

**Asking For a Friend:** What makes the Bible so important?

- **Can we turn the Bible into an idol?**
  - An idol is an object of worship, and idolatry is the practice of worshiping an idol.
    - In Exodus 20:1-5, God gives us the first two of the ten commandments
      - (#1) You shall have no other gods before Me.
      - (#2) You shall not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down to them or worship them.
    - New Testament in Romans 1:25, “They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served something created instead of the Creator, who is praised forever. Amen.”
    - Therefore from a biblical perspective, idolatry is worshiping the created instead of the Creator
  - Can we make the Bible an object of worship? Yes, and I’ll show you with 3 passages in John
    - **John 1:1-2, 14**, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning...The Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We observed His glory, the glory as the One and Only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”
      - Doesn’t this mean the Bible is God? No, “Word” is capitalized because the chapter and broader gospel is talking about Jesus and His manifestation of the essence of everything that flows from the mouth of God, which is much bigger than what is contained within the physical bible.
        - When John says the Word became flesh, does that mean the physical scriptures turned into a man? No.
        - You can also see it by substituting “Bible” and “Jesus” in John 1:1
        - Note, I’m not saying the Bible is not the inspired word of God. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” But notice that does not include worship.
    - **John 4:24**, Jesus tells the woman at the well that, “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”
    - Finally, upon being rebuked by the Jews for healing someone on the Sabbath, Jesus said this in **John 5:39-40**, “You pour over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal

life in them, yet they testify about Me. And you are not willing to come to Me so that you may have life.”

- The purpose of the Bible is to point us to Jesus. We miss the mark when we worship our own knowledge and study of the word instead of worshiping the One whom the word is about. This was one of the critical errors of the Pharisees. They studied the word not for God’s glory but for their own.

○ **How do we know when what we are hearing or feeling is God?**

- “I read and study the bible regularly. I discuss it with my spouse, my family and our community group. I feel knowledgeable (although I freely admit to not knowing it all!). Despite having knowledge, being saved and believing in the truth, I feel lacking in my relationship with God. When those around me talk about speaking to God and hearing him...I haven't had that experience. How do we know when what we are feeling or hearing is God?”
- Read Luke 24:13-35 (Road to Emmaus)
  - A few observations
    - God is with us, even when we don’t realize it (v.15-16)
      - His name is Emmanuel, “God with us”
      - Deut 31, Moses told Joshua
      - Matt 28:20, the great commission
    - They got to know Jesus through time with Him in the word (v.27)
      - Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the truth”
      - To know the word is to know Jesus
      - To hear the word is to hear from Jesus
        - Jesus quoted the OT ~80 times
    - God opens our eyes and impresses upon our hearts (v.31-32)
  - Practical ways to learn to hear from God
    - Read the word: It is the primary way God speaks to us
      - Heb 4:12 says, “For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart.”

- Seek wise counsel (ask somebody, we sometimes misunderstand what people say)
  - Prov 12:15 says, “A fool’s way is right in his own eyes, but whoever listens to counsel is wise.”
- Trust and act
  - Prov 3:5-6 says, “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.”
- Don’t give up
  - Luke 11:9-10, when teaching the disciples about prayer Jesus said, “So I say to you, keep asking, and it will be given to you. Keep searching, and you will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who searches finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”
- Final reminders
  - Don’t give yourself too much credit (every thought doesn’t come from you)
  - Don’t get caught up in comparisons to other people (our relationship with God is personal, different from person to person)
  - Don’t believe the lie (we have an enemy that wants to distract us from our relationship)
- **Why do you believe what you believe?**
  - 17<sup>th</sup> century French philosopher and mathematician, Renee Descartes, sought the answer to a similar question. “How can we know (or believe) anything?” And after stripping away all of the assumptions, he came to the famous conclusion, “I think therefore I am.”

### **Two Points**

1. Like Descartes, everyone believes in something
  - Every day we operate and live on beliefs in mathematics, biology, chemistry, and myriad of other disciplines which we do not understand and yet don’t give a second thought

- Even the belief in nothing is a belief in something
- 2. Every belief requires a source of truth and a measure of faith
  - What is faith? – Heb. 11:1, “Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.”
  - How do we acquire faith? – Rom. 10:17, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” (some versions say “words about Christ”)
  - Example: Matt. 16:13-17, “When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 “But you,” He asked them, “who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!” 17 And Jesus responded, “Simon son of Jonah, you are blessed because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father in heaven.
    - Notice different sources of truth, but Jesus told them to believe based on what was revealed by God to Peter
    - Jesus said in John 6:44, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him...”
- So how do we get tangled up in wrong beliefs?
  - Read Romans 1:18-25
    - v.18 – “suppress the truth”
    - v.21 – “do not glorify God or show gratitude”
    - v.25 – “exchange the truth of God for a lie and worship and serve something created instead of the Creator”
- My salvation story
  - I thought I received Christ because it made sense, but I didn’t understand until years later why my friends wouldn’t do the same.
  - It was either because they had not yet been drawn or they were suppressing the truth
- So why do I believe what I believe? Because the God of the universe revealed His word to me as truth, and I chose to believe with the faith that has been freely given to me.

## ○ Conclusion

- What makes the Bible so important?
  - It points us to Jesus

- It is the primary way God speaks to us
- It is THE source of truth for our lives
- But here's the real question. What has God revealed to you?
  - If you believe Jesus Christ is the son of God and that He was crucified and raised to life, then like Peter, you are blessed because flesh and blood did not reveal that to you. You don't have to understand it, you just have to believe it.
  - If you've never made a decision to follow Christ and make Him the Lord of your life, then today is your day.