

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES SERIES

# UNDERSTANDING THE FAITH

A SURVEY OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

TEACHER MANUAL

UNDERSTANDING THE FAITH TEACHER MANUAL

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**Course Overview**

The Bible has been the most influential book in the history of the world, printed, in part or in whole, in 2,800 languages worldwide. Christians believe the Bible is God’s Word. Through it, the creator of the universe speaks to humankind in a way he does nowhere else. If the Bible’s claim to reveal God is authoritative, then it extends to every area of life—to everyone in the world, at all times. If the Bible’s revelation about God is accurate, then what it says is authoritative.

The first volume in the Understanding the Times series, *Understanding the Faith* is an apologetics handbook that lays the foundation for a Christian worldview by studying what the Bible reveals about God, humanity, and life in this world. *Understanding the Faith* addresses life’s most important questions like “Why do we exist?” and “What is the meaning of life?” from a biblical perspective.

But is the Bible a trustworthy source? Does it contain errors and discrepancies? What about the critiques and questions of skeptics and atheists? *Understanding the Faith* answers the common challenges people pose in attempting to refute Christianity. It deals with these issues in a way that will instill confidence in God and his word while equipping readers to be courageous, articulate, and compassionate followers of Jesus Christ.

**Syllabus:** What occurs each day and when assignments are due.

*[The standard schedule for this course assumes your class meets 5 days per week for 36 weeks. However, the following alternative schedules can be found on the CD-ROM:*

- 5 days per week for 36 weeks
- 4 days per week for 36 weeks
- 3 days per week for 36 weeks
- 2 days per week for 36 weeks
- 1 day per week for 36 weeks
- 5 days per week for 18 weeks
- 4 days per week for 18 weeks
- 3 days per week for 18 weeks
- 2 days per week for 18 weeks
- 1 day per week for 18 weeks]

**Main Sections**

Before beginning this curriculum, it will be helpful to understand its structure and components.

1. **Objectives:** Main learning goals for each chapter.
2. **Chapter Discussion Questions:** A review of the material read in each chapter.
3. **Classroom Activities:** Activities designed to reinforce content from each chapter.
4. **Readings:** Primary source materials, sometimes from non-Christian sources.

- 5. Reading Discussion Questions:** A review of the material from the primary source readings.
- 6. Reading Quizzes:** Multiple-choice and true/false questions for each primary source reading.

*[Student copies can be found on the CD-ROM]*

- 7. Videos:** Lectures from experts, which dive deeper into key subjects.
- 8. Video Outlines:** Notes from each video.
- 9. Video Discussion Questions:** A review of the material covered in each video.
- 10. Video Quizzes:** Multiple-choice and true/false questions for each video.

*[Student copies can be found on the CD-ROM]*

- 11. Key Points:** Includes key questions, terms, verses, players, and works from each chapter reading.
- 12. Writing Assignments:** Essay questions to answer at the end of each chapter.
- 13. Tests:** A mixture of questions (matching, multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay) taken from each chapter's content.

*[Student copies can be found on the CD-ROM]*

### **College Credit**

If you are interested in learning more about college credit for this course, please visit [understandingthetimes.com/college-credit](http://understandingthetimes.com/college-credit) for more information.

# SYLLABUS

## WEEK 1

DAY	5-Day	ASSIGNMENT	PG
1	In Class	<b>ASSIGN</b> UTF Chapter 01 Assignment (p. 29)	1
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 01 Objectives	
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 01	
2	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 01 Questions	2
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 01 Activities	2
3	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 01 Questions	2
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 01 Activities	2
4	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 01 Questions	2
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 01 Activities	2
5	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 01 Questions	2
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 01 Activities	2

## WEEK 2

DAY	5-Day	ASSIGNMENT	PG
6	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 01 Questions	2
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 01 Activities	2
	At Home	<b>READ</b> “Does God Exist?”	14
7	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Does God Exist?” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Does God Exist?” Questions	22
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “Why Apologetics?”	24
8	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Why Apologetics?” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Why Apologetics?” Questions	26
9	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 01 Test	
10	In Class	<b>COLLECT</b> UTF Chapter 01 Assignment	CD
	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 01 Test	CD
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 02	

## WEEK 3

DAY	5-Day	ASSIGNMENT	PG
11	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 01 Test	31
	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 01 Assignment	
	In Class	<b>ASSIGN</b> UTF Chapter 02 Assignment (p. 54)	
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 02 Objectives	
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 02	
12	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 02 Questions	32
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 02 Activities	32
13	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 02 Questions	32
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 02 Activities	32
14	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 02 Questions	32
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 02 Activities	32
15	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 02 Questions	32
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 02 Activities	32

**WEEK 4**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
16	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 02 Questions	32
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 02 Activities	32
	At Home	<b>READ</b> “The Bible’s Influence”	44
17	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “The Bible’s Influence” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “The Bible’s Influence” Questions	45
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “The Case for Truth”	48
18	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “The Case for Truth” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “The Case for Truth” Questions	51
19	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 02 Test	
20	In Class	<b>COLLECT</b> UTF Chapter 02 Assignment	CD
	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 02 Test	CD
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 03	

**WEEK 5**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
21	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 02 Test	
	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 02 Assignment	
	In Class	<b>ASSIGN</b> UTF Chapter 03 Assignment (p. 85)	
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 03 Objectives	57
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 03	
22	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 03 Questions	58
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 03 Activities	58
23	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 03 Questions	58
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 03 Activities	58
24	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 03 Questions	58
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 03 Activities	58
25	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 03 Questions	58
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 03 Activities	58

**WEEK 6**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
26	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 03 Questions	58
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 03 Activities	58
	At Home	<b>READ</b> “Misquoting Jesus”	69
27	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Misquoting Jesus” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Misquoting Jesus” Questions	76
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “The Case for Reliability of the Gospels”	79
28	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “The Case for Reliability of the Gospels” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “The Case for ... the Gospels” Questions	82
29	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 03 Test	
30	In Class	<b>COLLECT</b> UTF Chapter 03 Assignment	CD
	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 03 Test	CD
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 04	

**WEEK 7**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
31	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 03 Test	
	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 03 Assignment	
	In Class	<b>ASSIGN</b> UTF Chapter 04 Assignment (p. 114)	
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 04 Objectives	87
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 04	
32	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 04 Questions	88
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 04 Activities	88
33	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 04 Questions	88
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 04 Activities	88
34	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 04 Questions	88
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 04 Activities	88
35	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 04 Questions	88
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 04 Activities	88

**WEEK 8**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
36	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 04 Questions	88
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 04 Activities	88
	At Home	<b>READ</b> “What Does Christianity Say ...?”	99
37	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “What Does Christianity Say ...?” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “What Does Christianity Say ...?” Questions	106
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “How to Know the Will of God”	109
38	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “How to Know the Will of God” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “How to Know the Will of God” Questions	111
39	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 04 Test	
40	In Class	<b>COLLECT</b> UTF Chapter 04 Assignment	CD
	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 04 Test	CD
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 05	

**WEEK 9**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
41	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 04 Test	
	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 04 Assignment	
	In Class	<b>ASSIGN</b> UTF Chapter 05 Assignment (p. 146)	
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 05 Objectives	117
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 05	
42	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 05 Questions	118
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 05 Activities	118
43	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 05 Questions	118
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 05 Activities	118
44	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 05 Questions	118
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 05 Activities	118
45	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 05 Questions	118
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 05 Activities	118



**WEEK 10**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
46	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 05 Questions	118
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 05 Activities	118
	At Home	<b>READ</b> “7 Lies Christians Believe about Sex”	128
47	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “7 Lies Christians Believe about Sex” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “7 Lies Christians Believe ...” Questions	132
	At Home	<b>READ</b> “Creation Accounts and Ancient Near Eastern Religions”	134
48	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Creation Accounts and Ancient ...” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Creation Accounts and Ancient ...” Questions	141
49	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 05 Test	
50	In Class	<b>COLLECT</b> UTF Chapter 05 Assignment	CD
	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 05 Test	CD
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 06	

**WEEK 11**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
51	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 05 Test	
	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 05 Assignment	
	In Class	<b>ASSIGN</b> UTF Chapter 06 Assignment (p. 170)	
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 06 Objectives	147
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 06	
52	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 06 Questions	148
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 06 Activities	148
53	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 06 Questions	148
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 06 Activities	148
54	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 06 Questions	148
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 06 Activities	148
55	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 06 Questions	148
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 06 Activities	148

**WEEK 12**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
56	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 06 Questions	148
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 06 Activities	148
	At Home	<b>READ</b> “The Covenants”	160
57	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “The Covenants” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “The Covenants” Questions	161
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “The Difference between ...”	163
58	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “The Difference between ...” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “The Difference between ...” Questions	165
59	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 06 Test	
60	In Class	<b>COLLECT</b> UTF Chapter 06 Assignment	CD
	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 06 Test	CD
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 07	

**WEEK 13**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
61	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 06 Test	
	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 06 Assignment	
	In Class	<b>ASSIGN</b> UTF Chapter 07 Assignment (p. 200)	
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 07 Objectives	171
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 07	
62	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 07 Questions	172
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 07 Activities	172
63	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 07 Questions	172
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 07 Activities	172
64	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 07 Questions	172
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 07 Activities	172
65	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 07 Questions	172
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 07 Activities	172

**WEEK 14**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
66	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 07 Questions	172
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 07 Activities	172
	At Home	<b>READ</b> “Taking the Bible Literally”	183
67	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Taking the Bible Literally” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Taking the Bible Literally” Questions	190
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “Relativism”	193
68	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Relativism” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Relativism” Questions	195
69	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 07 Test	
70	In Class	<b>COLLECT</b> UTF Chapter 07 Assignment	CD
	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 07 Test	CD
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 08	

**WEEK 15**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
71	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 07 Test	
	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 07 Assignment	
	In Class	<b>ASSIGN</b> UTF Chapter 08 Assignment (p. 232)	
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 08 Objectives	201
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 08	
72	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 08 Questions	202
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 08 Activities	202
73	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 08 Questions	202
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 08 Activities	202
74	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 08 Questions	202
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 08 Activities	202
75	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 08 Questions	202
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 08 Activities	202

**WEEK 16**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
76	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 08 Questions	202
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 08 Activities	202
	At Home	<b>READ</b> “Christ, Our Life”	214
77	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Christ, Our Life” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Christ, Our Life” Questions	222
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “What Does It Mean to Be Human?”	225
78	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “What Does It Mean to Be Human?” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “What Does It Mean to Be ...?” Questions	227
79	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 08 Test	
80	In Class	<b>COLLECT</b> UTF Chapter 08 Assignment	CD
	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 08 Test	CD
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 09	

**WEEK 17**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
81	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 08 Test	
	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 08 Assignment	
	In Class	<b>ASSIGN</b> UTF Chapter 09 Assignment (p. 262)	
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 09 Objectives	233
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 09	
82	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 09 Questions	234
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 09 Activities	234
83	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 09 Questions	234
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 09 Activities	234
84	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 09 Questions	234
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 09 Activities	234
85	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 09 Questions	234
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 09 Activities	234

**WEEK 18**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
86	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 09 Questions	234
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 09 Activities	234
	At Home	<b>READ</b> “Why Work?”	245
87	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Why Work?” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Why Work?” Questions	252
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “Conversations That Count”	255
88	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Conversations That Count” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Conversations That Count” Questions	257
89	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 09 Test	
90	In Class	<b>COLLECT</b> UTF Chapter 09 Assignment	CD
	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 09 Test	CD
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 10	

**WEEK 19**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
91	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 09 Test	
	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 09 Assignment	
	In Class	<b>ASSIGN</b> UTF Chapter 10 Assignment (p. 286)	
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 10 Objectives	263
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 10	
92	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 10 Questions	264
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 10 Activities	264
93	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 10 Questions	264
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 10 Activities	264
94	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 10 Questions	264
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 10 Activities	264
95	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 10 Questions	264
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 10 Activities	264

**WEEK 20**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
96	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 10 Questions	264
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 10 Activities	264
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “Is Religion a Poison or Cure?” Debate Clip	275
97	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Is Religion a Poison or Cure?” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Is Religion a Poison or Cure?” Questions	276
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “The Case for God’s Existence”	279
98	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “The Case for God’s Existence” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “The Case for God’s Existence” Questions	281
99	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 10 Test	
100	In Class	<b>COLLECT</b> UTF Chapter 10 Assignment	CD
	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 10 Test	CD
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 11	

