Opening

Gathering: Give an example of how the Bible has helped you in your everyday life.

Today's Focus: To understand what the Bible is, why God gave it to us and how it is organized to help us find and apply its truths to our lives.

Key Verses:

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16

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. John 20:31

Opening Prayer

Lesson

What We Believe (John 20:31)

Does it matter what we believe?
Acts 4:12 = There is no other name … by which we must be saved
What does it mean to be saved, and what is this name by which we must be saved?
John 17:3 = We are saved from eternal death into eternal life by knowing Jesus
Is thinking about God enough to know Him and be saved? = Speaking to educated Sadducees
Mark 12:24 = You do not know the Scriptures or the power of God
How can we know God and Jesus enough to receive the life He offers?
John 20:31 = The Bible is written so we may believe in Jesus & have life in His name

The Bible for Everyday Life (2 Timothy 3:16)

Is the Bible given only to build our faith to receive eternal life?
Matthew 4:4 = The Word is given for our daily lives also
How can the Bible help us in our daily lives?
2 Timothy 3:16-17 = Useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, training, equipping
Other than growth, what promise does God give to those who study His word?
Luke 11:28 = God will bless those who hear His Word and follow it

What is God's Word? (John 1) = Write the various manifestations of the Word on the board

How long has God's Word been around? = The Divine Word
John 1:1-3 = Even before the beginning - through Him all things were made
Why does John refer to the Word as “him”? = The Human Word
John 1:14 = Jesus is the Word - The Word became flesh and dwelt…
How were all things made through the Word? = The Spoken Word
Genesis 1:3, 31 = God created everything simply by speaking His word
How did the Word become flesh? = The Written Word
Luke 24:27 = The Scriptures point to Christ, from Genesis to Revelation

Note: Moses and the Prophets or Law and Prophets was name for Bible (OT) in Jesus’ time
Law and Gospel (Romans 3:21-24)

What two paths towards salvation are revealed in the Bible?
Romans 3:21-24 = God’s Law (all fall short) and Gospel (justified freely)

Is God’s Law only found in the Old Testament?
Matthew 5:17-18, 21-22a = No, it is found throughout the Bible

Is God’s Gospel (“Good News”) of grace found only in the New Testament? = Same God throughout
Genesis 12:1-3 = God gave His grace to Abraham, all he had to do was believe & follow

God’s Law (Matthew 22:37-40)

What are the three types of God’s Law?
Civil - Exodus 22:1 = For the new nation of Israel, changes with government  
Ceremonial - Exodus 34:22 = God relates to today’s man, changes over time  
Moral - Exodus 20:3-4, 7-8, 12-17 = God’s standards for all time, never changes

How did Jesus summarize God’s Moral Law?
Matthew 22:37-38 = Love the Lord your God - First Table of 10 Comm. (1-3)  
Matthew 22:39-40 = Love your neighbor - Second Table of 10 Comm. (4-10)

Since all fall short of being saved by obedience, what are the purposes of God’s Law?
Curb - 1 Timothy 1:9-10 = The Law revels the limits for how we live our lives  
Mirror - Romans 7:7 = The Law makes us aware of our sinfulness  
Guide - Psalm 119:9 (119:1-9) = The Law shows us how we are to live as His people

What are the promises of God’s Law?
Deuteronomy 6:24-25 = Obey them completely and always prosper & live & be righteous

What are the curses of God’s Law?
Deuteronomy 8:19-20 (see Galatians 3:10-13) = Disobey and be destroyed

God’s Gospel (Ephesians 2:8-9)

How did Paul summarize God’s Gospel?
Ephesians 2:8-9 = By grace you have been saved through faith, not by works

What purpose does God have in this Gospel?
John 3:16 = He offers His grace because He loves us so much

What are the promises of God’s Gospel? = Chosen, His sons, free grace, redemption, forgiveness, …
Ephesians 1:4-8, 13-14 = … wisdom, understanding, salvation, truth, Holy Spirit, guaranteed

What are the curses of God’s Gospel?
John 3:36 = Whoever rejects the Son will not see life

Contrasts of Law and Gospel (Galatians 3:10-25)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAW</th>
<th>GOSPEL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Galatians 3:10 = Under a curse</td>
<td>Galatians 3:13-14 = Under a blessing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Galatians 3:12 = Based on works</td>
<td>Galatians 3:11 = Based on faith</td>
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<td>Galatians 3:19 = Reveals our sin</td>
<td>Galatians 3:19b = Reveals our Savior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Galatians 3:22-23 = Imprisoned in sin</td>
<td>Galatians 3:24-25 = Set free (forgiven) in Christ</td>
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The Bible

Not one book, but a book of books (66) = A library

biblion = Greek for book

Canon = Means cane, or measuring rod
List of books recognized as the genuine, original inspired, authoritative Word of God

What did Peter explain to be the source of the books in the Bible?

