At the heart of this is the confession that Jesus Christ is Lord (1 Cor. 12:3). Paul uses the images of a tree (rooted) and a building (built up) to remind them of their firm foundation in what they have already been taught.

QUESTIONS THAT SHAPE A WORLDVIEW

Although there certainly are some common-ground beliefs shared by worldviews, you will find some pretty significant disagreements on what is claimed to be true when considering the following:

- Where did everything come from?
- What are the characteristics of the world?
- What is a human being?
- How is it possible to know anything at all?
- How do we know what is right or wrong?
- What happens to a person after death?
- What is the meaning of human history?

Using the whole counsel of scripture is essential in forming a biblical worldview. These questions are answered below through the lense of Scripture to provide the basic beliefs of a biblical worldview.

BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

1) God/Prime Reality – Where did everything come from?

God is infinite and personal, rational, creator, transcendent and immanent, sovereign and good.

Read Genesis 1:1-2:3.

What is the significance of God creating a beginning versus God coming after the beginning?

Read Exodus 3:14 and John 8:58.

“I AM” IS TRANSLATED AS YAHWEH

- 1) God is self-existent and therefore not dependent on anything else for his own existence.
- 2) God is the creator and sustainer of all that exists.
- 3) God is immutable in his being and character and thus is not in the process of becoming something different from what he is. He is “the same yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).
- 4) God is eternal in his existence.

Why is it significant that Jesus stated “before Abraham I AM”?

Read Genesis 3:7.

What is significant about God walking in the garden so that man could hear him?

These core questions define all worldviews. Students may hear question 2 stated: “The nature of external reality.” This statement has been simplified for readability.

Point to Make

God is. He has always existed and always will. However, the earth had a real beginning set in motion by God.

Point to Make

The name Yahweh has significant meaning. Help students realize what this means in the context of God as our creator.

Point to Make

Jesus and the Father are one along with the Holy Spirit. The characteristics of the Father are the same for the Son and the Holy Spirit because they are one. God is personal and interacts with man. This was ultimately shown through Jesus.

The implication is, why should they now give a hearing to any rival teaching?

Col. 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive (Gk. *sylagōgeō*, commonly used of the plundering of cargo from a ship). The false teacher(s) in Colossae pose a very real threat to the church. philosophy. The Greek for this word includes the article (*tēs philosophias*), suggesting that the ringleaders of the faction called their teaching “the philosophy.” When Paul speaks of “filling” and “fullness” in this letter (see v. 10), he is clearly echoing the jargon of the erring teachers, and he may be doing the same here. The term “philosophy” was used much more broadly in the ancient world than it is today. Josephus, for instance, could call the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees “philosophies.” Even a

2) Cosmos – What are the characteristics of the world?

God created the cosmos out of nothing to operate with a uniformity of natural causes in an open system (miracles are possible). It is a “fallen” world affected by sin and in need of redemption.

EX NIHILO – OUT OF NOTHING

God did not create all that there is out of a cosmic chaos, nor did he form that matter out of himself. God created ex nihilo, out of nothing. He spoke the universe into existence and it came to be.

Read Genesis 1:1.

How does this Scripture affirm “ex nihilo”?

The opening words of the Bible establish that God, in his inscrutable wisdom, sovereign power, and majesty, is the Creator of all things that exist.

Read Genesis 1:31-2:3.

Having previously affirmed on six occasions that particular aspects of creation are “good” (verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25), God now states, after the creation of the man and the woman, that everything he has made is very good. While many things about the present-day world do not appear to be good, this was not so at the beginning.

THE UNIVERSE IS ORDERLY, AND GOD DOES NOT PRESENT US WITH CONFUSION BUT WITH CLARITY. THE NATURE OF GOD’S UNIVERSE AND GOD’S CHARACTER ARE THUS CLOSELY RELATED. —JAMES SIRE

This is a great strength of the Christian worldview because it gives us a foundation for science, morality and purpose. Our worldview starts with God, not with ourselves.

Read Genesis 3:16-24 and Romans 8:20-21.

How did sin affect creation?

3) Humans – What is a human being?

Humans are created in the image of God, possessing rationality, personality, self-transcendence, morality, creativity, and sociability. Humans were originally good, now fallen, but capable of being restored through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Read Genesis 1:26-31 and Psalm 8:3-5.

Interact

Imagine seeing creation from God’s vantage point as he rested on the seventh day.

“In the beginning” refers to the beginning of everything. The text indicates that God created everything in the universe, which thus affirms that he did in fact create it ex nihilo.

The answers to life’s hard questions like, “why do we exist?” And “what is the meaning of life” are immediately answered because we know the one who created it all.

Definition

Self-Transcendence - the overcoming of the limits of the individual self and its desires in spiritual contemplation and realization.

magician could be called a philosopher. Paul is not making a blanket condemnation of the traditional Greek philosophical schools (e.g., Platonism, Stoicism, Aristotelianism, etc.). His remarks are focused on the particular factional teaching being disseminated at Colossae. He makes the incisive claim that this teaching is not only empty deceit but that it has been inspired by the elemental spirits (Gk. stoicheia) of the world. Stoicheia is sometimes translated “the basic principles” of the world and then interpreted to be something like the fundamental principles of pagan religion. In the ancient world, however, the term stoicheia was widely used for spirits in Persian religious texts, magical papyri, astrological documents, and some Jewish texts. Paul is likely using it here to refer to demonic spirits; it is the equivalent of “rulers and authorities” (vv. 10, 15). Although the false teaching is handed down

How does being made in the image of God provide an individual with a sense of worth?

Read Romans 5:12-21.

What does this passage of Scripture communicate about the state of mankind without the intervention of Jesus Christ?

4) Knowledge/Revelation – How is it possible to know anything at all?

Humans can have adequate knowledge of the world and God because God gave this capacity and revealed Himself. Knowledge is made available through both general and special revelation.

GOD IS OMNISCIANT = HE KNOWS EVERYTHING

Read Psalm 147:5 and Genesis 1:26-27.

Human knowledge is fundamentally an attribute of bearing of the image of God who knows everything.

Since humans have been made in God's image, we have been given a capacity to understand and have intelligence. Everything from a backpack, to the construction of a bridge comes out of our ability to intelligently design and create things. All the accomplishments of man in the fields of technology, video, art and academics are a direct result of our being made in the image of God.

General revelation represents the way God has revealed himself to all humans through creation and moral law. Special revelation is the manifestation of himself through Jesus and Scripture. These forms of revelation will be examined later sessions.

5) Ethics – How do we know what is right or wrong?

Standards of morality are based on the character of God as good (holy and loving). Some ethical principles are universal (not relative) and are given by general and/or special revelation.

Why is it important to trust that God is good and loving if he is the standard for morality?

Read Genesis 2:16-17 and 3:1-11.

Why did they provide coverings for themselves?

Read Genesis 3:22-24.

Point to Make

The view of humanity as being made in the image of God is a great strength to Christian theism in that it gives us a sense of worth. Humans are not just another animal in the larger family of the animal kingdom. Human life matters, killing another human is wrong because we have been endowed with the image of the ultimate being in the Universe.

This is revealed through general and special revelation.

This is a huge strength of the Christian theistic worldview because it demonstrates to mankind that we all have something to contribute.

Morality is objective and always has been.

as human tradition, it can ultimately be traced to the influence of demonic forces. The fundamental problem with this philosophy is that it is not in accord with Jesus Christ and the gospel proclaimed by him and the apostle Paul.

Gen. 1:1–2:3 The book of Genesis opens with a majestic description of how God first created the heavens and earth and then how he ordered the earth so that it may become his dwelling place. Structured into seven sections, each marked by the use of set phrases, the entire episode conveys the picture of the all-powerful, transcendent God who sets everything in place with consummate skill in conformity to his grand design. The emphasis is mainly on how God orders or structures every-

What does this Scripture say about humans having instinctive moral sense?

Although humans are given an inherent sense of good and evil, that cannot ultimately be our guide for ethics. Without an absolute standard, morality would be relative and dependent upon each individual.

Morality is not a human invention; it flows from the nature of God, who is eternal and unchanging. Therefore, as much as we may want to, we cannot determine what is right and wrong on our own. Our Creator, the Source of all truth, has revealed what we need to know of right and wrong in His Word and through Jesus.

Read Matthew 5:48.

The combination of the way that Jesus lived, along with the Scripture, is the ultimate moral authority.

6) Death – What happens to a person after death?

Death is either the gateway to eternal life with God or eternal separation from him as determined by one's relationship to Christ.

What are different beliefs that you have heard about what happens to an someone when they die?

Read Genesis 3:19, 22-24.

The Christian theistic worldview teaches that everyone dies once and then faces judgment. Death is not the end of the road, it is the beginning of your eternal existence.

Read Matthew 25:46, Revelation 20:15 and 21:27.

Hell is a real place and people who do not have a relationship with Jesus will go to Hell because of their sin. Heaven is also a real place and death no longer becomes something to fear when an individual has a relationship with Jesus Christ. Christians have the assurance of eternal life because of the resurrection of Jesus.

Read Romans 6:1-11.

OTHER PROPHETS SPOKE OF ETERNAL EXISTENCE OR PARADISE
BUT JESUS DEMONSTRATED ETERNAL LIFE BY HIS RESURRECTION.

Read Romans 10:9-13.

For those who have received Jesus Christ as Savior, there will be forgiveness and mercy.

Instinctive moral sense is a great example of general revelation.

Point to Make

An atheist or agnostic might say, "I determine what is right and wrong in my life". That might sound nice, but Hitler thought it was right to kill millions of human beings who he perceived were subhuman. Some will suggest that it is the job of the state (or government) to create standards and determine what is right and wrong. These are all flimsy and subjective views of morality.

thing. The structure of the account is as follows: after giving the setting (1:1–2), the author describes the six workdays (1:3–31) and the seventh day, God's Sabbath (2:1–3). Each of the six workdays follows the same pattern: it begins with "and God said," and closes with "and there was evening and there was morning, ... day." After declaring that God is the Creator of all things (1:1), the focus of the rest of Genesis 1 (beginning at 1:3) is mainly on God bringing things into existence by his word and ordering the created things ("let the waters ... be gathered together," 1:9), rather than on how the earth was initially created (1:1). Different features indicate this. For example, vegetation is mentioned on day 3, prior to the apparent creation of the sun on day 4. Readers concerned with how to compare this passage with a modern scientific perspective should consult Introduction: Genesis and

7) History – What is the meaning of human history?

History is a meaningful sequence of events leading to the fulfillment of God's purposes. History is guided by God's providence and miraculous intervention.

Read 2 Peter 3:2-14.

According to this passage, what is all of history leading up to?

History is God's highway to an appointed future. It is not just a random path cut through the woods by men and women without a compass. History is a highway that leads from creation to eternity. We have the privilege of looking at it from the side of history and knowing that Jesus Christ did come to this world, and He came to give His life for you and for me.

TRUST GOD AS HE DIRECTS HISTORY FROM HIS VANTAGE POINT.

