CORE VALUE 2 OF 10 · WEEK 2

ANABAPTISH

Believing the Bible

We value the Bible as God's authoritative Word, study it together, and build our lives on its truth.

John Dixon | Sunday, September 20, 2026 | Crest Community Church

For the Nightstand

THE TEACHING

Almost everyone has an opinion about this book. Some of us hold onto it with both hands, white knuckles, because the ground keeps shifting and this is the last solid thing. And sitting in the row right next to us is somebody who looks at it with deep suspicion, because the only thing it has ever been in their life is a weapon. Same book. So it is worth asking, plainly. What is this book, and what is it for?

After the resurrection, Jesus walked two people out of Jerusalem and explained to them what the whole Hebrew Bible had been saying about him. Genesis to Malachi, taught by the person the whole thing is about. Notice what he did not do. He did not hand them a new set of Scriptures and tell them to throw the old one out. He took the one they had heard read out loud in synagogue since they were kids, and he said, the whole thing points to me.

Luke uses one word three times in that chapter. Their eyes were opened. He opened the Scriptures to them. He opened their minds to understand. Every time, he is the one doing the opening. You cannot pry this book open by being smart enough or disciplined enough. It gets opened to you. So pray before you open it. Holy Spirit, would you reveal to me what is true? And when you close it, ask for one thing you can actually go do.

KEY SCRIPTURES

1 Samuel 4:1–11
They wanted the power, not the words.

Luke 24:27, 44–45
He explains the whole Bible about himself.

2 Timothy 3:14–17
God-breathed, and what it is for.

Genesis 3:1–6
A fence God never built, and its cost.

A PRAYER

Jesus, the written word leads us to you, the Word made flesh. Open our eyes. Open the Scriptures. Open our minds. Some of us hold this book too tightly. Some of us put it away. Meet us both. And give us each other, so we don't wander off the map. In Jesus' name, amen.

PART TWO

For Your Home Church

Gather together. About 60 minutes, after your meal or around it.

FOR LEADERS

This is shared language, not a script. Everyone in the room can see these notes, so feel free to read them out loud. The times add up to an hour. Hold them loosely. If a conversation is alive, stay with it and trim somewhere else.

Check In

5 min

Start by hearing how last week actually went.

LEADER NOTE

Go around the room. **How did last week's practice go?** Three were offered: reading Luke 7 once a day and asking "Jesus, where am I in this room today?", taking ten minutes to name honestly what you have been forgiven of, or catching yourself retreating or reaching for control and praying "I'm getting back behind you."

Some people will not have done it. That is fine, and it is worth saying out loud so nobody performs. Ask them instead what the week was like. No fixing and no follow-up questions. Just receive it.

Take Communion

5 min

Take the bread and the cup at the same kind of table where they finally recognized him.

LEADER NOTE

Share the bread and the cup, before, during, or after your meal. If your group doesn't have its own words yet, have someone read this psalm out loud first.

PSALM 19:7–10

7 The instructions of the Lord are perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the
Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. 8 The commandments of the
Lord are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are clear,
giving insight for living. 9 Reverence for the Lord is pure, lasting forever. The
laws of the Lord are true; each one is fair. 10 They are more desirable than gold,
even the finest gold. They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from
the comb.

Read This Overview

5 min

LEADER NOTE

Ask someone to read this out loud.

Almost everybody has a verdict on a book that most people have never actually read. Some hold onto it with both hands, white knuckles, because everything else feels like it is shifting and this is the last solid thing. Others look at it with deep suspicion, because the only thing they have ever seen it used for is a weapon. The same book that people in the abolition movement used to end slavery was also used by the people who justified it. Quite a book.

So, what is this book, and what is it for?

Start with what it physically is. Sixty-six books. Forty different people, writing across fifteen hundred years, on three continents, in three languages. Somebody once mapped every cross reference in it, every place where one part connects to another. There are 63,779 of them. If one person had written that, we would call them the greatest author who ever lived.

It is a library, written down by people and breathed by God. And it was breathed so that you would encounter the living God in the person of Jesus.

So picture it as a treasure map. Its entire purpose is to point the way to Jesus. The tragedy is how easy it is to spend your whole life gazing at the map, analyzing the parchment, debating the ink, and never following the directions to go find the treasure.

Which is why the value says three words that are easy to skip. Study it *together*.

Believing the Bible

We value the Bible as God's authoritative Word, study it together, and build our lives on its truth.

It is authoritative in the way that we **live**.

Go Deeper in the Scripture

20 min

Watch the risen Jesus teach two ordinary people their own Bible, and notice who does the opening.

LEADER NOTE

Have one or two people read the passages out loud. Use the background notes as you need them. You won't get to every question. If time is short, start with the three marked START HERE

LUKE 24:28–35

28 By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus
acted as if he were going on, 29 but they begged him, "Stay the night with us,
since it is getting late." So he went home with them. 30 As they sat down to eat,
he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them.
31 Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that
moment he disappeared!

32 They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with
us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?"

33 And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they
found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them, 34 who
said, "The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter." 35 Then the two from
Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were
walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking
the bread.

LUKE 24:44–49

44 Then he said, "When I was with you before, I told you that everything
written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must
be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

46 And he said, "Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and
die and rise from the dead on the third day. 47 It was also written that this
message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations,
beginning in Jerusalem: 'There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.' 48 You
are witnesses of all these things.

49 "And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay
here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from
heaven."

2 TIMOTHY 3:16–17

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to
make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong
and teaches us to do what is right. 17 God uses it to prepare and equip his
people to do every good work.

