

LEADER'S GUIDE



SEVEN THINGS I WISH CHRISTIANS KNEW ABOUT THE BIBLE

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INTRODUCTION

Verses

See how I love your precepts; preserve my life, Lord, in accordance with your love. All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.

—PSALM 119:159–160

For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

—PROVERBS 2:6

This Week's Big Question: Why is the Bible controversial?

Prayer

Father, thank you for this time you have given us to gather together to learn about the Bible. We want to gain a deeper understanding of Scripture so we can know you better and tell others the truth about you and your word. Please give us wisdom and discernment as we meet together to discuss this important topic. Amen.

Warm-Up Questions

- How does the Bible currently influence different parts of our culture?
- Why can it be difficult for us to understand parts of the Bible?

Discussing the Chapter

- What words would you use to describe the Bible, and why?
- What are some ways the Bible has shaped history and culture around the world?
- Why do you think the Bible is controversial?
- Why is it important to know about the origin and history of the Bible?
- What are some challenges you have faced while reading the Bible?

Going Deeper

- In what ways have you faced opposition to what you believe about the Bible?
- How do you respond to people who claim the Bible isn't true?
- When you read a passage in Scripture that is difficult to understand, what do you do?

Thoughts for Next Week

- Where did the Bible come from?
- What are some of the differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament?



***Tip for Leading a Group Discussion:** Your job as a discussion group leader is to facilitate the discussion, prevent conversations from veering from the topic, and ensure the group starts and ends on time. This means you don't need to do most of the talking. You steer the group and help discussions run smoothly.

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CHAPTER 1: THE BIBLE DIDN'T FALL OUT OF THE SKY

Verses

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.

—Hebrews 1:1–2

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life.

—John 6:63

This Week's Big Question: Where did the Bible come from?

Prayer

Father, please guide our group as we read about your word and how it has come to be. Please give us insight and wisdom through your Spirit as we learn more about you and how you communicate with us through Scripture. Amen.

Warm-Up Questions

- What part of the Bible are you most familiar with or do you tend to read more of (which genre, section, or specific book)?
- Why do you think it might be helpful to know about the origin of the canon and why specific books were chosen to be included in the Bible?

Discussing the Chapter

- What is your knowledge of the origin of the Bible and how it was assembled?
- Why do you think it was necessary to create qualifications that texts must meet in order to be included in the canon?
- Why do you think it is important to have a canon of Scripture?
- In what ways might it be beneficial to read the Apocrypha?
- What challenges do you think might be presented in translating ancient texts into Bible translations?
- Do you believe the canon should be updated when new ancient texts are found? Why or why not?

Going Deeper

- What is something new you learned about how the Bible was created and compiled?
- What stood out to you about the history of the Bible?
- Why do you think it is important to understand how the Bible was created and compiled?
- How will you use this information as you study Scripture?

Thoughts for Next Week

- What is biblical inerrancy?
- What does it mean that the Bible was inspired by God?

***Tip for Leading a Group Discussion:** Preparation is important as a group leader. Take time to review the lesson and discussion questions before each session. Think about how you'd like the discussion to progress, and allow room for group members to expound on their thoughts about each topic.

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CHAPTER 2: THE BIBLE IS DIVINELY GIVEN AND HUMANLY COMPOSED

Verses

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

–2 Timothy 3:16–17

We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

–2 Peter 1:19–21

This Week's Big Question: What does it mean that the Bible is the word of God?

Prayer

Lord, we come to you with open hearts so that we may learn more about your word and how it came to be. Please grant us wisdom, understanding, and discernment so that we can take the information we learn and use it to glorify you. Amen.

Warm-Up Questions

- What is biblical inerrancy?
- Do you think the Bible is without errors? Why or why not?

Discussing the Chapter

- Why is it important to understand biblical inspiration and inerrancy?
- What does it mean that the Bible was inspired by God?
- What are some of the ways God communicated with people in the Bible?
- What are some of the messages God communicated to people in the Bible?
- What are some of the battles of biblical inerrancy happening today?
- How would you defend the Bible as a true book if questioned by someone who hasn't read it before?

Going Deeper

- What did you learn about biblical inspiration and inerrancy?
- Which of the author's points on biblical inspiration and inerrancy do you agree with? Which points do you disagree with?
- Why do you trust God's word to be true?