2 Peter 1:20-21 = Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit

How did Paul, the author of nearly half of the New Testament books, feel about the message he gave?

Galatians 1:11-12 = He received it by revelation from Jesus Christ

How seriously should we consider the words in the Bible to be the exact Words of God?

Galatians 1:8 = Anyone who tries to change it should be eternally condemned (go to hell)

The Old Testament

Testament - A covenant or agreement between two parties, especially between God and His people.
Implies a strong relationship between the two.

What was God’s old testament?

Leviticus 26:3, 6, 9, 12 = If you keep My Law, I will protect and bless you

What is the focus of the Old Testament books of the Bible?

Genesis 28:13-15 = God’s revelation of Himself and His love thru a people chosen by grace

Current Old Testament canon selected soon after return from Babylon, around the time of Ezra
Books organized mostly chronologically within 5 categories (39 books): = see page 5

The Law (Torah) - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
History - Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings,
1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
Poetry - Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs
Major Prophets - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel
Minor Prophets - Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum,
Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

The New Testament

What was God’s new testament?

Hebrews 9:15 = We simply just receive the promised eternal inheritance won by Jesus

Is this new covenant still restricted to the children of Abraham?

Galatians 3:6-9, 14, 29 = Yes, but to Abraham’s children by faith, not by blood

What is the focus of the New Testament books of the Bible?

Ephesians 3:4-6 = God’s revelation of Himself and His love to a people chosen by grace

Current New Testament canon selected in 397 AD at the Council of Carthage
Were any of our New Testament books regarded as Scripture before this time?

2 Peter 3:15-16 = Peter saw Paul’s writings as Scriptural; Matthew & Luke drew from Mark
Books organized thematically within 5 categories (27 books): = see page 6

Gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
History - Acts
Letters of Paul - Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians,
Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians,
1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon
Letters of Others - Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude
Apocalypse - Revelation
Versions = See comparisons on page 8

Old Testament originally written in Hebrew. New Testament originally written in Greek
Translation - A rendering of the original text into another language
Paraphrase - A careful restatement of the authors thoughts

Literal Bible Versions = Useful for careful word-by-word study
Translations aimed at word-for-word accuracy
- Septuagint (Old Testament Hebrew translated into Greek) - 285-132 BC
- Vulgate (Bible translated into Latin by Jerome) - 405 AD
- German Bible (Translated by Martin Luther) - 1522-1534
- King James Version (KJV, Authorized) - 1611
- Revised Standard Version (RSV) - 1952
- New American Standard (NASB) - 1960

Dynamic Bible Versions = Easier to read than literal, Useful for serious study
Translations aimed at dynamic equivalency (phrase-by-phrase)
- New International Version (NIV) - 1978

Paraphrases = Especially helpful for first-time and casual Bible readers
Sentences and verses rewritten to maximize readability in today’s language
- The Living Bible (TLB) - 1971
- Today’s English Version (Good News) - 1976
- The Message - 2002

How To Take Advantage of God’s Word

Why should we study the Bible?
Matthew 22:29 = To know God and His right plan for our lives

How should we begin to study the Bible?
Colossians 1:9 = Pray that God will fill you with knowledge, wisdom and understanding

How can praying help us better understand the deep truths of the Bible?
John 14:26 = He will send the Holy Spirit who will teach you all things

But what if what we read is too difficult to understand?
Hebrews 5:11-14 = Keep studying and you will grow to where you can handle the solid food

What are three main ways we are to study the Bible?
Acts 17:2-3 = Learn from teachers gifted by the Spirit (large-group study)
Acts 17:11 = Search the Scriptures regularly with others (small group study)
2 Timothy 3:14-15 = Continue on your own (personal study)

Closing Prayer

Response

1. Why should I regularly read and study the Bible?
   (John 16:12-15; 20:31; Romans 15:4; Hebrews 5:11-14; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

2. How seriously should I take and trust the words in the Bible?
   (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; Acts 24:14; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

