

QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE

book four in the series:

THE OWNER'S MANUAL TO THE NEW YOU

DOUG BRITTON, MFT

Five-day Bible study for individuals, small groups, and churches

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- Day One: The Big Picture
 - Day Two: Why Should I Read the Bible?
 - Day Three: Overview of the Old Testament
 - Day Four: Overview of the New Testament
 - Day Five: Review and Test

Quick Overview of the Bible: Book four in “The Owner’s Manual to the New You”

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ISBN: 978-1-930153-53-0

Version: TOM0420181115A

Published by LifeTree Books, Sacramento, CA • Visit www.dougbrittonbooks.com



The Owner's Manual to the New You

Forty-eight short books

(Each book includes a five-day Bible study and homework)

By Doug Britton, MFT

Twelve books on “Knowing God”

Twelve books on “Developing a Godly Character”

Twelve books on “Enjoying Healthy Relationships”

Twelve books on “Overcoming Personal Problems”

For

Individuals

Small Groups

Churches

Available free for personal use at:
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The Owner's Manual to the New You

"The Owner's Manual to the New You," published by LifeTree Books, is a series of forty-eight cross-cultural discipleship books by Bible-based Marriage and Family Therapist Doug Britton. LifeTree Books is making these books available free of charge for individual use.

Each book is ideal for a five-day study by small groups, classes, or individuals. Although this is a forty-eight-book series, each book can be studied as a complete book by itself.

Doug Britton is in the process of completing the forty-eight books. The estimated completion date is June, 2019.

Knowing God

- Book 1: Who is God?
- Book 2: Becoming a Believer
- Book 3: Your Identity in Christ
- Book 4: Quick Overview of the Bible
- Book 5: How to Study the Bible
- Book 6: How to Pray
- Book 7: Key Christian Practices
- Book 8: Successful Christian Living
- Book 9: Living a Joyful Life
- Book 10: Knowing God's Will
- Book 11: Obeying God
- Book 12: Living in God's Power

Developing a Godly Character

- Book 13: Growing in Christ
- Book 14: Changing Your Self-Image
- Book 15: Changing Your Attitudes
- Book 16: Living with Humility
- Book 17: Living with Purpose
- Book 18: Living with Self-Control
- Book 19: Living with Integrity
- Book 20: Growing through Problems
- Book 21: Trusting God
- Book 22: Breaking Free from Our Culture
- Book 23: Handling Money Responsibly
- Book 24: Staying Faithful to God

Enjoying Healthy Relationships

- Book 25: Keys to Healthy Relationships
- Book 26: Making Friends
- Book 27: Showing Grace to Others
- Book 28: Forgiving Others
- Book 29: Serving Others
- Book 30: Resolving Conflicts
- Book 31: Overcoming Peer Pressure
- Book 32: Helping Others with Wisdom
- Book 33: Dating, Marriage, and Sex
- Book 34: Healing Racial and Social Divisions
- Book 35: Respecting Authority
- Book 36: Sharing Your Faith

Overcoming Personal Problems

- Book 37: Overcoming Your Anger (Part 1)
- Book 38: Overcoming Your Anger (Part 2)
- Book 39: Overcoming Rejection
- Book 40: Overcoming Temptation (Part 1)
- Book 41: Overcoming Temptation (Part 2)
- Book 42: Overcoming Anxiety and Fear
- Book 43: Overcoming Jealousy and Insecurity
- Book 44: Overcoming Self-Sufficiency
- Book 45: Overcoming Guilt and Shame
- Book 46: Overcoming Discouragement
- Book 47: Overcoming Failure
- Book 48: Overcoming the Fear of Death

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Foreword

When I was first asked to write a series of downloadable books for intensive discipleship training, I was excited. Jesus has revolutionized my life, and I am glad to share his truths with you.

The pages you are about to study come straight from God's word. They contain truth that puts our feet on the path to the fullest life possible—truth that sets us free.

As Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31-32).

May God speak to your heart as you read, and may he bring his truth alive in your life.

Your brother in Christ,

Doug Britton

P.S. LifeTree Books is offering this downloadable book and all the other books in “The Owner's Manual to the New You” series free of charge. If you find these books helpful, please feel free to spread the news to churches, ministries, and individuals who might benefit from them.

