

# LIFE CHANGE 3 - God Communicating With Us (1)

*How do I use the Bible?*

1. How did your last week go? Any highs or lows with your faith?
2. How did praying go last week?
3. Through your time with God, did he reveal anything about yourself, Himself, or life?

The primary way that God communicates with us is through His Word, the Bible. He has revealed to us who He is, that He wants a relationship with us, and how He has made that relationship possible.

## A Brief Overview of the Bible

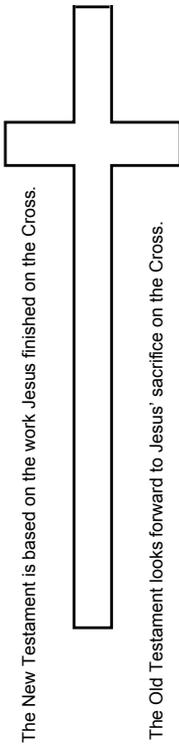
- **Creation: Where did we come from?** God created everything with His perfect design (Genesis 1-2)
- **Fall: What went wrong?** Humans sinned against God and broke everything. Humans continued in that brokenness, looking for redemption. God was gracious and continues to point toward His redemption (Genesis 3 - Malachi 4)
- **Redemption: Where do we find hope?** All of God's graciousness and promises lead to Jesus. Jesus is the center of the Bible. Christ, God in flesh, comes into human history, lives the perfect life, dies on the cross for our sins, and rises again. Jesus returns to heaven and sends His followers the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers Christians with a new life, changing them from the inside out as they live their lives sharing Jesus' message of redemption (Matthew 1 - Revelation 20).
- **New Creation: Where is history going?** In the end, God brings about full redemption and consummation of His promises to His people (Revelation 21-22).

# The Organization Of The Bible

The Bible is the most remarkable book ever written. It was written by about 40 men in several countries and with many occupations. They wrote over a period of about 1,500 years and in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek). Yet, the Bible is a well-organized collection of 66 individual books united with one great theme and one great central figure: Jesus Christ. All of this would be impossible unless the Bible had one supreme author. And it did: God the Holy Spirit.

The Bible is divided into 2 major sections: The Old Testament and The New Testament. The word “testament” means “covenant” - God’s agreement with man. The 39 books of the Old Testament or Old Covenant is an account of God’s dealings with mankind from Creation until about 400 years before the coming of Jesus. The 27 books of the New Testament or New Covenant reveal Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind. In it we find the life of Jesus, the beginning of Christianity, the way of salvation, instruction for Christian living, and God’s plan for the future.

Taken from <http://www.muncherian.com/TheBibleAtAGlance.pdf>

OLD TESTAMENT (39 Books)			“The New is in the Old concealed. The Old is in the New revealed.”				NEW TESTAMENT (27 Books)	
HISTORY 17 books	POETRY 5 books	PROPHECY 17 books			HISTORY 5 books	TEACHING 21 books	PROPHECY 1 book	
<b>Law</b> Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy  <b>History &amp; Government</b> Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon	<b>Major Prophets</b> Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel  <b>Minor Prophets</b> Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi					<b>Gospels</b> Matthew Mark Luke John  Acts	<b>Paul’s Letters</b> Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon  <b>General Letters</b> Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude
			About 400 years between Testaments					

## Use the chart to fill in these blanks:

Read 2 Peter 1:21 - When God chose a person through whom to communicate His Word, He used that person's perspective, vocabulary, and experience as His channel.

- This verse explains how \_\_\_\_\_ books written by more than \_\_\_\_\_ authors spanning \_\_\_\_\_ years can be so different from each other in style and yet be completely non-contradictory and consistent in message.
- There are \_\_\_\_\_ books in the Old Testament, with 4 types of literature: Law, History, Poetry, and Prophecy. Knowing what kind of literature you are reading before you start is helpful.
- There are \_\_\_\_\_ books in the New Testament, consisting of 3 types of literature: History, Letters, and Prophecy.

