



# INTERACTIVE FAITH

AN ONLINE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

## Introduction

“Polls indicate that more Americans than ever before identify themselves as church-goers while, simultaneously, the rate of biblical illiteracy has never been higher. In the mainline Christian churches the situation is almost dismal.”

“God’s Word is our great heritage, and shall be ours forever!”

The Lutheran motto of *Sola Scriptura!* (*By Scripture alone!*)

## Why don’t people read their Bibles as much as they should?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Even if we **know we should**; and even if we **want to** read and study our Bibles there are . . .

### Other obstacles:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Purpose of this course

- To help you grow . . .
  - 📖 *Romans 15:4* “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us.”
  - 📖 *Philippians 3:10* “I want to know Christ.”
  - In your \_\_\_\_\_
    - 📖 *Romans 10:17* “Faith comes by hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ.”
  - In your \_\_\_\_\_
    - 📖 *Colossians 3:16-17* “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom . . . and whatever you do, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

## DISCUSSION

1. Explore with honesty some of the obstacles that you have experience when it comes to regularly reading and studying the Bible on your own.
2. What practical steps could you take to make it easier to set aside regular time for reading the Bible.
3. Martin Luther was an extremely busy and productive man, writing and preaching hundreds of sermons, producing theological works, translating the New Testament, and teaching. In spite of that busy schedule, he set aside hours each day for prayer and study of the Scriptures. When someone asked him how he could find time to do that, he said that he would not be able to do nearly as much work if he *didn't* devote time to Bible study. What do you think he meant by that?

## Part 1: Why do we need the Bible?

### There are only two ways to know anything about God

- The **Natural Knowledge** of God; it tell us
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- The **Revealed Knowledge** of God; it tells us
  - \_\_\_\_\_

### We can know some things about God by looking at the world around us

 *Hebrews 3:4 "For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything."*

 *Psalm 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."*

 *Psalm 14:1 "The fool says in his heart, "There is no god.""*

- God is \_\_\_\_\_

 *Romans 1:20 "Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."*

- God is \_\_\_\_\_

 *Acts 14:17 "He has shown his kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons. He provides you with plenty of food and fills your heart with joy."*

- God is \_\_\_\_\_

 *Psalm 104:24 "How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures."*

- God is \_\_\_\_\_

## We can know some things about God through our conscience

- Definition of **conscience**: \_\_\_\_\_
- **Conscience** tells us
  - 📖 *Romans 2:14-15* “When Gentiles, who do not have the [written] law, do by nature the things required by law . . . they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.”
  - 📖 *Romans 1:32* “They [unbelievers] know God’s righteous decrees that those who do such things deserve death.”
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_

## The natural knowledge of God can NOT tell us

- 📖 (Paul’s experience in Athens in Acts 17) *Acts 17: “Men of Athens! I see that you are in every way very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown, I am going to proclaim to you.”*
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- 📖 *Romans 8:32* “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not graciously give us all things?”
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- 📖 *1 Timothy 3:15* “From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”
- 📖 *Acts 16:29-32* “The jailer asked . . . ‘What must I do to be saved?’ They replied, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved—you and your whole household.’ Then they spoke the Word of the Lord to him.”
  - \_\_\_\_\_

## Without the Bible, how do people shape their ideas about God?

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## DISCUSSION

1. Give concrete examples from human history or culture that human beings have an inborn, natural knowledge of God.
2. How does the teaching of evolution ignore the evidence that there is a god?
3. Sometimes people say that it is not fair that those who have not heard the message about Jesus are condemned eternally. In Romans 1:18-32, how does the Apostle Paul make it clear that unbelievers are “without excuse?”
4. If people base their knowledge about God only on what they know from nature, from conscience, or from their own ideas, what is the inevitable result?
5. What is the one thing that makes Christianity different from every other religion or religious system?

### The Revealed Knowledge of God: God telling us about himself in the Scriptures

*Read the following passages; what one characteristic of God do they all describe?*

 *John 7:3 “And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”*

 *Isaiah 42:8 “I am the LORD, that is my name. I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.”*

 *Isaiah 45:21 “There is no God apart from me, a righteous God and Savior; there is none but me.”*

- God is the \_\_\_\_\_

*Read the following passages; what one characteristic of God do they all describe?*

 *Matthew 28:19 “...baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”*

 *2 Corinthians 13:14 “May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God [the Father], and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit give you peace.”*

 *Deuteronomy 6:4 “Hear O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.”*

- He is \_\_\_\_\_

*Read the following passages; what one characteristic of God do they all describe?*

 *Psalm 145:7 “The LORD our God is righteous in all his ways.*

 *Leviticus 19:2 “I, the LORD your God, am holy.”*

 *Isaiah 6:3 “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts.”*

- He is \_\_\_\_\_

Read the following passages; what one characteristic of God do they all describe?

