



### GOALS

As students experience this session in Faith Basics, they will...

- Understand why the Bible is foundational to our faith and for maturing in our relationship with Christ.
- Learn about the benefits of engaging God's Word in meaningful ways.
- Critically consider their own level of commitment to learning from God's Word.
- Develop a plan to implement experiencing the Word as a spiritual discipline in their own lives.

### MATERIALS: Group

- Whiteboard or Post-it pad (the 25" x 30" variety)
- Dry-erase markers or Sharpies for Post-it pad
- 3x5 Commitment Cards (see Putting Into Practice exercise); depending on the option you choose, you may have some prep to do before your session

### MATERIALS: Each Student

- Different colored markers or colored pencils
- Student journal pages and Scripture sheets
- Bible

### One Week Out

Make sure you've done your personal prep from the Prep It book for this session.

### OPEN

After your group has gathered, open your session with a short discussion about books:

**What's the best book/novel you've ever read?**

**Why do certain books stand out over others?**

**What's the best love story you've ever read (fiction or non-fiction)?**

**Would you consider the Bible a love story? Why or why not?**

**What are some struggles people have when it comes to the Bible?**

*Possible responses:*

*If the Bible was written by men, how can we know it contains God's words?*

*With so many different translations of the Bible how do we know which one(s) are accurate?*

*How do we know that the Bible hasn't been changed or altered over the years?*

*How do we know that the Bible is more than just a collection of stories and a history of a group of people?*

**For those of us who view the Bible as sacred and an authority for the way we are to live, what thing(s) prevent us from devoting the time to diving into Scripture?**

*Possible responses:*

*Busy schedules, struggling to understand what is written/hard to read, lingering doubts about the Bible, not much of a reader, wrestling with God at the moment...*

After some good discussion, turn students toward the subject of this study series. Here are some talking points.

- The goal of each session is to better understand a specific element of the Christian faith.
- As each session is pieced together, students will gain a deeper confidence in their relationship with God and will have a powerful perspective of why we need Jesus Christ.
- Each session is designed so that group members can teach themselves from Scripture, learning lifelong study tools.
- This study will help students practice the group discussion discipline of answering questions from Scripture rather than answering with personal opinion (of course, personal opinion is important and sometimes it's asked for).
- You may want to mention to your students that toward the end of this session they will be making a plan to help them make studying God's Word a regular spiritual discipline practice.

## DIGGING IN

Share the concept of "If/Then" with your students from your personal prep. You may even want to share some of your own life experiences to briefly illustrate the concept.

Explain to students that the Bible is full of If/Then statements, such as, "if you do this (action), then this will happen (consequence, promise, or result)." Share with them the example from your Prep It, Exodus 19:5. "Now **if** you obey me fully and keep my covenant (action), **then** out of all nations you will be my treasured possession (consequence, promise, or result)."

Explain to your group that they will be reading a series of "If/Then" statements in Proverbs 2:1-6. Using the Scripture sheet provided have them read the passage of Scripture and mark the "if" conditions with one color and the "then" conclusions in another.

As the group reads the passage take the opportunity to create two columns like the one below on either a whiteboard or sheet of paper. Once individuals have finished, as a group, list all of the conditions and promises and place them in the proper columns.

### IF

*-you accept my words  
-and store up my commands within you  
-turn your ear to wisdom  
-apply your heart to understanding  
-you call out for insight  
-you cry aloud for understanding  
-look for it like silver  
-search for it like hidden treasure*

### THEN

*-you will understand the fear of the Lord  
-and find the knowledge of God  
-(God's Will!)*

Ask your students to look over their "if" lists and put a book symbol over anything that may refer to God's Word ("my words," "my commands," "it"). Now ask them to circle any action words (those great verbs). Once students start to see the relationship between action and Scripture, discuss how we are to approach our Bibles. Are we to casually read it a few minutes a day? Or are we to actively pursue the Word in engaging ways? What promises (the "then" phrases) can we count on if we pursue it in engaging ways? You may want to relate your thoughts on the analogy of searching for hidden treasure from your Prep It.

## DIGGING DEEPER

Invite students to move to a place of solitude if possible (a corner of the room, an empty room nearby). Have them take their Bibles and journal pages. Ask them to read the following verses and list on their journal pages everything they learn about the Word of God. Ask them to also jot down thoughts that God brings to mind concerning the Bible and the role it plays in their lives. This can be a time of real connecting with God. You may want to pray again before the group disperses.

