



ASKING THE BIG QUESTIONS
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CHALLENGING CHRISTIANITY

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LEADERS BOOKLET

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

At St Paul's we are committed to growing as disciples of Jesus, spurring each other on to know and grow in Jesus. We know that God works through His Word powerfully to teach and transform us. We therefore know the importance of seeing God's Word regularly sown into our lives, through our sermon series and also during the week.

We see this process as we daily open God's Word and depend on Him in prayer. We also grow as we meet in our households and study groups to read God's Word together.

Over time we've seen that as we study the passage from God's Word together, that God builds depth in our understanding, stronger application in our lives, and encouragement in our households and church as we learn together.

As we together dig into the idea of Apologetics this term, we are exploring the concepts in at least three ways...

CHURCH

Keep this guide with your Bible and bring it with you to church or keep it handy when you watch church online. Scribble down sermon notes in the space provided. Then, be ready to reflect on these personally, as you meet with someone 1:1, and as you meet up with your small group.

SMALL GROUPS

Take this guide with you to your small group each week. There are Bible studies for each topic within the Challenging Christianity series, with space to write down your answers plus prayer points that arise from the study and prayer requests from the members of your group.

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Use your family devotions time to open up the concept of Apologetics or Questions people have together as a household (keeping the devotions suitable for a range of ages). You can open up the passages at dinner time, just before bed, or as you are baby-sitting your grandchildren.

SETTING THE SCENE

The purpose of this series is to build upon what we have learned from Romans 8.

- How do we defend this faith we now enjoy?
- If it is true that there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, can we defend it?
- If it is true that there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God, we want people to have the opportunity to know this.

As we are reminded in 1 Peter 3:15-16, "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."

SO WHAT IS APOLOGETICS?

Apologetics is a defence of the faith so we might move forward with the gospel. It helps to break down barriers so the truth of the gospel, which is the power of God to salvation, might be delivered.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Confronting Christianity
Rebecca McLaughlin

Joined Up Life
Andrew Cameron

Questioning Christianity
Dan Paterson

Reason for God
Timothy Keller

Undeceptions podcast
John Dickson
*(You will have to wade through these
but topics are well defined)*



QC - Facebook



QC - Online



OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

The breakdown for our teaching series will be as follows:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 30 April 2023 | How can you know the Bible is true?
2 Timothy 3:16-17; Luke 1:1-4 |
| 7 May 2023 | How can you say there is only one faith?
Colossians 1:15-20; John 14:6 |
| 14 May 2023 | Can't we just be good without God?
Mark 10:17-31 |
| 21 May 2023 | Does religion cause violence?
Luke 23:26-38 |
| 28 May 2023 | Does science disprove God?
Genesis 1:27-2:1 |
| 4 June 2023 | Does Christianity crush diversity?
Galatians 3:28; Revelation 7:9 |
| 11 June 2023 | How could a loving God send people to hell?
Luke 22:39-44 |
| 18 June 2023 | How can God allow suffering?
Revelation 21:1-4; Romans 5:1-4 |

WEEK 1 NOTES

HOW CAN YOU KNOW THE BIBLE IS TRUE?

2 Timothy 3:16-17; Luke 1:14-4



STUDY 1

Q: HOW CAN YOU KNOW THE BIBLE IS TRUE?

2 Timothy 3:16-17; Luke 1:1-4

Leaders resources: *Confronting Christianity* - chapter 6, *How can you take the Bible literally*.

1. Understanding the question: What are some of the reasons people question whether the Bible is true?

The Bible is full of contradictions and discrepancies.

The Bible is full of violence, genocide, prejudice, and injustice, often commanded by God—and it's been used by Christians to justify more violence and oppression.

The Bible's descriptions of nature and natural history are hopelessly at odds with science.

The Bible was written by ancient and primitive people, and has no value to modern people anymore.

Christians can't even agree on what it's saying, so who cares if it's true or not.

2. Challenging the question: What arguments or evidence is there to challenge the view that the bible is not true?

The Bible is written over a long time and is cohesive as a whole.

Many authors can show God is over all of it.

Historically, it's claims can be verified by archaeology, eye witnesses and observation of the accuracy of this critique of humanity.

3. Resolving the question: How would you introduce the gospel from this question?

4. What Bible passages support your answer?

DID YOU KNOW.....

No archaeological discovery has contradicted anything in the Bible, e.g. a recent discovery of coins with Pontius Pilate's name engraved on them, the Pool of Siloam, & "the Pavement", all are mentioned in the Bible.

Records from other historians outside the Bible, such as Pliny, Josephus and Tacitus, support what is written in the Bible.

