

Why Study the Bible?

Multiply--Week 7

July 7, 2013

DAY 1: The Bible's Background

1. *Before* I became a Christian I looked at the bible as something:

- Optional. I knew about the Ten "Commandments" but I never *considered* them as *commandments*.
- Irrelevant. I once bought the argument that since the bible was written several thousand years ago, it could be not be relevant in today's world.

Are either of these how you think about the bible?

2. The bible is unique in its *compilation*.

I, and many people, had no idea how the bible came into existence. For example, I was of the belief that, "the bible was just written by a bunch of old men sitting around a table." That is a statement that can be de-bunked with some *elementary* facts about the bible's development. The bible:

- Is not "a" book, but a collection of books regarded as authoritative on a subject.
- Contains 66 books in 2 sections – Old Testament and New Testament
- Was written by 40 different authors
- Was written over a *1500 year* span
- Was written by authors from all walks of life
- Was written in 3 different languages
- Was written on 3 different continents
- Presents a unified portrait of God's plans and purposes in the world.

What things strike you about that list?

3. The bible is unique *historically*. The New Testament was written within 100 years of actual events. There are now more than 5,300 known Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Add over 10,000 Latin Vulgate and at least 9,300 other early versions (MSS) and we have more than 24,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament.

No other document of antiquity begins to approach such numbers and attestation. In comparison, the *Iliad* by Homer poem regarding the Fall of Troy is second with only 643 manuscripts that still survive. The *Iliad* was written 500 years AFTER the event, yet no one questions the veracity of the *historical reality* of the *Iliad*.

4. If someone does just the same amount of personal research that a junior high student would do on a history project, most people's questions about the bible would be answered.

a. Why do you think people won't do personal research?

b. Is this more a knowledge problem or a heart problem?

DAY 2: Bible: Useful and Complete

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1. "God-breathed" means "exhaled." The idea is that the bible *originated* with God, not with men. How does that affect your view of the bible?

2. You may wonder, "But what about those 40 authors?" God used those men, not as robots, but instruments in His hands to have them write what He wanted written. What is astounding to me is that these 40 different authors still had a unified story of God and His dealings with people! What strikes you about this?

3. In 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul writes that the scripture is "useful." This speaks to the relevance of the bible. It is something that human beings need. Paul says it is useful to do four things. Jot down what you think each one means:

- Teaching-

- Rebuking-

- Correction-

- Training in righteousness-

4. 2 Tim. 3:17 says that the bible is written so that we may be "thoroughly equipped for every good work." What does "thoroughly equipped" mean? (If you need some help thinking of this, what would it mean to be "thoroughly equipped" to climb Mt. Everest?)

5. He finishes with "for *every* good work." It means there is no realm of life to which the bible is not relevant. Sometimes the bible speaks directly to areas of our life, but if it doesn't speak directly, the bible gives us wise principles with which to think about an area of life.

6. We spent this morning looking at 2 Tim. 3:16-17. What is your biggest take away from this verse?

DAY 3: The Bible as God's Voice

1. Human beings love to think that they know best. Our working assumption is, "I know what to do." That belief is so embedded that *even God* doesn't know better than I do!

Bulletin: God knows you better than you do!!!

2 Peter 1:20-21: "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 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"

2. People usually think of "prophecy" as predictions about the future. But the word "prophecy" signifies more than that. "Prophecy" refers to God revealing things that we couldn't figure out on our own - God revealing himself. What two phrases does Peter use to indicate that the bible is God's voice, His words originating with Himself?

3. Many people cavalierly dismiss the bible with a saying like, "the bible is just what you want it to say." How does Peter address that dismissive?

4. It is not honest to read into the bible what you want it to say. This is what theologians call "isogesis." We are to let the bible speak for itself (Exegesis).

5. Peter says the bible writers were "carried along" by the Holy Spirit.

The Greek word for "carried along" was used to describe the wind blowing into a sail. The wind "carried" the boat "along." How does this illustrate how God used the writers of the bible?

6. Are you willing to listen to God's voice? Over your own voice?

DAY 4: The Bible as Truth

John 17:17 "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."

1. Over the last fifty years our culture has "pendulumed" from an understanding of **absolute** truth to a "commitment" to **relative** truth. If you've ever said, "Truth is relative. What is 'true' for you may not be 'true' for me," then you have been duped by our culture. God has created a universe where there is absolute truth. That should be a comfort to you! You are not left to have to "figure out" major arenas of life, such as, Who is God? What is He like? How do I build a healthy marriage? How do we balance love, discipline and training as we parent our kids? How do we work through conflict in such a way that you are closer to people after the conflict? and *hundreds* of other questions!

Have you been a "truth is relative" person? What effects did you notice during that time in your life?

Anxiety Confusion Doubt about what to do

Wrong/bad choices when you thought you had made good choices

Ambivalence; Wavering back and forth

Indecisive Lack of confidence

Other: _____

2. When it comes to God, there are only two ways of knowing what He is like: **revelation** or **speculation**. Either He reveals Himself to us, or we speculate as to what we think He is. Millions of people are quite comfortable with *speculating* about God, and are quite certain and sure in their thoughts about God. What strikes you about that approach?

3. For the following verses, underline the benefit(s) of knowing God's truth:

Psalms 25:5 guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

Psalms 26:3 for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth.

Psalms 40:10 I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and salvation. I do not conceal your love and your truth from the great assembly.

Psalms 40:11 Do not withhold your mercy from me, O LORD; may your love and your truth always protect me.

Psalms 43:3 Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell.

Psalms 51:6 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

Psalms 145:18 The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

4. What's something you learned about the benefits of absolute truth?

DAY 5: Bible Truth as Transformational

1. The bible is needed for another reason. Left to ourselves, we're doomed to go the wrong way in life. In the following verses, underline the human element *inside us* that leads us in bad directions:

Judges 21:25 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

Proverbs 16:2 All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the LORD.

Proverbs 3:5-7 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. ⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.

2. These verses tell us that our perspective, our vision, our way of seeing things is skewed, faulty. If we follow what our "eyes" (feelings, thinking, instincts, etc.) tell us, we're likely to move away from God and live for ourselves. What was your biggest take away from the verses, above?

3. The bible has the ability and power to show us ourselves, to bring to the surface what we can't see in ourselves. In the following verse, underline what the bible can do for us:

Hebrews 4:12 For 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.

4. The bible has the power to transform our very nature!!! Have you ever tried to change something in your human nature without God's help? How did that go?

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

5. What is Paul's advice for changing your human nature?

6. When our minds are transformed, what benefits does Paul point to at the end of Romans 12:2?

7. We finish our first week of looking at the uniqueness and value of the bible. How has your perspective changed this week?