

I DOUBT IT – LIFE Group Study Guide

CAN I TRUST THE BIBLE?

Pastor Miles McPherson – April 17, 2016



We live in a time in history when we have unprecedented access to the Bible—in written form, online, and so on. We have Bible apps, Bibles that look like a magazine, Bibles we can read on our phone or tablet or laptop. But even with all this, biblical literacy is at historic lows. Though it's readily available, far too many people ignore this book.

Many people ask questions like: Is the Bible reliable? Is it historically accurate? Or is it simply a collection of myths and stories? Ironically, many who ask those questions have never even bothered to read it!

Despite its critics and skeptics, the Bible has endured for centuries. Its truth has transformed millions of lives, because it demands not just agreement but a response. It contains the kind of truth that requires not just mental assent but decisive action.

Send your tough questions to Pastor Miles! Text "Questions" to 52525

Opening Discussion:

1. How would you describe your current connection with the Bible?
 - A. It pretty much sits on a shelf gathering dust
 - B. I hear it taught at church, and that's enough
 - C. I have a verse-a-day calendar (or receive an email devotional), which is the main way I read Scripture
 - D. I pull it out when I need wisdom or comfort
 - E. I really enjoy studying the Bible and learning more about it, and it's one way I communicate with God
2. What part of the Bible do you have the most difficulty believing or sharing with others?
(NOTE: we are just sharing our doubts or concerns here – not trying to give reasons to overcome them!)



Bible Study:

In Pastor Miles' sermon, he shared information on the number of manuscript copies of the Bible and length of time from when they were written (see chart below):

AUTHOR	Plato	Aristotle	Homer (Iliad)	New Testament
DATE WRITTEN	427-347 B.C.	384-322 B.C.	900 B.C.	A.D. 50-100
EARLIEST COPY	A.D. 900	A.D. 1100	400 B.C.	A.D. 130
TIME SPAN BETWEEN ORIGINAL & COPY	1,200 yrs	1,400 yrs	500 yrs	30-80 yrs
NUMBER OF COPIES	7	49	643	24,000

3. How is the above information relevant to your understanding of the reliability of Scripture? (for more, see <https://carm.org/is-the-bible-reliable>)

→ Read 2 Peter 1:16-21

4. This book of the Bible is a letter from Peter, one of Jesus' disciples. What difference does it make if the disciples are eyewitnesses (v16)?
(for more on v17-18, see Matthew 17:1-13)
5. What does this passage tell us about prophecy (which is the majority of what the Old Testament contains) and about Peter's own testimony?

→ Read Hebrews 4:12-13

6. What does the Bible tell us about itself in this passage?
7. What do you think it means when the text describes the Bible as living or alive? How can a book be alive?
8. How, exactly, does the Bible discern our attitudes and thoughts? How have you experienced this in your own life?

Apply it to Your Life:

9. How would you respond to a friend's statement that the Bible can't be trusted and that it's full of myths?
10. What questions or roadblocks get in the way of your being able to trust what God says in the Bible?
11. If the Bible is truly the Word of God and can be trusted, what are we going to do with it?

Prayer Time:

After one person shares his/her request, ask the person on the right to pray briefly for the need. Move through the group this way.

Next Steps:

BR1NG: *Invite your friends to join you this Sunday at one of the Rock campuses for "I DOUBT IT," and then invite them to join you at your LIFE Group next week!*

Take it Home: 21 Day Challenge!

If you're not in the habit of reading the Bible, or are having a hard time trusting it, would you be willing try a 21-day experiment?

- Read 1 chapter each day from the Gospel of John (in the New Testament). There are 21 chapters in John, so you will complete book in 21 days.
- Before you read each day, pray a simple prayer, asking God to open your understanding to what the Bible is saying and to show you what is true.
- As thoughts come to mind about what you read, or if verses really stand out to you, write them down in a notebook or journal

For more on the reliability of the Bible and other questions related to the Bible, see: <https://carm.org/bible>; "The Case for the Real Jesus" by Lee Strobel, or "The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict" by Josh McDowell.

LIFE Group Leader Tip of the Week:

- PRAYER: Open your group with prayer. This should be a brief, simple prayer, in which you invite God to give you insight as you study. You can pray for specific requests at the end of the meeting, or stop momentarily to pray if a particular situation comes up during your discussion.
- IDEAS FOR FILLING YOUR GROUP:
 - Ask everyone in the group to make a list of friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, etc. and then send a text to three of them during your group time
 - Every Sunday, introduce yourself to people around you and ask them if they're in a LIFE Group. If not, invite them to join your LIFE Group
 - **Goal:** meet 5 new people every week!
 - Follow up with everyone who contacts you about attending your group within 48 hours