

Understanding the Times Series

Foundations



SAMPLER

LESSONS 5 AND 15

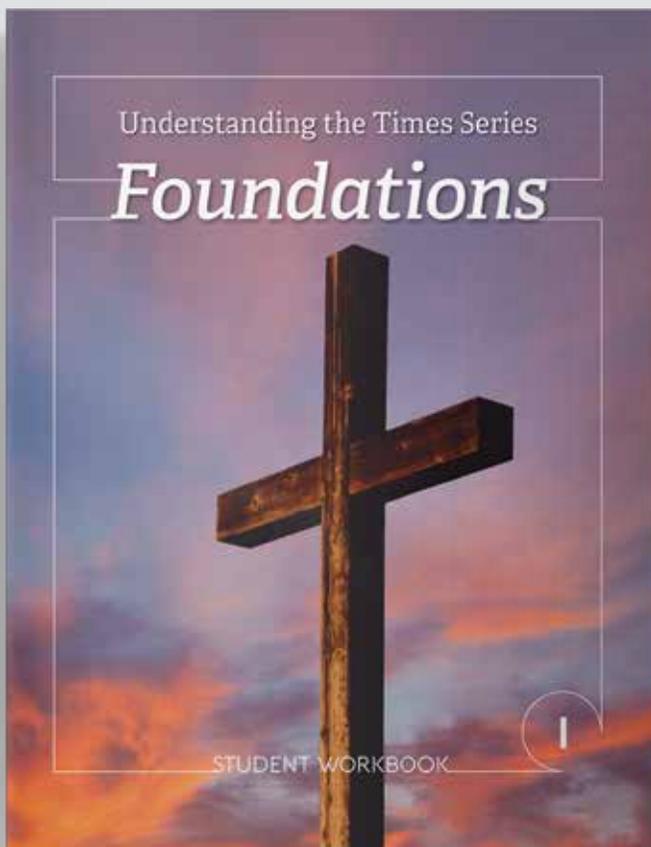
TEACHER MANUAL | STUDENT WORKBOOK | STUDENT TEXT

TEACHER MANUAL



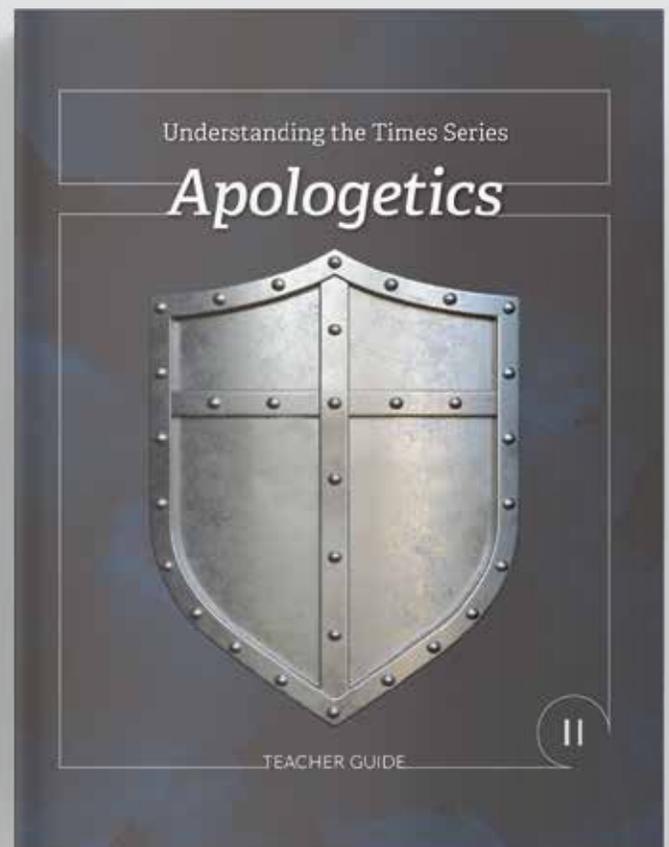


SUMMIT MINISTRIES' *UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES SERIES*



BOOK I

This volume introduces the foundational building blocks of the Christian worldview. These include God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), the Bible and its metanarrative or grand storyline, what it means to love God and neighbor, and how to practice your faith.

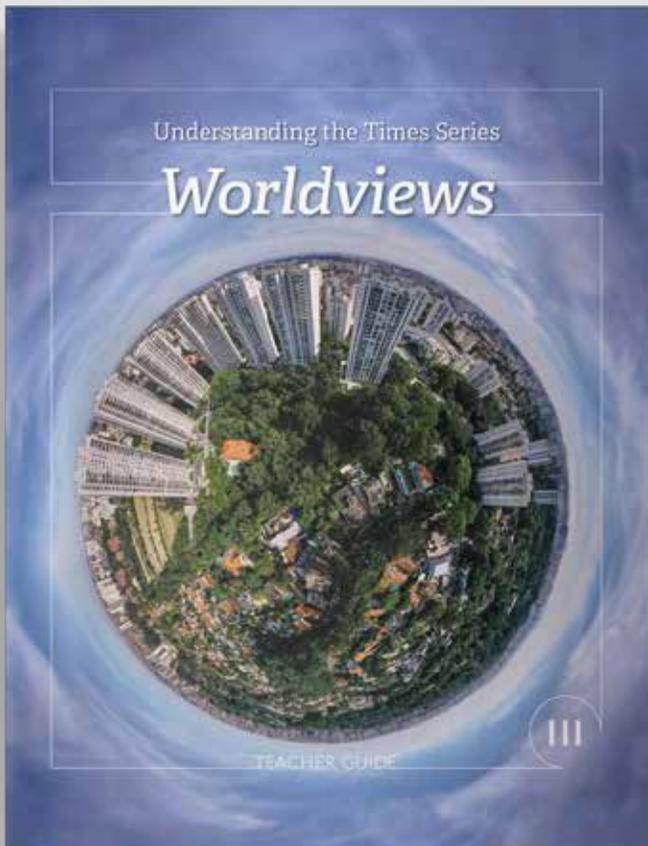


BOOK II

This volume provides guidance for defending and commending the Christian faith to others. It also demonstrates how the Christian worldview stands up to common objections to it in society today.

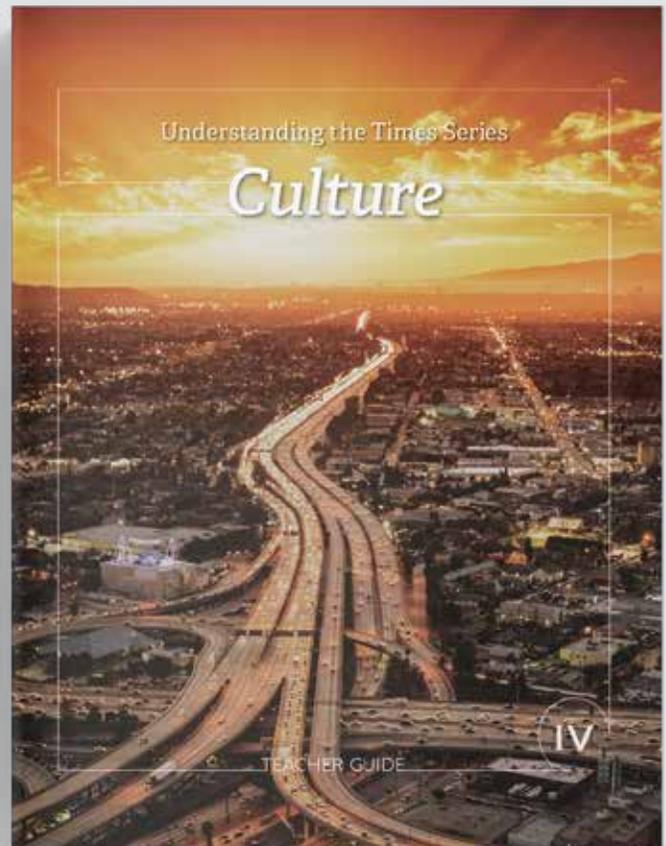
Helping high school students navigate through life

Summit Ministries' Understanding the Times Series is designed to help students know what is true about the world. This series is designed to help students find their way through life using the lens of Christianity. Along the way, we'll also explore objections to Christianity and consider the answers that other worldviews give to life's big questions. This series consists of four years, presented in Books I - IV.



BOOK III

This volume considers the Christian worldview in comparison to five other worldviews while examining the answers they each give to life's biggest questions in areas like ethics, history, philosophy, politics, biology, and more.



BOOK IV

This final volume shows how the Christian worldview has the resources to engage with the most challenging and controversial issues of our day, and it provides a model for faithful Christian engagement with the world. questions in areas like ethics, history, philosophy, politics, biology, and more.

To be the first to hear more about this series, visit summit.org/foundations.

Understanding the Times Series

Foundations



TEACHER MANUAL



Samples reduced; not actual size

Teacher Manual

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

This sample packet includes lessons 5 and 15 from the *Foundations* curriculum.

Table of Contents

Foreword	v
Introduction	vi
Summit's Faith and Convictions.....	vi–vii
Scope and Sequence	viii
Using Understanding the Times Series.....	ix
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2 What the Bible Is and Isn't.....	20
Chapter 3 Does the Bible Have Authority?	40
Chapter 4 How to Read the Bible.....	66
Chapter 5 The Bible as a Story.....	86
Chapter 6 Act 1: Creation	110
Chapter 7 Act 2: The Fall	134
Chapter 8 Act 3: Redemption Initiated—Israel.....	156
Chapter 9 Interlude: The Second Temple Period	180
Chapter 10 Act 4: Redemption Accomplished—Jesus.....	200
Chapter 11 Act 5: Restoration Initiated—The Church.....	222
Chapter 12 Act 6: Restoration Accomplished—New Creation.....	244
Chapter 13 Who God Is.....	264
Chapter 14 Who God Wants Us to Be	286
Chapter 15 Walking with God	310
Chapter 16 Walking with God in Community.....	334
Chapter 17 Loving God and Others	356
Chapter 18 Conclusion.....	378
Index	398
Appendix	404

Introduction

Foundational beliefs and values influence how students interpret the world and guide their actions. The Understanding the Times Series is a unique curriculum designed to help students in ninth through twelfth grades build foundational beliefs and values from a biblical perspective. In an age of competing worldviews, this curriculum will help high school students formulate a biblical perspective of the world and then live accordingly. The Understanding the Times Series incorporates Scripture with worldview curricula in a way that cohesively presents and affirms the biblical Christian worldview within the historic truths of creation, the fall, redemption, and restoration. It also addresses five worldviews that compete with Christianity—Islam, secularism, Marxism, new spirituality, and postmodernism—so students may engage in evaluative and comparative studies of biblical and unbiblical worldviews.

Christian schools have a unique opportunity to model educational excellence, preparing students to enter society with a distinctly biblical worldview in which they integrate their faith with their academic knowledge. From this integrated approach to education, students are enabled to not only remain firm in their Christian faith, but are also encouraged to make valuable contributions to society.

Summit Ministries

Established in 1962, Summit Ministries exists to train future Christian leaders to understand our times, faith, and culture and to know what it means to think and act like a Christian in every area of life. Summit Ministries is committed to developing curricula that will help students articulate and apply the biblical worldview to every aspect of reality. Key strategies in this battle for students' minds and hearts are Building on the Rock (for elementary students); Walking in Truth (for middle school students); and Understanding the Times Series, (for high school students).

Design of The Understanding the Times Series

The design and goals for the Understanding the Times Series are based on the premise that no worldview curriculum can, or should, provide an exact model for Christian thinking and action. Rather, a worldview curriculum must present a framework of biblical truth and values, encourage students to reflect upon it, and provide opportunities for students to apply what they have learned. Ultimately, it is up to students to individually embrace biblical truth and to act upon it as they are enabled by the Holy Spirit. Within these parameters, the goal of the Understanding the Times Series is to help students develop a cohesive Christian worldview through which they can interpret the world around them and respond to it biblically in both their thoughts and actions. It prepares students to answer the big questions about God, the universe, people, truth, and right and wrong. The Understanding the Times Series also equips students to defend their faith as well as identify the inherent contradictions and false ideas of unbiblical worldviews.

From its founding in 1962, Summit Ministries has focused on applying Christianity's essential doctrines to guide students to understand the times and know what our society ought to do. Summit's board of directors, employees, and volunteers seek to clearly state our faith as well as the convictions that flow from it.

Statement of Faith

As a Statement of Faith, **Summit** agrees with and holds to the Apostles' Creed, an ancient profession affirmed by Jesus-followers for more than 1,500 years:

[We] **believe** in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

[We] **believe** in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

[We] **believe** in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic [universal] church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. AMEN.

Summit's Faith and Convictions

Statement of Convictions

As an outworking of this Statement of Faith, Summit agrees with and holds to certain convictions describing what we know to be true about the world:

God. *God, existing eternally in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is the source of all truth and he expresses his nature relationally.*² God has revealed himself both in nature and through the Bible, the only inerrant, inspired, authoritative word of God.³ This has implications for the institutions of church, family, commerce and government.⁴

Humanity. *All human beings bear God's image and are thus inherently valuable—beginning at conception—whether or not society regards them as healthy, productive, or useful.*⁵ As God's image-bearers, men and women of all races and nationalities have the capacity and the calling to steward creation, create economic and social value, pursue justice, stand against evil, and act in a transforming way in culture.⁶

Salvation. *Through sin humanity has departed from God's way, but through our Lord Jesus Christ God has made a way for us to be reconciled to him, to be transformed to understand and do his will, and to be ambassadors of his gospel.*⁷ Further, God has instituted the church as a vital means by which his gospel would be proclaimed and practiced.

Society. *Citizens of the kingdom of heaven will always be the best citizens of the kingdom of man, because obeying God above all earthly powers is what best secures the blessings of liberty.* Government is God-ordained to punish evil and protect the good. When it oversteps its bounds by failing to recognize the value of each person, or by constraining conscience, or by calling good what God calls evil and calling evil what God calls good, we must call it to account.⁸

Marriage. *God made human beings male and female, equal in value but complementary in their relationship to one another* (Genesis 1:26-27). Gender is not a mere social construction, but part of a loving Creator's design that is lived out in singlehood as well as in marriage, which we believe to have been created by God and intended for one man and one woman, for life (Genesis 2:18-25).⁹ Man/woman marriage is the only proper place for intimate sexual relationship, and it is the proper place in which to welcome children—by birth or adoption—as a blessing from God.¹⁰ As valuable as marriage is, though, we believe that only God can ultimately meet our need for intimacy, and that our identity is properly placed in Christ rather than in our marital status or our assessment of our feelings of sexual attraction.¹¹

Stewardship. *Human beings were given charge over God's creation, and we take seriously our calling to care for it.*¹² We are called to bear God's image through creativity and industriousness.¹³ We support the principles of free exchange, respect for private property, and honesty as being means by which we best care for our planet, serve one another, and alleviate poverty and its effects.¹⁴

We see these convictions as based on justified true beliefs describing the world as it actually is, not on mere opinion or upbringing. Thus, out of gratitude and commitment to our Lord, we will believe them, act upon them, and seek to persuade others.¹⁵

The following footnotes reference various chapters from the *Understanding the Times* book series to further illustrate and explain our convictions.

¹*Understanding the Times*, chapters 1 and 2.

²*Understanding the Faith*, chapter 4.

³*Understanding the Faith*, chapter 3.

⁴*Understanding the Times*, chapter 15. *Understanding the Culture*, chapter 8.

⁵*Understanding the Faith*, chapters 5, 8, and 9, and *Understanding the Culture*, chapter 8.

⁶*Understanding the Culture*, chapters 15 and 16.

⁷*Understanding the Faith*, chapters 6 and 17.

⁸*Understanding the Culture*, chapter 13.

⁹*Understanding the Culture*, chapter 10.

¹⁰*Understanding the Times*, chapter 13, and *Understanding the Culture*, chapter 10.

¹¹*Understanding the Culture*, chapter 9.

¹²*Understanding the Culture*, chapter 11.

¹³*Understanding the Times*, chapter 16, and *Understanding the Culture*, chapter 14.

¹⁴*Understanding the Times*, chapter 16, and *Understanding the Culture*, chapter 17.

¹⁵*Understanding the Culture*, chapter 1.

Scope and Sequence

The Understanding the Times Series comprehensively covers the biblical worldview, the Great Commission, understanding competing worldviews, and how to engage today’s culture and defend the faith with sound biblical theology and powerful apologetics. The Understanding the Times Series invites students to become informed disciples and does not shy away from difficult subjects. It assists teachers in creating an environment where biblical teaching and lively discussion equips students to influence their generation for Christ. Each year includes numerous individual and group activities as well as supplemental videos from worldview experts.

The Understanding the Times Series builds upon Summit’s elementary and middle school curriculum series—Building on the Rock and Walking in Truth—to deepen students’ knowledge of the biblical worldview and their ability to engage in further comparative worldview studies.

	Book I Foundations	Book II Apologetics	Book III Worldviews	Book IV Culture
Main Focus	Teaches the basics of the Christian faith and how to walk with God individually and in community	Presents the importance of evangelism and apologetics and how to respond to common objections to a biblical worldview	Surveys today’s major worldviews of secularism, Marxism, postmodernism, new spirituality, and Islam in comparison with Christianity	Outlines the key social issues of our time and shows students how a biblical worldview can provide a compassionate, effective witness in culture today
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature and authority of the Bible and how to read it • The six acts and the interlude of the biblical metanarrative • The nature of God and of humanity • Christian living individually and corporately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible’s trustworthiness and metanarrative • The Christian’s calling to evangelism and apologetics • Faith in a pluralistic and skeptical age • Biblical responses on the topics of science, evil, hell, violence, and gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation, analysis, and critique of six worldviews • Discussion of worldview implications in theology, philosophy, ethics, biology, psychology, sociology, law, politics, economics, and history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of culture • Christianity and culture in history • Preparing to address cultural issues • Biblical responses on technology, the arts, the value of human life, sexuality and marriage, creation care, politics, religious freedom, poverty, justice, and community renewal

Using Understanding the Times Series

Materials and Components:

The Understanding the Times Series is created to guide students to the understanding that there is no difference between the secular and sacred—all truth is God’s truth. Its unique cross-curricular design integrates multiple subjects and skills. This enables students to practice critical thinking and collaborative strategies as well as to gain the understanding that knowledge is interdependent and connected rather than a set of individual, isolated subjects.

Each level of the Understanding the Times Series includes a teacher manual, student textbook, student manual, teacher resources, and presentation slides.

The Teacher Manual (TM) includes teaching instructions for 18 chapters; each chapter is divided into 10 daily lessons to cover 180 days of the school year. A variety of activities are provided to engage students with the textbook content and enhance their learning. Included in every 10-day syllabus are videos of various Christian educators and authors. Each expert answers a worldview or apologetics question. Discussion questions, study guides, and tests are also provided.

Every chapter begins with a title page followed by an overview of the chapter, lesson preparation requirements, and a complete list of the supplemental materials required for instruction. The subsequent pages include directions for teaching daily lessons, objectives, suggested discussion questions with answers to create engaging dialogue, as well as procedures for conducting the activities. A slide presentation and study guide are provided for reviewing the material before administering the student performance assessment.

The Student Textbook (ST) is a hard-bound book which provides the course content for students. Each chapter is divided into ten sections, nine of which include individual learning objectives. The tenth section is a summary of the chapter. Key terms are set in blue for emphasis. Unless otherwise specified, all Scripture is taken from the English Standard Translation ® (ESV®) version.

The Student Manual (SM) is a work text with exercises and activities for students to complete. Exercises include discussion questions based on the Student Textbook reading assignments and videos that are watched during class. Descriptions and procedures for activities and study guides are also included. Some of the full-day activities will be directed by the teacher and a Student Manual will not be used. Student Textbooks or Bibles will often be required to complete the exercises and activities.

Teacher Resources (TRs) are available online (see the back cover of this manual for the web address, username, and password). These materials serve a variety of purposes; some have cooperative-learning activities and games, while others are enriched student learning and assessment tools. Tests are provided at the end of each lesson. Presentation slides (PSs) are also available on the Summit website. Presentation slides are full-color visual aids used to enhance instruction and can be displayed using a computer or an LCD projector. Chapter review presentations slides are available for all 18 chapters, with the last chapter being a cumulative review.

Teacher Manual

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

How to Teach a Lesson

1

The 10-day syllabus shows what classroom instruction and homework assignments are for each day. Page numbers for the Teacher Manual, Student Manual, and Student Textbook are provided.

Chapter 6—Act 1: Creation

Chapter 6 Syllabus

Day		Assignment	Page
1	In Class	REVIEW	Chapter 5 Test
	In Class	DISCUSS	Questions for Chapter 6.1–6.2
	In Class	EXPLORE	Activity: Creating a Creation Myth
	At Home	READ	Chapter 6.3–6.4
2	At Home	ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 6.3–6.4
	In Class	DISCUSS	Questions for Chapter 6.3–6.4
	In Class	EXPLORE	Activity: Praising the Creator
	At Home	READ	Chapter 6.5–6.6
3	At Home	ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 6.5–6.6
	In Class	DISCUSS	Questions for Chapter 6.5–6.6
	In Class	EXPLORE	Activity: Community Stewardship Plan
	At Home	READ	Chapter 6.7–6.8
4	At Home	ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 6.7–6.8
	In Class	DISCUSS	Questions for Chapter 6.7–6.8
	In Class	EXPLORE	Activity: Reasons to Believe in God
	At Home	READ	Chapter 6.9–6.10
5	At Home	ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 6.9–6.10
	In Class	DISCUSS	Questions for Chapter 6.9–6.10
	In Class	EXPLORE	Activity: Gender and Marriage
	At Home	EXPLORE	Activity: Creation Feud Game
6	In Class	WATCH	Videos
	In Class	ANSWER	Video Questions
	In Class	DISCUSS	Video Questions
	At Home	EXPLORE	Activity: Who Is God and Who Are Humans?
7	In Class	REVIEW FOR	Chapter 6 Test
	In Class	ANSWER	Chapter 6 Test
	In Class	STUDY FOR	Study Guide Questions
	In Class	ANSWER	Study Guide Questions
8	At Home	GIVE	Chapter 6 Test
	At Home	READ	Chapter 7.1–7.2
	At Home	ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 7.1–7.2
	At Home	ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 7.1–7.2

Student Textbook (ST)

Student Manual (SM)

A full-year syllabus is available in the online resources.

Teacher Manual

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Chapter 6

NOTES

2 Chapter 6 Overview

Most cultures in the ancient world had creation myths to explain how everything came into being. Creation myths were intended to convey truths about the nature of reality and our place within it. There are some similarities between the Genesis creation story and these myths. Christians believe that Genesis is truth revealed through God's Word. The first two chapters of Genesis explain the true nature of reality and our place in the world.

Genesis 1 begins with two fundamental claims about God—that he exists and that he is the Creator of the universe. God speaks creation into existence *ex nihilo*. Everything he did was purposeful and orderly. God formed and filled the universe in six days, culminating with the creation of humans in his image, which is the focus of Genesis 2. There we learn that God designed humans as relational beings with a purpose. We also learn that God is both immanent and transcendent.

Three general ways in which human beings bear God's image are rule, resemblance, and relationship. First, God gave us rule—authority and stewardship—over his creation. Second, we resemble God in that we have certain attributes in common, such as intelligence and the ability to communicate. Third, God designed people to be in relationship with him, ourselves, other people, and nature.

The biblical creation story confronts and refutes the ideas and beliefs of many worldviews, both ancient and modern. It is important that Christians not only know the truth about creation and about who God is, but how to also defend those truths. This chapter will equip students with knowledge of both.

3 PREPARATION

- Day 1:** Print one copy of **TR 6.1A Two Creation Myths** for your use. Obtain two desk bells for use in the activity on Day 6.
- Day 2:** One concordance or computer will be needed for this activity.
- Day 4:** Computers will be needed for this activity.
- Day 5:** Access and preview the two videos listed in Activity: Gender and Marriage. See the inside back cover for instructions to stream videos.
- Day 6:** View **PS 6.6A Creation Feud Game** to become familiar with the activity.
- Day 7:** Access and preview the five videos listed on Day 7. You may want to alert parents that students will be watching a video on the harmful effects of pornography.
- Day 8:** Obtain a large pack of index cards.
- Day 10:** Make one copy of **TR 6.10A Chapter 6 Test** for each student.

4 SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Presentation Slides

PS 6.1A Ancestral Puebloan Myth
PS 6.1B Canaanite God
PS 6.6A Creation Feud Game
PS 6.8A Chapter 6 Review

Teacher Resources

TR 6.1A Two Creation Myths
TR 6.10A Chapter 6 Test

2 The Chapter Overview summarizes the Student Textbook content for the designated chapter.

3 Preparation (P) identifies what you need to prepare for class. A (P) icon will be located by the Day whenever preparation is needed.

4 A list of all supplemental materials needed to teach the lessons is provided.

How to Teach a Lesson

5 The day of instruction, chapter, and section number are identified here.

6 Instruction provides a systematic plan to present the lesson content and conduct the activities.

7 Learning objectives are set in blue textboxes. Discussion questions in bold-face type are provided to create meaningful dialogue and assess students' understanding. Answers are included for each question.

Chapter 6

5 Day 1: Chapter 6.1–6.2 P

6 Review Chapter 5 Test. Have students turn to page 72 in their student textbooks. Read the objectives to the class. Go over the answers to the Discussion Questions for Chapter 6.1–6.2 on pages 108–109 in the student manual. Display **PS 6.1A Ancestral Puebloan Myth**. Read the Ancestral Puebloan Emergence Creation Myth section on **TR 6.1A Two Creation Myths**. Then display **PS 6.1B Canaanite God** and read the Canaanite Myth section. Have students turn to **Activity: Creating a Creation Myth** in their student manuals. Read the directions. Assign the homework.

Objectives and Discussion Questions

7 *Objective:* Students will be able to explain the purpose of creation myths. [6.1]
Objective: Students will be able to summarize the creation narrative from Genesis 1. [6.2]

1. What is a creation myth? What are some examples of creation myths? [6.1]

A creation myth is a story that explains the nature of reality and how the universe and human beings came about. Not all creation myths claim to be historically true. However, these stories helped people explain the nature of reality and humans' place within it.

Some examples of creation myths are:

- Egyptian: Ra creates himself and then other gods from his body.
- Tahitian: Ta'aroa emerges from a shell and uses the two halves to create the world.
- Sumerian: Enlil separates heaven and earth with a hoe; humans "sprout" from the ground.

2. What similarities are there between the Genesis creation account and the *Enuma Elish*? Do you notice any differences? [6.1]

In the *Enuma Elish*, Marduk slays Tiamat, then uses her body to create an orderly cosmos. In Genesis, God also creates an orderly world. However, the God of the Bible does not have to fight any other god to get authority. In fact, there are no other gods. Some similarities between the two accounts include: darkness at the beginning; the creation of light, firmament, dry land, stars, and humans; and the depiction of the deity resting.

Note: These similarities may or may not be significant. Some scholars argue that the similarities show that the author of Genesis simply borrowed from other myths to make up his own story. However, the similarities could also be explained another way. The author of Genesis was likely familiar with some creation myths since he would have been surrounded by people who believed them. It may be that the author of Genesis used language and imagery from these myths, while also claiming that it was God, not the pagan deities who created the cosmos—in other words, the author of Genesis argued that pagan creation stories were false.

