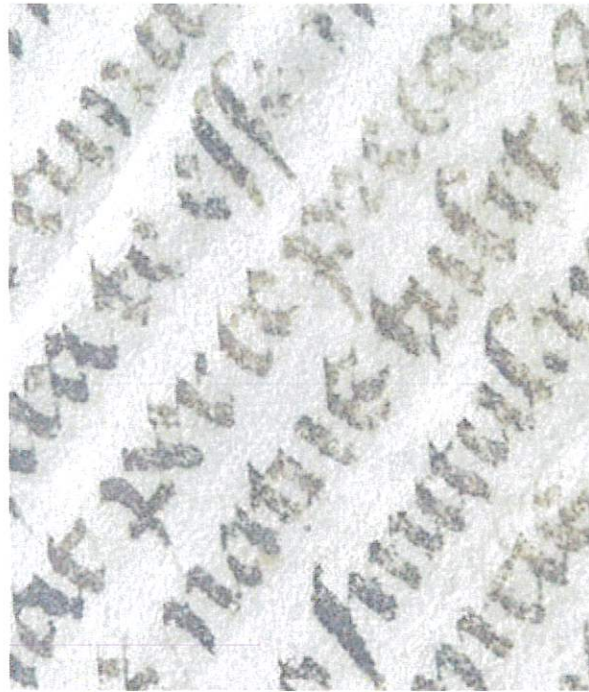


Session 3



THE
BIBLE



THE BIBLE: God's Love Letter to Humanity

INTRODUCTION

What do you know about the Bible? Perhaps you are coming from a faith tradition that emphasizes Scripture reading, and you know a great deal. But maybe all you know about the Bible is that it is a famous and holy book. Whatever you know (or don't know), this week's session will introduce you to the Catholic understanding of Scripture, how it fits into God's plan of salvation for our lives, and how the Catholic Church has been the guardian of the Bible since the very beginning of Christianity.

THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **What makes the Bible unique**
- **What Christians mean when they say the Bible is inspired by God**
- **How the 73 books of the Bible relate together**
- **How we can know which books are inspired by God and a part of Sacred Scripture**
- **Why Protestant Bibles don't have some books that are included in Catholic Bibles**
- **How we can use the Bible each day to hear God speak to each of us individually**



OPENING PRAYER

O Lord Jesus Christ,
 open the eyes of my heart,
 that I may hear your word
 and understand and do your will,
 for I am a sojourner upon the earth.
 Hide not your commandments from me,
 but open my eyes, that I may perceive the wonders of your law.
 Speak unto me the hidden and secret things
 of your wisdom.
 On you do I set my hope, O my God,
 that you shall enlighten
 my mind and understanding with
 the light of your knowledge,
 not only to cherish those things
 which are written, but to do them;
 that in reading the lives and sayings
 of the saints I may not sin,
 but that such may serve for my restoration, enlightenment
 and sanctification, for the salvation of my soul,
 and the inheritance of life everlasting.
 For you are the enlightenment of those
 who lie in darkness,
 and from you comes every good deed
 and every gift. Amen.
 —St. John Chrysostom

*“If you believe what you
 like in the gospels, and
 reject what you don’t like,
 it is not the gospel you
 believe, but yourself.”*

—St. Augustine



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What one thing ties all 73 of the books of the Bible together?

2. According to the video, what does it mean that Catholics don’t interpret the Bible in a literalistic way, but they do read the Bible literarily? What examples does the presenter give?

CALL TO CONVERSION

After spending a few moments in prayer, write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:

#1 Psalm 119:105 says, “Your word is a lamp to my feet, a light for my path.” What does this passage mean to me? Am I willing to read God’s Word in Scripture with an open heart and mind, expecting that God will give me insights for my life?



“As Paul says, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, and if the man who does not know Scripture does not know the power and wisdom of God, then ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.” —St. Jerome

#2 What can I do this week to make the reading of Scripture a greater part of my life? (Consider reading the Bible, perhaps starting with the Gospel of Luke as suggested in the video.)

#3 Reflect on the following quote from Pope Saint Gregory:

“The Holy Bible is like a mirror before our mind’s eye. In it we see our inner face. From the Scriptures we can learn our spiritual deformities and beauties. And there too we discover the progress we are making and how far we are from perfection.”

How might thinking of the Bible as a mirror and as a way to learn about my spiritual progress make a difference in how I listen to the readings at Mass? What can I do to be better prepared for the Scripture readings each week?



CLOSING PRAYER

Prayer Before Reading Scripture

We praise and thank you
glorious Lord Jesus Christ,
for being present among us
and in us.

In us you praise the Father
with the voice of the Spirit,
whom you have given us.
Lord, may this voice of the Spirit
be roused in us
as we listen to the words
of Scripture in a manner
that is worthy and fitting,

appropriate to the meaning
of the text and in harmony
with what is revealed to us.
Make us ready to recognize
how we can correspond
to the teaching and example
proposed to us,
for you are God, living and reigning
for ever and ever. Amen.

—Carlo Maria Martini SJ

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Here is a verse from the Bible that you can memorize and reflect on this week to help you apply today's session to your daily life:



"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." —Hebrews 4:12

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE BIBLE?

Visit www.SymbolonCatholic.org

To help answer your questions and enrich your faith, visit our website to discover additional online resources from throughout the Catholic world.

For Further Reading:

For more in-depth reading about the Sacred Scripture, see the following *Catechism* passages:

- *Christ as the Word of God: CCC 101-104*
- *Inspiration and the truth of Scripture: CCC 105-108*
- *The Holy Spirit and Sacred Scripture: CCC 109-119*
- *Books of the Old Testament: CCC 120-123*
- *The New Testament canon: CCC 124-127*
- *Scripture and the Church: CCC 131-133*

Other Resources:

- *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Chapter 3*
- *A Father Who Keeps His Promises: God's Covenant Love in Scripture* by Scott Hahn
- *Walking with God: A Journey through the Bible* by Tim Gray and Jeff Cavins
- *Catholic Bible Dictionary* by Scott Hahn
- *Where is THAT in the Bible?* by Patrick Madrid
- *The Bible Compass: A Catholic's Guide to Navigating the Scriptures* by Edward Sri
- *The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible series* by Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch