



6

Have You Not Read?

Key Theme

- God's Word must be the absolute authority.

Key Passages

- Matthew 15:1–20; Mark 12:18–27; 2 Timothy 2:14–26

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe Jesus's use of Scripture to refute error.
- Recognize the authority of Scripture over tradition.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will review the memory verse by completing the Memory Verse Review Sheet.

- Write on the board, "Should tradition ever trump Scripture?"
- Print one Memory Verse Review Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.



Memory Verse Review Game

- Print and cut out the Memory Verse Review Strips from the Resource DVD-ROM.
- Masking tape



Studying God's Word

The religious leaders of Jesus's day had fallen into the trap of legalism; they had made the traditions and commands of men equal to the commands of God. Jesus showed them the error in their thinking and always pointed them back to the Word of God as the authority. We, too, must stand on and use God's Word against all forms of legalism and error.

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



Activity: Have You Not Read?

Students will examine 2 Timothy 2:14–26 and the instructions Paul gave to Timothy on answering false teachers.

- Student Guides
- Pencils



Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages listed above along with this background.

We have been studying Christ's life—His mission, His miracles, His claims, and His teachings. As we study Jesus, we turn automatically to the sacred Scriptures and confidently rely on the Bible to be our authority. We know the Bible to be the means by which God has chosen to communicate with us. And as we study Scripture, we realize that God has always desired to speak to His people. We know that from the very beginning of creation, God revealed Himself and communicated with Adam. His exchange with man did not stop there, but throughout the Old Testament we find God speaking to Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Moses, David, the prophets, and many others.

As we move into the New Testament, God confirms the importance of His Word as we see Jesus defending the truth, reliability, exclusivity, and sufficiency of the Scriptures. Jesus spoke often with the Jewish leaders—particularly the scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. And He did not hesitate to stand on the solid Word of God.

These religious leaders and teachers did not handle the Scriptures of the Old Testament appropriately. And they were rebuked by Jesus for their failure to rightly understand and apply what had been recorded for them by God (Matthew 5:17–48). As Jesus taught and discussed the Scriptures with these teachers of His day, He often would ask the indicting question, "Have you not read?" (Matthew 12:3, 12:5, 19:4, 22:31). And then He would point them back to the right interpretation of God's Word. In fact, these leaders had such a skewed interpretation of the Scriptures that Jesus referred to them publicly as hypocrites. He compared them to whitewashed tombs that appear beautiful outwardly, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones (Matthew 23:27).

By all appearances, the Pharisees believed that all of what we call the Old Testament was a reliable record of God's revelation to them. They esteemed Moses and the Law and the prophets, seeking to be faithful to what God had called them to do. However, many of them had developed a zeal for obedience that was motivated by their desire to be admired by men. They had developed many oral traditions in which various rabbis (teachers) were esteemed and their teachings heeded.

For example, we read of Paul's training under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), who was a highly respected member of the Jewish council (Acts 5:34).

These added traditions created a religious system with layers of laws and regulations that went far beyond God's commands. We find record of many of these traditions in the Mishnah, written in the third century BC. (The Mishnah is a collection of Jewish laws and traditions covering many topics from the various holidays, to marriage laws, civil laws, laws concerning the Temple in Jerusalem, etc.) As the Pharisees held more and more to the traditions and approval of men, their morality and zeal for obedience became more artificial. These learned men, religious leaders, and teachers had strayed so far from the truth of God's Word that they could not see the Savior before them as He fulfilled all the prophecies they had read in the Scriptures. In fact, these men led the movement to crucify Jesus on the Cross.

We must take heed. The Bible is God's only Word to us. It is living, active, and powerful. It is what divides soul and spirit. It is what discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). We are all warned not to add to God's Word lest He rebuke us and we be found liars (Proverbs 30:6). Christians are called to be transformed by the renewing of their minds (Romans 12:2). And this can only be done by diligent and faithful study of the Bible. It is only through God's Word that we will learn His plan of redemption and His will.