© Foundations 113

Chapter 6

9

ACTIVITY

Creating a Creation Myth

Objective: Students will write their own creation myths.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: paper and pen
- Time Required: 20–25 minutes

Procedure:

1. Have students work independently to write their own creation myth. Allow 12 minutes.
2. The following information must be included in the myth: who or what did the creating, what was created, how it was created, and what the differences and similarities are between the creator and the creation.
3. While students are working on their myths, write the following eight significant details of the biblical account on the board:
 - There is one God, not many.
 - The universe has a divine origin.
 - Creation is perfect.
 - Creation resulted from God speaking.
 - God is Spirit.
 - God organized creation in a structured and orderly way.
 - Human beings are divinely created to bear the *imago Dei*, the image of God.
 - God rests. God takes pleasure in his creation and creates time to enjoy it.
4. Invite a few students to share their creation myths with the class.
5. Point out the details of the biblical account that you wrote on the board. Then have students discuss how the myths differ from the biblical creation story.

Day 2: Chapter 6.3–6.4 P

Read the objectives to the class. Go over the Discussion Questions for Chapter 6.3–6.4. Have students turn to **Activity: Praising the Creator** in their student manuals. Read the directions. Assign the homework.

Objectives and Discussion Questions

Objective: Students will be able to discuss the account of the creation of humans found in Genesis 2. [6.3]

Objective: Students will be able to articulate various attributes of God including his transcendence and immanence. [6.4]

8

NOTES

8

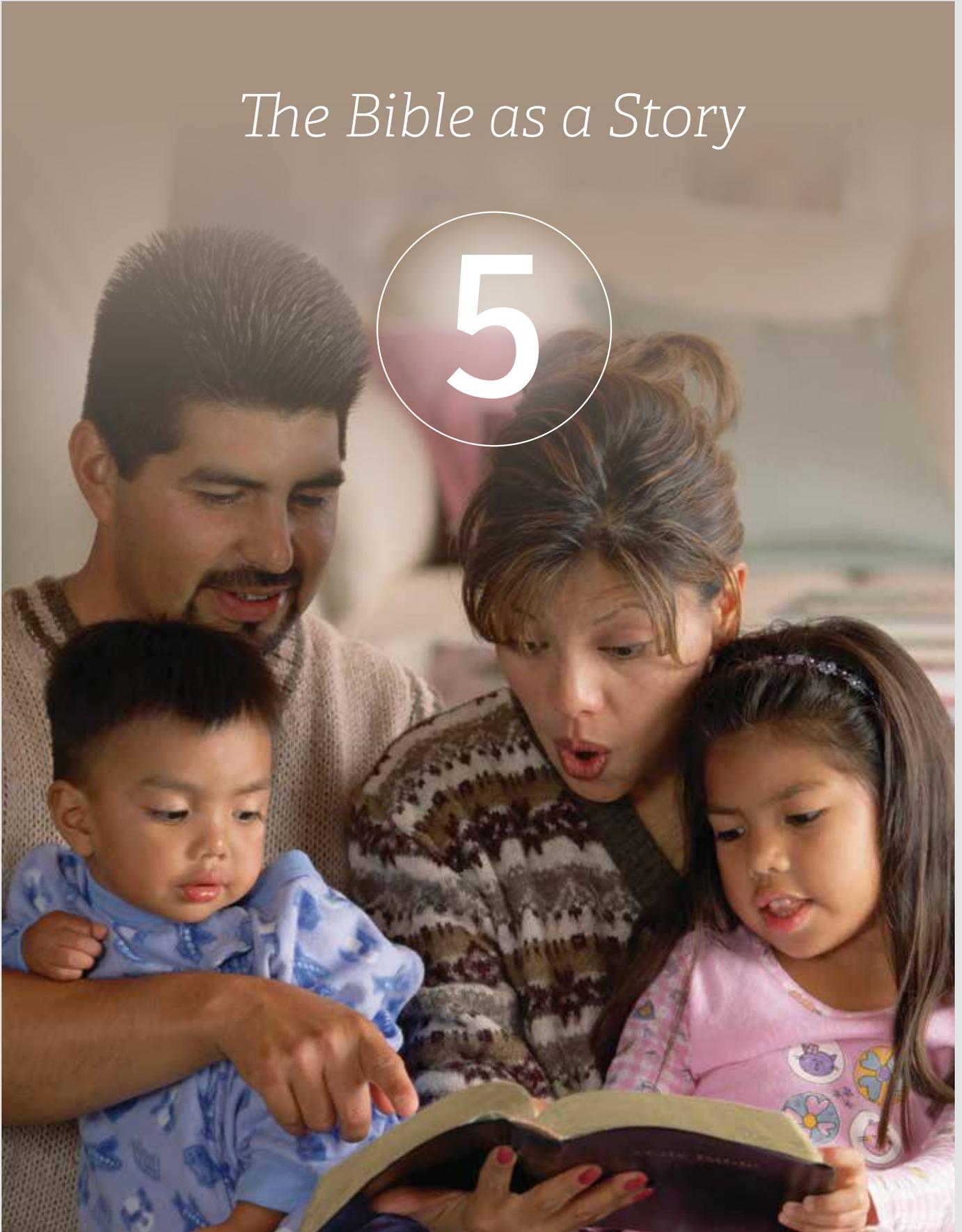
Notes sidebars are available for you to write additional questions or helpful teaching hints of your own.

9

Activity titles, objectives, materials needed, and procedures are in gray sections. The only exception is the full-day activity on Day 6—a teacher-directed activity. Step-by-step directions are provided in regular instructional format instead of the gray activity section.

The Bible as a Story

5



Teacher Manual

LESSON 5

Chapter 5–The Bible as a Story

Chapter 5 Syllabus

Day	Assignment	Page
1	In Class REVIEW	Chapter 4 Test —
	In Class DISCUSS	Questions for Chapter 5.1–5.2 89–90
	In Class EXPLORE	Activity: Anatomy of a Bible Story 90
	At Home READ	Chapter 5.3–5.4 ST 60–62
	At Home ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 5.3–5.4 SM 87–89
2	In Class DISCUSS	Questions for Chapter 5.3–5.4 91–92
	In Class EXPLORE	Activity: Worldview Bingo 93–94
	At Home READ	Chapter 5.5–5.6 ST 62–65
	At Home ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 5.5–5.6 SM 91–92
3	In Class DISCUSS	Questions for Chapter 5.5–5.6 95–96
	In Class EXPLORE	Activity: Literary Attributes 97
	At Home READ	Chapter 5.7–5.8 ST 65–67
	At Home ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 5.7–5.8 97–98
4	In Class DISCUSS	Questions for Chapter 5.7–5.8 97–99
	In Class EXPLORE	Activity: Stories within a Story 99
	At Home READ	Chapter 5.9–5.10 ST 67–69
	At Home ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 5.9–5.10 SM 94–95
5	In Class DISCUSS	Questions for Chapter 5.9–5.10 100–101
	In Class EXPLORE	Activities: Biblical Application 101
6	In Class EXPLORE	Activity: Building a Metanarrative 101–102
7	In Class WATCH	Videos 102
	In Class ANSWER	Video Questions SM 95–98
	In Class DISCUSS	Video Questions 103–104
8	In Class EXPLORE	Activity: Narrative Quiz Game 105
	In Class REVIEW FOR	Chapter 5 Test 105
9	In Class STUDY FOR	Chapter 5 Test SM 101–105
	In Class ANSWER	Study Guide Questions 106–109
10	In Class GIVE	Chapter 5 Test —
	At Home READ	Chapter 6.1–6.2 ST 72–73
	At Home ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 6.1–6.2 SM 108–109

Student Textbook (ST)

Student Manual (SM)

A full-year syllabus is available in the online resources.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Overview

Stories are accounts of related events. We need stories to make sense of reality. They guide us through life and can be conveyed in various forms. Another word for a story is a narrative. Good narratives include setting, characters, conflict, theme, plot, and point of view. Stories require connecting threads that help us see how events and other details work together to form a unified narrative.

A metanarrative provides an overarching story that shows how different stories make sense within it. Metanarratives are fundamentally connected to the meaning of life. Non-Christian metanarratives or worldviews such as secularism, new spirituality, postmodernism, Marxism, and Islam offer explanations about the meaning and purpose of life. But the Bible offers a better story about how the world really is, beginning with God's creation and ending with the final restoration of all things. The Bible is comprehensive, coherent, and normative. Although biblical authors may not have understood all the details, they seemed conscious of being part of a bigger story. Like the biblical authors and characters, modern Christians are participants. Each of our stories matters, and we find meaning and purpose in God's great story.

Reading the Bible as a metanarrative shapes how we understand God because he reveals himself through his interaction with human beings and the world. From Genesis to Revelation, God is active and involved in his story. He loves the world and all the people he created. Keeping the metanarrative in mind helps us navigate difficult or confusing passages. Knowing God through Scripture is a lifelong endeavor. One reason the Bible is so rich as a literary work is that there is so much to discover in each of its books—and even more to learn as God's grand story unfolds.

PREPARATION **P**

- Day 2:** Make one copy of **TR 5.2 Worldview Bingo** for each five students. Bring several small prizes to class.
- Day 3:** Bring one poster board for every three or four students.
- Day 5:** Make one copy of **TR 5.5A Biblical Application** for each student. Make one copy of **TR 5.5B Biblical Application Answer Key** for yourself.
- Day 6:** You will need four student backpacks.
- Day 7:** Access and preview the six videos listed on Day 7. See the inside back cover of this manual for instructions to stream videos.
- Day 8:** Review **PS 5.8A Narrative Quiz Game** and **TR 5.8A Narrative Quiz Game Answer Key** to become familiar with the activity.
- Day 10:** Make one copy of **TR 5.10A Chapter 5 Test** for each student.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Presentation Slides

PS 5.8A Narrative Quiz Game
PS 5.8B Chapter 5 Review

Teacher Resources

TR 5.2A Worldview Bingo
TR 5.5A Biblical Application
TR 5.5B Biblical Application Answer Key
TR 5.8A Narrative Quiz Game Answer Key
TR 5.10A Chapter 5 Test

Day 1: Chapter 5.1–5.2

Review Chapter 4 Test. Have students turn to page 58 in their student textbooks. Read the objectives to the class. Go over the answers to the Discussion Questions for Chapter 5.1–5.2 on pages 86–87 in the student manual. Have students turn to **Activity: Anatomy of a Bible Story** in their student manuals. Read the directions. Divide the class into pairs. Assign the homework.

Objectives and Discussion Questions

Objective: Students will be able to explain the importance of stories. [5.1]

Objective: Students will be able to list the different components of well-formed narratives. [5.2]

1. In what ways do stories shape the way we live? [5.1]

Stories help us make sense of the world we live in. It is often from stories that we learn about concepts like good and evil, sacrifice, loyalty, justice, honor, and friendship. The stories we take in shape what we believe to be true about the world and influence the way we behave.

In reading stories, we find characters we admire (whom we may seek to emulate), or characters we despise (whom we will try not to become). Stories help us discover more about ourselves and the people around us. They give us insight into the human condition.

2. What are the main elements of good stories? Why are these elements important? [5.2]

Good stories will usually include the following elements: an interesting setting, believable characters (including a protagonist and an antagonist), a conflict or challenge for the character to overcome, a meaningful theme, a discernable plot that moves from beginning to end, and a clear point of view. In addition, the tone and style of a story will fit with the genre, and the author will be able to hold many details together, without losing the plotline. All of these elements are necessary for the story to make sense.

3. What are some examples of good and bad stories? Explain what makes them good or bad. [5.2]

Answers will vary.

Note: Bad stories often include characters whose actions don't make sense or have meaning within the story, a meandering plot that fails to hold the reader's attention and dips into multiple sub-plots, no theme or structure, and an inconsistent tone or style.

4. What are the three parts of the three-act story structure? Why is this structure helpful?

Most stories have a three-act structure. The first act introduces us to the characters and conflict, setting up the location and time of the story, giving us a feel for the story's universe. In the second act, the protagonist confronts the conflict and various obstacles in the way of his or her goal. In the third and final act, the conflict builds to the climax and then ultimately resolves either happily or tragically. If there's not setup, we cannot understand the story. If there is no conflict or confrontation of challenges, there will not

Chapter 5

be much to hold the story together or to hold our attention. If there is no climax or resolution, the story will feel incomplete. The three-act structure gives a story form and function. It helps us understand the nature of stories in general and gives each particular story a sense of completeness.

5. How do style and tone contribute to a story? [5.2]

The meaning of the story is partly communicated by the author's style and tone. Compare two authors with very different styles, such as J.R.R. Tolkien and Dr. Seuss. One uses the style and tone of a serious epic, the other of whimsical rhyming stories. When we begin to read or listen to a new story, the tone and style very quickly tell us what sort of story we are reading.

6. How is each of our lives like a story? [5.2]

Each of us was born and each of us will die. In the meantime, we are somewhere in between. Our lives have a plot—beginning, middle, and end. As we journey through life, we will no doubt meet many interesting people and encounter challenges and obstacles to overcome. The events of our lives will be experienced in particular settings at a particular time in history.

If we see our lives as stories, we will likely ask questions like: “What will happen in the next chapter of my life?” “Is my life just a random series of events or does it have a theme, a meaning?” “Is my story a comedy, a tragedy, or something else entirely?”

ACTIVITY

Anatomy of a Bible Story

Objective: Students will analyze a biblical story for components of good storytelling.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: paper and pens
- Time Required: 15–20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Students should work with a partner. Have each pair of students choose a favorite biblical story. Direct them to identify the components of a well-written story in the biblical story.
2. Have each pair of students write down their findings, and as time allows, present them to the class.

Day 2: Chapter 5.3–5.4 P

Read the objectives to the class. Go over the answers to the Discussion Questions for Chapter 5.3–5.4. Have students turn to **Activity: Worldview Bingo** in their student manuals. Have copies of **TR 5.2A Worldview Bingo** available. Read the directions. Have students work independently. Assign the homework.

Objectives and Discussion Questions

Objective: Students will be able to discuss the relationship between metanarratives, worldviews, and the meaning of life. [5.3]

Objective: Students will be able to describe and critique the postmodern view of metanarratives. [5.4]

Objective: Students will be able to compare and contrast common non-Christian worldviews. [5.4]

1. What is a metanarrative? What are some examples of a metanarrative? [5.3]

A metanarrative is the story beyond the story; an overarching narrative that makes sense of everything. A metanarrative helps us see how different stories fit together or make sense.

Possible answers: The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) provides a metanarrative that helps all of its individual superhero movies fit together within a larger whole. The battle between good and evil in Star Wars sheds light on each character's individual journey. The metanarrative of the United States brings together various immigration stories into one story.

2. Are all metanarratives fiction or can they be nonfiction, too? What are some examples that support your answer? [5.3]

Metanarratives can be fiction or nonfiction.

Possible answers: The musical *Into the Woods* includes the stories of several fairy tale characters incorporated into the larger metanarrative of a couple's quest to have a child. The history of the United States could be seen as a collection of related immigration stories. The story of America can be told as a great metanarrative made up of the ways its diverse people became a part of the country, seeking freedom and opportunity.

3. How can metanarratives help us understand the meaning of our lives? [5.3]

Sometimes it is hard to see how individual stories have meaning unless they are connected to some larger story. In epic stories, the characters often find meaning by joining their individual stories to a metanarrative. The same is true for us. A metanarrative can give purpose and shape to what otherwise seems random and meaningless. Metanarratives help people explain the nature of reality, the reason for or meaning of certain events, and the purpose of their individual lives.

Chapter 5

4. Do we really need a metanarrative to make sense out of life? Why or why not? [5.4]

If we do not have a metanarrative to explain how we got here and where we are going in the future, it is hard to know how we should live in the present. A metanarrative provides the motivation for our actions. Everyone needs a metanarrative to help them explain and live in the world.

Note: Many postmodern thinkers would say we don't need a metanarrative. Metanarratives, they say, cannot be trusted because they make claims to universal truth, a notion that postmodernists reject. For them, we can only find meaning in life by looking at our own individual stories. Even postmodernists must invoke a metanarrative to say that there are no metanarratives.

5. What is a worldview? What is the relationship between a metanarrative and a worldview? [5.4]

A worldview is a pattern of ideas and beliefs that help us make sense of the world and that guide our decisions and actions. All worldviews offer a metanarrative that attempts to give meaning to life, make sense of events, and answer the biggest questions we ask.

6. What are some popular worldviews today? Do you think the metanarratives they teach can provide meaningful answers to life's biggest questions? [5.4]

Answers should include any of the following:

- **Secularism** sees humans as the only solution to the problems in the world and assumes that problems can be fixed without the help of any god. However, secularism fails to account for the sin nature in humans and it offers no hope beyond the grave.
- **New spirituality** says that everything and everyone is god and that the way to inner peace and harmony is through getting in touch with ourselves. The new spiritualist worldview encourages a self-focus, but ultimately dissolves our personalities into one. It also fails to have an adequate answer to the problem of evil.
- **Postmodernism** is skeptical of all truth claims and rejects the idea that metanarratives can provide meaning to life. However, in the end, postmodernism dissolves the concepts of right and wrong into power games, and leaves little meaning for life.
- **Marxism**, like secularism, invests its hope in human beings to create a utopian existence on earth. But it fails to take into account human sinfulness and encourages violent revolution.
- **Islam** is a theistic worldview that derives its teachings from the Quran, Hadith, and Sunnah. However, it makes salvation a matter of effort and fails to provide a satisfying explanation of God's character.

7. Are all worldviews equally valid? If so, why? If not, how can we know which worldview is best?

Not all worldviews can be equally valid. They all offer their own answers to the big questions in life, and the answers of one worldview often contradict the answers offered by other worldviews. They can't all be true. We don't want a worldview that just sounds nice, feels good, or helps us get by. To choose a worldview, we need a worldview that is rooted in reality, in the way the world actually is. This kind of worldview can help us live meaningful and fulfilling lives. The Christian worldview offers a metanarrative that best explains how the world really is and offers meaningful answers to life's biggest questions.

ACTIVITY

Worldview Bingo

Objective: Students will identify the elements of six common worldviews.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: TR 5.2, several small prizes
- Time Required: 15–20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Explain to students that all worldviews have their own metanarrative and pattern of belief and that it is important to know these patterns so students can identify them in social circles, education, culture, and entertainment.
2. Distribute bingo sheets from TR 5.2 Worldview Bingo to the students, one per student. Instruct students that the goal is to complete at least one row correctly and that the first student to complete a row should raise his or her hand and call out “bingo.” The student should then come to have you check the answers. If the row is correct, record the student’s name for later. If the row is incorrect, the student is out of the game. If students are unsure their first completed rows are correct, they may choose to wait until completing a second row before saying “bingo.”
3. Call out a worldview and tell the students to mark all bingo squares related to that worldview with the appropriate symbol. The symbols are as follows: secularism = stick figure, new spirituality = three small circles, postmodernism = arrow; Marxism = star, Islam = half-moon, Christianity = cross. (Note: Some bingo boxes may apply to more than one worldview, but students should only mark each box once.)
4. Distribute small prizes to the student who completed the first bingo correctly and to the student(s) who completed the highest number of correct bingos.

Teacher Manual

LESSON 5

Chapter 5

ACTIVITY ANSWER KEY

Secularism
atheistic/agnostic
faith in human ability and progress
contains a metanarrative
offers answers to life's big questions

New spirituality
everything is god
harmony and peace through divine
consciousness
contains a metanarrative
offers answers to life's big questions

Postmodernism
truth claims are power plays
skeptical of all truth claims
contains a metanarrative
makes self-contradictory claims
focuses on personal truths instead of
universal truths
offers answers to life's big questions
metanarratives can't provide meaning to life

Marxism
utopian future
class warfare
atheistic state
contains a metanarrative
offers answers to life's big questions
everything is held in common by the
people

Islam
theistic worldview
Quran
Hadith
Sunnah
claims to be true for everyone
offers answers to life's big questions
Mohammad
contains a metanarrative

Christianity
Jesus
people made in God's image
offers answers to life's big questions
based on eyewitness accounts
claims to be true for everyone
Bible
contains a metanarrative
theistic worldview

94

Teacher Manual

Chapter 5

Day 3: Chapter 5.5–5.6

Read the objectives to the class. Go over the answers to the Discussion Questions for Chapter 5.5–5.6. Have students turn to **Activity: Literary Attributes** in their student manuals. Read the directions. Divide the class into pairs. Assign the homework.

Objectives and Discussion Questions

Objective: Students will be able to summarize the metanarrative of the Bible. [5.5]
Objective: Students will be able to defend the Bible as a historical metanarrative. [5.6]

1. What kind of story is the Bible telling? How would you describe the historical narrative of the Bible? [5.5]

The Bible is neither a jumble of random moral tales nor a collection of dry historical facts. It is a story based on reality, the way the world actually is.

Possible answer: This historical narrative books make up about half of the Bible. But the Bible as a whole makes up a historical narrative that tells the story of God creating an amazing world. Yet that world is now under bondage to evil. The climactic moment of the story is Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension. The story will end with the restoration of all things.

2. What genres are present in the Bible and how do they relate to the historical narrative? [5.5]

Other than historical narrative, the Bible contains wisdom literature, prophecies, poetry, and letters. These genres are still part of the larger historical narrative, the metanarrative that links all of God's story from beginning to end. The historical narrative provides the framework into which all the other pieces fit.

3. What significance does the historical narrative of the Bible have for our lives? [5.5]

By engaging with the Scripture's metanarrative, we can find individual meaning for our own stories as we learn more about who God is, how he interacts with his people, and what his ultimate plan for us is. We find the purpose of our stories within God's grand story.

4. What does it mean to say that the Bible is comprehensive? Do you think the Bible is comprehensive? Why or why not? [5.6]

To say that the Bible is comprehensive is not to say that it tells us everything that we would like to know; rather, the Bible is comprehensive in that it tells us everything that we need to know—specifically about God and how to live faithfully in his world.

Note: While the above explanation of what it means to say the Bible is comprehensive should clear up confusion, students may still feel that the Bible does not tell them everything they need to know. This is a good opportunity for dialogue. If students raise needs they feel the Bible does not address, invite them explain why they feel they need to know those things. (This question is not meant to put them on the defensive, but rather to encourage them to think carefully.) It may be that the Bible does in fact address

Foundations

95

Chapter 5

those needs and students just need to see how. It may also be that the Bible does not address all our desires or curiosity. This is where reading the Bible as a metanarrative can be especially helpful. Even if the Bible does not address a specific topic, if we consider that topic within the whole story, we will likely gain wisdom on how to deal with it.

5. What does it mean to say that the Bible is coherent? What objections can you see to the claim that the Bible is coherent? [5.6]

To say that the Bible is coherent is to say that it is orderly, logical, and consistent throughout. Though there are many diverse pieces to Scripture, they all fit together. Given that the Bible was written by multiple authors over such a long period of time, it is a testament to its divine inspiration that it fits together as one coherent story.

Note: Calling the Bible coherent is a large claim and some students may raise objections. After all, there are numerous passages in Scripture that seem to contradict one another. Think of the different ways the four gospels tell the story of Jesus' resurrection, which are not so much contradictory as they are different perspectives on the resurrection. This is similar to how each person at a basketball game sees things a little differently depending on where they are sitting. They all see the same event, but they see it from different angles and tell the story accordingly. This is true of the gospel accounts. Each author emphasized certain things, while leaving aside other details. In fact, some have even suggested that the gospel accounts would be suspect if they were all told exactly alike.

Also consider Proverbs 26:4–5, which seems to be an obvious contradiction. This can be explained by paying attention to context. Proverbs is a book of wisdom, and wisdom is about discerning what to do or how to respond in different situations. Sometimes, as in Proverbs 4:5, a foolish person should be ignored since arguing would lead nowhere. Other times, as in Proverbs 5:5, a foolish statement needs to be corrected. It takes wisdom to discern which response is appropriate.

6. What does it mean to say that the Bible is normative? [5.6]

To say the Bible is normative is to say that it reveals a God-given standard for how people should live. It means that we must not simply read the Bible out of literary or historical interest; indeed the Bible calls for a response. We may choose to follow what it says or not, but either way we must respond.

96

Teacher Manual

Chapter 5

ACTIVITY

Literary Attributes

Objective: Students will create a memory aid to help them remember the three literary attributes of the Bible.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: poster board and markers
- Time Required: 15–20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Have the students work in groups of three or four and distribute a poster board and markers to each group. Remind them that in addition to being a historical narrative, the Bible has a combination of three literary attributes that make it stand out: it is comprehensive, coherent, and normative.
2. Have students brainstorm and design symbols, acronyms, rhymes, or visual cues that can help them memorize and recall the three literary attributes described in the lesson.
3. Invite volunteers to present their memory aids to the class.

Day 4: Chapter 5.7–5.8

Read the objectives to the class. Go over the answers to the Discussion Questions for Chapter 5.7–5.8. Have students turn to **Activity: Stories within a Story** in their student manuals. Read the directions. Have students work independently. Assign the homework.

Objectives and Discussion Questions

Objective: Students will be able to identify biblical characters who were aware they were part of God's larger story. [5.7]
Objective: Students will be able to describe the six main acts in the biblical metanarrative and their corresponding Scriptures. [5.8]

1. What does it mean to be caught up into God's big story? [5.7]

To be caught up into God's big story is to recognize that our own individual stories are not all there is. Instead, we realize that through Jesus we become part of a bigger story about the world. As we are caught up in this story, we learn from those who have gone before us and we are invited into what God is doing in the world today.

Foundations

97

Teacher Manual

LESSON 5

Chapter 5

2. How aware were the biblical authors of their part in God's story? [5.7]

The biblical authors may not have known or understood the details of the whole story, but they seem very conscious that they were operating within a larger narrative. In many instances in the Old Testament, God spoke directly to the authors and told them the part they were to play. In the Old Testament, the phrase "thus says the Lord" occurs more than 400 times in the English Standard Version. Prophecies by prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah about a future day when God would return to rule in righteousness also show awareness that individual stories are part of one big story. In the New Testament, the people in Jesus' life also demonstrated that they knew they were part of something special. The human authors and characters who followed God knew the story didn't originate or end with them. They were one piece in a larger puzzle, one thread in a larger tapestry.

3. Who are some of the biblical characters who found themselves caught up in God's big story? [5.7]

- Mary sang about God's mercy and faithfulness to Israel (Luke 1:46–55).
- Zacharias recognized that his son, John, was a sign that God's rescue for Israel was coming (Luke 1:67–79).
- Simeon and Anna realized that God's salvation for Israel was at hand (Luke 2:29–38).
- Mark knew that the story of Jesus was part of the larger story that began in Genesis (Mark 1:14–15).
- Paul saw his own ministry as part of God's continuing work in the world (Romans 1:1–5).
- Peter taught that believers were part of God's great story (1 Peter 1:3–13).

4. Listed below are three ways people summarize the message of the Bible. Explain why each is faulty. [5.8]

- Creation, Fall, Redemption
- We are sinners, Jesus died for our sins, those who trust Jesus go to heaven when they die.
- The God of the Old Testament was cruel, but Jesus is kind. He sets a good example that we are to follow.

Reasons why each of these outlines is faulty or incomplete:

- The first outline is ok, but it omits Israel from the story of the Bible and says nothing about restoration.
- The second outline fails to account for God's good creation and assumes that the only goal of the Christian life is to go to heaven after death.
- The third outline holds a faulty view of God and the Old Testament and assumes that Jesus was just a good moral teacher.

5. In your own words, explain what happens in each of the six acts of the biblical outline. Use the chart in Chapter 5.8 of your textbook as a reference. Which act do you feel you understand the best? The least? [5.8]

Answers will vary.