Thoughts for Next Week

- What is biblical authority, and how do we live under it?

***Tip for Leading a Group Discussion:** Encourage every member in your group to participate, whether they answer a question, read a Scripture passage out loud, or offer insight on a topic. As much as possible, give every participant an equal amount of time to speak.

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CHAPTER 3: SCRIPTURE IS NORMATIVE, NOT NEGOTIABLE

Verses

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

—Luke 24:44–45

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

—Colossians 2:8

This Week's Big Question: What is biblical authority? How do we incorporate biblical authority into our lives?

Prayer

Father, thank you for bringing us together so we can learn more about you and your word. Please share your truth with us as we study together, and bring us clarity and understanding. Please be with each member of this group and open our hearts to your wisdom. Amen.

Warm-Up Questions

- What parts of the Bible are sometimes declared outdated or not applicable in modern times?
- Do you believe the authority of the Bible is absolute or negotiable?

Discussing the Chapter

- What is biblical authority?
- Do you believe the Bible is authoritative? Why or why not?
- In what ways are biblical subscription and biblical submission different?
- What commandments or laws in the Bible seem strange or unorthodox to you?
- Why is it important to include the Old Testament when discussing biblical authority?
- How does your perspective of the Old Testament change when you consider reading it with Jesus' teachings as the center?

Going Deeper

- In what ways has your perspective of biblical authority changed after reading this chapter?
- How will you approach your reading of the Old Testament going forward?
- How is Jesus' authority connected to biblical authority?

Thoughts for Next Week

- Should we read the Bible through the lens of present-day circumstances, or should we read it through the lens of its historical context?

**Tip for Leading a Group Discussion: Keep the discussion on track as much as possible. Express gratitude to those who choose to share answers or experiences related to the questions, and gently but firmly redirect the conversation if it begins to get off topic.*

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CHAPTER 4: THE BIBLE IS FOR OUR TIME, BUT NOT ABOUT OUR TIME

Verses

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

—John 16:13

He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, 'they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!'"

—Mark 4:11–12

This Week's Big Question: What roles do history and culture play in biblical interpretation and application?

Prayer

Father, please open our minds and our hearts to your teachings today. Please guide our conversation as we learn more about how to apply your word to our daily lives, and please grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to grow closer to you. Amen.

Discussing the Chapter

- What does it mean to you that the Bible is "for us"?
- Do you agree with the author's point that it is important to consider the historical and cultural background of biblical text? Why or why not?
- In what ways can reading the Bible through the lens of current events cause us to have a superficial understanding of its message?

Going Deeper

- What did you learn about how Bible passages may reflect the time and culture in which they were written?
- How might learning biblical history help you better understand Scripture?
- What might be some challenges you face when learning about the historical context of Scripture?
- What steps will you take in order to incorporate historical texts into your regular reading routine?

Warm-Up Questions

- What are some ways that biblical times were different from modern times?
- In what ways might it be helpful to know more about the historical context of the Bible?

- Have you found any resources that have been helpful in understanding biblical history? If so, what are they?
- Why do you think ancient texts are often overlooked as reading material?
- What era of biblical history interests you most? What resource from the "How to Begin Learning about Bible Background: A Sampler" list might help you learn more about that time?

Thoughts for Next Week

- How literally do you take the Bible? Are there any passages you don't believe are meant to be taken literally?

***Tip for Leading a Group Discussion:** In addition to facilitating discussions during meetings, connect with your group members by interacting with them throughout the week. Send Scripture verses and questions for them to think about between meetings, and ask how you can pray for them.

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CHAPTER 5: WE SHOULD TAKE THE BIBLE SERIOUSLY, BUT NOT ALWAYS LITERALLY

Verses

Your statutes are always righteous; give me understanding that I may live.

—Psalm 119:144

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

—Hebrews 4:12

This Week's Big Question: Where does biblical meaning come from?

Prayer

Lord, thank you for bring us here together, and thank you for the Bible that teaches us so much about you and your will for us. Please guide our thoughts and conversations during this time so that we can come to a deeper understanding of the truths in your word. Amen.

Warm-Up Questions

- What questions do you ask yourself when determining the meaning of a passage?
- Do you tend to take the Bible literally? Why or why not?

