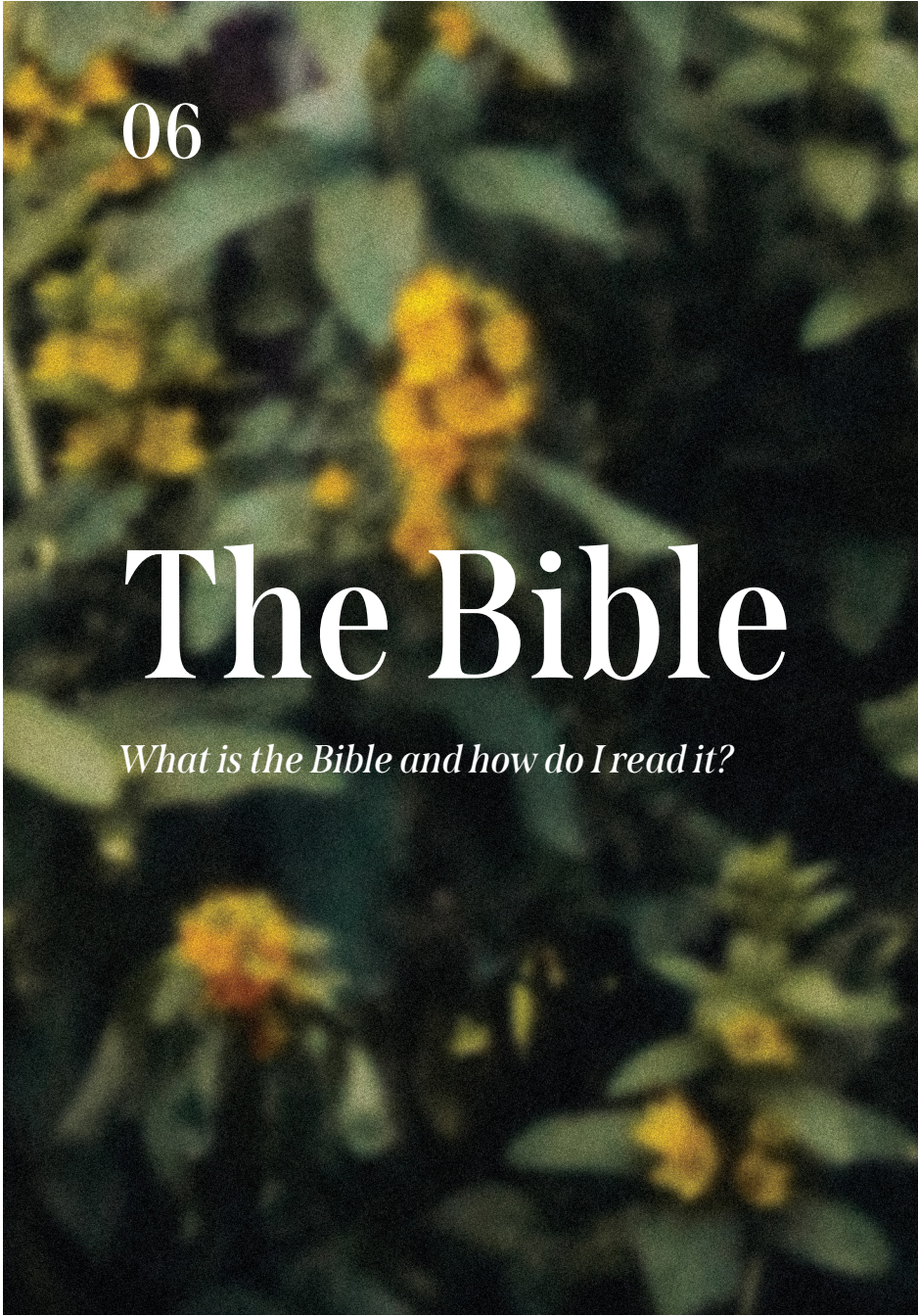
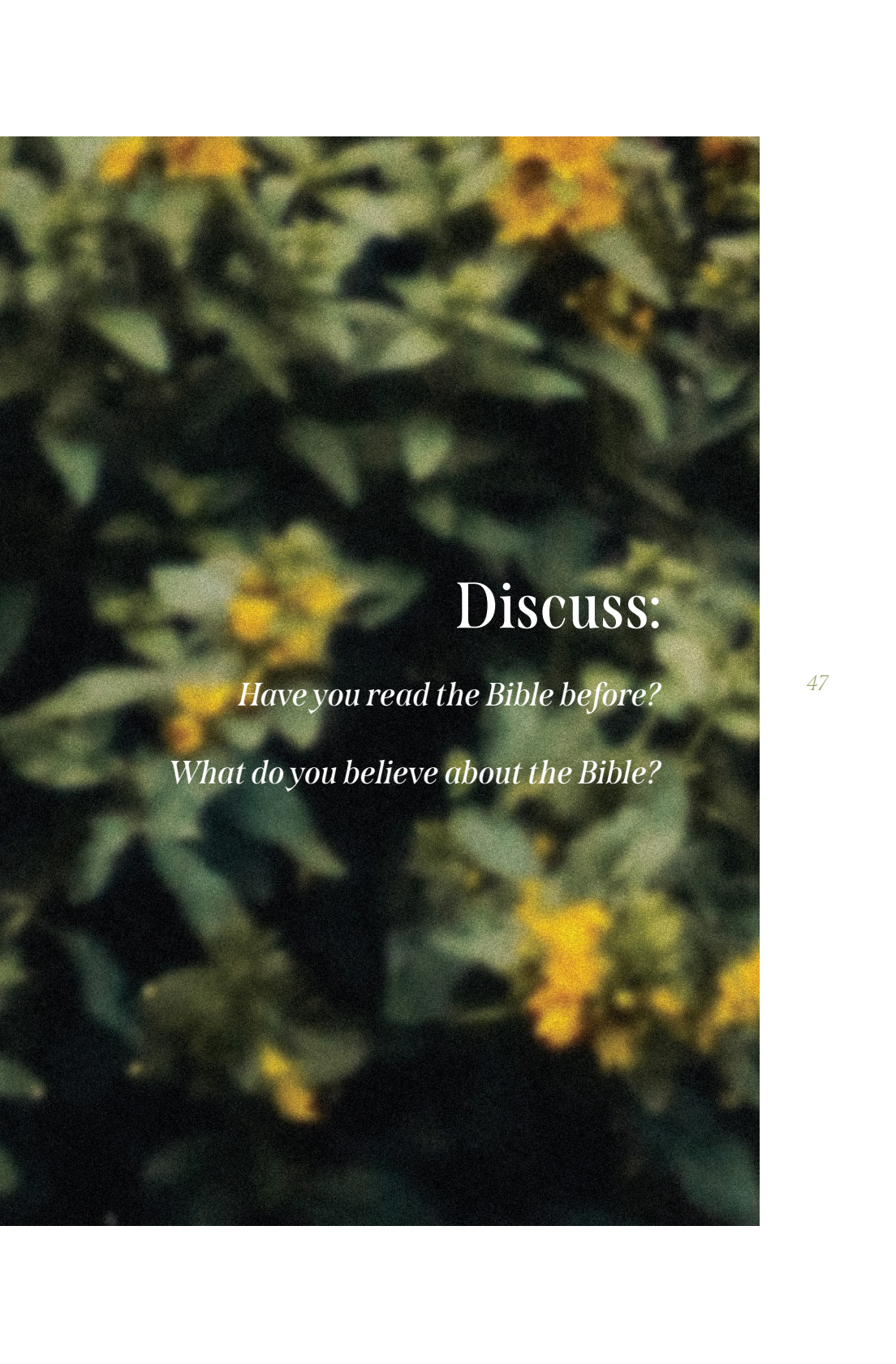




