

THE CORE VALUE: We value _____ and expect its _____
to _____ and _____ us.

1. Why is the Bible _____?

2. Why is the Bible _____?

3. Why is the Bible _____?

The Take-Off

Today we kick off our new series - “@ our core”

Organizations, people, even families have things that they value, and those values drive them even if they aren't verbalized.

Values become guidelines that help us make hard decisions because they help us remember our priorities. The values we'll be teaching will sharpen more and more over time, just as age helps us realize more and more what matters most.

They are, in short, what we are about. In the coming weeks, we'll look at each one, and while it may seem like a lot, they all fall somewhere in something we'll refer to as “The Core Four”

The UNDENIABLE message of Jesus, The UNBREAKABLE body of Jesus, The UNCONTAINABLE kingdom of Jesus, and The UNEXPLAINABLE worship of Jesus

Today, we'll begin looking at the UNDENIABLE message of Jesus, and our first core value starts there...

We value **Biblical truth and expect its power to challenge and change us.**

Let's ask and answer 3 questions about the Bible.

1. Why is the Bible different?
 - a. It is unique
 - i. In its circulation
 - a) read by and published in more languages than any book in history
 - b) The British and Foreign Bible Society had to publish 1 copy every 3 seconds to meet demand
 - ii. In its survival
 - a) Voltaire, noted French writer, predicted Christianity would disappear within 100 years. Instead, he was dead and the Geneva Bible Society used his house and printing press to produce Bibles.
 - b) In 303 A.D., the Roman emperor Diocletian issued an edict to stop Christians from worshipping, and to destroy their scriptures. Only 25 years later the Roman emperor Constantine called for 50 copies of the Bible to be prepared at the expense of the government!
 - iii. In its continuity
 - a) Written over 1500 years over 40 generations by over 40 authors in different places and times and moods on 3 continents in 3 languages about hundreds of topics and yet they all agree on a one central theme: God's redemption of man.
 - b) We could give 10 people on one day one topic and they wouldn't agree.
 - c) It's continuity is remarkable.
 - b. It is reliable
 - i. Method for copying manuscripts
 - a) Copied letter by letter
 - b) Total number of words and letters were counted; middle letter and word had to match
 - c) Different pen for writing God's name
 - d) After verifying the accuracy of the copy, the original was destroyed to ensure it couldn't be misunderstood as it aged
 - ii. The number of manuscripts
 - a) Over 24,000 copies of portions of the NT, the most of any literary work
 - b) Second most is The Illiad by Homer with 643

- c) The time span between Homer's work and the earliest copy is 500 years. The NT? 125 years.
 - d) The Bible has more manuscript evidence than any 10 pieces of classic literature combined
 - e) Bottom line: if we question the reliability of the Bible, we have to question the reliability of every classic work we've ever read
 - c. It is God's word
 - i. Protected by God from men
 - a) No book has been more maligned than the Bible, but it still exists. Why?
 - b) A supernatural God watching over His supernatural word.
 - ii. Written by God through men
 - a) 2 Peter 1:20-21
 - b) The DaVinci code made popular the error that for a book to be holy, it kind of had to drop out of heaven
 - c) But the Bible is a book from heaven and a work of men
 - d) In short, it is God's word to men, through men
 - iii. Prophesied by God to men
 - a) The prophecies in the Bible set it apart from all other holy books
 - b) Koran has no prophecies of a man who would come named Mohammed
 - c) The Bible has over 60 of a man who would come named Jesus - all fulfilled!
 - d) Fulfilling only 8 in one man is the same odds as Texas covered in a foot of quarters and allowing a blindfolded man to pick up the one marked with an "X"
- 2. Why is the Bible necessary?
 - a. It tell us about Jesus
 - i. He is the subject of the Bible
 - ii. Not us, not our good, not our lives
 - iii. Luke 18:31 - Jesus said the prophets wrote about Him
 - iv. Every author wrote about Him and His life
 - b. It tells us about salvation
 - i. 2 Timothy 3:15 - the Bible prepares us for salvation
 - ii. Salvation isn't found in the Bible, but rather in the person to Whom the Bible points
 - iii. We can't accept the Bible as a guideline, a manual, a playbook, or a collection of wise sayings only. If we do, then we miss the reason it is necessary. It points to Jesus. (John 5:39)
 - c. It tells us about ourselves
 - i. 2 Timothy 3:16 - it tells us the truth about ourselves
 - ii. 2 Timothy 3:17 - it equips us for every good work
- 3. Why is the Bible ignored?
 - a. It confuses us
 - i. Many people struggle understanding the Bible
 - ii. 2 Peter 3:15-16 - even Peter had a hard time understanding scripture!
 - b. It challenges us
 - i. This is probably the biggest reason people choose not to read the Bible
 - ii. It corrects us, rebukes us, and trains us
 - iii. Neither of these is particularly fun, and honestly it can be a hard sell
 - iv. Hebrews 4:12 goes even further

- a) The Bible is a living probe
- b) It is sharp - double-edged
- c) It is able to penetrate to places we don't even understand
- d) It judges us
- e) It leaves us "uncovered" and "laid bare" before its Author
- f) But the question is "Why?"
- g) Is the Bible - or God - cruel? A sicko? No!
- h) He is preparing us for Him so that we can stand blameless before Him in Christ

The Landing

- So, what do we take away from this?
- First, we decide to stop being surprised that the Bible sometimes makes us uncomfortable
- We should, as our core value says, expect it to challenge us.
- Second, we expect the truth of the Bible to change us
- Psalm 119:9-11 reveals definite behavior shifts that are expected due to making the Bible a personal priority
- Third, make the commitment to learn AND live the Bible (James 1:22-25)
- Read it regularly, even when it's difficult. Remember, we expect it to challenge us.
- Over time, just like eating 3 meals a day, you will find that you are growing stronger and healthier as a believer because you regularly read the Bible