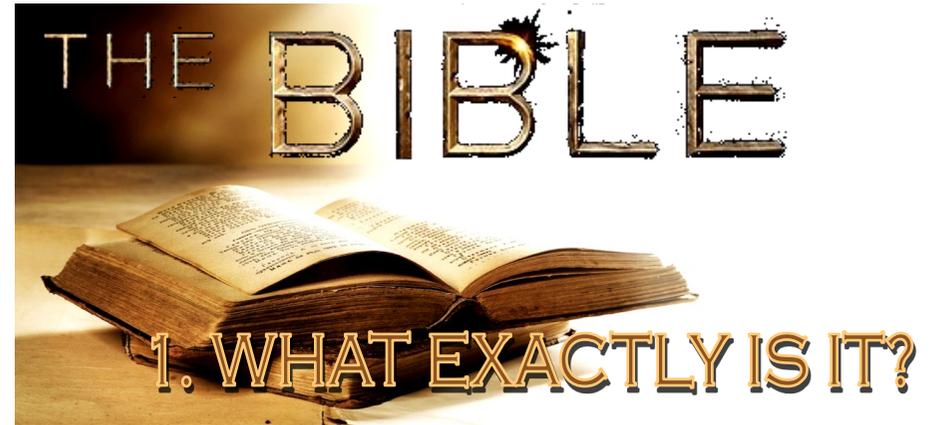


GETTING PERSONAL

1. Do you personally believe that the Bible was inspired by God and what we have today is essentially an accurate copy of the original? Why or why not?

What else would it take to convince you?

2. Have you ever experienced God speaking to you through the Bible—saying things you needed to hear? Describe these experiences. What made you believe it was God?
3. Do you treat the Bible like it really is inspired by God and is a message from Him to us today? How might that change?



THINKING ABOUT THE BIBLE

1. When you think about the Bible, what words come to mind? Explain.
 - *Confusing*
 - *Irrelevant*
 - *Boring*
 - *Complicated*
 - *Valuable*
 - *Intriguing*
 - *Mysterious*
 - *Contradictory*
2. In your opinion, which of the following statements best describes the Bible? (You can choose more than one).
 - The writings of wise and godly people who lived a long time ago.*
 - Words dictated by God to people who lived a long time ago.*
 - Ancient stories and principles that are timeless.*
 - Insights for living our lives today in the 21st century.*
 - One of many books God speaks through today.*

DIGGING DEEPER

3. Discuss the following statements about the Bible. Do you agree or disagree?
 - *We don't really need a Bible to discover who God is and how He wants us to live. We can figure that out for ourselves.*
 - *While God might have inspired the original writings, they have been copied so many times and translated into different languages and versions that the message has been changed if not lost completely.*
 - *We can never really prove whether God inspired the Bible or not.*
4. If the Bible really has been inspired by the Creator of everything, why do you think more people don't read it?

INTO THE BIBLE

1. Read 2 Peter 1:16-21. It was written by Peter, one of Jesus' closest friends and followers. List all the things Peter says in these verses that counter the claim that "The Bible is just a whole bunch of myths made up by people long ago,"
2. Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17. These lines were written by Paul, an older Christian, to a young Christian named Timothy. What does he say about where the Scriptures (the Bible) came from?

Why has God given us the Bible—what's its purpose?

2 PETER 1:16-21

¹⁶For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic splendour with our own eyes ¹⁷when he received honour and glory from God the Father. The voice from the majestic glory of God said to him, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy." ¹⁸We ourselves heard that voice from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.

¹⁹Because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. You must pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place—until the Day dawns, and Christ the Morning Star shines in your hearts. ²⁰Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, ²¹or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.

