

Acts In Action Training Series



Foundational Lesson 1

What Is The Bible?





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Introduction

The 'What Is The Bible' training lesson is a course designed to provide Biblically based and Spirit led answers and teachings about questions related to the Bible. In this lesson we will be taking a look at several common questions that people may have in regards to the Bible and discuss answers to those questions. These questions and answers are designed to be simple and easy to understand while at the same time providing depth and spiritual insight. The format is laid out in question and answer format and each of the answers are based completely on Biblical passages. In this study we will be reviewing the following four questions: What is the Bible? What is the Word? What is the purpose of the Bible? How do we apply the Bible in our life? These questions may seem very basic for someone who believes in Christ, however we know that a house is only as strong as the foundation that it is built upon. This teaching is intended to help the new believer lay a solid foundation on which to build and grow as well as encourage and challenge those who have believed for a long time to continue to learn and grow closer in their relationship with God.

This lesson is also not intended to prove that God exists, that the Bible is true, or convince anyone to follow Christ. This lesson was prepared with the assumption that His word is true and alive, that Jesus died on the cross as the perfect sacrifice so that our sins could be forgiven, that we should always be prepared to testify about what God has done and He is doing, that our faith must be displayed in action and not simply through words, that God is love and that we should treat everyone the same way that we would treat Jesus.

As you go through this lesson the first thing that we recommend is that you pray. Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you and teach you as you read and review the Bible passages that are used. Pray that as you learn about God and His Word, you will grow closer to Him and that you would be changed. Finally, pray that you will not only learn the information, but that you will apply it to your life and bring glory to the name of the Lord.





What Is The Bible?

Many people view the Bible as a collection of stories. Some may believe that these stories are from history and others may believe they are nothing more than fairytales. Others believe the Bible is a collection of rules that, if followed, will mean that we will live a good life and be accepted into heaven after we die. Still others view the Bible as nothing more than a collection of literature that has been created by different writers over a long period of time. However, the reality is that none of these are true. If we were to use our human wisdom and knowledge to describe the origin of the Bible we would say that it was created over a course of approximately 2,000 years by 40 different authors. The truth is however that the author of the Bible is One person, the Lord God and the Bible is very clear that it is in fact the very words of God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

It is easy to look at the number of humans that were involved and the timespan over which the Bible was written and wonder how it is possible that the entire Bible could be the Word of God. The truth is however that every single book, every single chapter, and every single word is the very word of God. He did not merely inspire a human to write a book and then the human wrote what he believed the Lord wanted. No, each word is precise and specifically chosen by the Lord Himself.

Consider this analogy, a king wants to build a new palace and because of this he brings in builders, engineers and designers. He talks with the engineers first and tells them exactly the design that he wants and they create the building plans. He then talks with the builders who take the plans and begin to build exactly to the specification that the king had laid out. Finally, he brings in the interior designers who begin to fill each room with furniture and decorations



that the king has selected, placing them in precisely the location that the king had specified. During this building process multiple people would have been involved and multiple steps taken. However, the palace is not a product of the engineers, the builders, or the designers. The palace is completely the work of the king and represents the vision that the king had for it. The Bible is a result of the same process. In this case, the Lord our God used various people during different periods of time to document the message, the information and the instruction that He wants to convey to us.

We must remember that, though the Bible does contain historical information, it is not simply a history book. The Bible also contains facts and information, but it is not intended to be used to prove or disprove anything and it is not intended to be used to help you win a debate. The Bible is God revealing Himself to use through His Words, through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the presence of His Holy Spirit. It was given to us by the Lord so that we can know Him more deeply and draw closer to Him.

In the Bible we read many stories and hear about many people. However, every story and every event ultimately point back to one person and that person is Jesus. Each story, while it can be used as an individual story, is actually only one part of a much larger tale. It tells us how much God loves us and how much we need God. He loves each of us so much and was willing to make the most amazing sacrifice in order to show us His love and provide a way for us to be reunited with Him.

So if we know and believe that the Bible is not the work of man but in fact the Word of God and we believe that the Word of God was intended to reveal to us how much He loves us and who He is then we can now move on to our next question, What is the Word?



What Is The Word?

We know that the Bible is the Word of God but what does that mean? How are the words of God any different than the words that are contained in any book? The Bible clearly tells us just how different the words of God are than the words of humans.

John 1:1 New International Version (NIV)

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

The Word of God is not simply words that are spoken like the words of humans, the word of God is much much more, the Word is God Himself. When we read the Bible we are not simply reading words that are written, but we are actually meeting God and seeing who He is. Because the Word is God Himself we can begin to examine the Word and its attributes. As we do this, we begin to see that because the Word is God the attributes of the Word are the same as those of God.

The first characteristic that we will discuss is that the Word of God is true. God is perfect in all of His ways and as such He does not lie. All that He does and all that He says is in perfect truth.

John 17:17 New International Version (NIV)

“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”

When we read the Word of God we can have complete confidence to know that nothing we are reading is false or incorrect. We do not have to worry that someone is trying to convince us of something or to persuade us by twisting the truth, Instead, we can read and learn knowing that we do not have to fear being lied to. What a relief this is!



The truth also never changes and this is another characteristic that we can see in the Word of God. When God has spoken, His Word will never change or become untrue.

Matthew 24:35 New International Version (NIV)

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”

We can stand on the Word of the Lord because it is firm and solid and does not shift and change in the way that the world does. Also, the Word of God will never pass away. No matter what is going on around us or what situation we may find ourselves in, even when it seems like our entire world is crumbling around us, the Word of God will be a firm rock on which we can stand and not be shaken.

Titus 1:2 New International Version (NIV)

“In the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time.”

So many people in the world and so many things in the world will promise us peace, love, joy, and happiness, yet there is in fact only One who can truly deliver. When God says something, we know that what He says will come true. We can have complete faith and confidence in the promises that He makes.

Numbers 23:19 New International Version (NIV)

“God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?”



He never forgets the things that He has told us and He will never take back His Word. He will never lie to us and therefore we do not need to wonder about His words for us and if they can be trusted. In a world where we can so easily be deceived by false promises and lies, we have the One who will always speak the truth to us and then act in the exact way that He has spoken. His actions will never be different than His words and His words will never contradict His actions.

Genesis 1:3 New International Version (NIV)

“And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.”

God’s words are not empty but instead they are completely powerful. God’s words become truth when He speaks them and whatever He speaks will happen. When we read Genesis and see how He created our universe we will see that He did not have to figure out anything or prepare a project plan like a builder would do if they were to build a house. No, He simply spoke what He wanted to happen and when He spoke it, it happened. How amazing it is to think that this same God who’s very words created all that we see and know loves us. One thing we can always take comfort in is that God will never tell us something that will not happen.

John 1:1 New International Version (NIV)

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

John 1:14 New International Version (NIV)

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”



In the same way that the word represents God, the word also represents Jesus. Jesus was there at the beginning and He was with God and Jesus, being the son of God, is also God. Jesus did not die but He rose again and He sent His Holy Spirit to be with us on earth until He returns again. This means that Jesus is active and alive in this world and in the hearts of those who have accepted His word. In the same way the Word is also alive and active. It is not simply words written in a book and therefore when we read the word we should ask the Holy Spirit to teach us and guide us and reveal His truth to us.

2 Peter 1:3 New International Version (NIV)

“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”

Revelation 22:18-19 New International Version (NIV)

“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll.”

God has given us all that we need in order to go through this life. He has given us His Word and He has given us His Spirit. We should allow both of these gifts to change our hearts, change our souls and change our minds. The Bible is not incomplete and it also does not contain anything that is not of use. We do not need to add anything to it and there is nothing that needs to be removed. It contains exactly what God knew we needed and to ensure that we did not miss anything or misunderstand He gave us a teacher in the Holy Spirit. While formal education is wonderful and has a purpose, you do not need it in order to become deeply rooted in the Lord. Simply open the Bible, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and show you what He wants to you know and start reading. God is faithful and He will show you exactly what you need to know.