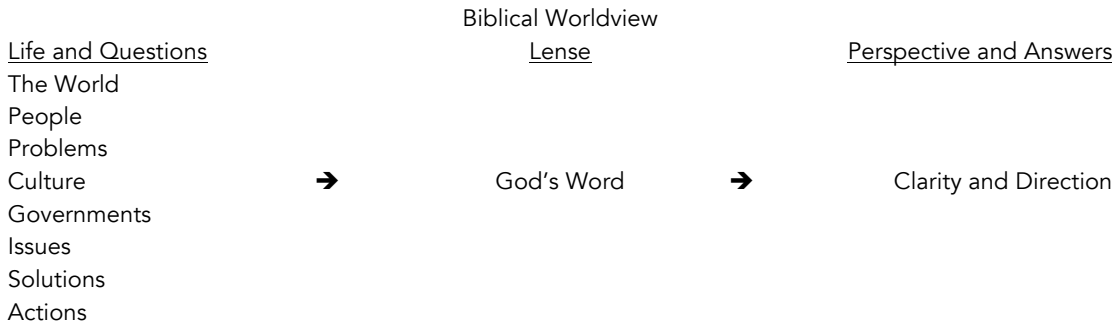
Point to Make

All things are leading to the culmination of time at the second coming of Christ. The strength in this view is that our existence on the earth is for God's purposes and history is actually His story. We get to take part in the greatest story ever told. What a privilege!

Science. Viewed in its ancient Near Eastern context, Genesis 1 says that God created everything, but it is also an account of how God has structured creation in its ordered complexity. Readers are introduced in the first three days to Day, Night, the Heavens, Earth, Seas—all these items, and only these, being specifically named by God. In days 4–6 the three distinctive regions are populated: the Heavens with lights and birds; the Seas with fish and swarming creatures; and the Earth with livestock and creeping things. God finally gives authority to human beings, as his vice-regents, to govern all these living creatures. Genesis 1 establishes a hierarchy of authority. Humanity is divinely commissioned to govern other creatures on God's behalf, the ultimate purpose being that the whole earth should become the temple of God, the place of his presence, and should display his glory.

NOW WHAT?

Answering the questions in this session with a biblical perspective provides great clarity and direction for the believer in Christ.



What are you going through right now for which you need an answer or a better perspective?

GOING DEEPER

How would a biblical worldview affect the decisions you face?

How does knowing that God directs history from His vantage point increase your faith?

What would be the consequences of believing that God is not all-powerful?

Explain why or why not you believe absolute moral truths exist?

Ex. 3:14 I am who I am. In response to Moses' question ("What is [your] name?" v. 13), God reveals his name to be "Yahweh" (corresponding to the four Hebrew consonants YHWH). The main focus in this passage is on the Lord's promise to be with Moses and his people. The word translated "I am" (Hb. 'ehyeh) can also be understood and translated as "I will be" (cf. esv footnote). Given the context of Ex. 3:12 ("I will be with you"), the name of Yahweh ("the Lord") is also a clear reminder of God's promises to his people and of his help for them to fulfill their calling. In each of these cases, the personal name of God as revealed to Moses expresses something essential about the attributes and character of God.

SUMMARY

This week we answered seven questions that formulate a biblical worldview. Ultimately, everyone must answer these questions for themselves.

To develop an accurate worldview, we must commit ourselves to learning the truth in God's Word, experiencing God in our lives, and obeying all we know to be true. It involves more than just being told what to believe.

A biblical worldview requires us to critically consider who God is, what Jesus has done for us, and how we live out our Christian lifestyle.

Here are some questions that could lead to great dialogue at home or with your friends:

What are the characteristics of God?

What happens when we someone dies?

What is the cause of pain in our lives?

How can a biblical worldview lead to a fulfilled life?

Have a wonderful week!

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Colossians 2:8

John 8:58 If there had been any uncertainty about Jesus' identity in other passages where he said, "I am" (e.g., 6:35; 9:5; 11:25), there was no confusion here because Jesus is claiming to be the one who was alive before Abraham was, that is, more than 2,000 years earlier. Jesus does not simply say, "Before Abraham was, I was," which would simply mean that he is more than 2,000 years old. Rather, he uses the present tense "I am" in speaking of existence more than 2,000 years earlier, thus claiming a kind of transcendence over time that could only be true of God. The words "I am" in Greek use the same expression (Egō eimi) found in the Septuagint in the first half of God's self-identification in Ex. 3:14, "I am who I am." Jesus is thus claiming not only to be eternal but also to be the God who appeared to Moses at the burning bush.

REAP

DAY

GENESIS 1:1-2:3

1

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What did God use to create the world?

What role and right does God have in our lives as creator?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

GENESIS 3:1-19

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What did Eve do and how did it affect the entire world?

Why is it important to believe that God interacts with us in a personal way?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

GENESIS 2:4-25

3

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What do these verses say about the responsibility mankind has toward the world and God?

What does it mean that humans are created in the Image of God?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

GENESIS 2:15-20

4

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Since God asked Adam to name the animals, what does that reveal about our ability to think?

How can we know anything about God and what he expects of us?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

GENESIS 3:22-23

5

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Who defines what is right or wrong?

What is the difference between knowing right and wrong and creating right and wrong?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

6

GENESIS 2:15; 3:17-24

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What is the primary consequence of Adam and Eve's disobedience?

How does being removed from the Garden of Eden symbolize this?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

7

GENESIS 1:1 & REVELATION 22:12-13

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Since God is the beginning and the end, what can we conclude about everything in-between?

Who is the main character in the Bible?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

Scripture Speaks For Itself

2 TIMOTHY 3:10-17

No other book has been more influential than the Bible. The Bible contains the most beautiful literature and the only perfect moral code ever communicated to humanity. Those in power and those who were cast aside as nobodies were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the Bible.

The best-selling book in history remains one of the most controversial. Revered by Christians as God's holy Word, the Bible spans centuries of history, contains a variety of literary styles and culminates in the person of Jesus Christ.

***Why is the Bible so controversial?
What causes you to trust or distrust the Bible?***

It is important for a Christian to understand what the Bible says about itself. There are key components to what the Bible says about itself that build a strong case for its reliability.

The Bible never uses the word "inerrant," but the idea is evident in many different Scriptures. In this study, we will discover five ways that the Bible reveals its own accuracy.

WEEK

4

Objectives

What: Teenagers are bombarded regularly with claims from teachers and peers on the validity of the Scriptures.

Why: We can help students avoid going along with the inaccurate belief that the Bible is full of mistakes and is not relevant to our modern world.

How: Your students will examine the Scriptures that declares its own testimony.

5-Minute Commentary

2 Tim. 3:10–17 Call to Hold Fast to Scripture and Paul's Example. This paragraph opens with a clear, strong contrast: "You, however." The false teachers live and teach one way (vv. 1–9), but Paul provides a totally different model for Timothy. The repetition of "my" in vv. 10–11 places clear emphasis on Paul as the model for faithful living and ministry, in contrast to that proposed by the opponents. See note on Phil. 3:17.

Ps. 12:6 To say that God's words are pure, refined, and purified is to insist that they have no "dross" of lies, flattery, or insincerity: God means what he says; his words are completely pure.

WE FIND EVIDENCE IN THE "INTERNAL TEST"

A test of reliability of the Bible involves the Scriptures and what they say about themselves. Remember, the Bible is not one book written by one person. It is a collection of 66 books, written by about 40 people in three different languages over a span of 2,000 years. The "internal test" involves looking at biblical claims, eyewitness accounts, biblical prophecies, cultural biases and how Jesus treated the Scriptures.

I LOVE THE BIBLE THE WAY I LOVE MY EYES—NOT BECAUSE MY EYES ARE LOVELY, BUT BECAUSE WITHOUT THEM I CAN'T SEE WHAT'S LOVELY. WITHOUT THE BIBLE I COULD NOT SEE THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST. —JOHN PIPER

1) Biblical Claims

The Bible must speak for itself in all things that pertain to life and godliness. We must be willing to take the truth exactly as God has stated it, without any additions or subtractions. The Bible is consistent, and doesn't attempt to mislead a sincere seeker of the Word.

Read Psalm 12:6, Psalm 19:7-9, Psalm 119:160, Proverbs 30:5-6 and 2 Timothy 3:16.

How do those specific passages reveal the accuracy and truth of the Bible?

What other themes or truths do you see in these Scriptures?

INERRANT – CORRECT OR WITHOUT MISTAKES.

How does the word "inerrant" relate to your understanding of what the Bible teaches—and what you believe about the Bible?

INSPIRED – THE MOVEMENT OF GOD THROUGH THE WRITER TO COMMUNICATE WHAT HE WANTED US TO HEAR.

What do you think it was like for the Holy Spirit to divinely guide the writers of the books that would be included in our Bible?

2) Eyewitness Accounts

Most of the New Testament was written between A.D. 47 and 70, and all of it was completed before the end of the first century. There was not enough time for myths to be created and propagated and distributed, because multitudes of eyewitnesses of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection were alive when

Ps. 19:7–11 These verses describe some characteristics and effects of God's revelation to Moses.

Prov. 30:5–6 Every word of God proves true (cf. 2 Sam. 22:31; Ps. 18:30). "Proves true" can also mean "refined" (cf. Ps. 12:6) or "well tried" (Ps. 119:140); the implication is that God's words are a proven foundation for one's life. The proverb's emphasis on every "word" (Hb. 'imrah) underscores the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and reliability of the Bible, not just in its overall message but also of every detail. This verse supplies support for the doctrine of the "plenary" (full, complete) inspiration of Scripture, extending even to "every word."

the New Testament books began to circulate. These eyewitnesses would have challenged blatant historical falsehoods about the life of Christ.

Read John 19:34-37, John 21:24-25, and 2 Peter 1:16-18.

What do these verses have in common and what do they reveal about biblical events?

3) Fulfilled Prophecy

Hundreds of Bible prophecies have been fulfilled. Often they were fulfilled long after the prophetic writer had passed away.

Read these three pairs of Scripture:

Jeremiah 31:15 and Matthew 2:16-18

Micah 5:2 and Matthew 2:1

Isaiah 61:1-2 and Luke 4:18-19

How are the Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in each New Testament passage?

Why is the fulfillment of prophecy such powerful evidence of the accuracy of the Bible?

Read 2 Peter 1:20-21.

Why is it important that no prophecy was formed by the will of man?

The only way Bible scoffers can explain away the astronomical probability of fulfilled prophecy is to discredit the prophecies in one way or another. Their only alternative is to accept that God is the author of the Scriptures. The Bible is a reliable book of genuine divine prophecy. You can trust it!

For a specific list of fulfilled prophecies about Jesus alone, see Fulfilled Prophecy in the back of this book.

4) Cultural Biases and Embarrassing Moments

One example of the use of a cultural bias was the presence of women in the account of Jesus' resurrection.

Read Luke 24:10-11.

There were eyewitnesses to these events. Eyewitnesses give testimony to the truth of events.

Most of the biblical authors claim that their accounts are eyewitness accounts of the events they recorded. In the New Testament, accounts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus were written by people who were intimately acquainted with him. Their writings reveal their truthfulness and their commitment to communicating the integrity of the Jesus narrative. These apostles maintained their testimony through intense persecution and even death. Many people will lay their life down for the truth, but no one will lay their life down for what they know is false.

John 21:24 "we know" represents a self-reference on the part of the author, most likely including his readers and/or associates in the affirmation that John's testimony is true. See also note on 5:31.

2 Pet. 1:16–18 Peter's Preaching Results from His Own Eyewitness Experience. Peter recounts his personal experience with Jesus during the transfiguration (Matt. 17:1–8; Mark 9:2–8; Luke 9:28–36a).

Jer. 31:15 Past devastations to Israel anticipate the devastation when Herod kills the children.

