

Excerpts for contemplation, discussion and application from this week's issue of THE LOOKOUT.

A Book Like No Other (pages 3-5)

"The Bible tells us who God is, what he has done, and what he likes and dislikes. It tells us who we are and what we can be."

- What have you learned about God from the Bible that you wouldn't otherwise know? What have you learned about yourself?

"Many would say they believe the Bible is out of date, that it is filled with errors, and it is neither reliable history nor relevant morality."

- Have you held similar opinions about the Bible in your life? Have they changed? Why, or why not?

"Bible heroes are portrayed with both strengths and weaknesses."

- With what biblical characters do you identify? Why?

From Information to Transformation (pages 6 & 7)

"How will the knowledge of God I have learned through my Bible study affect my relationship with him?"

- List a few ways.

"Often our feelings about ourselves come from the opinions of others. But when we study the Bible, we hear God speak about the true condition of our heart, mind, and soul."

"We need to ask ourselves whether or not this new information we have learned from Scripture requires a minor, or even a major change in our daily thought or activity."

- How can abstract ideas lead us to change? To whom will you be accountable for such change?

"The Christian life is a joint effort through which God helps us to become the people he wants us become. While we may want to change, without God's help, we will find it impossible."

- Give an example from your own life of how God's work in you contrasts with your own effort. Give an example from Scripture.

What the Bible Doesn't Say (pages 8 & 9)

"As Bible-believing Christians, we want to know what God wants us to do in our everyday lives. It's only natural for us to consult Scripture on the details."

- How does information become wisdom? How can we increase or promote that process?

"Of course, it is good to consult Scripture whenever we have a question about life, but we should not force Scripture to answer questions it is not trying to answer."

"As you read Scripture, approach it as a guidebook instead of a step-by-step instruction manual."

"When we know the ideals of Scripture but not the details of how to apply them, we are driven to consult our Lord to ask him to guide us . . ."

- Give an example of a general principle from Scripture you've applied to a specific situation.

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Mining for gold

The wisdom available to all of us in Scripture is so deep and profound, we can never hope to mine all its riches. Reading through the Bible isn't difficult. (Reading through in a year requires about four pages a day!) But any shovel full of soil from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount can keep a group of Bible students digging for months without fully grasping its depth.

Why does the Bible contain so much wisdom? One reason may be that the Bible itself is a reflection of God's vastness. Like God, the completeness of the Bible's wisdom is beyond our comprehension. And while it would be folly to give up, saying, "It's too much!", equal folly would be not to try.

Here are a couple of ideas for your small group this week:

- Read together a chapter from one of the Gospels. Open the floor for discussion—about things you notice, questions, and ways the passage has changed your life.
- Give each member a chance to tell what changes a key Scripture has made in his or her life.

The Bible calls Jesus "the Living Word," and if we seek him in our study, we'll find treasure enough for a lifetime. "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5). ■

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in

their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts. (Acts 2:46).