

The Bible

Part 1: What do I need to know?

The Bible is a book written for people with FAITH. This is the most important fact you need to know about your Bible.

What use is the Bible to me?

The Bible is a book through which God can speak to each one of us personally. Therefore your attitude to God and the Bible will either help or hinder God in His attempts to speak to you. Ask God to make you a person who is willing to learn and always ask the Holy Spirit to teach you as you read. With the right attitude you will find that the Bible has many uses in your life.

When the Bible is read with faith it becomes more than just words on a page, but it becomes the LIVING WORD OF GOD. The Word of God is the most powerful thing in the Universe, as God Himself will do the things that He has promised in it.

This is one of the most important uses of the Bible. It is a book of PROMISES made by God, which He will keep when we believe and trust Him to do them. About one in every three verses contains a promise! You can spend more than a life time discovering the wonderful promises God has made and then proving them true. Whatever your need there is a promise for you.

There are many other uses the Bible has. You can study the INFORMATION it contains about events, places, dates and people. The Bible teaches WISDOM to know the right way to live our lives. The Word of God can CORRECT us when we are wrong in our actions, words and the thoughts of our hearts. The Word of God brings HOPE to us to give patience, courage and peace in troubled times. The Word may be SPIRITUAL FOOD or CLEANSING to our hearts and minds. Above all, the Living Word brings understanding and love of God Himself. Lastly, the Word can INSPIRE us with personal messages of new ideas and actions for our everyday lives.

What do I need to do?

It is reasonable easy to listen to someone else read the Bible. It is not so easy to discipline yourself to read it. READ IT YOURSELF – REGULARLY. Ask God to help you. Then THINK ABOUT IT. Mull the words over in your mind. This is Biblical meditation. Lastly, SPEAK about it to others. Ask questions about what you are not sure of and pass on what you know.

1. READ 2. THINK 3. SPEAK

Activities - Part 1: What do I need to know?

1. Make a heading "Bible".
2. Make a subheading "What do I need to know?"
3. Write out the most important fact you need to know about your Bible.
4. Write the subheading "Uses of my Bible."
5. Why is your attitude to God and the Bible important?
6. What things should we ask God for when reading the Bible?
7. What do you think our attitude should be when reading the Bible? Write it down.
8. What happens when we read the Word of God with faith?
9. Start with the sentence: "The Bible is useful to me for...." And list down your page its uses in your life.
10. Write the subheading "What I need to do".
11. Write down the three things you need to do about the Bible.

The Bible

Part 2: The Word of God

1. The Bible is the Word of God. Because it is God's Word it is true and we can put our complete trust in it.
2. The Bible was not written to prove God is there. It simply assumes God is there.
3. The Bible contains many accurate recordings of what God had said directly and much else.
4. *Everything written in the Bible is what God wants written there.* This is why the Bible is the Word of God.
5. Everything written is designed to show something about God and the way He acts.

How we know the Bible is the Word of God?

1. The Bible itself says that it is the Word of God.
2. When we trust God's word God shows us that it is true and that it is His Word. In other words, God does what He promises.
3. We know by the way the Bible was collected together.
Moses was the first person to collect the words that God wanted and to write them down for us. The first five books of the Bible are known as the "Book of Moses".

Everyone knew that Moses knew God because of the great miracles God did for Moses. Because of this he was the best person to write down everything that God wanted and people knew it would be correct.

Moses also said that if a man spoke words from God they would always come true. This was to be the test if it really was God's Word.

Later as many men claimed to speak God's Word, it was tested. If it proved true then those words would be added to the rest of God's word.

In this way we can be sure that the whole of the Old Testament is the Word of God.

When Jesus the Son of God came he showed us perfectly what God is like. This is why the New Testament starts with four accounts of the life of Jesus. God's Word shows us what He is really like. After His death and resurrection His followers saw the Apostle Paul to be specially chosen by God to write much of the Word.

Activities - Part 2: The Word of God

1. Write down the sentences in quotation marks:

a) "The Bible claims to be the work of God. This is stated in the following Scriptures:"

2 Timothy 3:16

2 Peter 1:20

Write out these Scriptures and their references.

b) "A prophet's words were proven to be God's words if they came true."

