

Bible

RESPONSES

1. The point should be made that the Word of God reveals everything in our hearts, possibly even things that we didn't realize were there. If we heed the Word of God, we will receive enlightenment and come to a knowledge of Jesus Christ. Allow time for your students to offer their thoughts in making this parallel. Some thoughts that might be brought out: the greater the darkness, the brighter a light appears—belief in God's Word will stand out among non-Christians; without light it is difficult to move about in an unfamiliar place—without God's Word it is difficult to move safely through life.

2. Discussion should bring out the accurate fulfillment in the New Testament of the prophecies given in the Old Testament, the agreement of theme between the different writers, and the fact that the entire Bible presents one continuing story—that of human redemption. Scriptural substantiation could include specific prophecies and their fulfillments. Some possibilities: Micah 5:2—Matthew 2:1; Isaiah 7:14—Matthew 1:18; Zechariah 11:13—Matthew 27:6,7.

3. Your students' answers may include Moses, David, Daniel, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, and Peter. It might be interesting to point out that, though written centuries apart, the two Testaments form two volumes of one work. The first is incomplete without the second, and the second cannot be fully understood without the first.

TEXT: Psalm 119:1-16; 2 Timothy 3:16; Revelation 22:19

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE: 2 Peter 1:19-21

KEY VERSE: Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever. — Psalm 119:160

God has many ways of revealing Himself to mankind. The most commonly known is through His written Word, the Holy Bible. Men of God, over a period of time, recorded the Bible as they were directed and inspired by the Holy Ghost. The Bible tells how God revealed Himself to people of ancient times, and also how He will reveal Himself to us today. The Bible is different from all other religious literature because the Bible is the revelation of God, inspired by God, disclosing God's plans and purposes for the ages of time and eternity, and centering in Jesus Christ the Savior of mankind.

1. In 2 Peter 1:19, Peter parallels the "word of prophecy" to a light that shines in a dark place. Elaborate on this parallel, bringing out ways the Word is similar to light.

2. 2 Peter 1:20,21 indicates that holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost and recorded what God revealed to them. How can we be sure the Bible is not just a collection of private interpretations? Substantiate your answer with Scripture.

3. In the Old Testament, most of the writers did not even know each other, while the New Testament writers were acquainted. Still the fact that their accounts are in harmony is remarkable. Name some of the men who were inspired by God to write portions of the Holy Bible.

3

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. Our text brings out that the Bible is given for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. Give a Biblical example, or one from your own experience, illustrating how God's Word can be used in each of the ways mentioned.

5. Many people today are living unclean lives. Psalm 119:9 offers the solution to this problem: take heed to the Word. Define *heed* as used in this context.

6. The benefit of having God's Word in the heart is that one will be kept from sin. Sin separates a person from God, it engenders untold suffering, and in the end, unforgiven sin brings eternal punishment. Hiding God's Word in the heart and doing what the Scriptures say, are the solutions for conquering sin. How does one hide the Word of God in his heart?

7. It is not necessary that we understand everything that is written in the Bible, but we must believe everything recorded in it. What will happen to one who takes away any part of the Word of God?

8. Food is necessary for our physical bodies. Our spiritual lives also need sustenance and this is found in the Word of God. Using Hebrews 5:13,14 as a basis, an analogy can be made between the birth of a baby and the new birth of a beginning Christian. Compare the subsequent physical and spiritual growth and development of each. Ask yourself these questions: How long have I been saved? Does my spiritual growth reflect proper spiritual nourishment? Food cannot provide our physical bodies with nourishment before it is ingested. Have I been taking the Word of God into my spiritual life in order to benefit by it?

4. As your students contribute their illustrations, it should become increasingly obvious what a tremendous treasure the Word of God is in our lives. As a starting point for each of the ways mentioned, you could bring out that the Word of God teaches us the doctrine of salvation and the necessity of being saved from our sins. Some passages point out an area of weakness, such as a reproving of those who lack faith. It is a source of correction as illustrated by the messages to the churches in the Book of Revelation. Finally, it is a teacher of righteousness as it instructs us in the Christian virtues which we are to add to our lives (2 Peter 1:5-10).

