

THE JOURNEY

... entering God's epic story

Leader's Overview
For KBC Growth Group
Alignment

Welcome to the Journey ...

(... and why it's the right time to remember what the Bible is all about)

I can still remember when I first started getting into the Bible. I was about eleven years old, and our family was on winter holidays at my grandparent's property in country Victoria, Australia. It was a wet-weather kind of holiday, so I passed time exploring their quaint house, and lounging around in my bedroom.

Around the house I discovered the simple pleasures of walking barefoot over quality Persian rugs, and the excitement of seeing how much money grandpa had given me in pennies as I counted out the contents of his owl-shaped money box. But by far the greatest discovery I made was an old Bible on the bookshelf in my bedroom. And as I explored, I found myself captivated by this story of God's journey with a wandering world.

Each day I would curl up under the warm sheets in bed, and read for hours on end, flicking through pages to see what gems were hidden in the text. *This epic was like no other story I'd ever read.* There were gritty stories with unexpected endings through the lives of characters like Joseph, Samson, and Daniel. Israel as a nation developed over time, as this child became an unpredictable teen, at times clinging to its loving Father, and at other times striving for rebellious independence. In Proverbs I found pithy wisdom and ancient humour in one, as lazy people justified inaction by appealing to dangerous lions outside their door. Obviously the Bible's central and most enigmatic character is Jesus—I read of His guttural cry from the cross, and yet undying love at the time of His greatest loss. During this holiday, I was captivated most of all by the Psalms. David and others prayed a range of emotions I'd only begun to experience. This book was raw. And this book was real.

Through this book I met God.

As the years have rolled on, I keep returning to the Scriptures. God's Word really is living and active, and it always cuts through my pretensions and brings me to face the way I walk with God and engage His world. And one day when I have a family of my own, I hope my kids will also discover their own story within the Bible's pages. But I'm under no illusion—this will be a challenge in a world where “The Bible says” holds little or no meaning.

We live in a fast-paced, noisy world. The still, small voice of God speaking through His Word is often drowned out by the cacophony of sounds constantly streaming from my t.v., iPod, mobile phone, and other media assaulting my senses. In this consumer culture, latest is greatest, and the customer is always right. This doesn't fare well for an old story that's slow at coming to the point—a story which confronts our idolatry with the cross. Biblical morality, miracles, and history are rejected as both an oppressive metanarrative and an unbelievable account for a scientific society. We are spiritually malnourished; all the while people avoid the Bible like brussel sprouts.

Sadly the picture isn't much prettier in Christian circles. The average Christian in Australia owns eight Bibles, yet over half of us open the Bible less than once a week. And going to a church service on Sunday doesn't necessarily help. Often we're looking for fuel for everyday life—for how to fit God's good advice into *my* story. It's common to go message after message without the Bible being opened, a steady stream of topical preaching unlikely to seriously engage with what God has spoken. Surveying this scene, *now is the right time to remember what the Bible is all about.*

As we cover in one of the sessions, this isn't about a guilt trip. But *if* the Creator of the Universe—the one true God—*really has spoken*, then wouldn't you want to know what He said? Especially if He has told us stuff we could never work out for ourselves, which directs all our journeys in this leg of the larger story.

That's what *The Journey* is all about.

This **Leader Overview** is primarily to guide your growth group sessions across the KBC Wide Alignment, from July 24 through August 14. You may or may not want to use the DVD provided within your growth group. Each of the four Sundays we will preach the main content covered by the video, leaving your group time free to engage some or all of the activities, or revisit sections of the DVD as you think best. You may also want to journal through *Luke*, 6 chapters a week, to ground this series.

Session one, ***Pilgrim***, explores what *is* the Bible.

Session two, ***Lost***, explores what kind of story we're in.

Session three, ***Bearings***, explores why God's Word is worth trusting.

Session four, ***Travel***, explores how to faithfully enter God's epic story.

It's also worth getting together one more time for a fifth session, to share how God has spoken to you each across the sessions, opening your eyes and making your heart burn as you engaged His Word.

As we travel together over the next month, may you experience the childlike pleasure, excitement, and wonder of walking with God through His Word. And may you be captivated afresh by this story of God's journey with a wandering world. For this book is raw. This book is real. And through this book, you *will* meet God.

God bless,
Dave Benson

Pastor of Evangelism and Community Outreach,
Kenmore Baptist Church, Brisbane, Australia (www.kbc.org.au)

THE JOURNEY

... at a glance

<http://www.onthejourney.org.au/downloads/>

Download Official Leader's Manual with Transcript of DVD:

http://www.onthejourney.org.au/files/2011/03/Leaders_Guide-The_Journey.pdf

Download Participant's Manual:

http://www.onthejourney.org.au/files/2011/05/Participant_Handout-The_Journey.pdf

Download Complete Manual with Extra Activities and 24 Devotions on Luke:

<http://issuu.com/nikanddaveabroad/docs/journey>

[Session 1: Pilgrim](#)

pp. 5-7

[Session 2: Lost](#)

pp. 8-13

[Session 3: Bearings](#)

pp. 14-18

[Session 4: Travel](#)

pp. 19-24

[Sample Quiet Time in Luke](#)

p. 25

SESSION 1: "Pilgrim"

For the week starting Sunday 24th July

By the end of this session ... I'll understand what the Bible says about itself—that it's an inspired and authoritative story through which God embraces and directs all our stories.

Total DVD Length: 22 minutes 13 seconds.

DVD Chapters and Discussion Questions:



Take It To God ... Prayer

As a group, commit this session to God, and ask that He would give you a mind to understand, and a heart to respond to what's in His Word.

1.1 Setting the Scene: *The Day Yahweh Spoke* (marker: 0.00 / segment length: 3.56)



Do you believe God speaks through the Bible, even today? Why, or why not?

- Life was cruisy for Abraham, until the day YHWH spoke
- "Blessed to be a blessing": thus begins Abram's journey with a journeying God
- God's got a thing for tents. His Spirit meets us as we disentangle from our comfortable lives and take up the journey to follow Him into a new thing
- Pilgrims walk with God, always moving toward the city of God
- We're all on a journey somewhere. Join God and leave the comfortable behind



Truth Time ...

Take the next 10 minutes in pairs to discuss the following:

🗣️ How often do you read the Bible?

I can't even find my Bible!										It's my daily bread
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

🗣️ In a word, how would you characterize your experience reading the Bible? *Explain.*

🗣️ Do you believe that God speaks through the Bible, even today? Why, or why not?

🗣️ What inspires you to engage the Bible more?

What discourages you from reading it at all?



Try This ...

As a whole group, take the next 10 minutes to discuss "What is the Bible?"

🗣️ What metaphors have you heard to describe what the Bible is? (e.g. *an owner's manual*)

🗣️ In five words or less, finish this sentence:

“The Bible is a _____.”

🗣️ Thinking on what you’ve read in the Bible, how adequate is the description above?
What parts of the Bible *don’t* fit within this picture?

1.2 Drive: *What Is the Bible?* (marker: 3.56 / segment length: 11.45)



How solid is your knowledge of God’s Word, both the details and the overriding story?

- Has God given us the wrong kind of book? Have we left it in the drawer?
- Is the Bible an owner’s manual for life, a divine rule book for living right?
- Is the Bible a collection of ‘timeless’ truths about the meaning of life?
- Is the Bible God’s love letter to us?
- Event (God steps onto history’s stage) ⇨ Inspiration (selected people give a God-breathed take on history) ⇨ Illumination (God speaks via His living Word today)
- The Bible is an epic travelogue, a story of God journeying with His world to set everything right. And in the reading, we’re reshaped to join God’s mission
- The Bible may not be the book we wanted, but it is what we need. This book unlocks our own adventure so we can enter God’s epic story. The Bible is an inspired and authoritative story that directs all our stories.



Try This ... Let the Word Speak

Over the next 15 minutes, divvy up some of the following passages to see what the Biblical authors say about the Word of God. What does each passage reveal about how they understood the Scriptures?

Genesis 1:1-4

Exodus 3:1-15; 4:10-17

Numbers 23:19

2 Samuel 22:31

1 Kings 12:22; 17:24

2 Kings 1:16; 22:8-23:3

1 Chronicles 17:3

2 Chronicles 10:15

Psalms 12:6; 18:30; 19:7-10;

Psalms 119:105, 140, 160

Proverbs 6:23; 30:5-6

Isaiah 40:5-8; 46:8-10; 55:8-11

Jeremiah 1:5-9; 15:16; 19:3

Jeremiah 23:29, 36

Amos 8:11-12

Matthew 4:1-11

Matthew 5:17-18; 7:24

Matthew 11:27; 21:42; 26:54

Mark 1:1-3; 7:9; 12:24, 36

Luke 1:1-4; 4:21; 5:1; 8:5-15

Luke 11:28; 16:17; 24:25-27, 44

John 1:1-14; 3:12; 4:46-47; 5:39-40

John 7:17; 10:35-36; 14:26; 15:1-17

John 17:17; 20:30-31; 21:24-25

Acts 1:16; 4:25; 17:2, 11; 18:28

Romans 1:1-4; 3:4; 10:17

Romans 15:4; 16:25-27

1 Corinthians 2:12-16

1 Corinthians 10:1-11

Galatians 3:7-8

Ephesians 6:17

1 Thessalonians 2:13

1 Timothy 3:14-15

2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17

Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12-13

James 1:21-22

1 Peter 1:10-11; 2:2

2 Peter 1:19-21; 3:15-16

Revelation 19:13; 22:18-20

1.3 Fuel: *Inspiration for the Journey* >> William Tyndale (marker: 15.41 / segment length: 5.46)



- Blood was spilled so I can freely read my own Bible in English
- William Tyndale (1496-1536) thought translation was worth dying for, giving his all so God's Word would be accessible even to a common labourer
- For Tyndale, God's Word was anything but safe. And if the Bible is worth dying for, then it's certainly worth living from
- S.O.A.P. up each day, journaling through Luke 1-6 this coming week
- May you be a pilgrim, disentangling from the predictable and rediscovering your story as you dwell in the tent of YHWH



Destination ... Preparation for Next Week

Over the next week, read Luke 1-6. Each day, read one chapter of Luke, whether by yourself or with a friend. Seek God for a Scripture verse or two that really impacts you, and write it out in full in your journal. Then, make some observations about this text: how it fits into the passage as a whole, insights about God and His mission in the world, who we are and what we can learn from fellow travellers. Next, write down one point of application that you can live out this day, in response to the text. Finally, commit it to God in prayer, and thank Him for speaking to you through His Word. *Next session, come prepared to share one insight from living the Scriptures over that week.*

Remember, **S.O.A.P.** >> Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer.



Maps ... Useful Guides to Go Further

Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*.

Mark Driscoll, *The New Testament: Why to trust it, how to read it, and tips for studying it*.

Mark Driscoll, *The Old Testament: An introduction and survey*.

Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, rev. ed.

