



reflecting Jesus

BETA

when the Bible is studied
God's voice is heard **05**

? *did you know...*

we can be really confident that the Bible is reliable

Look at this comparison between biblical manuscripts and other documents that historians believe are accurate.

	Date of original document	Date of oldest surviving copy	Approximate date between the original and oldest surviving copy	Number of copies in existence today
Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian Wars	c. 431-400 BC	AD 900 plus a few earlier fragments	1300 years	73
Caesar's Gallic War	c. 58-50 BC	AD 825	875 years	10
Tacitus' Histories and Annals	c. AD 98-108	c. AD 850	750 years	2
The New Testament	AD 40-100	AD 350	310 years	14,000 approx.

From Christianity Explored, Study Guide: Leaders Edition, 2003, 60.

in 1947...

A shepherd accidentally made an amazing discovery. He was throwing stones up a cliff, when a stone flew into a hidden cave, making a strange sound. After climbing up to investigate, he found clay pots with scrolls inside. These scrolls were written around 1900 years ago. They demonstrated that as the Bible had been copied by hand over many hundreds of years, no significant changes had been made. These scrolls became known as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

so when we study the Bible, we can be certain that what we read is what God intended us to read

This means that when we study the Bible, we can be confident of hearing God speak. The question then is, will we believe it?



the facts of his story

Words are very important to God. He chose to reveal himself, not with pictures, but with words—the Bible. When we read these words, we hear him speak. When we hear what is on his mind for us to know, things happen...

1. What happened when God spoke?

Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26 _____

2. What happened when Jesus spoke? (In John's gospel, Jesus is called "the Word")

Mark 2:5-12 _____

3. What happened when God's people spoke and wrote down God's words for others to read?

Ezekiel: Ezekiel 37: 1-10 _____

Peter: Acts 2:40-41 _____

Paul: Romans 1:13-16 _____

Can you think of any other parallels between God's creation and our re-Creation?

When God spoke in Genesis 1, human beings were created in the image of God:

Instantly
Beautifully
Giving God great pleasure

When Jesus began to speak, human beings began to have the possibility of being re-created in His image:

Instantly
Beautifully
Giving God great pleasure



thinking it through

1. From what you have just read, what do you think is the most important thing that happens when God speaks?

2. How good are you at listening to God? What are the ways in which you "listen" to God?



habits for reflecting the mind of Jesus ~ Bible study using 8 critical questions

There are lots of ways to study the Bible so that we can hear God speak to us clearly and personally. Here is one way for you to try.

eight critical questions

Have you ever read the Bible and thought to yourself, "But what has this got to do with me?" or, "What difference does this make?" And of course, if we don't learn anything that will shape our lives to become more like Jesus, we will have wasted our time studying!

Applying the Bible to our own lives is the most important part of Bible study. So here are 8 questions to help you apply the meaning of the text to your own life.

1. Is there an example for me to follow?
2. Is there a sin for me to avoid?
3. Is there a command for me to obey?
4. What does this particular passage teach me about God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit?
5. Is there a difficulty for me to explore?
6. Is there a promise for me to claim?
7. Is there something that shows me how to more fully reflect the character of Jesus?
8. Is there something in the passage for me to pray about today?

how to use the questions

1. Prayerfully choose a passage to read or continue on from where you finished reading yesterday.
2. Pray for the Holy Spirit to teach you as you read, claiming the promise found in James 1:5. Pray also that God will speak clearly to you so that your life can be shaped by God's words in the Bible.
3. Read through your chosen Bible text a few times until you understand what you are reading as much as possible.

4. Once you have read through your passage, begin to ask these questions that will help you to apply the meaning to your own life.
5. As always, praying at the end of your study is really important. Pray for that the Holy Spirit will remind you of what God has spoken to you, and that your life will reflect the priorities and purposes of Jesus more and more!

Bible texts to start with

The stories about Jesus in the Gospels are great places to begin studying. Pray that God will guide you in the choice of a passage. You can start at the beginning of a Gospel and work your way through to the end.

If you want to move outside of the gospels, you can also use this way of studying to explore Acts and the writings of Paul. His letters to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians are great texts to study.

using your Journal

It's great to keep a record of what you have learnt in your Journal. It will be a reminder in the future of how God has guided you and this will be encouraging. You may find that you still have questions about the passage. You can write these down as well so you can ask a spiritual mentor when you have the opportunity.



putting the pieces together

In "the facts of his story" we saw how when God speaks, 1) things are created. But most importantly for us who are affected by sin, 2) when Jesus speaks to us, we have the chance to be re-created—back into the way God designed things to be at the very beginning. So at the heart of transformation are the words of God. 3) We can see this as a result of the preaching of Ezekiel, Peter, and Paul.

In "thinking it through" you had a chance to think about the words of God in your own life. What matters most is that we can hear God speak clearly to each of us if we want to experience His change in our lives.

In "habits for reflecting Jesus", we considered one way to study the Bible to help the words of God re-shape our lives so that we begin to live as God originally intended.

The Bible was not given to increase our knowledge
but to change our lives.

D. L. Moody



my time with God

This week, practice the habit for reflecting the mind of Jesus—the 8 questions—using the following Bible texts.

1. Mark 14:32-42
2. Psalm 103:1-14
3. 1 John 1:1-10
4. Ephesians 1:15-23
5. Ezekiel 37:1-14
6. Joshua 1:1-18

You can also practice with other passages if you like. A good place to start using this method of Bible study is the gospels and any of the stories that are found in the Old Testament.



pass it on!

Can you memorise the 8 questions for Bible study and teach them to someone?



extra help

1. Chapter 2, "The Sower Went Out to Sow", Christ's Object Lessons, Ellen White.
2. Chapter 37, "The Scriptures a Safeguard", Great Controversy, Ellen White.