



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Explained / Week 1

PRELUDER

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

The point of the Bible is to know God better.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students understand that the Bible is important because it helps us know what God is like, and Jesus helps us understand the Bible better because He is the ultimate representation of what God is like.

SCRIPTURE

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1 NIV).

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14 NIV).

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation (Colossians 1:15 NIV).

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- There is no shortage of things I wish I understood more—things that I wish someone could explain the answers to me.
- While I'd love an explanation for so many things, it makes me consider something else that perhaps many of us would like explained to us: The Bible.

TENSION

- When it comes to the Bible, we don't necessarily *want* an explanation. We don't think about it a lot and when we do, we really don't feel... *anything*.
- Maybe for you, people talk about it like it's life-changing. But when you read it, it doesn't really change anything. You still feel anxious, you still argue with your stepsiblings, you still don't have a date to.
- Maybe you've seen or heard people who use the Bible as a way of convincing people that they're wrong.
- Or maybe the Bible has been "explained" to you by different people, but they all say different things.
- Some people look at the Bible as a history book. Some use it as a weapon. Some look at it as a cup of coffee: a way to wake up and feel better.

- No wonder we are confused. We're left wondering, what exactly is the purpose of the Bible? What's the point? And what good does it do for us here and now?
- I imagine almost all of us have even more questions about the Bible than I just mentioned. And this is a safe place to ask them.
- And let me be the first to tell you, we won't answer every question you have about the Bible in this series. The hope is that as we take a deeper look at the Bible over the next few weeks, we'll be able to walk away with at least a little bit more of it explained.

TRUTH

- To start off, the Bible is divided into two BIG sections:
 - The "Old Testament," which is the pre-Jesus section.
 - And the "New Testament," with is—you guessed it—Jesus and beyond.
- In reality, the Bible isn't books within a book. It's a combination of history, eye-witness accounts, letters, songs and journals and a few other types of documents.
- With that in mind, I want to look at one of the eye-witness accounts of Jesus' life—written by John, who knew Jesus personally and was one of His friends.
- John started his account not by telling us *what* happened with Jesus, but instead telling us *why* it happened. (*John 1:1 NIV*).
- John was Jewish—just like Jesus. He grew up learning the Jewish Scriptures (a lot of what we call the Old Testament). He would've known that God's "Word" was really important in the Jewish Scriptures.
- God's Word had power. It was His essence—it represented everything about who He is. God's Word reflected God Himself!
- God's word always reflects who God is. John was talking about Jesus, but the same is true when we say the Bible is "God's word." It reflects Him.
- The point of the Bible is to know God better.
- Then, John took it one step further. (*John 1:14 NIV*).
- The words in the Bible are from God, but Jesus is the ultimate and clearest message from God.
- The biggest job of the Bible is to point us to Jesus.
- And why does that matter so much? Because Jesus is the best and most perfect representation of God. (*Hebrews 1:1-2a NLT*).
- When we know Jesus better, we know God better. So, when we read the Bible, we need to read it with that one goal in mind: getting to know God by getting to know Jesus.
- The biggest answer to the question of, "What's the point?" is Jesus.
- **Note: The Interactive happens here. See your Teaching Script for details.**

APPLICATION

- Let's look at something Jesus said in order to know God better. After we read it, I'm going to give you three questions to think through that will help you work with the verse.
- In a conversation with a religious leader, Jesus was asked which commandment was the greatest. (*Mark 12:30-31 NIV*).
- Now, answer these three questions:
 - What does this teach me about God?
 - What does this teach me about me?
 - What does this teach me about how I need to live or treat others?

LANDING

- This week, start reading the letter John wrote. Begin asking the three questions we talked about. Type your thoughts into the notes section of your phone, and then talk about them with your small group leader.

INTERACTIVE

For this Interactive you will need 3D glasses and a video clip or still from a 3D movie.



TEACHING SCRIPT

Explained / Week 1

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

The point of the Bible is to know God better.

INTRODUCTION

1.5 MINUTES

There is no shortage of things I wish I understood more—things that I wish someone could explain the answers to me. And since the title of this series is *Explained*, I thought I'd share some of my questions with you. These are things I wish would be explained to me...

- Why can't I lick my elbow?
- Is GIF pronounced *Jiff* or *Giff*?
- How does the Internet even work? Like how does a code made *only* of 1's and 0's tell someone at Amazon that I want 10lbs of Starburst delivered to my house?
- Why is Iceland green and Greenland covered in ice?