Mic. 5:2 The Messiah is to be born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1–6).

Not only were women present at the empty tomb, but they also were the first ones to hear the news of Jesus' resurrection and the ones who informed the other disciples. Why is this so significant? Most of us today agree with the equality of all people in political, economic, and social life, but that wasn't the case for the Jewish audience of the first century.

In that culture, women were forbidden to testify in a court of law because their word was worthless as an "inferior" gender.

Given this view of women and their exclusion from giving legal testimony, why is it significant that women were the first discoverers and chief witnesses of the empty tomb of Jesus?

If the writers of the Gospels were not writing accurately about Jesus' resurrection, why would they include this information? Why not remove references to the women and their discovery?

All four Gospel writers seem to have an unwavering dedication to the facts and accurately recorded what was for them, a very embarrassing and awkward fact: the women's testimony.

5) Jesus and the Scriptures

Jesus himself is an argument in support of the truth of the Bible.

Read John 10:35.

What does this verse testify about the authority of the Bible?

Read Matthew 5:17.

What does this Scripture communicate about what Jesus thought of the Old Testament?

Read Matthew 4:4.

Space does not allow a thorough investigation of the views of Jesus on the Bible, but it is sufficient here to note that he believed God spoke through the Bible, he overtly upheld belief in several Old Testament stories, and he revered the Bible as holy and authoritative.

Point to Make

Given the low status of women in that cultural context, it is extremely significant that the Gospel authors actually own up to the fact that women were initial witnesses of Jesus' empty tomb.

Point to Make

When Jesus says that Scripture "cannot be broken," he implies that every single word in Scripture is completely true and reliable. His opponents do not differ with this high view of Scripture, either here or anywhere else in the Gospels.

He didn't dismiss the OT. He believed and trusted the OT.

Matt. 2:1 Jesus' birth in Bethlehem of Judea, about 6 miles (9.7 km) south of Jerusalem, marks him as being from the tribe of Judah and from the city that produced the Davidic kings (Ruth 1:1, 19; 2:4; 1 Sam. 17:12, 15; see note on Luke 2:4).

Isa. 61:1 Christ applies these words to himself and his work of salvation (Luke 4:18).

Luke 4:18–19 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Jesus is aware of his anointing (Luke 3:22; cf. Acts 4:26–27; 10:38) and claims to be the messianic servant of the Lord who is speaking in this passage from Isaiah 61 ("Today this Scripture has been fulfilled," Luke 4:21).

NOW WHAT?

How does knowing that the Bible is a collection of books, numerous authors, and multiple languages over a long period of time, point to the accuracy of Scripture?

Based on today's conversation, how might you specifically answer a friend's question about the accuracy of the Bible?

How does the reliability of scripture effect your understanding of the Bible as the moral authority in your life?

GOING DEEPER

What effect do the eyewitness accounts of Jesus have on your view of the accuracy of Scripture?

Think of a specific time the Bible has been real and powerful in your life. What was that experience like, and what did that experience teach you about Scripture?

The Bible is full of great men and women of faith and is also full of their mistakes.

- Jacob was a deceiver.
- Gideon had his insecurities.
- David committed adultery and murder.
- Solomon, known as the wisest man on earth, showed a marked lack of wisdom.
- Elijah showed a lack of faith in God.
- Jonah, a prophet of God, allowed his prejudices cloud His obedience to God's call.

In Hebrews 11 is a listing to which the Bible points as great men of faith. Yet, many of these men messed up and their failures are recorded. Some of these men actually even wrote about themselves.

Why would someone be willing to put their own mistakes on paper for everyone to read?

2 Pet. 1:19–21 The truth about Christ is based on the prophecies of Scripture, something even more certain than (or just as sure as; see note on v. 19) eyewitness testimony.

Luke 24:10 It was Mary ... and the other women indicates that at least five women went to the tomb. On women as the first witnesses to the resurrection, was courageous, since the testimony of women as witnesses was not always given credence in the first-century context, especially in a court of law.

John 10:35 "cannot be broken," implies that each word in Scripture is completely true and reliable. Opponents do not differ with this high view of Scripture, either here or anywhere else in the Gospels.

SUMMARY

This week we continued to examine, foundational topics in apologetics—the discipline of explaining and defending what it means to have faith in Jesus. This week’s conversation focused on what the Bible says about itself.

The Bible testifies that it is the Word of God. Our view of the Bible matters immensely. If it is, as we have argued, then our eternal destiny hinges on how we will respond to Christ and His calling. Will we reject Him or accept Him?

As Christians, we believe the claims the Bible makes correspond to reality. It is important that we live in light of the truths of Scripture.

We encourage you to engage in conversation at home and with your friends with questions like:

Do you find it easy or difficult to believe that the Bible is accurate and reliable? Why?

Would you willingly die for something you know is not true? Why or why not?

As we continue through this series, please contact your leader or a pastor if you have any questions or would like additional resources to help answer your questions. Have a blessed week.

MEMORY VERSES FOR THE WEEK

2 Peter 1:16

Matt. 5:17 Jesus’ gospel of the kingdom does not replace the OT but rather fulfills it as Jesus’ life and ministry, coupled with his interpretation, complete and clarify God’s intent and meaning in the entire OT.

John 1:15 bore witness. Witnesses to Jesus (1) John the Baptist: 5:32–36; cf. 1:7–8, 15, 19, 32–34; 3:26 (2) Jesus’ own works: 5:36; cf. 10:25, 32, 37–38; 15:24 (3) God the Father: 5:37–38; 8:18 (4) The Scriptures, esp. by Moses: 5:39, 45–47 (5) Jesus himself: 3:11, 32; 8:14, 18; 18:37 (6) The Spirit 14:26; 15:26; 16:8–11, 13–14 (7) The disciples, esp. John: 15:27; 19:35; 21:24

REAP

DAY

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

1

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to this passage, where does Scripture come from?

How does Scripture equip a believer?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

DEUTERONOMY 11:18-21

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What does this passage say about the importance of God's Word?

What are practical ways that you can treasure God's Word?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2 PETER 1:16-21

3

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Describe how important an eyewitness is to solving a crime?

How does this passage point to the reliability of Scripture?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2 CORINTHIANS 2:1-16

4

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What is the Holy Spirit's role when you hear the Word of God?

How does it increase your faith knowing your faith rests in the power of God?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

JOHN 21:24-25

5

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How does this passage describe the limitless magnitude of everything that Jesus had done?

As an eyewitness, what credibility did John have about what he wrote?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2 TIMOTHY 4:2-4

6

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to this passage what will people do to discredit Scripture?

How can you prepare to be ready at any time to defend your faith?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

7

REVELATION 22:18-19

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What does this passage reveal about the seriousness of Scripture?

How do these verses encourage you to trust the Word of God?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

You Can Trust

It

PROVERBS 1:5

WEEK

5

Objectives

What: Teenagers are bombarded regularly with claims from teachers and peers on the validity of the Scriptures.

Why: We can help students avoid going along with the inaccurate belief that the Bible is full of mistakes and is not relevant to our modern world.

How: Your students will examine evidence that will give them a firm foundation on why they can trust the validity of the Bible.

Display and point to a stash of magazines, newspapers, and nonfiction books. On a scale of 1 to 10—with 1 as low and 10 as high—how important is it to you that the content in these resources be accurate when you are writing a research paper?

No book in history has been translated into more languages than the 66 books of the Bible. The collection of 66 books includes history, law, prophecy, letters, and poetry. Christianity rests in the declaration that the Bible is accurate and reliable.

*How do you determine if resources are accurate and reliable when writing a paper?
Do you find it easy or difficult to believe the Bible is accurate and reliable? Why?*

Many people in our culture ask, “How can you be sure that the Bible is the same now as it was when it was written?” Essentially, they’re asking, “What evidence do you have that the Bible is accurate?” As we’ll see today, we can point to several different sources and pieces of evidence that support the accuracy and trustworthiness of the Bible.

Critics say, either the Bible is full of inaccuracies or a fictional book put together by religious fanatics centuries ago. Others say the teachings of the Bible are outdated, contradictory, and full of scientific and historical errors. Let’s see what we can learn about the accuracy of Scripture. In this study, we will discover how we can know that Scripture is valid.

Introduction

Proverbs 1:5 may seem like a strange passage of Scripture for this lesson. However, the ESV commentary states, “Let the wise hear and increase in learning. The great virtue that this book seeks to instill is teachability, the willingness to grow in wisdom no matter how far along a person already is.”

As believers in Christ we must continue to learn and grow in our faith. That requires us to not settle for “churchisms” like “the Bible said, I believe it, nothing can change it.” This lesson will give students an opportunity increase their wisdom to have real answers to difficult questions.

MORE EVIDENCE PLEASE

Sometimes Christians quote the Bible to prove the Bible. Most skeptics are rightly cautious of this approach. Quoting the Bible to prove the Bible is viewed as being circular reasoning or illogical. After all, quoting the Bible to prove the Bible assumes the Bible is true, which is really the point of contention or discussion.

However, if the Bible can be shown to be a reliable document, accurately recorded and transmitted through history, from God to us, then we can build a strong case that the Bible is indeed true.

What's the oldest book you've ever seen?

MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE

When we talk about the Bible, it's important to understand the word manuscript.

MANUSCRIPT - A DOCUMENT THAT IS HANDWRITTEN.

This word is essential in understanding the validity of the Bible because the original writers not only penned the words of the Bible themselves by hand, but copies of the books were also handwritten and the process was meticulous. These copies were called manuscripts. Manuscripts were distributed to people from all regions that wanted to read the letters of the apostles.

What resource would have been great to have then?

Why is it important to know without a doubt that the Bible we have today is the same one written centuries ago?

Christians claim that the Bible is inspired and inerrant.

INSPIRED – THE MOVEMENT OF GOD THROUGH THE WRITER TO COMMUNICATE WHAT HE WANTED US TO HEAR.

INERRANT – CORRECT OR WITHOUT MISTAKES.

Inspiration and inerrancy applies to the original writings, not to the copies. In other words, it is the original writings that are without error. The copies, sadly, have copyist errors in them. Remember, it is the autographs (original writings) that are inspired and inerrant, not the copies.

Interact

Make sure students respond to the evidence verbally and have them describe how these evidences increase their faith.

Point to Make

In the first century, scribes meticulously copied important texts word for word. These scribes held great reverence and detail in duplicating these letters to minimize even the possibility of the slightest error. Scribes would handwrite 10-20 manuscripts a week, and these copies would be distributed to distant regions.

5-Minute Commentary

Prov. 1:5 Let the wise hear and increase in learning. The great virtue that this book seeks to instill is teachability, the willingness to grow in wisdom no matter how far along a person already is.

1 Thess. 2:7–8 gentle. Paul is highlighting the fact that he and his fellow missionaries did not exploit their rights and privileges but acted in an unassuming manner toward the converts. like a nursing mother. Paul and his fellow missionaries were without guile, loving, and selfless in their devotion to the converts.

The copies we have now are copies of inspired documents. The copies have no guarantee of being 100% textually pure. Does this then mean that we can't trust the Bible? Not at all.

THE COPIES ARE SO ACCURATE THAT ALL OF THE BIBLICAL
DOCUMENTS ARE 98.5% TEXTUALLY PURE.

The 1.5% that is in question is mainly nothing more than spelling errors and occasional word omissions like the words "the," "but," etc. This reduces any serious textual issues to a fraction of the 1.5%.

