



## EXPLORE GOD | IS THE BIBLE RELIABLE? | Week 6 February 24, 2019

### Psalm 119:97-105; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

**Opening:** During this series we have been looking at some deep questions of faith. This week, we look at the question “Is the Bible Reliable?” We can find criticism of the Bible from historians, literary analysts and people who just don’t like what it says. What is the real evidence? How does the Bible stand up to the assault? Let’s explore the arguments that support what we consider to be The Word of God.

**Context:** Can you imagine a more read or more studied book than the Bible? I can compare it to *Perry’s Chemical Engineering Handbook*, the “bible” of chemical engineering attempts to put all the calc’s and conventions of Chemical Engineering in a single volume. But the Bible is everyone’s single volume for “calc’s and conventions” of life. There are commentaries, devotional books, fiction and non-fiction written around its themes. *When you think of the Bible what comes to mind? How would you explain it to a friend?*

**The Opening Question:** Read Psalm 119:97-105. Pastor Meyer asks, “Why be so devoted to reading and meditating on and obeying what the Scriptures say?” *Reading, meditating, obeying seems to be a progression of commitment. How does this question strike you, what comes up in you? Why?*

**History Supports “Dependable Reliability”:** Historical reliability is a scholarly pursuit. Professors find new ways to think about text, or new analyses are postulated (both physical or contextual) and since it is modern and new it is considered—as if there were no skeptics in the preceding 2000 years. Pastor Meyer talked about the verification of the Dead Sea Scrolls. *Share with each other what has affected how you have come to trust the Bible. As a group what facts can you come up with about the Scriptures? Have you ever thought about the Bible in this way? Why or why not?*

**“The Ipsissima Vox”—the Very Voice:** The words, the voice, of Jesus shows “dozens of patterns of speaking (the parables, are but one example) which are markedly different from the story-telling and teaching forms of first century Judaism and are not found anywhere else in the ancient world at that time,” quoting Pastor Meyer. We aren’t qualified to do this academic comparative but we can ask ourselves how we regard the voice of Jesus in the scriptures. He was warm and gracious, angry and confrontive and mostly “interruptive”—causing people to question their motivation or what they valued in life. *How do you regard the Voice of Jesus? Do you imagine yourself hearing the “red letters” as you read the scripture? What must that have been like for them? What is it like for you?*



**God as Cruel Tyrant:** Another criticism that arises is the God of the Old Testament. Here we read of the barbaric cultures and their interaction with each other, and with God. From the comfortable chair of our “1<sup>st</sup> World Problems” we can look at this with disdain and criticism, never asking or imagining what it was like to live in such a setting. *How do you describe the God of the Old Testament? Share any tensions or questions you have about what you experience in reading the Old Testament. How do you reconcile what we see in Jesus and “God’s Story” for the human race with how you read the Old Testament?*

**Shaping the way we live:** Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Put yourself in this text. Teaching, rebuking, correcting and training, are active words. *How do you apply these words in the everyday moments of your life? How do you live into these action words so you are “thoroughly equipped for every good work,” that is, equipped for LIFE? What is your normal practice to allow God to breathe His Word into your life?*

**Practice of the Week: A light for my path.**

Read Psalm 119: 97-105. Each evening this week reflect back on your day and note any time your actions were influenced by a word or idea or concept from Scripture. This isn’t chapter and verse it’s more an overall attitude or motivation. e.g. empathic, gracious, listening, forgiving, patient, loving..... Does it surprise you that you are so close (or so far) from God’s lighted path? Pray about it with God, give Him thanks for the wisdom of the Scriptures and ask for His (continued) presence.

**Family Formation: A light for my path.**

What can we pray about? ..... Set up a course or a task that is safe but challenging for your child to do in the dark. Maybe walking through a dark room with toys on the floor, or walking down a few steps. Then ask them to do the same thing with added light from a flashlight. Talk about how God gives us guidance in life that acts just like the flashlight. We can “see” how to do things in a new and better way because of ideas and attitudes we have learned from scripture. Give a personal example.

**Additional Resources:**

- *The Bible Jesus Read*, by Philip Yancey
- *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading*, by Eugene Peterson.

We’d love to hear from you!

If you have thoughts questions, comments, ideas on how to make these study guides more meaningful for you and your group, please let us know.

We also enjoy hearing how God is using these scriptures and study guides in your lives.

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