Small Group Leader's Guidelines

Introduction. These studies are for new believers as well as mature Christians. They are for small groups, discipleship classes, mentors, and individuals. They are ideal for studies lasting from sixty to ninety minutes.

Choose the key points, verses, and discussion questions you will talk about. Don't think you need to cover every verse and question. With new believers, go over the main points, key verses, and selected questions. Go into more depth with mature Christians.

Begin and end each study with prayer. Start by asking God to help each person grow from the study. At the end, ask everyone to pray for help to put God's truth into practice.

Review homework. Before starting the current lesson, ask group members to discuss their answers to some of the previous day's homework questions.

Personalize the lesson. Although it's okay to read each lesson word-for-word, the material will "come alive" if you discuss some of the key points in your own words. Share your own experiences and struggles, and how God has helped you.

As you read, identify important points and key parts of verses. Ask group members to circle them, and then explain why you want to emphasize these points.

Get everyone involved. The more people are actively involved, the more they are impacted by what you are studying. Don't ask questions that can be answered by "yes" or "no." For example, don't ask, "Do you have any thoughts about this?" Instead, ask, "How does this insight speak to you?"

Consider breaking up into smaller groups to discuss the questions if you are leading a large group or class.

Use day five for a review and test. Use the questions in day five as a review and/or test. Remove these pages if you do not want group members to see the questions ahead of time.

Want to Learn More?

Free online resources: For more suggestions for small group leaders as well as many online Bible studies on Christianity and daily living (anger, marriage, self-image, finances, and more), visit www.dougbrittonbooks.com/resources/small-groups

Small group leader's book: For detailed information on how to lead small groups and overcome typical problems, visit www.dougbrittonbooks.com/bookstore/small-groups.

Day One: The Big Picture

We live in an age of countless and ever-changing opinions and theories about life, God, and human relationships. Yet there is a dependable source to which we can go for truth. The one who created us tells us in his word, the Bible, about himself and his plan for our redemption. In it he inspires us, encourages us, and warns us.

In its pages he also gives us cross-cultural truths for daily living, truths that have remained true throughout the ages. These range from helping us trust God and understand how much he loves us to showing us how to love others, raise children, and develop healthy communication patterns.



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 3:16-17)

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. (Hebrews 4:12)

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever. (Isaiah 40:8)

Do 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. (Joshua 1:8)

Discussion questions

1. According to Hebrews 4:12, what does the word of God do? How does it accomplish this?
2. Why does Hebrews 4:12 use the image of a sword?

Who wrote the Bible?

God is the author of the Bible. Although he used many different people to do the writing, he inspired what they wrote.

One way to think of this is to imagine the general of an army giving instructions to the top commanders who in turn write these instructions as memos to soldiers under them. Although the commanders write the memos, they contain messages from the general.

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 Peter 1:21)

I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles. (2 Peter 3:2)

Who were the people who did the actual writing? They came from a wide variety of backgrounds, ranging from fisherman to doctor to prophet. Many of the writers were alive at the time of the events they described, and they gave eye-witness accounts. They wrote in three languages—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek

Discussion questions

3. When people wrote the Bible, were they doing it because they decided to write about God, or because God prompted them?
4. Why is this an important question?

How can we be sure the Bible is accurate?

Some people think that since the Bible was copied by hand over many centuries (before the printing press was invented), mistakes must have been made. Others think that as the Bible was translated into various languages, it is inevitable that mistakes were made and the original message was lost.

However, the proof that the Bible we have today is faithful to the originals is overwhelming. The Old Testament, which was painstakingly transcribed for centuries by Jewish scribes (who had an extremely detailed quality-control system), has been proven accurate by multiple ancient documents such as the Dead Sea scrolls.

Likewise, the accuracy of the New Testament has been confirmed by many ancient manuscripts as well as passages of Scripture found in fragments of letters and prayer books going as far back as the second century.

I don't have space in today's lesson to go into the evidence that the Bible is historically accurate, or to show how many of its prophesied events have already taken place. However, if you would like to dig deeper into these fascinating topics, many books cover them in depth.

Don't people disagree about what the Bible says?

Those outside the faith attack the Bible from many fronts. Whenever one of their arguments is demolished, they come up with another one.

Even sincere people of faith have a different understanding about what the Bible says in some areas. That's one reason there are so many denominations.