Stephen Miller & Robert Huber, *The Bible: The Making and Impact of the Bible*.

Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*.

N. T. Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense*, chapters 13-14.

Philip Yancey, *The Bible Jesus Read*.

SESSION 2: "Lost"

For the week starting Sunday 31st July

By the end of this session ... I'll get a handle on what kind of journey God has us on—that far from being lost, we're walking out the fifth stage of a six leg trip spanning all history.

(N.b. For the first "Try This" activity, you will need one stub of post it notes, enough pens for each group member, and some tape to form a time-line on the wall.)

Total DVD Length: 40 minutes 36 seconds.

DVD Chapters and Discussion Questions:



Take It To God + Journal Insights

As a group, commit this session to God, and ask that He would give you a mind to understand, and a heart to respond to what's in His Word.

2.1 Setting the Scene: *Lost in the Story* (marker: 0.00 / segment length: 6.00)



How did the author understand the Scriptures?

- No one ever plans to get lost, but it's easy to miss the markers
- Moses and the Israelites ran ahead to write their own story, and then tried replaying old steps ... but the story had moved on
- If you want to pass on forty years in the wilderness and make the promised land, you'd better know what the Bible says and how to read the markers along the way rather than picking your own adventure
- We need a way to enter this epic story if we're to walk in step with God



Truth Time ...

Take the next 5 minutes in pairs to discuss the following:

- How solid is your knowledge of God's Word, both the details and the overriding story?

I'll wait till
it's on DVD

Which chapter
should I recite?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

- Which statement better represents your approach to the Bible:
The Bible is a resource to help me as I choose my own adventure. Or,
The Bible reminds me of the bigger picture, so I can better walk in step with God.

- Share a time you ran ahead of God, or lagged behind in the journey He has you on.
How has God used the Bible to guide your travels?

2.2 Drive: *How Do I Enter God's Epic Story?* (marker: 6.01 / segment length: 6.52)



What would have to change in your approach to God's Word if you saw your task as faithfully improvising in the fifth act, all through the Holy Spirit's prompting?

- Three thousand years ago Joshua crossed the Jordan and conquered Jericho
- Is this literally a promise to violently claim, or a rich story to metaphorically enact, or an old tale of no bearing since the New Testament came to pass?
- How are we meant to read the Scriptures? And what authority does an ancient story have for my living today?
- The commanding officer instructs with "Once upon a time" Or, the director withholds the details of the fifth act after a climactic fourth act. What would you do? This isn't 'anything goes', but instead a call to immerse yourself in the story
- We must 'faithfully improvise' in the fifth act, consistent with what went before, but directed toward the final scene when Jesus returns and sets everything right
- God exercises His authority through the Bible as we tell and retell this story of the world, following the Holy Spirit's leading to live our call in this time and space



Try This ... Time-Lining the Bible

As a whole group, take the next 10 minutes for the following activity.¹

- (1) Use the tape to construct a 3 metre horizontal time-line on the wall. On the far left, write CREATION. On the far right, inscribe NEW CREATION. And in the middle of history, draw a CROSS (✝).
- (2) Each person is to take 2-3 post-it-notes, and record a Biblical character or event on each slip, sticking it where you think is right on the time-line.
- (3) Once all notes are up, the facilitator must work with the group to roughly place the notes in the right order and area. Distinct groups of events should emerge.
- (4) Discuss how the events are grouped. (For instance, can you see the "silent years" from Malachi's prophecy to the annunciation for Mary?)
- (5) If the Biblical story has six main acts, what would you label each?
- (6) Finally, where does your life, right now, sit on the time-line? How should your improvising in the present properly relate to the other acts both before and after?

🗣️ What would have to change in your approach to God's Word if you saw your task as faithfully improvising in the fifth act, all through the Holy Spirit's prompting?

¹ Thanks to Clayton Fergie of Scripture Union International for this activity, which he uses often around the globe.

2.3 Drive: *The Journey In—Garden, Tower, Tent* (marker: 12.53 / segment length: 10.42)



What question does this retelling of the story raise for you?

- “You are *here!*” The Bible offers a map to help orientate our journey
- Like *Lord of the Rings*, the Bible is a six stage story: three legs have come and gone as we’ve journeyed *in* to the heart of the battle; the fourth scene was pivotal as God’s Son dethroned the evil ruler; and we journey back *out* in the fifth leg to announce the victory calling all citizens to align with the King before He returns to set everything right
- Each leg is tied to a specific location, traveling in from the garden to the mount of crucifixion, before heading out toward the city of God
- **Garden:** We’re designed for good, to love God, love others, and garden the world
- **Tower:** We’re damaged by evil, despising God, abusing others, and vandalizing the world. Genesis 3-11 culminates in a rebellious uprising at Babel
- **Tent:** Israel is chosen to bless the world, but continual sin threatens the covenant and lands them in exile, awaiting Abraham’s seed and the Kingly Messiah ... recorded in the books of the Law, the history books, poetry, and prophets



Try This ...

Over the next 10 minutes in pairs, explore one of the passages framing this epic journey.

The Garden ... designed for good

Genesis 1:1-3, 24-31; 2:7-9, 15-17. (See also Matthew 22:37-40.)

The Tower ... damaged by evil

Genesis 3:1-24; 6:5-8; 9:1-17; 11:1-9. (See also Isaiah 59, Romans 1:18-32, and 2 Corinthians 4:4.)

The Tent ... chosen to bless

Genesis 12:1-4; Exodus 19:4-6; 20:1-17; Leviticus 26:11-13; 2 Samuel 7:1-16; Psalm 67; Isaiah 55:3-5; Jeremiah 3:1-18; 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:17-38; Malachi 1:11; 3:1-2
(See also Galatians 3:8-9 and Hebrews 11:8-10 in the New Testament.)

🗣️ What questions does this retelling of the story raise for you? *Jot them below.*

🗨️ Which of the Old Testament books below have you read from beginning to end?

Tick them off.

<u>Books of Law</u> <u>(Pentateuch)</u>	<u>History</u>	<u>Books of Poetry</u>	<u>Major Prophets</u>	<u>Minor Prophets</u>
Genesis	Joshua	Job	Isaiah	Hosea
Exodus	Judges	Psalms	Jeremiah	Joel
Leviticus	Ruth	Proverbs	Lamentations	Amos
Numbers	1 Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel	Obadiah
Deuteronomy	2 Samuel	Song of Solomon	Daniel	Jonah
	1 Kings			Micah
	2 Kings			Nahum
	1 Chronicles			Habakkuk
	2 Chronicles			Zephaniah
	Ezra			Haggai
	Nehemiah			Zechariah
	Esther			Malachi

2.4 Drive: *The Journey Out—Mountain, House, City* (marker: 23.35 / segment length: 9.08)



What question does this retelling of the story raise for you?

- Before we can journey *out* to bless the world, God Himself must journey *in* to Jerusalem for a deadly confrontation
- **Mountain:** God enters the story through Jesus to restore us for better on the mount of crucifixion, completing Moses' and David's work with a New Exodus
- **House:** In that upper room, God's Spirit falls in power. We're sent together to help heal, a taste of how the story ends when Jesus returns. The Epistles (letters) direct a diverse bunch of former enemies in how to become a community of love
- **City:** Jesus returns and judges the world to set everything right. Sin is replaced by *shalom*, and as we read in *Revelation*, God's reign is established everywhere
- That's the epic story of the Bible, a journey in from the garden, via the tower and tent, to a mountain. And then it's the journey back out to bless the whole world from the house to the city of God. So, have *you* read God's story?



Try This ...

Over the next 10 minutes in pairs, explore one of the passages framing this epic journey.

The Mountain ... restored for better

Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Matthew 1:1; 5:1-19; 9:35; Luke 4:16-21; 10:17-20; 11:14-22; John 1:1-14; 3:1-21; John 10:10; 19:13-30; 20:1-23; Acts 4:12; Romans 1:1-4; 5:1-21; 9:1-8; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 15:1-8; Colossians 1:12-20; 2:13-15; Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 John 5:11-13

The House ... sent together to heal

Isaiah 66:18-19; Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 12:31-40; John 13:34-35; 15:5-27; 20:19-23; Acts 1:8, 12-14; Acts 2:1-47; 15:1-31; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Galatians 2:20; 3:13-29; Ephesians 2:8-13; 2 Peter 2:9-12

The City ... God sets everything right

Psalms 2; 96; Isaiah 2:2-4; 24:5-6; 65:17-25; Matthew 13:24-51; 25:1-46; John 5:24-29; Acts 17:22-31; Romans 8:18-25; 1 Corinthians 15:21-58; Philippians 2:1-11; 2 Peter 3:1-13; Revelation 7:9-10; 11:15-18; 20:1-2, 7-15; 21:1-8, 22-27; 22:1-7

🗨️ What questions, if any, does this retelling of the story raise for you? *Jot them below.*

🗨️ Which of the New Testament books below have you read from beginning to end?
Tick them off.

<u>Stories of Jesus</u> <u>(Gospels)</u>	<u>Church</u> <u>History</u>	<u>Gentile Letters</u>	<u>Jewish Letters</u>	<u>Apocalyptic Letter</u>
Matthew	Acts	Romans	Hebrews	Revelation
Mark		1 Corinthians	James	
Luke		2 Corinthians	1 Peter	
John		Galatians	2 Peter	
		Ephesians	1 John	
		Philippians	2 John	
		Colossians	3 John	
		1 Thessalonians	Jude	
		2 Thessalonians		
		1 Timothy		
		2 Timothy		
		Titus		
		Philemon		

2.5 Fuel: *Inspiration for the Journey* >> Martin Luther King (marker: 32.43 / segment length: 7.10)



- Our ongoing challenge is to keep in step with God, rather than running ahead of what He's doing, or re-treading steps from a previous stage
- This story has a trajectory, from the garden to the city always via the mount of crucifixion. We must be persons shaped by the story, sensitive to the Spirit
- Martin Luther King Jr. had a *dream* shaped by God's story, calling for justice in the present in line with a future where God's reign will be everyone's reality
- Have you entered this epic? Do you know *where you are* in God's story?



Destination ... Preparation for Next Week

Over the next week, read Luke 7-12. Each day, read one chapter of Luke, whether by yourself or with a friend. Seek God for a Scripture verse or two that really impacts you, and write it out in full in your journal. Then, make some observations about this text: how it fits into the passage as a whole, insights about God and His mission in the world, who we are and what we can learn from fellow travellers. Next, write down one point of application that you can live out this day, in response to the text. Finally, commit it to God in prayer, and thank Him for speaking to you through His Word. *Next session, come prepared to share one insight from living the Scriptures over that week.*

Remember, **S.O.A.P.** >> Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer.



Maps ... Useful Guides to Go Further

Roshan Allpress and Andrew Shamy, *The Insect and the Buffalo: How the Story of the Bible Changes Everything*.

Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story*.

Rob Bell, *Jesus Wants to Save Christians: A Manifesto for the Church in Exile*.

James Choung, *True Story: A Christianity Worth Believing In*.

John G. Stackhouse, Jr., *Making the Best of It: Following Christ in the Real World*.

Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*.

N. T. Wright, "How can the Bible be authoritative?" *Vox Evangelica* 21 (April 1991): 7-32.
(Available via google online.)

N. T. Wright, *The Last Word: Beyond the Bible Wars to a New Understanding of the Authority of Scripture*.

SESSION 3: "Bearings"

For the week starting Sunday 7th August

By the end of this session ... I'll express my doubts about the Bible, but find my bearings as to why "God's Word" is plausible to believe and credible to trust as a true story today.

Total DVD Length: 39 minutes 4 seconds.

DVD Chapters and Discussion Questions:



Take It To God + Journal Insights

Commit this session to God, and ask that He would give you a mind to understand, and a heart to respond to what's in His Word. Then, spend 10 minutes in pairs or threes sharing how God spoke to you this last week through journaling on Luke 7-12.

3.1 Setting the Scene: "Did God Really Say ...?" (marker: 0.00 / segment length: 6.26)



How sure are you that the Bible is God's Word, and all it says is true?

- Never trust a talking snake—it speaks with a forked tongue!
- Why did Eve *listen* to what the serpent said? When you trust yourself and a talking snake over the Word of an all knowing God, you'll be left looking stupid
- But, *a talking snake?! Did God really say? Can God speak in an age of science?*
- Science's track record isn't as strong as it used to be, and all belief takes faith
- And yet, the questions of morals, miracles, and history must be squarely faced
- We need solid foundations to see that the Bible is plausible and credible



Truth Time ...

Take the next 10 minutes in pairs to discuss the following:

☞ How sure are you that the Bible is God's Word, and all it says is true?

I don't think so. It's all miracles and misinformation.

Every word of it. It's totally trustworthy.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

☞ What has been your biggest doubt or struggle in believing the Scriptures?

☞ If a serpent-like sceptic challenged your trust in God's Word, what are the top two reasons you'd give for believing the Bible is inspired and authoritative for us today?

☞ If the Bible is God's Word, how would you know? What would convince you of this?

3.2 Drive: *A God Who Speaks? It's Plausible to Believe* (marker: 6.27 / segment length: 12.57)



How solid is your knowledge of God's Word, both the details and the overriding story?

- Does God exist, and can God speak? How can this be plausible to believe?
- The hallmarks of design abound. Rational, personal, and loving creatures point to a rational, personal, and loving Creator. If God's there, would He stay silent?
- In the Bible, God reaches down. Still, we need a DNA signature to identify fakes
- The Bible gives us a *view from above*. Like the missing pages of a mutilated book, God's Word explains our story's origins, meaning, morality, and destiny
- The Bible gives us a *view from beyond*. Only God can transcend natural law in miracles, and tell the beginning from the end in prophecy, as we see fulfilled hundreds of times, beyond all statistical possibility if simply a chance event
- God's signature is all over the Scriptures, evident to those willing to search



Try This ... A View From Above and Beyond

As a whole group, take the next 10 minutes for the following activity:

Together, read **Psalm 22** (*written by David, who prophetically spoke of experiences he never personally had*) and **Isaiah 52:13-53:12** (*prophesied concerning the Messiah*). Both passages were first penned more than 700 years before Christ, and are found in the Greek Septuagint, a translation of the Hebrew Tanakh (what we call the Old Testament), dating to around 250 BC.

- What clear parallels do you see with the life of Jesus? How do you explain this?
- What other prophecies in the Bible weigh in favour of this being God's Word?
- In what ways does, or doesn't, the Bible's story make sense to you in answering the big questions of origins, meaning, morality, and destiny? Can you find a more coherent view?

3.3 Drive: *A True Story? It's Credible to Trust* (marker: 19.24 / segment length: 13.08)



Read Psalm 22 ... What parallels do you see with the Life of Christ?

- Why should I trust anything the Bible says? Do these stories reflect reality?
- We must read each Scripture passage according to its genre: “Is it *true* in terms of its *intended purpose*?” Determine what *truth claim* the author is making—a divine take on history, an ironic parable, or an illuminating allegory—before assessing the text’s *truth value*. At points in the Old Testament, this is tricky
- The Biblical epic, however, rises or falls on its key events: Creation, Fall, Israel, Jesus, Church, New Creation. And the heart of it all is Jesus. Jesus affirmed the entirety of the Scriptures, so if the Gospels are solid, the whole Bible is gold
- The *transmission* of the New Testament books is trustworthy, with a mountain of manuscripts enabling reconstruction of a 99.5 percent pure text
- The timing is far too early for the stories of Jesus to be legends, and the details are too counterproductive to be made up. Also, nearly 40 ancient sources—many of whom are hostile—corroborate the accounts of Jesus in the Gospels
- The Bible gives us the true story of Jesus, and is credible to trust



Try This ... A Trust-Worthy Account

In pairs, take 10 minutes to discuss the following:

- If someone asked you, “Is the Bible true?” how would you respond?
- What do the following passages tell you about the agenda of Luke and John?
Read Luke 1:1-4; 2:1-5; 3:1-2; 23:1-12
John 19:28-37; 20:30-31; 21:24-25
(See also Acts 2:22, 1 Peter 5:1, 2 Peter 1:16, and 1 John 1:1-4.)
- In a word, how would you characterize Jesus’ view of the Scriptures?
(See Matthew 4:1-11; 5:18-19; 26:56; Mark 12:24; Luke 22:37;
John 10:35; 15:26-27; 16:12-15; 17:17-21)
- From what you know, how reliable is the Old Testament, both in telling a true story, and faithfully transmitting it to us in the present?
(*The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls are particularly relevant here.*)
- Record below some big questions you still have about whether the Bible is God’s Word. Now, take a look at the “Maps” section ending these notes, and circle one book that might help you discover an answer. Explore it for yourself!

3.4 Fuel: *Inspiration for the Journey* >> Sir William Ramsay (marker: 32.32 / segment length: 6.32)



- If the Bible really is a true story, then it can stand up to scrutiny. God's good with Thomases. The real question is this: how willing are *you* to search?
- Genuine sceptics fairly weigh what they find, and follow the evidence where it seems to lead. And often the greatest confirmation is after the fact, as obeying this ancient story lifts it off the page to transform lives
- Sir William Ramsay, Oxford expert in archaeology, was one such seeking sceptic. After thirty years trying to disprove Luke/Acts, he became a Christian and pronounced Luke "an historian of the first rank"
- God has scrawled His signature across the whole story, but only those willing to scan the Bible's pages will discover its truth
- May you discern the smooth words of sceptics, and find your bearings from God



Destination ... Preparation for Next Week

Over the next week, read Luke 13-18. Each day, read one chapter of Luke, whether by yourself or with a friend. Seek God for a Scripture verse or two that really impacts you, and write it out in full in your journal. Then, make some observations about this text: how it fits into the passage as a whole, insights about God and His mission in the world, who we are and what we can learn from fellow travellers. Next, write down one point of application that you can live out this day, in response to the text. Finally, commit it to God in prayer, and thank Him for speaking to you through His Word. *Next session, come prepared to share one insight from living the Scriptures over that week.*

Remember, S.O.A.P. >> Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer.



Maps ... Useful Guides to Go Further

Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*.

Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, 2d ed.

Ken Boa and Larry Moody, *I'm Glad You Asked* (chapter six).

F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*

Gary Habermas, *The Verdict of History*.

Walter Kaiser, *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable and Relevant?*

Tim Keller, *The Reason for God* (chapter seven).

Greg Koukl, "Never Read a Bible Verse," *Stand To Reason* apologetics web-site (www.str.org)

V. Philips Long, *The Art of Biblical History*.

Josh McDowell, *New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*.

William Ramsay, *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*.

Francis Schaeffer, *He Is There and He Is Not Silent + The God Who Is There*.

Jeffrey Sheller, *Is the Bible True?*

Peter Stoner and Robert Newman, *Science Speaks: Scientific Proof of the Accuracy of Prophecy and the Bible* (available online: <http://sciencespeaks.dstoner.net/>).

Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ + The Case for the Real Jesus + God's Outrageous Claims*.

Clifford Wilson, *Rocks, Relics, and Biblical Reliability*.

SESSION 4: "Travel"

For the week starting Sunday 14th August

By the end of this session ... I'll get a handle on how to properly interpret the Word of God, centred on Jesus and His Kingdom mission. In the process I'll find travel companions in the lives of God's followers from across this epic journey.

Total DVD Length: 38 minutes 33 seconds.

DVD Chapters and Discussion Questions:



Take It To God + Journal Insights

Commit this session to God, and ask that He would give you a mind to understand, and a heart to respond to what's in His Word. Then, spend 10 minutes in pairs or threes sharing how God spoke to you this last week through journaling on Luke 13-18.

4.1 Setting the Scene: *Reading the Story Right* (marker: 0.00 / segment length: 7.05)



How skilled are you at interpreting what God's Word Means?

- "Everything changed that day we picked up a hitch-hiker"
- He turned it all around with a question:
"Haven't you read the Scriptures? It all points to the Saviour"
- He talked. We listened. And we talked. And as we journeyed, it all became clear ... Jesus *was* the Messiah—we'd misread the plot. God reigns through the cross and resurrection, and we were to tell everyone this good news of His Kingdom
- The story wasn't about us. *It was about Him.* And now God's opened our eyes, the journey has just begun
- How can I legitimately apply inspired old stories to direct my steps today?
The keys to the challenge of interpretation are found in the Emmaus Walk



Truth Time ...

Take the next 10 minutes in pairs to discuss the following:

🗣️ How skilled are you at interpreting what God's Word means? That is, how able are you to move from what the text meant for the original audience in the past, to how it should be lived in your leg of the journey right now?

My head hurts just thinking about it!

I've got the skills and I'm good to go

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

🗣️ What stories or teaching in the Bible most trouble you, or your non-Christian friends?

Focusing on just one of these troubling aspects, how have you dealt with it?

🗣️ Share a time you saw the Bible *misused*. What makes the difference between legitimate and illegitimate interpretation of the Bible?



Try This ... Good Advice for Getting the Story Straight

As a whole group, take the next 10 minutes for the following activity.

- (1) **Together read Luke 3:21-22** on Jesus’ baptism, **from two or more translations** (e.g. **CEV**-Contemporary English Version; **NRSV**-New Revised Standard Version; **TNIV**-Today’s New International Version; **NLT**-New Living Translation)
- (2) *How can we legitimately move from what happened then—both for the spectators of this event on the Jordan River bank, and for Luke’s Gentile audience via Theophilus (cf. Luke 1:1-4)—to what it means for us today? ...*

As a group, write out your “top 5 principles to properly interpret the Bible.”

