

Through the Bible in 24 Months



WEEK 3 OF 104

Trust Under Test

Week 3 of 104 • 3% of the way through the Bible

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

General Old Testament	Genesis 17-24
Wisdom Literature	Proverbs 3
Gospels	Matthew 4:1-5:12
General New Testament	Acts 3:1-4:22

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

Trust is a pleasant word until God schedules the exam. This week Abraham climbs a mountain with firewood on his son's back and no idea how the morning ends. Solomon tells his boy to lean his whole weight on the Lord and not on the understanding he is so proud of. Jesus goes forty days without food and then has to decide, three times, whether His Father's word is enough to live on. And two unschooled fishermen stand in front of the same council that condemned Jesus and say, out loud, that they cannot stop talking about Him. Not one of these people was given the outcome in advance. Every one of them was given a word from God and asked whether that would do.

How to use this guide: Read all four passages during the week. Your teacher will take up two of them in class, one in each session. For the other two, work through the "Extended Class Discussion or Self-Study" questions on your own and write your answers in the space provided.

GENERAL OLD TESTAMENT Genesis 17-24

Laughter, Fire, and a Mountain

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

God renames Abram and Sarai and seals the covenant in their flesh. Three visitors bring news that makes Sarah laugh behind a tent flap, and then Abraham stands in the road bargaining for a city. Fire falls on Sodom, Lot's wife looks back, and Abraham repeats an old lie at Gerar. Then Isaac is born, Hagar and Ishmael are sent away, and God asks Abraham for the one thing he waited twenty-five years to receive. The reading ends with a servant, a well, and a bride for Isaac.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Genesis 18:22-33 shows Abraham standing in the road bargaining with God over Sodom. Walk through the exchange. What is Abraham appealing to, and what does his boldness tell us about how God receives the prayers of a friend?

2. Sodom is one of the passages people find hardest to defend. Read Genesis 18:20–21 and 19:1–13, then read 2 Peter 2:6–9 and Jude 7. How does Scripture itself explain what happened there, and how would you talk about it with a friend who thinks it makes God cruel?
3. God waited twenty-five years to give Abraham a son and then asked for him back. What was actually being tested on Mount Moriah, and what has God placed in your hands that you are holding with a closed fist?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Trace the promise to Abraham through 17:1–8, 18:17–19, and 22:15–18. What is added or sharpened at each stage, and who besides Abraham is included by the end?
2. Read Genesis 22:1–14 beside Hebrews 11:17–19. What had Abraham concluded God was able to do, and what does verse 5 of Genesis 22 suggest he expected to happen on the way back down?
3. List every detail of Genesis 22 that later finds an echo at Calvary: an only son, the wood carried uphill, the place God chose, the third day, the ram caught in a thicket. Then name the point where the parallel stops, and say why that difference is the whole gospel.
4. Abraham's servant prays a specific prayer in 24:12–14. Read the chapter and mark every place where God's providence and the servant's own diligence are operating in the same moment.
5. Sarah laughed, and so did Abraham (17:17; 18:12). Name the promise of God you have quietly stopped expecting Him to keep, and take one concrete step this week that would only make sense if He keeps it.

WISDOM LITERATURE Proverbs 3

Trust With All Your Heart

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

This chapter contains verses your class has seen on coffee mugs, and it will do them good to read those verses in their own neighborhood. Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Honor the Lord with your possessions. Do not despise the chastening of the Lord. Happy is the man who finds wisdom. The chapter closes with a run of short, practical commands about how to treat the neighbor who lives beside you, and a final contrast between the scorner and the humble.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Proverbs 3:5–6 is one of the best known passages in the Bible and one of the most misused. Read it slowly. What is promised, what is not promised, and what is the phrase “lean not on your own understanding” asking of a competent adult who is good at his job?
2. Verses 9 and 10 tell you to honor the Lord with your firstfruits and promise full barns. Whole ministries have been built on those two verses. Since a proverb states a general principle and not a guarantee, what is genuinely being taught here, and what is not?
3. Proverbs 3:11–12 says the Lord corrects the son in whom He delights. Think back over a hard season of your own life. How would you tell the difference between God’s discipline and plain trouble, and what did you do with that season at the time?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List the commands in 3:1–12 and write the promise attached to each one. How many of those promises concern material things, and how many concern something else?
2. What does Hebrews 12:5–11 add to Proverbs 3:11–12 about the purpose of discipline and about what it produces in a person who submits to it?
3. Verses 13 through 18 compare wisdom to silver, gold, and rubies, and then call her a tree of life. Trace the comparison, and look up Genesis 2:9, Genesis 3:22–24, and Revelation 22:2 to see where else that image appears.
4. Proverbs 3:27–30 lists four things not to do to a neighbor. Write them in plain modern terms, then name one situation in the last month where one of them described you.
5. Honoring the Lord with the firstfruits means God gets the first portion, not what is left over. Look at your actual giving and your actual weekly calendar, and change one of them this week so that God comes first in fact and not merely in sentiment.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

The Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness, where after forty days without food He is offered bread, spectacle, and the kingdoms of the world, and answers each offer with a line from Deuteronomy. John is arrested, Jesus moves to Capernaum, and the preaching begins. Four fishermen leave their nets. Crowds come from everywhere with every kind of sickness. Then Jesus climbs a hillside, sits down, and begins to describe the people who are genuinely blessed, and the list is nothing like the one we would write.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Jesus answers each of the three temptations with a verse from Deuteronomy. Take them one at a time. What is being offered in each case, and what truth does He use to refuse it?
2. Satan quotes Scripture in 4:6. Compare his quotation with Psalm 91:11–12 and notice what he left out. How do we protect ourselves from people who use real Bible verses to talk us into something God never said?
3. Read the Beatitudes slowly, all of them. Which one is least true of you at this point in your life, and what would have to change about an ordinary Tuesday for it to start becoming true?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List the three temptations with the three answers, and find each of Jesus' quotations in Deuteronomy 6 and 8. What were the Israelites doing when those words were first spoken to them?
2. Read 1 John 2:15–17 beside Matthew 4:1–11 and Genesis 3:6. Write down the pattern that shows up in all three passages, and where you have seen it in your own week.
3. Matthew 4:18–22 records four men walking away from a family business. Note exactly what each one left behind, and how much time the text says they took to decide.
4. The Beatitudes describe the character of kingdom people rather than listing entrance requirements. Trace the promise attached to each one, and mark which promises are stated in the present tense and which in the future.
5. Blessed are the peacemakers. Name the one relationship in which you are at peace only because you are avoiding somebody, and make the call, the visit, or the apology this week.

No Other Name

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Peter and John go up to the temple at three in the afternoon and meet a man who has been carried to the same gate every day of his adult life. Peter has no money and gives him something better. The man goes into the temple walking and leaping, a crowd runs together, and Peter preaches his second sermon. The priests arrest them at evening, but by then five thousand men believe. The next morning the two fishermen stand before the same council that condemned Jesus.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Peter tells this crowd in 3:19 to repent and be converted so their sins may be blotted out. Set that beside Acts 2:38. Where do the two accounts agree, and how does each one fill out the other?
2. In Acts 4:12 Peter says there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. What exactly is he claiming, and how would you say that kindly but plainly to a neighbor who believes every sincere path leads to God?
3. The council could not deny the miracle, so they tried to silence the men, and the men said they could not stop speaking. Where are you quietly silent about Jesus during an ordinary week, and what would speaking there actually cost you?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Trace the lame man from 3:2 through 3:11 and then again in 4:14. List every verb the text uses of him, and notice where he is standing at the end.
2. Peter explains the source of the power twice, in 3:12–16 and again in 4:8–10. Write down every phrase he uses to push the credit away from himself and toward Jesus.
3. Acts 3:22–23 quotes Moses about a Prophet like himself. Read Deuteronomy 18:15–19 and note what the stated consequence is for the person who will not hear Him.
4. Acts 3:25–26 says the covenant with Abraham is being fulfilled in what these men have just seen. Read Galatians 3:8, 16, 29 and explain who receives the blessing promised to Abraham and how a person comes to receive it.
5. The council marveled and realized that Peter and John had been with Jesus (4:13). Consider what the people at your work would conclude about you from watching you under pressure, and change one specific thing this week so that their conclusion would be accurate.

NEXT WEEK'S READING: Genesis 25-30 · Proverbs 4 · Matthew 5:13-5:48 · Acts 4:23-5:16

More studies available on ChurchOfChristBibleStudies.com