However, there are foundational truths (or "doctrines") about which the Bible is crystal clear, truths that are essential to understanding God and entering into relationship with him. Some of these key truths, accepted over the centuries by Bible-believing Christians from a wide variety of backgrounds, deal with our fallen nature, salvation through faith in Jesus, and the authority of Scripture. As you study more of the books in "The Owner's Manual to the New You," you will read about more of these key truths.

In addition to "doctrinal" truths, the Bible gives us many straightforward commands for daily living. Although some people choose to disobey them, there is no question about what the Bible actually says in numerous areas of life.

What's the Bible about?

The Bible contains history, the Jewish laws given by God, prophecies about the future, poetry, proverbs (advice for daily living), and psalms (the words of songs). It tells us how to be born again, how to grow closer to God, and how to love others. And it has many parables—stories that illustrate important points. (Jesus spoke in parables a lot.)

The rest of this book will go into more detail about what's in the Bible. Before moving on, let's look at two of the key themes in the Bible:

The Bible tells about God's relationship with humanity and his desire for a relationship with us.

The Bible tells us about many key events in history, including God's creation of the heavens and the earth, his creation of Adam and Eve, their fall, and God's subsequent dealings with humankind. In it we learn of God's relationship with the Jewish people and his desire to enjoy a close friendship with us.

The Bible introduces us to Jesus.

The Bible paints a clear picture of our sinful nature, but it also tells us about God's love and his plan of redemption. Prophecies in the Old Testament promise the future coming of a Savior (Jesus), while other Old Testament passages help us understand more about him.

The New Testament tells us about Jesus and how to be born again. It describes some of the miracles he performed so we may believe he is the Son of God and have eternal life with God.

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But 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 20:30-31)

Discussion questions

5. Why is it important to read the Bible?
6. How much of the Bible have you read?

What are the Old and New Testaments?

The Bible is divided into two parts. The first is the Old Testament. It was written before Jesus was born. It consists of thirty-nine books.

The second part is the New Testament. It was written after Jesus rose from the dead and went into heaven. It consists of twenty-seven books.

What are the "books" of the Bible?

Many people think of the Bible as one book, but it is really a collection of sixty-six separate "books" and letters inspired by God. These books are separate documents, ranging from one to many pages, compiled into one large book—the Bible. They include history, prophecies, a love song, hymns, and letters written by early church leaders.

Do you know Jesus?

This book was written to help believers in Jesus grow in their faith and personal life. You will get the most out of these pages if you know Christ, since it is through his love and power that you can truly change. If you have not yet entered into a relationship with Jesus, let me invite you to accept him as your Savior and Lord. Make this your personal prayer:

Jesus, I believe you are the Son of God, and I need your help. I confess I have sinned and failed you in many ways. I invite you to be my Savior and Lord, and I ask you to help me follow you the rest of my life. Thank you for loving me, forgiving me, and accepting me as your child.

If you prayed this prayer, welcome to the family of God. God has plans for you—to transform you. You have an exciting life ahead of you!

Memory verse

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 3:16-17)

Want to learn more?

Books by Doug Britton

Getting Started, Getting Connected

www.dougbrittonbooks.com/bookstore/getting-started

First Things First

www.dougbrittonbooks.com/bookstore/first-things-first

5. Why is it important to read the Bible?

6. How can we be sure the Bible is accurate?

7. Is the Bible true in any culture or society? Explain your answer.

8. What is the message in Joshua 1:8?

Day Two: Why Should I Read the Bible?

The Bible is God's word, yet many people rarely read it and are unaware of the truths found in it. In fact, the only time many people are exposed to the word is when they hear their pastor's sermons.

Why is it important to read the Bible? In today's lesson you will read some key reasons.

Discussion question

1. What are some reasons many of us rarely read the Bible?

God tells us to read (or listen to) the Bible

Throughout the Bible itself, God tells us how important it is to know and meditate on (or think about) the Bible. Let's look at a few verses that make this point.

Do 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. (Joshua 1:8)

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

It's good to read books about the Bible (like this one), watch Christian TV shows, or listen to Christian radio and podcasts. But don't stop there. Read the Bible itself.

Discussion question

2. According to Joshua 1:8, when should we think about (or meditate on) the Bible? In practical terms, how could we put this into practice?

The Bible teaches truth and corrects falsehoods

It's obvious that God is serious about wanting us to get into his word. Yet many take this command casually and allow themselves to be guided by the world's ideas, not God's. A passage in Hosea troubles me, for I have seen it fulfilled in the lives of many people I know.