06

The Bible

What is the Bible and how do I read it?



Discuss:

Have you read the Bible before?

What do you believe about the Bible?

2 Timothy 3:14-17

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.



In Loving Memory
R. V. (Vic) Burnett
1918 - 2005

God wants us to get to know Him and build a close relationship with Him. From the beginning of history, God has been revealing Himself. Creation proclaims Him. Sunsets and starry nights render us speechless – pointing us to a creative and powerful God – and yet, despite their grandeur, they can't tell us who He is. Because He wants us to know Him, He gave us a book that reveals Himself – His character, His loves, His values, and His nature – to us His adopted children.

The book we received is an eclectic conglomeration of sorts – in it you find letters, historical records, legal documents, songs, laments, and stories of people. Uniquely popular, it has been translated into 2,333 languages – 10 times more than any other book. 44 million copies are sold every year.

Composed by God through more than 40 authors and collected by His people, it is a compilation of 66 books that were written over a period of 1,500 years and divided into the Old and New Testament.

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As we seek to grow in maturity as Christians, it is essential that we read the bible regularly. The Bible is the primary way God reveals Himself to us. These are His words. Time reading the Bible is time spent with God. Therefore, when you read it, you are literally connecting with God Himself. Paul says that the word of God is living and active. God wrote this book centuries ago, but God actually speaks through it today. In His vastness, He reveals new things through words you may have read a thousand times. Something you read a month ago might have completely new truth for you today. God can use it to encourage you in times of trouble, strengthen you when you feel weak, convict you when you sin, and remind you of His love when you forget. When you spend time with Him, it brings Him joy. It also changes you. Being with God transforms us. Picture two friends: the more they are together, the more they rub off on each other. They might start to wear the same clothes and use the same slang. Similarly, God wants to change us through our interaction with Him. Change is not achieved by our willpower. Transformed hearts are the work of God, but our being with Him is His means of transformation. We read the book to be with its author. We grow as we abide in Him.

