



WALKING
WITH

Jesus

*Living in
the Valley...*
Walking With
Hope

At the crossroads of faith





In 1981, Stuart McAllister was part of a mission team whose primary task was to help the church in Eastern Europe transport Bibles, hymn books and Christian literature to believers behind the Iron Curtain.

On one occasion, while attempting to cross the border from Austria into what was then Communist-ruled Czechoslovakia, Stuart and his colleague were arrested and thrown into prison after guards discovered their concealed cargo.

In the recesses of his mind without any idea of when or if he might be released—it what would be a two-week confinement—questions and doubts began to surface in Stuart’s mind.

“In such circumstances,” Stuart writes [in retrospect], “we are forced to face what we mean when we speak of faith. Do we believe, in spite of evidence to the contrary? Do we believe no matter what? How do we handle the deep and pressing questions our own minds bring when our expectations and reality do not match?”

“During my time in prison, I expected God to do certain things, and to do them in a sensible way and time. I expected God to act quickly, and that I would sense his intervention. My reading of Scripture, my grasp of God’s promises, my trust in the reliability of God’s Word, the teaching I had received, and the message I had embraced, led me to expect certain things. When this did not occur in the way I expected, or in the timing that I thought, I was both confused and angry.”

“Since I had never given any conscious thought to worldviews in general, or mine in particular, I was unaware how many unexamined assumptions I was living by. I did not realise how little change had penetrated my heart, and under pressure the gaps were painfully revealed and felt.

From the perspective of time, I can now answer these questions meaningfully, but I needed the experience of doubt and hardship to show me how much I did not know or was not rooted in the biblical answers to these core questions. A worldview that merely answers questions intellectually is insufficient; it must also meet us existentially where we have to live.” (*Beyond Opinion: Living the Faith We Defend*, Thomas Nelson, 2007)

McAllister’s encounter with doubt is not unique. When faced with life-threatening situations like McAllister, everyone is forced to re-evaluate their world view. This is one of life’s most difficult struggles—what do we do when our beliefs system seems to fail us? How do you move forward?

If this describes you, be assured you are not alone in this struggle. The experience, however, raises key questions of what to do with doubt when it arises?

We need to realise that there are many things that cannot be explained. Should we be surprised to find that some things in the spiritual world are difficult to explain or understand. While our minds might be too narrow to reach these higher thoughts, God invites us to draw near to Him and reason with Him (see Isaiah 1:18). This act provides a framework that will help us deal with fears and doubt.

DEALING WITH DOUBT

Q1

How did Jesus respond when He was asked to prove His identity?



□ *Matthew 16:1–4*



□ *Luke 11:16, 29, 30* □ *Mark 8:11, 12* □ *John 2:18; 4:48*

It isn't uncommon to experience doubt; even some messages in the Bible seem hard to understand and can raise scepticism. Whatever the trial, Satan will seek to convince you of these uncertainties and shake your faith.

The good news is, God never asks us to believe without providing sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. While God has given such evidence, He does not remove the possibility of doubt.

Q2

Why is God beyond our human understanding?



□ *Isaiah 55:8, 9*



□ *Psalms 92:5; 77:19* □ *Matthew 11:25* □ *Romans 11:34–36*

Although the fullness of God is beyond our comprehension, this doesn't mean we're unable to understand or appreciate aspects of His character. While God continues to reveal Himself to us, the Infinite will remain clothed in mystery.



“If God is indescribable, where does that leave us? It leaves us walking more humbly than we’ve ever walked before—bowed at the thought of such a mighty and mysterious God.

It leaves us safe in the knowledge of His ultimate control—that the One who spoke these awe-inspiring, inconceivable wonders into being will never lose the plot or drop the ball.

It leaves us pondering just how much He—this creative God of hidden wonders—has in store for those who’ve chosen to love and follow Him.”

— *Louie Giglio in, Indescribable: Encountering the Glory of God in the Beauty of the Universe*



“It is impossible for our finite minds to
fully comprehend the character and the works
of the Infinite One.”

— *Ellen G. White*



“Science spotlights three dimensions of nature
that point to God.

The first is the fact that nature obeys laws.
The second is the dimension of life, of intelligently
organized and purpose-driven beings, which
arose from matter.

The third is the very existence of nature.
But it is not science alone that guided me. I
have also been helped by a renewed study of the
classical philosophical arguments.”

— *Antony Flew*



GOD'S MESSAGE TO US

Q3 *How do people react to Bible texts they don't fully comprehend?*



□ *2 Peter 3:16, 17*




□ *Romans 16:17, 18* □ *Jeremiah 23:35, 36*

□ *2 Timothy 3:5–7; 2:16, 23*

Some teachings in the Bible are difficult to fully explain or understand—the Godhead, the Creation, the entrance of sin and the birth of Jesus, to name a few. Although we may not fully comprehend these things, we have no reason to doubt the Bible simply because we cannot understand these mysteries.