Order of metanarrative timeline:

- Act 1: Creation — God's Good World
- Act 2: Fall — Sin and Its Consequences
- Act 3: Israel — Redemption Initiated
- Interlude: The Second Temple Period
- Act 4: Redemption Accomplished — Jesus
- Act 5: Restoration Initiated — The Church
- Act 6: Restoration Accomplished — New Creation

98

Teacher Manual

Chapter 5

6. Would you say the biblical metanarrative is about individuals or the world? Explain your answer. [5.8]

The biblical metanarrative is about both individuals and the world. It is a story that provides meaning and purpose for our individual lives, offering us salvation and restoration. On the other hand, it is also a story about how God is saving and restoring the whole world.

ACTIVITY

Stories within a Story

Objective: Students will create a visual representation of the biblical metanarrative and where well-known Bible stories fit within it.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: white printer paper, pens or markers, Bibles
- Time Required: 15–20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Give each student a piece of white printer paper. Have each student draw a horizontal line and mark it with small vertical lines to show the main parts of the biblical metanarrative in sequential order.
2. Tell students to place the following Bible narratives on the line within the proper section of the metanarrative timeline.
 - Joseph is sold into slavery.
 - Jesus heals a blind man.
 - Jonah and the mission to Nineveh.
 - Esther saves the Jewish people.
 - Jesus returns on a white horse.
 - Adam and Eve are thrown out of the garden.
 - David defeats Goliath.
 - Paul and Silas are thrown in jail.
 - The Israelites receive the Law at Mount Sinai.
3. Allow students to present their work to the class.

ACTIVITY ANSWER KEY

Order of metanarrative timeline:

- Act 1: Creation—God's Good World
- Act 2: Fall—Sin and Its Consequences
- Act 3: Israel—Redemption Initiated
- Interlude: The Second Temple Period
- Act 4: Redemption Accomplished—Jesus
- Act 5: Restoration Initiated—The Church
- Act 6: Restoration Accomplished—New Creation

Interlude: The Second Temple Period

- Esther saves the Jewish people.
- Act 4: Redemption Accomplished—Jesus
- Jesus heals a blind man.
- Act 5: Restoration Initiated—The Church
- Paul and Silas are thrown in jail.
- Act 6: Restoration Accomplished—New Creation
- Jesus returns on a white horse.

Foundations

99

Chapter 5

Day 5: Chapter 5.9–5.10

Read the objectives to the class. Go over the answers to the Discussion Questions for Chapter 5.9–5.10. Have students turn to **Activity: Biblical Application** in their student manuals. Read the directions. Distribute **TR 5.5A Biblical Application** to students. Keep one copy of **TR 5.5B Biblical Application Answer Key** for your reference. Have students read and complete the exercise.

Objectives and Discussion Questions

Objective: Students will be able to express what God's role in the biblical metanarrative is. [5.9]

Objective: Students will be able to articulate the importance of knowing that the Bible is a metanarrative when interpreting difficult passages. [5.9]

1. How does the Author of the Bible's great story get involved in the story? [5.9]

God is not a distant observer, watching the story unfold from afar. He has been active in his world by creating the world with loving care, being faithful to Israel, and coming to Earth in human flesh to give his life so that we might have life.

2. What can we do when we find troubling or difficult things in the Bible? [5.9]

There are several passages in Scripture that are difficult to understand or cause us to doubt God's goodness. When we come across these passages, we should not ignore them or try to explain them away. However, we must consider their contexts and how these troubling passages fit within the larger story of Scripture.

For example, when asking, "Why is slavery permitted in the Old Testament?" we must first consider the context of passages about slavery in the Old Testament and then ask how they fit within the larger story of Scripture. When we do this, we can begin to see how God works with his people even in less-than-ideal situations, ultimately moving them toward what is best. We will see that God is emphatically against the devaluing of human life. This will take careful study and hard work, but we shouldn't expect to figure everything out right away. Reading Scripture is a lifelong pursuit.

3. What do you think C. S. Lewis meant when he said that Jesus' love for us is "quite relentless in its determination that we shall be cured of [our] sins, at whatever cost to us, at whatever cost to him"? Is this good news or bad news? [5.9]

What Lewis meant is that Jesus loves us so much that he does not wish for us to live perpetually plagued by evil, always living in sin and experiencing the consequences of our sinful actions. This is good news because it means that Jesus went to the cross so that we might have life and be saved from the power of sin and death ("whatever cost to him"). However, being cured of our sins is a lifelong process that will be difficult and sometimes painful ("whatever cost to us").

100

Teacher Manual

Chapter 5

4. What can we learn about God's nature and character from reading the Bible as one grand story? [5.9]

One thing we can learn is that God will stop at nothing to redeem his creation. When we understand the way that love undergirds every action he takes, we can put our own stories and the individual stories of Scripture in proper perspective. This also provides a strong counterpoint to the common impression in culture that God is portrayed in Christian beliefs as brooding, grumpy, mean, and distant.

5. Based on what you have read in this chapter, what part do you think Christians have to play in God's great story? [5.10]

Christians are called to spread the good news about Jesus—the message of reconciliation between God and humans and of the restoration of all things. A believer's role is to witness to what God has done, is doing, and will do. Through love and service, Christians proclaim God's goodness to all creation.

ACTIVITY

Biblical Application

Objective: Students will complete an exercise to apply what they learned about the biblical metanarrative to the story of Jonah.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: TR 5.5A, pens, Bibles
- Time Required: 20–30 minutes

Procedure:

1. Distribute one copy of TR 5.5A Biblical Application and a pen to each student.
2. Guide the students through the steps on the instruction sheet. Then have them read the story of Jonah in their Bibles and use the steps to complete the exercise.
3. If time permits, allow students to share with the class.

Day 6 Activity

Building a Metanarrative

Have students select one backpack for each group to use for the activity. Explain the directions to students. Make sure each group understands its assigned skit topic and how to use the backpack.

Objective: Students will create their own narratives that build a larger metanarrative.

Preparation:

- Materials needed: four student backpacks
- Time required: 45–50 minutes

Foundations

101

Teacher Manual

LESSON 5

Chapter 5

Procedure

1. Divide the students into four groups. Have each group use one backpack as a prop. Each group will plan and present a five-minute skit in which their backpack symbolizes hope in some way. Each skit will play a part in building a larger story.
2. Instruct each group to spend 15–20 minutes planning their skit. Assign each group a different part in the metanarrative. The first group should tell a story that introduces conflict and shows hope being lost. This skit needs to have a sad ending either with hope totally lost or with a hint that hope might be restored in the future. The second group should create a skit that shows the consequences of lost hope. The third group's skit must show an action that restores hope, with some characters responding positively to what happens and one character refusing to accept hope. The fourth group should tell a story that shows what happens when hope is fully restored to a hopeless situation. The beginning of this skit should show people divided over whether to be hopeful or not, and the ending of this skit must be positive and bring resolution.
3. Have the groups present their skits in order. Each group should take no more than five minutes to act out their skit. When all four groups have finished, explain that in a similar way to how the students knew their skits were part of a larger story they couldn't see at first, the biblical authors also knew they were part of a bigger story, even though most of them couldn't see the bigger story in their lifetimes.
4. As time allows, discuss what happened as students acted in their own skits and watched the others. Was it easy or difficult to see how unrelated skits fit into one bigger story? How did the symbol of hope (backpack) show up in each skit? Were there any parts of the individual stories that connected unintentionally? How is this activity like how the Bible connects in theme and purpose over time?

Day 7: Videos

In this lesson, students will view six interviews of various Christian educators and authors. Each expert answers a specific worldview or apologetics question. These videos will allow students to expand their knowledge and provide biblical answers to thought-provoking questions. The following videos will be used in today's lesson:

1. How Do We Fit into God's Story? (Jimzejan, 3:04)
2. How Can We Effectively Understand the Scripture? (Paauw, 1:32)
3. What Is the Difference Between Mormonism and Christianity? (Kankle, 1:19)
4. How Should Christians Handle Apparent Biblical Contradictions? (Jimenez, 2:20)
5. What Is the Christian Metanarrative? (Gould, 2:47)
6. What Does the Christian Story Have to Do With Me? (Gould, 2:59)

Play the videos one at a time in the order listed above. Before each video, direct students to read the questions associated with that video in their student manuals so they know what to listen for. During and after the video has been shown, students should write their answers to the Discussion Questions. It may be necessary to play the video again so students can answer all the questions. Go over the questions for the first video. Play the next video. Continue in this manner until the last video has been played and questions have been discussed.

102

 Teacher Manual

Chapter 5

Discussion Questions

Video 1: How Do We Fit into God's Story?

1. What claim does Genesis 1:1 make about the Bible's message?

That is true for all people at all times in all places, and is not limited to one social or ethnic context.

2. What kind of truth does the Bible offer?

A public truth meant to be proclaimed to all people, not a private truth.

3. What are the two main purposes people were created for?

To fill the earth and be fruitful and to create and innovate

4. How do modern Christians fit into God's story?

They are to be set apart, to invite people to participate in God's story, and to propose a better way of life.

Video 2: How Can We Effectively Understand the Scripture?

1. What is one of the first steps Christians can take to understand the Bible?

Seek to understand its intended message in context. Understand that it's the revealed Word of God.

2. What does it mean to receive the Bible?

To understand it on its own terms and that it's a library of books forming one story, not a reference book

Video 3: What Is the Difference Between Mormonism and Christianity?

1. What are the two primary differences between Mormonism and Christianity?

Their views of God and of salvation, which make Christianity and Mormonism incompatible.

2. How are the Mormon and Christian views of God different?

Christians believe that God is triune and has existed from all eternity. Mormons believe that God was once a mortal man who became a god.

3. How are the Mormon and Christian views of salvation different?

Mormonism says that you need faith and works to be saved. Christianity says that you need faith and not works to be saved.

Video 4: How Should Christians Handle Apparent Biblical Contradictions?

1. What is the key for interpreting difficult Bible passages properly?

Study the totality of Scripture and interpret smaller sections with God's big story in mind.

 Foundations

103

Chapter 5

2. What is the art and science of biblical interpretation?

Understanding the context in which the author is intending it, historical context, the original audience, who wrote it, and other portions of Scripture that talk about this topic.

3. Should we base important doctrines on verses we don't understand well?

No, especially if the verses are about topics the Bible doesn't make a big issue of.

4. What is biblical interpretation based on?

Objectivity. We don't get to decide what the Bible means; the Bible gets to. It is our job to discover it.

5. What kind of systematic approach should we take to interpreting Scripture?

Grammatical, historical, and literal interpretation. We need to know what the original language means, look at it in context of its history, and interpret things literally or figuratively as the context makes clear.

Note: When scholars say to use a literal interpretation, they mean to interpret the text by its clear intent. For example, Jesus' words, "I am the door," were clearly figurative. Jesus' statement "If you love me, keep my commandments" was clearly literal.

Video 5: What Is the Christian Metanarrative?

1. What are the three questions the Christian metanarrative answers?

Where did we come from? What is our destiny? How do we get there?

2. According to the speaker, what are the four acts of the metanarrative?

Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration

3. What four words describe the metanarrative?

Home, away, home again

Video 6: What Does the Christian Story Have to Do With Me?

1. How does the speaker briefly describe the Christian story?

God created the world, the fall, God redeems the world, and God will restore it.

2. What does the metanarrative mean for us personally?

God cares for every aspect of our lives and passionately pursues us.

3. Why should the fact that God knows our hearts comfort us?

God cares about us, knows what is best, and has a great work for each of us.

104

 Teacher Manual

Chapter 5

Day 8: Activity and Review

Have a copy of TR 5.8A Narrative Quiz Game Answer Key printed for your reference. Use PS 5.8A Narrative Quiz Game to lead students through the activity. Then display PS 5.8B Chapter 5 Review to help students review the concepts in Chapter 5. Allow students to take turns reading the slides.

ACTIVITY

Narrative Quiz Game

Objective: Students will play a quiz game to help them remember key terms and concepts from the lesson.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: PS 5.8A and TR 5.8A
- Time Required: 20–30 minutes

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into three or four teams. Make sure there are no more than five students per team.
2. Display PS 5.8A Narrative Quiz Game and introduce the game using the title slide. Then move to slide 2 and explain the rules.
Rules: Teams will choose a category and a clue by saying, for example, "Metanarrative for 600." Teams must choose clues in the same column until that column has been completed. (For example, if Team 1 chooses the Metanarrative 200 clue, Team 2 must choose a clue from the Metanarrative category. Team 3 must also choose from the same category until that column has been completed.)

After the clue has been chosen, you will display the slide for that clue and read it aloud. All teams have 15 seconds to quietly confer. All the teams desire to answer the clue by having the student who will answer stand up. Answers must be given in a "who" or "what" question form. (For example, "What is a story?" or "Who is Jesus?"). If the fastest team answers correctly, the points for that clue will be added to the team's score. If the team answers incorrectly, the same number of points would be lost. In that case, the second-fastest team may take a guess. If correct, that team receives the points. If they are incorrect, the third-fastest team can make a guess. The team that answers correctly chooses the next clue. If no one answers correctly, the team that chose the previous clue chooses again. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

3. Read each selected clue aloud and call on the team member who stood up the fastest. Students have ten seconds to answer the clue.
4. As teams correctly answer clues, record their points on the TR 5.8A Narrative Quiz Game Answer Key and keep track of which clues have been answered on the tracking sheet. At the end of the game, tally up the points and announce the winner. You may want to offer small prizes to the winning team.

 Foundations

105

Teacher Manual

LESSON 5

Chapter 5

Day 9: Study Guide

Allow students to study for Chapter 5 Test. Have them turn to the Study Guide in their student manual and complete the exercises.

Chapter 4 Study Guide

Chapter 5 Key Points

Key Words	Key Verses
Narrative	Mark 1:14–15
Metanarrative	Romans 1:1–5
Historical narrative	Galatians 4:4
Comprehensive	Revelation 21:5
Coherent	
Normative	

1. Explain why stories are important.

Stories are important because they make sense of reality. They have the power to influence our lives.

2. List the different components of well-formed narratives.

The components include setting, characters, conflict, theme, plot, and point of view.

3. Explain the relationship between metanarratives, worldviews, and the meaning of life.

A metanarrative is an overarching narrative that helps us make sense of other narratives, and a worldview is another way to talk about a metanarrative. Worldviews or metanarratives offer answers to the big questions of life.

4. Identify and critique the postmodern view of metanarratives.

Postmodernism does not accept metanarratives that give meaning to life but instead focuses on small, individual narratives. Even postmodernists need a metanarrative to make sense of the world, though. The postmodern metanarrative claims there is no universal truth and that someone who makes a truth claim is usually trying to oppress others. The postmodern view is self-defeating because it uses a metanarrative to dismiss metanarratives and makes an absolute truth claim to deny that absolute truth exists.

5. Compare and contrast common non-Christian worldviews.

Secularism is an atheistic/agnostic worldview that puts its faith in human ability and progress to make the world a better place. New spirituality is a worldview that teaches that everything is god and that peace and harmony come from getting in touch with divine consciousness.

106

Teacher Manual

Chapter 5

Postmodernism is a worldview that tends to be skeptical of all truth claims and rejects the idea that metanarratives can provide meaning to life. Marxism is a worldview that sees all of history as class warfare and that aims for a future, utopian, atheistic state where everything is held in common by the people. Islam is a theistic worldview, centered on the life of the prophet Muhammad, that derives its understanding of the world from the teachings of the Quran, Hadith, and Sunnah.

6. Summarize the metanarrative of the Bible.

The metanarrative of the Bible is that God created the world and human beings with love, but that the curse of sin came into the world through human rebellion and broke everything. God will stop at nothing to redeem his creation, so he sent his Son Jesus Christ into the world to redeem it. In the end, Jesus will return to reign and to make all things new.

7. Defend the Bible as a historical narrative.

The Bible is a collection of historical accounts, wisdom literature, poetry, prophecies, and letters that work together within a larger historical narrative. The Bible is diverse but unified and establishes a trajectory from the beginning of the Bible in Genesis to the end in Revelation.

8. Identify biblical characters who were aware they were part of God's larger story.

Biblical characters who sensed their part in God's story include Mary, the mother of Jesus; Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist; and Simeon and Anna. All mention how Jesus' birth connects to God's plan for his people.

9. Describe the six main acts in the biblical metanarrative and relate them to their corresponding Scripture.

Act 1: Creation—God's Good World (Genesis 1–2)
 Act 2: Fall—Sin and Its Consequences (Genesis 3–11)
 Act 3: Israel—Redemption Initiated (Torah, Prophets, Writings)
 Interlude: The Second Temple Period (Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Daniel)
 Act 4: Redemption Accomplished—Jesus (Gospels)
 Act 5: Restoration Initiated—The Church (Acts, Epistles)
 Act 6: Restoration Accomplished—New Creation (Revelation)

10. Explain God's role in the biblical metanarrative.

God is not a spectator. He is an active participant in the story of redemption. He will stop at nothing to redeem his creation.

11. Explain the importance of knowing that the Bible is a metanarrative when interpreting difficult passages.

Knowing the metanarrative helps us understand hard passages in light of what the rest of the Bible teaches us about God's character. This does not explain away the difficulties, but it does help us understand them better along with careful reading of the whole Bible and the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Foundations

107

Chapter 5

12. What is a narrative?

A narrative is an account of related events or experiences told to listeners or readers.

13. What is a metanarrative?

A metanarrative is the story beyond the story; an overarching narrative that makes sense of everything.

14. What are some examples of fiction or nonfiction metanarratives?

The Marvel Cinematic Universe, *Star Wars*, and *Into the Woods* are examples of fiction metanarratives. The history of the United States could be an example of a nonfiction metanarrative.

15. What is a historical narrative?

A historical narrative is a historical account told in story form.

16. What does it mean to say that the Bible is comprehensive?

It means that the Bible is complete, including everything that is necessary or relevant.

17. What does it mean to say that the Bible is coherent?

It means that the Bible is orderly, logical, and consistent throughout.

18. What does it mean to say that the Bible is normative?

It means that the Bible sets norms or standards, especially when it comes to behavior.

19. Describe the typical three-act structure of most story plots.

The three-act structure begins with a setup (introducing the characters, plot, conflict, and setting), the second act when the protagonist confronts the conflict and faces obstacles, and the final act is when the conflict builds to a climax and then resolves either tragically or happily.

20. List the big questions that worldviews and their metanarratives seek to answer.

Who am I? Where did I come from? What is my purpose in life? What is wrong with this world? What is the solution? Where am I going after I die?

21. What type of worldview do we need? What worldview best serves this purpose?

We need a worldview that doesn't just offer us comfort, but one that is rooted in reality. The Christian worldview best describes the world as it really is.

22. What is the climax of the biblical metanarrative?

The birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ is the climax of the biblical metanarrative.

108

Teacher Manual

Chapter 5

23. What does the Bible's internal coherence indicate?

The Bible's extraordinary internal coherence points to divine inspiration.

24. Read and study the five Key Verses listed at the beginning of the study guide.

Day 10: Chapter 5 Test

Distribute **TR 5.10A Chapter 5 Test** to each student and allow time for them to complete the test. Assign homework.

Foundations

109

Understanding the Times Series

Foundations



STUDENT WORKBOOK



Samples reduced; not actual size

Chapter 5–The Bible as a Story

Chapter 5 Syllabus

Day	Assignment	Page
1	In Class REVIEW	Chapter 4 Test —
	In Class DISCUSS	Questions for Chapter 5.1–5.2 —
	In Class EXPLORE	Activity: Anatomy of a Bible Story 90
	At Home READ	Chapter 5.3–5.4 ST 60–62
	At Home ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 5.3–5.4 87–89
2	In Class DISCUSS	Questions for Chapter 5.3–5.4 —
	In Class EXPLORE	Activity: Worldview Bingo 89
	At Home READ	Chapter 5.5–5.6 ST 62–65
	At Home ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 5.5–5.6 90–91
	3	In Class DISCUSS
In Class EXPLORE		Activity: Literary Attributes 91
At Home READ		Chapter 5.7–5.8 ST 65–67
At Home ANSWER		Questions for Chapter 5.7–5.8 92–93
4		In Class DISCUSS
	In Class EXPLORE	Activity: Stories within a Story 93
	At Home READ	Chapter 5.9–5.10 ST 67–69
	At Home ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 5.9–5.10 94–95
	5	In Class DISCUSS
In Class EXPLORE		Activities: Biblical Application 95
6	In Class EXPLORE	Activity: Building a Metanarrative —
7	In Class WATCH	Videos —
	In Class ANSWER	Video Questions 95–98
	In Class DISCUSS	Video Questions —
8	In Class EXPLORE	Activity: Narrative Quiz Game 99
	In Class REVIEW FOR	Chapter 5 Test 100
9	In Class STUDY FOR	Chapter 5 Test —
	In Class ANSWER	Study Guide Questions 101–105
10	In Class TAKE	Chapter 5 Test —
	At Home READ	Chapter 6.1–6.2 ST 72–73
	At Home ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 6.1–6.2 108–109

Student Textbook (ST)

Student Workbook

LESSON 5

Chapter 5.1–5.2 Discussion Questions

1. In what ways do stories shape the way we live? [5.1]
2. What are the main elements of good stories? Why are these elements important? [5.2]
3. What are some examples of good and bad stories? Explain what makes them good or bad. [5.2]
4. What are the three parts of the three-act story structure? Why is this structure helpful? [5.2]

5. How do style and tone contribute to a story? [5.2]

6. How is each of our lives like a story? [5.2]

ACTIVITY

Anatomy of a Bible Story

Objective: You will analyze a biblical story for the components of good storytelling.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: paper, pens, Bibles
- Time Required: 15–20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Work with another student to choose a favorite biblical story. Identify the components of a well-written story in the biblical story.
2. Write down your findings. Present them to the class.

Chapter 5.3–5.4 Discussion Questions

1. What is a metanarrative? What are some examples of a metanarrative? [5.3]

Student Workbook

LESSON 5

2. Are all metanarratives fiction or can they be nonfiction, too? What are some examples that support your answer? [5.3]

3. How can metanarratives help us understand the meaning of our lives? [5.3]

4. Do we really need a metanarrative to make sense out of life? Why or why not? [5.4]

5. What is a worldview? What is the relationship between a metanarrative and a worldview? [5.4]

Student Workbook

LESSON 5

6. What are some popular worldviews today? Do you think the metanarratives they teach can provide meaningful answers to life's biggest questions? [5.4]

7. Are all worldviews equally valid? If so, why? If not, how can we know which worldview is best? [5.7]

ACTIVITY

Worldview Bingo

Objective: You will identify the elements of six common worldviews.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: TR 5.4, several small prizes
- Time Required: 15–20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Your teacher will give you one Worldview Bingo card. As your teacher calls out a worldview, mark all boxes that apply with the appropriate symbol. The symbols are as follows: secularism = stick figure, new spirituality = three small circles, postmodernism = arrow, Marxism = star, Islam = half-moon, Christianity = cross. (Note: Some bingo boxes may apply to more than one worldview, but you should only mark each box once.)
2. The goal is to complete at least one row correctly or complete the highest number of correct rows. When you have completed your first row, you should raise your hand and call out “bingo”. Take your sheet to your teacher to check the answers. If your row is correct, the teacher will record that you had the first complete row. If the row is incorrect, then you are out. If you are unsure that your first completed row is correct, you may choose to wait until completing a second row before saying “bingo”.

Student Workbook

LESSON 5

Chapter 5.5–5.6 Discussion Questions

1. What kind of story is the Bible telling? How would you describe the historical narrative of the Bible? [5.5]
2. What genres are present in the Bible and how do they relate to the historical narrative? [5.5]
3. What significance does the historical narrative of the Bible have for our lives? [5.5]
4. What does it mean to say that the Bible is comprehensive? Do you think the Bible is comprehensive? Why or why not? [5.6]

90

Student Manual

5. What does it mean to say that the Bible is coherent? What objections can you see to the claim that the Bible is coherent? [5.6]

6. What does it mean to say that the Bible is normative? [5.6]

ACTIVITY

Literary Attributes

Objective: You will create a memory aid to help you remember the three literary attributes of the Bible.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: poster board and markers
- Time Required: 15–20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Remember that in addition to being a historical narrative, the Bible has a combination of three literary attributes that make it stand out: it is comprehensive, coherent, and normative.
2. Work with your group to brainstorm and design symbols, acronyms, rhymes, or visual cues to help you memorize and recall the three literary attributes described in the lesson.
3. Present your memory aids to the class.

Foundations

91

Chapter 5.7–5.8 Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to be caught up into God's big story? [5.7]
2. How aware were the biblical authors of their part in God's story? [5.7]
3. Who are some of the biblical characters who found themselves caught up in God's big story? [5.7]
4. Listed below are three ways people summarize the message of the Bible. Explain why each is faulty or incomplete. [5.8]
 - Creation, Fall, Redemption
 - We are sinners, Jesus died for our sins, those who trust Jesus go to heaven when they die.
 - The God of the Old Testament was cruel, but Jesus is kind. He sets a good example that we are to follow.

92

Student Manual

5. In your own words, explain what happens in each of the six acts of the biblical outline. Use the chart in Chapter 5.8 in your textbook as a reference. Which act do you feel you understand the best? The least? [5.8]

6. Would you say the biblical metanarrative is about individuals or the world? Explain your answer. [5.8]

ACTIVITY

Stories within a Story

Objective: You will create a visual representation of the biblical metanarrative and where well-known Bible stories fit within it.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: white printer paper, pens or markers
- Time Required: 15–20 minutes

Procedure:

1. On a piece of white printer paper, draw a horizontal line and mark it to show the main parts of the biblical metanarrative.
2. Place the following well-known Bible narratives on the line within proper section of the metanarrative.
 - Joseph is sold into slavery.
 - Jesus heals a blind man.
 - Jonah and the mission to Nineveh.
 - Either saves the Jewish people.
 - Jesus returns on a white horse.
 - Adam and Eve are thrown out of the garden.
 - David defeats Goliath.
 - Paul and Silas are thrown in jail.
 - The Israelites receive the Law at Mount Sinai.
3. Present your work to the class.

Foundations

93

Student Workbook

LESSON 5

Chapter 5.9–5.10 Discussion Questions

1. How does the Author of the Bible's great story get involved in the story? [5.9]
2. What can we do when we find troubling or difficult things in the Bible? [5.9]
3. What do you think C. S. Lewis means when he says that Jesus's love for us is "quite relentless in its determination that we shall be cured of [our] sins, at whatever cost to us, at whatever cost to Him"? Is this good news or bad news? [5.9]
4. What can we learn about God's nature and character from reading the Bible as one grand story? [5.9]

94

© Student Manual

5. Based on what you have read in this chapter, what part do you think Christians today have to play in God's great story? [5.10]

ACTIVITY

Biblical Application

Objective: You will complete an exercise to apply what you have learned about the biblical metanarrative to the story of Jonah.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: TR 5.5A, Bibles, pen
- Time Required: 20–30 minutes

Procedure:

1. Read the instructions on TR 5.5A Biblical Application, then read the story of Jonah in your Bible. Use the steps from the instruction sheet to complete Exercise: Jonah and God's Grand Story.
2. Be prepared to share some of your thoughts with the class.

Video Discussion Questions

Read the discussion questions before each video is played so that you know what to listen for.

Video 1: How Do We Fit into God's Story?

1. What claim does Genesis 1:1 make about the Bible's message?

© Foundations

95

2. What kind of truth does the Bible offer?
3. What are the two main purposes people were created for?
4. How do modern Christians fit into God's story?

