

# CREW Bible Study

## Youth XP3 Message Series – EXPLAINED – Week 1

- **BOTTOM LINE:** The point of the Bible is to know God better.
- **GOAL:** To help students understand that the Bible is important because it helps us know what God is like, and Jesus helps us understand the Bible better because He is the ultimate representation of what God is like.
- **SCRIPTURE:**
  - *John 1:1 – In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
  - *John 1:14 – The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*
  - *Colossians 1:15 – The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*

### MESSAGE

What are some things that you wish you understood better?

- Algebra or Calculus?
- Why your sister won't listen to you?
- The meaning of TikTok?
- Why we don't have a vaccine for coronavirus yet?
- Life in general?

What about this - Have you ever wished you understood the Bible better? Because if you're like most people, the Bible can seem really confusing.

Some people say the Bible is like a history book. But maybe you're really not very good at history and that kind of closes you off to wanting to know more. And depending on which translation you're reading, the words may not make any sense!

Some people use the Bible like it's a weapon, quoting words from it as a way to convince someone that they're wrong. And it seems like the Bible is just a lot of words about what not to do.

I think we can all agree that there are things in the Bible that are confusing. And that's why we're starting this new message series called "Explained." Over the next few weeks, we're going to take a deeper look at the Bible and try to walk away with at least a little bit more of it explained. And if you have a question, reach out and ask!

To start off, it's important to know that the Bible has two big sections:

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

A lot of people talk about the “books” of the Bible. But in reality, instead of “books”, it's more like a combination of history, eye-witness accounts, letters, songs and journals. The point of the Bible is to know God better through all of these books and chapters and songs and stories.

With that in mind, let's look at one of the eye-witness accounts of Jesus' life in the New Testament. It was written by John, who knew Jesus personally and was one of His friends. John lived longer than any of Jesus' other disciples, and when he was old, he decided to write down what he remembered about Jesus. John started his story not by telling us what happened with Jesus, but instead by telling us why Jesus came to be on earth.

In John chapter 1, verse 1, he says, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*

If that sounds confusing, I totally get it! Let me try and explain. When John says, “the Word”, he is really referring to Jesus. If we insert Jesus' name in this verse instead, it reads like this: *“In the beginning was Jesus, and Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God.”*

And later in verse 14, John says, *“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

So, John is telling us that Jesus was with God from the very beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth. And God sent Jesus to be Him in human form, to walk on the earth, and let people see what He - God - was really like.

Jesus is the ultimate and clearest image of God. He is the living and breathing word of God. The biggest job of the Bible is to point us to Jesus because Jesus shows us who God is.

One Jewish writer who wrote to new Christians explained it this way in a letter that we now call Hebrews. Hear this from Hebrews, chapter 1, verses 1-2:

*“Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son.”*

Before God sent Jesus to live on earth, He revealed more of himself to prophets who would then tell the people what God said. Maybe you've heard of the prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel? God sent Jesus to be a representation of Him on earth so He wouldn't need to speak through prophets like this anymore. When we

read the Bible, we need to read it with this one goal in mind: to get to know God by getting to know Jesus.

Let's test this out. Let's look at something Jesus said in order to know God better. And afterward, let's apply three questions to this verse.

In a conversation with a religious leader, Jesus was asked which commandment was the greatest. And it was kind of a trap, because the religious leader knew that no matter what Jesus picked as the most important, it would imply that something else was less important. Here's how Jesus answered him, in Mark, chapter 12, verses 30-31:

*"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these."*

Basically, Jesus says, "Love God, and love your neighbor as yourself. That's what's most important." So, knowing that about Jesus, here's three questions for you to answer:

1. **What does this teach me about God?** If Jesus cared about loving God and loving your neighbor, what does God care about? He cares about love. What do people *think* that God cares about most? What do I think? Does that line up with what Jesus says? Is there anything that needs to change in the way that I see God?
2. **What does this teach me about me?** Another way to ask this question is, "What does this teach me about humans in general?" Knowing what I learned about God by answering the question above, what can I learn about myself? In this case, it teaches me that God assumes that I love myself. It's part of loving my neighbor, almost like loving me is part of the package deal with loving God and loving others.
3. **What does this teach me about how I need to live or treat others?** We might read a Bible verse, but if we don't know how to take that verse and apply it to our day-to-day lives, then it won't do much good. So, ask yourself, "if I put this verse into practice, how would it affect the way I treat my mom or my stepbrother or my friend?" What do I need to do differently in light of the fact that Jesus says loving your neighbor is part of the greatest commandment?

So, remember these three questions: What does this teach me about God, about myself, and about other people? These three questions help us understand the Bible better. And as we do, we'll get to know God better. It might be the explanation you're looking for.

## **FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What is something you wish you understood better? What is a question about life that you wish you had the answer to?
2. What are some of the common questions you hear people ask about the Bible?
3. What are some of the common reasons you think people avoid reading the Bible?
4. Think back to "elementary school" you. How did you see the Bible at that age? Has your view of the Bible changed since then? If so, how and why?
5. What are some of the characteristics we know to be true of Jesus? If Jesus is the best representation of God, how does knowing Jesus also affect the way you see God?
6. Does knowing that the purpose of the Bible is to point us to Jesus change how you see or think about the Bible? How and why?
7. Read Mark 12: 30-31. What does this verse teach you about God? About yourself? About how you need to live or treat others?