



ChristCommunity
an Evangelical Free Church



THE BIBLE

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INTRODUCTION

We believe the Bible reveals God’s design for all of life.

I have always struggled with this book—the Bible. There are parts I don’t understand, parts I don’t particularly like, and frankly, parts that are just really hard to believe. Now I’ve worked through many of my intellectual doubts—can it be trusted? Yes, I believe. But is it really worth it?

We all approach this book differently. Maybe you don’t believe this is God’s Word—it’s just another book. Or maybe you do believe, at least in theory, but it’s not really *that* important to you. You just sort of pick and choose. For others, though, this book changes everything. It is your life and it is your authority.

If there is a God who made us, and if He really does speak to us—what could be more important? The One who loves us, who knows best how our world should work, and who knows exactly what He expects from His creation—He speaks to us! We are desperate for understanding and wisdom—life in the form of words, breathed into these pages by the living God, proclaimed to us. *God is speaking—are we listening?*

As a church, we base everything we are and everything we do on this book. But have you ever asked yourself: what is this book, really? What is it for? It says in the New Testament:

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 (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

WHAT IS THIS BOOK?

Sure, it’s ancient, written over a period of two millennia, 2000+ years ago, by dozens of authors—66 individual books compiled into one. Today, there are more copies in more languages than any other book in history—there’s *something* significant here. The words of Scripture have been “*breathed out by God,*” it says—inspired by Him. While written by human authors, this book’s true author is God Himself—His message, His words, His love on paper—for us. If our Creator “*breathed out*” these words for us, that means they are our authority.

Step back for a moment and ask: what is this book really about? If you have trouble believing the Bible, it’s possibly because you worry about the outskirts, rather than focusing on the center. Let me give an example. Some reject the Bible because they don’t like its teaching on sexual ethics. Because they don’t like its teaching on sex, they don’t believe in Jesus. But the Bible is not about sexual ethics (even if it does speak to that subject). The Bible is about Jesus. Judge Him first, and then consider its teaching on sexual ethics.



Tim Keller writes:

If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept all he said. If he didn't rise from the dead, then why worry about any of what he said? The issue on which everything hangs is not whether or not you like his teaching but whether or not he rose from the dead (The Reason for God, 210).

So what is the Bible about? The best summary I've found is from a children's Bible:

God wrote, 'I love you'—he wrote it in the sky, and on the earth and under the sea. He wrote his message everywhere! ...And God put it into words, too, and wrote it in a book called 'the Bible.' Now, some people think the Bible is a book of rules, telling you what you should and shouldn't do. The Bible certainly does have some rules in it. They show you how life works best. But the Bible isn't mainly about you and what you should be doing. It's about God and what He has done...

The Bible is most of all a Story. It's an adventure story about a young Hero who comes from a far country to win back his lost treasure. It's a love story about a brave Prince who leaves his palace, his throne—everything—to rescue the one he loves. It's like the most wonderful of fairy tales that has come true in real life! You see, the best thing about this Story is—it's true. There are lots of stories in the Bible, but all the stories are telling one Big Story. The Story of how God loves his children and comes to rescue them. It takes the whole Bible to tell this story. And at the center of the Story is a baby. Every Story in the Bible whispers his name (Sally Lloyd-Jones, The Jesus Storybook Bible, 12-17).

What is this book? It's the true and inspired story of a God who rescues, centered upon His Son Jesus.

WHAT IS THIS BOOK FOR?

It is for our life—the greatest life. It is “*profitable for teaching, for reproof [or rebuke], for correction, and training in righteousness...*” This book rebukes us, telling us when we've gotten on the wrong path. It corrects us, showing us the way back. And it trains us in righteousness, enabling us to find and live the best kind of life. As individual believers and as a community, we are called to know and teach this book, so that it can do this good work in us.

The result is “*that the man [or woman] of God may be complete*”—whole. In a world in which everything feels fragmented and in which I myself often feel so shattered, I long for wholeness. I long to be complete. The Bible makes me whole by showing me Jesus, showing me myself, and showing me the better way, through faith in the One who died for me on the Cross, and inviting me into apprenticeship with Him through the Yoke. I am desperate for that.

“*...equipped for every good work.*” This book also equips us individually and collectively to accomplish the good to which God has called us. We all want to make a difference, don't we? We all want to know that our lives matter. This book equips us to do so. It equips us at home and at work, in our



relationships, and in our every effort to care for the people around us. Because of this book, not only are we shown the way to wholeness, we are given the path toward incredible transformation.

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THIS BOOK?

If you're a skeptic, come to this book with an open mind rather than cynicism. God can handle your cynicism, but let it drive you to the truth, not away from it. Are you open to the fact that God *might* be out there, He *might* be speaking, and He *might* even be speaking to you? Or have you already made up your mind?

Whether you're a skeptic or a believer, come to this book with reverence, rather than flippancy. Come with teachability, rather than arrogance. Come to this book assuming that if there's a disagreement (or more likely, *when* there's a disagreement), that He's right and you're wrong, and change accordingly. Come with expectation, rather than apathy. Expect God to speak.

And finally, come first to the center, rather than getting lost in the periphery. Look for the God who rescues on every page. That's the story this book tells—His life, death, and resurrection. If we come to Him in faith and repentance, we are given forgiveness and life. This is the message. This is God's Word for you, for me, and for our church. And in these words we discover what we were created for. God is speaking—are you listening?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- » *How has the Bible challenged you? Has it changed you and, if so, how? Is it your authority for life and, if not, what is?*
- » *What would it look like for you to interact with this book on a regular basis?*
- » *What might it look like for a church to truly value the Bible? How have you seen that lived out at Christ Community? In what ways have you seen this book do what it promises it will do (rebuke, correct, train, complete, equip)?*

NEXT STEPS

- » If you don't own a Bible, get one. Please contact the church office for a free copy.
- » If you have a Bible, read it—regularly. Perhaps begin with the Gospel of John.
- » Regularly attend a church that teaches this book. Whether here or elsewhere, make this a priority in a faith community.
- » Join a Bible study or Community Group to study this book together.
- » Consider joining our Razor's Leadership Pathway (beginning every September) in order to grow in your understanding of this broad story.