Throughout history, Christians have interacted with the Bible through 5 general approaches: Reading, Meditation, Hearing, Memorization, and Study. We start with READING the Bible for ourselves to give us an overall picture of who God is and what He is doing. This is a time for you to personally come before God and be with Him through His word. As you read, ask questions about how the text relates to the original audience and then how it relates to your life. MEDITATION happens when you reflect and ponder over what you read. It's like when a cow "chews the cud." A cow's digestive system tries to get everything it can out of its food. To do so it chews and swallows. Then later, it literally brings the food back and chews it again. This allows the cow to get all of the nutrients available. Meditation is re-chewing the food. God wants you to take the Bible in and then reflect on His words and what they mean for your life, getting everything you can out of it. By mulling over these truths, we get more nutrients out of the word. HEARING then occurs when you seek out godly insight from another's understanding of Scripture. This happens when you listen to sermons or talk with peers about what God is teaching you. We gain knowledge and understanding when we discuss the word of God with other believers. MEMORIZATION stores these truths in your head so that God can use them and move them to your heart. Lastly, STUDY deepens your understanding of what the Bible is saying and provides you with a framework for what you believe.

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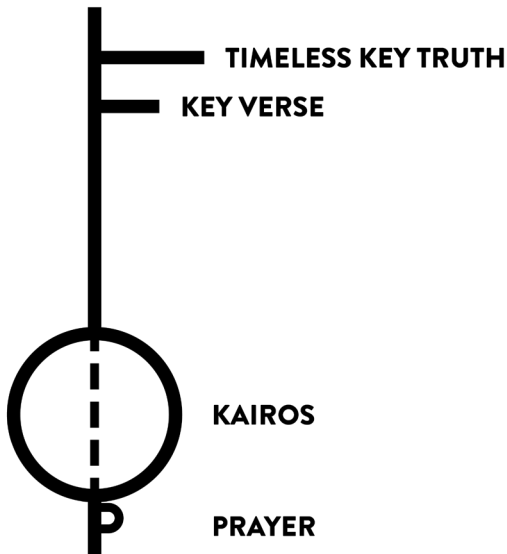
Together, these approaches teach us the character and story of God. As we learn, we will grow and change. Remember, however, these activities alone do not produce change. Treating them like a to-do list misses the point. Their job is to bring you to the place where change can occur—the deep intimacy of a relationship with God.

THE KEY

Journaling is an important part of your time in the scripture. We can engage all 5 ways of interacting with the Bible through journaling. God teaches us through His word and we grow spiritually by spending time in the word. You can see yourself grow spiritually in the same way you can see yourself grow physically. When you were a kid your mom or dad would put you against the wall and with a ruler, put a pencil mark on the wall. Why? So that six months to a year later, as you stood against that same wall with the same ruler, you could hopefully put a new mark on the wall and see and celebrate growth. In the same way. A journal acts as a wall and ruler so that you can look back and see what God has walked you through, how He has answered your prayers, and how you have grown spiritually.

This life shape is a helpful “key” to help you unlock what it is that God is trying to say to you during your time reading the bible.

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Start off by writing the date and the scripture that you are reading at the top of your journal page. This acts as a reference point when you look back at your journal. It also acts as a source of accountability. Sometimes we think it's only been a day or two since we spent time in the scriptures but when we look at our journal we notice that it's actually been 3 weeks.

KEY THOUGHT:

Read the passage for the day a couple of times. Pray for insight as you meditate on what the passage says. Think and study what it meant to the original audience. In one or two sentences, write what you see is the key thought of the passages that you read. Use your own words, imagine summing up what you just read to someone who has never read the Bible.

KEY VERSE:

Write down the one or two verses, word for word, that grabbed your attention or sums up the passage you just read. This does two things; it helps you meditate on and put those verses to memory.

KAIROS:

Every time we spend time in God's word we should have a kairos moment. However, there will be times where we hear His voice much louder than others.

Repent: Write down in a sentence, what is God saying to me?

Believe: Write down in a sentence, what am I going to do in response to what God has told me?

PRAYER:

Surprisingly the goal of spending time in God's Word is not to simply read the scripture but to pray the scripture. Based upon the text and what God has spoken to you, write out a prayer to God, like a letter to Him. You could ask Him for wisdom, courage to follow through with what He has asked of you, seek forgiveness for times that you haven't been obedient or simply pray through the scripture.

If you want to put this into action right now and you're wondering what to read, here are some great suggestions to get you started:

John 15; Joshua 1; Mark 8; 1 Peter 1