

A person with long blonde hair, wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt and a grey backpack, stands on a rocky mountain peak, looking out over a vast, hazy mountain range under a cloudy sky. The title 'We Believe' is written in a large, golden, cursive font across the top of the image.

We Believe

A Bible Study Series on Twelve
Essential Christian Doctrines

Prepared by Dr Andrew Corbett,
Pastor of Legana Christian Church

Studies prepared by Dr Andrew Corbett

www.legana.org

We Believe

- The Bible is inspired by God and is without error. We base our beliefs upon no other book (2Tim. 3:16; 2Pet. 1:19-21).
- There is One God, who has always existed in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; 2Cor. 13:14).
- Our Lord Jesus Christ is and was truly God: that He was born into the world by a virgin; He lived a sinless life; He performed genuine miracles; died for our sin in our place; was resurrected bodily; ascended to the Father's right hand; will personally return in the future (Jn. 1:1; Matt. 1:18; 2Cor. 5:21; Acts 10:38; Rom. 6:10; Jn. 20:13-17; Jn. 14:3; Acts 1:11).
- In the resurrection of both the saved and the lost, the saved to everlasting life and the lost to the second death (Dan. 12:2; Jn. 11:25-26; Rev. 21:7-8). The only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the finished work of Christ (Eph. 1:7).
- Being born-again by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for personal salvation (Jn. 1:13; 3:3; 1Pt. 1:23).
- In the power of the Holy Spirit to make believers mature, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy life (Gal. 5:16).
- The baptism of the Holy Spirit is given to believers who ask (Lk. 11:13).
- In the reality of the supernatural operation of the gifts of the Spirit for today (1Cor. 12:8-10; Heb. 2:2-3).
- The grace of God provides healing of the human body in answer to believing prayer (Isa. 53:4-5; Matt. 8:17).
- In the practice of: Christian baptism by immersion for believers; and, the Lord's Supper (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38; 1Cor. 11:23-26).
- The universe was created by God. He did not make it out of part of Himself. He is separate from it, although He is always present in it (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 33:6; Heb. 11:3).
- The devil, also known as Satan, can exert power and influence over human beings, but only as far as God permits. He was formerly one of God's angels who rebelled against God. He will ultimately be cast into the Lake of Fire and will be condemned there forever (Isa. 14:12-15; Job 1:12; John 16:11; Eph. 6:12; Rev. 12:9; 19:20).

THE IMPORTANCE OF CLEAR DOCTRINE

A “Doctrine” is a *teaching*. It is a statement of belief. Having a clear set of Doctrines, based on the Bible, helps us to piece together the various insights which Scripture intermingles with stories, Apostolic instructions, and poetic writings. For example, our Doctrine of *God As Creator* is based largely on 12 different Biblical passages and many more less obvious references. When we piece these together we can conclude that God is the Creator. Similarly, when take the over all message of the Bible, we can see that Scripture unfolds certain doctrines progressively. This means that some of the grand doctrines of Scripture are only made clear by the New Testament. They are dimly revealed within the Old Testament and fully lit within the New.

What a person believes determines how they act. If you believe that road traffic can not hurt you, you will express your pedestrianism across a busy highway quite differently to most of us who believe that heavy road traffic is actually dangerous!

Similarly, if you believe that Jesus Christ was just a good man, or an angel, or some exalted - but created - being, you will regard his death on the cross as the starting point of salvation, rather than the completion of it.

PERSPICUITY

When the Reformers protested that God’s message could be understood by anyone who read the Bible without the need for the Roman Catholic Church to tell them what it meant, they called this *the Doctrine of Perspicuity*. Perspicuity means *clarity*. That is, they taught that the Bible was sufficiently clear about what it was communicating.

PERSPICACITY

But the Reformers also taught that the Bible could also be equally *misunderstood* and become distorted by the reader’s own sinfulness (referred to as “perspicacity”). Therefore, they reasoned, the Church should have ordained ministers whose primary responsibility is the teaching of the Bible so that it is not distorted by members of a church congregation. This is why Reformed Pastors put the letters: “V.D.M.” (V e r b i D e i M i n i s t e r , *Minister of God’s Word*) after their name.

It is our hope that as we study God's Word together we can enjoy the Perspicuity of Scripture and avoid having our own natural yet sinful propensity to distort it ("perspicacity"). What we are able to conclude about what the Bible teaches on these 12 most essential matters will determine how we process life, our walk with Christ, how we relate to others, and why we think we are alive. We believe.

Dr. Andrew Corbett

Legana, Tasmania

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TIPS FOR BIBLE STUDY GROUP LEADERS

1. Prayerfully ask God to help you to lead your group.
2. Pre-read the study material.
3. The study questions are structured and designed for two reasons: firstly to inform, secondly to mutually inform through discussion. Therefore, consider what supplementary questions you can ask through out the study - avoid “Yes/No” answerable questions - and especially be prepared to ask further questions which relate to the answers the group members give. Your supplementary questions should *draw out* more thought from your group.
4. A part of your role is to interpret the study for your group. If presenting this to teens, you have to ask more comprehension questions like, *What do you think he means by that?* Or, *Why do think he might be asking a question like that?* Occasionally asking, *Does everyone follow what’s being said here?* Or if your ego can handle it, *I’m not quite sure that I get this point, can someone help me to understand it?*
5. Keep the group and its discussion on track. Someone may have a very pressing and valid question, but it can ruin the study meeting for everyone else involved. Sometimes saying, *I can see that this is an important issue for you. Can we talk about it further (or, continue this interesting but unrelated discussion) after the Bible Study meeting?*
6. Develop an ability to hear what group members are saying without saying it. Keep a running list of prayer requests for your group based on some of the answers and discussion they share. Perhaps after the study time, discreetly ask, when appropriate, whether there was anything you could privately pray about for them.
7. You don’t have to have all the answers. In fact, questions are the group leader’s best friend!
8. Guard your group from overly negative discussion about the pastor or the church. These things should be discussed in a more appropriate setting.
9. Your role is not to just to facilitate a Bible Study - your role is to facilitate a Bible Study Group (meeting). This involves helping the group to become a caring community. This is furthered by building trust within the group. One little exercise that can be quite fruitful is called an “ice-breaker”. This is where you start the Bible Study meeting with a *revealing* question rather than a study question. For example, an ice-breaker might be- *What was your first driving experience like?* It’s meant to be a fun, light-hearted way for group members to get to know each other.
10. Let group members know what the rules of the meeting are. Discuss with your group what rules they would like. For example: What time should be “Go home” time? How do we as a group respond to a visitor who raises objections to our material? How should group members be involved in the meeting? Food?