Discussing the Chapter

- What does it mean to take the Bible literally?
- Do you agree with the author's statement that it is impossible to always take the Bible literally? Why or why not?
- What is the difference between taking the Bible literally and taking it seriously?
- The author recommends being mindful of the four words that start with c—or C4—when reading the Bible: context, content, concern, and contemporary application. Which of these have you previously applied to your understanding of the Bible? Which will be new for you?
- What examples of intertextuality (how a biblical book refers to other biblical books) are you familiar with? In what ways does knowing how those passages relate help you better understand the text?
- What strategies do you use to help you apply Scripture to your daily life?

Going Deeper

- What did you learn about how to interpret biblical meaning from this chapter?
- Has what you learned changed how you will read the Bible? Why or why not?
- How might biblical meaning or interpretation differ between churches or denominations?

Thoughts for Next Week

- Why do we need the Bible? What is its purpose?

***Tip for Leading a Group Discussion:** Recruit help. Ask someone to be a co-leader to help facilitate discussions, and rely on group members to provide snacks and drinks for each meeting. This will help form a sense of community while also allowing you to focus on leading the discussions.

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CHAPTER 6: THE PURPOSE OF SCRIPTURE IS KNOWLEDGE, FAITH, LOVE, AND HOPE

Verses

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

—Psalm 119:15

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

—Ephesians 1:17

This Week's Big Question: What is the purpose of Scripture?

Prayer

Father, we come before you now with humble hearts. We seek your wisdom and knowledge as we study your word, and we ask for your guidance as we learn about how you communicate with us through Scripture. Amen.

Warm-Up Questions

- Why is it important to read the Bible?
- What is the purpose of the Old Testament? What is the purpose of the New Testament?
- In what ways is the Bible different from other books?

Discussing the Chapter

- How would you describe the purpose of the Bible to someone who is just beginning to learn about God?
- Why is it important to learn about God through the Bible?
- What have you learned about God through Scripture?
- In what ways does the Bible "bring us to a deepening faith"?
- What are some of your favorite verses about love?
- In what ways is love a form of worship?
- In what ways does the Bible give you hope?

Going Deeper

- How has your relationship with God deepened through reading the Bible?
- How do you prioritize reading the Bible in your daily schedule? What changes can you make to allow time for reading the Bible each day?
- How has reading the Bible changed your life or how you live your life?

Thoughts for Next Week

- How is Jesus reflected throughout the entire Bible?

***Tip for Leading a Group Discussion:** Respect your group members' time. Stay consistent with your schedule, and send reminders to them a day or two before you are set to meet. Begin group meetings promptly, and release participants on time.

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CHAPTER 7: CHRIST IS THE CENTRE OF THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE

Verses

"Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

—Luke 24:26–27

Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you."

—Galatians 3:8

This Week's Big Question: How do we read the Bible with Jesus at the center?

Prayer

Lord, thank you for your presence with us as we conclude our study. Please help us to understand how all Scripture is centered on your Son. Please guide the members of this group in the weeks ahead as we apply what we have learned. Amen.

Warm-Up Questions

- Do you believe Christ appears in the Old Testament? If so, where do you see him?
- How are the Old and New Testaments tied together by Jesus?

Discussing the Chapter

- At what point in your journey of faith did you learn that the entire Bible is centered on Christ?
- In what ways does the Old Testament reflect Jesus and salvation through him?
- How does your understanding of the Old Testament change when you read it with a "Jesus lens"?
- In what ways does Jesus fulfill the promises of the Old Testament?
- Why is it important to consider the content and concern of a specific biblical passage rather than focusing only on how it points to Jesus?
- In what ways does the Bible shape the morals of Christians?
- What does it mean to interpret the Bible in an apostolic manner? What does that look like in practice?

Going Deeper

- Why is it important to read Scripture with Christ as the center?
- Why do you think God put Jesus at the center of the Old Testament? How did he do so?
- How do the patriarchs and prophets demonstrate faithfulness to God despite not knowing Jesus?
- What does it mean that "Scripture is a God story"?

***Tip for Leading a Group Discussion:** If someone seems reluctant to share their thoughts, try to draw them into the conversation. If your group is large, try breaking into smaller groups for part of the discussion, which might help people feel more comfortable about participating.