## What did JESUS believe about the Bible?

- "Your word is \_\_\_\_\_." (John 17:17)

## WHO is the real author of the Bible?

- "All Scripture is \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_..." (2 Tim. 3:16a)

## WHY was the Bible written? (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

*"...and is useful for teaching (understanding truth), rebuking (comparing our life against the truth), correcting (aligning our life to the truth) and training in righteous (continuing to grow in the truth), so that the man of God may be thoroughly \_\_\_\_\_ for every good work."*  
*Asking these two questions is crucial to UNDERSTANDING the Bible:*

1. What is the meaning in context? (Not what does it mean to me - There is one interpretation of the passage)
2. How should this affect my life? Be specific! (There can be many applications)

## Steps for Interacting with the Bible

1. **START WITH PRAYER** - Before you open your Bible, pray. You can pray that God will help you understand what the text means, that God will stir your affection for Jesus, and whatever else comes to mind.
2. **HEAR**—Read James 1:19-25 *You can use the You Version App for a free Bible - We recommend reading from the ESV, NIV, or, for an easier read, NLT. Also, try using a Study Bible. They provided helpful insights into what you are reading. You can find an*

*ESV Study Bible at the Princetown Church Resource Center. Before you read a section of scripture, look at the introduction at the beginning of a Study Bible or on the YouVersion App to learn about the author, audience, and context.*

- What kind of heart will best hear and use the Word?
  - An honest and obedient heart
  - An open but indifferent heart
  - An alert and cautious heart
  - A well-trained, scholarly heart

We are to hear God's Word with an attitude of submission, purity, and humility (v.19-21) and apply it to our lives. We are not to be only hearers of the Word, but doers of the Word (v.22).

### 3. **STUDY**– Read Acts 17:11

- How should we study the Word? (Read Prov. 2:1-5)
- What should be our goal in studying the Bible? (Read 2 Tim. 2:15)

*You might get discouraged as you study because you don't understand everything immediately. This is normal. Reading the Bible can be like learning to walk. It takes practice. The more you do it, the easier it becomes. Remember, God wants to reveal Himself to you through His Word. Don't give up on it. God will change your life through it (2 Tim. 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12).*

### 4. **MEMORIZE**– Read Psalm 119:9,11

- What does God want us to do about His Word? (Read Deuteronomy 11:18)
- What do you think "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly" in Col. 3:16 means?

### 5. **MEDITATE**– Read Psalm 1:1-3 Unlike modern meditation, which is about clearing your mind, biblical meditation is a prayerful and continual reflection on what the Bible says. As you meditate on scripture, ask yourself: "What is God saying, and what should I do about it?"

- What promises are made to the person who continually meditates on the Word of God? (Read Ps. 1:2-3 and Josh. 1:8)
- Do you think meditating on God's Word can affect your speech and actions? How? (Read Luke 6:45)

6. **LOOK FOR JESUS** - *Luke 24:44 tells us that all the Bible points to Jesus! While we should respect what each verse means to the original audience, all the passages point to Jesus somehow. Look for that as you read!*

## **NEXT STEPS:**

1. Create a schedule and read Psalm 119 This week. As you read, notice the Psalmist's love for God's Word.
2. Or Start a devotional plan - On the YouVersion App or Princetown Resource Center (Recommended - *New Morning Mercies* by Paul David Tripp)
3. Memorize Psalm 19:14 and make it your prayer as you study God's Word.
4. What challenges might you face in your walk with God? How can we pray for each other this week?

## **FOR FURTHER STUDY**

### **Why is it important to understand the connection between the Old Testament and the New Testament?**

When we pick up a novel and read the last chapters, we consider that cheating! Similarly, the Bible is a book of progressive revelation. A major theme is being developed in Scripture that is more fully and clearly revealed toward the end than at the beginning. We must understand Old Testament prophecy in light of the New Testament account of its fulfillment, as well as Old Testament characters in light of New Testament comments on them.

*DISCUSSION: What is the meaning of the statements on the chart "The New is in the Old, concealed. The Old is in the New, revealed?"*

### **Isn't the Bible filled with ERRORS and CONTRADICTIONS?**

First, if you have this question, where are the contradictions? Most people can't name one. Where people claim there is an error, we must remember that Jesus claims God's Word is truth (John 17:17). The Bible claims to be reliable. It does not give us wiggle room on whether it is true or not. Its reliability doesn't rest on Modern thought or archaeology to say that it is true... The Bible is true because God is true (James 1:17, 1 Peter 1:25). When we encounter an apparent error, we are either misinterpreting modern evidence, misinterpreting the Bible, or the contemporary evidence confirms the Bible. An honest reading of the text will show no errors or contradictions! A basic rule of Bible study is to allow clear passages to interpret complex passages.

### **How do we know we have the "right" books in the Bible? Didn't they exclude other books?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhVPBNBAGY0>

**How can we know if the Bible is true?** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtp-DmgZbwA>

## **LIFE CHANGE 3 - God Communicating With Us**

Bible: **66** books by **40** authors written over **1500** years **39** Old Testament books, **27** New Testament books

- Truth
- God-breathed
- Equipped