3. When and how have I been blessed by studying God’s Word?
   (Deuteronomy 4:1-14; 8:1-10; Psalm 119; Ezekiel 3:1-3; Matthew 4:4)

4. When and how have I been cursed by ignoring God’s Word?
   (Deut 8:11-20; 11:26-28; Prov 30:5-6)

5. What steps can and will I take to learn more about God’s plan for my life and my future with Him?
   (Proverbs 1:7; Colossians 3:16-17; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-15; James 1:21-25)
Books of the Old Testament

The Law - *Torah* (Hebrew for “law” or “teaching”), *Pentateuch* (Greek for “five volumes”)
- **Genesis** - Beginnings of God’s People
- **Exodus** - Birth of God’s Chosen Nation
- **Leviticus** - Instructions for Living as God’s Holy People
- **Numbers** - Israel’s Journey to the Promised Land
- **Deuteronomy** - Moses Reminds Israel of Her Calling

History - *Stories of the Jews before Christ*
- **Joshua** - Israel Enters, Conquers andSettles the Promised Land
- **Judges** - Israel’s Early Years as a Confederacy
- **Ruth** - Story of God’s Love and Care to Ancestor of David and Jesus
- **1 Samuel** - God Gives Israel a King - Saul
- **2 Samuel** - Israel’s Second and Most Faithful King - David
- **1 Kings** - Israel Under Solomon and Divided into Two Kingdoms
- **2 Kings** - Kings and Fall of Israel and Judah
- **1 Chronicles** - Chronicle of the Reign of King David
- **2 Chronicles** - Chronicle of the Reigns of Solomon and Kings of Judah
- **Ezra** - Jews Return from Exile and Commit to God
- **Nehemiah** - Jews Rebuild Jerusalem and Rebuild Holy Nation
- **Esther** - Story of God’s Protection of His People

Poetry - *Also called Wisdom Literature*
- **Job** - Faithful Man Tries to Understand God’s Will Through Suffering
- **Psalms** - Hymns, Poems and Prayers of Israel
- **Proverbs** - Words of Wisdom from Solomon and Other Wise Israelites
- **Ecclesiastes** - Solomon’s Thoughts on the Vanity of Earthly Life
- **Song of Solomon** - Love Songs Symbolizing God’s Relationship With His People

Major Prophets - *Pointed Israel Back to God, Warned of Judgment, Promised Hope*
- **Isaiah** - Prophet to Southern Kingdom During Northern Kingdom’s Destruction, Foretold of the Messiah
- **Jeremiah** - Prophet to Southern Kingdom of Judah During its Last Days
- **Lamentations** - Songs of Mourning by Jeremiah Over Exile of Judah
- **Ezekiel** - Prophet of Judgment and Hope to Jews During Exile in Babylon
- **Daniel** - Prophet of God’s Plans to Jews During Exile in Babylon

Minor Prophets - *“Minor” Because Books are Smaller*
- **Hosea** - Prophet to Northern Kingdom of Israel During its Last Days
- **Joel** - Prophet to Judah Compares Famine to the Day of the Lord’s Judgment
- **Amos** - Prophet of Judgment Against Social Injustice
- **Obadiah** - Prophet of Judgment Against Judah’s Neighbor Edom
- **Jonah** - Story of Unwilling Prophet to Ninevah (capital of enemy, Assyria)
- **Micah** - Prophet Against Social, Political and Religious Evils
- **Nahum** - Prophet Foretells Destruction of Ninevah (capital of enemy, Assyria)
- **Habakkuk** - Prophet Questions God’s Purpose in Imminent Babylonian Conquest of Judah
- **Zephaniah** - Prophet Questions God’s Purpose in Imminent Babylonian Conquest of Judah
- **Haggai** - Prophet Reprimands Jews to Return to Rebuilding the Temple
- **Zechariah** - Prophet Calls Jews to Rebuild Temple and Reveals God’s Future Plans
- **Malachi** - Prophet Calls Jews to Commitment and Obedience While Awaiting the Messiah

You can find Bible Stories for Adults on the web at [www.biblestoriesforadults.com](http://www.biblestoriesforadults.com)
Books of the New Testament

**Gospels** - “Good News” of Jesus, the Christ (Messiah)
- **Matthew** - Story of Jesus as the Promised Messiah, Directed to Jews
- **Mark** - Story of Jesus as the Active Son of God, Directed to Romans
- **Luke** - Story of Jesus as the Perfect Son of Man, Focuses on Jesus' Humanity
- **John** - Story of Jesus as the Full Son of God, Focuses on Jesus' Divinity