Video 2: How Can We Effectively Understand the Scripture?

1. What is one of the first steps Christians can take to understand the Bible?

2. What does it mean to receive the Bible?

Video 3: What Is the Difference Between Mormonism and Christianity?

1. What are the two primary differences between Mormonism and Christianity?

2. How are the Mormon and Christian views of God different?

96

© Student Manual

3. How are the Mormon and Christian views of salvation different?

Video 4: How Should Christians Handle Apparent Biblical Contradictions?

1. What is the key for interpreting difficult Bible passages properly?

2. What is the art and science of biblical interpretation?

3. Should we base important doctrines on verses we don't understand well?

4. What is biblical interpretation based on?

5. What kind of systematic approach should we take to interpreting Scripture?

Video 5: What Is the Christian Metanarrative?

1. What are the three questions the Christian metanarrative answers?

© Foundations

97

Student Workbook

LESSON 5

2. According to the speaker, what are the four acts of the metanarrative?

3. What four words describe the metanarrative?

Video 6: What Does the Christian Story Have to Do With Me?

1. How does the speaker briefly describe the Christian story?

2. What does the metanarrative mean for us personally?

3. Why should the fact that God knows our hearts comfort us?

98

Student Manual

ACTIVITY

Narrative Quiz Game

Objective: You will play a quiz game to help you remember key terms and concepts.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: none
- Time Required: 20–30 minutes

Procedure:

1. Work with your group to play a game.
2. Follow along as your teacher reads the game rules.

Rules: Teams will choose a category and a clue by saying, "Metanarrative for 200." Teams must choose clue in the same column until column has been completed. (For example, if Team 1 chooses the Metanarrative 200 clue, Team 2 must choose a clue from the Metanarrative category. All team must continue choosing from the same category until that column has been completed.)

After a question has been read aloud, you may quietly confer with your teammates for 15 seconds. Teams indicate desire to answer the clue by having the member who was chosen to answer stand up. The first team to have someone stand up will have 10 seconds to respond in question form. Answers must be given in a "who" or "what" question form (For example, "What is a story?" or "Who is Jesus?"). If the fastest team answers correctly, the points for that question will be added to the team's score. If the team answers incorrectly, the same number of points would be lost. In that case, the second-fastest team may take a guess. If correct, that team receives the points. If incorrect, the third-fastest team can make a guess. The team that answers correctly chooses the next question. If no one answers correctly, the team that chose the previous question chooses again. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

Foundations

99

Chapter 5 Review

Take notes during the slide presentation.

100

Student Manual

Chapter 5 Study Guide

Chapter 5 Key Points

Key Terms
Narrative
Metanarrative
Historical narrative
Comprehensive
Coherent
Normative

Key Verses
Mark 1:14–15
Romans 1:1–5
Galatians 4:4
Revelation 21:5

1. Explain why stories are important.

2. List the different components of well-formed narratives.

3. Explain the relationship between metanarratives, worldviews, and the meaning of life.

Foundations

101

Student Workbook

LESSON 5

4. Identify and critique the postmodern view of metanarratives.

5. Compare and contrast common non-Christian worldviews.

6. Summarize the metanarrative of the Bible.

7. Defend the Bible as a historical narrative.

8. Identify biblical characters who were aware they were part of God's larger story.

102

© Student Manual

9. Describe the six main acts in the biblical metanarrative and relate them to their corresponding Scripture.

10. Explain God's role in the biblical metanarrative.

11. Explain the importance of knowing that the Bible is a metanarrative when interpreting difficult passages.

12. What is a narrative?

13. What is a metanarrative?

© Foundations

103

14. What are some examples of fiction or nonfiction metanarratives?

15. What is a historical narrative?

16. What does it mean to say that the Bible is comprehensive?

17. What does it mean to say that the Bible is coherent?

18. What does it mean to say that the Bible is normative?

104

© Student Manual

19. Describe the typical three-act structure of most story plots.

20. List the big questions that worldviews and their metanarratives seek to answer.

21. What type of worldview do we need? What worldview best serves this purpose?

22. What is the climax of the biblical metanarrative?

23. What does the Bible's internal coherence indicate?

24. Read and study the five Key Verses listed at the beginning of the study guide.

© Foundations

105

Understanding the Times Series

Foundations



STUDENT TEXT



Samples reduced; not actual size

The Bible as a Story

5



Student Text

LESSON 5

1. Tell Me a Story

Objective: You will be able to explain the importance of stories.

Did your parents ever read you a bedtime story? Did you ever read one to a sibling? Maybe you looked through a few titles before you picked one. Was it *Goodnight Moon*? *Llama Llama Red Pajama*? *The Chronicles of Narnia*? Do you have a favorite story?



Of course, stories aren't only for children. While not everyone likes reading stories, most people, including adults, enjoy hearing a good story. And sometimes the best stories are not in books. You see a photograph or souvenir and ask your grandma about it. She tells you the story of that vacation she took with your grandad long ago, and how wonderful and strange and funny it was. Or, you learn something that you never suspected: Your father once broke his leg when he lost control of his sled and slid into a tree. Your mother won a race. Your uncle met someone famous.

Stories are everywhere. They shape us and how we see the world. "Human beings have been telling stories as long as there's been a language to tell them in. We think in stories, remember in stories, and turn just about everything we experience into a story, sometimes adjusting or omitting facts to make it fit."¹ One Summit student put it this way:

It is difficult to understate the importance of story. Stories can expand our world. . . . Telling and listening to stories is how we figure out who we are. For many of us, some of our earliest childhood memories are of stories we were told and how they made us feel. Do you remember the disgust you felt at the selfishness of Cinderella's stepsisters? Or the awe inspired by the courage of Sir Gawain? Do you remember that your first concepts of sacrifice, loyalty, and justice were formed from [the] substance of fairy tales? These stories gave us our first heroes, our first concept of who we wanted to be [and] our first villains, instilling within us a deep hatred of darkness, evil, and selfishness. . . . Whether fiction or nonfiction, stories are a path to self-discovery, a tool of self-examination, and a measuring stick of character. . . . The kind of characters we identify with are formative of our own self-concept. We decide who we will be based off of who we admire.²

Stories are how we make sense of reality. They guide us through life just as the stars and constellations guided ancient explorers across uncharted lands and seas.

"Story is a metaphor for life," says award-winning author and storyteller Robert McKee. He explains that "Story is not only our most prolific art form but rivals all activities—work, play, eating, exercise—for our waking hours. We tell and take stories as much as we sleep—and even then, we dream. Why? Why is so much of our life spent inside stories? Because . . . stories are equipment for living."³

Stories clearly have power to influence our lives. Let's take a closer look at how stories work.

2. Elements of a Story

Objective: You will be able to list the different components of well-formed narratives.

Student Text

LESSON 5

Stories are conveyed in various forms: fables and fairytales, poems and songs, epics and essays, plays and movies, limericks and jokes. They can be fiction or nonfiction, oral or written, long or short, simple or complex, funny or sad. Another word for story is a narrative.

A **narrative** is an account of related events or experiences that is told to listeners or readers.



narrative
an account of related events or
experiences told to listeners or readers

Just as there are certain rules for constructing buildings that are safe and enjoyable to see and inhabit, so there are rules for constructing good stories. There are many different shapes and sizes of buildings, but the good ones have certain structural elements in common. The same is true of stories. The main components of well-written stories, or narratives, are:

- Setting: a time and a place
- Characters: a protagonist (hero), an antagonist (villain), and a supporting cast
- Conflict: a problem to solve or a challenge to overcome
- Theme: the message or idea the author is interested in communicating
- Plot: the storyline, with a beginning, middle, and end
- Point of view: who is telling the story and in what tense (past, present, future)⁴



The plot of a story is especially important. Most stories have a three-act structure that begins with a setup—introducing us to the characters, setting up the location and time of the story, giving us a feel for the story's universe. This is also the part where some kind of conflict is introduced. In the second act, the protagonist confronts the conflict and deals with various obstacles in the way of the goal. Sometimes, around the midpoint of the story, something happens that increases the drama or sets the story on a new trajectory. In the third and final act, the conflict builds to the climax and then ultimately resolves either happily or tragically.⁵

How an author chooses to tell a story is a part of the story too. The meaning of a story is partly communicated by the author's tone and style. Compare the different tones and styles of Dr. Seuss and J. R. R. Tolkien. Both are great storytellers, though their styles are radically different. Dr. Seuss' style involves a lot of rhyming and his tone is whimsical. Tolkien's style is epic, while his tone is usually quite serious.

A story can also have diversity within unity. Like the blending of colors in a painting, unity is a coming together of a multitude of details. In a good story, the reader eventually sees how all of the details fit together. That's why a series of random events does not constitute a story. There needs to be a connecting thread that helps us see how the events work together to form a narrative.



Student Text

LESSON 5

If you think about it, each of our lives is a story. They have a plot—a beginning, a middle, and an end, with lots of interesting characters and conflict along the way. The problem for us is that we don't know how exactly our stories are going to end or even what's going to be in tomorrow's chapter. Sometimes, our lives can feel like a series of random events. And what is the tone of our stories? Is life basically comic, tragic, or something in between? How can we make sense of our individual stories if we don't even know where they are going? To answer these questions, we need a metanarrative.

3. What Is a Metanarrative?

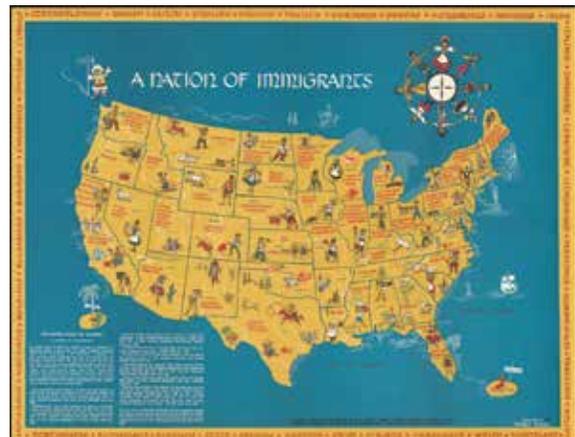
Objective: You will be able to discuss the relationship between metanarratives, worldviews, and the meaning of life.

What's a metanarrative? Narrative means *story*, and *meta* means *beyond*. A **metanarrative**, then, is *the story beyond the story; an overarching narrative that makes sense of everything*.

metanarrative
the story beyond the story;
an overarching narrative that
makes sense of everything

A metanarrative provides a single, overarching interpretation, or grand story, showing how different stories make sense within a larger story. For example, in the musical *Into the Woods*, the stories of Little Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel, Cinderella, and Jack and the Beanstalk are incorporated into the larger story of a couple's quest to have a child.⁶ This quest provides the metanarrative within which all the other stories fit together and make sense.

Not all metanarratives are fiction; there are nonfiction metanarratives as well. The history of the United States, for example, can be seen as a collection of related immigration stories. From the European traders who met the Native Americans already here, to the Pilgrims and Puritans who sought religious freedom; from the plight of enslaved Africans to that of Irish people fleeing the Great Famine in the mid 1800s; from Germans seeking farmland to Chinese building railroads, the story of America can be told as a great metanarrative encompassing the ways its diverse people sought freedom and opportunity.⁷



One of the most popular metanarratives in our culture today is the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU). As one pastor and movie critic explains:



Every human being is hungry for a single overarching storyline that ties all of our smaller stories together. Since 2008, evidence for this hunger has been as close as your nearest cinema. That's when the release of *Iron Man* marked the genesis of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. . . . The MCU includes a multiplicity of individual narratives. Taken together, these storylines form a master narrative—a metanarrative—that turns out to be as vast as the universe itself.⁸

Student Text

LESSON 5

Suppose you knew nothing about the Marvel Cinematic Universe and the first movie you watched was *Captain America: Civil War*. You might have a hard time understanding exactly what was going on. But if you had watched all of the movies that came before it, you would be able to make much more sense of that particular movie. The Marvel Cinematic Universe provides the metanarrative that gives meaning to, and explains, how all of the individual movies fit together.

Before the MCU, there was the *Star Wars* metanarrative created by George Lucas. With *Star Wars*, Lucas wanted to tell “an old myth in a new way.” A myth is similar in many ways to a metanarrative. In ancient times, mythical stories about gods and heroes helped people to explain the world and the origin and history of a people. In *Star Wars*, Lucas uses the mythical story of the hero’s journey (in which a hero character sets out on a quest, confronts a challenge, and returns changed), to highlight the struggle between good and evil in the galaxy. Each character in the *Star Wars* universe has such a journey, but their stories all come together in the great battle between good and evil in the galaxy.¹⁰

Lucas believes that this mythical story, or metanarrative, can help us make sense of our own world. Lucas sees “*Star Wars* as taking all the issues that religion represents and trying to distill them down into a more modern and easily accessible construct.”¹¹

The concept of metanarrative is fundamentally wrapped up with the meaning of life. In *Star Wars*, the initially selfish Han Solo finds meaning and purpose outside of making money when he realizes that he has become part of a bigger story—resistance to the evil empire. Young Jakku scavenger Rey discovers her “destiny” when she realizes that she is an heir to the ancient Jedi tradition.



In the same way, we can see our own stories as part of a bigger story—a metanarrative that gives meaning and purpose to the seemingly random events of our lives.

4. Worldviews as Metanarratives

Objective: You will be able to describe and critique the postmodern view of metanarratives.

Objective: You will be able to compare and contrast common non-Christian worldviews.

However, not everyone thinks that metanarratives can provide meaning to our lives. The term *metanarrative* was made popular by a 1979 book¹² on postmodernism, which argued that religious metanarratives can’t be trusted:



JEAN-FRANCOIS LYOTARD,
POSTMODERNIST FRENCH
PHILOSOPHER

[Postmodernists] generally do not accept any overarching story that gives meaning to all of life. Instead, they focus on small, individual narratives that give meaning to their own lives. A metanarrative speaks of absolute, universal truth. An individual narrative speaks of what is “true for me” and “gives meaning to my life.” Postmodern thinking rejects . . . universal truth.¹³

According to the postmodernist, there is no big story that makes sense of all the other stories. We can only find meaning and purpose in our own story. But we don’t even know what will happen in the next chapter of our lives. Stuck in the middle of our story, it’s hard to know how we should live it.¹⁴

It turns out that all people, even postmodernists, need a metanarrative to make sense of their lives. The postmodern metanarrative claims that there is no universal truth, and that someone who makes a truth claim is usually oppressing others. Do you see how this itself is a metanarrative that helps postmodernists to explain and make sense of everything?

Student Text

LESSON 5

Another way of talking about metanarratives is to talk about worldview. As you may remember from Chapter 1, a worldview is “a pattern of ideas and beliefs that help us make sense of the world and that guide our decisions and actions.” All worldviews offer a metanarrative that claims to explain or give meaning to life and the events in it. Worldviews provide answers to the biggest questions we ask, such as “Where did I come from?” “Who am I?” “What is my purpose in life?” “What is wrong with this world?” “What is the solution?” and “Where am I going after I die?”



Here are some of the most popular worldviews today:

-  **Secularism:** An atheistic/agnostic worldview that puts its faith in human ability and progress to make the world a better place.
-  **New spirituality:** A worldview that teaches that everything is god and that peace and harmony come from getting in touch with divine consciousness.
-  **Postmodernism:** A worldview that tends to be skeptical of all truth claims and rejects the idea that metanarratives can provide meaning to life.
-  **Marxism:** A worldview that sees all of history as class warfare and that aims for a future utopian, atheistic state where everything is held in common by the people.
-  **Islam:** A theistic worldview, centered on the life of the prophet Muhammad, that derives its understanding of the world from the teachings of the Quran, Hadith, and Sunnah.

While there are many different worldviews, all worldviews are not equally valid. Each provides its own answers to the big questions of life, and they can't all be true. How can we know which worldview is best? We don't just want a worldview that sounds nice or helps us to get by. We need a worldview that is rooted in reality, in the way things actually are—a worldview that helps us to live meaningful and fulfilling lives. We believe that the Christian worldview offers a metanarrative that helps to explain the world as it really is and provides meaningful answers to the biggest questions of life.

5. The Bible as a Metanarrative

Objective: You will be able to summarize the metanarrative of the Bible.

As you learned in previous chapters, the Bible is a diverse collection of writings by many different authors. Even a quick glance shows that it doesn't resemble a textbook, encyclopedia, or other books whose primary purpose is to list facts. The Bible's various books were written over 1,500 years. They address distinct audiences and historical circumstances. Yet the Bible is not a random jumble of disconnected stories. Rather, its many stories tell one big story, or metanarrative, centered on God's working in and through his people. The story's climax is reached with the fully divine and fully human Jesus Christ: his birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming return.



62

© Foundations

About half of the Bible can be classified as **historical narrative**—a historical account told in story form.³⁵ To be clear, though, the Bible is not just a report of facts about the past; it is a story based on history, on reality. It tells us about life in the world as it actually is. And as we saw in Chapter 3, there is good evidence for the Bible's historical accuracy.

historical narrative
a historical account told in story form

There are other parts of the Bible that aren't strictly historical narrative, such as wisdom literature, poetry, prophecies, and letters. But these parts were written within the historical narrative. The historical narrative establishes a trajectory from the beginning of God's story to the end. The Bible tells a story that is diverse but unified, with conflict and resolution, and an overarching plot that holds the story together.

If God is the ultimate author of Scripture, it makes sense that the details and subplots of the Bible come together in one coherent story, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As theologian John Piper reminds us:



In profound ways, the whole Bible—the whole of redemptive history—exists to create a place and time and meaning where particular, individual, finite humans can encounter its stunning parts. The parts make up the whole, and so serve the whole. They would have no meaning and no beauty without the whole. But it is just as important to say that the whole exists to give place and time and meaning to the parts so that the parts can be known and experienced and enjoyed.³⁶

By engaging with the metanarrative of Scripture, we can find individual meaning for our own stories as we learn about who God is, how he works with his people, and what his ultimate plan is for us.

The Bible tells the story of the world, to which God's very existence is the prelude. The world it describes is God's world—a world that he created out of love, a world that is flooded with his creative majesty. As one poet put it, “the world is charged with the grandeur of God.”³⁷ God speaks first in Genesis 1:3: “Let there be light.” A simple sentence. No hammering, no sawing. Just the sound of God's voice turning *nothing into something*.



When God commanded it to, impenetrable murkiness became brilliantly illuminated. Plants and animals came to life. And then God created humans, his image-bearers, and told them: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion. . . .” And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Genesis 1:28–31).

In Hebrew, the phrase *very good* is “*toch me'od*.” It means exceedingly, heartbreakingly, abundantly, richly, loudly, immeasurably good in a festive, generous, happy, intelligent, charming, splendid way.³⁸

And yet humanity has fallen under evil's assault and has been catapulted into vast spiritual and moral darkness. But, like in *The Hobbit*, when daylight broke just in time to turn the trolls into stone, Paul tells us that hope broke through into our world—just in time. “When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son” (Galatians 4:4).

We know this story because it was written down. And we know how this grand story turns out. We know that God is, in Christ, “making all things new” (Revelation 21:5).

© Foundations

63

6. Comprehensive, Coherent, and Normative

Objective: You will be able to defend the Bible as a historical metanarrative.

As we have said, the Bible is not a pleasant fiction. It is a true story, a metanarrative grounded in history. In addition to its narrative structure and historical basis, theologians also speak of the Bible as being *comprehensive, coherent, and normative*.³⁹ Let's take a look at what each of these words means in relation to the Bible.

First, the Bible is **comprehensive**, which means to *be complete; it includes everything that is necessary or relevant*. This does not mean that the Bible addresses everything that we would like it to, nor does it satisfy all our curiosities. For example, while the Bible speaks of the reality of a tempter (the serpent in Genesis 3) in the garden of Eden, it does not tell us where this tempter came from (except that God created him) or why the tempter is in the garden. The Bible does not tell us all that we would like to know about science or history. The Bible also does not tell us where or if we should go to college or whom we should marry (or if we should get married). What the Bible does tell us is all that we need to know about God to live meaningfully and faithfully in his world.



comprehensive
to be complete, including everything that is necessary or relevant

Second, despite its diversity, the Bible is **coherent**. To be *coherent* means to be *orderly, logical, and consistent throughout*. It means the parts stick together and don't clash or contradict each other. The many individual stories in the Bible, from different authors, cultures, countries, and centuries, can be pieced together like a jigsaw puzzle. The pieces themselves may have rough edges and might seem incompatible with each other, but put together in the right way, they form one coherent picture.



coherent
to be orderly, logical, and consistent throughout

It is remarkable that the Bible is coherent, given that it was written over such a long period of time by many authors who often didn't even know each other. Imagine a group of strangers trying to write a story over 1,000 years. With all the changes that happen in culture combined with the different styles of each author, it would be hard to keep things consistent throughout. And yet the Bible is miraculously coherent, pointing to its divine inspiration—the Holy Spirit guiding the hands of so many authors to tell one coherent story!

64

© Foundations



A norm is the accepted standard by which we judge something. An inch is an inch because it complies with an agreed-upon unit of measurement. Therefore, the Bible is normative.

To say the Bible is **normative** means that it is *setting norms, or standards, especially when it comes to behavior*.

normative
setting norms or standards, especially when it comes to behavior

The Bible being normative means that it reveals the God-given standard for how people should live. Because the biblical metanarrative gives us a true picture of reality, it cuts through our false notions, exposes our sinfulness, and calls for a response from everyone who interacts with it. As Scripture puts it: “The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:12–13).

The historical metanarrative of Scripture is comprehensive, coherent, and normative. But how could the biblical authors write such a coherent book?

7. Caught Up in a Bigger Story

Objective: You will be able to identify biblical characters who were aware they were part of God's larger story.

The internal coherence of the Bible is primarily due to divine inspiration. However, it is also worth observing that the biblical authors, though they may not have known or understood the details of the whole story, seem overwhelmingly conscious of the fact that they were operating within a larger narrative.

The people who spoke and eventually wrote down what became the Old Testament were aware that they were part of God's story. In many instances God spoke directly to them and told them the part they had to play. The phrase, “Thus says the Lord” occurs more than 400 times in the English Standard Version of the Old Testament. Other phrases also convey the same idea. The human authors knew the story didn't originate with them or end with them. Prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah spoke of a future day when God would return to rule the world with justice and righteousness, giving his people new hearts so that they might truly love God and neighbor.



MARY WRITING THE MAGNIFICAT.
MARIE ELLENREUER, 1833.
GERMANY

The same awareness can be seen in the New Testament. The people in Jesus' life knew they were part of something special. Mary, his mother, sensing her part in a bigger story, sang a song we now know as *the Magnificat*, a beautiful statement about God's faithfulness and deliverance (Luke 1:46–55). Zacharias, the father of Jesus' cousin John the Baptist, was skeptical at first; however, he later realized the events he witnessed were a part of God's grand narrative (Luke 1:67–79). Simeon and Anna, prophets in the temple, also sensed God's grand story when they spoke blessings over the infant Jesus (Luke 2:29–38).



© Foundations

65

Student Text

LESSON 5

Mark 1:14–15 records the beginning of Jesus' ministry: "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'" By recording Jesus' words that "The time is fulfilled," Mark demonstrated his awareness that the story of Jesus is part of a larger story—a story that began all the way back in Genesis and is reaching its climax in the ministry of Jesus.



In Romans 1:1–5 we learn that Paul saw his own ministry in light of the big story that began with God's promises to Israel and extended to all nations. Peter also recognized that those who believe in Christ are part of a larger story (1 Peter 1:3–13).

All throughout Scripture, God's servants are people who sense they are part of something bigger than themselves, something God is doing all over the world and throughout the ages. Each of them was caught up in a bigger story. As believers, we too are invited to play our part in the great story that God is telling. But how does that bigger story play out?

8. Outline of the Biblical Story

Objective: You will be able to describe the six main acts in the biblical metanarrative.

There are several ways to understand the metanarrative of Scripture. Numerous theologians have developed charts and maps for helping people understand the outline of Scripture. In this textbook, we have chosen to follow the outline presented by Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen in their book *The Drama of Scripture*.¹² This outline describes the biblical metanarrative in a six-act structure, with an interlude between act three and four. You can think of each act as an act in a play. The chart below allows us to see the Bible as one great metanarrative, which tells the story of the world beginning with God's creation and leading all the way up to the final restoration of all things.

Acts in the Biblical Metanarrative	Description	Primary Texts
Act 1: Creation—God's Good World	God creates a good world where humans, made in God's image, can live in harmony with him, themselves, others, and creation.	Genesis 1–2
Act 2: The Fall—Sin and Its Consequences	Sin corrupts God's world, leading to evil, the breakdown of relationships, and death.	Genesis 3–11
Act 3: Israel—Redemption Initiated	God chooses Abraham's family to be a blessing to the whole world by making them a kingdom of priests and a holy people.	Torah, Prophets, Writings
Interlude: The Second Temple Period	After their failure to be faithful to God, subsequent exile, and return to Israel, the people of God wait for a Messiah as they strive to obey God in the midst of foreign empires.	Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Daniel; Second Temple literature
Act 4: Redemption Initiated—Jesus	Jesus comes to Earth to announce the kingdom of God. He lives a sinless life, is crucified, and rises from the dead in triumph over evil, sin, and death. He makes reconciliation possible.	Gospels
Act 5: Restoration Initiated—The Church	Jesus ascends and the Holy Spirit empowers God's people, the church, to spread the good news through their proclamation and practice as they await the full restoration of all things.	Acts, Epistles
Act 6: Restoration Accomplished—New Creation	Jesus returns to Earth at the end of history to judge everyone and establish the kingdom of God. Sin is banished forever, and all things are made new.	Revelation

66

Foundations

In Chapters 6–12, we'll unpack this metanarrative in greater detail. As we do, we'll see that it is not just a story about the past and the future, but a story about God, humans, the world, and everything in it—a story in which we find meaning and purpose for our lives now. We are characters in this great drama. We have a part to play!

One theologian summarizes the biblical metanarrative like this: "God the Father has reconciled his created but fallen world through the death of his Son, and renews it into a Kingdom of God by his Spirit." Note the terms *created, fallen, reconciled, renewed, and Kingdom of God*. Each of these terms applies to the whole cosmos and not just to individuals.¹³ So, while the great story provides meaning and purpose for our individual lives, it also offers meaning and purpose for the whole world. Through this great metanarrative, we have been invited into something bigger than ourselves.

9. Meeting the Author

Objective: You will be able to express what God's role in the biblical metanarrative is.
Objective: You will be able to articulate the importance of knowing that the Bible is a metanarrative when interpreting difficult passages.

Reading the Bible as a metanarrative has important implications for how we understand God. God reveals himself, not by giving us a few facts about himself, but rather through the way he acts in the world and interacts with human beings. From Genesis to Revelation, God is active in his story, like a director who is also acting in a movie he wrote. He does not sit by and watch history unfold from the sidelines. He gets involved. We see this in his faithfulness to Israel, in his commitment to his creation, and ultimately in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross—all done because God loves the world and all the people he created.



However, as you read through the Bible, you will likely find passages that are troubling and confusing, or that lead to difficult questions, such as "If God loves everyone, why was slavery permitted in the Old Testament?" or "Why did God command the Israelites to invade the land of Canaan?" Isolated from the big story, troubling texts can make God seem petty or vindictive. This is why it is so important to understand the metanarrative. Over time, we will begin to see how troubling passages fit within the whole. This is not to explain them away or minimize the difficulties. It is to say that through the careful reading of Scripture and the illumination of the Holy Spirit, we can see that God is good, wise, and knowledgeable.

God patiently instructs, chastens, protects, delivers, and restores his people. He is faithful. As the Creator of this world, he is absolutely committed to us, and his commitment knows no bounds. As C. S. Lewis once said of Jesus:

The great thing to remember is that, though our feelings come and go, His love for us does not. It is not weakened by our sins, or our indifference; and, therefore, it is quite relentless in its determination that we shall be cured of those sins, at whatever cost to us, at whatever cost to Him.¹⁴

God will stop at nothing to redeem his creation. Understanding the way that love undergirds every action he takes provides a strong counterpoint to the common impression that God is brooding, grumpy, mean, and distant.



Hans THIERST, WORD ENGRAVING, 1850

Foundations

67

There is much to learn, and we must not assume that our finite minds can understand everything. Knowing God through Scripture is a lifelong endeavor. One of the reasons the Bible is so rich as a literary work, apart from its value as God's Word, is that there is so much to discover in each of its books—and even more to be learned as the whole grand story unfolds.

10. Conclusion

Understanding the metanarrative of Scripture will help us understand ourselves and the part we play in this cosmic drama. We are image-bearers of God, made for an eternal relationship with our Creator. From Genesis onward, we learn that the sovereign Creator has chosen human beings to share this life—and eternity—with him. We learn that we are broken by sin and unable to save ourselves or set the world right. We also learn that we are so loved by God that he sent Jesus to give his life for us! The Father's plan of redemption and restoration, promised in the garden of Eden and previewed in Israel, finds its fulfillment in Jesus and will one day be complete.

We are not mere spectators, passively watching the story unfold. We are part of the story! "The world of the Bible is our world," Bartholomew and Goheen remind us, "and its story of redemption is also our story. This story is waiting for an ending—in part because we ourselves have a role to play before all is concluded. We must therefore pay attention to the continuing biblical story of redemption."¹⁵



Each of our stories matters to God, and we find meaning and purpose in his great story. In the next chapter we will explore the first part of the biblical metanarrative: creation.

ENDNOTES

- ¹²Carl Alvani, "The Science behind Storytelling," Protagonist Studio, October 11, 2018, <https://medium.com/the-protagonist/the-science-behind-storytelling-5110075882c2>.
- ¹³Anne-Louise Cook, "Give Me a Story: A Week with Dr. Williams," Summit.org, October 19, 2016, <https://www.summit.org/blog/semester/give-me-a-story-a-week-with-dr-williams/>.
- ¹⁴Robert McKee, *Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting* (New York: ReganBooks, 1997), 11.
- ¹⁵Chris Drewe, "The 8 Elements of a Story—Explained for Students," Helpful Professor.com, <https://helpfulprofessor.com/story-elements/>.
- ¹⁶Glen C. Strathy, " Syd Field's Model of Screenplay Structure," How-To-Write-A-Book-Now.com, <https://www.how-to-write-a-book-now.com/syd-field.html>.
- ¹⁷Synopsis: *Into the Woods*, Bard.org, <https://www.bard.org/study-guides/synopsis-into-the-woods>.
- ¹⁸U.S. Immigration Timeline, History.com, <https://www.history.com/topics/immigration/immigration-united-states-timeline>.
- ¹⁹Timothy Paul Jones, "Culture: The Marvel Cinematic Universe and the Metanarrative of God," November 12, 2018, <https://www.timothypauljones.com/culture-the-marvel-cinematic-universe-and-humanity-hunger-for-a-metanarrative/>.
- ²⁰"The Mythology of 'Star Wars' with George Lucas," BillMeyers.com, June 18, 1999, <https://billmeyers.com/mythology-of-star-wars-george-lucas/>.
- ²¹Gene Stansel, "Star Wars and 'The Hero's Journey,'" February 23, 2016, <https://www.pgeenwood.org/blog/post/star-wars-and-the-heros-journey/>.
- ²²BillMeyers.com, "Mythology of Star Wars."
- ²³Jean-François Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir* (Paris, France: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1979), translated into English as *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xxiv, xi, 34, 37.
- ²⁴"What Is a Metanarrative?," Good Questions, <https://www.goodquestions.org/metanarrative.html>.
- ²⁵For a fuller explanation of this idea of being stuck in the middle of a story, see Iain Provan, *Seriously Dangerous Religion: What the Old Testament Really Says and Why It Matters* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 1–5.
- ²⁶Statistics vary. Robert L. Plummer, in *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010), 191, cites "about 60 percent" for OT and NT combined. Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *In How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 89, suggest that "over 40 percent" of the OT is narrative.
- ²⁷John Piper, "The Great Story and the Single Verse," *Desiring God*, October 24, 2012, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-great-story-and-the-single-verse>.

68

Foundations

- ¹²See "God's Grandeur," by Gerard Manley Hopkins, Poetry Foundation, <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173660>.
- ¹³See "moed" Strong's Hebrew reference number 3966, and "yob" Strong's Hebrew reference number 2896a, in Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible/Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries*, updated ed. (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 1981).
- ¹⁴The focus on comprehensiveness and normative is discussed in Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 20.
- ¹⁵This chart is adapted from the outline of the biblical metanarrative in Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014). The titles have been slightly modified. *The Drama of Scripture* is an excellent text for understanding the biblical metanarrative in greater depth. We highly recommend it for those looking for a deeper dive on what is presented in Chapters 6–12 of this book.
- ¹⁶Art Lindley, "Creation, Fall, Redemption," *Knowing & Doing* (Winter 2009): 1. https://www.celwisinstitute.org/Creation_Fall_Redemption_page1. Lindley was citing the Dutch Reformed theologian Herman Ritschl.
- ¹⁷C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 2017), 133.
- ¹⁸Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 213.

Foundations

69

Presentation Slides

LESSON 5

PS 5.8A **Narrative Quiz Game**

How much do you remember from this chapter?
Let's find out by playing this Narrative Quiz Game!

© Foundations

PS 5.8A **Narrative Quiz Game**

Narrative	Metanarrative	Historical Narrative	Biblical Attributes	More Biblical Attributes	Worldviews
200	200	200	200	200	200
400	400	400	400	400	400
600	600	600	600	600	600
800	800	800	800	800	800

© Foundations

PS 5.8A **Narrative Quiz Game**

NARRATIVE 200

This component of good storytelling includes a time and a place.

© Foundations

PS 5.8A **Narrative Quiz Game**

NARRATIVE 400

An author is interested in communicating this message or idea through a story.

© Foundations

Samples reduced; not actual size

Presentation Slides

LESSON 5

PS 5.8B The Bible as a Story

Chapter 5 Review

Chapter 5.1—Tell Me a Story

- Why are stories important to our lives?
 - Stories are everywhere.
 - Stories shape us and how we see the world.
 - We think in stories, remember in stories, and turn experiences into stories.
 - Stories can expand our world.
 - Stories are how we make sense of reality.
 - Stories guide us through life.
 - Stories have power to influence our lives.
 - “Story is a metaphor for life.”



© Foundations

PS 5.8B The Bible as a Story

Chapter 5 Review

Chapter 5.3—What Is a Metanarrative?

- What is a metanarrative?
 - The word *narrative* means *story* and *meta* means *beyond*.
 - **Metanarrative:** the story beyond the story; an overarching narrative that makes sense of everything
- ...ative can also be understood as a grand story that helps us make sense of smaller stories.

Metanarratives include:
 • *J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit*
 • *The History of the United States*
 • *The Marvel Cinematic Universe*
 • *S*
 • *S*
 • *S*



5

PS 5.8B The Bible as a Story

Chapter 5 Review

Chapter 5.6—Comprehensive, Coherent, and Normative

- The Bible is historical, and also comprehensive, coherent, and normative.



- **Comprehensive:** to be complete, including everything that is necessary or relevant
 - does not address everything or satisfy all our curiosities
 - does tell us all we need to know about God to live meaningfully and faithfully
- **Coherent:** to be orderly, logical, and consistent throughout
 - consistency though written over 1,500 years by multiple authors points to divine inspiration
- **Normative:** setting norms or standards, especially when it comes to behavior
 - reveals the God-given standard for how people should live
 - cuts through false notions, exposes sinfulness, and calls for a response from everyone who interacts with it



© Foundations

PS 5.8B The Bible as a Story

Chapter 5 Review

Chapter 5.10—Conclusion

- If we understand the biblical metanarrative, we can better understand ourselves and the meaning and purpose of our lives.
 - We are image-bearers of God, made for eternal relationship with our Creator.
 - God our Creator has chosen human beings to share life and eternity with him.
 - All human beings are broken by sin and unable to save ourselves or fix the world.
 - The Father loved us so much that he sent Jesus to pay the penalty for sin on our behalf.
 - The Father's plan of redemption and restoration, promised in Eden and previewed in Israel, is fulfilled in Jesus and will one day be complete.
 - We are not spectators; we are participants in God's story. We all have a role to play. What's yours?



14

Samples reduced; not actual size

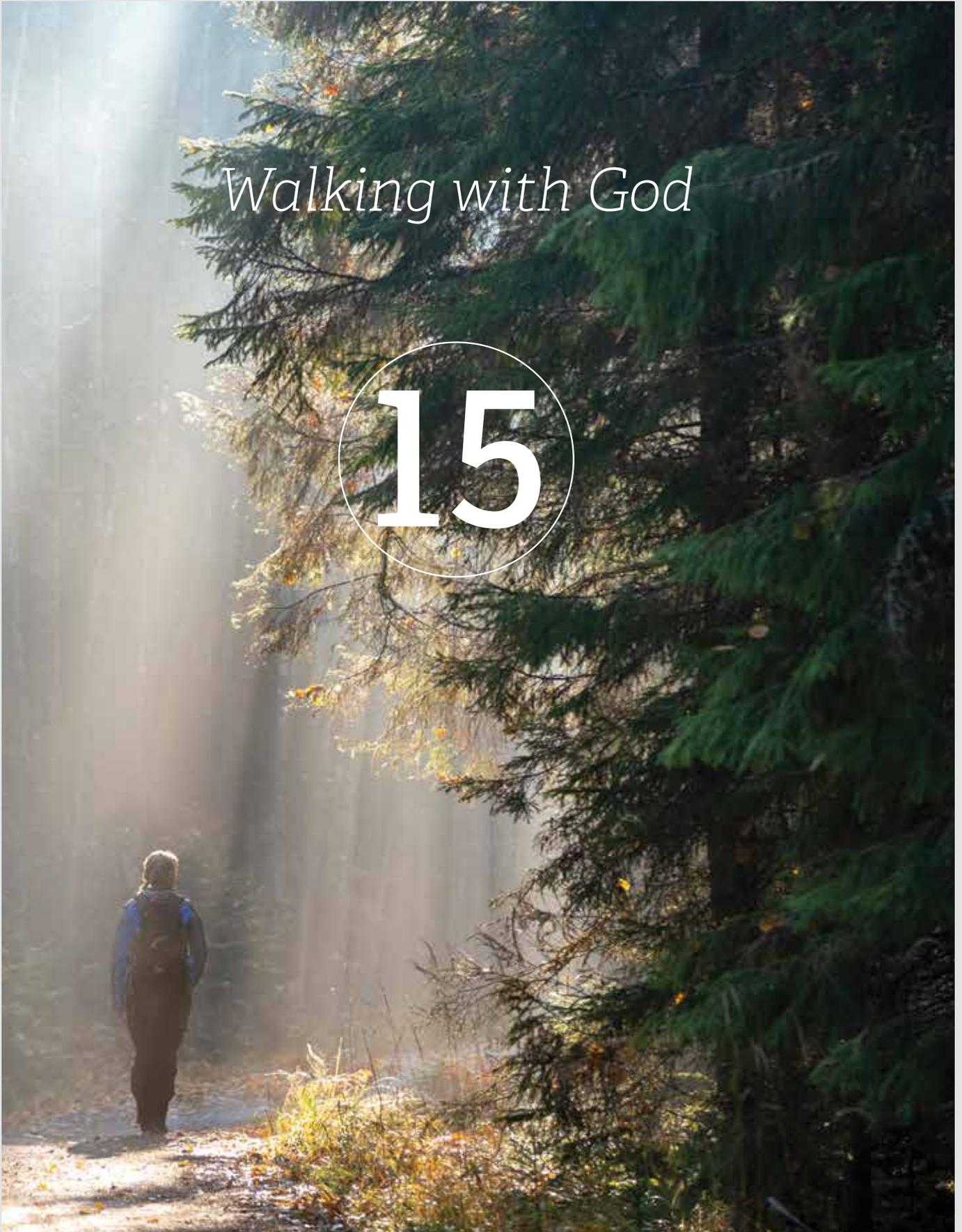
Video Samples
LESSON 5



Only Select Videos Displayed

Walking with God

15



Teacher Manual

LESSON 15

Chapter 15—Walking with God

Chapter 15 Syllabus

Day	Assignment		Page	
1	In Class	REVIEW	Chapter 14 Test	—
	In Class	DISCUSS	Questions for Chapter 15.1–15.2	313–316
	In Class	EXPLORE	Activity: Right Turn	314
	At Home	READ	Chapter 15.3–15.4	ST 194–196
	At Home	ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 15.3–15.4	SM 307–308
2	In Class	DISCUSS	Questions for Chapter 15.3–15.4	314–316
	In Class	EXPLORE	Activity: Strategy for Growth	316–317
	At Home	READ	Chapter 15.5–15.6	ST 196–198
	At Home	ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 15.5–15.6	SM 311–312
3	In Class	DISCUSS	Questions for Chapter 15.5–15.6	318–319
	In Class	EXPLORE	Activity: Methods of Prayer	320
	At Home	READ	Chapter 15.7–15.8	ST 198–200
	At Home	ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 15.7–15.8	SM 312–313
4	In Class	DISCUSS	Questions for Chapter 15.7–15.8	320–321
	In Class	EXPLORE	Activity: Counting the Cost	322–323
	At Home	READ	Chapter 15.9–15.10	ST 201–202
	At Home	ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 15.9–15.10	SM 315
5	In Class	DISCUSS	Questions for Chapter 15.9–15.10	324
	In Class	EXPLORE	Activity: Models for Living	325
6	In Class	EXPLORE	Activity: Category Clues	326
7	In Class	WATCH	Videos	326–327
	In Class	ANSWER	Video Questions	SM 317–320
	In Class	DISCUSS	Video Questions	326–329
8	In Class	EXPLORE	Activity: Discipline Your Memory	329
	In Class	REVIEW FOR	Chapter 15 Test	330
9	In Class	STUDY FOR	Chapter 15 Test	SM 322–326
	In Class	ANSWER	Study Guide Questions	330–332
10	In Class	GIVE	Chapter 15 Test	332
	At Home	READ	Chapter 16.1–16.2	ST 206–207
	At Home	ANSWER	Questions for Chapter 16.1–16.2	SM 330

Student Textbook (ST)

Student Manual (SM)

A full-year syllabus is available in the online resources.

Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Overview

Spiritual disciplines are practices and habits that help us to know God more truly and shape us into the people he created us to be. These actions invite us into a deeper relationship with God. These practices require discipline on our part as the Holy Spirit works in us and transforms us.

If we are to be transformed into the image of Christ, we must begin by being honest about who we are through practices such as solitude, silence, and self-examination. Prayer is also vital to the life of every Christian. Prayer is about being in relationship with God and about what God does in us. Through worship, we show reverence or adoration for someone or something. Our whole lives are meant to be an act of worship. Careful reading, study, and memorization of Scripture, combined with Christian meditation and contemplation, provide an avenue for God to speak powerfully to our hearts. Fasting, abstinence from various indulgences, simplicity, stewardship, and giving are also important spiritual disciplines.

Through the Bible, the Holy Spirit speaks to Christians today, showing us how we can be redeemed and remade into people who truly love God and others. The Bible does not cover every topic, and some passages can be hard to understand, so it's important to read the works of Christian authors who thoughtfully studied how to live and think as Christians. It's also important that we don't only read the works of authors we already agree with. We need to hear the perspectives of people from other parts of the world, other theological traditions, and other eras. We look to Jesus to learn how to live, yet we also learn much from the examples of many followers of Christ throughout history.

PREPARATION **P**

- Day 3:** Make one copy of **TR 15.3A Methods of Prayer** for each student.
- Day 4:** Obtain one ruler for each pair of students.
- Day 5:** Computers will be needed for the activity.
- Day 6:** Obtain one handheld whiteboard, marker, and eraser for each group of three to four students. Pads of paper can be used if whiteboards aren't available. Review **PS 15.6A Category Clues** to become familiar with the activity.
- Day 7:** Access and preview the five videos listed on Day 7. See the inside back cover of this manual for instructions to stream videos.
- Day 8:** Make one copy of **TR 15.8A Discipline Your Memory** for every four students. Cut out the cards and place each set in a resealable bag.
- Day 10:** Make one copy of **TR 15.10A Chapter 15 Test** for each student.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Presentation Slides

PS 15.6A Category Clues
PS 15.8A Chapter 15 Review

Teacher Resources

TR 15.3A Methods of Prayer
TR 15.8A Discipline Your Memory
TR 15.10A Chapter 15 Test

Day 1: Chapter 15.1–15.2

Review Chapter 14 Test. Have students turn to page 193 in their student textbooks. Read the objectives to the class. Go over the answers to the Discussion Questions for Chapter 15.1–15.2 on pages 306–307 in the student manual. Have students turn to **Activity: Right Turn**. Read the directions. Assign the homework.

Objectives and Discussion Questions

Objective: Students will be able to explain the purpose of spiritual disciplines. [15.1]

Objective: Students will be able to differentiate between Christian spiritual disciplines and Eastern religion transcendence practices. [15.2]

1. What is a spiritual discipline? What is the purpose of spiritual disciplines? [15.1]

A spiritual discipline is a habit or practice that helps form us to be more like Christ. The spiritual disciplines do not help us measure how “Christian” we are, nor by practicing them can we earn God’s favor or salvation. Rather, the spiritual disciplines help us to know God and Scripture more deeply and help us cooperate with the Spirit so that we can be transformed in the image of Christ.

2. What is the purpose of silence and solitude for Christians? How is this different from Eastern religions? [15.2]

The spiritual disciplines of silence and solitude can help us temporarily step away from the busyness and noise of life so we can focus on God without distractions. Silence and solitude make us face ourselves as we truly are; we come to God honestly with all our fears, sins, failures, and unmet desires. Eastern religions encourage silence as a way to transcend yourself and reach a “higher” spiritual reality. For Christians, silence and solitude are about focusing our full attention on God in prayer so our sinful tendencies can be put to death, and we can become more like Christ.

3. What does it mean to listen to God? [15.2]

To listen to God is to be aware of his presence and to reflect on how he is speaking to us through Scripture, the wise counsel of other Christians, and sometimes through circumstances. It is to pay attention to the conviction, encouragement, and challenge of the Holy Spirit. As we listen, make sure our conclusions align with the Bible and not simply with our own desires.

4. Why is it important to regularly practice self-examination? [15.2]

Regular self-examination helps keep us honest with ourselves and God. We daily acknowledge our brokenness, not in order to beat ourselves up, but to confess the ways we have failed to love others and pray for the grace to change. Regular self-examination and confession should also help us remember our need for God, our identity as his beloved children, and his unlimited forgiveness.

Chapter 15

5. How can you practice these quiet disciplines? [15.2]

Possible answer: In order to practice these disciplines, it can be helpful to find a time and place to be quiet and alone with God without distractions. Such a place can be hard to find, so this may require some creativity. Some options include picking a room in your house that is private or going on a walk outside through the woods or a park. We can try leaving our cell phone on silent during these times.

ACTIVITY

Right Turn

Objective: Students will examine the purpose of self-examination, confession, and repentance in the Christian life.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: Bible, paper, and pen
- Time Required: 20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into five groups. Explain that the quiet spiritual disciplines like self-examination are intended to bring us to confession and repentance. They restore and strengthen the intimacy of our relationship with God.
2. Assign each group one of the following references:
 - Psalm 51:1–2
 - Psalm 51:3–4
 - Psalm 51:7–9
 - Psalm 51:10–12
 - Psalm 51:16–17
3. Direct groups to read the verses and briefly answer the following questions:
 - What does this teach us about God?
 - What does this teach us about sin?
 - What does this teach us about self-examination, confession, and/or repentance?
 - How can we follow the psalmist's example?
4. Have each group present their findings to the class.

Day 2: Chapter 15.3–15.4

Read the objectives to the class. Go over the answers to the Discussion Questions for Chapter 15.3–15.4. Have students turn to **Activity: Strategy for Growth** in their student manual. Have them complete the chart. Assign the homework.

Objectives and Discussion Questions

Objective: Students will be able to give examples of various approaches to prayer. [15.3]

Objective: Students will be able to explain the Lord's Prayer as a model for prayer. [14.4]

Objective: Students will be able to describe various forms of Christian worship. [15.4]

1. What are some things that make prayer difficult? How does seeing prayer as primarily something that God uses to shape us affect that perception? [15.3]

Possible answer: Prayer is difficult for many reasons. Prayer isn't done to make us feel better or offer a sense of accomplishment. Prayer is not a tangible activity, which often makes it difficult to stay focused. Since we cannot see God with our eyes it may feel as though we are just talking to the air. Furthermore, God does not always answer prayers in the way or in the time we expect, which might cause us to wonder if he is even listening.

As we pray, we grow in dependence on God and in loving relationship with him. Because prayer is primarily what God uses to shape us, we do not need to try to come up with strategies for getting God's attention or devise methods to ensure our prayers are answered in the way we want. Instead, we simply cooperate with his work in us.

2. What does it mean to pray without ceasing? [15.3]

To pray without ceasing is to always be in a spiritual posture of prayer—that is, recognizing our dependence on God and being open to and aware of his presence throughout our day. It is keeping the dialogue with God open all day long, regularly expressing our needs and desires to him.

3. What does the Lord's Prayer teach us about how to pray? [15.3]

The Lord's Prayer is the model for prayer given to us by Jesus. It teaches us to address God as a loving parent, while still recognizing his holiness and kingship. It also teaches us to seek what God desires and conform to his will over our own, to trust God with our daily needs, to seek God's forgiveness and forgive those who have wronged us, and to ask him to bring us safely through trials and temptations.

4. How can our work be an act of worship? [15.4]

The Hebrew word for work often refers to sacred service offered to God. Our work becomes an act of worship when we do it for his glory by reflecting his excellence, goodness, and creativity. Our work brings glory to God when we do work that is good for the world; use our creativity to bless others; respect our bosses; and work diligently, thoroughly, and with excellence.

Chapter 15

5. Why is God worthy of our worship? [15.4]

Possible Answer: God is worthy of worship because he is our Creator, Sustainer, Helper, Savior, Redeemer, King, Lord, and Ruler. He is above and beyond our comprehension, yet he cares intimately about each person. He alone gave his life for the world, took the punishment for all our sins, and has overcome the power of sin and death.

6. What might make worshipping God difficult? [15.4]

We may not always feel like worshipping God. Sometimes God may seem distant or uninvolved. It may seem that God's promises are not being fulfilled or that he has let us down. When we feel this way, we can take courage from the biblical authors who again and again attest to God's faithfulness. We can also be encouraged by the psalmists who honestly complained to God when they didn't feel like worshipping him. God is honored by our honesty.

ACTIVITY

Strategy for Growth

Objective: Students will devise a personal strategy for regular prayer, worship, Bible reading, and memorization.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: pen
- Time Required: 15–20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Explain that the key to meeting goals and forming lasting habits is to set smaller, actionable goals that help you reach the larger goal. It is also helpful to create a plan for when goals aren't quite met, in order to prevent discouragement.
2. Direct students to complete the chart.
3. Encourage students to share their strategies.

Note: It may be helpful to share the following tip with students. If they are using a Bible reading plan (such as reading the whole Bible or the New Testament in a year) and miss a day or so, it can be helpful to begin by reading the assigned portion for the current date as if no days were missed or to shift the dates in the reading schedule. This helps keep the momentum and prevents discouragement from having “play catch up” on missed material.

Teacher Manual
LESSON 15

Chapter 15

	Prayer	Worship	Bible Reading	Memorization
What goal do I want to eventually reach in each area?				
What small change(s) can I make to begin moving toward each goal?				
How will I respond at times when I struggle to make changes or reach my goals?				
What goal do I want to eventually reach in each area?				

Teacher Manual

LESSON 15

Chapter 15

Day 3: Chapter 15.5–15.6

Read the objectives to the class. Go over the answers to the Discussion Questions for Chapter 15.5–15.6. Have students turn to **Activity: Methods of Prayer** in their student manuals. Distribute a copy of **TR 15.3A Methods of Prayer** to each student. Read the directions. Assign the homework.

Objectives and Discussion Questions

Objective: Students will be able to incorporate Christian meditation and Christian contemplation into personal Bible study. [15.5]
Objective: Students will be able to evaluate the merits of reading from a variety of authors including those they disagree with. [15.6]

1. Why is it important for a Christian to be familiar with and memorize portions of the Bible? [15.5]

Scripture is the primary source for learning who God is, who we are, the nature of reality, and the purpose of life. Memorizing Scripture provides us with encouragement in times of doubt, wisdom in difficult situations, and ammunition with which to combat temptation. Whenever possible, we avoid memorizing a single verse out of context. Try to memorize in paragraphs to keep the author's thoughts intact.

Note: There were no verses in the original Bible. Verse numbers were added in 1551 by French printer Robert Stephanus to help people navigate the text more easily.¹ Reference numbers can be helpful during church when the pastor tells us where to open our Bibles or when we want to check on the context of a verse someone quotes. One problem is that we tend to think Bible verses are snippets of wisdom we can take and use however we want. Encourage students to use the numbers as a reference tool, and to read and think in terms of whole paragraphs, whole books, and the whole collection of Scripture.

¹Greg Koussil, "A Warning about Bible Verses," Stand to Reason, February 1, 2022, https://www.stz.org/w/a-warning-about-bible-verses?p_l_bak_ssf=923a0c39b3f9c9c3030b66e2b0e88.

2. What is the difference between Christian meditation and Christian contemplation? [15.5]

Christian meditation engages the mind as well as the heart as we reflect on God's character and on specific Scriptures we have read. We meditate on Scripture by reading a passage slowly and then mulling over it, considering the meaning of the words, evaluating the argument that's being made or the story that's being told, and reflecting on what the passage reveals about God and his desire for our lives.

Christian contemplation is quietly responding to God based on your meditations on Scripture. This is a good time to listen to the Holy Spirit's promptings, whether that is responding to God in praise or repentance, awe, or comfort in his presence.

3. Based on what you learned about new spirituality in Chapter 5, Chapter 15.2 and 15.5, how are Christian spiritual disciplines, such as Christian meditation, contemplation, and self-examination, different from Eastern transcendental and new spirituality practices? [15.5]

318

Teacher Manual

Chapter 15

Possible answer: The Christian spiritual disciplines do not involve emptying our minds, but rather filling them with God's Word and responding to the work of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of the spiritual disciplines is not to liberate us to live in any way that we feel is most true to ourselves. Christian meditation is not about finding our "authentic selves," transcending ourselves as in some Eastern religions, getting in touch with divine consciousness, or reaching oneness with the divine with all that exists. Christian meditation, contemplation, and self-examination are about drawing closer to Jesus and internalizing and applying the Scriptures to our lives.