After an appropriate amount of time, bring the group back together to process what they've discovered in the Word. In the discussion, you may want to bring out some of the points noted below. As students share, ask them to share their observations in their own words (we've given a few examples below).

**Psalm 19:7-11**

- God's Word is perfect, refreshes the soul (brightens my day)
- God's Word is trustworthy, makes wise the simple (I don't have to be smart to trust)
- God's precepts are right, giving joy to the heart (makes me a happier person)
- God's commands are radiant, giving light to the eyes (people enjoy being around me)
- God's decrees are firm and righteous
- They are more precious than gold
- They are sweeter than honey

**Psalm 119:98-106**

- His commands make me wiser than my enemies (good for apologetics discussions)
- they are always with me
- I have more insight than my teachers if I meditate on God's statutes
- I have more understanding than my elders if I obey God's Word (smarter than you!)
- the understanding I gain from God's precepts helps me to hate every wrong path (and keeps me from temptation!)
- God's laws are righteous

**Matthew 22:29**

- Sadducees were in error because they did not know the Scripture or the power of God (let's hope Jesus never has to say this to us!)

**Hebrews 4:12**

- Word of God is living, active (it's not a crusty, ancient book)
- it is sharper than a double-edged sword
- it penetrates, dividing soul, spirit
- it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart

**Hebrews 5:12-6:2**

- God's Word is solid food (this is where my soul finds its best nourishment)
- it's for the mature
- if we constantly use the Word, we train ourselves to distinguish good from evil

**James 1:22-25**

- do what the Word says!
- don't just listen to it! (obedience shows I get it)
- we'll be blessed if we do what the Word says
- the Law gives freedom

**1 John 2:14**

- the Word of God is able to live in us (this is a big "Wow!")
- and we can overcome the evil one

**Isaiah 55:10-11**

- God's Word will not return to Him empty (I am NEVER wasting time in God's Word)
- it will accomplish God's purpose for which He sent it

**TAKING IT INWARD**

Review Psalm 119:99. Ask your group what they think this passage implies. Make sure that they understand that the best way for us to find out about God is directly from His Word, not from other people such as friends, parents, or their group leaders. While these folks can be helpful and very important, the Bible says that the best source is the direct source! Ask your students to circle on their lists (from the Digging Deeper exercise above) three traits of God's Word that are the most meaningful or convicting to them. Allow a couple minutes. Then have them share what they marked and why.

Another individual exercise. Ask your students to rate themselves on the following questions (This is printed for them on their journal pages):

Would you label yourself as someone who knows God through His Word or knows God through other people's experiences and descriptions of God?

Others									God's Word	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

1 John 2:14 states that God's Word is able to live in us and we can overcome the evil one! Is God's Word living in you enough to give you the power to overcome the evil one? Rate your power level on the following fuel gauge.

Empty									Full	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Using the analogy from Proverbs 2 (searching for hidden treasure), how does your engagement in God's Word compare to the intensity asked for in Proverbs 2?

There's a treasure out there?									Map and shovel in hand	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

## CROSS CHECKING

Invite your students to choose a partner and read over 1 Timothy 4:7-8 and 2 Timothy 3:16 from their Bibles. Have the groups discuss how God's Word is vital to training in righteousness and godliness.

## PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

Give students a few moments to make a plan for how they'd like to better engage in God's Word. Below are suggestions students will find on their student pages.

### Options:

You may want to distribute blank 3x5 index cards or create cards beforehand that include the steps noted below to serve as prompts (or any other type of card that would help your students create a personal plan for Bible engagement).

After they've had a few minutes, invite students to share their plans and goals with each other.

**Set Goals:** What are specific, yet realistic, goals you can set? (For example: read the gospel of John; explore and apply Jesus' parables; understand everything the apostle Paul taught about grace.)

**Find a Spot:** Designate a sacred space, a simple spot that tells your brain and your heart that it's time to listen to what God is saying in His Word.

**Take Steps:** What are specific steps you will take to attain your goal? (For example, read a segment a day; journal an "Oh, Wow!" thought every time you read something.)

**Write It Out:** Write out your plan and read it back to yourself.

**Commit to It:** Who are you going to share this plan with? Will this person help encourage you and hold you accountable?

**Remind Yourself:** Create a digital reminder (such as, a notification, phone wallpaper, etc.) to make your plan a regular part of your life.

After students have shared their plans and goals with each other, close your time by praying that each of them will have the wisdom and strength to implement their plans and enjoy the fruit of ramping up the use of God's Word in their lives.