What Is The Purpose Of The Bible?

The purpose of the Bible is not to be a book that we read. It is not meant to be something we read for pleasure or entertainment. It is not a self-help book that we can read in order to get solutions to life's problems. It is not a book of rules that if followed will mean that we will get into heaven. The purpose of the Bible is transformation through revelation. When we read the Bible, in conjunction with the Holy Spirit's guidance, it will begin to transform our lives. This transformation is not just a change in behavior or a change in mindset, but something much deeper.

Romans 12:2 New International Version (NIV)

“Do not conform 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.”

God’s desire for us is to be transformed so that we do not conform to this world. This means that we do not think like the world thinks, we do not care about the things that the world cares about and we do not live our lives in the way that the world says is right. This transformation occurs when we allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth of God’s Word to us. When we come face to face with the truth of God our lives will be changed and they will never be the same.

Actually, the word transformed goes beyond just being changed, it actually means that we are reborn and made new, we are made into something else. We may retain the memories of the past but we actually become something different. This is a similar process that we can see take place in a caterpillar when it turns into a butterfly. At the right time, the caterpillar undergoes a metamorphosis. The definition of metamorphosis is “a change of the form or nature of a thing or person into a completely different one, by natural or supernatural means.” The caterpillar undergoes a complete transformation in structure, appearance and purpose. This same process



occurs when we invite Jesus into our hearts and we accept the Word into our lives. It should also be noted that this process continues over the course of our lives. It prepares us for our eternal lives in heaven beside our Savior and Lord Jesus.

James 1:22-25 New International Version (NIV)

“Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.”

The Word of God is also not meant to simply be studied or memorized. Studying and memorizing is a good thing, but if you only memorize and study it, but never carry out what is being taught then it will be of no value or use. Consider the following example:

There are two sisters who both have a messy room. Their parents tell the sisters to clean up their rooms. The first sister searches for information about what it means to clean up your room. She studies different theories about the process of cleaning your room and how it can be done more efficiently. She learns different ways in which we can say that we need to clean our room. She even learns how to speak and describe cleaning her room in different languages such as Greek and Hebrew. She holds gatherings in her room with friends from the neighborhood to discuss what it means to clean a room and to encourage each other by talking about struggles of cleaning the room and how to overcome them. Yet, at the end of the day, her room remains un-cleaned. The second sister immediately goes to her room and cleans it. Which of the sisters has done what the parents have asked and has accomplished the task set before them?

We must remember that the application of the Word is what God seeks. So many will argue about which translations and which versions of the Bible should be used and the differences between them while all the time their room remains un-clean. We must use what God has



spoken to use through His Word and examine our lives to see if we are actually doing the things that He has taught us to do.

Psalm 119:105 New International Version (NIV)

“Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.”

Romans 15:4 New International Version (NIV)

“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.”

As we proceed on the path of transformation, the Word, along with the Holy Spirit, serves as a guide to help us understand what we need to do. As we make decisions and take steps in our life we should first and foremost seek the wisdom of God’s Word and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the truth. In this way, the path that God has for our lives can be shown to us and we can proceed with full peace and confidence that we are moving in the direction that God desires for us.

The Word contains the wisdom that we need in order to live a Godly life and the Holy Spirit serves as our teacher. This wisdom, when learned and applied, provides light to our world so that we can navigate. It will encourage us as we continue on the journey and it provides us with hope. We can have hope because God’s Word tells us that our future is in Him and that through Him we may have eternity in heaven.

Isaiah 55:10-11 New International Version (NIV)

“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the



eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”

Philippians 1:6 New International Version (NIV)

“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

The Word of God is also going to be accomplished. Just as we learned what happened when God said, “Let there be light” we know that each word contained in scripture will be accomplished. It is the Lord who spoke you into being and it is the Lord who has saved you and transformed you. You can have joy and peace to know that He will not leave you or forsake you, but he will continue His good work in your life because His Word tells us so. He will complete what He has said He will do and that includes the transformation of your life. Remember that God’s Word creates and transforms, so when the Lord speaks, that your life will be transformed by those very words which means that it will occur. He is speaking directly into your life and saying that it will be transformed in the same way that He said let there be light. His words will accomplish exactly what they say and He will say exactly what will happen.

