

Week 1: Why Do We Study the Bible?  
Introduction to Ephesians & the Importance of Bible Study

I. Opening Discussion (5-10 min)

Ask the class:

1. Why do you read the Bible?
2. What are some challenges to studying Scripture?
3. How has reading the Bible impacted your life?

Encourage people to share briefly, setting the tone for open discussion.

II. Why Do We Read the Bible? (10 min)

(Use these points to guide the discussion or as a short teaching segment.)

1. **The Bible is God’s Word** – It is divinely inspired (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
2. **It reveals who God is** – The Bible shows us His character and His plan.
3. **It gives wisdom for life** – God’s Word provides direction (Psalm 119:105).
4. **It strengthens our faith** – Faith grows through hearing and studying the Word (Romans 10:17).
5. **It helps us live as Christians** – The Bible equips us for every good work.

III. Why Study the Bible Deeply? (10 min)

Transition to deeper study:

- The Bible is not just for information, but **transformation** (Romans 12:2).
- Context matters: Misinterpretation can lead to confusion.
- Ephesians is a **letter written to help believers understand their identity in Christ** and how to live accordingly.

IV. Connection to Ephesians (10-15 min)

- **Ephesians 1:17** – Paul prays that believers will have "**the Spirit of wisdom and revelation**" to know God better.
- **Ephesians 3:3-6** – Paul explains that God has revealed His mystery to believers.
- **Ephesians 4:1** – "Live a life worthy of the calling you have received." How can we do that without knowing Scripture?

V. Application & Takeaways (5-10 min)

- What is one habit or change you can make to engage more with the Bible?
- How can we encourage one another to stay in God’s Word?

**Closing Prayer:** Ask God to give everyone a hunger for His Word and wisdom as you begin this journey through Ephesians.

**What is the difference between the bible being literal and authoritative?**

- **Literal** - John 10:9 "I am the door". Exodus 3:8 "a land flowing with milk and honey". Song of Songs 1:15 "Your eyes are doves." Mark 1:5 "And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him ..."
- **Authoritative** - Saying the Bible is authoritative means it has God-given authority over faith, morality, and life. Whether a passage is literal or symbolic, its teachings are binding and true.
- **Literal relates to how we interpret the Bible (word-for-word vs. figurative).**
- **Authoritative relates to how we submit to the Bible (recognizing it as the final standard for truth and obedience).**

**A person can believe in biblical authority while also understanding that some parts of the Bible use metaphors, poetry, and cultural expressions rather than always being strictly literal.**

**Biblical authority** refers to the belief that the Bible has the right and power to guide, direct, and command the lives of Christians. It is rooted in the conviction that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, serving as the ultimate standard for faith, doctrine, and practice. Here are some key aspects of Biblical authority:

1. Source of Authority

- The Bible is considered authoritative because it is **God-breathed** (2 Timothy 3:16). It is viewed as the direct revelation of God’s will and character.
- It is believed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit, making it reliable and trustworthy (2 Peter 1:20–21).

2. Nature of Biblical Authority

- **Divine Authority:** Since God is the ultimate authority, His Word carries His authority. Obedience to the Bible is viewed as obedience to God.
- **Comprehensive Authority:** The Bible addresses all areas of life—spiritual, moral, relational, and ethical.
- **Sufficient Authority:** The Scriptures are considered sufficient for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

3. How It Is Exercised

- **Doctrine and Theology:** The Bible defines Christian beliefs, such as salvation, the nature of God, and the work of Christ.
- **Moral Guidance:** It sets moral standards, providing principles for living a godly life (e.g., the Ten Commandments, Sermon on the Mount).
- **Church Practices:** It governs worship, leadership, and church discipline (e.g., 1 Timothy 3; Acts 2:42).
- **Personal Decisions:** Believers turn to Scripture for guidance in personal and ethical decisions (e.g., Proverbs 3:5–6).

4. Types of Biblical Authority

- **Normative Authority:** Scripture is the norm or standard by which truth is measured.
- **Moral Authority:** The Bible dictates how believers should live, defining what is right and wrong.
- **Spiritual Authority:** It reveals the way to salvation and sanctification through faith in Christ.

5. Challenges to Biblical Authority

- **Cultural Relativism:** Modern society often challenges the Bible’s relevance, arguing that its teachings are outdated or culturally bound.
- **Interpretation Disputes:** Differences in understanding Scripture can lead to debates about its meaning and application.
- **Rejection of Absolutes:** Many resist the idea of absolute truths or divine commands, favoring personal autonomy.

