

ακαίο handbook



About This Handbook



Becoming a Christian is a lifelong process, no matter what denomination with which you might affiliate. You never “get there.” And even though the world expects adult Christians to have it all together, to have all the answers, to be established followers of Jesus Christ, we have to admit that’s not always true. But we do possess the means and the curiosity and the commitment to find our way together. And Akaloo is about taking up that journey. It’s about finding out what we need and want to know. It’s about making that commitment with integrity and a sense of balance.

Though designed as the companion to the Akaloo Adult Introduction, to guide adults through a thorough boot camp for discipleship (notice the lesson material in the front section) this handbook also contains dozens of pages of basic information to browse and explore, all germane to any Christian faith-based conversation, no matter how familiar you are with the fundamentals. Use this handbook as a small group, classroom, or forum companion through the lesson material, but use it also to explore beyond that. Use it to crack open new subjects on your own and discover new territory as you travel your ever-expanding faith journey. Use it to follow your nose into areas of Christian doctrine, biblical scholarship, and discipleship that are especially of interest to you. Grow deep as you grow wide, adults! Christianity’s truths, whatever else they might be, ought to be compelling, challenging, and edifying.

AKALOO

Adult Introduction



Writers: Rolf A. Jacobson, Marc Ostlie-Olson, Megan J. Thorvilson, Megan Torgeson, Karoline Lewis, and Hans Wiersma
Editors: Laurie J. Hanson, Gloria E. Bengtson, Michelle L. N. Cook
Cover Design: Spunk Design Machine
Illustrations: Michael Kline

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- The Bible tells us that God frees us for lives that bless the world
- The Bible tells us that God is in relationship with us, and through us to the world
- The Bible tells us that God works through the law to bless the world
- The Bible tells us that God confronts sin, and we need God's confrontation
- The Bible tells us that God gives hope to desperate people
- The Bible tells us that we are invited to speak to God and called to speak about God to others

God—Who Is God?

- God is who Jesus shows us God is
- God in the person of Jesus takes away the sin of the world
- A loving being who loves the world and calls us to love each other as Jesus loves us
- One who, through Jesus, sets us free from fear of death in order to live fully
- One who shows us that, through the Spirit, Jesus is still present with us today

Discipleship—Who Am I?

- I am who God has made me through Jesus—a broken person claimed by Christ
- I am a child of God
- I am called to be a neighbor
- I am called to pray for the world
- I am called to share the good news

Church—Who Are We?

- We are a people, created by the Holy Spirit, to give witness to Jesus Christ
- We are the church together
- We are agents of reconciliation
- We are witnesses to the truth of Christ in every age
- We are simultaneously sinful and holy
- We are sent to be God's mission for the world
- We are both a local and a global people

World—Where Is God Sending Us?

- Out into the world to lead lives that belong to God
- To live out our callings at home
- To live out our callings at work
- To live out our callings in the local community
- To live out our callings in the global community

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

The Bible Tells Us Who God Is and Who We Are

Key Text: Deuteronomy 5:1-3

Key Idea: The Bible is both the Word of God and the words of humans. Like a library the Bible contains many types of books and literature.



fully both things, even though it is just one book.

An example might help. Picture a \$10 bill. Is the \$10 bill money or is it paper and ink? Well, we know that it is both. It is not 50% paper and ink and 50% money. It is 100% paper and ink and 100% money.

The Scriptures are the same way. They are 100% both God's word and human words. (See "Original Languages" and "Copying Process," pages xx-xx, for information on how these words were translated and copied.)

When we read the Bible, we have to keep in mind that the Bible is both God's word and humanity's word. Knowing that it is God's book reminds us that we are hearing from God. God will speak, God will be present, God will meet us. Knowing that it is a human book reminds us that we need interpret and translate the metaphors, cultural customs, and language of ancient human beings—such as the idea that God is king—into the language of our time.

The Bible Is Our Story—It Tells Us Who We Are and Who God Is

The Bible is not just the story of the ancient Israelite people, not just the story of Jesus, not just the story of the first Christians. (See "What the Bible Says about the Bible" and "What People Have Said about the Bible" on pages xx-xx.)

The Bible is our story. It tells us who we are.

In Deuteronomy, Moses spoke these words to the children of the people with whom God had established a relationship at Mount Sinai (called Mount Horeb here):

"The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. Not with our ancestors did the LORD make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today." (5:2-3)



CRAZY TALK

Inspiration is a word used when we talk about the Bible. The church teaches that the Bible is "inspired" by God, meaning that God's Spirit has made the words of the Bible the Word of God.

Moses wasn't saying that God did not establish a relationship with the people's ancestors. Rather, Moses was emphasizing that it was not *only* with the ancestors that God had made a relationship. Rather, God had made a relationship with us, each of us, here, alive, today!

The Bible is not just about what God did but about what God is doing! The Bible is our story. God's promises in the Bible are promises for us. God's love in the Bible is God's love for us. God's warnings and God's judgment are also for us.

Children love to hear stories about themselves—about what they did, what they said, and so on. These stories tell children who they are. The Bible works the same way. The Bible tells us who we are. The Bible is about us. It tells us who we are. It tells us who God is. When you read the Bible, you



meet yourself. When you read the Bible, God meets you.

Not only does the Bible tell you who you are, it tells you who God is. So when you read the Bible, you meet yourself—and God meets you.



DISCUSS

Is there one story about you that captures nicely who you are? Is there one story about God that captures well who God is?



IN YOUR LIFE

How often do you read the Bible? Do you read it in your family? Do you read it on the Web? How about this: Find one new time or way to read the Bible today.

What Does the Bible Say?

Reference Section



What Some Others Have Said about the Bible

"I take the Bible far too seriously to take it literally."

—Karl Barth (1886–1968)

"If we take the Bible over-literally we may miss the truth of the poetry, the stories, the myths. Literalism can all too easily become judgmentalism, and Jesus warned us not to judge, that we might not be judged."

—Madeleine L'Engle,
A Stone for a Pillow (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986), p. 87

"Do not try to make the Bible relevant. Its relevance is axiomatic.... Do not defend God's word, but testify to it.... Trust to the Word. It is a ship loaded to the very limits of her capacity."

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer
in Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), p. 422

"The glorious message of Scripture is that we do not have to be perfect for our Maker to love us."

—Madeleine L'Engle,
A Stone for a Pillow (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986), p. 46

What the Bible Says about the Bible

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws."

—Psalm 119:105-6, NIV

"...devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching."

—1 Timothy 4:13, NIV

The Books of the Bible

The Old Testament

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy
- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- 1 Samuel
- 2 Samuel
- 1 Kings
- 2 Kings
- 1 Chronicles
- 2 Chronicles
- Ezra
- Nehemiah
- Esther
- Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Solomon
- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Lamentations
- Ezekiel
- Daniel
- Hosea
- Joel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi

Some Christian groups also include some or all of the following books in the Old Testament:

- Tobit
- Judith
- Additions to the Book of Esther
- The Wisdom of Solomon
- Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach
- Baruch
- The Letter of Jeremiah
- The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews
- Susanna
- Bel and the Dragon
- 1 Maccabees
- 2 Maccabees
- 1 Esdras
- The Prayer of Manasseh
- Psalm 151
- 3 Maccabees
- 2 Esdras
- 4 Maccabees

The New Testament

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- John
- Acts of the Apostles
- Romans
- 1 Corinthians
- 2 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- 1 Thessalonians
- 2 Thessalonians
- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy
- Titus
- Philemon
- Hebrews
- James
- 1 Peter
- 2 Peter
- 1 John
- 2 John
- 3 John
- Jude
- Revelation