Translations and versions of the Bible are direct translations of the original language and text (Old Testament in Hebrew, New Testament in Greek) not "translations of translations of translations".

PRAYER

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Keith Baker. Pray that God will sustain him in his time as Acting Senior Minister. That God will grant him wisdom in decisions he needs to make.
- Our wardens, that God will grant them wisdom as they steward our finances and property.
- Rod and Abby Bishop, in their roles at ECM (European Christian Mission)
- Our church family, that we will grow in our love and knowledge of Jesus.
- Pray that we will remain faithful to the Word of God and seek to know him better as he reveals himself in it.

Group member's prayer points:

WEEK 2 NOTES

HOW CAN YOU SAY THERE IS ONLY ONE FAITH?

Colossians 1:15-20; John 14:6



STUDY 2

Q: HOW CAN YOU SAY THERE IS ONLY ONE FAITH?

Colossians 1:15-20; John 14:6

Leaders resources: Confronting Christianity - chapter 3, How can you say there is only one true faith?

1. Understanding the question: In your experience what are some of the reasons people have with the claim that there is only one legitimate faith?

Perhaps it is that people like choice.

Perhaps there are good people in any faith community.

Other faiths have ideas we ought to take seriously (this is true and a good posture for Christians to assume).

2. Challenging the question: What arguments or evidence is there to challenge the view that there is only one faith?

It is not just about the one path but also each religion can contain an aspect of the truth. This too is false.

"... When examined more closely, attempting to persuade others to change their beliefs is a sign of respect. You are treating them as thinking agents with the ability to decide what they believe, not just products of their cultural environment. We should not be offended when people challenge our beliefs: we should be flattered." Rebecca McLaughlin page 49.

Talk about problem of truth. What is your truth? Is the truth and something being true that same?

McLaughlin suggests the following headings to deal with this:

- o *Conversion*
- o *Problem of ethics*
- o *Problem of monotheism*
- o *Problem of Jesus*

3. How would you introduce the gospel from this question?

4. What bible passages would you use to support your answer?

PRAYER

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Ben Razey as he leads our youth ministries. Ask for wisdom, and for God to sustain him. Pray that the leaders in youth ministry will show God's love to those in their care and that many will be won for the kingdom.
- Our parish council, that God will grant them wisdom as they steward our finances and property.
- John and Fiona Mclvor. Pray that God will use them in SE Asia in their role as team leaders. Pray God will sustain them and be with Zeke and Clay.
- Give thanks to God that the object of our faith is Jesus and that he rules for evermore.

Group member's prayer points:

WEEK 3 NOTES

CAN'T WE JUST BE GOOD WITHOUT GOD?

Mark 10:17-31



STUDY 3

Q: CAN'T WE JUST BE GOOD WITHOUT GOD?

Mark 10:17-31

Leaders resources: *Creation and moral Order in Joined Up Life* by Andrew Cameron (page 148ff).

1. Understanding the question: What are some of the reasons people question whether we can be good without God?

*Goodness is innate in human beings.
Perhaps you could define goodness.*

2. Challenging the question: What arguments or evidence is there to challenge the view that we can be good without God?

*Who decides what is good?
What is good in one culture may not be in another*

3. Resolving the question: How would you introduce the gospel from this question?

4. What Bible passages support your answer?

PRAYER

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Linda Stephens and Naomi Pigot as they lead our children's ministries.
- Norm and Janelle Gorrie serving with CMS in Kenya, as they strengthen believers and reach the lost.
- Pray for boldness and compassion when answering questions that people have.

Group member's prayer points:

WEEK 4 NOTES

DOES RELIGION CAUSE VIOLENCE?

Luke 23:26-38



STUDY 4

Q: DOES RELIGION CAUSE VIOLENCE?

Luke 23:26-38

Leaders resources: ***Confronting Christianity. Chapter 5 by Rebecca McLaughlin. For the love of God - Centre for Public Christianity***

1. Understanding the question: What are some of the reasons people ask the question, does religion cause violence?

History is littered with violence such as the crusades or Spanish inquisition. Perhaps people think these days that the church is causing harm with its view on social issues such as gender marriage.

2. Challenging the question: What arguments or evidence is there to challenge the view that religion causes violence?

Unbelieving cultures have experienced high levels of violence that is not in the name of any faith. The problem may not be institutions or organisations as much the humans in them.

It is right to acknowledge that violence has been perpetrated in the name of God or gods. The challenge is to work toward the root cause of the problem, that is, sinful human beings.