BACKGROUND NOTES

"Opened." There is one Greek word, *dianoigo*, and Luke uses it three times in this chapter. Their eyes were opened in verse 31. He did it to the Scriptures in verse 32. He opened their minds in verse 45. English Bibles vary here, and this one says "explained" in verse 32, but it is the same word all three times. And Jesus is the one doing it every time.

"Stay the night with us." He acts as though he will keep walking. They have to ask him. He does not force his way to the table.

He took the bread and blessed it, broke it, gave it. Luke uses those same actions at the feeding of the five thousand and at the last supper. They recognize him at a table, not in the lecture.

The law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms. That is the whole Hebrew Bible, all three of its sections, named one by one. He is not pulling out a few proof texts. He is saying the entire library has been pointing at him the whole time.

The ABCs in verses 44 to 49. A is authority, and it belongs to Jesus, not to the book. **B is what the Bible turns into,** benevolence: a message of forgiveness for all who repent, not condemnation. **C is companionship.** We do not read this alone. The Spirit he promises in verse 49 reads it with us.

"Inspired by God." The Greek word is *theopneustos*, which literally means God-breathed. As far as we know there are only three things in the Bible that God is said to have breathed on. The dust he formed into the first man. The disciples after the resurrection, when Jesus breathed on them and said receive the Holy Spirit. And this book.

What "useful" is for. Paul tells Timothy the Scriptures give you the wisdom to receive salvation. Not a pile of facts. Wisdom that leads you to see you need rescuing, and then hands you to the one who does the rescuing.

HOW WE TALK ABOUT IT TOGETHER

1. It is far too easy to find Christians who will tell us what we want to hear, so commit to a faith family. Then you can't just leave when you hear something you don't like.

2. You have great value to this group. If the most academic or the most spiritual voices are treated as the ones who really understand, the quiet people stay quiet and we lose perspectives we need.

3. Home church should be a safe place to discuss the Bible. Safe, but not always comfortable. The transforming authority of the Bible demands some discomfort.

4. Get good at asking clarifying questions. It is illuminating to get to the motivation behind somebody's interpretation.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. Read it slowly. At what exact moment do they recognize him? START HERE
2. In verse 44, Jesus names the three parts of the Hebrew Bible. What does he say all of it is about?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

1. In what ways is it possible for the Bible to become an idol, one of the very things it warns against? What would that look like? START HERE
2. Every time Luke says Jesus opened something in this chapter, Jesus is the one doing it. If you cannot pry this book open by effort, what is our part?
3. What do you think about the idea that God gave us each other as a protective hedge against misunderstanding the Bible?

WHAT DOES IT ASK OF US?

1. What is your practice of reading the Bible? Was there ever a time when reading it was confusing or intimidating? What helped you get more comfortable?
   START HERE
2. How do you feel about sharing your own interpretation of the Bible with other people? What are some ways this home church could actually practice reading it together?

Practice for the Night: Read It Together

20 min

Two prayers, thirty seconds total, and a chapter read in the same room. This is the habit, practiced once.

LEADER NOTE

Most of this is quiet, and a room full of people reading silently feels strange for the first two minutes. Don't fill it. When it is time to share, go first and keep yours short and honest, because whatever you model is what you will get.

The chapter this week is **John 1**. Have a few Bibles on hand for anyone who doesn't bring one.

1. **Pray it open** · 3 min
   Say out loud, on behalf of the room: **Holy Spirit, would you reveal to us what is true?** Then tell everyone you're reading John 1, and that the next eight minutes are silent.
2. **Read alone, together** · 8 min
   Everyone reads John 1 at their own pace, in the same room, without talking. Paper Bible, app, whatever you have. If you finish early, go back to the start and read it again more slowly.
3. **Ask the second question** · 2 min
   Pray: **Jesus, show me one thing you want me to do with this.** Then everyone writes down their one thing. One sentence. Make it something you could actually do before next week.
4. **Share your one thing** · 7 min
   Go around the room and read out what you wrote. No commentary, no advice, and nobody fixes anybody. Passing is fine. Notice how differently people read the same chapter. That is the point.

Practice for the Week Ahead

3 min

Choose one small, honest step. Start where you are, not where you think you should be.

The two prayers take thirty seconds and they will change how you read. Before you open it: **Holy Spirit, would you reveal to me what is true?** After you close it: **Jesus, show me one thing you want me to do with this.** This week, pick one:

IF THIS BOOK STILL FEELS CLOSED TO YOU

Start in the gospel of Luke. One chapter a day, with the two prayers around it. That is the whole assignment. If you want help with how the Bible is put together or where to start, ask John. He offered.

IF YOU'VE FOLLOWED JESUS A WHILE

Name one fence. A rule you were handed that God never actually gave. Sit with where it came from, what it was protecting, and what God actually said.

IF YOU'RE READY FOR MORE

Take the passage you quietly find hardest to square with the character of Jesus. Don't sit with it alone. Bring it to somebody in this room this week.

Next week, we'll start by checking in on how it went.

Close in Prayer

2 min

LEADER NOTE

Gather everyone and close your time in prayer, however the Spirit leads.

COMING UP · SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Core Value 3: Worshiping God

We value heartfelt worship that is God-honoring, Spirit-directed, and life-changing.

WANT TO GO FURTHER?

Lunch and Learn, Sunday, September 27. The fuller story of where Anabaptism, the River Brethren, and the Brethren in Christ come from.

Compelling Convictions, the companion book to this series, is free to borrow from the church library. The chapter behind this week's value is written by Christina Bosserman. Just ask John.

Share Your Story

Has God been at work in your home church? A moment of grace, a conversation that turned, a meal that became more than a meal? We'd love to hear it. Email Kymbri at admin@crestcommunitychurch.org.

Open this guide on your phone.
Scan the code with your camera.