My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. (Hosea 4:6)

Pilate, the Roman ruler who ordered the execution of Jesus, asked, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). Many people ask the same question today.

The Bible gives us the truth. Plus it corrects false teachings. For example, in many places in the New Testament we are warned against the false idea that we can earn our salvation. We are told, instead, that we are justified through faith, not works (Galatians 3:1-27 and Romans 3:22-27).



Discussion question

3. What does Hosea 4:6 mean?

The Bible shows us God's love, power, and holiness

Many people have a vague idea of who God is. Or they think of him as a spiritual force, not a personage. As you read in Chapter 1, he is very different from that.

The Bible tells us of God's love, power, and holiness. As we read it, we are encouraged in our faith and motivated to draw closer to him. Read what David wrote about delighting in God's word:

I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word. (Psalm 119:16)

Discussion question

4. Have you ever felt "delighted" as you read God's word? If so, when? Why were you delighted by what you read?

The Bible tells us how to think, live, and love

The Bible, written long ago, is relevant today. It covers all areas of daily living, including marriage, parenting, communication, forgiveness, decision-making, finances, and overcoming temptation.

We need God's instructions, for we are exposed to many voices in the world, voices that in many cases give wrong information as well as a big thumbs up to immorality of every kind. Our exposure to the Internet, newspapers, magazines, books, teachers and professors, TV, movies, plays, and other influences have a major effect on our thoughts and opinions. We need God's life-giving instructions.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws. (Psalm 119:105-106)

Discussion question

5. Circle "lamp" and "light" in Psalm 119:105-106 (above). What do these words mean? How do they apply to our daily lives?

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 3:16-17)

Discussion question

6. Circle the word "all" in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (above). What does "all" mean?

Sometimes our "flesh"—our human nature—rebels against God's commands, and we don't want to obey them. At those times it's good to remember that all God's commands are for our good—even those that are hard to understand.

And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good? (Deuteronomy 10:12-13)

Discussion questions

Circle the words “for your own good” in Deuteronomy 10:12-13 (above).

7. What happens when we do things our way?
8. What happens when we do things God's way?

The Bible transforms us

When you read the Bible, you learn important information, but something else happens when you have an open heart. Reading and meditating on what you study actually changes your attitudes, motives, and emotions. It transforms you on the inside. It renews your mind.

Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (Matthew 4:4)

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. (Romans 12:2)

Discussion question

9. How does the Bible transform us?

The Bible comforts, inspires, encourages, and challenges us

The Bible comforts and inspires us through stories of God's faithfulness, verses about God's love, examples of faith in action, and psalms of praise. It encourages us to draw close to God, to be brave in our faith, and to overcome fear. It tells us who we are in Christ and challenges us to live for him.

Discussion question

10. Has reading the Bible ever comforted, inspired, encouraged, or challenged you? Describe one time this happened.

The Bible convicts us of sin and warns us against rebelling

The Bible encourages us to live righteous lives by showing us the serious consequences of sin and rebellion. Thankfully, it also teaches us about the grace of God and the forgiveness he offers when we turn from sin and ask for his forgiveness.

The Bible deals with our hearts as well as our outward actions.

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. (Hebrews 4:12)

Discussion question

11. Sometimes we are mainly concerned about whether our actions are good or bad. Hebrews 4:12 (above) says God's word judges “the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” Why is it important for our thoughts and attitudes to be judged?

The Bible gives us hope for eternal life with Jesus

The Bible is full of encouraging promises about our eternal life with Jesus.

In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. (John 14:2-3)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:1-4)

Memory verse

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws. (Psalm 119:105-106)

Homework – Day Two

1. What is one thing you learned from the Bible that has helped you think, live, or love?
2. Write out one verse in today's study that motivates you to read the Bible.
3. Why did you choose that verse? How did it impact you?
4. Which of the reasons to read the Bible are most motivating to you? Why?

5. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

- a. According to these verses, how much of the Bible is “God-breathed”?

- b. If you wanted to do well at a job and the boss gave you instructions, would you make an effort to learn those instructions? Why or why not?

6. Read Romans 12:2. How can your mind be renewed by reading the Bible?

7. Have you found Hosea 4:6 to be true in any area of your life? Why or why not?

8. Have you ever gone through a period of time during which you read the Bible regularly? What difference did this season of Bible reading make in your life?