3. Resolving the question: How would you introduce the gospel from this question?

4. What Bible passages support your answer?

PRAYER

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Sunday Care Teams at each of our services, prayer ministry, practical care, Help at Home Days, and the many teams providing care and support to people across our church.
- The Revd Ruth Walton, Anglican Dean of Nungalinya College, who is serving with BCA in the Northern Territory. Pray God will keep Ruth well and enthusiastic as she cares for the indigenous students who come to college.

Group member's prayer points:

WEEK 5 NOTES

DOES SCIENCE DISPROVE GOD?

Genesis 1:27-2:1



STUDY 5

Q: DOES SCIENCE DISPROVE GOD?

Genesis 1:27-2:1

Leaders resources: *Confronting Christianity. Chapter 5 by Rebecca McLaughlin. For the love of God - Centre for Public Christianity*

1. Understanding the question: What are some of the reasons people claim that science disproves God?

Gives logical answers.

2. Challenging the question: What arguments or evidence is there to challenge the view that science disproves God?

Science is about discovery not creating. "It is natural answers to a natural world." Praveen Sethupathy.

3. Resolving the question: How would you introduce the gospel from this question?

4. What Bible passages support your answer?

PRAYER

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Discipleship ministry at church and Paul Lucas as he leads the Discipleship Team.
- Chris and Erin our link missionaries serving in South East Asia.
- Small Group leaders across the church, for their encouragement and growth and the raising up of new leaders.
- Those involved with Read with Me (one-to-one bible reading) with others. Pray for the growth of this ministry for sharing the gospel. Pray for growth as disciples.

Group member's prayer points:

WEEK 6 NOTES

DOES CHRISTIANITY CRUSH DIVERSITY?

Galatians 3:28; Revelation 7:9



STUDY 6

Q: DOES CHRISTIANITY CRUSH DIVERSITY?

Galatians 3:28; Revelation 7:9

Leaders resources: *Confronting Christianity - Chapter 2, Doesn't Christianity crush diversity?*

1. Understanding the question: What are some of the reasons people claim that Christianity crushes diversity?
2. Challenging the question: What arguments or evidence is there to challenge the view that Christianity crushes diversity?
3. Resolving the question: How would you introduce the gospel from this question?
4. What Bible passages support your answer?

PRAYER

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Pat Jones and the Young Adults ministry.
- Brendan and Karina Pont, that they will be sustained in their new location and jobs.

Give thanks to God:

- For his being generous to us and for the generosity of his people in their giving, so that ministries in our church can continue.
- For his gospel that is changing lives.

Group member's prayer points:

WEEK 7 NOTES

HOW COULD A LOVING GOD SEND PEOPLE TO HELL?

Luke 22:39-44



STUDY 7

Q: HOW COULD A LOVING GOD SEND PEOPLE TO HELL?

Luke 22:39-44

Leaders resources: **Confronting Christianity - Chapter 12, How could a loving God send people to hell?**
Four Views on Hell - Stanley N. Grundy (editor)

1. Understanding the question: What are some of the reasons people claim that God is not loving by sending people to hell?

2. Challenging the question: What arguments or evidence is there to challenge the view that the Bible is not true?

*Need to define hell and understand its use particularly as a metaphor.
What does hell tell us about God? He is just.*

3. Resolving the question. How would you introduce the gospel from this question?

4. What Bible passages support your answer?

PRAYER

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Our intern, Sam Fletcher. Pray that he will enjoy his time, that he will grow in his love and knowledge of Jesus and that he will make good decisions about ministry in the future.
- Matt and Paula Crowe in Colombia.
- Our church family, that we will love one another with our words and our actions as we disciple each other and, under God, prepare each other for glory.

Group member's prayer points:

WEEK 8 NOTES

HOW CAN GOD ALLOW SUFFERING?

Revelation 21:1-4; Romans 5:1-4



STUDY 8

Q: HOW CAN GOD ALLOW SUFFERING?

Revelation 21:1-4; Romans 5:1-4

Leaders resources: *Confronting Christianity - Chapter 11, How could a loving God allow so much suffering?*

1. Understanding the question: What are some of the reasons people ask about God allowing suffering?
2. Challenging the question: What arguments or evidence is there to challenge this view?
3. Resolving the question: How would you introduce the gospel from this question?
4. What Bible passages support your answer?

PRAYER

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- City Alight ministry. That God will continue to give them creativity and use the songs to bless the church.
- Jess Forrester, Scott Lavender and the production team (both paid and volunteer). Thank God for their gifts and their work.
- Our church family, that we will be able to love others as we have been loved and will gain a greater understanding of the grace and love God has shown us in Jesus. Pray that as we relate to each other we will do so with genuine humility and love. That we will do this for the sake of Jesus' name and the good of our brothers and sisters.

Group member's prayer points:

