

Unit 1



family

DEVOTIONAL

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God's Word Is Our Foundation



Answers
BIBLE CURRICULUM

Answers Bible Curriculum

Unit 1 • Family Devotional

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Introduction

Welcome to the *Answers Bible Curriculum* family devotional. It is our prayer that God will use this guide as a tool to help you as parents to train and disciple your children. We encourage you to take time in the evening (or morning) during the week to have an intentional time of family Bible study, worship, and Scripture memory. You could do this every night or a couple nights each week. Make it a habit, and don't let the to-do's and pressures of our busy lives rob you of this precious time together.

While it's true that the church has a God-given responsibility to teach God's Word and lead in worship, God gives the primary responsibility for a child's spiritual development to his or her parents. Below are just a few of the Scriptures that admonish parents to be actively involved in training and teaching their children the things of the Lord:

Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children—how on the day that you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, the LORD said to me, “Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.” (Deuteronomy 4:9–10)

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4–9)

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

We suggest you read the lesson summary out loud, and then read each of the Scriptures and discuss the answers among yourselves. Of course, you'll want to adjust the questions based on the ages of your children. If you plan on having a family devotional time each night of the week, you will want to read ahead and split up each lesson into five or six smaller pieces.

We have included space for family prayer requests. It is important to spend time in prayer, lifting up the needs of each family member and praying for each one's spiritual growth. You can also use this time to lift up the needs in your church, any missionaries you know or support, etc. Record the prayer requests, and then review them from time to time to be encouraged as to how God has answered.

As parents, God has given you a great responsibility and a great privilege to train the next generation. You may not feel up to the task, but remember, our sufficiency is from God (2 Corinthians 3:4–6), and he delights in using the weak and foolish things of the world so that his wisdom and power may be manifest (1 Corinthians 1:26–31).



God's Word Is Our Foundation

Lesson Summary

The Bible is the starting point from which we discern truth and make decisions. We need to learn to use it to guide our every thought. Psalm 19 tells us that God's Word is perfect, sure, right, pure, true, righteous, more to be desired than gold, and sweeter than honey. It is like no other book ever written!

God's Word can also change us. It changes our soul; it makes us wise; it brings joy to the heart; and it allows us to see more clearly—like a light shining in the darkness.

We might think we know all the answers, but we don't know anything compared to God. God is the only one who is omniscient—he knows everything! But he has left us with a guidebook—the Bible—the very Word of God. If we refuse to use his Word to guide us, we will never see things clearly. We need to look at all of life through biblical glasses, using the Bible as our foundation in everything.

First and foremost, God's Word reveals who he is and what he has done for us in sending his Son Jesus as Savior. The Bible exhibits God's plan throughout history to save a people for himself.

God's Word is also a guide—helping us make wise choices that will honor God and glorify him. His Word will help us to determine what is true and what is not as we hear and learn things. This is very important because most people do not stand on the authority of the Bible. We need to know what it says so we know who is telling the truth and who is not. Wearing our biblical glasses is vitally important. It takes commitment to read the Word in order to know what it says.

Read and Discuss

Read the following passages and discuss the questions together.

Psalm 19:7–11

1. How did the psalmist view God's Word? What are some of the adjectives he used to describe it?
2. What are the Scriptures good for? What are some ways that they can change us?
3. Share a specific example with your family of a time when God's Word made you wise or enlightened your eyes.

2 Peter 1:20–21; 2 Timothy 3:16

4. According to these verses, how was the Bible written? Who is its author?

5. What was the role of God and what was the role of the human authors in writing the Bible?

6. Look up the following passages and note the synonym used for the Bible.

- 1 Peter 2:2

- Hebrews 4:12

- Colossians 3:16

- James 1:18

- 2 Timothy 3:15

- Daniel 10:21

- Isaiah 34:16

- Nehemiah 8:3

- Isaiah 30:9

- Ephesians 6:17

- Romans 3:2

7. What do these verses tell us about God's Word? Why can we trust it?

Memory Verse

Review the memory verse with your family.

Psalm 119:89–90 Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands fast.

Prayer

Take time to thank God for his Word. Ask him to accomplish his will in and through you as you submit to his Word and seek to obey him in everything.

Family Prayer Requests:



Attributes of God

Lesson Summary

Because there is no way to comprehend the vast depth of our holy God, we are at risk of conjuring up in our minds what we want him to be. This is not acceptable, but is a form of idolatry. We can begin to know who God is only by the revelation of his Word—what he has revealed to us.

David said of him, “Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable” (Psalm 145:3). And, “Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all” (1 Chronicles 29:11). We can’t say it any better than the Apostle Paul: “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways” (Romans 11:33)! The glimpses of God we observe from his Word are far, far from complete.

Question 4 of the historic Westminster Shorter Catechism, penned in the 1640s, asks, “What is God?” The answer? “God is Spirit (John 4:24), infinite (Jeremiah 23:24), eternal (Psalm 90:2), and unchangeable (Malachi 3:6) in his being (James 1:17), wisdom (Psalm 147:5), power (Revelation 19:6), holiness (1 Samuel 2:2), justice (Psalm 7:11), goodness (Psalm 107:8), and truth (Deuteronomy 32:4).”

Read and Discuss

1. Read the following passages and discuss together which attributes of God each passage mentions.

- Exodus 34:4-8
- Exodus 20:4-6
- Job 42:2
- Isaiah 40:25-28
- Psalm 48:3-5
- Psalm 90:1-6
- Psalm 147:1-7
- 1 John 4:7-11
- 2 Peter 3:8-9

2. Can we ever fully describe or understand God? Why or why not?

3. After reading these passages, do you think you have a clearer understanding of who God is?

4. Which attribute(s) of God do you sometimes fail to think about?

5. Which attribute(s) of God gives you hope? Comfort?

Memory Verse

Review the memory verse with your family.

Psalm 119:89–90 Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands fast.

Prayer

Spend some time praising God for who he is (be specific!). Thank him for those attributes that give you hope, comfort, and peace. Thank God that at the cross he demonstrated both his justice and his love, and ask him to help you live in light of who he is.

Family Prayer Requests:



We Can Know God Exists

Lesson Summary

God's existence as the self-sufficient and eternal Creator of the universe is presupposed from the very first verse of the Bible. God has not instructed his followers to spend time presenting physical evidences in an attempt to convince unbelievers of his existence. For example, Romans 10:17 does not say, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by amazing scientific evidences that prove the Bible to be true." On the contrary, the passage states: "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." No amount of physical evidence can convert a sinner into a child of God. Thankfully, this responsibility belongs to the Holy Spirit.

While we can use evidence (such as the very existence of design, order, natural laws, and principles in the universe) to confirm God's existence, we have to be careful not to elevate the evidences in nature above the truths of the Bible. If our interpretation of the evidence from nature can prove the Bible is true, then our interpretation becomes the authority over Scripture. That is the difference between thinking in an *evidential* way as opposed to a *presuppositional* way. The Bible should be our ultimate authority—our basic presupposition.

Read and Discuss

Read the following passages and discuss the questions together.

Psalm 90:1–6

1. When did God begin to exist?
2. What does it mean that God is everlasting or eternal?
3. How does the psalmist compare man to God?

Romans 1:20–22

4. What can be known about God from his creation?
5. Are there really any atheists according to this passage?

Hebrews 11:1–6; Romans 10:17

6. Ultimately, can we “prove” that God exists and that he is the Creator?
7. According to Hebrews 11:6, what does it take to please God?
8. Will intellectual arguments win people to Christ? How does faith come to people?

Memory Verse

Review the memory verse with your family.

Psalm 119:89–90 Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands fast.

Prayer

Praise God that he is the eternal Creator of heaven and earth. Thank him for his Word and for its gospel message, which is the power of God unto salvation. Ask God to help you use his Word as you witness, realizing that it is by hearing the Word of God that faith comes.

Family Prayer Requests:



The Trinity

Lesson Summary

While the word *Trinity* is not found in Scripture, the concept of the Trinity is clear in its accounts. It is an important doctrine of the Christian faith, advocating that God eternally exists as three persons. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God—but there is only one God. Because of our finite minds, this concept is impossible to fully understand or explain.

In this lesson we looked at several Scripture passages that show that Jesus is God and the Holy Spirit is God. All three persons of the Trinity are called God; all three are referred to as eternal; all three were present at creation; all three are ascribed attributes that only God has; etc.

Why is it important to believe trinitarian doctrine and specifically that Jesus is both God and man? Our very salvation requires it. The death of a mere man (no matter how noble) could not provide the purchase price required to redeem other men from their sins against an infinite God. But because Jesus is God, is eternal, and is infinite, he alone is able to satisfy the penalty for those sins by his death.

In addition, Jesus had to be fully human in order to redeem Adam's fallen race. The substitutionary atonement required that Jesus Christ must die as a man to bear judgment for the sins of men. Only the God-man could bridge the gap and bring both God and man together. As a

man, he lived a perfect life and is qualified to be our high priest and Savior (Hebrews 2:17, 7:24–28).

Read and Discuss

1. Read the following passages and discuss how they demonstrate God's triune nature.
 - Colossians 1:16–17, 2:9
 - John 8:58
 - Acts 5:3–4
 - John 14:16–23
 - Hebrews 1
 - Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14
2. Are we able to completely understand the Trinity?
3. Are there any analogies we can give to help people understand the Trinity?
4. Why is it important to understand the triune nature of God?

5. Why did Jesus have to be both man and God?

Read the following passage and discuss the questions together.

Ephesians 1:3–14

6. What have we received from God the Father?

7. What have we received from God the Son?

8. What have we received from God the Spirit?

9. What is the ultimate purpose of all that God has done for us (vv. 6, 12, 14)?

Memory Verse

Review the memory verse with your family.

Psalm 119:89–90 Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands fast.

Prayer

Thank God that he has revealed himself as a Trinity—three persons in one God. Ask him to help us understand him more and to accept by faith those things that we cannot understand.

Family Prayer Requests:



God's Word Guides Us

Lesson Summary

As believers striving to live in a way that pleases God, it is of utmost importance that we know how to study God's Word correctly, or as the Apostle Paul put it in 2 Timothy 2:15, that we are "rightly handling the word of truth." We learned to ask questions of the text, like Who? What? When? Where? and Why? We also learned exactly *how* God's Word can guide and change us. After all, the ultimate goal of Bible study is not to gain head knowledge, but to become conformed to the image of Christ as God's Holy Spirit takes his Word and uses it to transform our lives.

We know that the Bible is inspired by God himself, and he cannot lie. Because of that, we can trust it to be the very foundation for our lives. The more we study the Bible, the more guidance God will give us. We can count on it for excellent guidance because God inspired the writers through the Holy Spirit to write just what he wanted them to write.

Read and Discuss

Read the following passages and discuss the questions together.

2 Timothy 3:16–17

1. What are the different ways that God's Word can guide us? What does each mean?
2. What is the ultimate goal of Bible study according to this verse?
3. What might a mature believer who is thoroughly equipped look like?

2 Timothy 4:1–3

4. Why is it important to “preach the word”?
5. What does that involve?

Psalm 119:97–104

6. Do you love God’s law—his Word?
7. What happens to us as we study and meditate on God’s Word?
8. What does the Psalmist mean when he says that God’s words are “sweeter than honey” to him?
9. If we really loved God’s Word, if we considered it sweeter than honey and more valuable than gold, how would our priorities be different?

Memory Verse

Review the memory verse with your family.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Prayer

Take time to thank God for his Word. Ask him to make it a priority in your life and to reveal any areas in your life that need to be brought into alignment with his will. Ask God to give you opportunities to share his Word with others—to exhort, rebuke, correct, and instruct.

Family Prayer Requests:



God Preserves His Word

Lesson Summary

Last week we looked at the ways that God's Word changes us and how we can use his Word to help others. His Word truly is sweeter than honey and more precious than gold!

This week's lesson looked at the importance of the Old Testament—the part of the Bible written before Jesus' birth—and how God has preserved his Word. The Old Testament includes 4,000 years of history—and God wants us to know and believe all of it.

The Old Testament is what Jesus himself studied and taught from. Indeed, Jesus placed such a high value on the inspired Word of God that even he—the very Son of God, the Messiah—willingly submitted himself to its authority while on earth. He relied on it to resist the temptations of Satan (Matthew 4), and he read from it when he taught in the synagogues. In fact, he was reading from the Old Testament book of Isaiah when he proclaimed that he was the Messiah who fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy (Luke 4:16–21).

Even after he rose from the dead, Jesus continued to teach his disciples the truth from the Scriptures. He showed how these Scriptures, beginning at the writings of Moses and all through the Prophets and Psalms, spoke of him (Luke 24:13–27). His trust in the Old Testament can give us the same trust and confidence in this very

- Isaiah 53:3–11
- Isaiah 61:1–2
- Jeremiah 23:5–6
- Micah 5:2

4. How do passages like these give us confidence in the reliability of the Old Testament?

Memory Verse

Review the memory verse with your family.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Prayer

Thank God for his precious Word. Thank him that we can trust it from beginning to end. Ask God to increase your trust in his Word and to equip you to share it with others.

Family Prayer Requests:



God's Word Is Complete

Lesson Summary

Last week we looked at the Old Testament: how it has been preserved, how Jesus believed and taught from it, and why we can trust it to be truthful and accurate. This week we studied the New Testament and learned that God's Word is complete.

We know God's Word is true because 1) God guided and inspired the men to write the message he wanted them to write—in fact, Jesus promised that he would send the Holy Spirit to help the writers know exactly what God wanted them to write; 2) God cannot lie—so his Word must be true; 3) the Bible was written by eyewitnesses—like the Apostle John—who learned from Jesus.

We know God's Word is complete because God warns us in the book of Revelation that no one should change God's Word by adding to it or taking anything out of it. The 39 books in the Old Testament and the 27 books in the New Testament make up the complete Word of God. You can be sure of that. No one can add anything to his Word or take anything from it.

Read and Discuss

Read the following passages and discuss the questions together.

John 14:25–26

1. How does this promise of Jesus to his disciples increase our trust in the reliability of the Gospel accounts?

John 21:24

2. Why should we believe the testimony of John in his Gospel account?

Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32; Proverbs 30:5–6; Revelation 22:18–19

3. How seriously does God take tampering with his Word?

Ephesians 2:19–21

4. If the foundation of the church has already been laid by the apostles and prophets, with Jesus as the chief cornerstone, should we expect future additions to God’s Word? Why or why not?

Memory Verse

Review the memory verse with your family.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Prayer

Thank God for his complete Word. Ask him to increase our confidence in it and to show us how to study it more effectively and how to share it with others.

Family Prayer Requests:



Don't Change God's Word

Lesson Summary

Last week we looked at the New Testament and how God used eyewitnesses like the Apostle John to record the Gospels, and how Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would remind them of the things he said.

There are many warnings in the Bible against trying to change God's Word, and there are serious consequences for anyone who messes with it.

Today, as throughout church history, many false religions and false prophets or teachers teach lies about God and Jesus. Even some who claim to be Christians (or even pastors) are false teachers, teaching things contrary to the Scriptures. We must be on guard. The Bible is the only Word of God, and it must be our final and absolute authority.

It is important for you to know what God's Word says. That way you will realize when someone is trying to trick you by adding something to it. You can be like the Bereans in the book of Acts who listened to the teachers and then studied the Bible to be sure that what they were taught was true.

Read and Discuss

Read the following passages and discuss the questions together.

Deuteronomy 18:20–22

1. How did God tell the Israelites to test whether a prophet was a true one or a false one?

Acts 17:10–11

2. Why were those in Berea called “more noble” than those in Thessalonica?
3. How often did they search the Scriptures?

Galatians 1:6–9

4. Is there another gospel of Christ?
5. What did the Apostle Paul wish upon a man (or an angel!) who would preach any other gospel? What does this tell you about how God views false prophets or teachers?

Acts 20:28–31

6. What did the Apostle Paul warn the Ephesian elders about?
7. What will be the goals of these false teachers?

2 Peter 2:1–3

8. What are some destructive heresies being taught in the church today?
9. How many will follow these false teachers? And what will be the outcome for the church's reputation?

Matthew 7:15–20

10. What does Jesus warn about in this passage?
11. How are we to tell real prophets from false prophets? What are some examples of good fruit and bad fruit (see Galatians 5:19–24)?

1 John 4:1–6

12. What are we commanded to do in verse 1? How can we do that?
13. How can we distinguish the Spirit of God from false spirits?

