

*In God We Trust?
Can I Really Trust the Bible?*
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TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture:

2 Peter 1:20-21 (NLT)

20 Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, 21 or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.

2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT)

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

Psalms 28:7 (NLT)

7 The Lord is my strength and shield. I trust him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of thanksgiving.

Ephesians 4:14 (NLT)

14 Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth.

Matthew 24:35 (NLT)

35 Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.

Start **talking**. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- What are some of the things in which we commonly put our trust, but maybe shouldn't or don't even realize we're doing it?

Start **thinking**. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- **Read 2 Peter 1:20-21.** According to this passage how did the Bible gain its authority. Discuss the phrase "God wrote the Bible and man held the pen."
- **Read 2 Timothy 3:16.** What does the phrase "inspired by God" mean? What does the Bible do in our lives when we submit to its authority?
- What is the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls and how do they verify the prophecy and accuracy of the Bible?

Start **sharing**. Choose a question to create openness.

- At Generations Church we use the phrase "Biblical Authority" to describe how we make decisions and determine right from wrong. Is the Bible the primary authority for your life? If not, what is?
- Pastor Troy mentioned the discovery of the Hittites and the day of circumcision as examples of the Bible being historically and scientifically accurate. Can you think of any other examples in history or science where the Bible has proven to be accurate?
- Can you recall a time when the words of the Bible supernaturally changed your life?
- Why do you trust the Bible? If you don't trust the Bible, what's your biggest reason for not trusting it? Can our small group answer any questions or help you resolve your doubts?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "I'm an atheist" and 10 being "I completely trust God with every fiber of my being," how much do you trust God? If your number isn't 10, what's keeping you from trusting God completely?

Start **doing**. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Cultivate trust in God by reading His Word every day. A chapter per day read through the book of John (for 21 days) was recommended by Pastor Troy. There are other great options such as reading plans in the Bible app or a daily devotional guide such as Our Daily Bread.

Start **praying**. Be bold and pray with power.

- Father, thank you for giving us the truth of your revealed Word. Please guide us and give us discernment, and help us to put our trust in you and the Holy Bible. In Jesus' mighty name. -Amen

Start **digging**. For further study.

- Read the 2nd page and discuss it.

Question: "Why should I trust the Bible?"

Answer: We all trust in something. Even the most skeptical among us exercises complete trust in many things. When we stand up, we trust that our legs will hold us. When we sit down, we trust the chair. We trust that, when we inhale, the right amount of oxygen will be present to sustain us. When we go to bed, we trust that the earth will continue its rotation so that morning will come. We have chosen to place trust in these things because of their past reliability. We choose to trust; otherwise, we would live in a constant state of fear and uncertainty.

When it comes to God and the Bible, the same principles apply. We choose what we trust. Faith in God means that we have chosen to trust that He exists, that He is who the Bible says He is, and that our trust—or lack of it—will radically impact our lives and eternity. However, the alternative to faith is not “lack of faith.” To choose against faith in God also requires trust. We must trust that God does *not* exist, that He cannot be known by us, and that this choice has no impact on our lives and eternity. Denying God’s existence takes an even bigger leap of faith because the questions raised in the Bible still demand to be answered. Those who discount the Bible must supply answers themselves to countless questions with no ready answers, such as those dealing with the meaning of life and the complexity of design seen in the universe. Many who choose to trust something other than the Bible must finally agree with atheist Bertrand Russell, who concluded that, if life beyond the grave is a myth, then life before the grave has no meaning.

When choosing where to place our trust, we must consider the reliability of each option. The Bible makes some startling claims about itself. Some people think they can pick and choose which parts of the Bible they consider true, but the Book itself never gives us that option. It states that it is the inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16), that it is true (Psalm 119:160; John 17:17), and that it is the guidebook for our lives (Psalm 119:105; Luke 4:4). To trust that this is *not* true means that everything else the Bible claims is suspect; therefore, claiming the promises while ignoring the commands is irrational.

Helping us trust the Bible are the claims of the writers themselves. The Old Testament authors declared that they spoke the very words of God (Exodus 20:1–4; Deuteronomy 8:3; Isaiah 1:2; Jeremiah 1:1–13). Certain men were designated by God as prophets, kings, or leaders and were recognized as such by the people they served. The prophets qualified most of their pronouncements with the words, “So says the Lord” (e.g., Jeremiah 45:2; Zechariah 7:13). This declaration was often met with rebellion and persecution (Matthew 23:37; 1 Kings 19:10; Acts 7:52). There was no earthly reason for a prophet to declare unpleasant truths to people who were likely to stone him. Yet, the prophets continued to proclaim their message because they were completely convinced that the Lord held them responsible to represent Him faithfully. The words of the prophets were then recorded for future generations and accepted as the words of God, even by Jesus Himself (Matthew 4:10; Luke 4:8).

The New Testament authors identify various reasons for writing. Luke, for example, was a respected physician and historian who traveled with Paul on his missionary journeys. He explains the purpose for his book in the first chapter: “Just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught” (Luke 1:2–4). Luke personally researched the claims about Jesus in order to verify the veracity of the gospel narrative and wrote the twin books of Luke and Acts.

Another factor helping us trust the Bible is the life-changing impact the Bible has had for thousands of years. The Bible has withstood the attempts of kings, dictators, and whole societies to abolish it and still remains the top-selling book of all time. Its words contain a hope not found in any other religious writing and has transformed the lives of millions. Other world religions claim loyal adherence, but the glue that holds most of their faithful is fear, intimidation, or human effort. The Bible promises what no other book does: life, hope, and purpose as a gift from Almighty God. Its words have transformed murderers, tyrants, and nations because the Bible resonates as truth in the deepest part of the human soul (Ecclesiastes 3:11). The Bible may be rejected, hated, or ignored, but its impact on those who heed it cannot be discounted.

Ultimately, God has given each of us free will to choose what we believe. But He has also placed His fingerprints all over His creation, and He has written an instruction manual so we would know how to live (Psalm 19:1; 119:11; 1 Peter 2:11–12). His Word has given us ample evidence that it can be trusted, and those who do trust the Bible have a solid foundation upon which to build their lives (see Matthew 7:24–28).