Note: A 2016 Barna study found that 61% of practicing Christians agree with ideas rooted in new spirituality. Some of these ideas include the belief that all religions ultimately worship the same deity, that purpose and meaning come from becoming one with "all that is," and the karmic principle that "if you do good, you will receive good, and if you do bad, you will receive bad."¹

¹ Barna Group, "Competing Worldviews Influence Today's Christians", Barna Research, May 9, 2017, <https://www.barna.com/research/competing-worldviews-influence-todays-christians/>.

4. Why do we need to read books written by Christians with different perspectives from our own? What about books by non-Christians? [15.6]

If we read only books that we already agree with, we will have fewer opportunities to thoughtfully evaluate our own beliefs. Our ideas will not be challenged or corrected. We can learn much from other Christians and from non-Christians. All truth comes from God, and since all humans are made in his image, it makes sense that even those who don't believe the gospel can say some true things. Reading non-Christian books may give us insight into our culture so that we can better share the gospel. Regardless of whether we agree with a perspective or not, we always measure what we read against Scripture to see if that perspective accurately represents the truth.

Note: Being careful students of the Bible is essential in helping us evaluate the ideas contained in other books, both Christian and non-Christian. According to a 2016 Barna study, "only 17 percent of Christians who consider their faith important and attend church regularly actually have a biblical worldview."¹ Some well-meaning Christians may teach faulty ideas or interpret the Bible improperly (such as taking verses out of context). Even Christian authors we trust or generally agree with may make mistakes, so it is important to know the Bible well, study it properly, and compare the teachings of others to the teachings of the Bible.

¹ Barna Group, May 9, 2017.

5. Is reading fiction a good use of time for a Christian? Why or why not? [15.6]

Possible answer: Not all Christians believe that there is value in reading fiction. Yet, fiction can give us deep insight into the human condition and arouse in us empathy and understanding for our fellow humans. The best stories echo the true story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. Reading non-fiction forms us through reason, logic, and argument; but stories shape our imaginations and give voice to human experiences.

Foundations

319

Chapter 15

ACTIVITY

Methods of Prayer

Objective: Students will practice using the Lectio Divina as a method for Bible study and prayer.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: TR 15.3A, pen
- Time Required: 15–20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Distribute one copy of **TR 15.3A Methods of Prayer** to each student. Read the directions and have students complete the activity.
2. Have the class discuss their answers. If time allows, ask students what other methods of Bible study and prayer they use regularly.

Day 4: Chapter 15.7–15.8

Read the objectives to the class. Go over the answers to the Discussion Questions for Chapter 15.7–15.8. Have students turn to **Activity: Counting the Cost** in their student manuals. Read the directions. Have students work in pairs. Assign the homework.

Objectives and Discussion Questions

Objective: Students will be able to distinguish between three different types of fasts and describe appropriate fasting. [15.7]
Objective: Students will be able to articulate the biblical view of simplicity and stewardship. [15.8]

1. What is the purpose of fasting? What are three types of fasts in the Bible? [15.7]

When we fast, we acknowledge our dependence on God, that we need more than food to live. Fasting also helps us grow in gratitude for God's good gifts. Fasting gives us the opportunity to empty ourselves, so that God can fill us.

- Defining Moment Fast: Fasting when we recognize that God is doing something new in our lives.
- Turning from Sinful Choices Fast: Fasting when we realize we're living in sin, and we repent before God.
- Tragic Calamity Fast: Fasting in response to tragedy.

320

Teacher Manual

Chapter 15

2. What is asceticism and how could it be practiced appropriately in the modern day? [15.7]

Asceticism is the practice of abstaining from all types of indulgence. The purpose is to pursue God more intentionally by avoiding sin or by setting aside good things, usually for a set time. In the modern day, asceticism could mean taking breaks from social media, video games, other forms of entertainment, or certain kinds of foods in order to devote more focused attention to spiritual disciplines.

Note: Asceticism should never be pursued as a goal in and of itself, making God into a forbiddener of good things. Asceticism should only be practiced for the purpose of finding joy in a closer relationship with God.

3. What is the Christian motivation for work? [15.8]

One significant Christian motivation for work is love for others. God want us to have compassion for the poor. Christians should work so they "may have something to share with anyone in need" (Ephesians 4:28). We imitate God by giving out of our abundance, especially to those who are materially poor.

Note: We also work because we imitate God in his creativeness. He created the world and gave us the work of cultivating it. We also create because he creates. In other words, for the Christian, work is a good activity, and we can honor God through our work.

4. How might giving money sometimes make things worse for those we are trying to help? What are some constructive ways to help the poor? [15.8]

Possible answer: There is an old saying: "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime." We may think that the best way to solve any issue is to throw some money at it (give a man a fish). While that may temporarily relieve a problem, it can do more harm than good in the long term, perpetuating cycles of poverty. Simply giving money may cause us to see people as objects of our pity, rather than equal humans with dignity. When we give money, we may make people dependent on us instead of helping them to develop more constructive ways of building up their own communities.

Giving money can be good, but we also need to think about ways to help uphold the dignity of those who are poor and give them the training and tools to creatively address poverty (teach a man to fish). We need to work together with those who are trying to help.

5. What are some ways that you can practice simplicity and wise stewardship? [15.8]

Living simply does not necessarily mean giving away everything that you have, though some Christians have done this. By making small changes, each of us can learn to live more simply, and serve God and others with our resources, better steward what God has given us. This could include denying the urge to buy the newest things, reevaluating hobbies or possessions that distract us from seeking God's kingdom first, and rejecting instant gratification.

Foundations

321

Teacher Manual

LESSON 15

Chapter 15

ACTIVITY

Counting the Cost

Objective: Students will create a bar graph to compare the value of two biblical characters' gifts and relate the results to what Jesus values most.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: Bible, ruler, white printer paper, and pencil
- Time Required: 20–25 minutes

Procedure:

1. Have students work in pairs. Give each pair a ruler and piece of white printer paper. Direct students to read Mark 12:41–44 and John 12:1–8.
2. Have the students use the information below to create a bar graph representing the widow's offering, the average wage for a day laborer, the value of Mary's ointment, and the average yearly wage for a day laborer.
 - One *denarius* was a day laborer's wage (Matthew 20:1–16).
 - On average, there were 354 days in the Jewish lunar year. Once sabbaths are subtracted, the average annual wage for a day laborer was around 300 denari.¹
 - A Jewish *lepton*, known as a *widow's mite*, was worth $\frac{1}{64}$ of a denarius.²

How many *lepta* did the poor woman have? $\frac{1}{64}$
 How many denarii was Mary's ointment worth? $\frac{1}{300}$

3. Check students' graphs. Discuss what the graph should look like. Then ask students the following questions:

- Based on the bar graph you created, how does Mary's gift compare to a laborer's wage? How does the widow's gift compare to a laborer's wage? How substantial was the monetary difference between the widow's gift and Mary's gift to God? There is a big difference between Mary's gift and the widow's gift. Mary's gift was worth about a year's wages, around 300 denari. The widow's gift was worth a fraction of one day's wage.
- Look again at the value difference on the chart. The widow gave all she had. The ointment Mary used was considered the very best that could be offered, and it is speculated that the ointment might have been part of Mary's inheritance or dowry.³ Did one woman sacrifice more than the other? Why or why not? While we don't know all the details of Mary's financial situation, it seems that she gave God the very best she had to offer. Similarly, the widow gave the best she had to offer. In fact, it was everything she had to offer. Both women sacrificed a lot to serve God with the best that they had.

322

Chapter 15

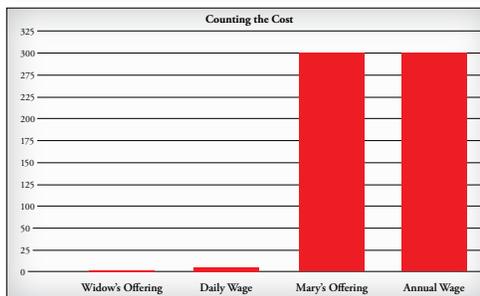
ACTIVITY

Counting the Cost, continued

- What was Jesus' response to each of these women? He praised them for what they had done.
- What did Jesus value more, the amount of an offering or the condition of the giver's heart? What evidence from the passages shows this? The condition of the giver's heart. Jesus praised those who gave generously and willingly to God.
- Is money itself or having money a bad thing? No. God gives us money and the ability to earn money so that we can honor him with it and serve others.
- Based on what you learned, how does God want us to give? God wants us to give him the best that we have. He wants us to give generously and sacrificially.

4. Read Luke: 16:10–13 aloud to the class.

¹ "The Jewish Calendar," Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/jewish-religious-year>.
² "How Much Was the Widow's Mite?," Tynedale, <https://www.tynedale.com/sites/tynedalebibles/how-much-was-the-widow-s-mite/>.
³ "What is spikenard in the Bible?" Got Questions, <https://www.gotquestions.org/spikenard-in-the-Bible.html>.



323

Chapter 15

Day 5: Chapter 15.9–15.10

Read the objectives to the class. Go over the answers to the Discussion Questions for Chapter 15.9–15.10. Have students turn to **Activity: Models for Living** in their student manuals. Have students work in groups of two or three. Read the directions. Direct students complete the exercise.

Objectives and Discussion Questions

Objective: Students will be able to consider how the stories of faithful believers can encourage Christians to grow spiritually. [15.9]

1. Which of these saints intrigues you the most? How can you follow them as they followed Christ? [15.9]

Answers will vary.

Note: In the Bible, Christians are sometimes referred to as saints, as in Romans 1:7 and Revelation 14:12.

2. Who are some of the saints in your life, including people you know personally, who encourage you by their words or example to know Jesus more? [15.9]

Answers will vary.

3. What should you do when you feel like you aren't getting anything out of the spiritual disciplines? [15.10]

In times of dryness in the spiritual life, it is common to think there is something wrong with us or the spiritual discipline we're practicing just isn't working. But this is the normal experience of Christians; during these seasons of dryness, God is working on us in ways we cannot see. That's why we continue to seek God and cooperate with him as we practice spiritual disciplines. They are not about what we are doing, but how God is working in us.

324

Chapter 15

ACTIVITY

Models for Living

Objective: Students will research the spiritual lives of historical Christians and identify three principles that can be learned from them.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: computer, paper, and pen
- Time Required: 25–30 minutes

Procedure:

1. Have students work in pairs. Assign each pair one of the names listed below. Inform students that these people from Christian history modeled spiritual disciplines, and despite their imperfections, modeled aspects of how to follow Jesus well. Their successes and imperfections encourage us that Christ can work in our lives as he worked in theirs.
2. Have each pair research basic biographical information about their saint's life and how he or she implemented spiritual disciplines. Direct them to write down three principles they learned about following Jesus faithfully or implementing the spiritual disciplines effectively. Partners may include an acronym to help them present these three principles to the class.
3. Have each pair present to the class a brief biographical description and the three principles they learned from the saint's life.

Possible Christians to study include:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Amy Carmichael | George Washington Carver |
| Andrew Murray | John Bunyan |
| Augustine of Hippo | Francis A. Schaeffer |
| Billy Graham | George Müller |
| Brother Andrew | Gladys Aylward |
| Brother Lawrence | Luis Palau |
| Caspar ten Boom | Patrick of Ireland |
| Corrie ten Boom | Susanna Wesley |
| Charles Spurgeon | Thomas Aquinas |
| Francis of Assisi | Yu Cidu (Dora Yu) |
| Fanny Crosby | Zhou Enying |

325

Teacher Manual

LESSON 15

Chapter 15

Day 6 Activity Category Clues

Distribute a handheld whiteboard, marker, and eraser to each team of three to four students. Pads of paper and pencils can be used instead of whiteboards. Use **PS 15.6A Category Clues** to lead students through the activity.

Objective: Students will match key concepts about spiritual disciplines with their appropriate categories.

Preparation:

- Materials needed: PS 15.6A, one handheld whiteboard (or pad of paper), marker and eraser for each group of three to four students
- Time required: 45–50 minutes

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into teams of three or four students. Give each team a whiteboard, marker, and eraser. Each team may select a scribe or share the responsibility among team members to write the answer on their whiteboard.
2. Display slide 1 on PS 15.6A Category Clues. Read the instructions. Introduce the categories in the chart below. Explain that each description on a slide must be placed correctly in one of the eight categories to earn points. Each team will work together to identify the category and write their answer. Teams must not show their answers until you say so.
3. Display slide 2 and read the category clue provided. Give teams 30 seconds to confer and write their answer. When the 30 seconds have ended, say “time’s up.” All teams must stop writing, even if their answer is incomplete. Any teams that continue writing or have incomplete answers will lose half the points.
4. Direct students to hold up their answers. Display slide 3 to reveal the correct answer. Award points to teams for correct answers and keep score on the board.
5. Display slide 4 and continue in the same manner until you reach the end of the slides or as time allows.

Categories

Solitude and Silence	Worship
Further Reading	Giving, Stewardship, and Simplicity
Prayer	Reading and Memorizing Scripture
Fasting and Abstinence	Examples of the Saints

Day 7: Videos

In this lesson, students will view five interviews of various Christian educators and authors. Each expert answers a specific worldview or apologetics question. These videos will allow students to expand their knowledge and provide biblical answers to thought-provoking questions. The following videos will be used in today’s lesson:

Chapter 15

1. Why Does God Feel Far Away? (Wood, 4:30)
2. Why Should We Pray? (Sherrard, 1:31)
3. Where Should We Begin Reading? (Bywater, 3:07)
4. How Should Christians Encounter Culture? (Gould, 2:27)
5. Why Do We Need to Know What We Believe? (McDowell, 2:08)

Play the videos one at a time in the order listed above. Before each video, direct students to read the questions associated with that video in their student manuals so they know what to listen for. During and after the video has been shown, students should write their answers to the Discussion Questions. It may be necessary to play the video again so students can answer all the questions. Go over the questions for the first video. Play the next video. Continue in this manner until the last video has been played and questions have been discussed.

Discussion Questions

Video 1: Why Does God Feel Far Away?

1. **What phrase describes feelings of God being at a distance?**
the dark night of the soul
2. **Why do we sometimes pull back from God during suffering?**
We pull back because we are disappointed or hurt that God is allowing us to experience this pain.
3. **What is our knowledge of God based on?**
It’s based on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, not on our feelings.
4. **How can we respond when our feelings lead us to believe God isn’t close?**
We can remind ourselves that emotions don’t always represent truth or reality.

Video 2: Why Should We Pray?

1. **Why should we pray?**
We should pray because God is a relational being with whom we can have a meaningful relationship.
2. **What is prayer *not* about?**
Prayer is not about getting what we want.
3. **What is prayer?**
Prayer is an opportunity to enter into communion with the Creator of the universe.

Chapter 15

Video 3: Where Should We Begin Reading?

1. **Why does the speaker work through five to ten books simultaneously?**
He does this because he needs to stop and think about what he read or because he is bored with a book.
2. **What is the benefit of working through more than one book at once?**
It shows how ideas connect to each other and how worldviews work together.
3. **What book is important to read when forming a Christian worldview?**
The Bible is the most important book for forming a Christian worldview.
4. **What are some ways to read the Bible?**
Possible answers: read the Bible in one year, read the Bible over several years, focus on one book of the Bible for a long period of time
5. **Why should we read the perspectives of those we disagree with?**
It helps us sincerely understand other people and ourselves.

Video 4: How Should Christians Encounter Culture?

1. **What are three common primary postures to culture as Christians?**
We critique culture, consume everything, or copy culture.
2. **What should our primary posture be?**
We should be cultivators of the good, the true, and the beautiful.
3. **Should we have boundaries in consuming culture?**
Yes, we need to exercise Christian wisdom.
4. **What is Christian wisdom?**
Christian wisdom is a virtue of the faith that helps us understand the world around us and organize our lives around the good that is God.
5. **How should we determine which content to avoid?**
If it leads us away from Christ or is not helpful, we should not consume it.

Video 5: Why Do We Need to Know What We Believe?

1. **What effect does adopting ideas from other worldviews have on our faith?**
It takes us from the power of living out our Christian faith as Jesus did.

Chapter 15

2. **What can we do to build a biblical worldview?**
We can start by reading some good apologetics worldview books and teach someone else.
3. **What would happen if each Christian took ownership of thinking biblically?**
We would see a radical change within the church.

Day 8: Activity and Review 

Have the bags of cards cut from **TR 15.8A Discipline Your Memory** ready. Have students turn in their student manuals to **Activity: Picture of Discipline**. Inform them that they will work independently. Then display **PS 15.8A Chapter 15 Review** to help students review the concepts in Chapter 15. Allow students to take turns reading the slides.

ACTIVITY

Discipline Your Memory

Objective: Students will match Bible verses with related spiritual disciplines.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: TR 15.8A, resealable bags
- Time Required: 20–25 minutes

Procedure:

1. Divide students into groups of four, then divide each group into teams of two. Distribute one set of cards you cut from TR 15.8A Discipline Your Memory to each group.
2. Have groups mix up the cards and place them facedown in rows to form a square or rectangle on a desk or table. Inform students that some cards have Bible verses on them, and others have spiritual disciplines. Each verse matches a spiritual discipline. The goal is to find matching cards to create pairs, which teams will keep. To begin the game, one member of the first team will flip over a card and read it aloud. The second member of the same team will flip over another card and read it aloud. If the cards match, their team may keep the pair. Matching cards will have the same number in the upper right corner. If the cards do not match, they should be flipped back to the face down position. The second team will then follow the same procedure, attempting to find a matching pair. The game ends when all pairs have been found. The team with the most pairs at the end of the game wins.
3. After the groups have finished playing the first game, have each team find a different team to compete against and repeat the game as time allows.

Teacher Manual

LESSON 15

Chapter 15

Day 9: Study Guide

Allow students to study for the Chapter 15 Test. Have them turn to the Study Guide in their student manuals and complete the exercises.

Chapter 15 Study Guide

Chapter 15 Key Points

Key Terms

Spiritual disciplines
Christian meditation
Christian contemplation
Simplicity

Key Verses

Genesis 2:15
1 Thessalonians 5:17
Ephesians 4:28
Hebrews 12:1

1. Explain the purpose of spiritual disciplines.

Spiritual disciplines are not a measure of how “Christian” we are. We can’t earn God’s favor or salvation by practicing them. The spiritual disciplines help us to know God and Scripture more deeply and help us cooperate with the Spirit so that we can be transformed in the image of Christ.

2. What is the difference between biblical spiritual disciplines and Eastern religion transcendence practices?

Eastern religions encourage silence as a way to transcend oneself and reach a “higher” spiritual consciousness. For Christians, silence and solitude are different. They are about focusing our full attention on God in prayer. This way, our sinful tendencies can be put to death and we can become more like Christ.

3. Give examples of various approaches to prayer.

One approach is to say short prayers throughout the day. Another is to write prayers, as the writers of the Psalms did. Some Christians pray before meals, and others stop to pray throughout the day. Some Christians pray by kneeling or praying with their hands raised.

4. Explain the Lord’s Prayer as a model for prayer.

From The Lord’s Prayer we learn that God wants us to address him as a loving parent, while recognizing his holiness. We learn to seek what God desires and conform to his will. We learn to trust God for our daily needs. We learn to seek forgiveness, as well as to forgive those who have wronged us. We also learn to ask God to bring us safely through trials and temptations.

5. Describe various forms of Christian worship.

Christians worship God through songs of praise and hymns. We also worship through adoration and by offering our lives to God’s service.

330

Teacher Manual

Chapter 15

6. Explain how to incorporate Christian meditation and Christian contemplation into personal Bible study.

Christian meditation and contemplation are ways of reflecting on God’s Word and enjoying his presence. Careful reading and study of Scripture combined with prayerful Christian meditation and contemplation provide an avenue for God to speak to us through his Word.

7. Distinguish between three different types of fasts and describe appropriate fasting.

- The Defining Moment Fast is fasting when we recognize that God is doing something new in our lives, or in response to a defining moment in our relationship with God.
- The Turning from Sinful Choices Fast is fasting when we realize we’re living in sin, grieving over our actions, and repenting before God.
- Tragic Calamity Fast is fasting in response to tragedy and asking God to redeem it or to bring justice.

Appropriate fasting is not fasting to gain God’s favor or to diet. Appropriate fasting is a response to what God is doing in our lives.

8. Relate biblical stewardship to simplicity.

Stewardship is about taking care of what God has given to us and using our resources well. This relates to simplicity through generosity. Being generous stewards of our resources can mean living more simply in order to be more generous.

9. Explain how the stories of faithful believers can encourage Christians to grow spiritually.

The examples of other Christians give us encouragement and support in our own spiritual growth. Because the Christians who came before us were just ordinary people who sought to give themselves freely and wholly to God, we can be encouraged to do the same.

10. Define asceticism.

Asceticism is the practice of avoiding all forms of indulgence.

11. Describe fasting and abstinence.

To abstain is simply to refrain from doing something. To fast is to intentionally abstain from food and drink, or to abstain from certain foods and drinks for a set time. They are both ways of giving up something in order to follow God more closely.

12. Define worship and explain its purpose.

To worship is to show reverence or adoration for someone or something. Who or what we worship is the person or thing that commands our utmost attention, service, and loyalty. The object of our worship is the triune God. Our worship of God is our response to who he is, what he has done, and what he is doing.

Foundations

331

Chapter 15

13. Define steward and explain what generosity is.

A steward is one who cares for and manages what belongs to another. Generosity isn’t about just giving money to needy people. It’s about giving our resources, time, and talent to help others.

14. What kind of books should Christians read?

Christians should read widely, including books by authors we agree and disagree with, by authors who are Christians and those who aren’t.

15. Give three examples of written prayers.

Possible answers: *The Book of Common Prayer*, *The Valley of Vision*, the Psalms, the Lord’s Prayer

16. Explain the importance of prayer and the Holy Spirit’s role in prayer.

Prayer is vital to the life of every Christian. Prayer doesn’t offer immediate rewards. Prayer is not just another thing to do. It is about being in relationship with God. The Holy Spirit gives us confidence to approach God the Father as we would a good parent. And when we do not know how to pray, the Spirit prays for us. Prayer produces change in us as we learn to depend on and trust God.

17. Why is Scripture memorization beneficial?

It helps us internalize God’s Word. It also helps us be able to access Bible verses quickly when we need them.

18. What are the steps of the *Lectio Divina*?

Read, meditate, contemplate, pray

19. Why are silence and solitude important?

Silence and solitude help us get away from distractions so that we can focus on God. These practices also allow us to examine ourselves and see the truth about ourselves.

20. How can Christians invite an author into conversation while reading?

They can make a generous effort to understand the author’s perspective, challenging the author where appropriate, and treating the author with respect even when you don’t agree.

21. Read and study the four Key Verses listed at the beginning of the study guide.

Day 10: Chapter 15 Test

Distribute TR 15.10A Chapter 15 Test to each student and allow time for them to complete the test. Those who finish early may start reading Chapter 16. Assign homework.

332

Teacher Manual

Understanding the Times Series

Foundations

STUDENT WORKBOOK



Samples reduced; not actual size

Student Workbook

LESSON 15

Chapter 15—Walking with God

Chapter 15 Syllabus

Day	Assignment		Page
1	In Class	REVIEW Chapter 14 Test	—
	In Class	DISCUSS Questions for Chapter 15.1–15.2	306–307
	In Class	EXPLORE Activity: Right Turn	307
	At Home	READ Chapter 15.3–15.4	ST 194–196
	At Home	ANSWER Questions for Chapter 15.3–15.4	307–308
2	In Class	DISCUSS Questions for Chapter 15.3–15.4	—
	In Class	EXPLORE Activity: Strategy for Growth	309–310
	At Home	READ Chapter 15.5–15.6	ST 196–198
	At Home	ANSWER Questions for Chapter 15.5–15.6	311–312
3	In Class	DISCUSS Questions for Chapter 15.5–15.6	—
	In Class	EXPLORE Activity: Methods of Prayer	312
	At Home	READ Chapter 15.7–15.8	ST 198–200
	At Home	ANSWER Questions for Chapter 15.7–15.8	312–313
4	In Class	DISCUSS Questions for Chapter 15.7–15.8	—
	In Class	EXPLORE Activity: Counting the Cost	314
	At Home	READ Chapter 15.9–15.10	ST 201–202
	At Home	ANSWER Questions for Chapter 15.9–15.10	315
5	In Class	DISCUSS Questions for Chapter 15.9–15.10	—
	In Class	EXPLORE Activity: Models for Living	316
6	In Class	EXPLORE Activity: Category Clues	—
7	In Class	WATCH Videos	—
	In Class	ANSWER Video Questions	317–320
	In Class	DISCUSS Video Questions	—
8	In Class	EXPLORE Activity: Discipline Your Memory	320
	In Class	REVIEW FOR Chapter 15 Test	321
9	In Class	STUDY FOR Chapter 15 Test	—
	In Class	ANSWER Study Guide Questions	322–326
10	In Class	TAKE Chapter 15 Test	—
	At Home	READ Chapter 16.1–16.2	ST 206–207
	At Home	ANSWER Questions for Chapter 16.1–16.2	330

Student Textbook (ST)

Student Workbook

LESSON 15

Chapter 15.1–15.2 Discussion Questions

1. What is a spiritual discipline? What is the purpose of spiritual disciplines? [15.1]
2. What is the purpose of silence and solitude for Christians? How is this different from Eastern religions? [15.2]
3. What does it mean to listen to God? [15.2]
4. Why is it important to regularly practice self-examination? [15.2]

5. How can you practice these quiet disciplines? [15.2]

ACTIVITY

Right Turn

Objective: You will examine the purpose of self-examination, confession, and repentance in the Christian life.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: Bible, paper, and pen
- Time Required: 20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Write the Scripture reference assigned to you. _____
Work with your group to read and discuss your assigned Bible verses.
2. Answer the following questions as you discuss the passage. Take notes as needed.
 - What does this teach us about God?
 - What does this teach us about sin?
 - What does this teach us about self-examination, confession, and/or repentance?
 - How can we follow the psalmist's example?
3. Present your findings to the class.

Chapter 15.3–15.4 Discussion Questions

1. What are some things that make prayer difficult? How does seeing prayer as primarily something that God uses to shape us affect that perception? [15.3]

Student Workbook

LESSON 15

2. What does it mean to pray without ceasing? [15.3]

3. What does The Lord's Prayer teach us about how to pray? [15.3]

4. How can our work be an act of worship? [15.4]

5. Why is God worthy of our worship? [15.4]

6. What might make worshipping God difficult? [15.4]

ACTIVITY

Strategy for Growth

Objective: You will devise a personal strategy for regular prayer, worship, Bible reading, and memorization.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: pen
- Time Required: 15–20 minutes

Procedure:

1. The key to meeting goals and forming lasting habits is to set smaller, actionable goals that help you reach the larger goal. It is also helpful to create a plan for when goals aren't quite met, in order to prevent discouragement.
2. Complete the chart to create your personal spiritual growth strategy.
3. Share your strategies with the class.

Note: If you are using a Bible reading plan (such as reading the whole Bible or the New Testament in a year) and miss a day or so, it can be helpful to begin by reading the assigned portion for the current date as if no days were missed or to shift the dates in the reading schedule. This helps keep the momentum and prevents discouragement from having “play catch up” on missed material.

Student Workbook

LESSON 15

	Prayer	Worship	Bible Reading	Memorization
What goal do I want to eventually reach in each area?				
What small change(s) can I make to begin moving toward each goal?				
How will I respond at times when I struggle to make changes or reach my goals?				
What goal do I want to eventually reach in each area?				