Matthew 4:4 New International Version (NIV)

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

God’s Word brings life to us. Just as we need various things such as food, air and water each day in order to physically survive and thrive we must also understand that God’s Word is an absolute necessity to live and thrive spiritually. We can have all of our physical needs met in this world and yet be living in a completely dead state if we are disconnected from the Word of God and the presence of the Holy Spirit. In this way, God’s Word provides us with the very



sustenance and nutrients that our spirit needs in order to survive and thrive in this world. There are many ways that we can choose to go in this world, but there is only one way that will lead to life and that is when we chose to accept Christ and are connected with the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. All other ways will lead to death.

Hebrews 4:12 New International Version (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.”

Lastly, the Word of God provides us with discernment. When we understand God’s Word through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, we will begin to understand the heart of God. We will understand the difference between right and wrong and we will be able to judge between actions of obedience and actions of disobedience. When we are doing wrong, we will begin to feel conviction in our hearts and we will not be able to proceed because in our hearts we will know that we are disobeying. We will not be able to hide or cover it up because the Word of God and the Holy Spirit will penetrate every area of our lives and show us the truth. When we see the truth of who we are, we will know how desperately we need Jesus and the salvation and forgiveness that He has provided to us through the cross.





How Do We Apply The Bible In Our Lives?

Applying the Word of God to our lives is the point in which we truly demonstrate the beliefs that we have professed with our lips. When we read the Word of God and hear the message that the Holy Spirit speaks to us through it and fail to apply those teachings in our lives, we are no different than the girl who was told to clean her room but failed to actually do so.

James 1:21-22 New International Version (NIV)

“Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”

The Bible is very clear that if we only listen to what the Word says to us, but we do not allow it to change our lives, we are deceiving ourselves. We are telling God as well as all those around us that despite saying we believe the Word of God, we actually do not. If you truly do believe that the Bible is the Word of God and you truly want to allow it to change your life, it is simply a matter of making the decision to allow the Holy Spirit to change you and obeying what He tells you to do.

Joshua 1:8 New International Version (NIV)

“Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; 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.”

One of the first steps that we must take is to not simply read the Bible as though it were a task we must complete. We cannot read it like we read a book which has a beginning and an end.



When we read a normal book we start at the beginning and read through the last page and then once we are done we will think back about what the book said and determine if the book was good or bad, think about what we learned, and consider if we enjoyed reading it. After we have given some time to think about it, we will say that we have ‘finished reading’ that book and place it on our bookshelf or give it to a friend. As we have established however, the Bible is not simply a book and as such we must understand that we should never view the Bible as something we finish reading.

The Bible tells us that we are to keep the words that are written in it always on our lips. This means that we should read the Bible consistently and faithfully. We should never replace our reading of the Bible with anything else no matter what it would be. Any other book we read should be in addition to the Bible but never in place of the Bible. We should also note that there is not a specific amount that we should read at any given time. In fact, when we truly allow the Holy Spirit to lead us and teach us as we read the Bible we will find that sometimes we may read a single sentence which speaks to us while other times we may read entire chapters.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 New International Version (NIV)

“And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.”

Next, we cannot simply read the Bible and then move on to our other tasks. Once we have read the Bible and allowed the Holy Spirit to guide us and teach us, we are to meditate on what we have learned day and night. We should not simply walk away and forget what we have learned, but instead we must think of it and ponder what it means and how our lives can and should be changed as a result of it.



One thing that is interesting is that when we carry out this process of reading the Word of God, allowing the Holy Spirit to teach and then meditating on what we have learned, the Bible tells us that we will be prosperous and successful. This is because when we allow the Word of God to speak to us through the Holy Spirit and are applying what we have learned we will begin to make decisions according to the Lord's plan and desire for our lives. One thing that should be noted is that in our worldly minds it is easy to limit the words 'prosperous' and 'successful' to the world's definition, such as having more money, more possessions, or a greater status. While it is entirely possible that we may experience those types of blessings in this world as a result of our obedience, it is just as possible that we won't. Yet, we will learn that happiness, joy, peace, and love are not dependent on worldly success but instead are a result of our relationship with God. A true and living relationship with the Lord and obeying Him is success.