TYPES OF ERRORS (ALSO KNOWN AS VARIANTS)

1) Spelling & Nonsense.

- These are errors that occurred when a scribe wrote a word that makes no sense in its context.
- Read 1 Thessalonians 2:7.
- Example: "we were horses among you" (Gk. hippoi, "horses," instead of ēpioi, "gentle," or nēpioi, "little children")
- Obviously, Paul isn't saying he acted like a horse among them. These kinds of errors are easily corrected.

2) Minor Changes.

- These minor changes are as small as the presence or absence of an article "the" or changed word order, which can vary considerably in Greek.
- This does not indicate that the meaning is lost.

3) Meaningful but not Reasonable.

- These errors have meaning but are not a reasonable reflection of the original text.
- Read 1 Thessalonians 2:9.
- Instead of "the gospel of God" (the reading of almost all the manuscripts), a late medieval copy has "the gospel of Christ."
- There is a meaning difference between God and Christ, but the overall manuscript evidence points clearly in one direction, making the error plain and not probably part of the original.

4) Meaningful and Reasonable.

- These are errors that have meaning and that the alternate reading is reasonable as a reflection of the original wording.
- These types of errors account for less than 1% of all variants and typically involve a single word or phrase.
- Example: Lookup Mark 16:9-20 and read the footnote or the break in text.
- Most contemporary scholars do not regard as original. Our translations even footnote that!

How does knowing the types of errors that a skeptic might point out equip you to respond?

1 Thess. 2:9 Paul's love was shown by the fact that he had undertaken long hours of manual labor in order to avoid burdening the Thessalonians financially.

Mark 16:9–20 "Longer Ending of Mark. "Some ancient manuscripts of Mark's Gospel contain these verses and others do not, which presents a puzzle for scholars who specialize in the history of such manuscripts. This longer ending is missing from various old and reliable Greek manuscripts (esp. Sinaiticus and Vaticanus), as well as numerous early Latin, Syriac, Armenian, and Georgian manuscripts. Early church fathers (e.g., Origen and Clement of Alexandria) did not appear to know of these verses. Eusebius and Jerome state that this section is missing in most manuscripts available at

Bill Foster, author of *Meet the Skeptic*, explains biblical variants through the form of analyzing a recipe handed down from generation to generation.

Examine the copies of the recipes below. Draw a circle around the variant and draw a line to the original.

Original - Blackberry Sauce

2 pt. fresh blackberries, halved
 ¼ cup sugar
 2 ½ tsp. orange zest
 ½ tsp. ground ginger
 1 pt. vanilla ice cream
 6 gingersnaps, crushed

1) stir together the first 4 ingredients in a sauce pan over med. high heat: cook, stirring constantly, 5 minutes or until thoroughly heated; serve over ice cream, sprinkle with gingersnaps

Copy 1 - Blackberry Sauce

serves 6
 2 pt. fresh blackberries, halved
 ¼ c . sugar
 2 ½ tsp. orange zest
 ½ tsp. ground ginger
 1 pt. vanilla ice cream
 6 gingersnaps, crushed

stir together the first 4 ingredients in a sauce pan over med. high heat: cook, stir constantly, 5 minutes or until thoroughly heated; serve over ice cream sprinkled with gingersnaps

Copy 2- Blackberry Sauce

2 pt. fresh blackberries, halved
 ¼ cup sugar
 2 ½ tsp. orange zest
 ½ tsp. ground ginger
 1 pt. vanilla ice cream
 6 gingersnaps, crushed

stir together the first 4 ingredients in a sauce pan over medium heat: cook, stirring constantly, 5 minutes or until thoroughly heated; serve over ice cream, sprinkle with the gingersnaps

Copy 3 - Blackberry Sauce

2 pt. fresh blackberries, halved
 ¼ cup sugar
 2 ½ tsp. orange zest
 ½ tsp. ground ginger
 1 pt. vanilla ice cream
 6 gingersnaps, crushed

1. stir together first 4 ingredients in a sauce pan over med. high heat: cook, stirring constantly, 5 minutes or until thoroughly heated; serve over ice cream, sprinkle with gingersnaps

Even if there are variances between the recipe copies we could still assemble an accurate recipe because the same mistakes do not appear on all copies and there is an overwhelming amount of information on which all copies agree.

How did this exercise illustrate the type of errors listed on the previous page?

Point to Make

Variances such as:
 "med. high heat" vs. "medium heat"
 "stirring" vs. "stir"
 "c" vs. "cup"
 "sprinkled" vs. "sprinkle"
 "1)" vs. "1." vs. " "
 "the" vs. " "
 " " vs. "the"
 Do not corrupt the recipe.

their time. And some manuscripts that contain vv. 9–20 indicate that older manuscripts lack the section. On the other hand, some early and many later manuscripts (such as the manuscripts known as A, C, and D) contain vv. 9–20, and many church fathers (such as Irenaeus) evidently knew of these verses. As for the verses themselves, they contain various Greek words and expressions uncommon to Mark, and there are stylistic differences as well. Many think this shows vv. 9–20 to be a later addition. In summary, vv. 9–20 should be read with caution. As in many translations, the editors of the esv have placed the section within brackets, showing their doubts as to whether it was originally part of what Mark wrote, but also recognizing its long history of acceptance by many in the church. The content of vv. 9–20 is best explained by reference to other passages in the Gospels and the rest of the

The reliability of the Bible is directly related to the quality and number of manuscripts from which it is translated from. When the Bible is translated, it is not translated from a translation of a translation of a translation. It is translated from the original language into whatever language a person needs to read.

What would be the problem if the Bible were translated from Greek to English to Spanish?

Despite common skeptical claims that the Bible has often been changed through the centuries, the physical evidence tells another story. The New Testament records are incredibly accurate. As mentioned before there are minor differences in manuscripts, called variants, but none of these variants impact or change key Christian beliefs or claims.

We do not have any original ancient manuscripts by Homer, Julius Caesar, Thucydides, nor any of the Bible. Yet, compared to the many famous ancient works whose reliability is unquestioned, the Bible has by far the most manuscript evidence and the shortest time gap between the originals and the copies. This places its reliability in a class by itself.

<u>Author</u>	<u>When Written</u>	<u>Earliest Copy</u>	<u>Time Span</u>	<u>No. of Copies</u>
Homer (Iliad)	900 BC	400 BC	500 years	643
Caesar (The Gallic Wars)	100 - 44 BC	900 AD	1,000 years	10
Plato (Tetralogies)	427 - 347 BC	900 AD	1,200 years	7
Aristotle	384 - 322 BC	1,100 AD	1,400 years	49
Herodotus (History)	480 - 425 BC	900 AD	1,300 years	8
Euripedes	480 - 406 BC	1,100 AD	1,500 years	9
New Testament	50 - 90 A.D.	130 AD	30 years	24,000

Of the 24,000 copies, there are eighteen second-century manuscripts. That means that these early copies are within 150 years of the original writings. Also, there are 99 manuscripts that date before 400 AD, including one complete New Testament.

The number of manuscripts discovered is unparalleled in ancient literature. The 20th century discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls provides a significant check on the quality of the manuscripts we have of the original text—in Hebrew for the Old Testament, and Greek and Aramaic for the New Testament.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

Why is it significant that outside sources confirm the accuracy of the Bible?

What's an example from modern-day culture of an outside source confirming something or someone's accuracy?

Point to Make

A series of steps can easily lead to corruption of the text. The one-step process makes the translation process very accurate and trustworthy in regards to what the Bible originally said.

Interact

Many students may not know any of the other texts but if their faith were to be challenged this would have a place to start in a conversation.

Reminder

The manuscripts are not printed copies, they are handwritten copies.

Dead Sea Scrolls

Collection of 972 texts. They have great historical, religious and linguistic significance. For more information visit <http://www.dead-seascrolls.org.il>

NT. (Most of its content is found elsewhere, and no point of doctrine is affected by the absence or presence of vv. 9–20.) With particular reference to v. 18, there is no command to pick up serpents or to drink deadly poison; there is merely a promise of protection as found in other parts of the NT (see Acts 28:3–4; James 5:13–16). (See The Reliability of the New Testament Manuscripts.)

1) Widely accepted non-Christian historians validate the existence of Jesus.

1) Flavius Josephus - first century Jewish historian.

- He made specific references to John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and James in his writings.
- Josephus gives us many background details about the Herods, the Sadducees and Pharisees, the high priests like Annas and Caiaphas, and the Roman emperors mentioned in the Gospels and book of Acts.

2) Mara Bar-Serapion – first century non-Christian Syrian historian.

- Secular references to Jesus in a letter to his son comparing the deaths of Socrates, Pythagoras and Jesus Christ.
- Written a little after A.D. 73.

2) Historical and archeological findings.

Passages in the Bible continually refer to historical events. These events are verifiable and their accuracy can be checked by external evidence. We see chronological details in the prologue to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:1-3) and in Luke (Luke 3:1-2). We can date Ezekiel's first vision of God to the day (July 31, 592 B.C.) by inspecting Ezekiel 1:2.

The historical narratives of the Bible are so specific that many of its details are open to archaeological investigation. The pages of history align with the nations, kings, wars, cities, mountains, rivers, regions, buildings, treaties, customs, culture, economics, politics, and dates mentioned in the Bible.

There are non-Christian Roman, Greek, Jewish, and other historical sources that validate the existence of the person of Jesus.

NO ARCHEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY HAS EVER CONTROVERTED A BIBLICAL REFERENCE. SCORES OF ARCHEOLOGICAL FINDINGS HAVE BEEN MADE WHICH CONFIRM IN CLEAR OUTLINE AND IN EXACT DETAIL HISTORICAL STATEMENTS IN THE BIBLE. BY THE SAME TOKEN, PROPER EVALUATION OF BIBLICAL DESCRIPTIONS HAS OFTEN LED TO AMAZING DISCOVERIES.

—Dr. Neson Gluek (World-Renowned Archeologist)

What does the quote from Dr. Neson Gluek point out about archeological discoveries?

How does this evidence increase your faith?

Definition

Controverted – Deny the truth of (something).

NOW WHAT?

How does understanding some evidence for the Bible's accuracy give you a foundation for talking to others who may question the validity of the Bible?

Based on today's conversation, how might you specifically answer a friend's question about the accuracy of the Bible?

How can the Bible's accuracy help you grow deeper in your faith and your trust in Jesus?

GOING DEEPER

What are some specific ways the Bible is different from other books?

How is the Bible similar to other books?

Think of a specific time the Bible has been real and powerful in your life. What was that experience like, and what did that experience teach you about Scripture?

SUMMARY

This week's conversation focused on understanding the accuracy and reliability of the Bible. The key evidences that were discussed point to the reliability and authority of the Bible. Christianity rests in the declaration that the Bible is accurate and reliable.

We can stand firm on the Bible and the testimony it gives us because we can be certain that it is the Word of God. You will be challenged in our culture. Christians are bombarded regularly with claims from teachers, coworkers and peers on the validity of the Scriptures. It's important to avoid going along with the inaccurate belief that the Bible is full of mistakes and is not relevant to our modern world.

In this week's gathering, we examined evidence that offers a firm foundation for why we can trust the truths of the Bible. We encourage you to engage in conversation at home and with your friends with questions like these:

Do you find it easy or difficult to believe that the Bible is accurate and reliable? Why?

Would you willingly die for something you know is not true? Why or why not?

Why is it significant that outside sources confirm the accuracy of the Bible?