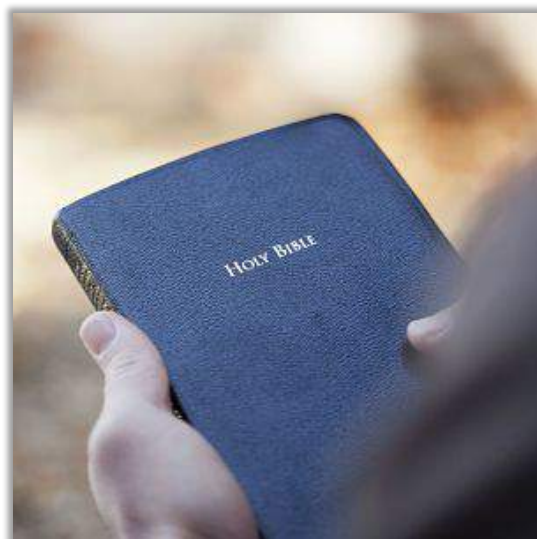
Day Three: Overview of the Old Testament

The thirty-nine books of the Old Testament contain history, the Jewish laws given by God (often referred to as “the law”), prophecies about the future, promises of the coming Savior (Jesus), poetry, proverbs (advice for daily living), and psalms (the words of songs).

We are not under the law the same way the Jews were before Jesus came, but we still can learn much about God and how to live from the Old Testament.

The Old Testament tells us about God’s love and faithfulness, his holiness, and his punishment for rebellion. When we read it, we learn a lot about how—and how not—to approach God.

We also learn how rebellious human nature is, for the Israelites frequently ignored or rebelled against God’s word. When he punished them, they would repent, but after a while they would rebel again.



Discussion questions

1. How many books are in the Old Testament?
2. Have you read the Old Testament, either all of it or part of it? If so, what did you learn? Was it helpful?

Brief description of the books in the Old Testament

The first five books

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are sometimes referred to as the Pentateuch. They record the early history of mankind and the Jewish people. They also contain the law God gave the Jews.

The next twelve books

These are historical books. Some of them overlap, covering the same time periods from different perspectives.

The next five books

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs (also known as the Song of Solomon) include history, poetry, instructions, and guidelines for living.

The following five books

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel include both history and prophecies. They are often referred to as the “Major Prophets” because they are longer than the next twelve books. They deal with events that are also described in the historical books mentioned above.

The last twelve books

These books include both history and prophecies. They are often referred to as the “Minor Prophets” since they are smaller than the five “Major Prophets.”

Does the Old Testament apply to us?

We are not under the law the same way the Jews were. For example, we no longer sacrifice animals to be forgiven for our sins since Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is the only sacrifice we need. As Paul wrote to the Galatians:

So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. (Galatians 3:24-25)

We can learn a lot about God and the way he looks at things by reading the Old Testament.

Although we are “no longer under the supervision of the law” (Galatians 3:24-25), it's still important to read the Old Testament, for in it we learn much about God, his interactions with humankind, the coming Messiah (Jesus), the way God looks at different types of behavior, and much more.

Jesus quoted the Old Testament.

Jesus quoted the Old Testament, read from it, or referred to it on several occasions. For example, when he said, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test’” (Matthew 4:7), he was quoting from the following verse in the Old Testament.

Do not test the LORD your God as you did at Massah. (Deuteronomy 6:16)

Here's another example: When Jesus said, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4), he was quoting from the Old Testament.

He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. (Deuteronomy 8:3)

Jesus' apostles also quoted the New Testament.

The early Christians were students of the Old Testament, and they quoted it often. The following New Testament verse encourages us to recall the words from the past as well as the command given by our Lord and Savior.

I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles. (2 Peter 3:2)

Discussion questions

3. Why is it important for us to read the Old Testament?
4. Did Jesus quote the Old Testament? Why did he?
5. Does the Bible apply to us today? If so, how does it apply?

Understanding Proverbs

Proverbs, one of the books in the Old Testament, deserves special mention. Its thirty-one chapters are packed full of guidelines for life—guidelines that help us interact with other people and grow in wisdom and the knowledge of God.

Some of the verses in Proverbs are written along the lines of “if you do ..., the results will be” When you read these passages, remember that they are proverbs, general guidelines for living, and that they are not intended as absolute promises of success in everything you do.