Matthew 22:37-40 New International Version (NIV)

“Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Jesus provided us with a very straight forward two-part answer to what it means to apply the Bible in our lives and what the result should be. We are first to love God. This is not a love that we often think about as a human in which we merely get a warm feeling when someone is near because they make us happy, it is talking about true love. A love that transcends any circumstance or temporary emotions and remains completely devoted no matter what has happened, what is happening, or what may happen in the future and trusts completely. When we trust Him, we will completely follow His Word and His commands. The second is that we are to love our neighbor in the exact way that we would hope that we are loved. If we think about how we want to be loved and are honest with our heart, we will want to know that no matter how we may have failed or sinned, we are valued, cared for, considered, forgiven, trusted, and



remembered not for what we have done or what we can do, but simply because of who we are. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you how to have this kind of Love for God and for others.

Psalm 119:9-16 New International Version (NIV)

“How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Praise be to you, Lord; teach me your decrees. With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth. I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches. I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word. “

When we allow God’s Word to sink into our hearts, we will live according to what we have learned and our lives will be changed. We will find that we no longer stray from what God tells us, but instead we naturally do as the Word of God has instructed. Our desire will begin to be to please our Father because of our love for Him. We will begin to talk about our Father more and more and each area of our lives will become an area of worship. No matter if we are at work, at home with our spouse, with our children, our family, our friends, or enjoying a hobby, we will praise the Lord because we will know that He is good. Obeying the Father will become a delight of our heart and we will seek to follow every command that He has given us and every word that He speaks to us.

2 Timothy 3:15-17 New International Version (NIV)

“And how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”



Lastly, when we apply the Bible in our lives we will also see that the Holy Spirit will use us to help teach those around us. The Bible tells us that everything written in it is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training so that the servant of God can be prepared to do the good work of the Father here on earth. As we begin to allow the Holy Spirit to teach us what the Word of God is and we allow it to be applied to our lives, we can also begin to share what we have learned with others. Do not be surprised when the Holy Spirit uses other believers to speak to you about the Word of God and also, do not be surprised when the Holy Spirit uses you to speak to other believers.

Philippians 1:6 New International Version (NIV)

“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

As we work to apply the Word of God in our lives, we must always remember that it is not us who initiated the work, it is the Lord. When we invited Jesus into our hearts the Lord began the process of changing our hearts and this change is a lifelong process. While we are on this earth, we will never reach the point in which we can say ‘I have learned and applied all of the Word of God to my life’. The learning and application of the Word of God will be a continuous process throughout our lives and our understanding and maturity in it will go deeper and deeper as we seek the heart of God more and more.





Conclusion and Closing Prayer

If we truly believe that the Word of God represents God Himself, then we should understand how seriously we should take His Word. If you are serious about wanting to know who God is and want your life to be transformed by His love and by His Word, then open your heart and invite His Spirit to reveal His truth to you and to teach you what it means. After all of these pages of instructions and teachings it can be summed up in this way: Open the Bible, ask the Holy Spirit to teach what you are about to read, read a portion of the Bible and finally ask the Holy Spirit to show you how you can apply what you have read and learned as you live your life.

Father, as we come to the end of this teaching, we first want to thank You for Your love for us. Lord, we know that while we are undeserving of Your love, You choose to give it to us freely.

We know that Your Word to us is a wonderful gift and we are so blessed and honored to be able to learn about who You are and how much You love us. Father, may our hearts, our minds and our souls be transformed as You teach us Your Word. Father, we want to know You more and we want to be closer to You and we pray that every barrier and every wall is torn down so that we may have a more intimate and close relationship with You. Help us to understand and apply the things that You teach us and help us to be a light for Your kingdom in this world.

Father, we thank You, we praise You and we give You all of the glory, honor and praise now and forevermore. Amen and Amen!