Everyday, we are surrounded by things in the natural world that we simply cannot fathom. The difficulty lies solely in the weakness and narrowness of the human mind.

As the Bible unfolds truth to the reader, the human heart is engaged in the awesome contemplation of God. Rather than creating doubt, this should inspire deeper faith, study and assurance, that the Bible is unmistakably the Word of God.

 "If God's greatness and majesty could be grasped by finite minds, then the Bible would not bear the unmistakable credentials of divine authority." *Ellen G. White*

Q4

Why do we need help to understand God's word?



□ 1 Corinthians 2:14



□ 1 Corinthians 2:12, 13 □ Matthew 13:11 □ Romans 8:5, 6
□ John 3:6; 8:43; 16:13; 14:26 □ Proverbs 14:6

The truths revealed in the Bible match the needs and desires of our heart. These truths are both complex and simple; they encompass the deepest themes of our existence, and yet, are clear enough that all who hear them can understand the plan of salvation.

The Bible points us to Jesus and invites us to put our faith in Him as the only One who saves. The more we study the Bible and seek God's truth, the more our belief in God will deepen as our human thoughts begin to comprehend the greatness of God.

Q5

What do we need to guard our hearts against?



□ Hebrews 3:12



□ Hebrews 3:19; 10:38 □ Matthew 13:58; 17:20
□ Mark 9:24 □ Romans 3:3, 4; 11:20

EXPERIENCING GOD'S WISDOM

People who don't believe in God will often point to the mysteries of the Bible as a reason to deny it. Believing in God doesn't mean we are immune from doubts or that we will understand the Bible perfectly.

When reading the Bible, some people are snared by their own pride believing they should by their own intelligence be able to understand the Bible. In holding to such a position, they are actually denying God’s power and the authority of the Bible.

We must never impose an interpretation of the Bible that is contrary to the teachings of God. God is infinite; in Him are all the “treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3).

Q6 *How is God’s wisdom different to our own?*



Deuteronomy 29:29



Romans 11:33, 34 *Daniel 2:22* *Matthew 13:35*
 Acts 1:7 *1 Corinthians 2:10–11*

When was the last time you stopped to ponder the limitless and infinite nature of God?

We will never reach a point where we know everything about God. However, God intends that even in this life, the truths of the Bible will forever reveal a knowledge of Him.

We must have the simplicity and faith of a little child that is eager to learn. When you open the Bible, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide your understanding. The Holy Spirit will give an understanding that will help you know the limitless and infinite God.

Throughout eternity, we will be searching, learning, and amazed at God’s wisdom, goodness and power.

“It is true that many theories and doctrines popularly supposed to be derived from the Bible have no foundation in its teaching, and are indeed contrary to the whole tenor of inspiration. These things have been a cause of doubt and perplexity to many minds. They are not, however, chargeable to God's word, but to man's perversion of it.”

— *Ellen G. White*





“What’s a nine-foot-tall Goliath to a star-forming God? Dwell on the size of your God, not the height of your giants.” *Louie Giglio*

Q7

How can we experience God’s wisdom?



James 1:5



1 Corinthians 2:12 *Romans 8:1, 5, 6* *2 Corinthians 4:4*
 John 16:14, 15 *1 John 2:20, 27; 5:20*

God shares His truth throughout the Bible. To help us understand the Bible, the Holy Spirit—the same source that inspired the writing of the Bible—is ever present to reveal God’s deepest truths.

OPENING OUR MINDS TO THE BIBLE

Q8

What will you discover when you allow the Holy Spirit to guide your study of the Bible?




John 16:13



John 14:17, 26; 15:6; 8:32; 7:16–18 *1 John 4:6*

God has given us intelligent and creative minds to think, reason and make decisions. Reading the Bible engages both the heart and mind as no other study can. The reading of the Bible should be approached with the same humility and reverence as if we were to enter the very presence of God. Ask God for His Holy Spirit to guide your mind and give understanding for what you are reading.

 “Nothing is so calculated to enlarge the mind and strengthen the intellect as the study of the Bible. No other study will so elevate the soul and give vigour to the faculties as the study of the living oracles.” *Ellen G. White*

The student of the Bible should be taught to approach it in the spirit of a learner. We are to search the pages not for proof to sustain our opinions but in order to know what God says.


Q9 *Who is the source of all wisdom?*

 *James 1:17, 3:17*

 *James 1:17; 3:17* *Job 28:12–28* *Matthew 7:7–11*
 Proverbs 3:5–7; 9:4–6; 2:3–11

God has promised to help us understand the Bible—even aspects that may at first seem difficult or unclear, God can reveal His truth if we ask for help.

Reading the Bible doesn’t automatically mean we will understand it. It is possible to read the Bible and not gain anything from it. This happens when we read without a humble and teachable heart. If our hearts and mind are not fixed upon God, they will fill with doubt as Satan seeks to divert our attention and magnify any uncertainties we may have. In order to find truth, we must be wanting to know the truth and be willing to obey it.