As we continue through this series, please contact your leader or a pastor if you have any questions or would like additional resources to help answer your questions. Have a blessed week.

MEMORY VERSES FOR THE WEEK

Proverbs 1:5

REAP

DAY

ECCLESIASTES 12:9-14

1

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Solomon was the wisest man ever. What was his final conclusion about what life was about?

What is the difference between wisdom and knowledge?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

ROMANS 3:10-18

2

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What does the Bible claim is wrong with the world?

How does this claim match reality?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

ACTS 17:16-21

3

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What does it mean that Paul reasoned with Jews and those in the marketplace?

How can you use your God-given wisdom to persuade others concerning the truth about God?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

ACTS 2:32-33

4

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Describe two evidences Peter offers to his listeners that the message about Jesus is true?

What does it mean for Christianity that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

5

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

If the Bible is really written by God, what are the consequences if it contains errors?

When comparing the Bible with the truth we find in nature, what will the result always be?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2 CORINTHIANS 15:3-19

6

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What does Paul consider the most important element of the Christian faith?

If archaeologists found Jesus body in a cave this week, how would that affect your faith?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

1 PETER 3:14-17

7

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why is it important to be prepared to give an answer for what you believe?

According to this scripture, how should you handle a situation when your faith is challenged?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

General Revelation

ROMANS 1:18-20

WEEK

6

Objectives

What: Throughout history, God has revealed himself to all of humanity in general ways.

Why: Many people wonder if God really exists, but God has proven his existence in unique ways that communicate to us in a way that we can understand.

How: You students will examine two ways God has revealed himself, and will consider the significance and impact of each method of revelation.

Consider for a moment your most beautiful, memorable, amazing outdoor experience. Think about why that moment was so incredible.

Insert personal story.

God has created a world filled with so many examples of beauty. The Bible teaches that God loves us and made himself known through His creation—nature—so that we could encounter His glory. God's intent was that his ultimate glory would be shown through his creation, but the devastating effects of sin make it impossible for humans to attain a sure and saving knowledge of God just by looking at his creation.

***Why do so many people consider the outdoors to be a "spiritual" place?
How is nature a reflection of God's existence and His glory?***

Not only has God given us a sense of beauty and appreciation for creation, but we also have a basic awareness of right and wrong. This was given to us so that we would search for an understanding of the ultimate moral authority. Being aware of beauty in creation and right and wrong, point to the revelation of God in our lives.

General revelation is a term used to represent the way God has revealed himself to all humans. Today we will discuss two different ways God has revealed and continues to reveal himself to humanity.

5-Minute Commentary

Rom. 1:18 God's wrath refers to his personal anger against sin. God's anger is not selfish or arbitrary but represents his holy and loving response to wickedness. Some have understood God's wrath in impersonal cause-effect terms, but that would be a deistic worldview rather than a biblical one.

Rom. 1:19–20 God's wrath is expressed for good reason since his power and divine nature are clearly revealed through the world he has made, and yet he is rejected by all people. These verses show that salvation does not come through "general revelation" (what is known about God through the natural world) since Paul emphasizes the universality of sin and concludes that "no one seeks for

WHAT IS REVELATION?

Revelation is God's primary method for making himself known to his creation.

REVELATION - THE UNVEILING OF THE PERSON, WORK, CHARACTER, AND WILL OF GOD.

God has revealed himself gives us an opportunity to know him and enter into a relationship with him. This week will study two methods of general revelation.

GENERAL REVELATION

GENERAL REVELATION - THE WAY GOD HAS REVEALED HIMSELF TO ALL HUMANS.

All of creation has God's fingerprint, and Scripture shows how God's glory can be seen through his creation. Stars, plants, the ocean, species of animals, and sunsets all elicit awe and wonder—we resonate with creation because we have the same maker. All of humanity is able to see God through this general revelation.

1) God Is Revealed Through Creation

List four things in creation that you think are incredible.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

What do these things say about the character of God?

Read Isaiah 45:18-19.

What did Isaiah mean when he said that God made a world to be lived in, rather than a place of empty chaos?

What would be revealed about God if his creation were empty and chaotic?

Read Psalm 19:1-6.

God" (3:11). things that have been made. The entire natural world bears witness to God through its beauty, complexity, design, and usefulness. without excuse. No one should complain that God has left insufficient evidence of his existence and character; the fault is with those who reject the evidence.

Ps. 19:1–6 The Eloquent Heavens. These verses describe how features of the sky bear witness to their Maker; in so doing, the song directs attention to divine speech that goes out to all humanity.

James 1:17 God's intentions for them are always for good (cf. Rom. 8:28).

Think about the last time you stepped out into the night, looked up at the sky and marveled at the stars above. How does this passage of Scripture match your experience?

Read Romans 1:20.

What are three qualities of God clearly seen by exploring creation?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Why is it important that creation itself speaks to majesty of God?

Both the Old and New Testaments talk about God as creator, and throughout the Bible we read about how God created this world as a reflection of who he is. When exploring creation, we can see God as all-powerful, prevailing, intelligent, ingenious, and intimate.

Stop for a moment and consider the vast oceans, the mountain peaks, the size of the earth, and the incomprehensible size of the millions of galaxies that surround us on our little planet. Then think about all the different reptiles, bugs, birds, fish and the millions of species of insects that roam the earth.

The same God who fashioned all of the enormity of creation also developed the intricate design and harmony that makes the earth spin on an axis and each interior cell of our bodies to fit together.

How do the statements above increase your faith?

2) God Is Revealed Through Life Experiences And Moral Laws

The Bible tells us that God has given us life circumstances and a conscience so that we can encounter him and be sure that he is with us.

Think about a circumstance in your life when you were sure "God showed up." How can you be sure that it was God who acted or intervened and not coincidence?

Read James 1:17

How does this Scripture confirm that God is involved in our lives?

Point to Make

General revelation through creation provides sufficient evidence of God's existence and character.

God will never act outside of his character. We can know his character because it is revealed to us through Jesus and the Bible.

Rom. 2:14–16 Some have suggested that these verses speak of Gentile obedience that leads to salvation (cf. vv. 7, 10). It is clear, however, that Paul explains here why Gentiles who do not have the law will face judgment apart from the law (see v. 12). The reason it is fair for God to judge them for their evil is that God's law is written on their hearts, so that their consciences attest to what is right and what is wrong in their behavior. Paul does not imply that the testimony of human conscience is always a perfect moral guide (for people have conflicting thoughts about their moral behavior, sometimes excusing themselves from wrongdoing), but the very existence of this testimony is sufficient to render people accountable to God. (Elsewhere Paul indicates that people's consciences can be distorted by sin; see 1 Cor. 8:7, 10; 10:29; 1 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:15.)

Read Romans 2:11-16.

How does the existence of “moral laws” point to a Moral Lawgiver who surpasses human governments and manmade laws?

Read Genesis 1:26-27.

The moral laws we instinctively know as right and wrong are an expression of being made in God’s image. Although all humans have a moral impulse, all persons do not always hold to a given moral code.

How is morality distorted by people's natural sinfulness and the cultures in which they are raised?

Read Romans 2:15-16.

Why is it fair for God to judge those who do not have the Bible?

Read Romans 3:23 and 6:23.

What do these Scriptures say about the state of all mankind?

Creation and moral laws written on our heart may reveal God, but they are incapable of granting us the forgiveness and grace we so desperately need. The solution comes through the special revelation of Jesus fulfilling the Scriptures as the sacrifice for our sin.

Point to Make

Humans make moral decisions between right and wrong each day. This involves something more than our personal likes and dislikes, and something more than convenience. People’s different situations, culture, and upbringing obscure proper moral understanding. We need an absolute standard and that is found through Scripture and the life of Jesus.

Point to Make

All people are without excuse before God since the Scriptures tell us that the knowledge of God and the knowledge of sufficient moral responsibility can be seen in creation as well as known in the heart. God has been revealed to all mankind and right and wrong has been written on our hearts therefore we know when we commit a sin.

Gen. 1:26 Let us make man in our image. The text does not specify the identity of the “us” mentioned here. Some have suggested that God may be addressing the members of his court, whom the OT elsewhere calls “sons of God” (e.g., Job 1:6) and the NT calls “angels,” but a significant objection is that man is not made in the image of angels, nor is there any indication that angels participated in the creation of human beings. Many Christians and some Jews have taken “us” to be God speaking to himself, since God alone does the making in Gen. 1:27 (cf. 5:1); this would be the first hint of the Trinity in the Bible (cf. 1:2).

Gen. 1:27 Traditionally, the image has been seen as the capacities that set man apart from the

NOW WHAT?

Today we discussed two ways God is revealed in our world. Which one is most significant to you, and why?

How can today's conversation help you talk with people who are unclear or unconvinced that God has revealed himself to humanity?

What is one specific, tangible way you know that God has revealed himself to you?

In response to what we've discussed today, write a prayer of appreciation to God and list specific ways he has revealed himself to you and what that has meant to you.

GOING DEEPER

Why is there a need for an absolute standard of morality?

What is the flaw in humans determining the absolute standard of morality?

Does general revelation provide a solution to the problem of sin?

other animals—ways in which humans resemble God, such as in the characteristics of reason, morality, language, a capacity for relationships governed by love and commitment, and creativity in all forms of art. All these insights can be put together by observing that the resemblances (man is like God in a series of ways) allow mankind to represent God in ruling, and to establish worthy relationships with God, with one another, and with the rest of the creation. This “image” and this dignity apply to both “male and female” human beings. At this stage, humanity as a species is set apart from all other creatures and crowned with glory and honor as ruler of the earth (cf. Ps. 8:5–8). The events recorded in Genesis 3, however, will have an important bearing on the creation status of humanity.

SUMMARY

We continued our series designed to develop a strong understanding of what Christianity teaches, why we believe what we believe, and how this groundwork will help each of us stand firm in a culture that goes contrary to the truths of Christianity.

This week we discussed how God has revealed himself through general revelation. We looked at specific Scriptures that allowed us to dive deep into this reality, encouraged a deep look into the Bible and the world around us through the confident lense that God has revealed and continues to reveal himself.

This lesson centered on the following methods of revelation by God:

- General Revelation
 - God is revealed through creation.
 - God is revealed through personal experience and our conscience.

Here are some questions that can help you keep the conversation going at home or with your friends this week:

Why do so many people consider the outdoors to be a “spiritual” place?

Think about a circumstance in your life—or someone else’s life—when you were sure “God showed up.” How can you be sure that it was God who acted or intervened and not coincidence?

As we continue through this series, please contact your leader or a pastor if you have any questions or would like additional resources to help answer questions. Have a blessed week!

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK.

Romans 1:20

Rom. 3:23 No one can stake a claim to this righteousness based on his or her own obedience, for all people have sinned and fall short of what God demands (see 1:21).

Rom. 6:23 Those who give themselves to sin will die both physically and eternally, whereas Christians are assured of eternal life. Wages implies that the punishment for sin is what one has earned and what one deserves. Free gift is the opposite of something one deserves, which fits Paul’s earlier emphasis on justification by grace alone (God’s unmerited favor; see note on 4:16), through faith alone (trusting in Christ for justification; see 1:17; 3:21–4:25).

REAP

DAY

ROMANS 1:18-32

1

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why does Paul say that there is no excuse for denying the existence of God?

How does God reveal himself in nature?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

GENESIS 1:1-2:3

2

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

God created all things. How does this fact impact the way we interact with all of creation?