2 TIMOTHY 3:14-17

¹⁴But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. ¹⁵You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

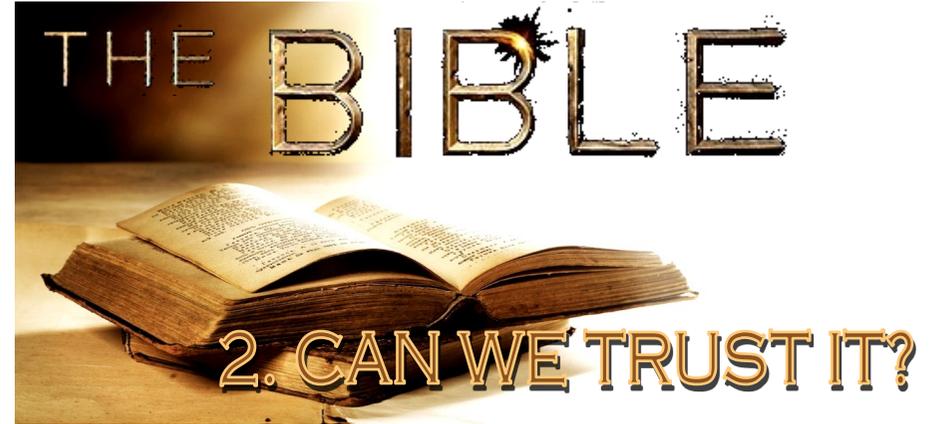
HEBREWS 15:4

⁴Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled.

3. Read Hebrews 15:4 above. What other purposes of the Bible are mentioned here?

GETTING PERSONAL

1. What makes it difficult for you to trust the Bible? Are there questions you have—things you don't understand or find hard to believe? Make a list of these and discuss them.
2. The two things referred to on the previous page that can lead us away from trusting God and His Word are evil people and a tendency to rely on what we think is best rather than trusting God and what He says. Which of these two pose the greatest temptation to you: being led astray by others, or trusting your own understanding?



TRUSTWORTHY OR UNTRUSTWORTHY?

1. Discuss the following statements about the trustworthiness or untrustworthiness of the Bible. Do you agree or not?
 - *The Bible has no errors.*
 - *The Bible is too hard to understand—how can we trust it?*
 - *Because it was written so long ago the Bible does not speak accurately to the issues of today.*
 - *If parts of the Bible are untrue, we should discard the whole Book as worthless.*
2. What do you do when you read something on the internet and you're not sure if it's true—how do you decide if you will trust what you read?

How would you approach deciding if you could trust the Bible? Any differently?

3. Which of the following facts would you regard as being good evidence for the trustworthiness of the Bible? Give reasons:
- *Jesus quoted parts of it.*
 - *It has survived numerous attempts to destroy it.*
 - *It is the best selling book of all time.*
 - *People's lives are changed through reading it.*
 - *Bible prophecy has been consistently fulfilled.*
 - *It has been shown to be archeologically and historically accurate.*
 - *It's teachings have remained timeless and relevant for hundreds of years.*
 - *Although written by many people over thousands of years it contains no significant contradictions.*

INTO THE BIBLE

1. Read Psalm 97-106. Choose a favourite line—one that shows that the writer truly does trust God's Word.
2. Read Proverbs 2:12-15 & 3:5-7. What are the two things that can lead you away from trusting God's wisdom found in His Word?

What two promises does God give to those who follow the wisdom found in the Bible?

PSALM 119:97-106

- ⁹⁷ Oh, how I love your instructions!
I think about them all day long.
- ⁹⁸ Your commands make me wiser than my enemies,
for they are my constant guide.
- ⁹⁹ Yes, I have more insight than my teachers,
for I am always thinking of your laws.
- ¹⁰⁰ I am even wiser than my elders,
for I have kept your commandments.
- ¹⁰¹ I have refused to walk on any evil path,
so that I may remain obedient to your word.
- ¹⁰² I haven't turned away from your regulations,
for you have taught me well.
- ¹⁰³ How sweet your words taste to me;
they are sweeter than honey.
- ¹⁰⁴ Your commandments give me understanding;
no wonder I hate every false way of life.
- ¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to guide my feet
and a light for my path.
- ¹⁰⁶ I've promised it once, and I'll promise it again:
I will obey your righteous regulations..