5. Discussion of this question will bring out that *heed* means "to take careful notice of, or to pay close attention to something." To heed seems to involve a change of behavior. If we heed the Word we will apply the Word to our life. It is more than simply observing; we will obey. When this is done, the heart will be cleansed.

6. Answers will vary, but direct your students' attention to verses 15 and 16 of our text in Psalms. Discuss the progression of these verses. Help them see that while we may be able to meditate from a purely intellectual standpoint, if we have respect for His ways we are accepting and honoring them. Moving into verse 16, if we delight in the Lord we have made His ways our ways and have found them good. The final step is to remember them.

7. Revelation 22:19 tells us that his name will be taken out of the Book of Life. Explain the ramifications of this, using Revelation 20:15 as a reference. You may also refer to John 12:48, bringing out that those who reject Christ will be judged by the Word.

8. You will not want to ask for direct responses to the questions asked. However, discussion of the analogy should point out the necessity of absorbing the Word of God into our lives as a necessary part of spiritual development. Wrap up your class session by discussing specific ways in which the Word can be taken into the life.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Why did the Psalmist hide God's Word in his heart? How would knowing God's Word help a person not to sin?

Why do you read the Bible?

How can we show respect for the Book itself?

What part should the Bible play in a Christian's life?

What can a person do to better understand the Bible?

What can a person do if he doesn't understand a Scripture in the Bible?

What are some of the different methods of Bible study?

Has the Lord ever spoken to you through the Bible? Through what specific passage of Scripture?

According to the following Scriptures, why was the Bible written?

John 20:31

Romans 15:4

1 Corinthians 10:11

In our ANSWER story, Tom made the statement that, "You have to believe all of it or you may as well believe none of it." Do you agree with that statement? Why?

THINGS TO DO

Circle Response Bible Quiz: Prepare a list of short-answer questions concerning the Bible. Seat your class in a circle, and have each one respond to a question in turn. (If you cannot make a circle, work your way down each row.) If a student does not know the answer, the next person in line responds until someone answers the question correctly. If the question works its way around the circle without the correct answer, then you give the answer. This activity allows everyone to respond, and you can cover a lot of information quickly.

Book Advertisement: Bring a book advertisement to class. Have your students make up an advertisement for the greatest seller of all time: the Bible. They may want to explain why it is such a good Book to read, and they could include information about the Author, selected quotes, etc.

Open-end Statements: Prepare a list of open-end statements to be passed out to each member of your class. For example:

My favorite part of the Bible is . . .

I wish the Bible could . . .

People would read the Bible more if . . .

Have your students finish the statements. Discuss their responses in class.

Draw a large outline of two hands (fingers and thumbs spread out) next to each other so you have ten digits on which to write. Use the left hand to represent the Old Testament and the right hand to represent the New Testament. Write the Old Testament section titles on the fingers of the left hand: Law, History, Poetry, Major Prophets, Minor Prophets. Then write the New Testament section titles on the fingers of the right hand: Gospel, History, Paul's Letters, General Letters, Prophecy. (Leave space under each title to write in some books of the Bible.) Explain to your students that the Bible isn't just a lot of stories put together in a jumble. It is laid out in a very orderly fashion. Once you have studied the layout of the Bible it should be fairly simple to find whatever you are looking for. Show the children which books go under each title. Old Testament: Law, Genesis-Deuteronomy; History, Joshua-Esther; Poetry, Job-Song of Solomon; Major Prophets, Isaiah-Daniel; Minor Prophets, Hosea-Malachi. New Testament: Gospel, Matthew-John; History, Acts; Paul's Letters, Romans-Hebrews; General Letters, James-Jude; Prophecy, Revelation. Tell the students that just like two hands held together with fingers interlaced, so the Old Testament and New Testament work as one to prophesy and fulfill one another. Whether the Word was first spoken or written, God has continued to bless its message throughout the ages. You might want to make a reduced copy of these hands for each of your students to keep and study.