What role does God have in our lives if he is our Creator?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

GENESIS 3:1-13

3

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why did Adam and Eve try to hide from God?

How do you respond when you sin? What does this tell you about your relationship with God?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

ACTS 17:22-31

4

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why were men from Athens described as religious if they did not know God?

According to this scripture, what does God's sovereignty over the nations and creation lead to?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

PSALM 19:1-6

5

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What is creation declaring through its speech and knowledge?

How does the message creation speaks change the way you appreciate nature?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

ROMANS 2:12-16

6

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why is your conscience a proof that God exists?

Name a few moral laws that everyone agrees on? Why do we agree on these things?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

ACTS 14:15-17

7

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How is creation a strong witness for God?

How do feelings like satisfaction and gladness provide a sign that God exists?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

Special Revelation

HEBREWS 1:1-12

WEEK

7

Objectives

What: Throughout history, God has revealed himself to all of humanity in specific ways.

Why: Many people wonder if God really exists, but God has proven his existence in unique ways that communicate to us in a way that we can understand.

How: Your students will examine two ways God has revealed himself, and will consider the significance and impact of each method of revelation.

Although humans are given an inherent sense of good and evil, it cannot ultimately be our guide for ethics. Without an absolute standard, morality would be relative and dependent on each person. Despite the beauty of creation and awe-inspiring moments it fosters, creation falls short in declaring the complete love and care of God.

The pages of Scripture declare the standard for morality and the complete love of God. Both are represented through Jesus.

Special revelation represents the way God revealed himself to specific people at specific times and places through means other than man's reason. Special Revelation is needed so the gospel can be known and preached.

What value do you place on the Word of God?

How does Jesus represent the standard for morality and embody the complete love of God?

As we look into special revelation today there are two things to keep in mind. The first is that we can know who God is. This is possible because of our access to the Word of God. The second is we can have a relationship with God. Jesus Christ provides the opportunity for us to be in relationship with the Father.

Today we will discuss two specific ways God has revealed Himself to humanity. Most importantly, special revelation leads us to a personal encounter with God.

5-Minute Commentary

Heb. 1:1–14 The Supremacy of God's Son. Jesus is God's final and definitive revelation (surpassing the OT, vv. 1–2), for he is the Son of God (v. 2), the agent of creation (v. 2), the very glory of God (v. 3), and the one who purifies from sin (v. 3). In all this he is superior even to angelic beings, especially in his unique sonship (vv. 4–14). This leads to a warning to attend to the words of salvation, since they are from and about the Son (2:1–4).

Heb. 1:1–4 Introduction: Summary of the Son's Person and Work. Many themes of Hebrews are announced in this opening (a single

WHAT IS REVELATION?

Revelation is God's primary method for making himself known to his creation.

REVELATION - THE UNVEILING OF THE PERSON, WORK, CHARACTER, AND WILL OF GOD.

God has revealed himself gives us an opportunity to know him and enter into a relationship with him. This week will study two aspects of special revelation.

SPECIAL REVELATION

As significant as general revelation is, it is not sufficient for us to know God in all his glory. God has used a second method of revelation to reveal himself to humanity. When Adam and Eve walked with God in the Garden of Eden, there was no interference between God's revelation and humanity's understanding.

However, when sin entered the world it became impossible for sinful humans to grasp the greatness of God's revelation. That's where special revelation entered the picture.

SPECIAL REVELATION –THE WAY GOD REVEALED HIMSELF TO SPECIFIC PEOPLE AT SPECIFIC TIMES AND PLACES THROUGH MEANS OTHER THAN MAN'S REASON.

Special revelation allows us to examine specific ways God revealed himself. The history of God's people and biographies of influential missionaries highlight God's presence in the world.

1) God Is Revealed Through Jesus

The writer of Hebrews seems to be telling us that the prophets spoke on God's behalf in the past, but Jesus Christ builds on the foundation the prophets shared and unveils even more of who God is. The Bible teaches us that Jesus was God incarnate—he became human and dwelt among us.

Read John 1:1-14, 5:18, and 8:58.

In these words from the Gospel of John, how does each Scripture give you a picture of Jesus as a revelation of God in the world?

Read John 14:8-11.

What was Jesus saying in this passage?

How is Jesus a representation of the Father?

Point to Make

The lens through which Adam and Eve viewed God was unfiltered, unblemished, and crystal-clear.

John 1:1–18 Prologue: The Incarnate Word. In the prologue John presents Jesus as the eternal, preexistent, now incarnate Word (vv. 1, 14) and as the one-of-a-kind Son of the Father who is himself God (vv. 1, 18). The prologue also introduces many of the major themes developed later in the Gospel, such as Jesus as the life (v. 4), the light (vv. 5–9), and the truth (vv. 14, 16–17); believers as God's children (vv. 12–13); and the world's rejection of Jesus (vv. 10–11).

John 5:18 making himself equal with God.

John 8:58 He uses the present tense "I am" in speaking of existence more than 2,000 years earlier,

Back in the first century, Jewish leaders in Jesus' culture were appalled that Jesus would equate himself to God by calling God his Father. Ultimately, this claim was a pivotal reason for the leaders desired to crucify Jesus.

Jesus wasn't just saying that he was like the Father or an image of the Father—he said that he was inexplicably the exact representation of the Father.

IF PEOPLE WANT TO SEE GOD THE FATHER,
THEY NEED TO LOOK NO FURTHER THAN HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, JESUS CHRIST.

2) God Is Revealed Through The Bible

You may have heard the Bible referred to as "the canon." The word canon means standard or measuring rod. The word canon is used to describe the books recognized as inspired by God.

THE BIBLE REVEALS

- 1) God does exist.
- 2) God's characteristics.
- 3) How we can have a relationship with God.
- 4) God's will.
- 5) How people in the past followed or rejected God.
- 6) How Christians should live.

Read John 20:30-31.

How can the signs and wonders John included lead someone to know that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God?

Read Isaiah 35:5-6 and John 9:1-12.

How does Jesus fulfill Isaiah's prophecy about Messiah?

What does this demonstrate about how God reveals himself to humans through the Bible?

Take a few moments to skim through the book of John to find some of the miracles that Jesus performed.

Why are the miracles recorded in the Bible so important to revealing who God is?

Point to Make

John 20:30-31 is his summary for why he chose the signs and wonders recorded in his gospel.

Examples

- 1) The miracle of water into wine (John 2:1-11)
- 2) Healing the noble man's son (John 4:46-53)
- 3) Healing the man at the pool (John 5:1-9)
- 4) Feeding the 5,000 (John 6:4-13)
- 5) Jesus walks on water (John 6:16-21)
- 6) Healing the blind man (John 9:1-12)
- 7) Raising the dead (John 11:30-44)

thus claiming a kind of transcendence over time that could only be true of God. Jesus is claiming not only to be eternal but also to be the God who appeared to Moses at the burning bush.

John 14:8–11 He makes the stunning assertion that those who have seen him have seen the Father—a clear claim to deity.

Isa. 35:5–7 Then ... then. The prophet points to the promised future, inaugurated in the first coming of Jesus Christ (Luke 4:16–21; 7:18–23) and fully consummated at his second coming (Rev. 21:4; 22:1–5).

The Bible is also the primary way that God communicates his standards and words to humans.

Read Micah 6:8.

What is wrong with individuals creating a moral standard by which everyone should live?

Read Matthew 22:36-40.

God, our creator, the source of all truth, has revealed what we need to know of right and wrong in His Word and through Jesus.

Combined with the idea that Jesus is a specific revelation of God in the world, we can see that Jesus and the Bible help us encounter the life-giving message of God's love, grace, forgiveness, and redemption.

GENERAL REVELATION VS. SPECIAL REVELATION

Both are needed. However, general revelation does not provide sufficient information for the gospel message. The gospel, which is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, is found in the Bible. General revelation deals with the existence of God and general morality. Special revelation, the Bible, and the person of Christ, give specifics regarding sin, salvation, heaven, hell, the nature of God, the Trinity, the incarnation, death, the Fall, redemption, etc.

Read Matthew 28:18-20.

This command of Christ, given by special revelation, is the command to give those who only have general revelation the more specific and necessary doctrines revealed through special revelation, the Bible.

Read Romans 10:14-17.

Why is it important to preach the Gospel every chance that you have?

Point to Make

Although humans are given an inherent sense of good and evil, that cannot ultimately be our guide for ethics. Without an absolute standard, morality would be relative and dependent on each individual. An absolute standard of morality must depend on Scripture and not the individual. Ultimately it flows from the nature of God, who is eternal and unchanging.

Point to Make

Since general revelation is not sufficient for salvation, it is necessary for all Christians to participate in the Great Commission.

John 1:19–12:50 The Signs of the Messiah. The first half of John's Gospel features Jesus' demonstration of his messianic identity by way of several selected "signs" (cf. 20:30–31).

Mic. 6:8 The Lord desires the primary forms of love—justice (do justice), mercy (love kindness), and faithfulness (walk humbly)—as the expressed response of his people to his redemptive acts (Matt. 23:23; cf. Deut. 10:12–13; 1 Sam. 15:22; Isa. 1:11–17; Hos. 6:6).

Rom. 10:14–15 How then ... ? With a series of rhetorical questions, Paul considers the chain of events necessary for a person to be saved. Verse 14 is linked to v. 13 with the word call. The logic

NOW WHAT?

Today we discussed two ways God is revealed in our world. Which one is most significant to you, and why?

In your own words describe the difference between general and special revelation.

How can today's conversation help you talk with people who are unclear or unconvinced that God has revealed himself to humanity?

GOING DEEPER

Read Exodus 3:1-15.

Even though Moses met God at a burning bush, he had moments of doubt. You probably won't ever encounter God in a burning bush in the middle of a desert, but God has revealed and will reveal himself to you in a variety of ways.

How and why do you find yourself doubting who God is in spite of the ways he has revealed himself to humanity?

Read Matthew 24:14.

This Scripture falls in the middle of a discussion Jesus was having about the end times. He said that it is essential for the message of good news to be shared in every nation before He returns.

Why is it so important for the message of Jesus to be declared globally before he comes back?

Why do Christians believe that God has spoken through the Bible in ways that he has not spoken through other great religious books?

of these verses is clear: (1) People will call on Jesus to save them only if they believe he can do so; (2) belief in Christ cannot exist without knowledge about him; (3) one hears about Christ only when someone proclaims the saving message; and (4) the message about Christ will not be proclaimed unless someone is sent by God to do so. That is why Paul was so urgent about spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth, for he believed that the only way to be saved was to hear and believe in the gospel (see note on 1:19–20). (Paul is not talking here about OT believers who looked forward to Christ, such as Abraham and David in ch. 4, nor is he talking about infants who die in infancy; see note on 2 Sam. 12:23). Since salvation comes only from hearing the gospel, the feet of those who bring the message about Christ are beautiful (Isa. 52:7), probably because the feet carry the messen-

SUMMARY

We continued our series designed to develop a strong understanding of what Christianity teaches, why we believe what we believe, and how this groundwork will help each of us stand firm in a culture that goes contrary to the truths of Christianity.

This week we discussed how God has revealed himself in two specific ways. We looked at specific Scriptures that allowed us to understand this reality. Through the lense of special revelation, we can be confident that God has and continues to reveal Himself.

