



EXPLORE

**FIVE
BIG
TRUTHS
FROM
THE
BIBLE**

 **NORTHSIDE CHURCH**



 **NORTHSIDE CHURCH**

EXPLORE: 5 BIG TRUTHS FROM THE BIBLE

INTRODUCTION

We're so glad you're holding this book in your hands. You may be looking for answers to your biggest faith questions. Maybe you're hoping this resource will help you get back into a regular time with Jesus and His word. Perhaps a friend gave you this book and asked you to read it with them. Regardless of the reason, we're excited to dig into God's Word with you over the next few days in this guide. We hope you'll experience, for the first time or the thousandth time, the One who created us, and invites deep, lasting joy into our lives.

Sometimes a specific season of life leads us to especially seek after the Lord in order to experience his love, grace, and peace. If you're in that season now, we pray that this guide will be a springboard into a life of surrender to Jesus.

We ask for the following three commitments as we work through this guide:

- I am open to learning new things from God's Word about my view of God and myself.
- I will read and reflect on each section and ask questions.
- I will be honest with myself and with the Lord.

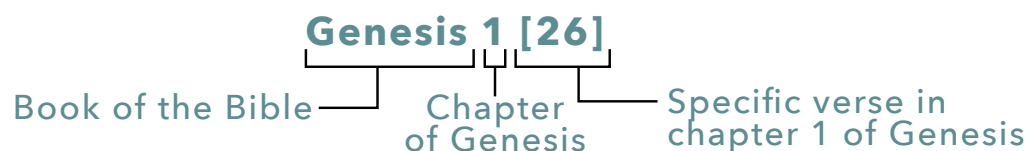


BIBLE READING & REFERENCES

Some people are seasoned veterans in Bible reading. Others are just starting out. No matter where you find yourself today, these few points will help us as we read the Bible together.

The Bible is also referred to as **God's word** or **scripture**. We'll use all three of those terms throughout this guide. A **passage** of the Bible is a section of the Bible. The Bible is organized into **two** big sections - Old Testament and New Testament. The Old Testament contains 39 different books, and the New Testament contains 27 books. These books are written in several genres, or forms. Some of the books are **history** books, detailing specific real events and stories. Other books are **poetic** books with songs and stirring language. The Bible also has books of **prophecy** (speaking the truth of God about the future), **gospels** (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John), early works in the church, **letters** to churches, and apocalyptic **literature** (pointing to the eternal state of the world).

Specific parts of the Bible are referred to as follows:



Bible passages are also often written as Genesis 1:26, with a colon separating the chapter and verse. Genesis 1 [26] is spoken out loud as "Genesis one twenty-six."

Bible books were written by people living in their own life situation and time in history. They didn't fall into a trance and suddenly begin scribbling. However, we do believe that the authors of the Bible wrote specifically under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the person of God, along with the Father and the Son. Therefore the words that we read and receive are God speaking to us - written by real people in human history, and divinely inspired.

There is power in the word of God. 2 Timothy 3:16 shows us that all Scripture is "breathed out by God." When we read the Bible, it's as though God is breathing life on and inside us. Joshua 1:8 tells us to "meditate on the word of God day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." The road to true success runs right through the timeless words of Scripture. Peter was one of Jesus' early followers. He once replied to Jesus, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life (John 6:68)." We pray that the Lord will meet you in an extraordinary way as you take time in His word.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS GUIDE

Each lesson in this guide has four parts: **Scripture**, **reflection**, **big truth**, and **questions**. The lessons are meant to build on one another. Don't feel the need to rush through the lessons in order to get them completed - instead, choose a time when you can truly focus and reflect. Take your time. Write down questions, comments, and points where you agree or may disagree.

We hope you'll finish this guide with a clearer understanding of the God who created us, His son Jesus's sacrifice for us, and what it looks like to surrender our lives to Him and submit to the Holy Spirit in daily life.

LESSON 1

Genesis 1 [26] Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." [27] So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female. [28] God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth." [29] God also said, "Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you, [30] for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth—everything having the breath of life in it—I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. [31] God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

Our God is a beautiful creator. He made the Himalaya mountains, sunsets over Santa Monica, and the Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River. He is the crafter of amazing animals that come in every size, shape, and nature. But what we see from the book of Genesis is that we, His people, are the greatest creation of all. We are, "...very good indeed."

God created us, "in our image, according to our likeness." In a shorter term, we are created as "image bearers" of our God. This means that we are a little bit like God, and we represent Him on earth. What a life-changing truth! Because God is infinitely valuable, we, as His creations, are valuable too. We are magnificent tiny reflections of a God who spoke

the entire world into existence. Every person is valuable - period. God doesn't make junk. When we believe this, it changes the way we see every single person, including ourselves.