And finally...

- What happened to Carole Baskin's husband?

Right?! And while I'd love an explanation for these things, it makes me consider something else that perhaps many of us would like explained to us...

The Bible.

Okay, I know. It doesn't sound as thrilling as tiger-themed drama, but it can sometimes feel equally as puzzling or confusing. (And honestly, certain parts of the Bible are sort of scandalous like Tiger King.) But when we really think about it, sometimes the Bible seems as confusing as the American computer coding. If we want to make any sense of it, it really needs to be "explained."

TENSION

2.5 MINUTES

Most of these things we want explained are things we are interested in, but the problem is that if most of us were honest (myself included), when it comes to the Bible, we don't

necessarily want an explanation. We don't think about it a lot and when we do, we really don't feel... anything.

- Maybe for you, people talk about it like it's life-changing. But when you read it, it doesn't really change anything. You still feel anxious, you still argue with your stepsiblings, you still don't have a date to homecoming, and you still don't feel great about yourself. So, you're left wondering, "Exactly HOW is this thing life-changing???"
- Maybe you've seen or heard people who use the Bible as a way of convincing people that they're wrong. And you're like, "Why would I get excited about something that's used to talk down to other people?"
- Or maybe the Bible has been "explained" to you by different people, but they all say different things. What one person says contradicts what the next person says. Yet they both talk with authority like they know the right way to understand the Bible. And because of that, you're left just feeling confused.

Some people look at the Bible as a history book. Some use it as a weapon. Some look at it as a cup of coffee: a way to wake up and feel better. Some people read it as fiction, and some people act like it's an instruction manual. No wonder we are confused. We're left wondering, **what exactly is the purpose of the Bible? What's the point? And what good does it do for us here and now?**

If I had to guess, I imagine almost all of us have even more questions about the Bible than I just mentioned. And I want you to know this is a safe place to ask ALL of them. You don't have to put your doubt, curiosity, or frustration with the Bible aside when you show up here. We don't ask you to leave your brain at the door. Every question is okay here.

And let me be the first to tell you, we won't answer every question you have about the Bible in this series. We'll have some answers and some better questions and some new ways of thinking about it, **but** the hope is that as we take a deeper look at the Bible over the next few weeks, we'll be able to walk away with at least a little bit more of it explained.

TRUTH

8 MINUTES

To start off, the Bible is divided into two BIG sections:

1. The "Old Testament," which is the pre-Jesus section.
2. And the "New Testament," with is—you guessed it—Jesus and beyond.

A lot of people talk about the "books" of the Bible. But in reality, it's not books within a book. It's a combination of history, eye-witness accounts, letters, songs and journals and a few other types of documents.

With that in mind, I want to look at one of the eye-witness accounts of Jesus' life—which means it was in which part of the Bible? You guessed it, the New Testament! It was written by John, who knew Jesus personally and was one of His friends. John lived longer than any of Jesus' other disciples, and when he was old, he decided to write down what he remembered about Jesus. He may have been one of the last people living who actually remembered hanging out with Jesus.

John started his account not by telling us *what* happened with Jesus, but instead telling us *why* it happened. I imagine that John started this way because he was older and had time to think through his experience.

John starts his account like this...

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1 NIV).

You may be thinking, "This doesn't explain *anything*. It actually sounds like a riddle." I get it, but give me a minute to try and explain...

You see, John was Jewish—just like Jesus. He grew up learning the Jewish Scriptures (a lot of what we call the Old Testament). He would've known that God's "Word" was really important in the Jewish Scriptures. God spoke a word and all of creation came to be. So, God's Word was more than just God's sounds or syllables. God's Word had power. It was His essence—it represented everything about who He is. God's Word reflected God Himself!

Ok, that's deep.

Here's what I'm getting at. God's word always reflects who God is. John was talking about Jesus, but the same is true when we say the Bible is "God's word." It reflects Him. It tells us who He is and what He is about.

The point of the Bible is to know God better.

Then John took it one step further. He said...

"The Word (still talking about Jesus, here).

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14 NIV).

John is referring to Jesus—the *Word of God, the Power of God, the reflection of God*—took on human form and walked the Earth. People got to see what God was like in Jesus.