Deuteronomy 18:21 & 22

Write out this Scripture and its reference.

2. Look up 2 Peter 3:15-16

What does the Apostle Peter say that the Apostle Paul's writings are like?

Write down the Scripture reference beside your answer.

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Part 3:- The Word of God is a Person

So far our study of the Bible has centred on two main ideas.

1. The Bible is God's Word which is absolutely true and trustworthy.
2. We must read the Bible with faith expecting God to speak to us personally through it.

In this next section we will be looking at the main subject of the Bible. In the Bible we find many encounters between men and God in a variety of different situations at different times and places. In each encounter, God shows a little more of what people are like, and often uses it to unfold a little more of His plans for Himself, the Universe, the world, people and especially each individual – you and me.

It is important to realize that God has a plan and that there is a purpose for everything He created.

At the centre of all God's plans is the Word of God. By this we are not meaning the Bible but a person called the Word of God. So who then is the person called the Word of God? He is introduced to us in the first chapter of the Gospel of John. He is of course, God Himself, the second person of the trinity, the Son of God who came to earth as a man, Jesus of Nazareth.

Put simply, *the Bible is a book about Jesus*. The Old Testament predicts his coming. It tells us what He would be like and what He would do. In the New Testament, the Gospels tell of His life, death, resurrection and ascension. The Epistles teach His disciples how their risen Lord is to be followed. One writer put it like this: "The new (testament) is the old concealed, the old is the new revealed."

Jesus is 'hidden' in the Old Testament writings but the New Testament makes it perfectly clear who He is and what He came to do. Finding Jesus in the Old Testament can be very exciting.

Much has been written about God's plan for the universe but we are going to touch on only a few points here.

In Genesis, God spoke and *created* by His Word.

In John's Gospel, the Word became a man and lived in the World to be its Saviour.

In Revelation, the Word of God destroys evil and established a righteous Kingdom.

In summary, when God wants anything done, He does it through His Word. Not only does God do everything through the Word, He also does everything *for* His

Word. One day the centre of the universe will belong to Jesus Christ for Him to rule over and enjoy.

Activities - Part 3: The Word of God is a Person

1. Who is at the centre of God's plans?
2. Who is the Word of God?
3. Read John Chapter 1:1-18. Write out the verses where the "Word" is mentioned.
4. The first Old Testament reference to the coming of the Word to earth is hidden in Genesis 3:15. What word is given to describe the Word in this verse?
5. Write out Luke 24:27 and 44. Is it true that the centre of God's plan for our lives is the Word? Discuss this question.

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Part 4: Themes in the Bible

A theme is simply an idea or subject of discussion. In many books the author simply takes a theme and builds his characters and plot around them. The book then becomes an illustration or series of illustrations about what the author thinks about those themes. Usually one or two main themes dominate but there is no reason why a number of less important themes cannot be woven into the book.

How do you decide what are the most important themes? One way is to see how many times the idea is repeated in the book. Another is to see what amount of the book is spent on a particular theme. Knowing the author can also give us valuable insights as to what is important in his book.

As a book, the Bible varies little from others when we consider its themes. Needless to say there are however a great many more themes in the Bible than in most ordinary books.

It is most important to realize the themes it contains are not man's ideas but God's.

Biblical themes are not just ideas; they are much more important. They tell us what things are important to God, as well as speaking to man. Because God's ways are higher than man's we do not always understand what is important to God. We may know with our minds what is important but not understand with our hearts. As we grow more and more to know and love God, so then we start to rejoice more and more in what He rejoices in. Then our hearts begin more and more to understand the importance of Bible themes.

Knowing the author is one sure way of coming to understand the main themes of the Bible.

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Activities - Part 4: Themes in the Bible

1. What do we mean by a theme?
2. How does God speak to us?
3. How do you know that God has spoken to you?
4. One sure way of coming to understand the main themes of the Bible is...
(Write out and complete this sentence).
5. How do we get to know the author?