PROVERBS 2:12-15 & 3:5-7

- ¹² Wisdom will save you from evil people,
from those whose words are twisted.
- ¹³ These men turn from the right way
to walk down dark paths.
- ¹⁴ They take pleasure in doing wrong,
and they enjoy the twisted ways of evil.
- ¹⁵ Their actions are crooked,
and their ways are wrong.
- ⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart;
do not depend on your own understanding.
- ⁶ Seek his will in all you do,
and he will show you which path to take.
- ⁷ Don't be impressed with your own wisdom.
Instead, fear the Lord and turn away from evil.

INTO THE BIBLE (continued)

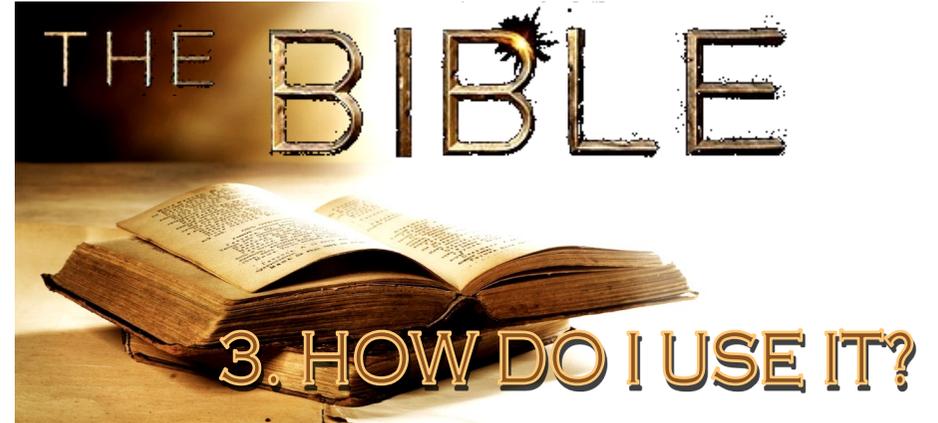
Principles:

What's the most important thing you think God might be telling you from these verses?

3. If you have time, repeat the process from 1 John 2:1-6
4. If you had to memorise one verse from the verses you've been looking at, which would you choose and why? (Why not do it!)

GETTING PERSONAL

1. Share your own experiences in trying to read the Bible. What advice has been helpful to you?
2. What might you do to develop a more consistent habit of reading the Bible and listening to hear what God is saying to you?



GETTING INTO THE BIBLE

1. If the Bible really is God's message to us, that makes it the most important book ever written. What stops you spending more time reading it? Discuss the following possible answers—valid or not?
 - *I have too many other things to do.*
 - *It's just too hard to understand.*
 - *Compared to books young people like to read (Hunger Games, Harry Potter, Twilight etc.) it's pretty boring.*
 - *I don't know where to start.*
 - *It contains rules for living that are hard to live by.*
 - *God never speaks to me through it.*

INTO THE BIBLE

1. Read 1 John 1:1-4.

Who are these verses talking about?

Three times these verses refer to him as “being life” (He is the Word of life...who is life itself...who is eternal life). What do you think this means?

What else do we learn about Him from these verses?

Complete the following sentence: “Because of who Jesus is, I... “

2. A good way to study the Bible is to think of the three P’s:
 - *Praise: What does this passage teach me about God?*
 - *Practice: What does this passage teach me about how I should live?*
 - *Principles: What new things does this passage teach me?*

Read 1 John 1:5-10 and use these three headings to summarise what you are learning:

Praise:

Practice:

1 JOHN 1:1-4

¹ We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life. ² This one who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him. And now we testify and proclaim to you that he is the one who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then he was revealed to us. ³ We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ We are writing these things so that you may fully share our joy.

1 JOHN 1:5-10

⁵ This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. ⁶ So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. ⁷ But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

⁸ If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. ⁹ But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.

1 JOHN 2:1-6

¹ My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. ² He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.

³ And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments. ⁴ If someone claims, “I know God,” but doesn’t obey God’s commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. ⁵ But those who obey God’s word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. ⁶ Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.