**History** - Story of God’s New Covenant People
- **Acts** - Formation and Expansion of the Christian Church

**Letters by Paul**
- **Romans** - Explanation of Christianity, Saving Righteousness Comes Through Faith
- **1 Corinthians** - Exhortations Against Disorders Within the Church
- **2 Corinthians** - Reconciliation Between Christians and With God
- **Galatians** - Christians Are to Live By Grace, Not By Law
- **Ephesians** - Be Joyful and Thankful in all Circumstances
- **Colossians** - Salvation is in Christ and in Christ Alone
- **1 Thessalonians** - Remain Steadfast While Awaiting Christ’s Return
- **2 Thessalonians** - Misconceptions of Christ’s Second Coming Corrected
- **1 Timothy** - Advice for Pastor of Christian Congregation
- **2 Timothy** - Persevere in Faith Despite Persecution and Godlessness in the World
- **Titus** - Guidance to Pastor in Handling Opposition
- **Philemon** - Forgiveness and Acceptance of Runaway Slave as Fellow Christian

**Letters by Others**
- **Hebrews** - Christ Supersedes All Things of God’s Old Covenant
- **James** - True Faith is Evident in its Resultant Good Works
- **1 Peter** - Encouragement to Stay on the Narrow Road Despite Persecution
- **2 Peter** - Condemnation of False Teachings Within the Church
- **1 John** - Avoid False Teachings and Live Out God’s Love For Others
- **2 John** - Avoid False Teachers and Obey God’s Commands
- **3 John** - Hospitality Commended in Face of Opposition From Church Leader
- **Jude** - Defending the Faith Against False Teachers

**Apocalypse** - Highly Symbolic Writings that Describe Future Times
- **Revelation** - Visions of Heaven and the Last Days Given to John
Books of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

Apocrypha & Pseudepigrapha

Religious writings not accepted as divinely inspired (not in canon)
Old Testament canon defined by rabbis at Jamnia in 90 AD
Produced and circulated during period of 200 BC - 100 AD
Contain various historical references and stories
Recommended by Jerome & Luther for ethical but not doctrinal teaching
Many apocryphal New Testament writings also exist, such as:
  Gospel of the Infancy, Gospel of Thomas, ... Nicodemus, ... Bartholomew
  Acts of John, ... Paul, ... Peter, ... Andrew, ... Philip, ... Thomas

Apocrypha - Greek for hidden things

Contain ideas that disagree with Protestant doctrine
Purgatory, masses for the dead, good works earn merit with God
Roman Catholics accept 12 of these 15 books as Deuterocanonical
  Accepted at Council of Trent in 1546 in response to reformers
Eastern Orthodox accept all but 2 Esdras as canonical

1 & 2 Esdras
Tobit
Judith
Additions To Esther
Wisdom of Solomon
Ecclesiasticus
Baruch
Letter of Jeremiah
Song of the Three Young Men
Susanna
Bel and the Dragon
Prayer of Manasseh
1 & 2 Maccabees

Pseudepigrapha - Greek for false authorship

Falsely claimed to be written by a well-known ancient figure
Given even less credence than apocrypha
Called Apocrypha by Roman Catholics
  Eastern Orthodox accept 3 & 4 Maccabees as canonical

Enoch
Psalms of Solomon
Books of Adam and Eve
Martyrdom of Isaiah
Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs
King James Version
(A Psalm of David.)

23 THE Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his names sake.
4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

The Living Bible

23 Because the Lord is my Shepherd, I have everything I need!
2,3 He lets me rest in the meadow grass and leads me beside the quiet streams. He gives me new strength. He helps me do what honors him the most.
4 Even when walking through the dark valley of death I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me, guarding, guiding all the way. b)
5 You provide delicious food for me in the presence of my enemies. You have welcomed me as your guest: c) blessings overflow!
6 Your goodness and unfailing kindness shall be with me all of my life, and afterwards I will live with you forever in your home.

New International Version

A psalm of David.

23 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
3 he restores my soul.
He guides me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
4 Even though I walk
through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
6 Surely goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Revised Standard Version

A psalm of David.

23 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want;
2 he makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters;
3 he restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
4 Even though I walk
through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil;
for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff,
they comfort me.
5 Thou preparest a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
thou anointest my head with oil,
my cup overflows.
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life;
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.