For example, Proverbs 16:7 says, “When a man’s ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.” When our ways please the Lord, the results are often incredible. Yet this verse is not meant as an absolute guarantee. As you can see in Acts 7:57-60 and Acts 12:2, godly people have sometimes been persecuted or killed for their faith.

Along the same lines, we read in Proverbs that “a gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1). This verse tells us how to respond to an angry person, advice that often gets amazing results. But a gentle answer does not always turn away wrath. It’s possible to respond gently to wrath, yet be injured or killed.

Discussion questions

6. How can we take Proverbs seriously since much of it is general guidelines, not absolute promises?
7. Have you ever felt encouraged, guided, or challenged by a Proverb? If so, what was the Proverb? How did it encourage, guide, or challenge you?

Digging deeper

Read Galatians 3:24-25. Notice that “the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.” What does that mean? How could the law “lead us to Christ”?

Memory verse

I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles. (2 Peter 3:2)

Notes

Homework – Day Three

1. What are the different types of books in the Old Testament?

2. Write the names of the books in the Old Testament that contain the Law.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

3. Write out the names of the books in the Old Testament known as the “Major Prophets.”
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

4. Write the names of the books in the Old Testament known as the “Minor Prophets.”
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.
 - g.
 - h.
 - i.
 - j.
 - k.
 - l.

5. Write two verses in the New Testament in which the Old Testament is quoted.
 - a.

 - b.

6. Write Psalm 23, one of the most popular passages in the Old Testament.

7. Does God expect us to follow all the laws in the Old Testament? Why or why not?

8. Why is it important for us to read the Old Testament?

Day Four: Overview of the New Testament

After Jesus rose from the dead, some of his followers wrote letters, a history, and four “gospels.” You can see by the following verse that some were shared between the early churches.

After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea. (Colossians 4:16)

Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. (2 Peter 3:15-16)



Eventually these writings were gathered together to make the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. In the following centuries, various groups of church leaders met to “canonize,” that is, to confirm, that the twenty-seven books were from God. The councils also determined that no other writings should be included. The most important canonization was by the Council of Carthage in AD 397.

The New Testament tells us about Jesus’ life, how to be born again, how to grow closer to God, how to conduct ourselves in church, and how to love others. It also warns us to live godly lives, explains important doctrinal issues, and gives prophecies of future events.

Although we should read the Old Testament, we should put special emphasis on the New Testament since it was written to Christians, encouraging them and giving them instructions for the new type of relationship they had with God.

Discussion questions

1. How many books are in the New Testament?
2. Have you read the New Testament, either all of it or part of it? If so, what did you learn? Was it helpful?

Brief description of the books in the New Testament

The first four books

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are known as the four gospels. Each one gives an account of Jesus’ life and teachings from a different perspective.

Luke, the author of “Luke,” explained his motivation to give an accurate account of Jesus’ life. (Notice that although God used Luke to write the gospel, he had Luke use his investigative abilities.)

Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:3-4)

The gospels introduce us to the sacrifice Jesus made so that we could be “born again” and have an intimate relationship with God. When Jesus took our sins upon himself, he radically changed the relationship between us and God.

Discussion questions

3. Have you read any (or all) of these four gospels? If so, which one(s)?
4. What is one thing you read that impacted you personally?

The next book

Acts describes some of the history of the early church, with a special emphasis on the activities of Peter and Paul. It also shows how the Holy Spirit moved within the early church and directed people at key times.

Discussion questions

5. Have you read Acts? If so, talk about one event in it that inspires you to make a difference in this world for God.
6. What are some ways the Holy Spirit was active in Acts?

The following twenty-one books

The next books are letters written by Paul and others to help Christians know God’s holiness, love, and power; to correct false doctrines; and to instruct, encourage, correct, and inspire their audiences.

Some were named after the authors, and some were named after the group of people to whom they were written. For example, Ephesians is a letter Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus.

The letters were originally sent to specific recipients, and then some were passed around before being gathered together into the Bible.

Discussion questions

7. Which of these books have you read?
8. What are some ways they have spoken to your heart or impacted your life?

The last book

Revelation, the last book in the New Testament, is also a letter. Like the other letters, it instructs, encourages, corrects, and inspires its readers. It also describes a vision given to the apostle John of heaven and end-time events, often using figurative language.

Does the New Testament apply to us?

