

Week 6: Is the Bible Reliable?

Before the Meeting...

- Contact your group members several days before your meeting and:
 - > Declare this next meeting as BYOB (Bring Your Own Bible) in whatever form you use: book, electronic app, a particular version, etc.)
 - > Also, invite them to come prepared to briefly share one particular verse (or brief passage) in the Bible that has had significant personal impact on their lives.
- Remember to combine the resources below with the exploreGod.com materials as desired.

During the Meeting...

Break the Ice (choose one)

1. Play the classic “Trust Game” - Have people partner up and take turns crossing arms over their chests and then falling backward into the waiting arms of the other. NO DROPS!
2. What's the funniest thing you did as a kid that your parents still talk about to this day (or talked about for many years into your adulthood)?

Watch Video 1: Pulse of the World on the Bible

Discuss from among the following:

1. Discuss the Explore God (EG) provided questions as applicable (see EG material).
2. Briefly discuss how one’s conclusions about the Bible influence that person’s approach to God and to life. *(Examples from Sunday: If the Bible is irrelevant - we’ll ignore it; if it’s inauthentic – we’ll reject it; if it’s only a book of wisdom – we’ll consider it; if it’s God’s inspired message to us – we’ll be radically changed by it as we dive into it and follow its precepts)*

Watch Video 2: The Curiosity Collective: Is the Bible Reliable?

Discuss from among the following:

1. Discuss the Explore God provided questions as applicable (see EG material).
2. On Sunday, Pastor Brandon discussed three evidences that engender trust in the reliability of the Bible. Briefly review these as a group.

Witnesses

The Bible is a collection of 66 books, written by 40 different authors (witnesses), over nearly 1,600 years. Although it was written over multiple generations, in three languages (Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic), by authors from various backgrounds (including shepherds, priests, prophets, fishermen, tax collectors), and on three different continents (Asia, Europe and Africa), it is basically one story.

ASK: If someone asked you to describe the story of the Bible, what would you say?

Manuscripts

The authors of the Bible recorded their experiences with God and, thus, constitute historical documentation.

- The first 39 books of the Bible comprise the Old Testament and include the Law of Moses, the history of the Jewish people, the foretelling of the Messiah, and how life is to be lived in light of the Gospel. These comprise the sacred Scriptures for Jewish people and partially so for Christians.
- The last 27 books make up the New Testament and were written by eyewitnesses to Jesus' life, documenting His ministry and explaining God's plan to bring about his Kingdom.
- See the "Evidence for NT" picture (.PDF attached) which compares the overwhelming historical support for the New Testament when compared to other "accepted" historical sources.

Prophecy

- There are approximately 1,800 prophetic statements contained in the Bible. To date, none of these has been refuted, while many have been verified.
- Documents foretelling the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus appear as early as 1,000 years prior to His birth.
- More than 350 prophecies concerning the Messiah that Jesus fulfilled. Recall from Week #5 that the probability of one man fulfilling just 8 of those prophecies is: 1 X 10 to the 17th power (or 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000).

ASK: Using the information above, how might you respond to someone who says that the Bible isn't history, but rather made-up stories about mythical people?

3. How relevant is the Bible to your everyday life?
4. Ask some volunteers to briefly tell the group about a verse or brief Bible passage that has had significant personal impact on their lives. *(Perhaps guide them by asking: What was the life circumstance? Had they read it before? What was different about the verse this time? How did it impact you? Does it continue to impact your life?)*

Inspire

Do a "Truth Search" together as a group.

Often people say that they don't really get anything applicable to their daily lives from reading the Bible. Use the attached Truth Search.PDF to walk the group through a process of interacting with the Holy Spirit to bring out truths from the pages of the Bible that are pertinent to their lives. *(This might be the only thing you do for this entire meeting – but it might also be the best thing you do! Make certain to have paper – perhaps a copy of the Truth Search directions – and pens for everyone if they do not have their own.)*

Prayer & Ministry

It might be that the "applications" discovered in the Truth Search (above) become the prayer and ministry points for the evening. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in this regard. Otherwise, consider the following:

1. Invite the group to spend some time thanking God for his amazing revelation of himself through the Bible, for it's power to impact our lives, and for those who have preserved it through the centuries. Pray also for those whose calling it is to teach or to preach it.
2. Invite group members to share any personal needs for which they would like prayer as a group. Go for it!

After the meeting...

- Plan to share a meal together as a group soon – potluck is fine. Make it a party!
- **Begin to discuss whether or not your group will continue to meet after the Explore God series concludes.** Relationships take time and energy to develop but they certainly are worth the effort. Your pastors hope that you will strongly consider continuing on with your group, even if only occasionally during the upcoming holidays. We have wonderful group resources available for you to utilize as well as Truth Search.

Pastor Dwayne's Further Recommendations:

- ***Is Today's Bible Authentic?*** Great Explore God video (3 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKnNP59U0I8>
- ***The Bible as Evidence*** (3 ½ minutes – shown on Sunday)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfB5r7wXUO8>
- ***Why Read the Bible?*** (2 ½ minutes – shown on Sunday)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlTHR_hqH9I
- Great articles by searching “Bible Reliable” at Explore God site