

Developed by *Desiring God*



JOHN PIPER  
SMALL GROUP SERIES

*First of all, that no  
prophecy of Scripture  
comes from someone's own  
inspiration, but men spoke from God  
as they were carried along  
by the Holy Spirit.*

# WHY WE BELIEVE THE BIBLE



A STUDY GUIDE TO THE DVD  
featuring **JOHN PIPER**

## WHY WE BELIEVE THE BIBLE



WHY WE BELIEVE  
**THE BIBLE**

STUDY GUIDE DEVELOPED BY DESIRING GOD

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*Why We Believe the Bible Study Guide*

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## INTRODUCTION TO THIS STUDY GUIDE

**JESUS SAID SOME VERY HARD THINGS.** So hard, in fact, that many who followed him turned back and wanted nothing to do with him. On one such occasion, Jesus turned to the twelve disciples and asked, "Do you want to go away as well?" John records Simon Peter's answer: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God" (John 6:67-69). Simon Peter knew that no one spoke like Jesus. Jesus spoke with authority. He spoke words of eternal life and Peter believed.

The situation is similar today when we come to the Bible. For many, the Bible is either offensive or irrelevant: a patchwork quilt of antiquated dogma, conflicting data, and unfounded myths. It may have value as a historical relic, or perhaps we may glean some insight from its ethical teachings, but it is certainly not reliable as a guide to all of life. Furthermore, other religious texts such as the Qur'an, the Bhagavad Gita, the Book of Mormon, and the Buddhist Sutras grapple for our allegiance. We are a torn people in need of clarity.

The purpose of this study guide is to help you part the philosophical fog and delight in the cast-iron reliability of the Word of God. Paul had similar desires for Timothy when he wrote, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). Our prayer is that you would feel the life-giving nature of these words and say of the Scriptures, "More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings from the honeycomb" (Psalm 19:10).

After all, the stakes are high. Paul said all Scripture is breathed out by God. Peter said Jesus had the words of eternal life. If they are right, then to reject the Scriptures is not simply being misinformed. It is suicidal. May God be pleased to use this resource to protect thousands from stopping their ears to his voice and to cause them to heed the words of Isaiah: "Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live" (Isaiah 55:2-3).

This study guide is designed to be used in a twelve-session,<sup>1</sup> guided group study that focuses on the *Why We Believe the Bible* DVD set.<sup>2</sup> After an introductory lesson, each subsequent lesson examines one 30-minute session<sup>3</sup> from the DVD. You, the learner, are encouraged to prepare for the viewing of each session by reading and reflecting upon Scripture, by considering key quotations, and by asking yourself penetrating questions. Your preparatory work for each lesson is marked with the heading "Before You Watch the DVD, Study and Prepare" in Lessons 2-11.

The workload is conveniently divided into five daily (and manageable) assignments. There is also a section suggesting further study. This work is to be completed individually before the group convenes to view the DVD and discuss the material.

Throughout this study guide, paragraphs printed in a shaded box (like this one) are excerpts from a book written by John Piper or from the Desiring God Web site, or excerpts from other sources. They are included to supplement the study questions and to summarize key or provocative points.

The second section in Lessons 2-11, entitled "Further Up and Further In," is designed for the learner who wants to explore the concepts and ideas introduced in the lesson in greater detail. This section is not required, but will deepen your understanding of the material. This section requires that you read online sermons or articles from the Desiring God Web site ([www.desiringGod.org](http://www.desiringGod.org)) and answer relevant questions. These sermons can be found by performing a Title Search at the Desiring God Web site.

The third section in Lessons 2-11, entitled "While You Watch the DVD, Take Notes," is to be completed as the DVD is playing. This section includes fill-in-the-blanks and leaves space for note-taking. You are encouraged to engage with the DVD by filling in the appropriate blanks and writing down other notes that will aid you in the group discussion.

The fourth section in each normal lesson is "After You Watch the DVD, Discuss What You've Learned." Three discussion questions are provided to guide and focus the conversation. You may record, in the spaces provided, notes that will help you contribute to the conversation. Or, you may use this space to record things from the discussion that you want to remember.

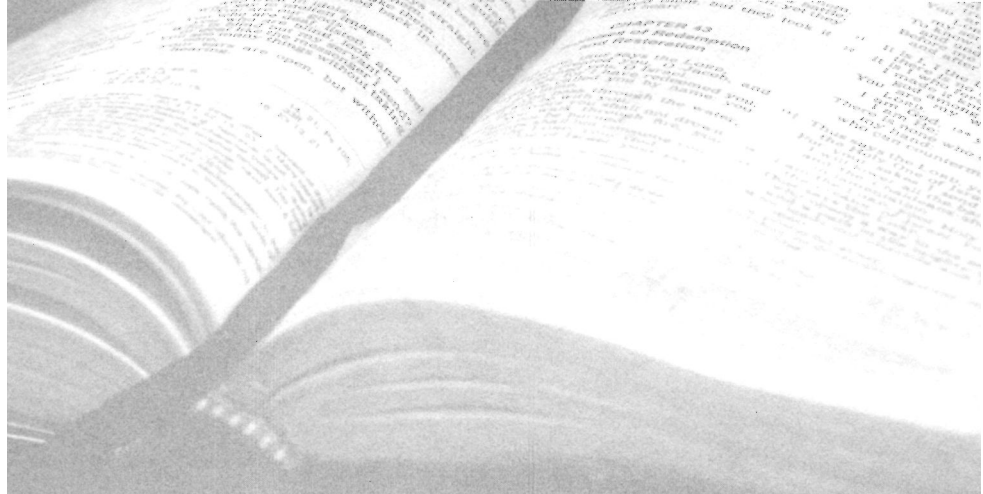
The fifth and final section is an application section: "After You Discuss, Make Application." You will be challenged to record a "take-away point" and to engage in a certain activity that is a fitting response to the content presented in the lesson.

Group leaders will want to find the Leader's Guide, included at the end of this study guide, immediately.

Life transformation will only occur by the grace of God. Therefore, we highly encourage you to seek the Lord in prayer throughout the learning process. Pray that God would open your eyes to see wonderful things in his Word. Pray that he would grant you the insight and concentration you need in order to get the most from this resource. Pray that God would cause you not merely to understand the truth, but also to rejoice in it. And pray that the discussion in your group would be mutually encouraging and edifying. We've included objectives at the beginning of each lesson. These objectives won't be realized without the gracious work of God through prayer.

## **NOTES**

1. While this study guide is ideally suited for a twelve-session study, it is possible to complete it in six sessions. For instructions on how to use this study guide for a six-session group study, turn to Appendix A: Six-Session Intensive Option.
2. Although this resource is designed to be used in a group setting, it can also be used by the independent learner. Such a learner would have to decide how to use this resource in the most beneficial way. We would suggest doing everything but the group discussion, if possible.
3. Thirty minutes is only an approximation. Some sessions are longer; others are shorter.



# LESSON 1

## INTRODUCTION TO *WHY WE BELIEVE THE BIBLE*

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

It is our prayer that after you have finished this lesson . . .

- > You will have a better sense of how you and others in your group approach the Bible.
- » Your curiosity will be roused, and questions will come to mind.
- > You will be eager to better cherish and defend the reliability of the Scriptures.

### ABOUT YOURSELF

- 1) What is your name?
  
- 2) Tell the group something about yourself that they probably don't already know.
  
- 3) What are you hoping to learn from this study?