📖 Genesis 33:11 "I am God Almighty."

📖 Matthew 19:28 "Witt God, all things are possible."

📖 Jeremiah 32:27 "I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for me?"

- He is \_\_\_\_\_

Read the following passages; what one characteristic of God do they all describe?

📖 Psalm 147:5 "Great is our LORD and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit."

📖 John 21:17 "[Peter said to Jesus] Lord, you know all things."

📖 Luke 12:7 "Indeed, there very hairs of your head are numbered [by God]."

📖 Hebrews 4:13 "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight."

- He is \_\_\_\_\_

Read the following passages; what one characteristic of God do they all describe?

📖 Psalm 139:8 "If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths you are there."

📖 Jeremiah 23:23-24 "'Can anyone hide in secret places that I cannot see him?' declares the LORD. 'Do I not fill heaven and earth?'"

- He is \_\_\_\_\_

Read the following passages; what one characteristic of God do they all describe?

📖 John 8:58 Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am."

📖 Psalm 90:2 "Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God."

📖 1 Timothy 1:17 "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible . . . be honor and glory for ever and ever!"

- He is \_\_\_\_\_

Read the following passages; what one characteristic of God do they all describe?

📖 Ephesians 1:7 "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us."

📖 Ephesians 2:8 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves. It is the gift of God."

📖 Psalm 51:1 "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out all my transgressions."

- He is \_\_\_\_\_
- Note the significance of the name **YAHWEH יהוה**

**The Bible is the account of God's gracious promises made and kept. How is God's promise seen in each of the following times in history?**

- Creation: \_\_\_\_\_
- Eden after the fall: \_\_\_\_\_
- The chosen people and the prophets: \_\_\_\_\_
- The Savior's birth, life, death, and resurrection: \_\_\_\_\_
- The New Testament church: \_\_\_\_\_
- The church today: \_\_\_\_\_
- Future in eternity: \_\_\_\_\_

**DISCUSSION:**

1. Why is it necessary for God to reveal these characteristics of his in the Scriptures?
2. Discuss each one of these characteristics and why it is important for your faith to know this about the true God.
3. If the entire Bible is an account not just of history but of *His Story*, what benefit is there for you to know that story thoroughly?
4. Give examples of times when your knowledge of Scripture (without having a Bible in front of you) proved to be beneficial. Or, taking a risk, give examples of times when you wished you knew your Bible better.
5. Why is the Old Testament just as important as the New Testament?
6. As you read the Scriptures, God's faithfulness to his promises stands out. What does that mean for you personally? For your family? For the church?

**Things to remember:**

- **The focus and heart of the Scriptures:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **The central theme of the Scriptures:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **The purpose of the Scriptures:**
  - To \_\_\_\_\_ of my sin
  - To \_\_\_\_\_ me from unbelief to faith in Christ
  - To give me \_\_\_\_\_ in my relationship with God
  - To give me \_\_\_\_\_ for the present and the future
  - To shape my \_\_\_\_\_ toward God and others
  - To \_\_\_\_\_ when my faith is attacked
  - To \_\_\_\_\_ to serve

## The importance of being “biblically literate Christians”

- For ourselves:

- 
- For our children and future generations
- 

- In our interaction with others

 *1 Peter 3:15 "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."*

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 *2 Thessalonians 2 :10-12;15 "They [unbelievers] perish because they refused to love the truth and be saved . . . God sends them a powerful delusion so that they believe the lie . . . So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you."*

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### DISCUSSION:

1. There is a knock at your door. Two nicely dressed young men with Bibles in their hands ask if you have a few minutes to speak with them. Your inclination is to close the door. What else might you do? How will being confident in your knowledge of the Bible help you to view this as an opportunity rather than something to avoid?
2. We live in a culture in which biblical values and truths are under constant attack. Christians can easily be influenced by the culture around us in such matters as homosexuality, abortion, marriage, and sexual behaviors. How will a thorough knowledge of Scripture help you when the culture war arrives at your doorstep?

**To think about at home: Read a chapter or two of one of the New Testament epistles. Find descriptions about who God is and what he reveals about himself and his characteristics.**