As we consider how the Pharisees' desire to please men and to be honored by men led them to stray so far from the truth of God's Word, 1 Peter 1:24–25 may come to mind:

"All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

In the early first century, the Bible consisted only of the 39 books of the Old Testament—the 27 books of the New Testament had not yet been written. However, we can be confident that the Old Testament was sufficient for godly wisdom. We read in 2 Timothy that as the

Apostle Paul was nearing the end of his life, he wanted to impart godly wisdom to Timothy, instructing him on how to lead the growing church as an elder and teacher. The letter we refer to as Second Timothy is filled with truths exhorting and guiding Timothy to fulfill his role. Paul recognized the perilous times Timothy was facing, especially from false teachers rising up in the church and those who were against the church from the outside. With this in mind, he directed Timothy to “hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 1:13). The revealed truth from God was entrusted to Timothy, and he was to pass it on to faithful men who could teach it to others (2 Timothy 2:2).

In this important letter, Paul goes on to tell Timothy the importance of “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15), so critical because of the profane and idle babblings that would increase to ungodliness (2 Timothy 2:16).

Paul warned young Timothy that the false teachers he would encounter would have influence over many (2 Timothy 3:1–7). He called Timothy to continue in the things which he had learned—even how from childhood he had known the Holy Scriptures, which alone can give wisdom for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:14–15).

We are still encountering false teachers and lies against God’s truth. However, many Christians suggest that we should leave the Bible out of our answers to skeptics because these skeptics don’t believe the Bible is authoritative. But we know by the example Scripture offers that this is not the way to defend God’s honor and His Word. We can only turn to the authority of God’s Word as we seek to correct those who are in error.

As we encounter these false teachers, we are instructed to share with patience and humility. In 1 Peter 3:15, Peter exhorted his readers to always be ready to give a reason for the hope they have in Christ but to do so with meekness and fear (or gentleness and respect). As we engage others around us, our distinctive Christian life should cause others to see us as different. As we talk of the hope we have in Christ, unbelievers will have questions for us. Responding to these questions from Scripture and pointing people to the truths of the Bible is imperative—whether we are talking about marriage, sexuality, education, entertainment, or any topic.

Even in the church today, we need to check ourselves to be sure we are standing on the foundation of Scripture alone. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for the traditions they had added to God’s Law, and later in history we see that the Reformers of the sixteenth century sought to correct errors of the Roman Catholic Church brought on by man-made traditions.

One of the common cries of those Reformers seeking to restore sound teaching was *ad fontes*, a Latin phrase that means “to the fountains.” This was a call to go back to the Bible as the source of truth, examining the traditions that had been handed down to make sure they lined up with Scripture. Those that were not consistent with Scripture were set aside as false traditions of men.

With that said, traditions are not always wrong. Biblical Christian churches can present the truth in a different manner by their use of choir robes, pews, prayer books, statements of faith, pulpits, even music styles. However, in all things Scripture needs to be our guide. We have no biblical right to impose our patterns and practices on anyone else, unless it is a doctrine clearly taught in the Scriptures. Doing so could easily lead to the same trap of legalism and imposing regulations on others that the Pharisees and the Roman Catholics had fallen into with their lists of extra regulations and laws.

In all of this, we must always look to God’s Word for truth, as Paul wrote to Timothy, and subsequently to all of us:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16–17).



BEFORE THE THRONE

Almighty Lord, thank you for your Word. It truly is living, active, and powerful. Help me and my students to understand it, live it, and teach it rightly to others.

Review

I trust you have been learning much about our magnificent Savior as we have been looking at the many ways He demonstrated the character and attributes of God while He walked on the earth. As we have studied through these passages in the Word of God, we have learned more about Jesus, the Word made flesh. We saw how He had power over nature, disease, and death. And

He has given us a model of the perfect Man and how we might imitate Him in obedience to and love for the God who has redeemed us.

Today we are going to continue looking at how Jesus interacted with the people around Him, especially the religious leaders of His day.



Memory Verse Review Game

MATERIALS

- Memory Verse Review Strips
- Masking tape
- Optional: Timer
- Optional: Small prizes like pencils or bookmarks

INSTRUCTIONS

Allow students a couple minutes to review the memory verse from their Student Guides then say the verse together as a class a couple of times. Tape the Memory Verse Review Strips onto the students' backs. If you have fewer than 12 students, tape more than one strip, in the proper order, on some students. If you have more than 12 students, print two sets of strips. You may also want to divide the class into teams and see which team can be the first to assemble the verse properly.

Instruct the students to work together to put themselves in order according to the memory verse. Once they are standing in order, check the verse by reading the words out loud according to how the students are standing. You may want to set a time limit, so the game moves along at a quicker pace.

We have been working on this verse from John for five weeks. Today, you'll get a chance to say the whole verse from memory for the class. But first, I want you to work together as a group to put the words taped to your backs in the right order. I'll check the verse when you are finished. *Once the students think they are in the right order, check them by reading the words out loud.*

? Great job working together! Now who can say this verse for the class without any help?
Encourage students to say the verse alone.

Optional: Offer individual prizes to students who can recite the verse alone. Encourage everyone to try.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Memorizing Scripture is a special way to honor God. He wants us to know His Word well, obey it, and share it with others. Next week we'll begin memorizing a new verse!





Studying God's Word

► Write on the board, "Should tradition ever trump Scripture?"

READ THE WORD

Let's read Mark 12:18–27 together and look at how Jesus dealt with some of the religious teachings of His day. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

Mark 12:18–27

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? **At what point in the ministry of Jesus did this conversation take place?** *Since chapter 11 opens with the Triumphal Entry and chapter 14 begins on the day of the Last Supper, this conversation took place in the final week of His earthly ministry.*
- ? **Who approached Jesus?** *A group of Sadducees, one of the Jewish sects of Jesus's day.*
- ? **What did the Sadducees believe about the resurrection?** *They believed there was no resurrection.*
- ? **What resurrection were they referring to?** *Rather than Jesus's Resurrection, they were referring to the resurrection of all people at the consummation. Verse 23 makes it clear that they were talking of the resurrection at the end of time.*
- ? **If the Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection, why were they asking Jesus about the resurrection?** *They were trying to make Jesus look foolish by asking Him a question that they believed was a hypothetical example that would show that the resurrection was foolish.*
- ? **Who did the Sadducees appeal to in their question?** *They appealed to Moses and his writings. The example they used was the law of levirate marriage prescribed for the Israelites in Deuteronomy 25:5–6.*
- ? **What did Jesus say about the validity of their question?** *He noted that they were mistaken.*
- ? **What two reasons did Jesus give for their mistake?** *They did not know the Scriptures nor the power of God.*
- ? **Did Jesus affirm the resurrection the Sadducees denied?** *He clearly affirmed it in the phrase "when they rise from the dead."*
- ? **What mistake did Jesus reveal in the Sadducees' thinking in verse 25?** *The people in the resurrection will not be married or given in marriage.*
- ? **To what did Jesus compare the people in the resurrection?** *He compared them to angels who are not married either.*
- ? **What phrase did Jesus use to assert the authority of Scripture on the topic of the resurrection?** *In verse 26 He said "have you not read?" to point them to what Scripture says on the matter.*

- ? **What passage did Jesus point the Sadducees to as a proof of the resurrection?** *He pointed to the passage of the burning bush where God spoke to Moses.*
- ? **Why didn't Jesus give a chapter and verse reference?** *The chapter and verse references were added much later, so Jesus used a reference that the Jews would easily recognize.*
- ? **What verb in the quoted text of verse 26 did Jesus use to make His point?** *He used the present tense verb "am" to show that even though Moses lived long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God was still their God, indicating that they are "still living" in God's view. This affirms the truthfulness of the resurrection since God is and will always be the God of these men, the Sadducees' "dead" men.*
- ? **How did Jesus drive His point home?** *He clearly stated that God is the God of the living, not the God of the dead so that there was no doubt about what He was saying.*
- ? **What did Jesus plainly say about the Sadducees' understanding of the resurrection?** *He clearly said they were mistaken (or deceived).*
- ? **On what grounds were the Sadducees mistaken?** *They were mistaken on the grounds of misunderstanding or mistrusting the Scriptures.*
- ? **How does Daniel 12:1–2 relate to the mistake of the Sadducees?** *This passage from the Old Testament clearly indicates that all people, righteous and unrighteous, will be resurrected in the end. This affirms Jesus's acknowledgment of the resurrection and shows that the Sadducees could have studied this passage to know there was life after death.*
- ? **Looking at the broader context, what do Mark 11:18, 12:12, and 12:15 reveal about the motives of the questions the Sadducees and Pharisees brought to Jesus?** *The religious leaders were trying to find a way to trap Jesus in His words so that they could bring charges against Him in a trial and put Him to death. They had been pursuing this goal for some time but especially since Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead a few days before this encounter.*

Daniel 12:1–2

Mark 11:18, 12:12, 12:15

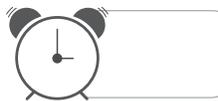
Discover the Truth

As Jesus faced this question, He did an astonishing thing—He appealed to the authority of the Scriptures that had been revealed by God. He knew that the Sadducees claimed to esteem Moses and his writings, and He used those writings against them in a way that exposed the fact that they really weren't trusting in his writings as much as they supposed. Rather than answering in what may have been perceived as wisdom from a man, Jesus appealed to the words of God recorded by Moses. He looked to the revealed text and helped them to rightly interpret the passage and apply it to the question that they thought made the resurrection impossible. However, there was no contradiction between the levirate marriage commanded by Moses and the resurrection of all people.

- ? **What attribute of God did Jesus demonstrate in answering the question that was meant to entrap Him?** *He is wise, answering the question in a way that showed the error of the Sadducees and exalted the truthfulness of Scripture. Refer to Attributes of God Poster.*

WISE

“Have you not read?” is a common idea expressed by Jesus when dealing with the religious leaders of the Jews but also with the disciples and others. While He doesn’t always express it in those exact words, the idea comes across constantly in the Gospels. Jesus appeals to the written Word of God because it is the common standard that everyone could study and use as a guide. Any other standard falls short of offering absolute truth by which we may judge our thoughts and actions. It is no different for us today.



READ THE WORD

Our next passage has a similar theme, but a different group brought the question to Jesus and the disciples. Let’s read Matthew 15:1–20 together and examine how Jesus answered His critics. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

Matthew 15:1–20

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? **What events did this conversation follow?** *This happened shortly after the feeding of the 5,000 in the beginning of the third year of Jesus’s ministry. Refer to the New Testament History poster just after the third Passover.*
- ? **Where did this conversation take place?** *Matthew 14:34 places them in Galilee in the area of Gennesaret.*
- ? **Who approached Jesus?** *The scribes and Pharisees.*
- ? **Where did they come from?** *Jerusalem.*
- ? **What was a scribe?** *The scribes were those trained in the law, who sat under the teaching of various teachers. They served as copyists and in other roles including minor jurists. Luke refers to them as lawyers since they were trained in the Law (Luke 14:3).*
- ? **Who were the Pharisees?** *The Pharisees were a group of fairly conservative Jews. As the term is used in the Gospels and Acts, it generally refers to those who were the leaders in the Sanhedrin council. They were the dominant group of religious leaders though they shared the political power with the Sadducees. They are also described as being zealous for obeying God to the point of creating manmade rules that became oppressive.*
- ? **What rule were the disciples accused of breaking?** *They had not washed their hands before eating.*
- ? **Where did this rule come from?** *It was a tradition of the elders.*
- ? **What additional information does Mark 7:3–4 provide about this tradition?** *Mark gives more detail about the ritual regulations for washing various vessels used for eating. The phrase “when they come from the marketplace” seems to convey the idea that they had been interacting with unclean things, so they needed to be purified so that they would not contaminate themselves as they ate.*

Mark 7:3–4

- ? **What question did Jesus ask of the Pharisees?** *He asked them a similar question but regarding their transgression of the commandment of God: “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?”*
- ? **How do the two questions in verses 2 and 3 compare to one another?** *Both of the questions begin with “why do you transgress” and then focus on two different authorities—the Jewish elders and God.*
- ? **What does the word “transgress” mean?** *The word means to cross a line. So, the context used in this case means to cross a boundary that has been established by an authority. To transgress is a willful act.*
- ? **What commands of God did Jesus accuse the Pharisees of transgressing?** *He pointed to the command to honor your father and mother from Exodus 20:12 and the command not to curse them in Exodus 21:17.*
- ? **What phrase did Jesus use to contrast the command of God with the tradition of men?** *“But you say.”*
- ? **What regulation had the Jewish elders created with regard to honoring parents with money?** *They had created a way to get around the command to honor their parents by giving money to God that should have gone to support their parents.*
- ? **How did this violate the command of God?** *Because they said there are circumstances in which you must not honor your parents, they had created a command that negated the intent of God’s command to honor parents.*
- ? **What special term for this practice did the Jews use according to Mark 7:11?** *Corban, for which Mark provided a translation as “a gift to God.”*
- ? **How did Jesus answer the question He posed in verse 3?** *He repeated the question in the affirmative, telling them very plainly that they had made God’s command of no effect with their tradition.*
- ? **How did Jesus label the Pharisees?** *He called them hypocrites.*
- ? **What prophetic proof did Jesus offer to the Pharisees?** *He applied the words of Isaiah to them, pointing to their hypocrisy and the fact that the words from their lips did not match the attitudes of their hearts—their worship was in vain.*
- ? **Who did Jesus turn His attention to in verse 10?** *He directed His comments to the crowd around Him who had witnessed the events.*
- ? **What instruction about eating did Jesus give the crowd?** *He told them it is not what enters a man that defiles him, but what comes from within.*
- ? **How did Jesus explain this teaching to the disciples?** *He made it clear that any “contamination” that might be on food when it is eaten is just eliminated from the body after digestion. Rather than the things going into the mouth, it is the things coming out of the mouth*

