

# Bible

## (Word Hand)



What are the importance of the Scriptures, also known as the Bible or the Word of God?

### Scripture

Throughout Jesus' life on earth he showed the importance of the Scriptures. He speaks about their authority and that their source is from God himself, he quotes them, refers to them and often responds to people's questions by pointing them to the Scriptures as a primary source of knowledge and wisdom about God.

Read the following Bible verses and note what stands out to you:

Matt 15:1-9 (Jesus explains the difference between God's word and religious tradition)

Matt 21:12-17 (Jesus answers critics at the temple)

What stands out about the value that Jesus places on the scriptures?

In what ways do you see Jesus using the scriptures?

### Story

Mary Jones lived in the Welsh Countryside in the late 1700s. She was 9 and her father worked as a weaver to provide for his family. Mary heard the Bible read at church but she longed to have a Bible of her own. She begged her father for one but he explained that Bibles were expensive and so they couldn't afford it. She said she would work and save up to get enough for a Bible. She did extra bits of work and saved hard for 6 years until she had enough to buy one. When she had enough, she told her parents and they said they had heard that there was a man in a village twenty-five miles away who had Bibles for sale. She packed her purse and some food and set off, barefoot, on the long walk. When she arrived at the village, her feet sore and tired, she searched out the man and eventually found him. She said 'I am Mary Jones. I walked 25 miles to get here and I saved for 6 years to get enough money to buy a Bible. I have it here. Please can I have a Bible.' He welcomed her in, she was given food and then given the Bible, the last one he had for sale. She stared at it, thanked him with all her heart and then walked the twenty-five miles home.

What stands out to you, or challenges you, about Mary's desire to have access to a Bible?

Why do you think she wanted one so badly?

## Shape

The **Word Hand** illustration can help us to remember some of the ways we can get God's Word into our life. Engaging with each element of The Word Hand can help us get a good grip on God's Word.



### Hear

We can get God's Word into our hearts by hearing it. Romans 10:17 says 'faith comes from hearing the message'.

Some of the ways we can engage in hearing the Word are by listening to the Word being preached at church or through online recordings, or listening to an audio recording of the Bible being read.

We only retain about 5-10% of what we hear, so this is why hearing is illustrated using the pinkie finger.

### Read

We can consume God's Word by reading it. Jesus often responded to people's questions by saying, 'Have you never read in the scriptures...?' (Matt 21:42).

There are various Bible reading plans available to help you read through the Bible in a certain timeframe, or just pick a Bible up and start reading a gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John).

We retain about 10-20% of what we read, so this is illustrated by the ring finger, which is stronger than our little finger, but weaker than others.

### Study

Studying is when we take more time to examine the text beyond simply reading it.

This could involve taking notes, putting parts into your own words (paraphrasing); looking deeper at the meaning of some words (using a normal or Bible dictionary); or looking at other Bible passages that speak about similar topics (cross referencing).

We retain much more by studying than we do by reading and hearing, hence why the stronger middle finger represents this element.

### Memorize

We know Jesus memorised Scripture as he is recorded as quoting from twenty-four different Old Testament books roughly one-hundred and eighty times!

Memorising is best done by repeating a Bible verse over and over again. Writing it down lots of times helps too. Taking time to revisit and review verses you've learned helps them stick, as it moves them from your short-term to long-term memory.

Not surprisingly, you remember a high percentage of what you memorise, so this is represented by the strongest finger, the index finger.

## **Meditate**

The Old Testament character Joshua was told to ‘meditate on it (God’s Word) day and night so you may be careful to do everything written in it’ (Joshua 1:8).

We are not to just remember the words of Scripture, but are to take time to consider what they mean and what implications they have for our lives. This is meditation.

Meditation is represented by the thumb because it touches every other finger. We are to meditate on what we are hearing, reading, studying and memorising. Meditating helps us to get a really good grip on the Bible. Try picking up a Bible without your thumb!

## **So What?**

In groups discuss the following questions:

What do you love most about the scriptures?

What stories do you have of how the scriptures have changed your life?

What barriers, if any, do you have to engaging with the Bible?

What part of The Word Hand comes most naturally to you?

What finger is your strongest and what things have helped you to be strong in this area?

Is there a finger you haven’t used much and would like to have a go at? How could you go about this? Is there something you could do together as a group and encourage each other in?

## **Grow Further**

### **Memory verse:**

2 Tim 3:16–17

‘All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.’

### **Other Bible Passages:**

- Psalm 119
- John 20: 30–31
- Romans 15:4
- 2 Tim 3:14–15
- Hebrews 4:12

### **Other resources:**

The Story of The Bible - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7\\_CGP-12AE0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_CGP-12AE0)