The first people, Adam and Eve, live in a beautiful world. Plants are lush and fruit-bearing. Trees are soaring toward the radiant sunshine. The ground swells with water. Sparkling rivers flow through the land. Adam and Eve lived together in harmony with creation, one another, and God.

The scripture text goes on to show us that God gave human beings two initial tasks. First, we are to fill the earth. This task shows us that we are made to invest our lives into precious children. Psalm 127:3 tells us that children are a beautiful gift from the Lord. As you care for your niece or nephew, welcome a child into your home through fostering, have biological children, nurture young ones as a grandparent, or serve with little ones in or outside the church, you are doing exactly what God created you to do.

Second, we are to subdue the earth. We subdue the earth when we take what is in the world and fashion it into something useful and beautiful for mankind. More simply, we subdue the earth when we work. You may have a rewarding career that you love. Or you may have something less than what you would call rewarding. In the beginning, God made work as a gift for mankind, and men and women worked with eager intent and purpose. Even if our jobs today are not perfect, the rhythm of work and rest was always designed by God. Our work gives us purpose, and our rest reminds us to reflect on and worship God.



BIG TRUTH #1

GOD IS THE ALL-POWERFUL CREATOR. HE HAS A BEAUTIFUL DESIGN FOR THE WORLD, AND HE CREATED ME IN HIS IMAGE.

What does this text say about how we are made?

What does it mean to “fill the earth?”

What does it mean to “subdue” the earth?

How do we see these two commands working in our lives today? What did God call His creation in verse 31?

Do you struggle with seeing yourself as valuable and wonderfully made? Why or why not?

Review the big truth of this lesson. Do you believe this truth? Why or why not?

LESSON 2

Romans 3 [10] as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; [11] no one understands; no one seeks for God. [12] All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

This passage of the Bible is from the book of Romans, which was written through a movement of the Holy Spirit in a man named Paul. Born a Roman citizen, Paul was familiar with the culture of power and dominance in the important city of Rome. Furthermore, Paul was a highly trained man in the Jewish faith. He memorized large portions of the Old Testament. Paul was very good at being religious, but Paul came to realize that the Lord is not looking for us to move from irreligious to religious. The Lord also is not looking for us to move from religious to more religious. God is calling us not to religion, but to surrender. (If you'd like to read more about Paul's own change from religious to surrendered, you can find that story in Acts 9:1-22).

We see two big truths in Romans 7. First, God is holy. The holiness of God refers to the absolute moral purity of God. He cannot sin, and He cannot be with sin. He alone is righteous. The second truth in this passage is that all of us sin. Surrender begins when we realize the holiness of God, and understand that our sin deeply separates us from Him. This is a big realization, but a healthy understanding of sin does not lead us to self-hate. Remember: we are beautiful image-bearers of our heavenly Father. A healthy view of sin helps us see the truth about our desires, motivations, emotions, thoughts, and decisions. We are not basically good or even morally neutral. We are rebels, affected in every way by the brokenness inside us and the brokenness around us.

Genesis 1 showed us that we are image-bearers of God, but sin tarnishes our ability to image God...not totally but significantly. Sin diminishes our ability to reflect the image of God.

Sin has become a dreaded and avoided word in our culture. The news about us being sinners can seem like bad news. However, God created us to live in His design, and departure from that design will only lead to more brokenness and less joy. The road to experiencing lasting joy, peace, and a relationship with God runs right through a correct understanding of sin.

BIG TRUTH #2: MY SIN SEPARATES ME FROM GOD. I DESERVE GOD'S JUDGMENT FOR MY SIN.

What is your current view of sin?

Does this passage change your view of sin?

Do you believe our sin separates us from God? How so?

Does the Bible teach that we are basically good?

Review the big truth of this lesson. Do you believe this truth?

LESSON 3

1 Corinthians 15 [1] Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the gospel I preached to you, which you received, on which you have taken your stand [2] and by which you are being saved, if you hold to the message I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. [3] For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, [5] and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. [6] Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep. [7] Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

Have you ever received good news? The words, “It’s a girl!” or, “You’re cancer free!” can ignite in us a celebratory feeling like no other. The word gospel literally means good news. A gospel message in New Testament times was a declaration of victory. The victory of the gospel is a proclamation that Jesus has won. He defeated sin, sickness, and death in His life, death, burial, and resurrection. Best of all, Jesus invites us into that victory.

Paul made this gospel message abundantly clear. Why do people feel the need to clarify things? Mostly because we are all prone to a lack of clarity. We often want to craft Jesus into our own image of who he should be. Paul makes clear who Jesus is and what He came to do so that we would have no uncertainty or confusion about His purpose. In fact, Paul says that this gospel is “most important.” The gospel is not a thing in Christianity. The gospel is the thing in Christianity.

