

Introduction to *The Bible Tells Me So: 7 Films on the Bible with Pete Enns*
by Andrew Hill // Discussion guide writer

If you're anything like me, your relationship with the Bible is "complicated." My Evangelical fundamentalist upbringing taught me that the Bible is the inerrant, infallible and literal Word of God. As a teenager, I pictured Paul writing his epistles the way Trinity was programmed to learn how to fly a helicopter in 'The Matrix' in three seconds. Sure, Paul's hand was writing the letters, but the Holy Spirit was moving his hand or whispering in his ear or something like that.

What's interesting to me is that most Christians don't have much of a problem with Jesus' humanity, yet the humanity of the Bible makes many squirm. I get it. I used to be there. Pete Enns and I were having a conversation late last year and I was describing my empathy for people who view the Bible as God's static and final word for all of us. I told him I get it because the Bible is this physical object we can hold in our hands and God is not. It's something we can open up, see the words and all agree that they're there. It's a tangible thing. Pete responded; "What you are describing is an idol."

It hit me hard, but I instantly knew he was right.

As a Protestant, I grew up pointing my finger at Catholics for worshipping the pope. Yet I, and many other Protestants, were busy worshipping an idol of our own- the Bible. Two years ago, I was right in the middle of a deconstruction of my Christian worldview. And it all started with the Bible. Many of the questions that had popped up over the years had returned all at once and it was too overwhelming to ignore:

Who wrote the Bible?

What do we do with all the contradictions?

What about Science? Evolution?

Why is Jesus so graceful and loving in the New Testament when God appears to be a violent and wrathful bully in the Old Testament?

What about LGBTQ+ people?

Are women really second class citizens?

Is the Bible pro-slavery?

Etc. Etc. Etc.

My entire belief system unraveled - largely to do with my hermeneutic and unseen addiction to certainty.

I hit rock bottom and became an agnostic who was flirting heavily with atheism. It was confusing, isolating, lonely and absolutely terrifying. Oh and by the way, I was a pastor at the time, which made things way easier.

A number of friends and acquaintances had recommended Pete's book, *'The Bible Tells Me So,'* over the course of the year, so out of pure desperation I started reading.

Words cannot describe what this book means to me. It literally changed my life. As you read the book yourself and watch the films, my hope is that it will have a similar impact on you as well.

I am honored to be pondering these questions in this discussion guide with you. My prayer is that they stir something in you, get the juices flowing in your head and heart and make for good discussion with those you are in community with. I hope this study is impactful for you. I hope it brings you some comfort and clarity and opens you up to the mystery of God in new and exciting ways.

I hope your trust in God is deepened. I hope the Bible come alive in new ways.

I hope new things in you get stirred up. And I hope the conversations surrounding the book and films with your community are beneficial to you and those around you.

Never stop asking questions. Never stop wrestling with new ideas.

Keep searching and never forget that, although the Bible is incredibly important, its job is to point us towards Jesus, not take Jesus' place in our lives.

A Suggested Practice

You may find it helpful to say this prayer below to open or close a session.

Think about it and ponder it. Contemplate any words or phrases that may stick out to you.

“My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.”

This series includes 7 sessions:

SESSION ONE // I'll Take Door Number Three

SESSION TWO // God Did *What?*!

SESSION THREE // God Likes Stories

SESSION FOUR // Why Doesn't God Make Up His Mind?

SESSION FIVE // Jesus Is Bigger Than The Bible

SESSION SIX // No One Saw This Coming

SESSION SEVEN // The Bible, Just As It Is

Peter Enns is the Abram S. Clemens Professor of Biblical Studies at Eastern University. Pete is the author of many books and commentaries, including *Inspiration and Incarnation*, *The Evolution of Adam*, and *The Bible Tells Me So*. His most recent book is *The Sin of Certainty: Why God Desires Our Trust More Than Our "Correct" Beliefs*. Learn more about Pete here: www.peteenns.com

Andrew Hill is a pastor, theologian, photographer and blogger/podcaster. Learn more about Andrew here: www.andrewpaulhill.wordpress.com.