This lesson centered on the following methods of revelation by God:

- Special Revelation
 - God is revealed through the person of Jesus
 - God is revealed through the Bible

Here are some questions that can help you keep the conversation going at home or with your friends this week:

Think about some of the miracles that Jesus performed. Why are the miracles recorded in the Bible so important to revealing who God is?

What is the significance of God revealing himself through Jesus and the Bible?

As we continue through this series, please contact your leader or a pastor if you have any questions or would like additional resources to help answer questions. Have a blessed week!

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK.

Hebrews 1:3

gers to their destinations.

Rom. 10:16 Hearing the gospel is necessary for salvation, but hearing is not enough: people must also respond with personal trust. Isaiah (Isa. 53:1) prophesies that not all will believe. In the context of Romans 9–11, Paul is thinking especially of the Jews who did not believe.

Rom. 10:17 Paul now sums up the argument thus far. One can come to faith only through hearing the gospel, and the specific message that must be heard is the word of Christ, that is, the good news about Jesus Christ as the crucified and risen Savior.

REAP

DAY

EXODUS 20:1-21

1

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why did God reveal his law to the people of Israel?

What do the ten commandments teach us about God and about man?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

HEBREWS 1:1-3

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What advantage do we have over anyone in the Old Testament?

What is God trying to communicate to us through Jesus as the exact imprint of God's nature?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

ROMANS 10:14-17

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How the special revelation of the Word of God needed for faith?

Why is it important that you read and hear scripture?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

JOHN 14:1-7

4

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What does this passage say about those who believe in God, but not Jesus?

Why is it important that we preach the gospel to those who have never heard about Jesus?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

5

EPHESIANS 1:11-14

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to this Scripture, how can we believe Jesus Christ?

"Preach the gospel at all times, when necessary use words." What is the flaw in this statement?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

6

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13-14

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What did the Thessalonians understand about the message Paul had preached to them?

How did Paul know the Thessalonians had become Christians?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-25

7

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to this Scripture, what will be the reaction of unsaved people to hearing the gospel?

Why did God choose to save people in way that seemed foolish to the world?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

Sharing Your Faith

ACTS 4:1-21

WEEK

8

Objectives

What: Scripture tells us that we must always be ready to explain the hope we have found in Christ and to share the amazing message of Jesus with others.

Why: Teenagers need to understand why sharing their faith is important, but not every student in our churches understands why this is true or how to prepare themselves to do this.

How: Students will look at instances from the New Testament when people boldly shared their faith, and they'll examine some of the words of Jesus and his mandate to his followers to boldly share the message of the gospel.

When we become followers of Jesus, we have the opportunity to share the amazing news and gift with others. Many of us want to share why we believe what we believe, but we lack the courage or drive to do so. Some fear the unknown reactions they may receive, while others are unsure of what to say.

An effective witness begins with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The Bible promises that when we submit our lives to him, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14) and God's Spirit gives us the power necessary to be his witnesses (Acts 1:8). We find many examples in the Bible of people who came to faith in Jesus and immediately began sharing what they believed with others. We don't have to be a theologian to be effective in sharing the message of Jesus.

We can share the gospel as we interact with others in our social environments. Jesus didn't intend evangelism to be a program our churches participate in, rather, a lifestyle that Christians live.

***Name a song, movie, or TV show that has prompted a spiritual conversation with a friend?
When do you feel most confident talking to other people about your faith?***

According to Matthew 28 Jesus promises to be with us as we talk to people about our faith and what we believe. As we read the Bible, we see that God continually used seemingly ill-equipped people to spread his Word—he equips the people he calls.

When it comes to talking with other people about our faith, many of us shrink back in fear. As we read through the Bible, we learn about people who were unsure, yet stepped out in faith and shared the story of God with others. Their experiences can inspire us to move beyond our fears and tell people what we believe and why we are followers of Jesus. Let's explore some of the reasons we ought to share our faith and what it takes to prepare our minds and hearts to stand for what we believe in.

5-Minute Commentary

Acts 4:1–22 Peter and John Witness before the Jewish Council. Provoked by Peter's sermon, the Sadducean leaders had the two apostles arrested and held for trial before the Sanhedrin. The section falls into three parts: the arrest (vv. 1–4), the hearing (vv. 5–12), and the warning (vv. 13–22).

Acts 4:12 Peter's statement that there was salvation in no other name was an implicit invitation to the Sanhedrin to place their faith in Jesus. It was Jesus' name that brought physical deliverance to the lame man (3:1–10)—the same powerful and exclusive name that brings eternal salvation to all who call upon him. Peter emphasizes this by saying that it is the only name under heaven (that is,

YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SHARE

What are some of your biggest fears in life and when do these fears hold you back?

What are some reasons that you may be hesitant to share your faith or to have spiritually focused conversations?

If you're a follower of Jesus, how did you reach that place? Did someone share his or her faith with you? Explain.

Read Acts 4:1-21.

In this passage from Acts 4, why would the fact that these men had been with Jesus have any significance?

Look at verses 19-20. What are some specific things you have seen, heard, or experienced as a follower of Jesus?

What might it look like in your life to have the kind of faith and dedication that Peter and John displayed?

Peter and John were continually sharing the truth about Jesus because they had experienced life with him and had witnessed the resurrection of the Messiah. These men were not properly trained in the Scriptures and lacked the perceived educational qualifications for ministry. However, they possessed the greatest tool for sharing their faith: a personal encounter with Jesus Christ.

Read Romans 10:11-15.

Interact

Students may look at Peter and John and say that they had to share their faith because they physically walked with Jesus. Do we have the same mandate to share our faith? What will happen if we don't share our faith?

throughout the whole earth) by which a person can be saved. Further, there is no other name among men (that is, in all of human society) that saves. On Christ as the exclusive way of salvation, see also Matt. 11:27; John 3:18; 14:6; 1 John 5:12. This verse also suggests that salvation comes only through conscious faith in Jesus.

Acts 4:13 Boldness (Gk. *parrēsia*) is an important word in Acts which depicts Spirit-inspired courage and confidence to speak in spite of any danger or threat. It also occurs at 2:29; 4:29, 31; 28:31; cf. 2 Cor. 3:12. Uneducated and common ("nonprofessional") men like Peter and John were not expected to speak so confidently before the supreme court of the land. The two words do not mean that they

Summarize the big idea Paul is sharing in these verses.

How has Jesus “sent” you out to tell people the good news?

Read Luke 15:4-10.

What do these parables tell you about Jesus’ desire for you—and for everyone else in the world?

How can you be a part of “finding the lost”?

Read Matthew 5:13-16.

What does it mean to be the salt of the world?

What does it mean to shine your light for people to see? What might this look like in your sphere of influence?

YOU CAN BE PREPARED TO SHARE

If you have ever gone on a long hike or run, you have experienced the need to prepare well. Preparation can be the difference between enduring an extensive hike on a backwoods trail and falling victim to malnutrition or extreme elements. The Bible teaches us that preparation is just as important when we share our faith.

Name specific reasons Peter and John were prepared to share in Acts 4. How might their process of preparation translate to your life today?

Point to Make

Jesus calls each of his followers to be salt and light in the world. This takes boldness, faith, the power of God’s Spirit, and an ability to dialogue tactfully. We live in a culture filled with many different beliefs and world-views that dispute the claims of Christianity. That’s why we’re spending these lessons talking about apologetics—it’s all about explaining and defending your faith.

were illiterate or unintelligent but rather that they had not gone through the advanced training of the rabbinic schools. they had been with Jesus. It is impossible to imagine how much the disciples would have learned from spending three years in close association with the Son of God living on earth, listening to him teach, hearing him pray, and watching him interact with the most difficult challenges. They knew Jesus, and in knowing him they knew much more than all the learned scribes of the Sanhedrin.

Acts 4:18–20 Though the leaders of the council charged them not to speak or teach ... in the name of Jesus, Peter realized the impossibility of abiding by this prohibition, thus demonstrating that be-

Read Proverbs 15:28.

What are possible consequences if you speak before you think when standing up for what you believe?

Read 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

How does the Bible teach what is true, and point out faults in our lives?

What are some specific ways you study, or could study Scripture to prepare yourself to talk to people about your faith?

How can God use the Bible to prepare and equip you to effectively tell other people about your faith and what it means to be a follower of Jesus?

Read Acts 17:22-29.

How did Paul use illustrations from the Athenian culture to talk about God?

Who or what are the "objects of worship" and "inscriptions" of our culture today?

How can you use these to talk to your peers about God and faith?

Preparing your heart to be righteous and gentle is important. Preparing your mind to be sharp so you can clearly communicate what we believe is essential. Knowing Scripture and understanding the culture that surrounds you is vital in sharing your faith.

Interact

Students may have a hard time answering this question because they probably haven't thought about anything in culture being a god. Remind students of Exodus 20:3.

Point to Make

The more you prepare, the more confident you can be as you talk with people about your faith.

lievers have the responsibility not to obey authorities when such authorities prohibit preaching the gospel or otherwise require Christians to disobey God's explicit commandments (cf. 5:29).

Rom. 10:14–15 The logic of these verses is clear: (1) People will call on Jesus to save them only if they believe he can do so; (2) belief in Christ cannot exist without knowledge about him; (3) one hears about Christ only when someone proclaims the saving message; and (4) the message about Christ will not be proclaimed unless someone is sent by God to do so. That is why Paul was so urgent about spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth, for he believed that the only way to be saved was to hear and believe in the gospel. Since salvation comes only from hearing the gospel,

YOUR STORY IS POWERFUL

As a follower of Jesus, your greatest tool in sharing your faith has nothing to do with what you have memorized or studied. The best way to show that God exists and changes lives isn't to regurgitate facts or use skillful ways to discredit other people's views. The greatest tool in sharing your faith is something you have without ever having to learn it: your story—or what some people call a "testimony."

Read 1 John 1:1-4.

If some people in that culture believed Jesus was just a ghost, why is verse 1 so important?

What is so significant about the ways John details the experiences he had with Jesus?

Why are testimonies so important in court cases? How does that carry over into the power of your story when talking about faith?

Read Revelation 12:10-11.

How can your testimony help defeat Satan?

An individual's story is unique to that individual, and only that person can claim the ways in which they have encountered Jesus. If someone has experienced a changed life because of Jesus Christ, no amount of archeological evidence, New Age philosophy, or Buddhist meditation can refute it. A believer knows what happened to them and how Jesus changed their life. Our testimony is the chief tool in communicating the Gospel to those who oppose it or are interested in it. Our confidence comes from what we know God has done in the past, and as we recall what God has done over and over, our faith is formed.

Point to Make

In the intro of the John's first letter, he wrote about the ways in which he and the disciples encountered Jesus. John did this because many people were spreading rumors about Jesus. Some said Jesus never really existed, some said he was a spirit and not a man, and some said Jesus was a regular man on whom God's Spirit rested. John used the power of his testimony to affirm what he knew to be true about Jesus.

Point students to the My Salvation Experience in the back of the book. Encourage them to write out their testimony to be ready to share.

the feet of those who bring the message about Christ are beautiful(Isa. 52:7), probably because the feet carry the messengers to their destinations.

Matt. 5:13–16 As salt is beneficial in a number of ways (as a preservative, seasoning, etc.), so are disciples of Jesus who influence the world for good. Light of the world. Jesus' disciples have the kingdom life within them as a living testimony to those in the world who do not yet have the light. The typical lamp in a Jewish home was fairly small and was placed on a stand to give maximum illumination. The world will see the light of the kingdom through the good works done by Jesus' disciples (and believers today), with the result that the Father who is in heaven will be glorified.