The good news of Christianity is wrapped up in the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. We can remember the gospel quickly through the letters L-D-B-R. Jesus **lived** a perfect life (unlike our sinful life). Jesus **died** an excruciating death on a cross. His body was broken, His blood was shed, and the heart in His body stopped beating. Jesus was **buried** in a borrowed tomb, but it's ok that it was a borrowed tomb, because He didn't need it very long. Jesus **rose** victorious from the grave and is actively at work in the world today through the Holy Spirit.

BIG TRUTH #3: THE GOSPEL IS THE LIFE, DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

What is the most important thing, according to Paul in verse 3?

What is the gospel, according to Paul in this passage?

Does Paul speak to the believability of the gospel? How so? Do you believe the gospel? Why or why not?

Review the big truth of this lesson. Do you believe this truth? Why or why not?

LESSON 4

2 Corinthians 5 [21] He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

This one verse is packed with depth and meaning. Here is a brief breakdown of what is happening:

He - this is God the father.

The one who did not know sin - This is Jesus, the Son. Jesus lived a perfect life. He never sinned. Although he experienced temptation from his friends, the government, religious leaders, and even Satan himself, Jesus perfectly endured without sin.

To be sin for us - Because Jesus remained perfect, or righteous, Jesus is able to become a perfect sacrifice for us on the cross. The wrath, or judgment of God was poured out on the Son of God so that I could be saved from my sin and from God Himself - and so can you. On the cross, we see two truths at the exact same time: I am a desperate sinner, and Jesus paid for all my sin.

So that in Him - When we repent of our sin and believe in the gospel, we are then found "in Christ." The song Before the Throne of God Above perfectly summaries Christ's work for us as a response to our repentance and belief:

One in Himself, I cannot die
My soul is purchased by His blood
My life is hid with Christ on high
With Christ, my Savior and my God

Listen to the full song -
Before the Throne of God Above
[Use your camera app to scan]



Repentance and belief are a decision that we make when God gives us spiritual life. This decision happens in a moment, day, or short period of time. We continue to repent and believe after our first decision, but the initial decision to repent and believe happens at a particular point in our lives that we will remember forever. We can not turn toward Jesus until we choose to turn away from sin. When we repent, we choose to say to God and to others within a church family, "I turn from my sin and turn toward Jesus." Sin transforms from a playground for my pleasure into a battleground for God's glory and our joy. We don't just turn from sin, we turn to a life in Jesus that's filled with peace, joy, and hope.

After surrendering our lives to Jesus, we take the next step of getting baptized. Baptism is important because it points to our decision to repent and believe. Baptism is also a marking point of the passing from unrepentance to repentance. We pass from unbelief (or casual belief) to full belief in the gospel, and we declare that belief publicly through this action of being baptized.

We might become the righteousness of God - You and I become the righteousness of God through repentance and belief. We are justified not by our good deeds or religious works, but by the righteous blood of Jesus shed for us. Through this faith, our standing before God becomes just as if we had never sinned. When God looks at us, He sees Jesus and the sacrifice that paid for our sin - past, present, and future - in full.



**BIG TRUTH #4:
THE PERFECT JESUS BECAME MY SIN, SO THAT I MAY APPEAR
AS RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD.**

Who is the one who did not know sin? What does this tell us about Jesus? What did Jesus become for us?

What do we become because of Jesus?

What is repentance?

What is belief?

Review the big truth of this lesson. Do you believe this truth? Why or why not?

LESSON 5

Mark 10 [17] As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" [18] "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked him. "No one is good except God alone. [19] You know the commandments: Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not defraud; honor your father and mother." [20] He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these from my youth." [21] Looking at him, Jesus loved him and said to him, "You lack one thing: Go, sell all you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." [22] But he was dismayed by this demand, and he went away grieving, because he had many possessions.

Bruce Olson is best known for his pioneering work in bringing Christianity to the Motilone Indians of Colombia and Venezuela. "Bruchko," as the native people called him, struggled to find a single word in their language that would encompass the complete idea of the word "believe." To believe is more than simple affirmation or knowledge. To truly believe means to have complete confidence and put into action that confidence.

Bruce was often terrified to climb into one of the high-strung hammocks loved by the Barí. In these hammocks, they would swing freely and sing songs with one another. He wanted to keep one foot on the ground, but the people told him he could only sing if he was fully suspended in the hammock.

That's when Bruce had a revelation. He told the people, "That is how it is when you follow Jesus. No man can tell you

how to walk His trail. Only Jesus can. But to find out, you have to tie your hammock strings into Him and be suspended in God." One person among the tribe, Bobarishora, later told Olson, "Bruchko, I've tied my hammock strings into Jesus. Now I speak a new language." For the Barí, "language" is equivalent to life. Bobarishora spoke of having a new life, suspended in Jesus.