Jesus had been the word of God long before any ancient letters and poems were written. **The words in the Bible are from God, but Jesus is the ultimate and clearest message from God.** He is the living and breathing word of God. It all points to Him. His story is *the central story*. He is what makes everything else make sense.

In other words, **the biggest job of the Bible is to point us to Jesus**. And why does that matter so much? **Because Jesus is the best and most perfect representation of God.**

One Jewish writer who wrote to new Christians explained it this way in a letter that we now call *Hebrews*:

"Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2a NLT).

In the past, God revealed more about Himself to prophets who would then tell the people. The writer here says that Jesus is the best way to see what God is like. And the Bible is the place that helps us understand Jesus' story. **When we know Jesus better, we know God better.** So, when we read the Bible, we need to read it with that one goal in mind: getting to know God by getting to know Jesus.

All of the questions that come to mind when we read the Bible are important and necessary to ask. But the biggest answer to the question of, "What's the point?" is Jesus.

Say something like this:

Think of it this way...

Have you ever been to a 3d movie? They're awesome...if you wear the glasses. I mean, without the glasses you can kind of see what's going on (show clip or image) but it's way better with these on (put on 3d glasses). The glasses help you see everything more clearly.

And the Bible is kind of like that, too. All the early books, the poetry, the law books, the prophecy books, they all give you a glimpse of what God is like. But Jesus is like putting on the 3d glasses. Suddenly, all the other stuff makes sense, and you and I can see more clearly.

So, if you're starting to read the Bible for the first time—or for the first time in a long time—start with Jesus. Start with what He said, and what His friends said about Him. Put most of your attention there, because the point of the Bible is to know God better, and Jesus is the best place to start.

APPLICATION

10 MINUTES

In fact, let's practice for a minute or two. Let's look at something Jesus said in order to know God better. After we read it, I'm going to give you three questions to think through that will help you work with the verse. In fact, you can ask these questions to any verse you read in the Bible.

In a conversation with a religious leader, Jesus was asked which commandment was the greatest. And it was kind of a trap, because the religious leader knew that no matter what Jesus picked as the *most* important, it would imply that something else was *less* important. Here's how Jesus answered...

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31 NIV).

Basically, Jesus says, "Love God, and love your neighbor as yourself. That's what's most important." So, knowing that about Jesus, answer these questions...

(Communicator note: leave the scripture on the screen and give students 5 to 10 seconds to think through each question before going forward. The goal is to help them practice thinking about Scripture).

- **What does this teach me about God?** If Jesus cared about loving God and loving your neighbor, what does God care about? He cares about love! What do people *think* that God cares about most? Does that line up with what Jesus says? Is there anything that needs to change in the way I see God?

Next question...

- **What does this teach me about me?** Another way to ask this question is, "What does this teach me about humans in general? Knowing what I learned about God by answering the question above, what can I learn about myself?" In this case, it teaches me that God assumes that I love myself. It's part of loving my neighbor, almost like loving *me* is part of the package deal with loving God and loving others.

And last question...

- **What does this teach me about how I need to live or treat others?** We might read the best verse and be so inspired by it, but if we don't know how to take that verse into our day-to-day lives, then it won't do much good. So, ask yourself, if I put it into practice, how

would it affect the way I treat my mom or stepbrother? What do I need to do differently in light of the fact that Jesus says *loving your neighbor* is part of the greatest commandment?

So, three questions: What does this teach me about God, myself, and other people? These three questions can help us understand the Bible better. And as we do, we'll get to know God better. And that's the whole point: **the Bible helps us know God better.**

LANDING

1 MINUTE

The truth is, even though it doesn't feel like it should be, the Bible can be confusing. But starting with the right idea of the Bible's purpose will help. **The point of the Bible is to know God better.** And reading about Jesus is the perfect way to do that. So, start by reading the Bible with Jesus in mind. Pay attention to the Jesus parts before everything else, and ask questions about what He says. He is your 3d glasses, and He'll make the rest of it clearer.

As you change the way you see the Bible, it'll be a good idea to talk with an adult you trust—someone you can bring your questions and thoughts to. In fact, your small group leader may be a great person to go to. This is exactly why we have small groups: to be in a safe space where we can talk about what we're learning and what we're confused about.

This week, start reading the letter John wrote. Begin asking the three questions we talked about. Type your thoughts into the notes section of your phone, and then talk about them with your small group leader. We can't wait to hear what you learn about God in the process!



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS



INTERACTIVE
