

GOD BREATHED

What It *Really* Means for the
Bible to Be Divinely Inspired

Study Guide

by ZACK HUNT



Harrisonburg, Virginia

-
- This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

-
- This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

-
- This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

- [illegible]

- [illegible]

-
- This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

THE BULL STAMP

1. From childhood to old age, we all have embarrassing moments in life. What's the most embarrassing moment you've ever experienced? How did you handle it?
2. If your faith has changed or evolved from your youth or even more recent years, what is something you were once convinced of that now makes you embarrassed or regret believing? Who or what made you change your mind?
3. Jesus and Augustine both say that our most important calling is to love God and one another. But what does that look like in practical terms?
4. If you were to follow Augustine's rule of love for reading the Bible, how might that change your understanding of the passages in the Bible that you cherish the most? What about those that you loathe or avoid?
5. Passages that address slavery, women, and homosexuality are listed as examples of texts that seem clear but can't be taken literally if they don't lead to love. What are some other examples of such passages in the Bible?
6. We often talk about the Christian faith, and theological doctrines in particular, in abstract terms, as if faith were completely or at least mostly relegated to the spiritual realm, too often forgetting the practical effect it has not just on our own lives, but on the lives of those around us. What role, if any, should people or personal relationships play in shaping our theology?
7. The truth of the Bible is not found in facts. Nor is the truth of our lives found in basic facts about us. And yet the story of the Bible is one that is filled with truth. What is the truth of your story? Your life?
8. Many people are fleeing the church today, never to return. Others have left or are thinking of leaving but aren't quite ready to give up on their faith, Jesus, or even the Bible. If someone is interested in learning more or rediscovering or recovering the Bible in a spiritually healthy and intellectually honest way, how would you suggest they do so?

[illegible]

CAN THESE BONES LIVE?

1. Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones is one of the strangest scenes in the entire Bible, yet most of us don't have much trouble understanding its meaning. But understanding and application don't always go hand in hand. Are there any valleys of dry bones in your life that seem beyond resurrection?
2. It is no secret that American Christianity is in dire straits and has been for many years. If the church can be resurrected, why should it be? What would it take to accomplish that?
3. Like American Christianity in general, the Bible faces its own set of challenges. Long ago displaced as a leading source of authority in public life, in the private faith of many believers it is also neglected, tucked away on a shelf somewhere and rarely read, let alone seriously studied outside of seminaries and Sunday school. If the Bible can be resurrected, why should it be? What would it take to accomplish that?
4. Over a century ago, Henry Emerson Fosdick asked whether the fundamentalists were going to be allowed to win. Sadly, asserts Zack, they did. Is it too late to stem the tide of fundamentalism? Why or why not?
5. God told Ezekiel to prophesy to the wind, to play an essential role not just in what God is doing but in how God should act in a time of need—an action not unlike prayer. If you had the chance, what would you tell God needs to be done in your life or community? And like Ezekiel, how would you go about making that happen?
6. Breathing new life into a dead and dying world isn't a task reserved for prophets. We have the same godbreathed spirit in our lungs that Ezekiel had in his. What are some creative ways you could go about breathing new life into your local church? Your local community? Your home?
7. In the United States we love to talk about freedom. We have an entire day dedicated to freedom in July. But the freedom to explore, wrestle with, and even challenge Scripture is not a freedom many of us grew up enjoying. Consider yourself set free. Free to ask, free to challenge, free to doubt, free to question, free to celebrate, free to go wherever the Spirit leads you. How can you share that freedom with others?
8. Let us end with another deceptively simple and straightforward question: Now that we've learned the story of the Bible, how it came to be, what it is, what it is not, and what our role is in that story, what will your story be going forward? How will you be remembered? How do you want your story to be told after you are gone?