NOW WHAT?

What would give you greater confidence in sharing your faith boldly?

What steps or strategies could help you become better prepared to talk with other people about faith?

Write down the names of three people you want to share your faith with. Commit to pray for them for two weeks, and at the end of the two weeks look for an opportunity to start a spiritual conversation and openly share the reason your faith.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

How does our commitment to sharing our faith connect us with the life Jesus lived?

GOING DEEPER

The Gospel of John records exchanges Jesus had with three different people. Each interaction is intriguing because Jesus takes a distinct approach to talking about faith with each person.

Read John 3:1-16, John 4:7-26, and John 4:46-54.

How would you summarize or explain the different strategies Jesus used in these conversations?

What is most interesting about the approach Jesus used in John 3 for a conversation with someone who was religious?

Based on John 4:16-18, we see that the Samaritan woman was leading a sinful lifestyle. Why was the approach Jesus took with her so important?

What ideas or truths can you take away from these three separate instances of how Jesus spoke about faith?

Acts 17:22–34 Although rooted in OT ideas, it appealed to the Greek philosophers by interacting with their thought, even quoting their own writers in a well-informed, respectful way. Its main subject was the error of idolatry. Paul began with and returned to the theme of idolatry (vv. 23, 29), in a well-informed manner, clearing the way for a full statement of the gospel, but he was interrupted before he could achieve this.

1 John 1:1–4 Prologue. A dozen or so first-person plural references (“we,” “our,” “us”) highlight the eyewitness testimony of John and other early Christians, particularly the apostles. They know “fellowship with the Father and with his Son” (v. 3) and yearn to see it extend to readers. John was an

SUMMARY

We all face a staggering cultural and spiritual onslaught, and students are challenged daily with pressures that seem to be overwhelming. Trying to be a Christ-follower in this culture can feel daunting, but having a strong foundation of faith the will last through difficult times

This week, our group finished the worldview essentials introduction to apologetics by talking about the importance of being confident in sharing what we believe. Many people fear sharing their faith for fear of not saying the right thing or not knowing enough. Some are afraid of looking foolish and are uncertain about stepping into a difficult conversation.

We looked at various Scriptures that covered why we need to share our faith, how we can be prepared to explain what we believe, and how our personal stories of faith are so powerful.

Here are some questions you might want to ask this week to keep the dialogue going:

When do you feel most confident talking to other people about your faith? When do you feel least confident?

What does it mean to shine your light for people to see? What might this look like in your sphere of influence?

What would give you greater confidence in sharing your faith boldly?

Have a spectacular week!

MEMORY VERSES FOR THE WEEK

Acts 4:12

eyewitness to the physical and historical reality of Jesus' life on earth. His message is not based on an ecstatic vision, grand idea, or mere human religious conviction.

Rev. 12:10–11 The dragon's expulsion from heaven shows that Satan cannot press charges as the accuser of our brothers because the Lamb shed his blood for them and they maintain their testimony of trust even unto death. Although "conquered" by the beast physically in death (11:7; 13:7), in fact the martyrs have conquered both the beast (15:2) and the dragon that empowers it. They have conquered him is set in ironic and beautiful contrast to 13:7.

REAP

DAY

1 SAMUEL 2:1-10

1

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What are three phrases that Hannah uses to exalt God?

How can Hannah's prayer help you to worship God?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why does Paul write about who he used to be and what he used to do before knowing Christ?

How is Paul's testimony encouraging to you?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2 TIMOTHY 1:3-7

3

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How is the faith of Lois, Eunice, and now Timothy an encouragement to Paul?

How can your faith be an encouragement to your family and friends?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

EXODUS 15:1-18

4

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How does Moses's song bring glory to God and encourage you at the same time?

Describe one truth about God that is proclaimed in this song that you can share with others.

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

PSALM 51:1-19

5

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How does David's sorrow over his sin provide an example for you?

What aspect of God did David experience that he could use as a testimony to unbelievers?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

LUKE 1:46-55

6

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why is Mary's song of praise good for others to hear?

How does Mary's story inspire you to worship God?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

7

PHILIPPIANS 1:19-30

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What was Paul excited about if he had to continue living here on earth?

What does it take to live a life worthy of the gospel of Christ?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

FULFILLED PROPHECY

PROPHECY - FORETELLING AN EVENT IN SUCH DETAIL BEFORE IT HAPPENS SO AS TO NECESSARILY REQUIRE DIVINE GUIDANCE.

Here is a sample of just 60 distinct predictions in regard to our divine Savior Jesus Christ. Not only were the predictions made 1000 years before Christ came from heaven to earth, but they were made over 500 years before crucifixion was first used anywhere in the world as a form of capital punishment! Crucifixion didn't exist when the prophecies were made.

The probability of one man randomly fulfilling just 48 of them is 1 in 10 to the exponent of 157. That is one followed by 157 zeros! Yet, Jesus fulfilled over 60 prophecies!

Concerning his birth

1. Born of the seed of woman
2. Born of a virgin
3. Seed of Abraham
4. Seed of Isaac
5. Seed of Jacob
6. Seed of David
7. Tribe of Judah
8. Family line of Jesse
9. Born in Bethlehem
10. Herod kills the children

Prophesied

- Gen 3:15
Isa 7:14
Gen 22:18
Gen 21:12
Num 24:17
Jer 23:5
Gen 49:10
Isa 11:1
Mic 5:2
Jer 31:15

Fulfilled

- Gal 4:4
Mt 1:18-25
Mt 1:1
Lk 3:23+34
Lk 3:34
Lk 3:31
Rev 5:5
Lk 3:32
Mt 2:1-6
Mt 2:16-18

Concerning his nature

11. He pre-existed creation
12. He shall be called Lord
13. Called Immanuel (God with us)
14. Prophet
15. Priest
16. Judge
17. King
18. Anointed by the Spirit
19. His zeal for God

Prophesied

- Mic 5:2
Ps 110:1
Isa 7:14
Deut 18:18-19
Ps 110:4
Isa 33:22
Ps 2:6
Isa 11:2
Ps 69:9

Fulfilled

- 1 Pet 1:20
Acts 2:36
Mt 1:22-23
Acts 3:18-25
Heb 5:5-6
Jn 5:22-23
Jn 18:33-37
Mt 3:16-17
Jn 2:15-17

Concerning his ministry

20. Preceded by a messenger
21. To begin in Galilee
22. Ministry of Miracles
23. Teacher of parables
24. He was to enter the temple
25. Enter Jerusalem on donkey
26. Stone of stumbling to Jews
27. Light to Gentiles

Prophesied

- Isa 40:3
Isa 9:1-2
Isa 35:5-6
Ps 78:1-4
Mal 3:1
Zech 9:9
Isa 28:16; Ps 118:22
Isa 49:6

Fulfilled

- Mt 3:1-3
Mt 4:12-17
Mt 9:35;11:4
Mt 13:34-35
Mt 21:10-12
Mt 21:1-7
1 Pet 2:6-8
Acts 13:46-48

<u>The day Jesus was crucified</u>	<u>Prophesied</u>	<u>Fulfilled</u>
28. Betrayed by a friend	Ps 41:9	Jn 13:18-27
29. Sold for 30 pieces of silver	Zech 11:12	Mt 26:14-15
30. 30 pieces thrown in Temple	Zech 11:13	Mt 27:3-5
31. 30 pieces buys potters field	Zech 11:13	Mt 27:6-10
32. Forsaken by His disciples	Zech 13:7	Mk 14:27+50
33. Accused by false witnesses	Ps 35:11+20-21	Mt 26:59-61
34. Silent before accusers	Isa 53:7	Mt 27:12-14
35. Wounded and bruised	Isa 53:4-6	1 Pet 2:21-25
36. Beaten and spit upon	Isa 50:6	Mt 26:67-68
37. Mocked	Ps 22:6-8	Mt 27:27-31
38. Fell under the cross	Ps 109:24-25	Jn 19:17; Lk23:26
39. Hands and feet pierced	Ps 22:16	Jn 20:24-28
40. Crucified with thieves	Isa 53:12	Mt 27:38
41. Prayed for enemies	Isa 53:12	Lk 23:34
42. Rejected by His own people	Isa 53:3	Jn 19:14-15
43. Hated without cause	Ps 69:4	Jn 15:25
44. Friends stood aloof	Ps 38:11	Lk22:54;23:49
45. People wag their heads	Ps 22:7;109:25	Mt 27:39
46. People stared at Him	Ps 22:17	Lk 23:35
47. Cloths divided and gambled for	Ps 22:18	Jn 19:23-24
48. Became very thirsty	Ps 22:15	Jn 19:28
49. Gall and vinegar offered Him	Ps 69:21	Mt 27:34
50. His forsaken cry	Ps 22:1	Mt 27:46
51. Committed Himself to God	Ps 31:5	Lk 23:46
52. Bones not broken	Ps 34:20	Jn 19:32-36
53. Heart broken	Ps 69:20;22:14	Jn 19:34
54. His side pierced	Zech 12:10	Jn 19:34+37
55. Darkness over the land	Amos 8:9	Lk 23:44-45
56. Buried in rich man's tomb	Isa 53:9	Mt 27:57-60
<u>His Resurrection & Ascension</u>	<u>Prophesied</u>	<u>Fulfilled</u>
57. Raised from the dead	Ps 16:8-11	Acts 2:24-31
58. Begotten as Son of God	Ps 2:7	Acts 13:32-35
59. Ascended to Heaven	Ps 68:18	Eph 4:8-10; John 3:13
60. Seated beside God	Ps 110:1	Heb 1:3+13

The evidence of divine prophecy presented here is just a tiny portion of the proofs available to establish the divine origin of the Bible. Yet, they are more than sufficient to prove the inspiration of the Bible. There will always be men who scoff at the Bible. You, however, can be confident when you read your Bible that God is the author, for it is written:

"WE CONSTANTLY THANK GOD THAT WHEN YOU RECEIVED FROM US THE WORD OF GOD'S MESSAGE, YOU ACCEPTED IT NOT AS THE WORD OF MEN, BUT FOR WHAT IT REALLY IS, THE WORD OF GOD" -1 THESSALONIANS 2:13

LOOKING BACK

How do you feel now that you have completed this study?

So now you are thinking, okay, now that I've completed this study, I know everything I need to know now, right?

Discipleship isn't about completing a study. It is about a lifestyle of learning and living as you follow Jesus. What you have learned throughout this study will become more important to your Christian life in the months, even years, to come. Think about some of the major concepts that you have learned and lived out.

- Knowledge that truth can be understood.
- Knowledge that your worldview matters.
- Basic understanding of a biblical worldview.
- Understanding of how to use your biblical worldview as a lense to make sense of reality.
- Point out specific ways that God has revealed himself.
- Ability to point to Scripture and present the claims about itself.
- Ability to engage in conversation about the validity of the Bible.
- Realization that you are God's plan for declaring his gospel to all nations.

Wow! That's a lot! Now it's time to continue to live out what you have learned in this study.

PERSONAL SALVATION EXPERIENCE

Read Acts 20:22-24.

Like Paul, the best way to testify about Christ is to share the difference Christ has made in your life. Write out your personal testimony by answering the following questions.

What was your life like before you accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord?

What actually happened when you accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord?

What has your life been like since you accepted Jesus as your Savior?

What would life be like if you hadn't chosen to follow Jesus?



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