310

© Student Manual

Chapter 15.5–15.6 Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important for a Christian to be familiar with and memorize portions of the Bible? [15.5]
2. What is the difference between Christian meditation and Christian contemplation? [15.5]
3. Based on what you learned about new spirituality in Chapter 5, Chapter 15.2 and 15.5, how are Christian spiritual disciplines, such as Christian meditation, contemplation, and self-examination, different from Eastern transcendental and new spirituality practices? [15.5]
4. Why do we need to read books written by Christians with different perspectives from our own? What about books by non-Christians? [15.6]

© Foundations

311

5. Is reading fiction a good use of time for a Christian? Why or why not? [15.6]

ACTIVITY

Methods of Prayer

Objective: You will practice using the *Lectio Divina* as a method for Bible study and prayer.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: TR 15.3A, pen
- Time Required: 15–20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Read the directions and complete the activity for TR 15.3A Methods of Prayer.
2. Discuss your answers with the class.

Chapter 15.7–15.8 Discussion Questions

1. What is the purpose of fasting? What are three types of fasts in the Bible? [15.7]

312

© Student Manual

2. What is asceticism and how could it be practiced appropriately in the modern day? [15.7]

3. What is the Christian motivation for work? [15.8]

4. How might giving money sometimes make things worse for those we are trying to help? What are some constructive ways to help the poor? [15.8]

5. What are some ways that you can practice simplicity and wise stewardship? [15.8]

© Foundations

313

Student Workbook

LESSON 15

ACTIVITY

Counting the Cost

Objective: You will create a bar graph to compare the value of two biblical characters' gifts and relate the results to what Jesus values most.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: Bible, ruler, white printer paper, and pencil
- Time Required: 20–25 minutes

Procedure:

1. Obtain a ruler and piece of white printer paper from your teacher. Work with a partner and read Mark 12:41–44 and John 12:1–8.
 2. Use the information below to answer the questions. Then create a bar graph comparing the value of the widow's offering and Mary's ointment, and the average wage and yearly wage for a day laborer.
 - One *denarius* was a day laborer's wage (Matthew 20:1–16).
 - On average, there were 354 days in the Jewish lunar year. Once sabbaths are subtracted, the average annual wage for a day laborer was around 300 denari.¹
 - A Jewish *lepton*, known as a *widow's mite*, was worth $\frac{1}{64}$ of a denarius.²
- How many *lepta* did the poor woman have? _____
 How many *denari* was Mary's ointment worth? _____
3. Have your graph ready for your teacher to check. Discuss the following questions with the class.
 - Based on the bar graph you created, how substantial was the monetary difference between the widow's gift and Mary's gift to God?
 - Look again at the value difference on the chart. The widow gave all she had. The ointment Mary used was considered the very best that could be offered, and it is speculated that the ointment might have been part of Mary's inheritance or dowry.³ Did one woman sacrifice more than the other? Why or why not?
 - What was Jesus' response to each of these women?
 - Which did Jesus value more, the amount of an offering or the condition of the giver's heart? What evidence from the passages shows this?
 - Is money itself or having money a bad thing?
 - Based on what you learned, how does God want us to give?

¹ "The Jewish Calendar." Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/jewish-religious-year>.
² "How Much Was the Widow's Mite?," Tyndale, <https://www.tyndale.com/sites/tyndalebibles/how-much-was-the-widow-s-mite/>.
³ "What is spikenard in the Bible?" Go Questions, <https://www.goquestions.org/spikenard-in-the-Bible.html>.

Chapter 15.9–15.10 Discussion Questions

1. Which of these saints intrigues you the most? How can you follow them as they followed Christ? [15.9]
2. Who are some of the saints in your life, including people you know personally, who encourage you by their words or example to know Jesus more? [15.9]
3. What should you do when you feel like you aren't getting anything out of the spiritual disciplines? [15.10]

ACTIVITY

Models for Living

Objective: You will research the spiritual lives of historical Christians and identify three principles that can be learned from them.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: computer, paper and pen, and paper
- Time Required: 25–30 minutes

Procedure:

1. Write the name of the saint your teacher assigns you. _____
 Work with your partner to research basic biographical information about this saint's life and how he or she implemented spiritual disciplines.
2. Write down three principles you learned from your saint's life about following Jesus or implementing the spiritual disciplines. Consider using an acronym to remember the three principles.
3. Present your biographical description and the three principles that can be learned from the saint's life.

Amy Carmichael
 Andrew Murray
 Augustine of Hippo
 Billy Graham
 Brother Andrew
 Brother Lawrence
 Caspar ten Boom
 Corrie ten Boom
 Charles Spurgeon
 Francis of Assisi
 Fanny Crosby

George Washington Carver
 John Bunyan
 Francis A. Schaeffer
 George Müller
 Gladys Aylward
 Luis Palau
 Patrick of Ireland
 Susanna Wesley
 Thomas Aquinas
 Yu Cidu (Dora Yu)
 Zhou Enying

ACTIVITY

Category Clues

Objective: You will match key concepts about spiritual disciplines with their appropriate categories.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: handheld whiteboard or pad of paper, marker, and eraser
- Time Required: 45–50 minutes

Procedure:

1. Work with your team as your teacher guides you through the activity.
2. Choose from the categories in the chart below for each clue.

Categories

Solitude and Silence	Worship
Further Reading	Giving, Stewardship, and Simplicity
Prayer	Reading and Memorizing Scripture
Fasting and Abstinence	Examples of the Saints

Video Discussion Questions

Read the discussion questions before each video is played so that you know what to listen for.

Video 1: Why Does God Feel Far Away?

1. What phrase describes feelings of God being at a distance?
2. Why do we sometimes pull back from God during suffering?
3. What is our knowledge of God based on?

Student Workbook

LESSON 15

4. How can we respond when our feelings lead us to believe God isn't close?

Video 2: Why Should We Pray?

1. Why should we pray?

2. What is prayer *not* about?

3. What is prayer?

Video 3: Where Should We Begin Reading?

1. Why does the speaker work through five to ten books simultaneously?

2. What is the benefit of working through more than one book at once?

3. What book is important to read when forming a Christian worldview?

318

© Student Manual

4. What are some ways to read the Bible?

5. Why should we read the perspectives of those we disagree with?

Video 4: How Should Christians Encounter Culture?

1. What are three common primary postures to culture as Christians?

2. What should our primary posture be?

3. Should we have boundaries in consuming culture?

4. What is Christian wisdom?

5. How should we determine which content to avoid?

© Foundations

319

Video 5: Why Do We Need to Know What We Believe?

1. What effect does adopting ideas from other worldviews have on our faith?

2. What can we do to build a biblical worldview?

3. What would happen if each Christian took ownership of thinking biblically?

ACTIVITY

Discipline Your Memory

Objective: You will match Bible verses with related spiritual disciplines.

Preparation:

- Materials Needed: TR 15.8A
- Time Required: 20–25 minutes

Procedure:

1. Work with a partner to compete in a matching game against another team. Obtain a set of cards from TR 15.8A Discipline Your Memory. Some cards have Bible verses and others have spiritual disciplines on them. Mix up the cards and place them facedown in rows to form a square or rectangle. Your goal is to find the Bible verse that corresponds to each spiritual discipline.
2. To begin the game, choose which team will go first. One member of the first team will flip over a card and read it aloud. Then the second member of the same team will flip over a different card and read it aloud. If the cards match, you may keep that pair. Matching cards will have the same number in the upper right corner. If the cards do not match, they should be flipped back to the face down position. The second team will then follow the same procedure, attempting to find a matching pair. The game ends when all pairs have been found. The team with the most pairs at the end of the game wins.

320

© Student Manual

Chapter 15 Review

Take notes during the slide presentation.

© Foundations

321

Student Workbook

LESSON 15

Chapter 15 Study Guide

Chapter 15 Key Points

Key Terms

Spiritual disciplines
Christian meditation
Christian contemplation
simplicity

Key Verses

Genesis 2:15
1 Thessalonians 5:17
Ephesians 4:28
Hebrews 12:1

1. Explain the purpose of spiritual disciplines.

2. What is the difference between biblical spiritual disciplines and Eastern religion transcendence practices?

3. Give examples of various approaches to prayer.

4. Explain the Lord's Prayer as a model for prayer.

322

© Student Manual

5. Describe various forms of Christian worship.

6. Explain how to incorporate Christian meditation and Christian contemplation into personal Bible study.

7. Distinguish between three different types of fasts and describe appropriate fasting.

8. Relate biblical stewardship to simplicity.

9. Explain how the stories of faithful believers can encourage Christians to grow spiritually.

© Foundations

323

10. Define *asceticism*.

11. Describe fasting and abstinence.

12. Define *worship* and explain its purpose.

13. Define *steward* and explain what generosity is.

14. What kind of books should Christians read?

324

© Student Manual

15. Give three examples of written prayers.

16. Explain the importance of prayer and

17. Why is Scripture memorization benef

18. What are the steps of the *Lectio Divina*

19. Why are silence and solitude importan

© Foundations

20. How can Christians invite an author into conversation while reading?

21. Read and study the four Key Verses listed at the beginning of the study guide.

326

© Student Manual

Understanding the Times Series

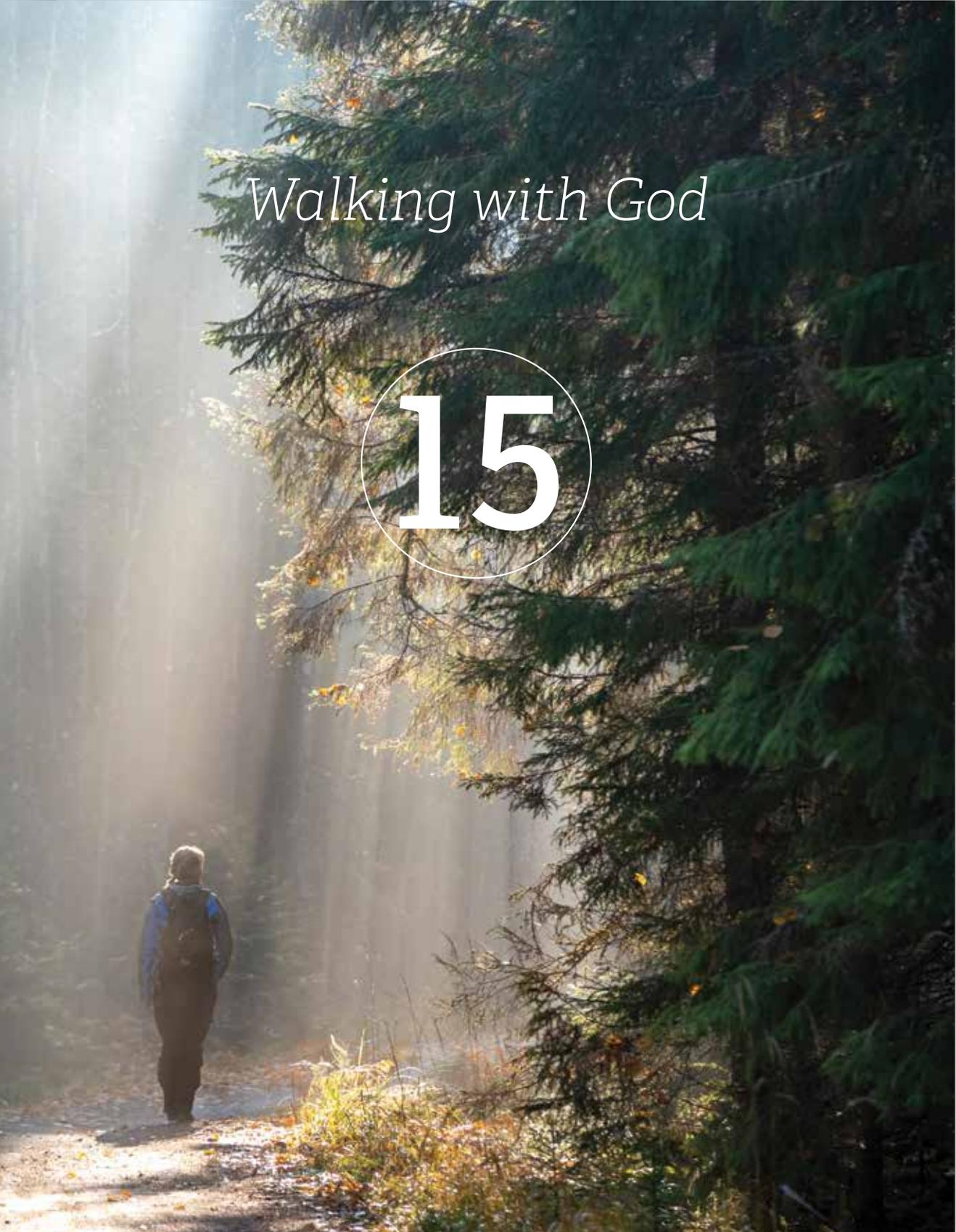
Foundations



STUDENT TEXT



Samples reduced; not actual size



Walking with God

15

Student Text

LESSON 15

I. Spiritual Disciplines—For What?

Objective: You will be able to explain the purpose of spiritual disciplines.

Throughout the centuries, Christians have placed great value on spiritual disciplines like Bible reading, prayer, worship, and fasting—to name just a few. **Spiritual disciplines** are *habits and practices that help form us to be more like Jesus*. They are actions that invite us into a deeper relationship with God so that we can know God more intimately. Central to this is the truth that God desires a loving relationship with each person (Ephesians 3:14–19; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 3:1). Spiritual disciplines help us in our journey to know God more truly and shape us into the people he created us to be—that is, people who are like Jesus, loving God and others.¹



spiritual disciplines
habits and practices that help
form us to be more like Jesus

Spiritual disciplines are worthwhile, though they can be mistaken for a measuring stick to tell how good a Christian someone is. For example, you might think you're a good Christian if you pray for fifteen minutes and read at least three chapters of the Bible every day. If you don't do these things regularly, you might start to feel guilty or think that you are a bad Christian. But spiritual disciplines are not about doing more stuff or trying to make God happy by tireless effort. Ephesians 2:8–9 is clear that salvation is a free gift of God's grace—so practicing spiritual disciplines won't help us earn salvation. God already loves each of us more than we could ever fathom (Romans 5:8, 8:38–39)—so we don't need to somehow win God's love or favor.



Scripture is also clear that believing the gospel isn't simply about getting a pass into eternal life. If you are a believer in Jesus, you are destined to rule with him throughout eternity (Revelation 5:10). God's kingdom has already broken into the world through Jesus (Matthew 12:28, Mark 1:15, Luke 11:20), so eternal life begins now! Even as we anticipate the full arrival of God's kingdom, we are to actively prepare for it—loving one another, forgiving those who wrong us, sharing the good news about Jesus, and bringing *shalom* to our communities



Some people might think that being a Christian saps the joy or fun out of life. But Jesus said that he came so that people might “have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). To live an abundant life is to live life to the fullest, enjoying God's good creation, becoming all that we were created to be, fulfilling our role as stewards, and bringing glory to Jesus in all our actions. Paul was clear in his letter to the Ephesians that he didn't want Christians to remain babies in the faith. He wanted them to grow and mature so that they could become like Christ (Ephesians 4:11–16). As Christians, that is our destiny (Romans 8:29).

Student Text

LESSON 15

Spiritual disciplines are the kind of practices that help form us into people who can live well and rule well in God's kingdom. It will take discipline and hard work on our part, but the good news is that becoming this kind of person is not ultimately up to us. By practicing spiritual disciplines, we are simply putting ourselves in a place where God can work on our hearts. We come to God with open hands, but it is the Holy Spirit who works in us and transforms us into people who are more like Jesus (Romans 12:1–2; Galatians 5:19–26; Philippians 1:6, 2:13).

2. Solitude, Silence, Listening, and Self-Examination

Objective: You will be able to differentiate between Christian spiritual disciplines and Eastern religion transcendence practices.

Right now, your life is probably dominated by your school schedule, extracurricular activities, and spending time with friends. If you are bored, you can pop in headphones and tune out the world, browse social media, or text your friends. Many people are so addicted to these activities that they would be totally lost without them. Perhaps the reason we are so uncomfortable without any background noise, entertainment, or distractions is because silence forces us to confront our inner self—our fears, sins, failures, and unmet desires. We don't often like what we find when we look inside ourselves.



But if we are to be transformed into the image of Christ, we must begin by being honest about who we are. This starts with solitude and silence. To be clear, the Christian practices of solitude and silence are not “me time,” self-isolation, or a self-help project that liberates you to live in any way that you feel is most true to yourself. Nor is their goal to help you transcend yourself or achieve higher consciousness, as in some Eastern religions. Rather, silence and solitude are about taking the time to step away from the chaos of life to listen to the Holy Spirit and to spend time in loving relationship with God. The goal is to put aside distractions, focus on knowing God more, and be transformed into his image, “filled with all the fulness of God” (Ephesians 3:19). One author called solitude “the furnace of transformation,” the place where our sinful tendencies are continually put to death and we are remade to be like Christ.²



CHRIST IN THE WILDERNESS, BY BRITISH PAINTER BRITON RIVIÈRE, 1898

Jesus modeled these disciplines by regularly separating himself from the crowds to be alone with the Father (Matthew 14:23–24; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16). You can practice these disciplines by finding a quiet place where you can be alone without distractions. You want to give God your full attention. Try leaving your phone on silent or shutting it off during this time. Many people find that being outside in creation helps to focus their mind on God. Practicing these disciplines will not be easy at first, but remember that God wants to spend time with you.

Practicing silence and solitude also gives you space to practice two other spiritual disciplines—listening and self-examination. In listening, you are not necessarily listening for the audible voice of God; rather, you listen by reflecting on how God is speaking to you. He may speak through Scripture, the counsel of others, or the circumstances in your life. Pay attention to the conviction, encouragement, comfort, or challenge of the Holy Spirit; look for the ways that God is with you throughout your day. As you open your heart to God in this way, the Holy Spirit will remind you of the truth about who God is and the truth about your identity as his beloved child (John 14:26).

Student Text

LESSON 15

Self-examination involves asking the Holy Spirit to help you discern ways you have sinned and failed to love God and others throughout your day. It is recognizing your brokenness and confessing your sins to God, praying for the strength to change. It also involves hearing the words that God forgives you (1 John 1:9), has already forgiven you through Jesus (Ephesians 4:32), and does not condemn you (Romans 8:1). So even as you confess your sins, remember that God is patient with you. He remembers that you are dust (Psalm 103:14)—as one book puts it, we are “beloved dust.”³



3. Prayer

Objective: You will be able to give examples of various approaches to prayer.

Objective: You will be able to explain The Lord’s Prayer as a model for prayer.



Prayer is vital to the life of every Christian. Yet for many believers (including people like Martin Luther and Teresa of Avila⁴), it is a struggle to pray at all. Perhaps this is because prayer doesn’t offer immediate rewards, make us feel better, or provide a sense of accomplishment.⁵ We can’t see God with our eyes. We might doubt that God even hears our prayers at all.

But prayer is not just another thing to do. Prayer is about being in relationship with God. Through Jesus, Christians have been adopted into God’s family (John 1:12–13; Galatians 4:4–5). The Holy Spirit gives us confidence to approach God the Father as we would a parent (Romans 8:14–17) with our needs and requests (Hebrews 4:16). And when we do not know how to pray, the Spirit prays for us (Romans 8:26). Ultimately, prayer is not primarily something that we do, but something God uses to shape our hearts. Just as Jesus relied on the Father in prayer (John 11:41–42; 17), so too, as we offer our requests and listen patiently, we learn to depend on and trust God.

When the disciples asked Jesus how to pray, he gave them this prayer (Matthew 6:9–13):

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.”



THE LORD’S PRAYER,
PAINTING BY JAMES TISSOT



From this prayer, often called *The Lord’s Prayer*, we learn that God wants us to address him as a loving parent, while recognizing his utter holiness. We learn to seek what God desires and conform to his will. We learn to trust God for our daily needs and to seek forgiveness, as well as to forgive those who have wronged us. Finally, we learn to ask God to bring us safely through trials and temptations.⁶ Try praying this prayer and pausing after each line to offer your own words to God.⁷

Student Text

LESSON 15

The apostle Paul encouraged believers to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This doesn’t mean that we mutter nonstop prayers. Rather, it means we are continually in a posture of prayer—recognizing our total dependence on God and paying attention to the ways that he is present throughout our day. We can pray this way by saying simple prayers like “Thank you, Father,” “Help me, Jesus,” or “Have mercy on me, a sinner.”

Written prayers are a rich way of expressing ourselves to God. The Psalms teach us how to talk to God in times of joy, thanksgiving, lament, frustration, anger, and grief. No matter how you’re feeling, there is a prayer for it in the Psalms. In addition, *The Book of Common Prayer* (from the Anglican tradition) and *The Valley of Vision* (from the Puritan tradition) include many short prayers of devotion;⁸ your own church or denomination may have similar resources.

Some people find it helpful to pray in the morning or evening for a set time. Others pray the hours, a liturgical practice that involves stopping two to four times a day to reflect on God’s presence and lift up requests to him. Some Christians “say grace” before every meal as a way of thanking God for his many blessings. You might find it helpful to make a list of people and circumstances that you want to pray for on a regular basis or simply offer what is on your heart and pray as the Spirit leads you.



Many people involve their bodies in prayer. God will hear us in any position that we pray, but praying on one’s knees or lying prostrate before him can express humility before God. Some pray with their palms up to express their desire to receive what God wants to give them; others raise their hands or place them on their heart as a gesture of surrender to his will. Another way to pray with your whole self is to try a prayer walk, which involves walking through a neighborhood and praying for the people around you, or to dance before the Lord.⁹ However you pray, remember that prayer is spending time with God!

4. Worship

Objective: You will be able to describe various forms of Christian worship.

To *worship* is to show reverence or adoration for someone or something. Who or what we worship is the person or thing that commands our utmost attention, service, and loyalty. For Christians, the object of our worship is the triune God of love—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the Creator and Sustainer of all things, the perfect Judge, the humble Redeemer and Restorer. Our worship of God is our response to who he is, what he has done, and what he is doing.



THE HOLY TRINITY,
CHURCH OF MADONNA DEL
TUFO, ROCCA DI PAPA, ITALY

One way to worship God is through praise. After God answered her prayer for a son, Hannah offered a prayer of praise (1 Samuel 2:1–10). In response to God’s power and glory, David praised God, singing and lifting up his hands (Psalm 63:2–4). At the dedication of the temple, Solomon offered praise and worship to God for his faithfulness (1 Kings 8:12–66). Even Jesus offered worship through song. In Matthew 26:30, Jesus participates in singing a hymn, and Hebrews 2:12 has him singing a song of praise.¹⁰



The Psalms provide templates for how to praise God (see Psalms 34, 100, and 145). The church also has many great hymns and praise songs. Some people begin their time of worship by singing; others listen to worship songs. You might even try writing your own song or poem of praise. Think about an aspect of God’s character that you are grateful for and try expressing your praise to God through song.

Student Text

LESSON 15

Another way to worship God is through adoration, which may include praise, but goes beyond it.¹⁹ To express adoration for God is to reverence before him, seeking to love him with our whole selves, and offering our lives to him for his glory and service. In Isaiah 6, Isaiah finds himself in the presence of God. He realizes his own unworthiness, is purified by God, and offers his life for God's service. Jesus also showed reverence for the Father by submitting to his will (Luke 22:41–44) and offering his life (Hebrews 9:14).

Ultimately, our whole lives are meant to be an act of worship. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word meaning *work (abad)* often refers to sacred service offered to God. So, when God put humans in the garden of Eden "to work it and keep it" (Genesis 2:15), their work was to be an act of worship to God.²⁰ Similarly, what we do can show reverence and love for our Creator. It should be done for his glory (1 Corinthians 10:31), reflecting his excellence, goodness, and creativity. Brother Lawrence, author of *The Practice of the Presence of God*, believed that all of our actions, including washing dishes and cleaning a room, could be acts of worship to God.



We may not always feel like worshipping God. Worshipping him does not mean that we pretend that everything is okay. God can handle our doubts and confusion. In Psalm 73, Asaph begins by complaining that the wicked seem to get off so easily, but when he comes into God's presence, he is able to finish his psalm with praise, expressing trust in God's justice and wisdom. As we spend time in worship and adoration, our understanding of who God is can be transformed so that we love him more, growing in gratitude for all his works.

5. Reading, Memorizing, Meditating On, and Contemplating Scripture

Objective: You will be able to incorporate Christian meditation and Christian contemplation into personal Bible study.

The Bible is the great story of what God has done, is doing, and will do. Through it, we learn who God is, who we are, and what part we have to play in God's world.

There are many plans available to help you read through the Bible in a year. This can be a good challenge, but it's easy to get behind and then feel hopeless about catching up. Perhaps you tried to read through the Bible, but found yourself getting bogged down in Leviticus and just giving up. Here's a word of advice: if you miss a day, you don't have to catch up. It's not a bad thing if it takes you three or four years to get through the whole Bible. The important thing is to read it regularly. Some people find it helpful to read a little bit every day; others like to read large chunks or whole books at a time. However you choose to do it, remember that it's not about checking a box.²¹



JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.
ILLUSTRATION BY
WILLIAM HOLE, 1906

196

Memorization helps you to internalize God's Word. The book of Luke tells how 12-year-old Jesus astounded Israel's teachers with his knowledge and understanding. Memorizing Scripture was a significant part of the spiritual education of Jewish children, so we can assume that Jesus knew the Scriptures well. Luke says that Jesus asked questions of the teachers and grew in wisdom (Luke 2:46–47, 52). Because Jesus knew God's Word well, he was prepared to combat the devil's lies and temptations (Matthew 4:1–11). The Bible is like a lamp that lights our path and helps protect us in times of temptation (Psalm 119:11, 105), so we do well to have it ready at hand. Try picking a favorite passage and reading through it every day for a month. Then slowly work on memorizing it line by line until you know it by heart.

Foundations

Meditating on and contemplating Scripture are another way to internalize it. *Christian meditation* is reflecting on God's Word and *Christian contemplation* is resting quietly in the presence of God and his infinite love. When we meditate, we do not empty our minds as in Eastern religions; we use our minds to reflect on what a passage reveals about God and what he desires for our lives. In contemplation, we reflect on what God wants to do in our lives by opening our heart to God and allowing his Word to penetrate our hearts. The goal is to know God more deeply and personally as he is revealed in Scripture.



Christian meditation
reflecting on God's Word

Christian contemplation
resting quietly in the presence of God
and his infinite love

One very old practice that brought meditation and contemplation together is *Lectio Divina*, which simply means *divine reading*. To practice it, pick a short passage of Scripture, perhaps from one of the four Gospels. Before you begin, take a moment to sit quietly and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. Then follow these four steps:²²

1. Read: Slowly read the passage several times. What words or phrases catch your attention?
2. Meditate: Reflect on the meaning of the passage. What questions do you have about the passage? What does the passage reveal about God? What might it be teaching you personally?
3. Contemplate: Sit in silence and just be with God, allowing his Word to permeate your heart and soul. How does it make you feel? Does it prompt you to praise God? To repent from sin? To worship God in awe?
4. Pray: Talk to God about what you are reading. What is your reaction? How would you like God to work in your heart and your life? Thank God for speaking through his Word. Enjoy his presence.

Reading the Bible regularly is no easy task. Careful reading and study of Scripture (see Chapter 4), combined with prayerful meditation and contemplation, provide an avenue for God to speak powerfully to you through his Word.

6. Further Reading and Exploration

Objective: You will be able to evaluate the merits of reading from a variety of authors, including those they disagree with.