In our culture, many people are open to the idea of Jesus and spiritual things. But it's an entirely different idea to suspend our life on the truth of Jesus. Jesus asked the rich young ruler to **turn from** his dependence on things, and **turn toward** dependence on Jesus.

BIG TRUTH #5:
MY RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL SHOULD BE SURRENDER, IN FAITH, TO JESUS. THE DECISION TO SURRENDER HAPPENS IN A MOMENT, DAY, OR SHORT PERIOD OF TIME.

Why do you think that Jesus told him that no one is good but God alone?

Why do you think that Jesus told the rich young ruler about the commandments? Why do you think that Jesus told the rich young ruler to sell all of his stuff?

What do you think surrender would look like for the rich young ruler?

What are you holding onto that is keeping you from surrender?

Review the big truth of this lesson. Do you believe this truth? Why or why not?



REVIEW

1 BIG TRUTH #1: GOD IS THE ALL-POWERFUL CREATOR. HE HAS A BEAUTIFUL DESIGN FOR THE WORLD, AND HE CREATED ME IN HIS **IMAGE**.

2 BIG TRUTH #2: MY **SIN** SEPARATES ME FROM GOD. I DESERVE GOD'S JUDGMENT FOR MY SIN.

3 BIG TRUTH #3: THE **GOSPEL** IS THE LIFE, DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

4 BIG TRUTH #4: THE PERFECT JESUS **BECAME** MY SIN, SO THAT I MAY APPEAR AS RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD.

5 BIG TRUTH #5: MY RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL SHOULD BE **SURRENDER**, IN FAITH, TO JESUS. THE DECISION TO SURRENDER HAPPENS IN A MOMENT, DAY, OR SHORT PERIOD OF TIME.

KEY WORDS TO REMEMBER EACH TRUTH:
IMAGE-BEARER > SIN > GOSPEL > BECAME > SURRENDER

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS YOUR NEXT STEP?

- I want to surrender my life to Jesus
- I'm not yet ready to surrender my life to Jesus
- I have questions

A VERY IMPORTANT APPENDIX LESSON 6

Revelation 21 [1] Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. [2] I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. [3] Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. [4] He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away. [5] Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new." He also said, "Write, because these words are faithful and true." [6] Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give to the thirsty from the spring of the water of life. [7] The one who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he will be my son. [8] But the cowards, faithless, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars—their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

This Bible study began with the creation of man and woman. This man and woman lived in a beautiful land. In the beginning, the land had rivers, fruit-bearing trees, and the presence of the Lord. If we fast-forward through time we see nations rise and nations fall. Rulers, kings, and presidents govern the earth. Some of these rulers were great, some not-so-much. Beauty and brokenness ran wild throughout God's created world.

Amidst all the changes of the world, Jesus' story of love, sacrifice, and redemption is the overarching story above all other stories. Men and women have always been searching for something greater and better than what we see in the world around us. An invisible spiritual magnet pulls our hearts toward something more joyful, abundant, and rich than the sum total of what we see in this world. We need healing from brokenness and a way to make things new.

God had a plan from the beginning, and God's plan is one that leads to His glory and our joy. Through the work of Jesus on the cross and in His resurrection, we have hope of a beautiful land to come. This land will have beautiful rivers, fruit-bearing trees, and the presence of the Lord. We'll laugh, worship, remember, work, play, and enjoy one another and God's beautiful gifts. For today, we join with the prayer of Jesus - that God's kingdom would come to this earth, and His will would be done, on earth as it is in heaven. May we be a people who invite a taste of the goodness in the world to come, through an overflow of the grace and peace we've experienced in our surrender to king Jesus.

**BIG TRUTH #6:
THERE IS HOPE IN THIS WORLD BECAUSE OF JESUS, AND HIS
BEAUTIFUL WORLD TO COME.**

What is broken in this world that you long to see redeemed in the world to come?

How does the gospel change our perspective on God's big plan for the world?

What parallels do you see between Adam and Eve and the new creation to come?

How does the kingdom to come give us hope in this world?

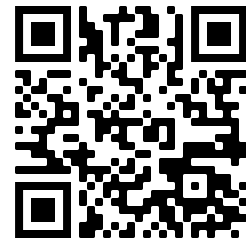
How can we welcome a taste of that kingdom to come in this world today?



LET US KNOW

Let us know you're exploring! We'd love to pray for you as you walk through this guide and hear stories of how it's impacted you. Fill out this quick form and let us know!

SCAN HERE



N NORTHSIDE CHURCH

EXPLORE: 5 BIG TRUTHS FROM THE BIBLE