

How do you know? – Study Guide

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Chapter 1 Starting Points (p 3-5)

1. How might what we believe affect our health?
2. What is “doctrine?”
3. To what extent do you find the word “messy” a helpful description of the world around us?
4. What are the four key doctrinal loci?

Chapter 2 How can we know anything about God and the World? (p6-8)

1. Define the following
 - a. Rationalism
 - b. Empiricism
 - c. Irrationalism
 - d. Romanticism
 - e. Post Modernism
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each of the above?
3. What do you make of Van-Til’s claim that Adam was both rationalist and irrationalist at the same time? How might this affect our understanding of sin?
4. How does Van-Til’s description of irrationalism and rationalism affect our understanding of other religions?
5. How does God cut through the problem of rationalism and irrationalism?

Chapter 3 How does God speak? (p9-12)

1. Do you agree with Calvin that “there exists in the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, some sense of the Deity?” Are we right to call atheists “fools”?
2. How would you respond to someone who claims that religion is a tool invented by those in power to control people?
3. Write a short exposition of Romans 1:16-20).
4. Someone asks you “what happens to those who live in remote countries and have never had the opportunity to hear the Gospel?” How do you respond?

Chapter 4 How does God speak? Part 2: Special Revelation (p13-15)

1. What is Special Revelation and where do we find it?
2. Why do we need Special Revelation?

Chapter 5 Scripture the source of Special Revelation (p16-21)

1. What does it mean to describe Scripture as inspired?
2. Does your Bible have errors in it?
3. How do we know what should and what shouldn’t be in the Bible? How would you respond to someone who claimed that the early church had suppressed diversity of ideas by censoring the Gnostic Gospels out of the Bible?
4. How would you help someone who says that they find parts of the Bible too difficult to understand?

5. What does it mean to be “thoroughly equipped for every good work?”
6. What implications do Chapters 3-5 have for our approach to the use of Spiritual gifts - especially Tongues, prophecy and words of knowledge?

Chapter 5 God’s Word and its practical implications (p22-29)

1. List the 5 practical implications given for seeing Scripture as God’s inspired word. Are there any implications you would like to add?
2. What is expository preaching? How does it differ from other forms of preaching? What might its strengths and its weaknesses be?
3. “Pastoral counselling is best done by professionals with appropriate qualifications psychiatry, psychology and/or counselling.” Discuss.
4. What is the discipline of Hermeneutics and why is it important (For further reading check out “Wesley and the Slave Trade” available from the Faithroots publication page
5. When was the last time God disagreed with you?

Chapter 7 How can we help? (p30-31)

1. How can the fear of being seen as “judgemental or preachy” limit our pastoral effectiveness?
2. How might the “let’s go to the Bible together” approach outlined in this chapter help overcome that problem
3. How would you deal with the “confidentiality” question?
4. A friend comes to you and admits that they have a pornography addiction -where would you go to in Scripture with them?

Chapter 8 Spiritual Warfare (p32-34)

1. What would you say to a person who thought their house was haunted? What would you do?
2. Write a short exposition of Ephesians 6:10-18
3. How does the wider context of Ephesians help us to understand what Spiritual warfare is all about?
4. Where is spiritual warfare fought?

Chapter 9 -10 Sorry! Some worked examples in Apologetics (p35-40)

1. Using the method suggested have a go at answering some of the objections that your friends have raised to Christianity. Here are some examples to get you started
 - a. Miracles don’t really happen
 - b. The Bible is just a load of made up stories
 - c. The God of the bible is a cruel and abusive God
 - d. All religions lead eventually to truth, you just have to find your own path

Chapter 11-13 Expository Worship (p41-50)

1. What do you make of the term “Expository Worship”? To what extent does this describe your experience of church life?
2. Do you think Mark Dever is right to specific “Expository Preaching” as the first mark of a healthy church? Why this and not other forms of preaching?
3. What are the consequences of pastors and elders becoming stunted in their spiritual growth? How do we guard against this?
4. Is the assessment of WWJD in this chapter fair?
5. What would you say to the parent of a 16 year old who say that their child won't be able to handle staying in the service and listening to the preaching?
6. Does Expository Worship require a traditional sermon? What are the pros and cons of a traditional sermon (i.e. where the preacher delivers a talk lasting between 20-45 minutes?)
7. In what other ways might you help the church to be word centred.
8. We used the example of “The Mystery of the Cross” to look at expository worship, Choose another song lyric – it might be a hymn or a secular song. How would you use expository preaching to engage with it? How might you build a whole worship service around the theme

Chapter 14 Pulling Things Together (p51)

1. Summarise what are the 5 key things that you have learnt from these studies
2. How will what you have learnt affect your preaching?
3. Consider this scenario.

“The church members have to make a decision. The building is old increasingly reaching its capacity. Do they agree to:

- a. Start a new service?
- b. Plant a new church?
- c. Undertake a major building project?

How would you as a leader help the congregation come to a decision? What factors would you need to consider? How will General Revelation help with this? What does Scripture have to say?