Mark 7:11

that demonstrate that a man is already defiled. Our words are a product of our hearts and our attitudes. This ties back to the quote from Isaiah that says the Pharisees were honoring God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him.

- ? **What types of wickedness are in the hearts of man?** *Evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies are identified by Jesus.*
- ? **How did Jesus describe the Pharisees to the disciples in verses 13 and 14?** *He called them plants that will be uprooted and blind guides leading the blind.*

Discover the Truth

Here, again, we see Jesus very clearly pointing the Jewish leaders away from their traditions and back to the Word of God. He did not use the words “have you not read?” but the same intent is clear in pointing them back to the clear commands of God in Exodus and the description of false teachers in Isaiah—both passages the scribes and Pharisees would have been familiar with. He expected them to look to the revealed words as authoritative.

Contrary to the popular portrayal of Jesus as a soft-spoken man who never judged anyone, He publicly rebuked them using the Word of God and labeled them as hypocrites. He told those who were listening that these men fit the bill of false teachers, promoting their own ideas, traditions, and commands over the commands of God. Lest the crowd listening be confused about what commands to obey, Jesus passed judgment on the traditions of the elders and told them to worry about what comes out of their mouths, not what might be on their hands when they eat. The words spoken by a man are a better gauge of the condition of His heart toward God and others than whether he washes his hands well before he eats.

It is in a similar context in the last week of His ministry that Jesus told the Pharisees that they were so concerned about straining a gnat out of their drinks that they were willing to swallow whole the unclean camel, defiling them even further (Matthew 23:24). Their blindness as to the true commands of God had not only led them astray, but it had caused them to lead others astray as well. Their own traditions had negated the commands of God. Being blind themselves, they had led others into error, falling into a ditch of destructive hypocrisy.





Have You Not Read?

MATERIALS

- Student Guides
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

As Christians, we are to be ready to give a reason for the hope we have in Christ. As we engage with people around us, we can point them to the truths of Scripture as we obey the commands of Jesus to make disciples and to model our life after His. We call upon everyone to conform their thinking to the truths of Scripture.

In your Student Guide you will find the Have You Not Read? activity. In small groups, read through 2 Timothy 2:14–26 and develop some basic principles regarding answering those who contradict the Word of God. *Have the students work in small groups to answer the questions in the activity.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Let's talk about the principles you have drawn out of this passage.

1. How does the command in verse 15 relate to the passages studied in the lesson? *Paul called Timothy to "rightly divide" God's Word just as Jesus showed the Pharisees how to rightly interpret and apply Scripture.*
2. Is it appropriate to name those who are promoting false teachings as you warn others? *Paul provides an example of this in this passage, warning of the dangerous teaching of two men by name in verse 17.*
3. What danger do false teachers present? *Paul compared their false teachings to cancer that will spread and cause more harm if it is not*

corrected. The false teachings will cause an increase in ungodliness and overthrow the faith of many in the church (vv. 16–19).