Memory Verse

Review the memory verse with your family.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Prayer

Thank God for his all-sufficient Word. Ask him to help you discern truth from error and to recognize false teaching, whether coming from outside the church or from inside. Thank him for his Holy Spirit who guides us into all truth.

Family Prayer Requests:



The Gospel Is Good News

Lesson Summary

To truly understand the good news of the Bible, we must grasp the bad news of the Bible first. Because God is a holy God—righteous and separate from sin—he cannot dwell with sinful man, and his perfect justice demands that he punish disobedience. The Bible tells us that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) and that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). This is the bad news—that all people are separated from God, born spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1), under his just penalty, and destined for an eternity in hell.

The good news is that God sent his own Son, Jesus, to become a man, live a sinless life, and then die on the cross, paying the penalty of death that we all deserve. “For our sake he [God] made him [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). In the death of Christ, we see the justice of God satisfied and the love of God demonstrated (Romans 5:8).

Repentance of one’s sin and trust in Christ as Savior and Lord are the responses of the sinner unto salvation. We are adopted by God as sons, joint heirs with Christ (Ephesians 1:5; Romans 8:16–17); we are born again to a new and living hope (1 Peter 1:3); we become new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17); and we have the sure hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2). Praise be to God for his grace and mercy demonstrated in the good news of the gospel—the central theme of the Bible!

5. How many people are sinners and guilty before God?

6. Will a person understand the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection without first understanding the bad news of his sin and position before God?

7. What is the only way to be justified before God?

Memory Verse

Review the memory verse with your family.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Prayer

Thank God for his Word, which gives us the gospel message. Thank him for sending his Son Jesus to be our Lord and Savior. Ask him to give you a burden for those who do not know Christ and boldness in sharing the bad news and the good news of the gospel.

Family Prayer Requests:



Unit Review

Lesson Summary

Scripture makes it abundantly clear that the words of God are the source of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and truth. Wisdom begins with a fear of the Lord (Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7, 9:10, 15:33). If we are to base our lives on any source or system other than the Bible, we are acting as fools.

Apart from the truths in the Bible, we can know little about the true nature of the world around us. Whether we are trying to understand the origin of the world, why bad things happen, or the nature of humanity, we must start with the Bible to get a correct picture. In order to understand what ideas are true, we must compare them to Scripture—we must look at the world using our biblical glasses.

This is the admonition Paul gave to young Timothy when he wrote to him in 1 Timothy 6:20–21. People had strayed from the faith by following ideas that were not founded on God’s truth. Timothy was to protect his flock from these false teachings and hold to the clear teachings he had received. Wisdom based in man’s reasoning, apart from God and his truth, is false knowledge.

Paul expanded upon this concept in Colossians 2:1–10. It is in Christ, not in the philosophies or traditions of men, that we find all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Thinking and reasoning that starts from man’s ideas alone is deceitful and will lead to error. As

believers, we received the truths of Christ by faith, and we should continue to walk with him by faith. If we do anything other than that, we cheat ourselves and miss the riches of Christ.

Read and Discuss

Read the following passages and discuss the questions together.

Proverbs 4

1. What will wisdom and understanding bring to us?
2. How is the path of the righteous different from the path of the wicked?
3. How does this chapter encourage you to make family teaching and instruction around God's Word a priority?

Colossians 2:1–10

4. Where can we find all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge?
5. Where do we learn about Christ—who he is, how he lived, and what he taught?

6. What did Paul warn us about in verse 8? What are some examples of philosophy, empty deceit, and human traditions that could cheat us?

1 Timothy 6:20–21

7. What are the two commands Paul gave to Timothy?
8. How can we best avoid “the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called ‘knowledge’”?

2 Corinthians 10:3–5

9. What are our weapons of spiritual warfare useful for?
10. How can we destroy false arguments?
11. What does it mean to “take every thought captive to obey Christ”? How can Scripture memory help us do that?

Memory Verse

Review the memory verse with your family.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Prayer

Thank God for his Word, which gives us understanding of the world around us. Thank him for sending his Son Jesus, who is the source of all true wisdom and knowledge. Ask God for discernment so that you are not deceived by worldly wisdom and philosophy.

Family Prayer Requests: