

Back to the Basics

What is Truth?

As a way of introduction, let's go around the room and each person can briefly introduce themselves and mention their religious background.

In this Bible Study, we will have a memory verse that each one is encouraged to meditate on each day. Let's read together the memory verse that we'll be saying each week at the start and close of our meetings together:

John 3:3 (NIV)

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

Prayer

Just Stop and Think DVD

The challenge in presenting a Bible study is that people are from many different religious backgrounds, experiences, opinions and walks of life. It is for this reason, we are not going to be talking about religion or denominations but rather we are going to discuss our relationship to God. Undoubtedly, denominations will periodically come up in discussion but we need to always understand our need for a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. When you think about it, religion cannot get us 6 inches off the ground but a correct relationship with our Creator will allow us into the kingdom of Heaven. The purpose of this lesson is for you to gain a deep appreciation as to the truthfulness and accuracy of the Word of God.

Do you think it's possible that God revealed Himself in the Bible? How well to you know the Bible to have come to your conclusion?

In Back to the Basics, we take the position that God indeed reveal Himself in the Bibles and that to discover who He is, we examine Him through the Scriptures. The material presented will be using the New International Version (NIV) translation of the Scriptures. "This was compiled with over a hundred scholars working directly from the best available Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. It had its beginning in 1965 when a group of scholars met at Palos Heights, Illinois. This translation of the Bible is in contemporary English. This group, though not made up of official church representatives, was transdenominational. Its conclusion was endorsed by a large number of leaders from many denominations in 1983, 18 years of study, research and revisions.

Participants from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand worked together to give the project its international scope. That they were from many denominations—including Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baptist, Brethren, Christian Reformed, Church of Christ, Evangelical Free, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Nazarene, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and other churches. This helped to safeguard the translation from sectarian bias.

How it was made helps to give the New International Version its distinctiveness. The translation of each book was assigned to a team of scholars. Next, one of the Intermediate Editorial Committees revised the initial translation, with constant reference to the Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek. Their work then went to one of the General Editorial Committees, which checked it in detail and made another thorough revision. This revision in turn was carefully reviewed by the Committee on Bible Translation, which made further changes and then released the final version for publication. In this way the entire Bible underwent three revisions, during each of which the translation was examined for its faithfulness to the original languages and for its English style.

All this involved many thousands of hours of research and discussion regarding the meaning of the texts and the precise way of putting them into English. It may well be that no other translation has been made by a more thorough process of review and revision from committee to committee than this one.

The translators were committed to the authority and infallibility of the Scriptures as originally written. We also will be committed to the authority and infallibility of the Scriptures, believing that it contains the divine answer to our deepest needs, that it alone sheds light on our path in a dark world and that it presents the way for our eternal well being.”

Excerpts were taken from preface of Life Application Bible by Zondervan.

A transdenominational Bible is simply a Bible that is accepted as truth in many denominations. The Scripture in any transdenominational Bible is welcome to be shared with the group as a matter of comparison. Bibles that are published by a particular faith or denomination may be presented to the group for text comparison looking for similarities but understanding that they may have a denominational bias.

The importance of trusting the correct translation cannot be understated. If God revealed Himself through the Scriptures (which He did), a Correct Bible understanding is literally a matter of life and death. As there is only One Creator, there is only one truth on how to live in this world and prepare us for the world to come.

Choosing a bible that promotes a denomination's bias can have disastrous consequences because it is no longer the Word of God but rather man's word. It is vital we trust our reading to trans-denominational Scriptures.

There are translations that paraphrase extensively, for example the Living Bible and the Message. Although these translations may contain the Word of God, they are not the Word of God. Neither of these translations is widely accepted with many denominations. We must accept Biblical truth only from trusted and widely accepted sources.

Ultimately, the goal must be to present a better understanding of the Holy Scriptures and a fuller knowledge of the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ.

Do you have a transdenominational Bible?

When people have a good Bible translation, they rarely disagree as to what is said on the printed page. Reading a Scripture verse is sometimes confusing because it may go against a way we have been trained while growing up or taught in Church. There may be verses the group reads together that may seem contradictory or unclear. In presenting Biblical truth, Back to the Basics always presents multiple passages to confirm Scripture with Scripture to give you

the assurance this is truly what God is saying to us. The truthfulness and authority of the Scriptures will always be the final judge in our discussion.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The goal of this study is to discover our correct relationship with our Creator.