4. How should a servant of the Lord offer correction? *First, it should be done rightly from "the word of truth" as verse 15 describes. Second, the call should be made firmly, charging others before the Lord, shunning what is false, and in a way that is not quarrelsome but patient and humble (vv. 23–25).*
5. What goal does Paul identify in offering correction from Scripture? *The goal in the correction is that those who think or teach contrary to Scripture will repent of their error, coming to their senses and not being taken captive by the schemes of the devil (vv. 25–26). The goal of biblical correction is repentance.*
6. As you consider this passage, how do you measure up to the standard that Paul calls Timothy to meet? *Discuss various answers, encouraging strengths and giving hope in overcoming weaknesses.*

No matter where false teaching comes from, whether inside the church or from the world, we have one source of truth to combat the errors—the Bible. No matter our role in the body, but especially for teachers and elders, we are to shun error and proclaim the truth. Just as Jesus pointed the religious leaders of His day back to Old Testament truths, we have both testaments to use to correct errors in both thought and deed. But we are to do it in a manner that is firm but gentle, pointing to truth in humility knowing that it is God's Word that convicts.

Our goal is ultimately to present the truth so that they may repent of the error and turn to God for forgiveness in Christ.





Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

As Jesus interacted with the religious leaders of His day, He consistently pointed them to errors in the way they were thinking. And to make their error clear, He pointed to the authority of the Scriptures that they claimed to follow. He held them to the standards provided in what God had revealed, clearly telling them that their traditions were not the right standard to be following.

Jesus, as the Word made flesh, pointed His questioners to the authority of Scripture and held them accountable as if God had spoken to them individually. His explanation of Scripture showed the error in their thinking and clearly communicated that they were not as obedient to God as they may have thought. They had fallen into the trap of legalism—making the traditions and commands of men equal to the commands of God.

Rather than turning to the thinking and traditions of men, we need to be looking to the Scriptures as the ultimate standard of our thoughts and actions. If we are going to meet this mark, we need to be studying the Scriptures, asking the Spirit to reveal truth to us as we diligently seek to understand them and apply them to our lives. As we do, we honor God and His Word just as Jesus did, and just as Paul called Timothy to do. Let us follow the pattern Christ has set for us and draw truth from His Word.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

- ? What key ideas can we take away from studying how Jesus responded to the Pharisees and Sadducees in these passages? *We must always look to Scripture as the source of truth and boldly point others to that truth.*
- ? The Sadducees had raised certain portions of Scripture above others, arriving at wrong conclusions about what God had said. Where do similar ideas show up within the church today, and what errors does this lead to? *Many Christians suggest that the "red letters" are more important than other passages of Scripture, demanding that the words of Jesus are more important than other passages. This fails to acknowledge that all Scripture is inspired by God. Some who take this view would argue, for example, that committed homosexual relationships are acceptable because Jesus never spoke against them. Other Christians suggest that books like Genesis are not scientific explanations and that God was just relating the creation to the Israelites in a way that they could understand. This leads many to set aside Genesis as the "how" of creation, embracing evolution as the process God used to create. Discuss other various ideas, including those who only teach from the New Testament and other ideas. Emphasize that we must take the whole counsel of God as truth, not pick and choose the parts we want to accept as true.*

- ? **When you listen to those who teach the Scriptures, why is it important for you to know the Scriptures well?** *If we do not know what Scripture teaches, we can easily be led astray by false teachers who will often use Scripture in inappropriate ways so that people follow them rather than Christ. We must be careful to measure all things against Scripture, lest we be devoured by wolves imitating shepherds.*
- ? **Have you ever been taken in by a tradition of men and later come to find out that it was actually contrary to Scripture? How did you become aware of the error, and how did you correct it?** *Discuss various answers. Some examples may include obeying certain dietary laws, various "Sabbath" restrictions, entertainment options, etc.*
- ? **Why do Christians fall into the trap of legalism, making additional rules that appear to promote holiness?** *It is easier to make extra-biblical rules to avoid wrestling with the clear commands of God. For example, dressing modestly is "easier" to obey if you create an additional set of rules that describe how long sleeves and pants/skirts need to be rather than honoring God and loving others by acting out of a heart of obedience. While we might develop our own personal standards for modesty, if we impose those rules on others in judgmental ways or think the way we dress makes us holy, we have made our own traditions the standard, not God's Word. Other areas to discuss would include music styles, entertainment, Bible versions, and schooling choices.*



MEMORY VERSE

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

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

- Thank God for giving guidance through the Bible.
- Praise God for His kindness in revealing Himself to us in Jesus.
- Ask God for discernment in identifying false teaching and responding to it.