



Don't Change God's Word

6

Key Themes

- The Bible is the only inspired revelation from God.
- God's Word must be the absolute authority.

Key Passages

- Deuteronomy 18:20–22; Acts 17:10–11; Galatians 1:6–9;
Revelation 22:18–19

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Recognize that there are those who speak for God and those who are false prophets.
- Recognize that there are other religions that have added to or taken away from the Bible.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

page 5

Students will place bookmarks at Deuteronomy 18, Acts 17, Galatians 1, and Revelation 22. Students will practice placing all the books of the Bible in order.



Studying God's Word

page 5

The Bible is the only inspired revelation from God, and it must be the absolute authority.



Activity 1: Truth or Consequences

page 9

Students will fill out the Truth or Consequences worksheet to review God's warnings about false writings.



Activity 2: Memory Verse Pass It On

page 10

Students will practice the Memory Verse as a group as they pass a ball to one another.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- Cut strips of paper for each student to mark Deuteronomy 18, Acts 17, Galatians 1, and Revelation 22 in their Bibles.
- Pass out the Books of the Bible cards. See the template on the Resource DVD-ROM, Lesson 3.

- Strips of paper for each student
- Books of the Bible cards—one set for each group of 3–5 students



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.

- Student Take Home Sheets



TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

- Print one Truth or Consequences worksheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your own use.

- Truth or Consequences worksheet for each student
- Truth or Consequences answer key
- Pencils



MEMORY VERSE PASS IT ON

- Write the words "Memory Verse" on a ball.

- Ball marked with "Memory Verse"
- Timing device such as a stopwatch or minute timer



Memory Verse

Psalm 19:7–9 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;
the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

► **Pace your lesson!** You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

“Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field . . . and he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree in the garden?’” (Genesis 3:1). Just as Satan cast doubt on God’s Word in the very beginning, the Word of God has been questioned, denied, changed, added to, and misinterpreted throughout history.

As you prepare to teach this week, meditate on the passages below. We are called to search the Scriptures to discover the truth—to be Bereans (see Acts 17:10–11). Your confidence and trust in God’s Word as your final authority will instill the same confidence in the children you teach.

Deuteronomy 4:2—“You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.”

Deuteronomy 12:32—“Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”

Deuteronomy 18:20–22—“But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?’—when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.”

Galatians 1:6–9—“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”

And as we reach the Bible’s final chapter, we are given God’s assurance that it is complete as He warns that it must not be changed in any way.

Revelation 22:18–19—“For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Tolerance—it’s a word we often hear in this culture. The attitude today is to be open-minded, accept everyone, be careful not to offend anyone, and accept all religions as equally true. If it works for you—it works! This is not an accurate understanding of tolerance, but a twisted view that comes from the post-modern mindset where people can construct their own truth. Real tolerance involves understanding the positions of others, knowing why you disagree, living alongside them, and confronting their false ideas with biblical truth. If we are not convinced that someone is wrong, why would we need to tolerate their different views?

As Christians, we are called to follow the example of Jesus Christ, who was not tolerant of false religions, but stood on the truth of God’s Word (e.g., John 3:34, 14:6, 17:3).

Is the Bible the only Word of God? Be assured, God’s Word needs no proof. God begins with the presumption that He exists (Genesis 1:1) and follows up with many texts that authenticate His Word (e.g., Proverbs 30:5; Psalm 119:160; John 17:17). He does, however, warn us against succumbing to empty deceit, traditions of men, and the principles of the world that are not of Christ (Colossians 2:8).

With this in mind let’s take a look at how some false religions blatantly deny the truth of God and the work of Jesus Christ.

We need to be very aware that there are many false teachings in the world today. And only God’s Word provides us with the information we need to reveal them for what they are. The Bible is the only Word of God.

View of Origins

Bible

God created all things in six, 24-hour days, about 6,000 years ago. All creatures, including man, were kinds. Sin, disease, sickness, and death were not part of this creation; they came as a result of the Fall.

Islam

The Koran teaches that Allah created all things, but it contradicts itself on the number of days. It also teaches that the first man and woman were created in Paradise but were later banished to earth after the fall into sin.

Mormonism

God created man physically after He created the earth. However, we had a pre-earth life, in which we existed as God’s “spirit children.”

Jehovah’s Witnesses

The Watchtower Society teaches that each of the six creative days of God in Genesis 1 was 7,000 years long, and that the universe is billions of years old.

	Bible	Islam	Mormonism	Jehovah's Witnesses
View of Christ	Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, who became man to live a perfect life, to be mankind's substitute on the Cross, and to rise from the dead, defeating death.	Allah (God) created Jesus and appointed him to be a messenger to the Jewish people. The Koran does teach that Jesus was sinless but He was not God, and He did not die on the Cross.	Jesus is the spirit-brother to every man, and even Satan. Jesus is one of an endless number of gods and is a being separate from the Heavenly Father.	Jesus is the Son of God, but is a created being. Christ existed in a pre-human state as the Archangel Michael. Jesus died at his crucifixion and was resurrected as an invisible, non-material, glorious, spirit creature.
Sin and Salvation	Every person has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ and His redeeming work on the Cross.	Salvation is possible after adherence to the Koran, as well as performing the five pillars of the Islamic faith. But even then, salvation is not guaranteed.	Sin was part of God's plan because without it mankind could not progress to become like God, know joy, or have children. Salvation is a combination of faith and works.	Human nature is universally sinful, because all humans inherit the original sin of Adam and Eve. Salvation comes by placing faith in Christ's sacrifice, being baptized as a Witness, and doing good works.
Life After Death	Mankind will live forever either in heaven or in hell. The only way for us to get to heaven is through faith in Christ.	Allah sends both righteous and unrighteous to hell unless they die in a holy war. But if their good works outweigh their bad, they should be admitted into Paradise. Paradise is only guaranteed to those who die in jihad (holy war).	Even after death, everyone has an opportunity to respond to the gospel. Heaven has three levels, and those who attain the highest level become gods, ruling and populating their own world.	There is no eternal hell; this is a false concept created by Satan to turn people away from belief in Jehovah. Unbelievers cease to exist at death (annihilation), while believers remain in death until the resurrection. Only 144,000 will go to heaven, while the rest will live in an earthly paradise.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

God presumed His existence and felt no need to prove it. His Word commences with, "In the beginning, God . . ." (Genesis 1:1), and that is how our history started.

Believers who have gone before us have demonstrated how much the Bible meant to them. They were willing to go to great sacrifice in order to spread the Word throughout the world in common languages because they knew it to be the only Word of God.

Consider John Wycliffe who was born in England in 1324. In those days, church leaders purposely kept ordinary people from the Scriptures. John Wycliffe declared that God's Word is for all people and he began a quest to produce the Scriptures in common English—handwritten from the Latin translations then available. These translations had to be read in secret and Wycliffe suffered persecution all of his life for his efforts.

John Huss, born in 1369 in Bohemia, was another of God's servants. John Huss was intent on maintaining the Word of God as the authority over Christian doctrine, and he spoke boldly and courageously against the compromises he saw in the church such as altering the Lord's Supper and selling indulgences. As a result, he was burned at the stake—giving his life so the Word of God might remain the pure standard for the Church.

German believers experienced similar persecution. When Martin Luther was born in 1483, the Bible was a very rare book and practically unknown. As he grew, so did his love for the Bible, God, and truth. Luther was aware that there were grave and unbiblical injustices in the church and God stirred his soul to action. On

October 31, 1517, he posted his complaints against the church authorities—jeopardizing his life to defend the Bible as the only Word of God.

At the time Luther was translating God's Word into German, God also stirred William Tyndale (1492–1536) to desire that the Word be available in the English language. This was a terrible time in England and Tyndale's spirit, boldness, and faithfulness to God's Word put his life in constant danger. Yet he pursued his God-given vocation and eventually did complete a translation of the New Testament—the first translation into English from the original Greek. Ultimately, God's will was for Tyndale's life to end in tragic death.

These are but a few of the saints who have gone before us to preserve, protect, and provide the Word of God. It is the only Word of God—and around the world people are still giving up their lives to honor its integrity.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Father, thank you for preserving your Word and allowing it to be so available. Please keep me alert to those people around me who have been led astray by false teachings and guard me against their influence. Guide me to be ready always to give an answer for the hope and knowledge that I have in Christ Jesus as I have learned from your Word. Speak through me to guide my students to that same hope.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- Provide strips of paper to mark Deuteronomy 18:20–22; Acts 17:10–11, Galatians 1:6–9; Revelation 22:18–19.
- Provide envelopes containing cards with the names of the books of the Bible for groups of three to five students. Students are to place the books in the proper order. They can use the Books of the Bible poster or their own Bibles to confirm the right order. If time allows, have them do it a second time without looking at the poster or their Bible. You may want to time them and determine who finishes first.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Studying God's Word

You know, there are a lot of different religions that claim to have God's Word and yet they don't believe the Bible. They try to change it so that it fits with what they want it to say.

? Can God's Word be changed? *No!*

Absolutely not. There are a lot of warnings in the Bible against people who try to change God's Word. We talked a little about that last week. Let's take a look at some of the warnings God gives to those who try to change His Word.

READ THE WORD

First, we are going to read Deuteronomy 18:20–22. Turn there in your Bibles—you marked it earlier.

What we are reading was spoken by God through Moses. God was telling the people that there would be teachers who would lie about His Word.

Let's read it. *Ask someone to read the passage.*

Deuteronomy 18:20–22

EXAMINE THE WORD

We are going to ask some questions. All of the answers will be in these verses we just read. Take a close look at them.



Observe the Text

Refer to the Bible Study poster to remind your students how to dig deeper into God's Word by asking the right questions.

- ? In verse 20, who is God warning? *The prophet.*
- ? The prophet is speaking to others. The text says "in My name"—whose name is that? *God's name.*

Right. This prophet is presuming—see that word? It means who dares to speak in God's name.

- ? What does verse 20 tell us about what this prophet is speaking? Look very closely. This is what we mean by examining or observing what God's Word really says. Can you see the answers? *God did not command the prophet to speak. The prophet is speaking in the name of other gods.*

This is a false prophet. Not a true prophet—like Moses or Jeremiah or Isaiah. This prophet was not commanded to speak by God. And he may be speaking in the name of other gods!

- ? What will God do to false prophets like the one described here? It is at the very end of verse 20. *God will kill him. He will die.*
- ? What question is asked in verse 21? *How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?*
- ? In other words, how can we know the true teachers from the false teachers? What is the test described in verse 22? *If the thing does not happen or come to pass, then it was not from God.*
- ? So, how can we know if someone is speaking God's Word truthfully? *Whatever he says is going to happen must happen the way he says it will.*

Discover the Truth

That's right! So, what does this passage mean?

Refer to the Bible Study poster. Remember? Whenever we read Scripture we need to ask that question—we are trying to understand the meaning—to interpret. That is step two in our Bible study method.

- ? Does anyone know what it means when we say that everything the prophets say should happen just like they say? Remember the test we talked about in verse 22. *Allow for discussion.*

Well, let me tell you something I have seen. There are people in the world today—lots of them—who are false prophets. These people have started their own religions. These are false religions and we need to be very

careful of them. Some don't read the Bible at all. Some don't believe in Jesus. Some don't want to believe the entire Bible—just parts of it.

These people will tell you they are speaking for God or on His behalf. But they aren't. When you hear people say things that are wrong according to what you know God's Word says, you have to say, "No. I don't believe that. God's Word doesn't agree with what you are saying."

I'd like for you to turn in your Bibles to Acts 17:10–11. You should have your bookmark there already. This tells us about some people—the Bereans—who were listening to Paul and Silas. Let's see what these Bereans did. Listen carefully as I read. *Read this passage to the children emphasizing that the people in Berea received the Word and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether the things they heard were true.*

Acts 17:10–11

? **How were they responding to Paul and Silas?** *They received the Word and they were searching the Scriptures.*

They were doing exactly what we should do when we hear teaching about God's Word. In fact, that is what you should do when I tell you things. You should be like these wise Bereans and go back to God's Word to be sure what I say is true! The Bible is the only true Word from God—like we have been saying.

If someone teaches you something that is against God's Word—that person is a false prophet. False prophets make things up by adding to God's Word or taking things away from it that they don't like. But a true prophet, or teacher of God's Word, will always tell you the truth according to God's Word.



READ THE WORD

We are going to read a couple of passages now that tell us how God feels about false prophets who don't teach His Word the way it is written. Turn first to Galatians 1:6–9.

Galatians 1:6–9

This letter to the Galatians was written by the Apostle Paul. He was concerned because some of the believers in Galatia were listening to false prophets—or teachers—about Jesus Christ. Does everyone have the place? Let me read it for you. *Read the passage emphasizing the words "different gospel," "preach any other gospel," "let him be accursed."*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? **What do you think accursed means?** *It means cursed by God. It is the opposite of a blessing from God.*
- ? **That is very serious, isn't it? What would cause someone to be cursed according to these verses?** *Not preaching the true gospel, but preaching some other gospel.*
- ? **Where do we find the true gospel message?** *In God's Word.*

- ? Who is the real gospel about? *Jesus Christ.*
- ? I need to stop here a minute and ask. What is the gospel? *Allow for answers.*

This is a very important question. When we talk about the gospel, we are talking about God as a man—Jesus Christ—coming to earth to live among sinners. He did not sin Himself. He was born, he lived and died, was buried, and rose again!

- ? Does anyone know why Jesus would do that? *Allow for answers.*

He did it to provide a way for people—sinners like us—to be forgiven of our sins. He did it so that everyone who would turn to Him, ask forgiveness for their sins, and trust Jesus as their Lord could be forgiven and one day go to heaven.

This is one way many people try to change God’s Word. They try to say Jesus is not necessary—that you don’t have to believe in Him—that there are many ways to get to heaven, and Jesus is just one of many.

These are false religions. They will tell you lies about Jesus—that you don’t have to know Him, believe in Him, trust Him, or receive Him in your life to be forgiven and get to heaven.

- ? Is this true according to what we have been studying? *No.*

This verse in Galatians tells us that if anyone tries to say this—if anyone tries to change the gospel—he will be cursed by God. You have to trust God’s Word for what it says.

We read a couple of verses last week from Revelation 22. And we need to look at them again! Turn to Revelation 22:18–19.

Revelation 22:18–19

- ? You should have a bookmark there. How about two of you reading one verse each? *Assign the verses to two children.*
- ? What is God trying to protect in these verses? *His book, His Word, the Bible.*
- ? What is God telling us not to do? *He is telling us not to add to His Word or take anything away from His Word.*
- ? What will God do to the one who disobeys this command? *God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. God will punish and judge anyone who wants to change His Word.*

Discover the Truth

Yes. It seems like we are repeating this point. But it is very important for you to know that God does not like anyone to mess with His Word. And there are many people who do it. There are people who say they are speaking for God—but they are not teaching from the Bible. They don’t even believe the Bible.

The Bible is the only book that will ever tell us the truth about God. Don’t let any false prophets fool you.

And this is very important. Don't be like the Galatians and listen to a false gospel that will tell you that you don't need to believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the only way, the only truth, and the only One who can give eternal life. No one will get to God the Father without believing in Jesus.

There are other religions—all of them have added to or taken things away from the Bible. These are the people who will be cursed by God and receive His judgment.



Truth or Consequences

MATERIALS

- Truth or Consequences worksheet for each student
- Truth or Consequences answer key
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Distribute worksheet and pencils to students. Split your class into teams to work together.

- ? **What happens at your house when you break a family rule?** *Listen for various responses indicating that there are consequences for doing wrong.*

The word “consequences” means the results that come from your actions. This worksheet has some of the Scripture passages we just studied. Take a few minutes to look these up again and connect

column A to the proper consequence in column B. After you finish, we'll check your answers. *When students have finished, review the answers with them.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

God is very serious about His Word, isn't He? He does not want anyone to change it. It is the only Word of God. We are not to listen to false teachers. You need to be aware that there are other religions that don't believe the Bible. Some are not Christian, and some claim to be Christian but really aren't because they don't believe the Bible. Be sure you are like the Bereans in the book of Acts and check the teachings with the Bible.





Memory Verse Pass It On

MATERIALS

- Ball to pass around the circle
- Stopwatch or minute timer

INSTRUCTIONS

Arrange class members to stand in a circle. Optional: place the Memory Verse poster within view.

We have been studying our memory verse for five weeks so we should know it pretty well by now. So let's test ourselves today with Memory Verse Pass It On. When I hand this ball to the person on my right, he or she will start our memory verse by saying the first word. Then he will pass the ball to

the next person who will say the second word and so on around the circle. I'll keep track of how long it takes to complete the verse correctly. If you need help, you can look at the poster to see what the next word is. **Ready, go!** Start timer or stop watch. Repeat the effort starting off with the next person in the circle, trying to complete the verse more quickly the second time. Repeat several times.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Our memory verse reminds us that God has provided everything we need in His Word to know Him and the truth.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

You know we can't change God's Word. He tells us that over and over again. *Show Lesson Theme poster.*

- ? There are many warnings in God's Word against trying to change God's Word. And there are serious consequences to changing God's Word. **What are those consequences?** *Have the students read the consequences from the worksheets they completed.*

There are many false religions and false prophets or teachers teaching lies about God and Jesus. These religions have tried to add things to the Bible or take out the things they don't like. These are not God's Word. The Bible is the only Word of God and it must be our final and absolute authority.

It is important for you to know what God's Word says. That way you will realize when someone is trying to trick you by adding something to it. You

can be like the Bereans in the book of Acts. They listened to the teachers and then studied the Bible to be sure that what they were taught was true.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

There are many things in the world today that people use to draw us away from studying and believing God's Word. Even for children like you, there are things that want to distract you from believing God's Word.

For example, movies that try to change God's Word. And maybe you have heard someone talk about horoscopes in the paper or going to a fortune teller.

These people are looking in the wrong place for answers to their questions about life. God's Word is what should guide us—not movies or fortune tellers or horoscopes or anything that distracts us from the truth. These things are not according to God's Word.

Remember, too, that there are many religions and churches that don't believe or teach God's Word. They add to it or take stuff away. They want to change it to fit their own needs. When you hear things that don't sound right—either in church, school, or from friends—be like the Bereans and study God's Word. It is the only truth—and His Word will not lead you in the wrong direction.



➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 19:7–9

The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;
the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Thank God for the wonder and truth of His Word.
- Ask God's Holy Spirit to help students place their trust in the authority of God's Word alone.
- Pray that the students will be wise like the Bereans and measure everything with God's Word.