There will never be any pressure to “think our way.” We will be simply presenting the Scriptures, leaving the decision up to you to on how base your relationship with Christ. We are powerless to change the hearts and minds of people. God alone has this power. We desire to only give you the truth of the Scriptures and the need for your personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Have you ever been confused about a verse in Scripture?

For the next several weeks, we will only be studying the first three (3) chapters in the book of John however; many times, we will be reading Scripture from other areas of the Bible to present basic truths. For you to understand the Bible, the best way is simply to read it repetitively. For example, we recommend for you to read John chapter 1 each day for 2 weeks, John chapter 2 each day for 2 weeks and John chapter 3 each day for 2 weeks. After all, this is a Bible study. This should only take 15-20 minutes each day for you to understand what the Bible is saying. By the end of our Study, you will then have a good understanding of the first three chapters in the Book of John.

Also, you will be able to ask meaningful questions during the discussion. By following this process, be assured you will certainly begin to know and appreciate the Bible and come to a deeper relationship with our Lord.

Let’s read the Scriptures below and feel free to discuss each one. Note the bold (emphasis added) print. For those who have Bibles with you, please look them up and underline the verses in your own Bible.

John 3:3 (NIV)

³In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

Everyone who has a relationship is going to Heaven.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The Bible teaches us how to live.

Psalms 119:97-98 (NIV)

⁹⁷Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. ⁹⁸Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me.

Scripture memorization allows us to act wisely in all situations.

2 Timothy 4:2 (NIV)

²Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage - with great patience and careful instruction.

We are to share the Scripture with others.

2 Peter 1:20-21 (NIV)

²⁰Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

God's Word is what it says. He is the Author of the Bible, He is the Holder of the Bible and He dispenses it to all who will read it.

Jude 1:3 (NIV)

³Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

This is speaking of the Scripture which was once at one point in time delivered to the saints, the once for all delivered to the saints faith. There are no further Biblical revelations. Note that it also tells us the Scriptures reveal how we can go to Heaven.

John 17:17 (NIV)

¹⁷Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

Jesus says that God's Word is the Truth.

Hebrews 4:12 (NIV)

¹²For the word of God is living 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.

The Bible is alive if you allow it to penetrate your thoughts and attitudes.

Deuteronomy 8:3 (NIV)

³to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

The Bible tells us how to handle all of life's situations.

Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

⁴Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Do you realize that in your lifetime you will probably eat 150 or more head of cattle? You'll eat at least 3,000 chickens, conservatively, 225 lambs, 26 sheep, you'll eat 310 pigs in bacon and ham alone. Twenty-six acres of grain you will consume alone. And you will eat 50 acres of fruit and vegetables. And Jesus said, 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'

Isaiah 55:10-11 (NIV)

¹⁰As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

This states that as you read His word during this study, you will either accept it or reject it, His purpose in sending it to us.

John 20:31 (NIV)

³¹But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Ah Ha! The key to eternal life in the kingdom of Heaven must start with believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

John 14:6 (NIV)

⁶Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

It's also stated in:

Romans 10:17 (NIV)

¹⁷Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

There is only one way to have a saving faith in Christ, and that is hearing and understanding the Word of God.

Ephesians 5:25-26 (NIV)

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

The key to every successful marriage is a husband loving his wife and presenting her with the Word of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NIV)

¹³And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

This is confirmation it was not written as the word of men but that of God.

Psalms 19:7 (NIV)

⁷The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

It doesn't matter how much common sense you have or don't have because the Word of God will make you wise.

Luke 10:25-26 (NIV)

²⁵On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

Jesus continually points us to the Word of God for eternal life.

1 Peter 1:23 (NIV)

²³For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

Peter says that we become born by understanding the living Word of God.

1 Peter 1:25 (NIV)

²⁵but the word of the Lord stands forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you.

Peter says that His Word will last forever.

Joshua 1:7-9 (NIV)

⁷Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

The Bible is commanding to meditate and memorize the contents so we will be successful.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Do you believe that all Scripture is God-breathed?

Summary

Read the Scripture literally and understand the need for a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Again, the text presented in this printed material will be the NIV translation because of its accuracy to the originally written text without denominational bias. There are other many good translations available today. We encourage you to study the Scriptures along with us.

Please read John chapter one each day. We will be starting with John 1:1 next week.

Let's close by reading our memory verse:

John 3:3 (NIV)

³In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

Prayer