Principle #1: _____

Principle #2: _____

Principle #3: _____

Principle #4: _____

Principle #5: _____

4.2 Drive: Principles and Process—What It Means For Them (marker: 7.06 / segment length: 11.49)



Read Luke 3:21-22. What is the author’s point?

- Interpretation is unavoidable, so let’s learn to do it well
- The Bible is only safe if you never read a verse; put it in its full context
- Are we stealing promises and skipping the unpleasant parts? Is it for me?
- Key Principle #1: *Bring the Bible to Jesus.* It all points to Him, so ask His Spirit to open your eyes, and then allow the Word to be fuel for the journey as you faithfully join His Kingdom mission
- Key Principle #2: *Walk It out with Friends.* We need travel companions, so read and engage the Scriptures in community
- The process of interpretation hinges on a key question: **“What does this text mean for them, through Christ, to us today?”** *For them*—in their particular context. *Through Christ*—how does Jesus fulfil and transform this text? And *For Us*—how do I live this today in my context?
- Step #1: *What does this passage mean FOR THEM?* What is the author’s point? What *genre* is this passage written in? What is the author’s *point* for the book as a whole? Where in the epic journey does this story sit? And what is the *context* of the passage?
- Pick up *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth + How to Read the Bible Book by Book* (Douglas Stewart & Gordon Fee) + “... for Everybody” series (N. T. Wright)



Try This ... What Luke 3:21-22 Meant For Them

Having already read Luke 3:21-22 in two or more translations, take the next 10 minutes (in pairs or threes) to discuss the central question of what this passage meant *for them*:

“What is the author’s point?”

(The following questions will help uncover the author’s point, and can be used as a process for any passage you read, before considering what it means *THROUGH CHRIST, and TO US today*. Remember, “God’s Word to us was first of all His Word to them.”)

🗨️ What *genre* is this passage written in?

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parable/Allegory | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Narrative | <input type="checkbox"/> Law/Command |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Song/Poem/Psalm | <input type="checkbox"/> Historiography (crafted retelling) | <input type="checkbox"/> Prophecy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Proverb/Wisdom | <input type="checkbox"/> Letter/Epistle | <input type="checkbox"/> Apocalyptic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure (consult a commentary for insight) | |

🗨️ How should this *genre* affect your reading of the text?

(For future reference, Gordon Fee and Douglas Stewart’s book *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 3d ed., is really helpful in this process.)

🗨️ What is the author’s *point* for the book as a whole?

(For future reference, Gordon Fee and Douglas Stewart’s book *How to Read the Bible Book by Book* is very useful.)

🗨️ Where in the *epic journey* does this story sit?

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garden (Creation) | <input type="checkbox"/> Tower (Fall/Rebellion) | <input type="checkbox"/> Tent (Israel) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mountain (Jesus) | <input type="checkbox"/> House (Spirit/Church) | <input type="checkbox"/> City (New Creation) |

🗨️ What connections do you see in this passage to prior and following events in the epic?

🗨️ What is the *context* of the passage, historically, and in a literary sense of flow?

(I.e., What would these events and this account have meant to the original audience? Why did the author include this passage in this location for the paragraph and book as a whole?)

🗨️ In a sentence, *What did this event and Scripture mean FOR THEM?*

4.3 Drive: *What It Means Through Christ, To Us* (marker: 18.55 / segment length: 11.37)



Read Luke 3:21-22. What does this passage mean to you?

- The whole story had come to a climax in Jesus. So when we read the Scriptures, we've got to ask, "*What does this passage mean through Christ?*" How has Jesus formed and reformed the story? Reframe in light of who He is and what He did
- Christians *have* used the Bible to oppress and control others. But when we worship a slain lamb and are sent through the scars in Christ's hands, joining Jesus on mission, this kind of love will never oppress—if our story is straight
- "*What does this passage mean for them, through Christ, TO US?*" The whole story of the Bible is unlocked when we see it as the journey of a God on mission. In telling and retelling these stories, we learn to faithfully travel the fifth leg, joining Jesus in transforming the world
- What is God like, and what am I like?
- What's God's mission in the world, and who would He have me be, for Jesus Christ, today? ... Remember your mission, and seek the Spirit's help each day
- *If you read it right, you'll never be the same.* Be offended, but bring it to God
- *Find travel companions to guide your journey.* The Bible is filled with divine mentors who direct our steps from the garden, via the mount, to the city



Try This ... Luke 3:21-22, Through Christ, To Us

Still reflecting on Luke 3:21-22, take the next 10 minutes (in pairs or threes) to discuss the central question of what this passage means *through Christ, to us today*:

“Who would You have me be, for Jesus Christ, today?”

(The following questions will help uncover this answer, and can be used as a process for any passage you read to legitimately apply the Scriptures to your life today.)

🗨️ All Scripture points toward Christ (Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39-40). Whilst these verses in Luke 3:21-22 are already about Jesus, *what does this passage mean through Christ?*

(That is, how does Jesus’ life and identity form and reform the story, reframing our understanding of the meaning and significance of this event?)

🗨️ From this passage, *what is God like?*

🗨️ From this passage, *what am I (and what are we) like?*

(Use the Bible as a mirror to see yourself more clearly with God’s eyes.)

🗨️ From this passage, *what is God’s mission in the world?*

🗨️ Putting this together in concise form, *what does this passage mean to me right now? ... Who would Jesus Christ have me be for Him today?*

(Write out two application points to live over the next day.)

🗨️ How does this passage challenge my understanding and way of life?

(Remember, read it right and you’ll never be the same.)

🗨️ What can I learn from Kingdom characters featured in this passage?

🗨️ Which Biblical character seems like a natural traveling companion for me at this stage in my journey? What do you have in common?

🗨️ What other questions help me legitimately apply God’s Word to my life today?

(Remember, the Scriptures give us fuel to faithfully walk in the journey’s fifth leg.)

4.4 Fuel: *Inspiration for the Journey* >> Mother Teresa (marker: 30.32 / segment length: 8.01)



- The Word of God is alive and active. As we tell this story, we are shaped to be like Christ, on mission to reconnect a lost world to its loving Father
- But how should we travel on a planet seriously messed up?
- Mother Theresa was a woman shaped by the Scriptures: “I am a little pencil in the hand of a writing God who is sending a love letter to the world”
- God’s call on her life was clear, but it wasn’t without crisis. In the same way, when we stop racing ahead of God’s plans or retracing steps of those who went before, faithful improvisation can leave us with lots of questions
- Still, God’s Word is food for the hungry, and sensitivity to His Spirit makes the impossible a reality. Dwelling in this book directs our travel today as a sign of His Kingdom. Everything hinges on Jesus and His mission. Will you join His story?



Destination ... Preparation for Next Week

Over the next week, read Luke 19-24, using the process explored in this session. Read a chapter each day, and ask God for a couple of verses to focus in on. Then, consider what this Scripture means **for them, through Christ, to us today**. As you record your observations and write out application points for each day, commit it to God in prayer, and thank Him for speaking to you through His Word. Next week is an optional session without video instruction, but can I encourage you to *consolidate all you’ve learned and celebrate how God has grown you through the Journey*. And remember, everything hinges on Christ and God’s mission in this world. So travel well, and may God bless.



Maps ... Useful Guides to Go Further

Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World*.

Klaus Bockmuehl, *Listening to the God who Speaks: Reflections on God’s Guidance from Scripture and the Lives of God’s People*.

Wayne Cordeiro, *The Divine Mentor*.

Eugene Robert Ekblad, Jr. *Reading the Bible with the Damned*.

Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stewart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 3d ed.

Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stewart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*.

Douglas Stewart, *Old Testament Exegesis*, 3d ed.

W. Randolph Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*, rev. ed.

Rick Warren, *Rick Warren’s Bible Study Methods: Twelve Ways You Can Unlock God’s Word*.

Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative*.

Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God’s People: A Biblical Theology of the Church’s Mission*.

N. T. Wright, *Luke for Everybody*.

N. T. Wright, *New Testament and the People of God*.

SAMPLE QUIET TIME IN LUKE



Luke 1: John the Baptist is Born

Read this chapter, asking God to open your eyes to His leading this day.

Scripture: Write out in full the one or two verses that really speak to you.

Observations: What is the author's point? What does this Scripture show you about what God is like, and what you are like? What does this Scripture show you about God's mission, and your mission in the world? What can I learn from Kingdom characters?

Application: What does this passage mean to you right now? "Who would Jesus have me be for Him today?" Write out one point of application to live today in response.

Prayer: Commit what you've read, and your application point, to God. Thank Him for speaking to you through His Word. And over the day, look for opportunity to live this out.



Luke 24: The Risen and Ascended Christ

Read this chapter, asking God to open your eyes to His leading this day.

Scripture: Write out in full the one or two verses that really speak to you.

Observations: What is the author's point? What does this Scripture show you about what God is like, and what you are like? What does this Scripture show you about God's mission, and your mission in the world? What can I learn from Kingdom characters?

Application: What does this passage mean to you right now? "Who would Jesus have me be for Him today?" Write out one point of application to live today in response.

Prayer: Commit what you've read, and your application point, to God. Thank Him for speaking to you through His Word. And over the day, look for opportunity to live this out.

SYMBOLS KEY

Navigating Your Way through Each Session



Video ... Each session has one video clip, divided into multiple chapters. After each video segment (chapter), a timer will guide you through activities before the next clip.



Take it to God ... Prayer is crucial if we are to truly engage God's Word. Press into God at the start of each session, that He speak to you through the Bible across the Journey.



Setting the Scene ... Each session begins with a key Biblical story which frames all the activities. The story's full version is in the Session Notes, after the group notes each week.



Truth Time ... This activity is more for personal or pairs reflection. These questions act as a mirror, encouraging you to honestly face your engagement with God's Word.



Try This ... A number of activities are involved in each session, usually requiring you to work as a group and get into the Bible, to practice what you are learning about in 'Drive.'



Drive ... 'Drive' represents the main teaching blocks in each session that carry our understanding forward as we seek a dynamic and faithful way to enter God's epic story.



Navigation ... Here's space to jot your own notes, in response to the video or activities.



Fuel ... Each session finishes with an inspirational biographical story that demonstrates what these principles can look like in practice. May their stories offer fuel for your journey.



Destination ... When you reach the end of your session, 'Destination' reminds you of what still lies ahead. In particular, it highlights how to journal your way through Luke's Gospel.



Maps ... Check out these great sources if you want to explore the concepts in each session in more detail. Even a four week course is skimming the surface, so keep learning!



Session Notes ... After each group discussion, but before the six weekly devotions, are 'Session Notes'. These carry the **key content for the Journey**, fleshing out what is suggested in each of the video segments. Make sure you read through these with your journaling.



Journal ... Here's space to engage the Word each day, exploring six chapters of Luke's Gospel per week. 'Journal' follows S.O.A.P.: Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer.



Rear Vision ... At the end of each journal entry is 'Rear Vision', directing you to read over one section of the Session Notes. This will help you look back over where you've been.

