



# S T A R T

FOUNDATIONS

OF

THE

CHRISTIAN

FAITH



# START

## WEEK TWO: GOD SPEAKS

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### *Review (15 minutes):*

Last session was about the center point of the Christian faith: the gospel message. The two key concepts from last week were that each person is a sinner, and that God gives salvation to sinners through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. You also had the chance to write down and practice telling your own spiritual story.

How did what you learned last session impact your week?

Were you able to tell your story to any of your three people on your list from session one? Were you able to teach them the lesson? If so, how did it go?

## Learn (20 minutes):

This section will be broken into two parts: what the Bible is and how to read it. Most people do not understand what the Bible really is, and so they misquote, misinterpret, misapply, and eventually discard it. In this session you will first learn what the Bible claims to be and secondly how to read it in a way that helps you grow closer to God.

### ***What The Bible Is***

Imagine, for a minute, that the entire human race was contained in an enclosed warehouse. Maybe there are only three hundred of us, but we've all grown up in this warehouse and no one has ever been outside (I know, it's like some toned down version of LOST, which was already crazy enough). Some of us have theories about what is beyond the walls, but deep down we know that none of us really know. All we really have to go on is conjecture. Even if one of us were on to the right idea, we'd have no way of knowing. But if someone from outside the warehouse came into the room and began telling us what was on the other side, we'd all listen. Each of us would then decide if we believed him or not and what we believe would impact our lives from that point forward.

### ***Key Question:***

Write down three words that describe your view of the Bible.



Read Hebrews 1:1-2

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.”

***THE BIBLE*** doesn't claim to be a collection of man's best ideas about God. The Bible is a collection of what God has spoken to us about himself and about what he's created. It's as if the one who built the warehouse walked in and started describing how it was built and what's behind the walls. Christians put such deep faith and trust in the Bible because it is the words by and about the only one who has been beyond our human existence.

Read 2 Peter 1:16-21

“For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,’ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

### ***Key Question:***

Use three words to describe the Bible’s view of the Bible.



***WHAT IF GOD*** has really spoken? What if his opinions about morality, truth, reality and an after life are recorded for us in black and white? Wouldn't those be words to treasure, to study, and store deep in your mind? Those would be words that would unlock the human experience, provide answers for the pain and suffering we experience, and guidance for how to navigate life. Most importantly, those words would introduce you to the God who created you.

## *Did You Know?*

# *What makes the Bible Unique?*

- The Bible is 66 books written by 40 different authors over 1,500 years. All telling one story written by and about a God who lived human life in human history.
- The concept of grace found in the Bible is unique among major religions. All major religions have good advice and rules for living and help you live up to them. Only the God of the Bible expresses a desire to love you and be in relationship with you despite constant failure to live up to these standards.
- The New Testament is by far the best-attested and most accurately copied document from the ancient world. We have 5,600 copies of parts of the New Testament from within the first century of Christianity. Compare that to the next best, which is Homer's Iliad from which we have 643 copies from the first 500 years of it being written. Or Caesar and Livy, of which we have less than 20 copies from the first 1,000 years of it having been written.
- It is estimated that the Bible has been translated into over 2,500 languages, giving credence to its wide global appeal.

***How to Read the Bible***

The main takeaway for you in this session is knowing how to understand the Bible and how to teach others to do the same. REAP is an acronym that will help you develop a clear method for understanding the Bible. REAP stands for:

**Read:** Read the passage. Note the key words and phrases, and then summarize the passage in your own words.

**Examine:** What do you learn about God? About mankind?

**Apply:** What should change (in your beliefs or your behavior) in light of this passage?

**Pray:** Pray and talk to God about what is on your heart and mind. Is he revealing anything to you?

Are you willing to commit to a daily time with God? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Date:

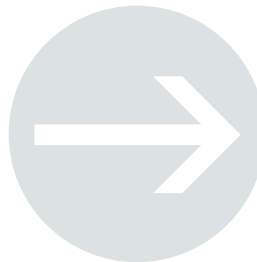
Time:

Place:

Plan (See [summitrdu.com/bible](http://summitrdu.com/bible) to join the Summit's one-year Bible reading plan):

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

You can find an example of the REAP method on the next page.





## ***An Example Of Reap***

Title: The Greatest Commandment

Scripture: Mark 12:28-31

### *Read*

Jesus tells the scribes that the most important commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. He continues, saying that the second most important commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself.

### *Examine*

God made us with different faculties: a heart to have emotion, a mind to think, strength to do, and a soul that is eternal, and I am commanded to love God with the fullness of all of my faculties. This is the first and greatest commandment; every other area of obedience flows out of this.

Jesus says the command to love our neighbors is like the first commandment. Loving others as myself is somehow connected to loving God with all of my being.

### *Apply*

Do I think of loving God with all that I am as the greatest and first call on my life? No. I have reduced obedience to praying or being kind to my family and friends, or fighting the desire to lie.

Do I love God with my mind: Do I seek to study his Word daily, think about him and learn about him? Do I love God with my heart and soul: Do I have affection toward something that is stronger than my affection toward him? Do I love God with my strength: Do I actually live out his Word rather than just knowing his Word?

I can think of several people that I am far from loving well. How is that lack of love for others connected to my lack of love for God?

### *Pray*

Father, I confess that I can't muster up the love that you want from me. Give me a new mind, a new heart, a new soul, and new strength, and give me the ability to love you fully with all of my faculties.

I pray for my mind specifically – that I would honor you today with my thoughts and love you well. I pray for my relationship with my father and my brother. Help me to love them because I love you and you made them!

## *Practice (30 minutes):*

Break up into groups of two or three. Walk through Matthew 28:16-20 using the REAP Method. After 15 minutes (or after every group is finished), come back together as a large group and share what you found in your smaller groups.

What did you REAP from Matthew 28:16-20?

Is there anything about REAP that you do not understand?

## *Teach:*

The biggest part of growing closer to God is teaching others what you are learning. This is something God calls everyone to do, so don't worry about what you think your ability is. Think about your close network of friends, family, and co-workers. Write down the name of three people you can talk through what you are learning from God.

Commit: This week I'm going to read the Bible every day, and teach at least one of these three people about what I learned about the Bible this week.

I'll try:  Yes  No

## *Wrap-Up:*

This session focused on the Bible: what it is and how to read it. Here are a couple of points to help you pray for one another as you are sent out into the community this week.

- Pray God will allow your group members to know him more deeply through your reading of the Bible this week.
- Pray for God to open opportunities to teach one of the people on your list, and pray for the courage to talk to them about what you are learning from God's word.