



Week One

Opening Praying

God, thank you for meeting us here and for giving us the Bible as a tool to connect with you. Help us to hear what you have to say to each of us. Helps us to say 'yes' to whatever you are inviting us into. Amen.

Talk It Over

This week we kicked off a new series — 40 Days in the Word — with the hope that we'd each encounter Jesus through the written word of the Bible.

- What are some of your earliest memories, whether positive or negative, of the Bible?
- What does this new series centered on the Bible spark in you?

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (Message)

Here at EastLake, we believe the Bible is inspired by God. This doesn't mean we believe God dictated the Bible and that the writers were in some mindless trance where God took over. But rather that God used the writers — with their uniqueness, their time, and their situations — to communicate his message. We believe there is a divine truthfulness and trustworthiness in the Bible. We believe there is a power and a purpose in the word of God that can encourage and empower each of our lives.

- What role has the Bible played in your spiritual development?
- Tell us about the most meaningful encounter you've had with God through the Bible.
- What is your favorite thing about the Bible?

This weekend we quickly looked at the various ways we can trust the Bible. *(Leader Note: As always, feel free to skip the text under each category. Only read the various descriptions if you believe it will contribute to a well rounded, life-giving conversation.)*

1. Historically

The Bible isn't just doctrinally or theologically correct. It's true historically. This is a book written by real people, in real places, and in real time. In fact, the last 100 years of archaeology have done nothing except prove the historical accuracy of scripture.

2. Scientifically

The Bible was not written to be a scientific text book, but there is not bad science is the Bible. Johannes Kepler, a famous mathematician and astronomer said it this way, "Science is simply thinking God's thoughts after him." In other words, the universe was created by God and now science is simply trying to catch up with how God did it. (Continued on the next page.)

3. **Prophetically**

There are approximately 2,500 prophecies in the pages of the Bible — consisting of events, descriptions, stories about future events. Of these 2,500 prophecies about 2000 of these have already been fulfilled. The birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus fulfilled more than 300 prophecies.

4. **Thematically**

The Bible was written over 1,600 years on three different continents and three different languages originally. It was written in caves, ships, homes, palaces, prisons. Most of the 40 different authors didn't even know about the others. This book was written by poets, prophets, princes, kings, sailors, soldiers, attorneys, prisoners, and a doctor. And still, one theme of redemption from cover to cover, all pointing to Jesus as our loving redeemer.

5. **Personally**

For the Bible to do it's work in our life we each must trust the Bible personally. Scripture was never intended as a history book or a science book or a literary book. It is a book meant to change us. This ancient book still speaks to our deepest questions and desires as human beings. It speaks to the human condition at personal and meaningful levels and address our pain, suffering, doubt, betrayal, forgiveness, pride, friendship, family, joy, happiness, and so much more. The relevancy of the Bible also transcends culture and time. It has connected with and changed people in every culture and every time period.

Looking at these five categories above, consider these questions:

- Which of the areas listed above is the hardest for you to wrap you head around?
- Which of the areas listed above do you have the most interest in exploring or learning more about?
- Which of the areas listed above do feel is the most important to you personally?
- Is there any area listed above that really doesn't matter to you personally? If so, tell us why.

Read James 1:25 (NLT)

Jesus invites us to love him, to learn from him, and to live for him. For this to happen in our lives it takes some cooperation on our part. We have to let the Bible into our heads, let it drip into our hearts, and eventually let it guide how we live.

- Have you ever met someone who knew a lot about the Bible, but wasn't very good at letting God call the shots in their head, heart, or life? Without telling us who, tell us about the impression this person left on you.
- Who in your life seems to do a good job at letting the Bible move into their head, heart, and life? Tell us about the lessons you observed from that person.
- All in all, who or what would you say ultimately calls the shots in your life?
- How are you personally doing at letting the Bible have final authority over your life? Tell us how you have grown, where you are struggling, and how you are hoping to grow in this area.

Challenge

Consider committing to the summer scripture reading plan we heard about this week at church. The plan was given to you in your program and can also be found on the EastLake Church app which is accessible on iPhone and Androids.

Closing Prayer

God, help us to encounter you through the Bible. Open our minds and soften our hearts to the Bible. Help us to follow through on our next right step on this topic. We want to encounter your love, we want to learn from you, and we want to live for you.