 “Disguise it as they may, the real cause of doubt and scepticism, in most cases, is the love of sin.” *Ellen G. White*



“The wisdom of God devised a way for the love of God to deliver sinners from the wrath of God while not compromising the righteousness of God.”

— *John Piper*



ASKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

Q10 *What does Bible help us understand?*



□ *John 7:17, 17:17*



□ *John 8:31, 32* □ *Psalms 119:10, 101, 102*
□ *Micah 4:2* □ *Acts 17:11*

Instead of focusing on all the things that you may not understand, it is better to focus on the truth God has revealed to you. By so doing, you will see His teachings more clearly and increase your understanding of Scripture.

God invites us to prove for ourselves the reality of the Bible. Instead of relying only on the experiences of others and what they have learnt from the Bible, we are to experience Him personally and claim His promises for ourselves.

As we understand the fullness of God, our doubts and darkness will disappear in the light of His presence.

Q11 *How does knowing Jesus help us in everyday life?*



□ *Colossians 1:13*



□ *Ephesians 5:7–9* □ *1 Peter 2:9* □ *1 John 2:8*
□ *Romans 6:20–22; 4:20, 21* □ *Titus 3:3–7*

Our personal experience with Jesus is a powerful witness. The love and truth of God will be self-evident and clearly demonstrate the power of the Bible and Jesus to transform lives.

Q12 *How does the Bible shape your spiritual journey?*



□ *2 Timothy 3:15–16*



□ *Luke 24:3* □ *Psalms 92:12* □ *Proverbs 4:18*
□ *Hosea 14:1–7* □ *Malachi 4:2* □ *Ephesians 4:15*
□ *2 Thessalonians 1:3* □ *1 Peter 2:25*

When we walk with Jesus, our faith will grow and our understanding of the Bible will become clearer. Every day, we will see the beauty of the truths He has given to us.

Throughout life, although much has perplexed us and doubts have arisen, we can rejoice that in time, God will make all things plain. Things hard to understand will find explanation; where our finite minds discovered only confusion, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony.

By faith we look forward to a new time. In grasping the truths of the Bible, you will be connected to a living God, that will bring new life and joy to your wearied heart.



“Bible study without Bible experience is pointless.
Knowing Psalm 23 is different from
knowing the shepherd.”

— *Kingsley Opuwari Manuel*

REFLECTION

I choose to believe the evidence God has given.

YES

UNDECIDED

I believe God has given me the Bible to help me to understand His love and character.

YES

UNDECIDED

I recognise that God's wisdom is beyond my understanding. I believe He knows best, and I will put my trust in Him, believing that He is always in control.

YES

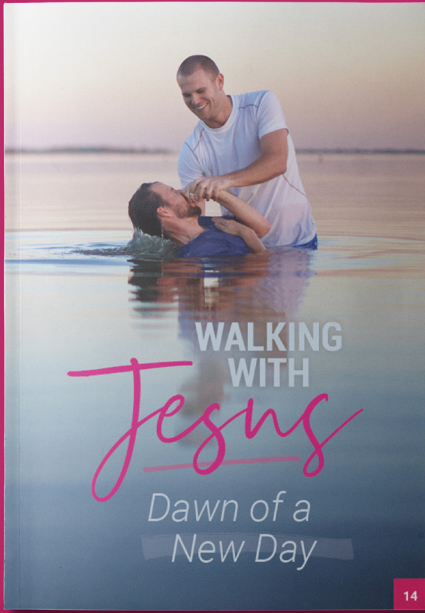
UNDECIDED

I know Satan wants me to doubt God and the truths of the Bible, however even when Satan tries to tempt me, I will choose to follow God and continue to put my faith in Him.

YES

UNDECIDED





CONTINUE YOUR
JOURNEY IN PART 13:

DAWN OF A NEW DAY

When we follow Jesus, our lives become a living witness to His message of love and hope to share with those around us. God promises to supply us with His endless love and strength. We can be glad in Jesus even when we face challenges, because in Him we find hope and peace despite life's uncertainties.

SHARING

If you have found this course helpful you can help share the message. Where ever you see the following social media symbols the digital content can be found at hopechannel.com/inspire for sharing:



HopeChannel

- ✉ discover@hopechannel.com
- 🌐 hopechannel.com/learn
- f [/hopedigital](https://www.facebook.com/hopedigital)
- 🐦 [@hopechannel](https://twitter.com/hopechannel)
- ☎ 1300 300 389 (AU)
0800 694 673 (NZ)

This booklet series is adapted from Steps to Christ by E.G. White and the Steps to Christ Bible Study Guide developed by Merlin Beerman, Revelation Publications.

Published by: Hope Channel

Scripture: Unless otherwise stated, taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV®. Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™