Scripture challenges us to love God with our whole selves, including our minds (Mark 12:30). Proverbs instructs us urgently to seek wisdom and understanding (Proverbs 4:5–9). In other words, we don't just believe things because someone told us to. Instead, we are to take our faith seriously, seeking to understand it and learning from others how to live it.

For Christians, the key source of wisdom and knowledge is the Bible. Through it, the Holy Spirit speaks to us today, showing us how we can be redeemed and remade into people who truly love God and others. But the Bible does not cover every topic exhaustively, and some passages can be hard to understand. That's why, for over 2,000 years, Christians of all stripes have been writing about the faith, trying to understand the meaning of Scripture, and helping us think about how to live as Christians in our own time. Their works are a rich treasure we can learn from.



Foundations

197

It's important that we don't only read books by authors we already agree with. We need to hear the voices of other Christians—Christians from other parts of the world, other theological traditions, and other eras. C. S. Lewis advised people to read one old book between every new book. His reason? We tend to become trapped in the mindset of our own age and culture. We neglect the wisdom of thinkers throughout history, and we often assume that whatever is the latest is the best. Reading old books and books written from other perspectives challenges us to think more carefully.²³



PAUL PREACHING IN ATHENS.
AQUATINT PRINT, c. 1815, BY
GEORGE BAXTER

Think of reading as an exercise where you invite the author to have a conversation with you. Ask careful questions, make a generous effort to understand the author's perspective, challenge the author where appropriate, and treat the author with respect even when you don't agree.²⁴

This exercise can be done with all kinds of genres—including fiction. For example, Jane Austen, author of *Pride and Prejudice*, was a master of understanding human personality. Her stories can give us insight into and compassion for the people in our own lives.²⁵ The best fiction echoes elements of the true story—creation, fall, redemption, restoration—and illuminates our own experiences.²⁶



Jesus is a good example for us. We know that even as a boy, Jesus was actively learning and growing. He had a solid understanding of the Scriptures, but on more than one occasion, he quoted cultural proverbs (Matthew 16:2–3; Luke 4:23). He also understood the power of fiction and used parables to teach about the kingdom of God.

To practice this spiritual discipline, you might start by asking your pastor or teacher for some recommendations. If reading isn't something you enjoy very much, start slow. Try reading one book every two months or listen to the audio version. You can also learn a lot through sermons, podcasts, videos, and other resources.

7. Fasting and Abstinence

Objective: You will be able to distinguish between three different types of fasts and describe appropriate fasting.

To fast is to intentionally abstain from food and drink, or to abstain from certain foods and drinks, for a set period of time. Numerous examples of fasting can be found in the Old Testament (1 Samuel 7:6; Daniel 10:2–3; Ezra 8:21–23). Jesus also practiced fasting (Luke 4:1–13) and assumed that those who followed him would fast as well (Matthew 6:16–18). Fasting was a common practice in the early church, though it might seem odd to us today.



198

Foundations

Fasting is not a display of holiness for the spiritually elite. Jesus said that when we fast, we shouldn't go about broadcasting it to everyone (Matthew 6:16–18). Fasting is also not an attempt to get God to do something for us nor to earn his forgiveness.

One theologian categorizes fasts under these three headings:²⁷

1. Defining Moment Fast: Fasting when we recognize that God is doing something new in our lives, or in response to a defining moment in our relationship with God.
2. Turning from Sinful Choices Fast: Fasting when we realize we're living in sin, grieving over our actions, and repenting before God.
3. Tragic Calamity Fast: Fasting in response to tragedy and asking God to redeem it or to bring justice.

Dieting is not fasting. By fasting we acknowledge that we need more than food to live (Matthew 4:4)—that ultimately, it is God who sustains us. By going without food for a time, we come to realize how great a gift it is, and we grow in gratitude. Fasting is thus a response to what God is doing in our lives, our awareness of sin, and the brokenness of the world.²⁸



Consider the above three categories and think about when it might be appropriate for you to take a fast. A word of caution: If you are considering a fast, it is wise to consult your parents and your pastor first. If you have a medical condition that would make it dangerous, you should not practice fasting.

Similar to fasting is the practice of abstinence. To abstain is simply to refrain from doing something. In the fourth century, thousands of men and women went into the deserts to practice abstinence from worldly pleasure and follow Jesus in more focused discipleship. They became known as ascetics. Asceticism is the practice of avoiding all forms of indulgence.

You may have heard stories about wild ascetics who sat on top of pillars for years, beat themselves with whips, or severely damaged their bodies through starvation (See Chapter 16). Such extreme cases distort the true meaning of asceticism. For most Christians, asceticism meant battling sin and sometimes giving up something good to pursue God more intensely.²⁹

How can we practice asceticism and abstinence today? Ask what things in your life distract you. They might not be bad things, but perhaps God is inviting you to abstain from them for a time so that you can follow him in greater discipleship. Try abstaining from social media or video games for a week and see what happens.



8. Giving, Stewardship, and Simplicity

Objective: You will be able to articulate the biblical view of simplicity and stewardship.

For many people, the goal of life is comfort, success, and upward mobility—we work to earn money so we can be secure, have a nice house, nice car, nice career, and extra left over to spend on our pleasures.

Foundations

199

Student Text

LESSON 15

For a Christian, there is a very different motivation for earning money. Paul instructed the Ephesians to do "honest work" so that each person "may have something to share with anyone in need" (Ephesians 4:28). God's heart is all compassion for those in poverty (Leviticus 19:9-10; Proverbs 31:8-9; Luke 6:20-21); Jesus himself became poor for our sake (2 Corinthians 8:9); and early followers of Jesus were marked by their concern for the poor and needy.²⁴



Generous giving should be a part of every Christian's life. Christians do well to support their local church²⁵ and charitable organizations,²⁶ but being generous is more than simply giving money. In fact, sometimes giving money can make things worse for the people we are trying to help.²⁷ Therefore, we must also be willing to give generously of our time and expertise to help others.

For a Christian, giving is tied directly to the idea of stewardship. A steward is one who cares for and manages what belongs to another. Everything that we have is a gift from God, so giving to those in need is a way of faithfully stewarding God's resources—time, talent, and treasure. Being generous stewards might mean that we have to cut back on our personal pleasures or hobbies. It might mean not getting the latest piece of technology. Ultimately, this calls us to the spiritual discipline of *simplicity*—the practice of living simply so that we can seek God's kingdom first without being enslaved by material possessions.



simplicity
the practice of living simply so that we can seek God's kingdom first

Jesus told us not to store up treasures here on Earth (Matthew 6:19-20). He modeled this himself by living simply (Luke 8:1-4; 9:58) and focusing on his mission of spreading the good news of God's kingdom.



Living simply doesn't mean that all of us are called to live in poverty, nor that having wealth is bad. Rather, it means trusting our needs to God, recognizing that he will take care of us. It means finding our primary joy in God and not in our possessions; holding what we have as belonging to God and using it for his glory; and trusting that our identity comes from being God's children, not from what we possess. Our disposition is to be one of generous giving and wise stewardship of God's creation.

Here are a few practical ways to live simply and steward God's creation:²⁸

- Reject the need to always have the latest and greatest.
- Practice regularly giving to others.
- Spend time enjoying God's creation. Consider how you could help protect and preserve it through eating better or using environmentally friendly products.
- Think about ways you can reduce damage to creation by recycling and instead of simply throwing things out.
- Think about who or what is being harmed by the products you buy. Try to find ethically sourced products.
- Reevaluate any hobby or material possession that keeps you from seeking God's kingdom first.



200

© Foundations

9. The Example of the Saints

Objective: You will be able to explain how the stories of faithful believers can encourage Christians to grow spiritually.

As we seek to practice these spiritual disciplines, we look to Jesus, our ultimate Example and Teacher. Throughout history, many of Jesus' followers have also practiced these disciplines. Their example provides encouragement and support for us on our own journeys.

• **Anthony of the Desert (251–356):** After hearing the words of Jesus in Matthew 19:21 about selling one's possessions and giving to the poor, Anthony sold his possessions and left for the desert to battle against temptation and follow God in a life of asceticism. Many people followed his example.



BENEDICT OF NURSIA

• **Benedict of Nursia (c. 480–547):** Benedict founded the Benedictine order. His rule for the monks under his care provided for regular reading of and meditation on Scripture. Benedictine monks helped to preserve Scripture and other writings for future generations.²⁹

• **Clare of Assisi (1194–1253):** Born into a noble family, Clare vowed not to marry and gave away her inheritance to the poor in order to follow Jesus. A disciple and friend of Francis of Assisi, Clare helped found an order for women ("the Poor Clares") that focused on simple living and voluntary poverty.³⁰ Like Francis, she had a deep respect for creation.



TERESA OF AVILA

• **Teresa of Avila (1515–1582):** Teresa is regarded by some as a master teacher on the life of prayer; yet she recounts in her autobiography how she struggled with prayer for much of her life. Eventually her persistence changed her prayer life, and she used what she had learned to encourage others. She went on to lead the reform movement in her Carmelite order.

• **Susanna Wesley (1669–1742):** As the mother of John and Charles Wesley, Susanna's impact on their lives, as well as the Methodist movement, is noteworthy. Susanna ran the Wesley household, bore 17 children, and provided for their academic, religious, and moral education, including weekly one-on-one time with each child.³¹ She worshipped God and prayed through all that she did.



DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

• **Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945):** A German Lutheran pastor and theologian during WWII, Bonhoeffer encouraged believers to practice regular times of solitude and silence, noting that these times were essential for Christians to live together in healthy community.³² Bonhoeffer stood up to Hitler and was eventually executed by the Nazis.

• **Luis Palau (1934–2021):** Palau was a beloved Argentinian evangelist, author, and radio preacher. He left an important legacy of humility, endurance, and obedience to God. Palau carefully studied the Bible and shared the gospel message all over the world. He was known for being honest about his mistakes and spoke of the role of repentance in the Christian life. Palau encouraged many people to pursue a passionate and rooted Christian faith.



LUIS PALAU

10. Conclusion

Each of these believers desired something more than self-level faith. They wanted to know and love God intimately and to offer their whole lives in his service. The goal of listing them here is not for us to compare ourselves to them (2 Corinthians 10:12). Paul instructed his fellow Christians to follow him as he followed Christ (1 Corinthians 1:11). So, we follow the example of those who have followed Christ. These believers are part of the "great cloud of witnesses" that has gone before us (Hebrews 12:1–2). Their lives witness not to extraordinary abilities, but to the power of God's Spirit working through all who faithfully seek him.

10. Conclusion

As the title of this chapter suggests, practicing these disciplines is a lifelong journey of walking with God. It is a journey that leads us deeper into knowledge of God and ourselves, so that through the power of the Holy Spirit we can imitate Jesus and become the people the Father created us to be. In this lifetime, we will not complete the journey, but we can be confident that Christ is renewing us day by day (2 Corinthians 4:16–17) and will one day complete the work of sanctification that he began in us (Philippians 1:6).



Maybe talking about all these spiritual disciplines has left you feeling a little overwhelmed. You might be regularly practicing only one or two of these disciplines, or maybe you have a hard time practicing any of them at all. Don't be discouraged. Remember that this is not a giant to-do list. Instead, the spiritual disciplines are an invitation to experience relationship with God at a deeper level. He wants you to know him as he truly is, and he is for your good. Even when you fail, he is patient, longing for you to return to him so that you can experience true life.

If you struggle to practice any of these disciplines, don't start tomorrow by trying to practice all of them. Instead, ask God to show you what he is inviting you to do. Choose one or two that you think you could start practicing regularly. Maybe that means just taking off your headphones for 15 minutes every day and reading the Bible. Maybe that means stopping to pray and reflecting on your day before bed. It might mean fasting from a meal, reading a book about faith, or taking a meal to your neighbor.

There will be seasons of life in which you feel like you aren't getting anything out of the disciplines. You might feel God is silent or doesn't hear you; you may feel like you aren't making any progress. During these times, you may be tempted to give up, thinking that there must be something wrong with you. But the testimony of numerous Christians over the centuries is that this is a normal experience in the Christian life. In such dry times, God is working on you in ways that you cannot see. It is during these seasons that God invites you to trust him while he works silently to transform you.

A final word of caution. This chapter could give the impression that being a Christian is a private, individual affair, exclusively between you and Jesus. It is true that the gospel is for you as an individual. It is an invitation to enter a personal relationship with Jesus. But no one was ever meant to live the Christian life alone. In fact, Scripture warns us not to isolate ourselves from other believers (Hebrews 10:25). It challenges us to build one another up (1 Thessalonians 5:11). The Christian life is to be lived out in community. In the next chapter, we'll learn how to practice spiritual disciplines in community, so that together with our Christian brothers and sisters we can grow to become more like Jesus.



ENDNOTES

²⁴For a more in-depth study of how to know God, prayer, and meditation on his Word, see A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (New York: HarperCollins, 1961).

²⁵Henri Nouwen, *The Spirituality of the Desert Fathers and Mothers* (New York: HarperCollins, 1981), 25.

²⁶Janis Goggin and Kyle Stomba, *Beloved Debt: Drawing Close to God by Discerning the Truth about Yourself* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2014).

202

© Foundations

²⁴See Michael Reeves, *Enjoy Your Prayer Life* (Leeland, England: 10Publishing, 2014), 15–16 and Teresa of Avila, *Book of Her Life, in The Collected Works of Saint Teresa of Avila, Volume 1*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D. and Otilio Rodriguez, O.C.D. (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1987).

²⁵Goggin and Stomba, *Beloved Debt*, 2.

²⁶For possible meanings of Matthew 6:13, see "3 Things 'Lead Us Not into Temptation' Might Mean—and Which Fits Best," Logos Blog, <https://blog.logos.com/4-things-lead-us-not-into-temptation-might-mean-and-which-fits-best/>.

²⁷See C. S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1964), 24–28.

²⁸The *Book of Common Prayer* can be found online here: <https://www.bcponline.org/>; excerpts from *The Valley of Vision* are available at <https://baneroftruth.org/devotional-series/the-valley-of-vision-devotional/>.

²⁹See Exodus 15:26, 2 Samuel 6:14; Psalm 149:3, 150:4.

³⁰Rony Rinkis, "Jesus Says," "Dressing God," <https://www.dressinggod.org/articles/jesus-says>.

³¹"What Is Adoration in the Bible?," *Got Questions*, <https://www.gotquestions.org/adoration-in-the-bible.html>.

³²For discussion of the word *shalom*, see John H. Walton, *Genesis: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 172–174.

³³Ben Keiser, "Spiritual Disciplines: Reading Scripture," *Summit Ministries*, April 6, 2020, <https://www.summit.org/resources/articles/reading-scripture/>.

³⁴"This is a modified form of *Lectio Divina*. Technically, *Lectio Divina* follows the pattern "read," "meditate," "pray," "contemplate," but prayer and contemplation are often intermingled. The *Lectio Divina* was first developed by Benedict of Nursia for the Benedictine monasteries, and the four-step process was outlined by French monk Guigo II the Carthusian in *Scala Perennis* or *The Ladder of Paradise*.

³⁵C. S. Lewis, "Introduction" in St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 4–5.

³⁶John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (London: Epworth Press, 1952), 87, as quoted in J. P. Moreland, *Love God with All Your Mind* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2012), 94.

³⁷Mark Allan Powell, "Acts 17:27–28—Paul Quotes the Pagans," supplement to *Introducing the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2018).

³⁸Jeram Barr, *Breaking Bread with the Dead: A Reader's Guide to a More Tranquil Mind* (New York: Penguin Press, 2020), 27.

³⁹Ben Keiser, "The Enduring Popularity of Jane Austen," *Summit Ministries*, February 21, 2020, <https://www.summit.org/resources/reflect/jane-austen-good-literature/>.

⁴⁰Jeram Barr, *Echoes of Eden: Reflections on Christianity, Literature, and the Arts* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 67.

⁴¹"Tim Mackie, 'Practicing Faith Part 2: Feasting and Fasting,' Episode 26, Exploring My Strange Bible Podcast, September 11, 2017, <https://bbpproject.com/podcast/practicing-faith-part-2-feasting-fasting/>.

⁴²Mackie, Episode 26.

⁴³See James E. Goehring, "Alone in the Desert?" *Christian History Institute*, <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/alone-in-the-desert>.

⁴⁴Raymond Stark, *The Triumph of Christianity: How the Jesus Movement Became the World's Largest Religion* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 105–119.

⁴⁵"Many Christians give to their local churches in the form of a tithe. In 2 Corinthians 9:7, Paul says, 'Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.' Further, Paul affirms that the preaching of the gospel is real and valuable work for which it is right for one to receive compensation (1 Corinthians 9:7–11; Galatians 6:6).

⁴⁶Christians do not all agree on giving directly to charitable organizations. The kind of charities that exist today were not around in the ancient world, so we should not expect to find specific verses directing us to give or not give in these ways. Some churches partner with local charities so that some of their regular funds go to those who work directly with people in need. All Christians must seek to be wise stewards of their resources and to share God's concern for the poor, giving generously—whether that be directly through the church, or through charities.

⁴⁷See Steve Carter and Brian Filken, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor . . . and Yourself* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2012).

⁴⁸Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (New York: HarperOne, 1988), 90–95. For a note on Foster's approach to spiritual disciplines, see Douglas Groothuis, "Apologues as Spiritual Formation," *Equip.org*, <https://www.equip.org/articles/apologues-as-spiritual-formation/>.

⁴⁹Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, ed. Marshall Shelley, 5th ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2021), 154–58.

⁵⁰Ingrid Peterson, "Francis' Tenacious Lady," *Christian History Institute*, <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/faith-of-our-mothers>.

⁵¹Eletha Coffman, "Faith of Our Mothers," *Christian History Institute*, <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/faith-of-our-mothers>.

⁵²Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Day After Tomorrow* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1954), 76–89.

© Foundations

203

Teacher Resources

LESSON 15

TR 15.3A Methods of Prayer

Name _____

There are many models that Christians use to organize their prayer lives. Here we will use the steps of the *Lectio Divina* as a guideline.

Step 1. Read—Slowly read the passage several times. Ask yourself what the passage might have felt like to sit in the original audience hearing these words. How do they have responded? How would you have responded? What stands out to you as you read?

Step 2. Meditate—Reflect on the meaning of the passage. Think about what it reveals about your character and reflect on that. What does the passage teach you about human nature? How do you respond to it? How would you have responded to it?

Step 3. Contemplate—Sit in silence and just be with God, allowing his words to go to your heart and soul. Humble your heart and open it to the Holy Spirit's work in your life. How do his words make you feel? Do you feel a sense of awe over who God is? Do you feel convicted about your life and need to repent? Do you have a deeper sense of God's love and care for you?

Step 4. Pray—Talk to God about what you are reading. What is your reaction? How do you respond to God's work in your heart? Thank God for speaking through his Word. Enjoy his presence.

Exercise: Freedom in Christ

Use the four steps described above to read and respond to the Scripture passage provided.

Introduction: Early churches struggled with condoning sin as "freedom in Christ." Legalistic rules and Jewish traditions to the gospel. In Galatians, Paul corrected the extra requirements for salvation and explained what freedom in Christ looks like.

Passage: Galatians 5:13-26

1. Read—Read the passage several times, noticing patterns like repeated words or phrases. Follow the flow of thought in the passage and how one idea connects to the next. What words or phrases catch your attention?

How would you have felt or responded if you were in the original audience?

© Foundations

Methods of Prayer Answer Key TR 15.3A

1. Read—Read the passage several times, noticing patterns like repeated words or concepts. Try to follow the flow of thought in the passage and how one idea connects to the next one.

What words or phrases catch your attention?

talk by the Spirit, desires of the Spirit, fruit of the Spirit, led by the Spirit, works of the flesh

How did you feel or respond if you were in the original audience?

might have felt surprised by the idea that freedom was an opportunity to be free of a big burden because Christ set me free from legalism.

What did you learn while reading this passage?

passage teach about the Holy Spirit's involvement in our lives?

help us live according to what pleases God and fight against sin and legalism.

What about doing what we want to do, or is it about being free to do what is right?

Christian freedom is about freedom from sin and freedom to love God and others.

What does obedience to God and freedom in Christ produce in our lives?

obedience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control

Rest quietly in God's presence and note your heart's response.

What did you feel prompted to praise, confess sin, or worship?

praising you? Do you feel prompted to praise, confess sin, or worship?

What did you learn about God about what you are reading?

praising and thanking God for speaking through his Word and inviting him to work in your life.

TR 15.3A Methods of Prayer

2. Meditate—Reflect on what you learned while reading this passage.

What does this passage teach about the Holy Spirit's involvement in our lives?

Is Christian freedom about doing what we want to do, or is it about being free to do what is right and to avoid evil? _____

What "fruit" does obedience to God and freedom in Christ produce in our lives?

3. Contemplate—Rest quietly in God's presence and note your heart's response.

What is God showing you? Do you feel prompted to praise, confess sin, or worship?

4. Prayer—Talk to God about what you are reading.

Write a brief prayer thanking God for speaking through his Word and inviting him to work in your heart and your life.

© Foundations

2

Samples reduced; not actual size

TR 15.8A Discipline Your Memory

1	1	4	4
Christian Meditation	Psalm 1:1-2 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked . . . his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.	Silence	Psalm 62:5-6 For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation . . .
2	2	5	5
Christian Contemplation	Psalm 139:17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!	Self-examination	Lamentations 3:40 Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the LORD!
3	3	6	6
Simplicity	1 Timothy 6:6-7 But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.	Worship	Psalm 95:6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

© Foundations

TR 15.8A Discipline Your Memory

7	7	10	10
Generosity	2 Corinthians 9:7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.	Fasting	Matthew 6:17-18 But when you fast . . . wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
8	8	11	11
Stewardship	1 Peter 4:10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace . . .	Asceticism or abstinence	1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.
9	9	12	12
Prayer	Ephesians 6:18 . . . praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints . . .	Memorization	Psalm 119:11 I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

© Foundations

2

Samples reduced; not actual size

Presentation Slides

LESSON 15

PS 15.6A **Category Clues**

Clue 3 **10 points**

Doing these spiritual disciplines daily is more important than completing a Bible reading plan or covering large amounts of Scripture each day. They can also help you internalize God's Word.

What's the category?

© Foundations

PS 15.6A **Category Clues**

Answer 3 **10 points**

Doing these spiritual disciplines daily is more important than completing a Bible reading plan or covering large amounts of Scripture each day. They can also help you internalize God's Word.

Reading and Memorizing Scripture

7

PS 15.6A **Category Clues**

Clue 11 **10 points**

The book of Psalms in the Bible offers many examples of these two spiritual discipline categories in every chapter.

What are the categories?

© Foundations

PS 15.6A **Category Clues**

Answer 11 **10 points**

The book of Psalms in the Bible offers many examples of these two spiritual discipline categories in every chapter.

Worship and Prayer

© Foundations

23

Samples reduced; not actual size

Presentation Slides

LESSON 1 5

PS 15.8A Walking with God

Chapter 15 Review

Chapter 15.1—Spiritual Disciplines - For What?

- Spiritual disciplines invite us into a deeper relationship with God.
 - **Spiritual disciplines:** habits and practices that help form us to be more like Jesus
 - Are not a measuring stick to tell how good a Christian someone is
 - Will not help us earn salvation
 - Will help us grow and mature to become like Christ
 - Are practices that help form us into people who can live and rule well in God's kingdom
 - Can involve hard work as we put ourselves in a place where God can work in our hearts
 - We open our hearts to the Holy Spirit, who transforms us.



© Foundations

PS 15.8A Walking with God

Chapter 15 Review

Chapter 15.5—Reading, Memorizing, Meditating On, and Contemplating Scripture

- Reading the Bible regularly is vital for Christian growth.
- Memorization helps us internalize God's Word.
- **Christian meditation:** reflecting on God's Word
 - We reflect on what a passage reveals about God and what he desires for us.
- **Christian contemplation:** resting quietly in the presence of God and his infinite love
- The *Lectio Divina* has four steps.
 - Read
 - Meditate
 - Contemplate
 - Pray



6

PS 15.8A Walking with God

Chapter 15 Review

Chapter 15.9—The Example of the Saints

- Jesus is our ultimate Example and Teacher.
 - Christians throughout history have left examples of how to follow Jesus and model the spiritual disciplines.
 - Some include Anthony of the Desert, Benedict of Nursia, Clare of Assisi, Teresa of Avila, Susanna Wesley, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Luis Palau
 - We can learn by following the examples of other faithful Christians throughout history.



© Foundations

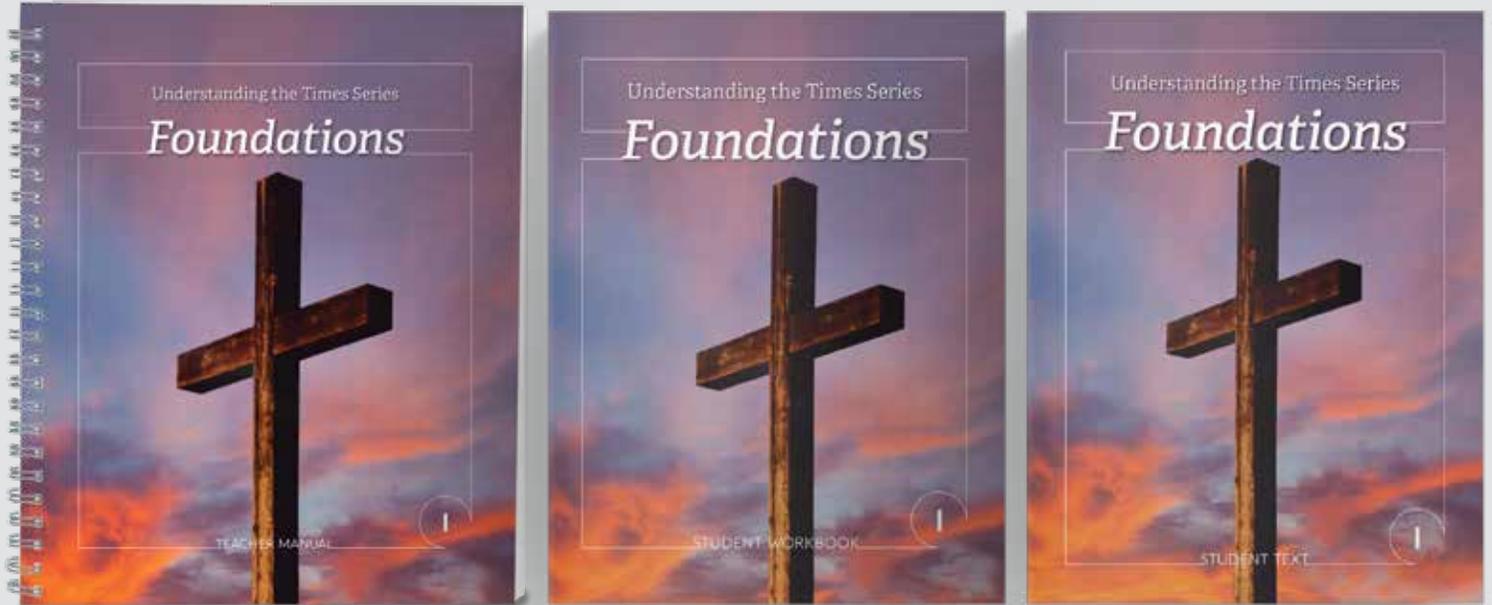
10

Samples reduced; not actual size

Video Samples
LESSON 15



Only Select Videos Displayed



SUMMIT
MINISTRIES
Faith for Life

MANITOU SPRINGS, CO 80829

>summit.org/curriculum
866.786.6483