6. Practical Implications for Believers

- **Submission:** Believers are called to submit to the Bible’s teachings as God’s revealed will.
- **Study and Application:** Christians are encouraged to study Scripture diligently (2 Timothy 2:15) and live according to its principles.
- **Proclamation:** The Bible’s authority motivates believers to share its message with others.

7. Key Verses Supporting Biblical Authority

- **Psalm 119:105:** "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."
- **Matthew 4:4:** "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."
- **Hebrews 4:12:** "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword..."
- **John 17:17:** "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."

Summary

Biblical authority means that the Bible, as God’s Word, has the right to govern and direct the lives of individuals, churches, and society. It challenges believers to live in alignment with its teachings, trusting its reliability, and submitting to its divine instruction.

Romans 10:17 (NIV) says:  
*"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ."*  
This verse emphasizes that faith is built by hearing and understanding the Word of God, highlighting the importance of preaching and teaching the gospel.

2 Kings 22:8-13  
**8** Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the Lord." He gave it to Shaphan, who read it. **9** Then Shaphan the secretary went to the king and reported to him: "Your officials have paid out the money that was in the temple of the Lord and have entrusted it to the workers and supervisors at the temple." **10** Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.  
**11** When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes. **12** He gave these orders to Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Akbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king's attendant: **13** "Go and inquire of the Lord for me and for the people and for all Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the Lord's anger that burns against us because those who have gone before us have not obeyed the words of this book; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written there concerning us."

**Hebrews 4:12 (NIV):**  
*"For the word of God is alive 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."*  
This verse emphasizes the power of God's Word—it is not just words on a page but something dynamic, able to transform hearts and discern our innermost thoughts.

**Proverbs 3:3 (NIV) "Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart."**  
**Proverbs 7:2-3 (NIV) "Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart."**  
**Deuteronomy 6:6 (NIV) "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts."**

**Psalms 119:105 (KJV):** *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."*

**Jeremiah 17:9 (NIV):** *"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"*  
This verse emphasizes the fallen nature of humanity, warning that our hearts can lead us astray and that only God truly understands and can transform them.

**Warnings About the Deceitfulness of the Heart:**

- **Proverbs 28:26 (NIV)**  
*"Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe."*
- **Mark 7:21-23 (NIV)**  
*"For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person."*
- **Ecclesiastes 9:3 (NIV)**  
*"This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of people, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead."*

**Warnings About Trusting in Your Own Understanding:**

- **Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)**  
*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."*
- **Isaiah 55:8-9 (NIV)**  
*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."*
- **1 Corinthians 3:18-19 (NIV)**  
*"Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become 'fools' so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight."*

These verses emphasize the importance of relying on God's wisdom rather than our own flawed understanding.

Related YouTube Video:

**Biblical Authority in an Age of Uncertainty | Carson, Piper, Keller**  
<https://youtu.be/hBfb8Zbxn0?si=MCYOxQ4D0aZGqQtI>

**Tim Keller on the Authority of Scripture**  
<https://youtu.be/-J67U2oTj5g?si=gcKBoLS7NwmGNstu>

**Is the Bible inerrant or infallible?**  
<https://youtu.be/UT5zYw1qaaM?si=BpJyHLEqO-MBJZt1>

**Tim Keller on Interpreting the Bible | Big Think**  
<https://youtu.be/UUisUZ42HLA?si=8W9zyt0goPGMu97c>

**Why is the Bible reliable? | Tim Keller at Columbia University**  
[https://youtu.be/UZAPFKXMy\\_Y?si=9kxlllZOgygli6oA](https://youtu.be/UZAPFKXMy_Y?si=9kxlllZOgygli6oA)

**Q&A: Is the bible literally true? Tim Keller**  
<https://youtu.be/qyEXQ3JZkUs?si=oebhF8jr4NKugzIR>

**Is the Bible infallible? How if it's written by fallible people? Ask NT Wright Anything Podcast**  
[https://youtu.be/W3YIQsjP6Ig?si=X9ZRXf2vP\\_TnBgNi](https://youtu.be/W3YIQsjP6Ig?si=X9ZRXf2vP_TnBgNi)

**Can the Bible have errors? Tom Explains | Ask NT Wright Anything**  
<https://youtu.be/6-f4taPmORc?si=2QN1GJhplmvRn-nZ>