The first four books in the New Testament quote many things Jesus said, and almost all of them directly apply to us. A few things he said to individual people (for example, the rich young ruler in Matthew 19:16-22) are not absolute commandments to everyone, although they illustrate important principles that we need to pray about.

It's good to remember that Jesus often taught using stories, figures of speech, and parables. At these times, such as when he said to pluck out your eye if it offends you (Mark 9:47), he was emphasizing an important point (the importance of dealing with sin), not saying to literally to pluck out your eye.

The letters in the New Testament were written to Christians, and almost everything in them applies directly to us. As in the gospels, some of the passages contain instructions or answers that apply to specific situations (for example, Paul's request for his cloak in 2 Timothy 4:13), but even in these unique situations we can learn something.

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. (Hebrews 4:12)

Discussion questions

9. Why did God prompt his followers to write the New Testament?
10. What would have happened to believers without the letters and eventually the New Testament?

Memory verse

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16)

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Notes

Homework – Day Four

1. Why was the New Testament written?
2. Who wrote the most letters in the New Testament? How many did he write?
3. Would you agree that although we should read the Old Testament, we should put special attention on the New Testament? Why or why not?
4. Read Colossians 3:16. What does it mean to “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly”?

5. When we read words clearly written to specific individuals (such as the Ephesians), can we learn from them? Why or why not?

6. Write the names of the four gospels.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

7. What do the four gospels have in common?

8. What would have happened to believers without the letters and eventually the New Testament?

9. How often do you read the New Testament?
 - a. Do you think you should read it more often? If your answer is "yes," when would be the easiest time for you to read?
 - b. Write a brief prayer asking God to help you put this into practice.

Day Five: Review and Test (may be removed by leader)

Note to teachers and small group leaders

These questions can be used in day five as a review and/or test. Remove this page if you do not want group members to see the questions ahead of time.

True or false (circle one)

- T F 1. God is the ultimate author of the Bible.
- T F 2. The Bible is composed of many documents, many of which are probably bogus.
- T F 3. You don't really need to read the Bible, but it's important to carry it with you all the time since it is your sword.
- T F 4. Reading the Bible can renew your mind.
- T F 5. There are fifteen books in the Old Testament.
- T F 6. Christians don't need to read the Old Testament. Even Jesus ignored it.
- T F 7. The gospels are found at the beginning of the Old Testament.
- T F 8. The New Testament marked a big change in the type of relationship we can have with God.
- T F 9. It's a good idea to have a daily pattern of Bible study.
- T F 10. If you are close to Jesus, he will speak directly to your heart. There's no need to read the Bible.

Short questions

- 1. What are three reasons you should read the Bible?

- 2. How can we be sure the Bible is accurate?

Day Five: Answer Key to Test (may be removed by leader)

Note to teachers and small group leaders

Remove this page if you do not want group members to see these answers ahead of time.

True or false

- T 1. God is the ultimate author of the Bible.
- F 2. The Bible is composed of many documents, many of which are probably bogus.
- F 3. You don't really need to read the Bible, but it's important to carry it with you all the time since it is your sword.
- T 4. Reading the Bible can renew your mind.
- F 5. The Old Testament is composed of fifteen books.
- F 6. Christians don't need to read the Old Testament. Even Jesus ignored it.
- F 7. The gospels are found at the beginning of the Old Testament.
- T 8. The New Testament marked a big change in the type of relationship we can have with God.
- T 9. It's a good idea to have a daily pattern of Bible study.
- F 10. If you are close to Jesus, he will speak directly to your heart. There's no need to read the Bible.

Memory verses

- 1. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

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. Psalm 119:105-106

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws.



About the Author

Doug Britton, Bible-based Marriage and Family Therapist, has helped hundreds of thousands of people as a therapist, clinical director of a treatment center, seminar speaker, radio co-host, and author of over twenty books that show people how to apply God's truths in their daily lives.

He has also trained pastors, counselors, mentors, and lay leaders in biblical counseling, mentoring, and small group leadership.

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Books

Doug has written Bible-based books on many daily-living topics. Visit www.dougbrittonbooks.com/bookstore.

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Doug is the founder and president of LifeTree Institute and LifeTree Books. If you would like him or another member of the LifeTree team to speak in your church on any of the above topics, please visit www.dougbrittonbooks.com and click on the "Seminars" link.

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Breaking Free (from Drugs and Alcohol)

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