**WEEK 21**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
101	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 10 Test	
	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 10 Assignment	
	In Class	<b>ASSIGN</b> UTF Chapter 11 Assignment (p. 312)	
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 11 Objectives	287
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 11	
102	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 11 Questions	288
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 11 Activities	288
103	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 11 Questions	288
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 11 Activities	288
104	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 11 Questions	288
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 11 Activities	288
105	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 11 Questions	288
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 11 Activities	288

**WEEK 22**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
106	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 11 Questions	288
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 11 Activities	288
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “Miracles” Video Clips	300
107	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Miracles” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Miracles” Questions	301
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “Evidence for the Resurrection”	304
108	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Evidence for the Resurrection” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Evidence for the Resurrection” Questions	306
109	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 11 Test	
110	In Class	<b>COLLECT</b> UTF Chapter 11 Assignment	CD
	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 11 Test	CD
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 12	

**WEEK 23**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
111	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 11 Test	
	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 11 Assignment	
	In Class	<b>ASSIGN</b> UTF Chapter 12 Assignment (p. 336)	
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 12 Objectives	311
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 12	
112	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 12 Questions	312
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 12 Activities	312
113	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 12 Questions	312
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 12 Activities	312
114	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 12 Questions	312
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 12 Activities	312
115	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 12 Questions	312
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 12 Activities	312

**WEEK 24**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
116	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 12 Questions	312
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 12 Activities	312
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “Naturalism” Part 1	324
117	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Naturalism” Part 1 Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Naturalism” Part 1 Questions	325
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “Naturalism” Part 2	327
118	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Naturalism” Part 2 Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Naturalism” Part 2 Questions	329
119	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 12 Test	
120	In Class	<b>COLLECT</b> UTF Chapter 12 Assignment	CD
	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 12 Test	CD
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 13	

**WEEK 25**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
121	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 12 Test	
	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 12 Assignment	
	In Class	<b>ASSIGN</b> UTF Chapter 13 Assignment (p. 368)	
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 13 Objectives	335
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 13	
122	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 13 Questions	336
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 13 Activities	336
123	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 13 Questions	336
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 13 Activities	336
124	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 13 Questions	336
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 13 Activities	336
125	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 13 Questions	336
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 13 Activities	336

**WEEK 26**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
126	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 13 Questions	336
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 13 Activities	336
	At Home	<b>READ</b> “Religious Pluralism and Ultimate Reality”	348
127	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Religious Pluralism and Ultimate Reality” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Religious Pluralism and Ultimate Reality”	356
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “Truth and Tolerance”	359
128	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Truth and Tolerance” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Truth and Tolerance” Questions	361
129	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 13 Test	
130	In Class	<b>COLLECT</b> UTF Chapter 13 Assignment	CD
	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 13 Test	CD
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 14	

**WEEK 27**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
131	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 13 Test	
	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 13 Assignment	
	In Class	<b>ASSIGN</b> UTF Chapter 14 Assignment (p. 390)	
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 14 Objectives	367
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 14	
132	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 14 Questions	368
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 14 Activities	368
133	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 14 Questions	368
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 14 Activities	368
134	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 14 Questions	368
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 14 Activities	368
135	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 14 Questions	368
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 14 Activities	368

**WEEK 28**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
136	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 14 Questions	368
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 14 Activities	368
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “God and Evil” Debate	378
137	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “God and Evil” Debate Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “God and Evil” Debate Questions	379
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “The Problem of Evil”	381
138	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “The Problem of Evil” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “The Problem of Evil” Questions	383
139	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 14 Test	
140	In Class	<b>COLLECT</b> UTF Chapter 14 Assignment	CD
	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 14 Test	CD
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 15	

**WEEK 29**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
141	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 14 Test	
	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 14 Assignment	
	In Class	<b>ASSIGN</b> UTF Chapter 15 Assignment (p. 413)	
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 15 Objectives	389
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 15	
142	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 15 Questions	390
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 15 Activities	390
143	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 15 Questions	390
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 15 Activities	390
144	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 15 Questions	390
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 15 Activities	390
145	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 15 Questions	390
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 15 Activities	390

**WEEK 30**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
146	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 15 Questions	390
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 15 Activities	390
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “C.S. Lewis on Heaven and Hell” Part 1	400
147	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “C.S. Lewis on Heaven and Hell” Part 1 Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “C.S. Lewis on Heaven ...” Part 1 Questions	402
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “C.S. Lewis on Heaven and Hell” Part 2	404
148	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “C.S. Lewis on Heaven and Hell” Part 2 Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “C.S. Lewis on Heaven ...” Part 2 Questions	406
149	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 15 Test	
150	In Class	<b>COLLECT</b> UTF Chapter 15 Assignment	CD
	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 15 Test	CD
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 16	



**WEEK 31**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
151	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 15 Test	
	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 15 Assignment	
	In Class	<b>ASSIGN</b> UTF Chapter 16 Assignment (p. 437)	
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 16 Objectives	411
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 16	
152	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 16 Questions	412
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 16 Activities	412
153	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 16 Questions	412
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 16 Activities	412
154	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 16 Questions	412
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 16 Activities	412
155	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 16 Questions	412
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 16 Activities	412

**WEEK 32**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
156	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 16 Questions	412
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 16 Activities	412
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “The God Delusion” Debate Clip	423
157	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “The God Delusion” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “The God Delusion” Questions	424
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “A Christian Response to Homosexuality”	427
158	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “A Christian Response to Homosexuality” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “A Christian Response to ...” Questions	430
159	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 16 Test	
160	In Class	<b>COLLECT</b> UTF Chapter 16 Assignment	CD
	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 16 Test	CD
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 17	

**WEEK 33**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
161	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 16 Test	
	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 16 Assignment	
	In Class	<b>ASSIGN</b> UTF Chapter 17 Assignment (p. 469)	
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 17 Objectives	435
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 17	
162	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 17 Questions	436
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 17 Activities	436
163	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 17 Questions	436
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 17 Activities	436
164	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 17 Questions	436
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 17 Activities	436
165	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 17 Questions	436
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF 17 Activities	436



**WEEK 34**

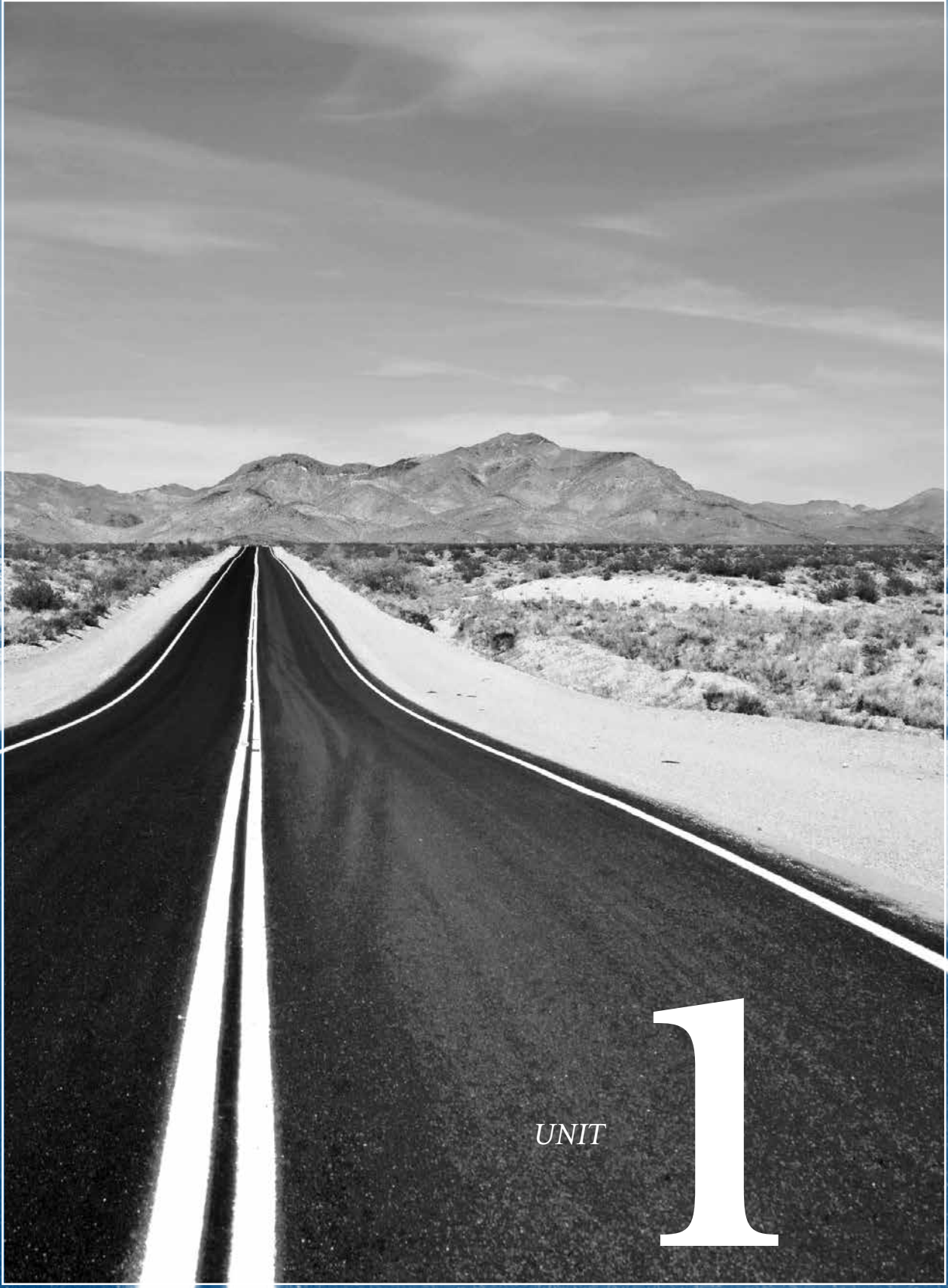
<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
166	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 17 Questions	436
	In Class	<b>EXPLORE</b> UTF Chapter 17 Activities	436
	At Home	<b>READ</b> “Isn’t Religion Based on Faith?”	447
167	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Isn’t Religion Based on Faith?” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Isn’t Religion Based on Faith?” Questions	456
	At Home	<b>WATCH</b> “Dealing with Doubt”	459
168	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> “Dealing with Doubt” Quiz	CD
	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> “Dealing with Doubt” Questions	462
169	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 17 Test	
170	In Class	<b>COLLECT</b> UTF Chapter 17 Assignment	CD
	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 17 Test	CD
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 18	

**WEEK 35**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
171	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 17 Test	
	In Class	<b>REVIEW</b> UTF Chapter 17 Assignment	
	In Class	<b>VIEW</b> UTF Chapter 18 Objectives	469
	At Home	<b>READ</b> UTF Chapter 18	
172	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 18 Questions	470
173	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 18 Questions	470
174	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 18 Questions	470
175	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 18 Questions	470

**WEEK 36**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>5-Day</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>PG</b>
176	In Class	<b>DISCUSS</b> UTF Chapter 18 Questions	470
177	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 18 Test	
178	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 18 Test	
179	In Class	<b>STUDY FOR</b> UTF Chapter 18 Test	
180	In Class	<b>GIVE</b> UTF Chapter 18 Test	CD



UNIT

# 1

# 1

# INTRODUCTION

## CHAPTER 1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

*Students will be able to:*

1. articulate why they need guidance in life. [1.1–1.2]
2. identify how ideas affect the way they live. [1.3]
3. explain the five key questions that affect their direction in life. [1.4]
4. describe why it is important to understand the times in which they live. [1.5]
5. discuss why the search for knowledge is possible. [1.6]
6. state why the search for knowledge is biblical and important. [1.7]
7. list different types of authority and state the relevance of each to their lives. [1.8]
8. present evidence for why Christians should submit to God's authority. [1.9–1.10]
9. articulate why biblical faith isn't blind or without reason. [1.11]
10. discuss how to deal with doubt. [1.11]
11. explain why this book is important. [1.12–1.14]
12. summarize why they should live out their faith in the location God has placed them. [1.15]

**Chapter 1.2 Activity**

**GETTING DIRECTIONS FOR LIFE**

**Objective:** Students will compare and contrast the ways in which good and harmful ideas can positively or negatively affect confusing issues humans face.

**Preparation:**

- Materials Needed: computer or paper and pencil, index cards
- Write out the questions from the text that involve the different confusing issues humans face on index cards before class starts.
- Time Required: 15–30 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Facilitate a class discussion brainstorming the ways teens can discern between good and bad ideas that affect their lives.
2. Distribute one index card to each student. Select a student to read their question aloud. Choose a volunteer to give an answer that would be a good idea guiding the person toward a future of success or going somewhere. Next, choose a volunteer to give an answer that would be a bad idea guiding the person toward a failure in life or going nowhere. Ask students what would cause a teen to choose the idea that could lead them toward failure. Invite students to share about themselves or anyone they know who may have made either of the choices presented.
3. Continue the process until all questions have been read and answered.
4. Finish by discussing why teens need guidance if they plan to go somewhere with their life.

**1. Why was this book written? [1.2]**

This is a guidebook to assist you in the exploration of God. It addresses such questions as these:

- Who is God?
- Where is he?
- What is he like?
- Can we trust what the Bible says about him?
- Are we dealing with fact or fiction when it comes to God?
- Does he really exist or did humans just make him up to give life meaning?
- How is God relevant and why is Christianity a valid search for him?
- What about the sincere critiques and questions of skeptics, cynics, and atheists?

This isn't just an abstract study. Understanding is the most important thing a human can do. If we don't know God, we will find it next to impossible to gain insight into practical questions such as these:

- Where did I come from?
- What does God want from me?
- What should I do for a job?
- Should I get married?
- How can I live in harmony with those around me?

## 2. What is the result of the human search for answers? [1.2]

Humans are the only animals who ask questions like “Why do we exist?” and “What is the meaning of life?” The products of our musings and thought processes are called **ideas**. Some ideas accurately reflect our world; others don't. Ideas can be either helpful or harmful. Figuring out the difference is key to a meaningful life.

The ideas we ultimately adopt shape how we see the world. It is these ideas that end up informing the choices we make and dictating how we live. Some ideas accurately reflect the world, but many do not. Good ideas help us live well; bad ideas lead us away from truth and into danger.

## 3. How do ideas influence the direction of our lives? [1.3]

We are constantly bombarded by ideas in every advertisement we see, video game we play, book we read, and song we listen to. These ideas are either true or false, but they are never neutral. False ideas influence us every day and are competing for our allegiance.

Ideas suggest information about how the world works and thus influence how we live. They help us shape the bits and pieces of daily life into a “big picture” that gives meaning and purpose to our existence. Ideas are like the details on a map. A good map can help us navigate the road ahead and avoid getting lost. The more accurately our map conforms to reality, the more likely we are to understand the world we live in.

## 4. Is there a principle we can use to make sense of the vast array of ideas? [1.4]

There is more information than we can possibly process and more ideas than we can ever consider. King Solomon said, “Of the making of books there is no end” (Ecclesiastes 12:12) and that was before the printing press, the Internet and the Cloud! Which ideas should we accept, which should we ignore, and which should we actively oppose as dangerous?

The Apostle Paul offers the following approach to sifting information and ideas:

“We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:5)

**Chapter 1.4 Activity****FIVE QUESTIONS AFFECTING OUR DIRECTION IN LIFE**

**Objective:** Students will create idea maps to show how the five key questions affect their lives.

**Preparation:**

- Materials Needed: computer or paper and pencil
- Time Required: 30–45 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Divide the class into five groups.
2. Review the concept of idea maps from the end of Lesson 1.3. Assign each group one of the five key questions.
3. Have each group create an idea map that shows how the question affects the life of a teen. The groups should brainstorm ideas of how the question affects them personally and then write a detailed map about a fictitious teen.
4. When all groups have finished, have a spokesperson from each group present to the class. Each group besides the one presenting should suggest at least one idea that could be added to the idea map for that question.

**5. What are five important questions with which every human must grapple? [1.4]**

The really important questions in life have to do with the following:

- Origin
- Identity
- Meaning
- Morality
- Destiny

**Where did we come from?** Are we the product of time and chance or were we created “on purpose”? The various creation stories contradict one another. Which one makes the most sense in light of the evidence we have?

**Who are we?** Human beings are animals, but is there more to us than that? Do we have an immaterial spirit? Do we have intrinsic worth and dignity?

**What is real and true and how do we know?** Is “reality” real or an illusion? Why do humans not only exist but also wonder about why we exist?

**How should we live?** Are there rules for the good life? Who makes them? Are they true for all times and all cultures, or do they depend on circumstances?

**What happens next?** Where is history headed? Is there an afterlife? If so, what is it like? Should we try to fix the world we live in or just wait for things to improve in the next life?

### Chapter 1.5 Activity

## WHY WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE TIMES

**Objective:** Students will write an email to one of the priests of Issachar explaining why Christians today need to understand the times.

### Preparation:

- Materials Needed: computer or paper and pencil
- Time Required: 30 minutes

### Procedure:

1. Direct students to write an email to one of the priests of Issachar explaining why teens today need to understand the times.
2. After they have written the email explaining their thoughts on the topic, they will find a partner and read each other’s emails.
3. Have the students write an email expressing what the priest might answer back to their partner’s original email.
4. Allow time for students to read the email answer. Invite volunteers to read the original email along with the response to the rest of the class.

## 6. How do the answers to some of the questions above shape the answer to others?

*[Ask your students to arrange the above five questions in order of importance. Then have different ones explain why they chose the order they did.]*



**7. What can we learn from the ancient tribe of Issachar about living a good life? [1.5]**

The tribe of Issachar had an “understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do” (1 Chronicles 12:32). Their faith informed and guided their *way*. Deuteronomy 10:12 says we should “walk in all his ways.” There’s a right way and a wrong way to go in life; a way of wisdom and a way of foolishness; a way of life and a way of death.

If we understand the right way, the wrong way will become evident. If we know how to stay on the right way, we can discern when we (and others) deviate from the path (Romans 1:18–21).

**8. What is “epistemology” and why is it important? [1.6]**

*Episteme* is Greek for “knowledge” and **epistemology** is the branch of philosophy that addresses the nature of knowledge. It deals with what we know, how we know, and how what we know relates to what is real.

While it is impossible to know reality exhaustively, we can know it truly. Still, people disagree about what can be known. Some claim we can’t know anything outside our personal reality and that we must get in touch with our higher selves to find true knowledge. This approach is known as **relativism**—the belief that truth, knowledge, and morality are relative to the individual, society or historical context.

Christianity takes a different approach. It is based on the Bible, which reveals a God who does not change the rules of reality to suit his whims. Nor does he adjust right or wrong according to the actions and philosophies of any particular community.

**9. What problem does relativism create for secular humanists? [1.6]**

Paul Kurtz, an atheist philosopher who helped develop secular humanism, acknowledged the problem with relativism:

Nevertheless, the humanist is faced with a crucial ethical problem: Insofar as he has defended an ethic of freedom, can he develop a basis for moral responsibility? Regretfully, merely to liberate individuals from authoritarian social institutions, whether church or state, is no guarantee that they will be aware of their moral responsibility to others. The contrary is often the case. . . . Once these sanctions are ignored, we may end up with [a man] concerned with his own personal lust for pleasure, ambition, and power, and impervious to moral constraints.

Without revealed moral truth, anything can be seen as good or bad relative to our current situation. Even if we want to do the right thing, if there’s no absolute standard by which to judge, who’s to say what’s right and wrong?



## Chapter 1.7 Activity

### IS IT TRULY GODLY TO SEEK KNOWLEDGE?

**Objective:** Students will choose a Bible verse and design a poster communicating to others that they should seek biblical knowledge.

**Preparation:**

- Materials Needed: Bible, computer, poster paper and markers
- Time Required: 15–30 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Direct students to choose a Bible verse from the text or one they find in the Bible that addresses why biblical knowledge is important for today's teens.
2. Set out paper and markers or have students use a computer to design a poster inspiring teens to seek biblical knowledge and why that is important.
3. Display the posters in the classroom and discuss the message of each poster.

#### 10. Should Christians study worldviews and philosophies that are at odds with Christianity? [1.7]

False ideas are so prevalent that there is no way to avoid them without avoiding society all together. The Bible warns us to be wise and to not be taken captive by such ideas.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)

“Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ... For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” (1 Corinthians 1:20, 25)

“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.” (Colossians 2:8)

Being taken captive by false ideas is bad, but this doesn't mean studying other ideas is wrong. The Bible is full of examples of people who understood the truth from God's perspective and were better thinkers and leaders as a result. The Bible shows that God cares very much about knowledge, which is why we should also care:

“For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.” (Proverbs 2:6)

“An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.” (Proverbs 18:15)

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” (Hosea 4:6)

“It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment.” (Philippians 1:9)

### 11. What is the “two-story concept of truth” and why is it dangerous? [1.8]

Professor Nancy Pearcey explains the two-story concept of truth as described by her mentor, Francis Schaeffer:

Using the metaphor of a building, [Schaeffer] warned that truth had been split into two stories. The lower story consists of scientific facts, which are held to be empirically testable and universally valid. The upper story includes things like morality, theology, and aesthetics, which are now regarded as subjective and culturally relative. Essentially the upper story became a convenient dumping ground for anything that an empiricist worldview did not recognize as real. Schaeffer used a simple graphic, which we can adapt like this:

The two-story concept of truth

VALUES: Private, subjective, relative

---

FACTS: Public, objective, universal

The way to overcome this artificial separation is to recover Christianity as a knowledge tradition. To do that, we have to believe God is actually real and has authority as opposed to being just a figment of our imaginations.

### 12. What problems are created by the “fact/value split?” [1.8]

The erroneous division of truth into “fact” and “value” means matters of science are considered **objective facts**, while ethics and theology are considered **subjective opinions**. This leads to the assumption that science is a matter for the mind while faith is a matter for the heart.

Because of this divide, the life of the mind has been unnaturally divorced from religion. Claims about God’s existence and authority are treated like personal opinions. But if people don’t believe God is real (a fact about the world), they won’t give him the authority he deserves in their lives.

## Chapter 1.9 Activity

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE AUTHORITY?

**Objective:** Students will create skits to show hard and soft authority.

**Preparation:**

- Materials Needed: none
- Time Required: 30–45 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Divide the class into two or four groups depending on the number of students in your class. Have one or two groups brainstorm ideas to illustrate the characteristics of hard authority and have the other groups illustrate the characteristics of soft authority.
2. Allow time for the groups to prepare and briefly practice the skit.
3. Select a group to perform their skit about hard authority. Let student volunteers identify how each characteristic was portrayed in the skit. Discuss situations where students have encountered that type of authority and how they felt in those situations.
4. Select a group to perform their skit about soft authority. Let student volunteers identify how each characteristic was portrayed in the skit. Discuss situations where students have encountered that type of authority and how they felt in those situations.
5. After all groups have performed their skits, ask students which type of authority they respond to the best and why. Discuss as a class.

### 13. What does it mean to have authority? [1.9]

The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defines authority as: (1) “The power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience,” and (2) “the power to influence others, especially because of one’s commanding manner or one’s recognized knowledge about something.” The first definition could be called “hard” authority and the second “soft” authority.

**Hard authority** is the power to give orders and enforce obedience. It is

- **Extrinsic:** it resides in the office rather than the person.
- **Hierarchical:** both parties understand that one has standing over the other.
- **Punitive:** if you resist, there will be consequences.

**Soft authority** is the power of influence. People possess it because others respect who they are and what they know. It is

- **Intrinsic:** it resides within the person.
- **Relational:** a person who obeys does so because he or she trusts the source.
- **Non-punitive:** those who obey aren't forced to act on penalty of law.

#### 14. What types of authority does God have? [1.9]

Christianity sees God's authority revealed generally in nature and specifically in Scripture. He has the right to give orders and demand obedience backed by the threat of punishment. He also has the power to influence and persuade people because of his character and knowledge or out of earned respect.

God's authority is

- hard and soft
- intrinsic and extrinsic
- relational and hierarchical
- obligatory and persuasive

#### 15. Is doubt a good reason for not submitting to God's authority? [1.10]

We evaluate claims of authority all the time and decide whether or not to submit to them. Most people who have considered the claims of Christianity have legitimate doubts about those claims:

- How do I know the Bible is true?
- If something is in the Bible, do I have to obey it?
- What does the Bible say about obeying authorities?
- Am I obligated to follow the Bible, even if those who say they believe it don't obey its teachings?

These are important questions, but in themselves they are not a sufficient cause for doubt. If the balance of evidence shows Christianity to be true and authoritative, it's reasonable to accept it.

#### 16. What is biblical faith? [1.11]

Faith is firm trust or confidence in someone or something. Biblical faith is based on knowledge (Colossians 1:9–10) that can be tested and verified (1 Corinthians 13:14). It is trusting in a faithful God who is who he says he is and who does all he has promised to do. It is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8).

Biblical faith is not blind, nor does it believe without good reason. It is based on evidence. It is valid because its object is actually worthy of belief.

Faith derives its value not from the intensity of the believer but from the genuineness of the one she believes in. True faith is faith in the right object; faith in an unfaithful person is worthless or worse. (David Clark)

### Chapter 1.11 Activity

## BUT ISN'T CHRISTIANITY BASED ON FAITH, NOT KNOWLEDGE?

**Objective:** Students will research and find five observable or provable facts found in the Bible.

### Preparation:

- Materials Needed: computer or Bible concordance
- Time Required: 15–30 minutes

### Procedure:

1. Direct students to search the Scriptures and find five facts that are provable and/or observable. For each fact students write down, have them explain why or how this could be proven as a fact. For example, Isaiah 40:22 mentions “the circle of the earth,” a fact that was proven true when explorers finally navigated around the world and didn’t fall off an edge of what they thought was a flat world.
2. Allow about 10 minutes to find the verses and write their explanations.
3. Invite volunteers to read a fact and their explanation. On the board write down the categories for the facts, such as history or nature.
4. Continue to have students read their facts and write down the categories. Discuss whether these facts are disputed or accepted today and why.

### 17. Can a person have faith and doubts at the same time? [1.11]

Yes. All of us experience doubts because we are limited in our knowledge. We have questions for which we don’t have satisfactory answers and may never get them. But doubt can actually be a healthy part of a Christ-centered, thoughtful life.

A faith without some doubts is like a human body without any antibodies in it. People who blithely go through life too busy or indifferent to ask hard questions about why they believe as they do will find themselves defenseless against either the experience of

tragedy or the probing questions of a smart skeptic. A person's faith can collapse almost overnight if she has failed over the years to listen patiently to her own doubts, which should only be discarded after long reflection. (Tim Keller)

Dealing with doubt is part of being mature in the faith. But we must also learn to doubt our doubts so they don't overpower everything else in our lives.

**18. What are the areas where you might be embarrassed if someone were to challenge your faith? [1.13]**

*[Answers will vary.]*

**Chapter 1.14 Activity**

**UNDERSTANDING THE FAITH SO WE CAN UNDERSTAND THE TIMES**

**Objective:** Students will write an essay about why they feel it is important to understand their faith.

**Preparation:**

- Materials Needed: computer or paper and pencil
- Time Required: 30–45 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Direct students to write an essay about why they feel it is important to understand their faith. Set an appropriate length and guidelines for the essay. Give the students ample writing time in class.
2. Invite volunteers to read their essays to the class. After listening to an essay, have students share how that person's essay encourages them to want to understand their faith.
3. Allow time for students to read the email answer. Invite volunteers to read the original email along with the response to the rest of the class.

### 19. Are today's Christian young adults prepared to defend their faith in a pluralistic world? [1.14]

Summit Ministries has discovered some alarming findings about today's Christian young adults:

- **They are unprepared for opposition:** *Only one out of six* students understands the worldviews that set themselves up against the knowledge of God.
- **They cannot mount a defense:** While more than two out of three students are confident that the Christian worldview is true, *only one in five feels* prepared to defend it as such.
- **They are failing at spiritual disciplines:** *Only one in three* students claims to have a strong devotional or prayer life.
- **They feel alienated from God:** Imagine a youth group meeting at church: *only one in two* students assembled there actually feels close to God.

Young Christians are disengaging from their faith and embracing what sociologist Christian Smith calls “liberal whateverism.” Yet fully 60 percent say they want to make a difference. They just need guidance.

### 20. What is the main battle of our time? [1.15]

The main battle of our time isn't over territory or power. It's a battle for truth against lies, for justice against injustice, and for good against evil. Christians must be brave and stand up for truth.

[Christians] are tempted to make unnecessary concessions to those outside the Faith. We must show our Christian colours, if we are to be true to Jesus Christ. We cannot remain silent and concede everything away. (C. S. Lewis)

This doesn't mean we should major in the minors. We should agree on the non-negotiable basics of the faith while exercising charity in the areas where we disagree.

### 21. What reasons can give to show that the Bible is the Word of God?

Answers might include the following:

- Fulfilled prophecy
- Cohesive message from beginning to end
- Many of its historical details can be verified
- Its positive impact on human history and on millions of individuals
- How its claims relate accurately to logic and reason

## “DOES GOD EXIST?” READING

Christian philosopher William Lane Craig explains why the idea that God is dead is itself dead in many academic circles. Along with a resurgence of traditional philosophical arguments for God—cosmological, teleological, moral, and ontological—new arguments have been presented and defended by top-tier Christian philosophers.

Craig briefly outlines eight reasons in support of God’s existence:

1. God is the best explanation why anything at all exists.
2. God is the best explanation of the origin of the universe.
3. God is the best explanation of the applicability of mathematics to the physical world.
4. God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life.
5. God is the best explanation of intentional states of consciousness.
6. God is the best explanation of objective moral values and duties.
7. The very possibility of God’s existence implies that God exists.
8. God can be personally known and experienced.

Together these arguments make a strong case for a personal God as the best explanation for universe in which we find ourselves.

### DOES GOD EXIST?

by William Lane Craig

On April 8, 1966, *Time* magazine carried a lead story for which the cover was completely black except for three words emblazoned in bright, red letters against the dark background: “IS GOD DEAD?” The story described the so-called “Death of God” movement then current in American theology. But, to paraphrase Mark Twain, it seemed that the news of God’s demise was “greatly exaggerated.” For at the same time that theologians were writing God’s obituary, a new generation of young philosophers was re-discovering His vitality.

Back in the 1940s and ‘50s it was widely believed among philosophers that any talk about God is meaningless, since it is not verifiable by the five senses. The collapse of this Verificationism was perhaps the most important philosophical event of the twentieth century. Its downfall meant a resurgence of metaphysics, along with other traditional problems of philosophy which Verificationism had suppressed. Accompanying this resurgence came something altogether unanticipated: a renaissance of Christian philosophy.

The turning point probably came in 1967 with the publication of Alvin Plantinga’s *God and Other Minds*, which applied the tools of analytic philosophy to questions in



the philosophy of religion with an unprecedented rigor and creativity. In Plantinga's train has followed a host of Christian philosophers, writing in professional journals and participating in professional conferences and publishing with the finest academic presses. The face of Anglo-American philosophy has been transformed as a result. Atheism, although perhaps still the dominant viewpoint in Western universities, is a philosophy in retreat. In a recent article, University of Western Michigan philosopher Quentin Smith laments what he calls "the desecularization of academia that evolved in philosophy departments since the late 1960s." ("The Metaphilosophy of Naturalism," *Philo*, Vol 4, #2, at [philoonline.org](http://philoonline.org)). Complaining of naturalists' passivity in the face of the wave of "intelligent and talented theists entering academia today," Smith concludes, "God is not 'dead' in academia; he returned to life in the late 1960s and is now alive and well in his last academic stronghold, philosophy departments."

The renaissance of Christian philosophy has been accompanied by a resurgence of interest in natural theology—that branch of theology which seeks to prove God's existence without appeal to the resources of authoritative divine revelation—for instance, through philosophical argument. All of the traditional philosophical arguments for God's existence, such as the cosmological, teleological, moral, and ontological arguments, not to mention creative, new arguments, find intelligent and articulate defenders on the contemporary philosophical scene.

But what about the so-called "New Atheism" exemplified by Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens? Doesn't it herald a reversal of this trend? Not really. As is evident from the authors it interacts with—or rather, *doesn't* interact with—the New Atheism is, in fact, a pop-cultural phenomenon lacking in intellectual muscle and blissfully ignorant of the revolution that has taken place in Anglo-American philosophy. It tends to reflect the scientism of a bygone generation, rather than the contemporary intellectual scene.

### **Eight Reasons in Support of God's Existence**

I believe that God's existence best explains a wide range of the data of human experience. Let me briefly mention eight such cases.

#### **(I) God is the best explanation why anything at all exists.**

Suppose you were hiking through the forest and came upon a ball lying on the ground. You would naturally wonder how it came to be there. If your hiking buddy said to you, "Forget about it! It just exists!" you would think he was either joking or just wanted you to keep moving. No one would take seriously the idea that the ball just exists without any explanation. Now notice that merely increasing the size of the ball until it becomes coextensive with the universe does nothing to either provide, or remove the need for, an explanation of its existence.

So what is the explanation of the existence of the universe (by "the universe" I mean all of spacetime reality)? The explanation of the universe can lie only in a transcendent reality beyond it—beyond space and time—the existence of which transcendent reality is metaphysically necessary (otherwise its existence would also need explaining). Now there is only one way I can think of to get a contingent entity like the universe

from a necessarily existing cause, and that is if the cause is an agent who can freely choose to create the contingent reality. It therefore follows that the best explanation of the existence of the contingent universe is a transcendent personal being—which is what everybody means by “God.”

We can summarize this reasoning as follows:

1. Every contingent thing has an explanation of its existence.
2. If the universe has an explanation of its existence, that explanation is a transcendent, personal being.
3. The universe is a contingent thing.
4. Therefore, the universe has an explanation of its existence.
5. Therefore, the explanation of the universe is a transcendent, personal being—which is what everybody means by “God.”

## **(II) God is the best explanation of the origin of the universe.**

We have pretty strong evidence that the universe has not existed eternally into the past, but had a beginning a finite time ago. In 2003, the mathematician Arvind Borde, and physicists Alan Guth and Alexander Vilenkin were able to prove that *any* universe which has, on average, been expanding throughout its history cannot be infinite in the past, but must have a past spacetime boundary (i.e., a beginning). What makes their proof so powerful is that it holds so long as time and causality hold, *regardless* of the physical description of the very early universe. Because we don't yet have a quantum theory of gravity, we can't yet provide a physical description of the first split-second of the universe; but the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem is *independent* of one's theory of gravitation. For instance, their theorem implies that the quantum vacuum state which may have characterized the early universe cannot have existed eternally into the past, but must itself have had a beginning. Even if our universe is just a tiny part of a so-called “multiverse,” composed of many universes, their theorem requires that the multiverse *itself* must have had a beginning.

Of course, highly speculative physical scenarios, such as loop quantum gravity models, string models, even closed timelike curves, have been proposed to try to avoid this absolute beginning. These models are fraught with problems, but the bottom line is that none of these theories, *even if true*, succeeds in restoring an eternal past for the universe. Last year, at a conference in Cambridge celebrating the seventieth birthday of Stephen Hawking, Vilenkin delivered a paper entitled “Did the Universe Have a Beginning?” which surveyed current cosmology with respect to that question. He argued that “none of these scenarios can actually be past-eternal.” Specifically, Vilenkin closed the door on three models attempting to avert the implication of his theorem: eternal inflation, a cyclic universe, and an “emergent” universe which exists for eternity as a static seed before expanding. Vilenkin concluded, “*All* the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning.”

But then the inevitable question arises: *Why* did the universe come into being? What brought the universe into existence? There must have been a transcendent cause which brought the universe into being—a cause outside the universe itself.

We can summarize this argument thus far as follows:

1. The universe began to exist.
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. Therefore, the universe has a transcendent cause.

By the very nature of the case, that cause of the physical universe must be an immaterial (i.e., non-physical) being. Now there are only two types of things that could possibly fit that description: either an abstract object like a number, or an unembodied mind/consciousness. But abstract objects don't stand in causal relations to physical things. The number 7, for example, has no effect on anything. Therefore, the cause of the universe is an unembodied mind. Thus again we are brought, not merely to a transcendent cause of the universe, but to its Personal Creator.

### **(III) God is the best explanation of the applicability of mathematics to the physical world.**

Philosophers and scientists have puzzled over what physicist Eugene Wigner called "the unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics." How is it that a mathematical theorist like Peter Higgs can sit down at his desk and, by pouring over mathematical equations, predict the existence of a fundamental particle which, thirty years later, after investing millions of dollars and thousands of man-hours, experimentalists are finally able to detect? Mathematics is the language of nature. But how is this to be explained? If mathematical objects like numbers and mathematical theorems are abstract entities causally isolated from the physical universe, then the applicability of mathematics is, in the words of philosopher of mathematics Mary Leng, "a happy coincidence." On the other hand, if mathematical objects are just useful fictions, how is it that nature is written in the language of these fictions? The naturalist has *no* explanation for the uncanny applicability of mathematics to the physical world. By contrast, the theist has a ready explanation: When God created the physical universe He designed it in terms of the mathematical structure which He had in mind.

We can summarize this argument as follows:

1. If God did not exist, the applicability of mathematics would be just a happy coincidence.
2. The applicability of mathematics is not just a happy coincidence.
3. Therefore, God exists.

### **(IV) God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life.**

In recent decades scientists have been *stunned* by the discovery that the initial conditions of the Big Bang were fine-tuned for the existence of intelligent life with a precision and delicacy that literally defy human comprehension. This fine-tuning is of two sorts. First, when the laws of nature are expressed as equations, you find appearing in them certain constants, such as the gravitational constant. The values of these constants are independent of the laws of nature. Second, in addition to these constants, there are certain arbitrary quantities which define the initial conditions on

which the laws of nature operate—for example, the amount of entropy (disorder) in the universe. Now these constants and quantities fall into an extraordinarily narrow range of life-permitting values. Were these constants or quantities to be altered by less than a hair's breadth, the life-permitting balance of nature would be destroyed, and life would not exist.

There are three live explanatory options for this extraordinary fine-tuning: physical necessity, chance, or design.

Physical necessity is not, however, a plausible explanation, because the finely-tuned constants and quantities are independent of the laws of nature. Therefore, they are *not* physically necessary.

So could this fine-tuning be due to chance? The problem with this explanation is that the odds of all the constants and quantities' randomly falling into the incomprehensibly narrow life-permitting range are just so infinitesimal that they cannot be reasonably accepted. Therefore, the proponents of the chance explanation have been forced to postulate the existence of a 'World Ensemble' of other universes, preferably infinite in number and randomly ordered, so that life-permitting universes like ours would appear by chance *somewhere* in the Ensemble. Not only is this hypothesis, to borrow Richard Dawkins' phrase, "an unparsimonious extravagance," it faces an insuperable objection. By far, the most probable observable universes in a World Ensemble would be worlds in which a *single* brain fluctuated into existence out of the vacuum and observed its otherwise empty world. So, if our world were just a random member of the World Ensemble, by all probability we ought to be having observations like that. Since we don't, that *strongly* disconfirms the World Ensemble hypothesis. So chance is also not a good explanation. Thus,

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is due to either physical necessity, chance, or design.
2. The fine-tuning of the universe is not due to physical necessity or chance.
3. Therefore, the fine-tuning of the universe is due to design.
4. Thus, the fine-tuning of the universe constitutes evidence for a cosmic Designer.

**(V) God is the best explanation of intentional states of consciousness.**

Philosophers are puzzled by states of *intentionality*. Intentionality is the property of being about something or of something. It signifies the *object-directedness* of our thoughts. For example, I can think about my summer vacation, or I can think of my wife. No physical object has intentionality in this sense. A chair or a stone or a glob of tissue like the brain is not about or of something else. Only mental states or states of consciousness are about other things. In *The Atheist's Guide to Reality: Enjoying Life without Illusions* (2011), the materialist Alex Rosenberg recognizes this fact, and concludes that for atheists, there really are no intentional states. Rosenberg boldly claims that we never *really* think about anything. But this seems incredible. Obviously, I am thinking about Rosenberg's argument—and so are you! This seems to me to be a *reductio ad absurdum* of his atheism. By contrast, for theists, because

God is a mind, it's hardly surprising that there should be other, finite minds, with intentional states. Thus intentional states fit comfortably into a theistic worldview.

So we may argue:

1. If God did not exist, intentional states of consciousness would not exist.
2. But intentional states of consciousness do exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

**(VI) God is the best explanation of objective moral values and duties.**

In our experience we apprehend moral values and duties which impose themselves as objectively binding and true. For example, we recognize that it's wrong to walk into an elementary school with an automatic weapon and shoot little boys and girls and their teachers. On a naturalistic view, however, there is nothing *really* wrong with this: moral values are just the *subjective* by-products of biological evolution and social conditioning, and have no objective validity.

Alex Rosenberg is brutally honest about the implications of his atheism here too. He declares, "there is no such thing as ... morally right or wrong." (*The Atheist's Guide to Reality*, p. 145); "Individual human life is meaningless ... and without ultimate moral value." (p. 17); "We need to face the fact that nihilism is true." (p. 95). By contrast, the theist grounds objective moral values in God, and our moral duties in His commands. The theist thus has the explanatory resources to ground objective moral values and duties which the atheist lacks.

Hence we may argue:

1. Objective moral values and duties exist.
2. But if God did not exist, objective moral values and duties would not exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

**(VII) The very possibility of God's existence implies that God exists.**

In order to understand this argument, you need to understand what philosophers mean by "possible worlds." A possible world is just a way the world might have been. It is a description of a possible reality. So a possible world is not a planet or a universe or any kind of concrete object, it is a world-description. The actual world is the description that is true. Other possible worlds are descriptions that are not in fact true but which might have been true. To say that something exists in some possible world is to say that there is some consistent description of reality which includes that entity. To say that something exists in *every* possible world means that no matter which description is true, that entity will be included in the description. For example, unicorns do not in fact exist, but there are some possible worlds in which unicorns exist. On the other hand, many mathematicians think that numbers exist in every possible world.

Now with that in mind, consider the *ontological argument*, which was discovered in the year 1011 by the monk Anselm of Canterbury. God, Anselm observes, is by definition the greatest being conceivable. If you could conceive of anything greater

than God, then *that* would be God. Thus, God is the greatest conceivable being—a maximally great being. So what would such a being be like? He would be all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good, and He would exist in every logically possible world. A being which lacked any of those properties would not be maximally great: we could conceive of something greater—a being which did have all these properties.

But this implies that if God's existence is even *possible*, then God must exist. For if a maximally great being exists in any possible world, He exists in all of them. That's part of what it means to be maximally great—to be all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good in every logically possible world. So if God's existence is even possible, then He exists in every logically possible world—and therefore in the actual world.

We can summarize this argument as follows:

1. It is possible that a maximally great being (God) exists.
2. If it is possible that a maximally great being exists, then a maximally great being exists in some possible world.
3. If a maximally great being exists in some possible world, then it exists in every possible world.
4. If a maximally great being exists in every possible world, then it exists in the actual world.
5. Therefore, a maximally great being exists in the actual world.
6. Therefore, a maximally great being exists.
7. Therefore, God exists.

It might surprise you to learn that steps 2–7 of this argument are relatively uncontroversial. Most philosophers would agree that if God's existence is even possible, then He must exist.

So the question is, is God's existence possible? Well, what do you think? The atheist has to maintain that it's *impossible* that God exists. That is, he has to maintain that the concept of God is *logically incoherent*, like the concept of a married bachelor or a round square. The problem is that the concept of God just doesn't appear to be incoherent in that way. The idea of a being who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good in every possible world seems perfectly coherent. Moreover, as we've seen, there are other arguments for God's existence which at least suggest that it's possible that God exists. So I'll just leave it with you. Do you think, as I do, that it's at least possible that God exists? If so, then it follows logically that He does exist.

#### **(VIII) God can be personally known and experienced.**

This isn't really an *argument* for God's existence; rather it's the claim that you can know God exists wholly *apart* from arguments, by personally experiencing him. Philosophers call beliefs grasped in this way “properly basic beliefs.” They aren't based on some other beliefs; rather they're part of the foundation of a person's system of beliefs. Other properly basic beliefs would be the belief in the reality of the past or the existence of the external world. When you think about it, neither of these beliefs can be proved by argument. How could you prove that the world was not created five minutes ago with built-in appearances of age like food in our stomachs from the breakfasts we never really ate and memory traces in our brains of events



we never really experienced? How could you prove that you are not a brain in a vat of chemicals being stimulated with electrodes by some mad scientist to believe that you are reading this article? We don't base such beliefs on argument; rather they're part of the foundations of our system of beliefs.

But although these sorts of beliefs are basic for us, that doesn't mean that they're arbitrary. Rather they're grounded in the sense that they're formed in the context of certain experiences. In the experiential context of seeing and feeling and hearing things, I naturally form the belief that there are certain physical objects which I am sensing. Thus, my basic beliefs are not arbitrary, but appropriately grounded in experience. There may be no way to prove such beliefs, and yet it's perfectly rational to hold them. Such beliefs are thus not merely basic, but *properly* basic. In the same way, belief in God is for those who seek Him a properly basic belief grounded in their experience of God.

Now if this is so, then there's a danger that philosophical arguments for God could actually distract your attention from God Himself. The Bible promises, "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you" (James 4:8). We mustn't so concentrate on the external arguments that we fail to hear the inner voice of God speaking to our hearts. For those who listen, God becomes a personal reality in their lives.

### **Summary**

In summary, we've seen eight respects in which God provides a better account of the world than naturalism: God is the best explanation of

- (I) Why anything at all exists.
- (II) The origin of the universe.
- (III) The applicability of mathematics to the physical world.
- (IV) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life.
- (V) Intentional states of consciousness.
- (VI) Objective moral values and duties.

Moreover

- (VII) The very possibility of God's existence implies that God exists.
- (VIII) God can be personally experienced and known.

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**1. What factors led to a resurgence of Christian philosophy in the twentieth century?**

Despite the proclamation that “God is dead,” a host of Christian philosophers, led by Alvin Plantinga, made a strong case for God’s necessary existence to explain the universe in which we find ourselves. The argument that nothing exists except what can be verified by the five senses—verificationism—collapsed in the face of this intellectual assault.

A renaissance of Christian philosophy was set off by Plantinga’s book, *God and Other Minds* (1967), which applied the tools of analytic philosophy to questions in the philosophy of religion and transformed Anglo-American philosophy as a result. This renaissance was accompanied by a resurgence of interest in natural theology—the branch of theology which seeks to prove God’s existence without appeal to divine revelation.

Along with the traditional philosophical arguments for God such as the cosmological, teleological, moral, and ontological arguments, new lines of reasoning were presented by Christian philosophers in professional journals and conferences and in academic departments at colleges and universities.

“God is not ‘dead’ in academia; he returned to life in the late 1960s and is now alive and well in his last academic stronghold, philosophy departments.” Quentin Smith

**2. How does the fine-tuning of the universe provide evidence for a cosmic Designer?**

Recent scientific discoveries point to the initial conditions of the Big Bang being fine-tuned for the existence of intelligent life with a precision not possible by chance or luck. There are certain constants, e.g., the gravitational constant, that fall into an extraordinarily narrow range of life-permitting values. In addition to these constants, there are certain arbitrary quantities that define the initial conditions on which the laws of nature operate, e.g., the amount of entropy (disorder) in the universe.

There are three possible explanations for this fine-tuning: physical necessity, chance, or design. Physical necessity is out because the constants and quantities are independent of the laws of nature. Therefore, they are not physically necessary. The chances of all the constants and quantities falling into the narrow life-permitting range by chance are so infinitesimal that they cannot be reasonably accepted. This leaves design, and that requires a designer.

**3. Why is God the best explanation of objective moral values and duties?**

In our experience, we comprehend moral values and duties that impose themselves as objectively binding and true. For example, we recognize that it’s wrong to walk into an elementary school with an automatic weapon and shoot boys and girls and their teachers. On a naturalistic view, however, there is nothing wrong with this because moral values are just the subjective by-products of biological evolution and social conditioning, and have no objective validity.



The consistent atheist has to admit that there is no such thing as right or wrong. By contrast, the theist grounds objective moral values in God. Moral duties are based on his character and commands; hence we may argue: 1. Objective moral values and duties exist. 2. If God did not exist, objective moral values and duties would not exist. 3. Therefore, God exists.

#### **4. What is the ontological argument and how does it explain God’s existence?**

The ontological argument was put forth in AD 1011 by the monk Anselm of Canterbury. It goes like this: God is by definition the greatest being conceivable. If you could conceive of anything greater than God, then that would be God. Thus, God is the greatest conceivable being.

Such a being would be all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good, and he would exist in every logically possible world. A being that lacked any of those properties would not be maximally great because we could conceive of something greater. This implies that if God’s existence is even possible, then God must exist. For if a maximally great being exists in any possible world, he exists in all of them.

Most philosophers would agree that if God’s existence is even possible, then he must exist. The atheist must prove that it’s impossible that God exists; therefore the concept of God is logically incoherent, like the concept of a round square. The problem the atheist faces is that the concept of God doesn’t appear to be incoherent in that way. The idea of a being who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good in every possible world seems perfectly coherent.

#### **5. How do we know that God can be personally known and experienced?**

The belief that God exists because we can experience him is called a “basic belief.” It is not based on some other belief but is part of the foundation of a person’s belief system. This is what philosophers call “properly basic beliefs.” Other properly basic beliefs would be the belief in the reality of the past or the existence of the external world. Neither of these beliefs can be proved by argument, e.g., how could you prove that the world was not created five minutes ago with built-in appearances of age?

Although these sorts of beliefs are basic, that doesn’t mean they are arbitrary. Rather, they are grounded in the sense that they are formed in the context of certain experiences. There may be no way to prove such beliefs, and yet it’s perfectly rational to hold them. Such beliefs are not merely basic, but *properly* basic. In the same way, belief in God is for those who seek him a properly basic belief grounded in the experience of God.

The Bible promises, “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you” (James 4:8). We must not focus on external arguments to the exclusion of hearing God speak to our hearts. For those who listen, God becomes a personal reality in their lives.



## “WHY APOLOGETICS?” VIDEO

Mary Jo Sharp opens with her own story of conversion from atheism to Christianity. She talks about her early struggles with doubt and her efforts to believe in the truth of the Bible. Her search for answers led her into the field of apologetics.

Apologetics is “a defense” for the Christian faith. Apologetics involves knowing what you believe, why you believe it, and how to defend it. Sharp gives three reasons for studying apologetics: (1) to answer doubts, (2) to build confidence, and (3) to change lives. She goes on to explain several ways to do these vital tasks effectively.



*To access this video, go to [www.summitu.com/utf](http://www.summitu.com/utf) and enter the passcode found in the back of your manual.*



## “WHY APOLOGETICS?” VIDEO OUTLINE

Former atheist Mary Jo Sharp rejected Christianity because of many factors:

- Upbringing
- Entertainment and news media
- Shallow and hypocritical Christians
- Distrust of the church

Being exposed to a vibrant Christian and the Bible led to her conversion and ultimately an interest in apologetics. **Apologetics**: giving a “defense” (1 Peter 3:15). Apologetics involves defense and offense:

- Defense—answering \_\_\_\_\_ **challenges** \_\_\_\_\_ to the faith
- Offense—presenting \_\_\_\_\_ **reasons** \_\_\_\_\_ for belief

### Three Reasons for Apologetics

#### 1. Answer Doubts

Doubts are prevalent because of

- life experiences;
- brushes with great \_\_\_\_\_ **evil** \_\_\_\_\_;
- exposure to bad arguments without exposure to good arguments;
- limitation of human knowledge; and
- lack of living in God’s presence.

Seeking answers to doubts can root out false beliefs and allow us to trust God. Sometimes we won’t find answers to doubts; we just have to live with them.

#### 2. Build Confidence

These things tear down confidence in God:

- Popular atheists who insist Christianity isn’t intellectually credible
- Media and education that present a secularized view of the world
- Christians who lack \_\_\_\_\_ **training** \_\_\_\_\_, who don’t know how to integrate faith and life, and who reject the need to engage the culture

#### 3. Change Lives

Apologetics can change lives. It transforms us and the people around us.

Personal transformation is proof of God. It’s not that people don’t have answers to their questions, it’s that they don’t have good models.

We can’t change the \_\_\_\_\_ **culture** \_\_\_\_\_ unless we are changed first.



## “WHY APOLOGETICS?” DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### 1. What are some of the factors keeping people like Mary Jo Sharp from becoming Christians?

**Upbringing:** People raised in agnostic or atheistic homes don't see the positive aspects of Christianity. They are taught it isn't a viable worldview. To adopt it later in life would be to go against those they love most.

**Entertainment and news media:** These often give a distorted view of Christianity and focus on the worst stereotypes.

**Shallow and hypocritical Christians:** Good disciples are a draw to the faith and poor disciples are a repellent. Hypocritical Christians confirm a nonbeliever's lack of interest in Jesus and the church that bears his name.

### 2. What is apologetics, and what does it try to achieve?

“Apologetics” comes from 1 Peter 3:15, where we are told to be prepared to give a “defense.” It means to make a case for something. Apologetics builds an *offense for* and a *defense of* Christian beliefs.

The goals of apologetics are to

- answer doubts;
- build confidence; and
- change lives.

Can you think of other goals apologetics can accomplish?

- Win converts to Christ
- Give credibility to the Christian worldview in a pluralistic society
- Make a case for intelligent design as an alternative to evolution

### 3. How did Jesus respond to the doubts of the apostle Thomas and John the Baptist?

The heart condition is the difference between Thomas and John. Thomas appears to be demanding evidence on his terms. Unless Jesus met his conditions, he wouldn't believe (John 20:24–29).

In the case of John the Baptist, he had an honest question based on his experience—being in prison, being different from what he expected, the reign of the Messiah he had identified. He just wanted confirmation: “Are you the one?” (Luke 7:18–28).

Along with his request, Thomas gets a public rebuke from Jesus. John gets physical miracles to affirm his faith and the highest praise from the Master.

Who do you identify with most, Thomas or John?

#### 4. Why are doubts so prevalent?

Doubt is one of the most frequent and painful problems that plague Christians. It can spring from the following:

- **Life experiences:** Failure by God to live up to our expectations can lead to a contrast between what we experience and what we are promised.
- **A brush with great evil:** Tragedies like the death of a spouse or parent can lead to doubts of God’s existence or character.
- **Exposure to bad arguments:** Bad philosophy comes through the Internet and media. Good arguments are harder to find.
- **Limitation of human knowledge:** All humans have doubts about something at some time.
- **Lack of living in God’s presence:** Not practicing the spiritual disciplines leaves one weak and susceptible to doubt.

#### 5. What’s tearing down confidence in Christianity in our culture?

**Popular atheists** like Mark Twain, Bill Maher, Richard Dawkins, and Sam Harris have broad appeal. They articulately insist Christianity isn’t intellectually credible.

The **media** presents a secularized view of reality. Hollywood producers, news directors, and educational leaders are largely atheists and promote atheistic worldviews.

Some **Christians** lack training and can’t challenge the scientific naturalism of our day, don’t know how to integrate faith and life, and reject the need to interact with and engage the culture.

## Chapter 1 Key Points

### Key Questions:

1. Why are ideas important?
2. How do ideas affect us?
3. How do faith and ideas relate?

### Key Terms:

1. Epistemology
2. Faith
3. Hard Authority
4. Relativism
5. Soft Authority\*

### Key Verses:

1. 1 Chronicles 12:32
2. Esther 4:14
3. Romans 1:18–21
4. Romans 12:2
5. 2 Corinthians 10:5
6. Ephesians 4:17–24
7. Colossians 2:8

*\*Short answer or essay question on the exam*

## CHAPTER 1 ASSIGNMENT

Answer the following questions with at least one paragraph.

**1. Explain the concept of a mental map and how it can help us to understand and explain the world. Who has this kind of “ideas map,” what kinds of questions should it help us answer, and why do our answers matter?**

**2. What are some reasons Christians give to avoid thinking about “worldly” kinds of knowledge and philosophy, and how might a Christian answer these objections biblically?**

**3. What is the metaphor of the “two-story concept of truth,” and what are some consequences of thinking that way?**

**4. How might a Christian respond to the claim that Christianity is based on faith, and that faith is the opposite of knowledge or facts?**

Other potential questions:

- What kinds of authority have most influenced your own understanding of Christianity, whether for good or bad?
- What are some doubts that you have heard about from others or experienced yourself? What caused these doubts?



UNIT

# 2



# 2

## WHAT THE BIBLE IS AND ISN'T

### CHAPTER 2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

*Students will be able to:*

1. describe what the Bible is and is not. [2.1]
2. identify the impact the Bible has had throughout history. [2.2]
3. list the benefits of studying the Bible. [2.3]
4. explain why the Bible is more like a compass than an instruction book. [2.4]
5. describe what it means to call the Bible God's "revelation." [2.5]
6. identify the two ways God has revealed his nature and character. [2.6]
7. explain what it means to say the Bible is "God's Word." [2.7]
8. compare how knowledge and the Bible relate to one another. [2.8]
9. assess on what basis the Bible claims to be true. [2.9]
10. explain why truth matters. [2.10]

**Chapter 2.1 Activity****WHY TRUTH MATTERS**

**Objective:** Students will give examples of relativism on different topics and explain why the topics are not “subjective truth claims.”

**Preparation:**

- Materials Needed: computer
- Write each of the following categories on a sheet of paper: a teen in a small village in Africa, a famous actor, a liberal woman in NYC, a teen in a Muslim country, and a teen in a Christian school.
- Time Required: 15–30 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Choose five volunteers and give each student one of the previously made signs to hold.
2. Name a topic (cheating, stealing, living together before marriage, drugs, or other topics suggested by students) and have each volunteer assume the role on the sign and respond with their version of relativism about the topic. Ask the class what the Bible says is the “objective truth claim” about the topic. Have students articulate why this topic is not a “subjective truth claim.”
3. Continue this process with different volunteers and topics.

**1. How do you compare to the rest of the country on some basic Bible knowledge? [2.1]**

Can you name the first five books of the Bible and briefly say what each is about?

- 58 percent were unable to correctly identify the first five books of the Bible.

Can you recite the Ten Commandments—in order?

- 60 percent of Americans can’t name five of the Ten Commandments.

Can you name the four Gospels and say something about each author?

- 50 percent of Americans can’t name any of the four Gospels.

Can you prove Satan exists from the Bible?

- 27 percent are confident that Satan exists.

Does the Bible teach, “God helps those who help themselves”?

- 45 percent erroneously believe the Bible teaches God helps those who help themselves.

**2. Which of these phrases best describes the Bible: a rule book, an instruction manual, or a story? [2.1]**

The Bible has rules and instructions for wise living, but its overall tone is more that of a story—a story that’s all the more compelling because it’s true!

No, the Bible isn’t a book of rules, or a book of heroes. The Bible is most of all a Story. It’s an adventure story about a young Hero who comes from a far country to win back his lost treasure. It’s a love story about a brave Prince who leaves his palace, his throne—everything—to rescue the one he loves. It’s like the most wonderful of fairy tales that has come true in real life! (Sally Lloyd-Jones)

### Chapter 2.2 Activity

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE

**Objective:** Students will make a timeline of the Bible and its influence throughout history.

**Preparation:**

- Materials Needed: computer or paper and pencil
- Time Required: 30–45 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Depending on the size of the class, divide the class into groups of about five students.
2. Have each group make a timeline of the Bible and its influence throughout history. Direct the groups to consider how the Bible affects history through, but not limited to, the topics of world literature, changes to Western civilization, effects on education, and effects on morals.
3. Encourage groups to research when the Bible was written and first published and use that date to start the timeline. Have each group include at least one point on the timeline for each century.
4. When all the groups have finished, ask each group what date they started with and why. Continue through the centuries and invite the groups to share any points they put on their timelines. Compare and contrast the cited items through a class discussion.
5. If possible, allow the groups to display their timelines.

**3. Has the Bible played a key role in the shaping of America or is that just the Christian version of history? [2.2]**

The best way to determine the Bible's influence on American history is to read what some leaders have had to say about it: John Jay, Samuel Adams, Noah Webster, and Benjamin Rush. Many presidents have also had a high regard for Scripture and testified to its moral power: John Adams, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and Ronald Reagan, to name a few.

Not all these leaders would be called evangelical Christians by today's standards, but they all placed a high value on the Bible and affirmed its essential role in shaping a free society. Even the United States Congress recommended the Bible to all citizens: "Resolved that the United States in Congress assembled ... recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States."

**4. What are some important reasons to study the Bible? [2.2]**

Summit Ministries' founder, David A. Noebel, offers four compelling reasons why everyone should read the Bible and take it seriously:

- a. The Bible is part of world literature.** There are more quotations from the Bible in *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* than from any other source.
- b. The Bible changed Western civilization.** Alvin Schmidt's *How Christianity Changed the World* shows how the Bible influenced everything from the abolition of slavery, to freedom and dignity for women, to the founding of hospitals and schools, to the advance of science and the development of great art and architecture.
- c. Knowledge of the Bible is the mark of an educated person.** Everyone who has a thorough knowledge of the Bible may truly be called educated; and no other learning or culture, no matter how extensive or elegant, can, among Europeans and Americans, form a proper substitute. ... I believe a knowledge of the Bible without a college education is more valuable than a college course without the Bible. (William Lyon Phelps)
- d. Knowledge of the Bible is the mark of a moral person.** People need to distinguish between right and wrong and choose to do what is right. The famous Golden Rule of morality, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," comes from the Bible.

**5. Can you match the following worldviews with their sacred texts? [2.3]**

<u>Worldview</u>	<u>Sacred Text</u>
Muslims	Bhagavad Gita
Secular Humanists	<i>The Communist Manifesto</i>
Libertarians	Bible

Marxists	<i>Atlas Shrugged</i>
Hindus	Quran
Christianity	<i>Humanist Manifesto</i>

**6. In what ways is the Bible different from these other holy books?**

Several distinctions are discussed in this chapter. The Bible is:

- Special revelation from God
- Inspired by God
- Inerrant in the original documents
- Influential in human history

**7. What benefits will be gained from a careful study of the Bible? [2.3]**

The followers of Christ are commanded to carefully study Scripture: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). (See also Psalm 119; 2 Peter 3:16; Acts 17:1–4). In return, they are promised the following:

- Blessing: Psalm 119
- Insight into how to bear spiritual fruit: Galatians 5:22–23
- Freedom from spiritual bondage: 2 Corinthians 3:17–4:2
- Direction in life: Proverbs 3:5–6
- The ability to grasp truth and defeat error: 2 Corinthians 10:3–5; Ephesians 6:10–19

**8. How is the Bible more like a compass than an instruction manual? [2.4]**

An instruction manual gives step-by-step directions for completing isolated tasks. It doesn’t require study or reflection, and it doesn’t explain how things work. A compass gives direction. Like a compass, the Bible points to truth and can help us discover God.

Reading scripture, like praying and sharing in the sacraments, is one of the means by which the life of heaven and the life of earth interlock. (This is what older writers were referring to when they spoke of ‘the means of grace.’ It isn’t that we can control God’s grace, but that there are, so to speak, places to go where God has promised to meet with his people, even if sometimes when we turn up it feels as though God has forgotten the date. More usually it’s the other way around.) We read scripture in order to hear God addressing us—us, here and now, today. (N. T. Wright)

The Bible-as-compass analogy helps us see God’s Word less as a to-do list and more as a guide to wise living, which is important in this fallen world where beauty and ugliness, safety and danger exist side by side.

**9. Why is the Bible a better compass than other holy books? [2.4]**

Christianity is a revealed religion, not the product of human thought and speculation. If the Bible's revelation about God is *accurate*, then what it says is *authoritative*. This is serious and warrants a closer look at

- the idea of revelation;
- what it means to know something;
- what is true; and
- how we know the Bible is God's Word.

**Chapter 2.4 Activity****NOT MERELY A BOOK OF INSTRUCTIONS**

**Objective:** Students will draw a diagram showing how the Bible is like a compass in their lives, or students will write a "how to" guide to use the Bible as an instruction manual in their lives.

**Preparation:**

- Materials Needed: computer or paper and pencil
- Time Required: 15–30 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Divide the class into pairs. Assign one partner the task of drawing a diagram to show how the Bible is like a compass in his or her life. The other partner will write a "how to" guide to use the Bible as an instruction manual in his or her life.
2. Have each pair share their work with the class.
3. Discuss common themes that appeared among the groups and why.
4. Have students vote on whether they use the Bible as a compass or an instruction manual. Invite volunteers to explain why they voted the way they did and what conclusions they can make from the results of the vote.

**10. What are the only two options when it comes to the origins of religion? [2.5]**

The two options for the origins of religion are *revelation* or *evolution*. Revelation means “to make known something that was previously unknown.” The Hebrew word (*galah*) and the Greek word (*apokalypto*) express the idea of uncovering what was concealed.

Either God exists and has revealed himself to humans or humans have invented religion and its texts have evolved over time. Christianity boldly asserts the former. It claims that God exists and has made himself known from the beginning.

So the God of the Bible in the very first chapter [of Genesis] is not some abstract “unmoved mover,” some spirit impossible to define, some ground of all beings, some mystical experience. He has a personality and dares to disclose himself in words that human beings understand. Right through the whole Bible, that picture of God constantly recurs. However great or transcendent he is, he is a talking God. (D. A. Carson)

**11. What does it mean to say that God is personal? [2.5]**

When we say that God is personal, we mean that he’s a person with self-awareness and his own personality, mind, emotions, and volition. Not only is he personal, he is also relational and wants to have a relationship with humanity.

Knowing God is the most important thing in life. God created people fundamentally for relationship with himself. This relationship depends on knowing who he is as he has revealed himself. God is personal, which means he has a mind, will, emotions, relational ability, and self-consciousness. Because he is personal, and not merely an impersonal object, God must personally reveal himself to us. (Erik Thoennes)

**12. What are the two ways in which God reveals his character? [2.6]**

God has revealed his nature and character through general revelation and special revelation. **General revelation** is God’s universal revelation about himself and morality that can be seen in nature by everyone.

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. (Psalm 19:1–4)

**Special revelation** is God’s unique revelation about himself through the Scriptures, miraculous events, and Jesus Christ.

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. (Hebrews 1:1–2)

Because God's general revelation is universally clear, ignorance is no excuse (Romans 1:19–20; 2:14–16). General revelation is evident in creation and written on our hearts. But it reveals God's work only in its broadest strokes. A saving knowledge of Jesus Christ only comes through special revelation.

### Chapter 2.6 Activity

## THAT ALL MAY KNOW: TWO WAYS GOD REVEALS HIS NATURE AND CHARACTER

**Objective:** Students will write down items from A–Z that reveal God's nature and character through general revelation.

**Preparation:**

- Materials Needed: paper and pencil
- Time Required: 30 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Discuss general revelation.
2. Have students take a sheet of paper and write the letters of the alphabet down the side. Give them five minutes to write one item of creation that reveals God's nature and character for each letter of the alphabet, such as A: atom; B: baboon, etc. Explain that they will receive one point for each item they write that no one else in the class wrote down.
3. At the end of five minutes, have them stop writing.
4. Start with "A" and have the students call out what they wrote down. If more than one person wrote the same thing, no one scores a point. Have students justify an answer that might seem incorrect for general revelation. If the justification is deemed valid, the student scores a point.
5. Continue this process as you work through the alphabet.
6. Have students total their points and find the highest score of the class. Reward the highest scorer in some way.



**13. What do we mean when we say the Bible is the Word of God? [2.7]**

To say the Bible is the revealed Word of God is to make the following claims:

- There is an external world that can be known.
- Truth about this world can be discovered.
- The Bible objectively describes this world as it is for everyone.
- The Bible's claims are open to scrutiny and can be examined for truth.

Some people say *the Bible contains God's Word*, but this implies that it contains other things too. Then who's to decide which parts are God's Word? Presumably, for people who hold this view, the Bible is God's Word only insofar as it rings true in their experience. This is contrary to the whole point of biblical revelation.

### Chapter 2.7 Activity

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY THE BIBLE IS THE "WORD OF GOD"?

**Objective:** Students will create slide presentations to show what it means to say the Bible is God's Word.

### Preparation:

- Materials Needed: computer
- Time Required: 60-80 minutes (two separate class periods)

### Procedure:

1. Divide the class into three groups, or if you have a large class, make six groups.
2. Assign each group one of the following three topics: the Bible is rooted in history and has been accurately transmitted; the Bible is inspired by God; or the Bible is inerrant. Have the groups brainstorm how they will explain in a PowerPoint presentation that the Bible is God's Word.
3. Set an appropriate amount of slides and time to work on the presentations.
4. Select a group to show their presentation. Let the other groups ask questions and critique the presentation on creatively depicting the topic.
5. Continue until all groups have presented.

**14. Can we trust the accuracy of the Bible? [2.7]**

**The Bible is rooted in history and has been accurately transmitted.** The Bible is based on actual historical events involving real people, places, and events. From the beginning, those who transmitted the details of those events did so with great care. Although there have been some errors in the transmission of the Bible, the essential doctrines of the faith have been reliably communicated.

The discovery of the **Dead Sea Scrolls** underscored this. They contained an almost complete book of Isaiah nearly a thousand years older than the next oldest copy. There was less than a 5 percent difference in the texts, most of which was spelling variations.

The accuracy of the New Testament is similarly demonstrated by manuscript evidence, the presence of early texts, the number of witnesses testifying to its truth, and archeological discoveries confirming what the text actually says.

**15. What does it mean to say the Bible is “inspired” by God? [2.7]**

The word “inspire” means “to breathe.” It’s a translation of the Greek word *pneuma* used in 2 Timothy 3:16, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.”

When Christians say the Bible is divinely inspired, they mean God used the writers to communicate exactly what he wanted and yet did so without overriding their personalities. The sixty-six books in the Bible were written by forty different men over fifteen hundred years, yet it is one completely coherent book.

If we start by recognizing the Bible’s truth and admit that our recognition is not what makes it true, we can respond with full confidence to the way its truths resonate in our lives.

The objective authority of the Bible rooted in God’s inspiring action stands against allowing any contemporary agendas to gain control over the theology. The subjective recognition of the Bible as authoritative guards against a dead orthodoxy that pays lip service to divine truth even as it pursues other agendas. (David Clark)

**16. What does it mean to say the Bible is “inerrant”? [2.7]**

To say the Bible is **inerrant** is to say that it is without error. Since God used the writers to communicate exactly what he wanted, and since God cannot lie, the Bible is accurate in the original writings. This is a reasonable claim, as long as we understand what we mean by inerrant.

When all the facts are known, the Bible (in its original writings) properly interpreted in light of which culture and communication means had developed by the time of

its composition will be shown to be completely true (and therefore not false) in all that it affirms, to the degree of precision intended by the author, in all matters relating to God and his creation. (David Dockery)

This doesn't mean there have been no errors in transmitting the text through time. But it does mean the essential doctrines of the faith have been transmitted reliably and that the best translations today do not mislead in any areas they address.

### 17. What is the basis for true knowledge? [2.8]

Knowledge is justified true belief. According to Jonathan Morrow, "For something to count as knowledge, (1) you must believe it; (2) the belief you hold must be true (accurately describes the way things actually are); and (3) this true belief must be justified or supported by adequate evidence based on thought and experience."

Knowledge leads to truth, which in turn leads to confidence.

People perish for lack of knowledge, because only knowledge permits assured access to reality; and reality does not adjust itself to accommodate our false beliefs, errors, or hesitations in action. Life demands a steady hand for good, and only knowledge supplies this. This is as true in the spiritual life as elsewhere. (Dallas Willard)

The Bible assumes that true belief is possible because it is based on knowledge discovered by careful investigation. Take the Gospel of Luke for example. The good doctor's testimony was based on careful research that included interviews with eyewitnesses (Luke 1:1-4).

### 18. Which provides a better basis for true knowledge, "naturalism" or "Christian theism"? [2.8]

**Naturalism** is the belief that everything that happens has a natural cause, such as evolution. But naturalism and evolution don't provide a sufficient basis for true knowledge. Though evolution may have given us faculties that help us survive, there's no guarantee that those faculties deliver truth. Evolution selects for the fittest organisms; it does not select for truth. Truth is an irrelevant concept in evolution's quest for survival.

**Christian theism**, on the other hand, says that God created us to be knowers. As philosopher Ronald Nash points out: "God has endowed humans with a structure of rationality patterned after the ideas of His own mind: we can know truth because God has made us like himself." Christian theism assumes that a rational God created rational human beings in his image with reliable faculties designed to help them discover, learn, and explore the world. If this is true, then we can trust our faculties.

**19. Is 100 percent certainty a necessary condition for knowledge? [2.8]**

The search for knowledge is really a search for *adequate reasons* for belief. One hundred percent certainty is not a necessary condition for knowledge. This is especially true in considering spiritual claims:

One can know something without being certain about it and in the presence of doubt or the admission that one might be wrong. ... When Christians claim to have knowledge of this or that, for example, that God is real, that Jesus rose from the dead, that the Bible is the Word of God, they are not saying that there is no possibility that they could be wrong, that they have no doubts, or that they have answers to every question raised against them. (J. P. Moreland)

**20. Can we know something with certainty if it hasn't been scientifically proven? [2.8]**

**Scientism** is the belief that all knowledge comes solely through the scientific method. However, science is not the only way of knowing. Volume Two of this series will examine nine additional ways of knowing: theological, philosophical, ethical, psychological, sociological, political, legal, economical, and historical.

The scientific method gives us a disciplined way of examining the evidence of the physical world, but it cannot reasonably claim to be the source of all truth. To say you can't know something unless you can prove it scientifically is logically self-defeating because this statement cannot itself be scientifically proven.

**21. What is the "correspondence theory of truth"? [2.9]**

The **correspondence theory of truth** is the view that the truth of a proposition is determined by how accurately it describes the facts of reality.

A belief or statement is true only if it matches with, reflects or corresponds to the reality it refers to. For a statement to be true it must be factual. Facts determine the truth or falsity of a belief or a statement. It is the nature and meaning of truth to be fact dependent. In other words, for a statement to be true, there must be a truth-maker that determines its truth. A statement is never true simply because someone thinks it or utters it. We may be entitled to our own opinions, but we are not entitled to our own facts. Believing a statement is one thing; that statement being true is another. (Douglas Groothuis)

We can distinguish between **objective truth claims**, which do not depend on one's beliefs, and **subjective truth claims**, which change according to one's beliefs. An objective truth claim makes a claim of fact about the independent world. A subjective truth claim makes a claim of fact about the personal beliefs of an individual.

The Bible clearly makes objective truth claims whose truth does not rely on whether people believe them. The Bible is a compass pointing north even when we wish it would point another way.

**22. What is “relativism” and how is it self-refuting? [2.10]**

**Relativism** is the belief that truth, knowledge, and morality are relative to the individual, society, or historical context. It leads to self-refuting claims.

A **self-refuting claim** is a statement that attempts to affirm two opposite propositions at the same time and in the same sense. A self-refuting claim cannot possibly be true. Broad statements like these are self-refuting:

- I have a brother who is an only child.
- Every sentence has only five words.
- There is no truth.
- There are no absolutes.
- No one can know anything.

**23. How is the Bible different from any other book? [2.11]**

Christianity says the Bible is God’s Word. Through it, the creator of the universe speaks to humankind in a way he does nowhere else:

The Bible is not a book like any other. It makes a claim that God spoke and speaks through its message. It argues that as his creatures, we are accountable to him for what he has revealed. The trustworthiness of Scripture points to its authority as well. Scripture is far more than a history book, as good and trustworthy as that history is. It is a book that calls us to examine our lives and relationship to God. Beyond the fascinating history, it contains vital and life-transforming truths about God and us. (Darrell Bock)

If the Bible’s claim to reveal God is authoritative, then it extends to every area of life—to everyone in the world, at all times.

## “THE BIBLE’S INFLUENCE” READINGS

The following articles on the Bible’s influence are from a special collection compiled by *The Washington Times*. They give a brief overview of the impact the Bible has had on civilization in general and Western culture in particular, as well as its influence on literature and American history. This material wasn’t compiled by Christian apologists but by journalists reporting on the cultural phenomenon of the bestselling book of all time.

To access these readings, go to [www.summitu.com/utf](http://www.summitu.com/utf)  
and enter the passcode found in the back of your manual.

**1. Did the Bible become the bestselling book of all time because its message has been universally accepted and promoted?**

The contrast between how the Bible has been viciously attacked by its enemies and wholeheartedly embraced by its supporters couldn’t be more stark. David Keene notes:

Tyrants, ancient and modern, have tried over centuries to burn them, deny the Bible’s content and suppress those who believed with Thomas Aquinas that “The author of Holy Scripture is God.” Christians were sentenced to Stalin’s Gulag for distributing Bibles, killed by Mao’s troops for spreading its words and are today beheaded, tortured and burned alive in parts of the world for doing the same. But the words of the Bible have never been stamped out or its influence diminished. It is not only the most widely published and read book in the history of the world, but the most influential.

Can you think of some historical examples where violent suppression of the Bible actually led to increased circulation?

- John Wycliffe completed the first English translation of the Bible in the fourteenth century. He was declared a heretic and his translation burned, but it survived and helped shape English literature and culture.
- Martin Luther translated the Bible into German in the sixteenth century. He was excommunicated by the Roman Catholic church but his translation was key to expanding the Protestant Reformation.
- Communist countries like Russia and China suppressed the Bible but the Bible is available in those countries today and the church there is growing.

**2. What are some notable examples of the Bible’s impact on literature?**

The Bible’s influence on English and American literature can be seen in a number of critically acclaimed books and plays that owe their story lines and main characters to the Bible, such as *The Power and the Glory*; *Measure for Measure*; *The Sun Also Rises*; *East of Eden*; *Absalom, Absalom*; *Evil under the Sun*; and *Song of Solomon*.

Great novelists and playwrights drew on the Bible for inspiration: William Shakespeare, Victor Hugo, Herman Melville, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and John Steinbeck, to name a few.

[As a follow-up question, ask students if they can name other famous authors who explored biblical themes or expressed a Christian worldview in their writings. Answers might include Charles Dickens, George MacDonald, C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, John Updike, Annie Dillard, Toni Morrison, and Ann Patchett.]

**3. Although it is a sacred book, why is it important to read the Bible as literature?**

The Bible itself is a work of literature and should be read as such. It is a literary anthology—a collection of varied literary genres written by multiple authors over many centuries. It utilizes several literary genres including narrative, poetry, letters, and visionary writing.

We should apply exactly the same methods of literary analysis to the Bible that we use for other literature. . . . The literary aspects of the Bible do not require anything different from ordinary tools of analysis. In the Bible no less than in English and American literature, a story consists of settings, characters, and action.  
(Leland Ryken)

C. S. Lewis said, “There is a sense in which the Bible, since it is after all literature, cannot properly be read except as literature; and the different parts of it as the different sorts of literature they are.”

The literary nature of the Bible opens the way to its being studied as part of the literature curriculum of schools and colleges. It is the world’s most famous literary work and the central book of English-speaking cultures.

**4. What role did the Bible play in American history?**

The founders of America brought the Bible with them and used it as their guide for personal development and nation-building. The Pilgrims came here to find freedom to practice biblical Christianity as they understood it. They were fleeing the tyranny of state-controlled churches in pursuit of individual liberty to worship and obey God as they saw fit.

David Gelernter points out that “most historians look to the British and Continental philosophers of the Enlightenment, Locke especially, as the major intellectual influence on America’s Founding Fathers and revolutionary generation. To rely on Locke is to rely (indirectly) on the Bible.”

While the Bible’s role in shaping America is downplayed by some historians today, it has had a profound impact throughout our history as a nation. *The Bible & Public Schools: A First Amendment Guide*, notes:

Many historical documents including many presidential addresses and congressional debates contain biblical references. Throughout American history, the Bible has been invoked on various sides of many public-policy debates and in conjunction with social movements such as abolition, temperance, and the civil rights movement.

[As a follow-up question, ask students to name some key historical documents that were influenced by the Bible. Answer might include the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Bill of Rights, and presidential addresses (e.g., Washington and Lincoln)].



## 5. How has the Bible shaped America education?

The Bible was central to the American educational system from the beginning. The first colleges the Pilgrims started were not agricultural or engineering schools. They were religious schools to train pastors and theologians, e.g., Harvard, Yale, and the other Ivy League schools of today. Harvard’s original motto was “*Veritas pro Christo et pro eclesia*” (Truth for Christ and the Church). Yale’s motto is “*Lux et Veritas*” (Light and Truth).

Most Americans were familiar with the Bible, even if they weren’t practicing Christians, because it was part of their upbringing. George Lindbeck, former professor of theology at Yale University, once wrote:

[The Bible’s] stories, images, conceptual patterns, and turns of phrase permeated the culture from top to bottom. This was true even for illiterates and those who did not go to church, for knowledge of the Bible was transmitted not only directly by its reading, hearing, and ritual enactment, but also indirectly by an interwoven net of intellectual, literary, artistic, folkloric, and proverbial traditions. There was a time when every educated person, no matter how professedly unbelieving or secular, knew the actual text from Genesis to Revelation.

[As a follow-up question, ask students what role they think the Bible plays in public education today.]



## “THE CASE FOR TRUTH” VIDEO

J. Warner Wallace gives three reasons why so many Christians lose their faith in college: (1) poorly prepared students, (2) aggressive, antagonistic campuses, and (3) innately fallen humans as students. He also exposes the Three Big Lies told at universities today.

Wallace focuses on the understanding of truth, of which he gives four popular views. He uses Francis Schaffer’s illustration of truth as a house, with objective truth residing on the first floor and subjective opinion residing on the second floor. He defines and explains the difference between objective and subjective truth and underscores what makes truth true.



*To access this video, go to [www.summitu.com/utf](http://www.summitu.com/utf) and enter the passcode found in the back of your manual.*



## “THE CASE FOR TRUTH” VIDEO OUTLINE

J. Warner Wallace gives three reasons why so many Christians lose their faith while in college, explains the difference between objective and subjective truth, and gives four popular views of the understanding of truth.

### Why Do Christian College Students Defect?

Christians who attend college leave the faith in large numbers. Between 55 and 80 percent of Christian freshmen aren't practicing Christians as seniors. The primary reasons are as follows:

1. Poorly prepared as students
2. Aggressive, antagonistic campuses
3. Inherent fallen human nature

College campuses aren't neutral when it comes to the understanding of truth. Most Christian students aren't prepared to go into hostile territory. And all of us have a sinful bent to follow our own fallen desires.

### The Difference Between Objective and Subjective Truth

- Objective truth resides in the object—FACT.
- Subjective truth resides in the subject—OPINION.

If your opinion *can't* change something, that something is objective truth. If your opinion *can* change something, that something is subjective truth.

Objective truth claims can be proven true or false because there's an objective reality against which to judge them. Subjective truth claims can't be proven true or false because they're personal opinions.

### The Three Big Lies Told on College Campuses

1. There's no objective truth; everything is relative.
2. Truth cannot be known.
3. All views have equal merit and none should be considered better than another.

### Four Views of Truth

1. Pragmatism: Truth is whatever works.
2. **Empiricism**: Truth is whatever you can sense.
3. Emotivism: Truth is what you feel.
4. **Correspondence theory of truth**: Truth is a relationship between what you think is true and what really is.

### **Three Ds of Tolerance**

**Tolerance** is “a fair, objective, and permissive attitude toward those whose opinions, practices, race, religion, nationality, etc., differ from one’s own.”

Tolerance requires three Ds:

1. Disagreement
2. Differences
3. Don't be a jerk



## “THE CASE FOR TRUTH” DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### 1. Between 55 and 80 percent of Christian freshmen aren't practicing Christians as seniors. Why do so many Christian college students defect?

1. Poorly prepared as students: They don't know *why* they are Christians except that they were born that way or attended church all their lives.
2. Aggressive, antagonistic campuses: These are not neutral environments when it comes to objective truth and morality. This is hostile territory.
3. Inherent fallen human nature: We all have a bent to follow our sinful desires. We don't need much encouragement to do our own thing.

### 2. What's the difference between objective and subjective truth?

Objective truth resides in the object—FACT.

Subjective truth resides in the subject—OPINION.

If your opinion *can't* change something, that something is objective truth. If your opinion *can* change something, that something is subjective truth. Objective truth claims can be proven true or false because there's an objective reality against which to judge them. Subjective truth claims can't be proven true or false because they're personal opinions.

Give examples of truth claims and see if the class can recognize whether they are objective or subjective. For example:

- Chocolate chip cookies are the best dessert.
- Premarital sex is immoral.
- Jesus is both God and man.
- White cars are faster than other cars.

### 3. Not all views of truth are the same. What are four different views of truth, and is one more “true” than the others?

1. **Pragmatism:** Truth is whatever works.
2. **Empiricism:** Truth is whatever you can sense.
3. **Emotivism:** Truth is what you feel.
4. **Correspondence theory of truth:** Truth is a relationship between what you think is true and what really is.

The correspondence theory of truth is more “true” in that it is based on a reality outside itself. In order for your thoughts to be considered true, they must be consistent with what is in the real world.

**4. What are the Three Big Lies told on college campuses?**

1. There's no objective truth; everything is relative.
2. Truth cannot be known.
3. All views have equal merit and none should be considered better than another.

Talk about how the answers to questions 2 and 3 can help you address these lies.

**5. Why is the popular view of tolerance itself intolerant? What's a better definition of tolerance?**

The typical view of tolerance that claims every view should be accepted as equally true and valid is impossible to hold. It is self-refuting in that it is intolerant of the view that insists some views are wrong, immoral, and untrue.

Tolerance is "a fair, objective, and permissive attitude toward those whose opinions, practices, race, religion, nationality, etc., differ from one's own." True tolerance requires three Ds:

1. Disagreement
2. Differences
3. Don't be a jerk

## Chapter 2 Key Points

### Key Questions:

1. Why are ideas important?
2. How do ideas affect us?
3. How do faith and ideas relate?

### Key Terms:

1. Correspondence Theory of Truth
2. Dead Sea Scrolls
3. General Revelation
4. Inerrancy
5. Knowledge
6. Naturalism
7. Objective Truth
8. Relativism
9. Revelation\*
10. Scientism
11. Self-Refuting Claim
12. Special Revelation\*
13. Subjective Truth

### Key Verses:

1. Psalm 19:1–4
2. Psalm 119
3. Luke 1:1–4
4. Romans 1:19–20
5. Romans 2:14–16
6. 2 Timothy 3:16
7. Hebrews 1:1–2

### Key Works:

1. "Naturalism Defeated"  
by Alvin Plantinga

*\*Short answer or essay question on the exam*

## CHAPTER 2 ASSIGNMENT

Answer the following questions with at least one paragraph.

- 1. What are the differences between general revelation and special revelation?**
- 2. What have Christians traditionally meant by claiming that the Bible is the revealed Word of God? (Include a discussion of biblical inspiration and inerrancy.)**
- 3. Explain the argument that says naturalism cannot provide as reliable a basis for knowledge and truth as theism. Give your own opinion and analysis of this argument.**
- 4. How does theism, specifically biblical Christianity, offer a more reliable explanation for our ability to discover knowledge and truth than naturalism?**

Other potential questions:

- Do you agree with the definition of knowledge as “justified true belief”?
- What are other definitions of truth you have encountered?
- Do you think that scientism and the “two-story concept of truth” discussed in chapter 1 are the same thing, related, or unrelated?



