

What We Believe

volume 1

Biblical Worldview  
of God and Truth

Who Is  
**GOD?**



*And Can I Really  
Know Him?*

David Webb and John Hay



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# WHERE AM I BUILDING MY LIFE?

HE IS THE ROCK, HIS WORKS ARE PERFECT, AND ALL HIS WAYS ARE JUST. A FAITHFUL GOD WHO DOES NO WRONG, UPRIGHT AND JUST IS HE.

DEUTERONOMY 32:4

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## THE BIG IDEA

Wise builders know that every house must have a **foundation**. A foundation is usually made of concrete or stone and steel, and its purpose is to hold the house up from underneath. Wise builders also know that the foundation must be built on very solid ground or rock. If the house is built on sand, the building will fall when the sand under the foundation washes away in a storm, or when it shifts during an earthquake.

For the same reason, a person's life must also have a strong foundation. Wise people know that "storms" are a part of life, that we all will face our share of difficulties and disappointments. Therefore wise people build the foundation of their lives on God, whom the Bible calls **the Rock**:

*"For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God?" (2 Samuel 22:32)*

*[God] alone is my rock and my salvation. (Psalm 62:2)*

God is like the solid rock, dependable and durable, on which wise people lay the foundations for their houses. You can always count on God and His Word—the Bible—because they always tell us what is true. Whether building houses or building their lives, wise people will follow a good plan, and there is no plan as good as the one found in God's Word.

Yet some people don't follow the best plan for building their houses. More importantly, some people don't follow the best plan for building their *lives*. Some don't know about the instructions God gives us in the Bible for building our lives. Others know about the Bible but choose to ignore it.

Jesus warned us that many people build their lives on sand. This means that they decide what is true in their own minds; they decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong. And when they build their lives without guidance from God, sooner or later their lives start cracking and sliding downward.

Wise builders, however, know that God is the Rock of Truth. That's why they choose to follow the plan God gives us in His Word for building their lives. Instead of building on Sandy Hill, they build in Rocky Canyon.

*"There is no one holy like the LORD . . . there is no Rock like our God."* (1 Samuel 2:2)

## WHAT YOU WILL DO

- » You will explore scriptures that explain why you should build your life on the Rock of God and His Word.
- » You will identify ways people build their lives on "sand" instead of building on the Rock of God and His Word.
- » You will explore scriptures that explain what it means to build a foundation of wisdom for your life.

## THE GREAT ARCHITECT

An **architect** is an individual who designs buildings and plans the details related to a building's construction. The word *architect* comes from the Greek word *arkhitekton*, which means "chief builder." The sixteenth-century French theologian John Calvin called God the "Great Architect" and "the Architect of the Universe."

Architects draw their building plans on a document called a **blueprint**. The men and women on a construction crew then follow this blueprint as they build. These plans include many safety features, such as emergency exits and sprinkler systems, designed to protect the people who will work or live in the building.

God has drawn up a plan for building our lives, and His plan includes many important safety features. His blueprint, if followed faithfully, will keep us from all kinds of danger and even show us the way out of difficult situations. It's no wonder this blueprint for living is the best-selling book of all time!



## UP SANDY HILL, DOWN ROCKY CANYON

“Dad,” Jeremy asked as he gulped down the last of his orange juice, “what time does Ben’s flight arrive?”

“I’m not sure. Check it out on the Internet. He’s flying on Rocky Mountain Air, flight 380, I think,” replied Dad.

“Eleven o’clock, and it’s on time,” Jeremy said, looking at the website. “Let’s get going. I don’t want to be late. I haven’t seen Ben in over a year.”

“You’ve really missed Ben since we moved out West, haven’t you?”

“A whole lot,” replied Jeremy. “But we’re gonna have a great time this week—you know, hiking, biking, a couple of movies, and lots of staying up late.”

“Well, I don’t know about staying up late. I think with all those plans, you’ll be ready for bed much earlier than you expect,” said Dad, laughing.

“I think that’s his plane at the gate,” shouted Jeremy as he and his dad walked into the waiting area of the airport terminal.

Minutes later, Ben came down the escalator and headed for the baggage claim area.

“Hey, Ben,” yelled Jeremy. “We’re over here.”

As they all exchanged big bear hugs, Ben said, “Thanks, Mr. Simmons, for letting me come for a week this summer. I hope I won’t be any trouble.”

“I’m sure you won’t be any trouble,” replied Mr. Simmons. “We’re just glad you could come.”

After lunch, Jeremy asked, “Ben, you want to see my dad’s office? It’s downstairs. He’s an architect. You know, one of those guys who draws plans for houses and all kinds of buildings. Anyway, he works at home and has a really neat set-up in the basement.”

“Sure,” replied Ben curiously.

“Tell Ben what you do, Dad,” said Jeremy.

“Well, I draw plans—blueprints—you know, diagrams and pictures that tell builders exactly how to build houses and other kinds of buildings. Without blueprints, builders can’t build. And without good plans, they sure can’t build good, strong buildings.”

“Hey, Dad,” said Jeremy. “I’m gonna show Ben that house up on Sandy Hill. You remember, the one you drew the plans for.”

“Oh, yes. I remember that house very well,” said Dad, raising his eyebrows. “And I also remember telling the builder not to build up on Sandy Hill. The ground there is not solid, and after a heavy rain, you can count on mudslides from that hillside.”

“Really?” asked Ben.

“Yeah,” said Jeremy. “Come on. I’ll show you. The bikes are in the garage.”

After a slow, hard ride up Sandy Hill, the boys reached the house, or rather, what was left of it.

“Wow! Look at that,” exclaimed Ben. “The foundation and walls are all cracked. It looks like the whole house could slide off the hill at any minute.”

“Yeah. That’s why the signs say ‘Keep Out’ and ‘No Trespassing.’ I think the city’s gonna tear it down soon. My dad warned them, but the builder thought he knew best. I guess he didn’t think my dad was telling him the truth. Anyway, come on, I want to show you another house my dad drew the plans for up in Rocky Canyon. It’s a really neat cabin.”

The two boys coasted down Sandy Hill and took the bike path along Silver Creek. The hills became steeper as the path wound into Rocky Canyon.

“Cool, huh?” Jeremy said. “This is my favorite place to bike. I like the big pine trees and the sound of the creek. And if you keep your eyes open, you might even see some deer, but hopefully not a bear.”

“A bear? Are there bears around here?”

“Yep, but they won’t bother you if you stay on the bike path, near the road, and don’t try to feed them.”

“Don’t worry. I’m right behind you!” Ben said nervously.



“There it is,” said Jeremy, pointing to the two-story cabin beside Silver Creek. “It’s really a neat cabin, and the builder built it just like my dad’s plans showed. There’s rock under the foundation, so it’s gonna be here a long time.”

“I bet the guy who built up on Sandy Hill wishes he’d built in Rocky Canyon instead,” Ben said.

“I think so too,” said Jeremy, looking at his watch. “Hey, we need to start heading home. It’s almost time for supper.”

As the boys pulled their bikes into the garage, Jeremy hollered, “We’re home, Mom! What’s for supper?”

“Hamburgers,” replied Mrs. Simmons. “How was your ride?”

“Great,” exclaimed Ben. “Jeremy showed me the house on Sandy Hill and the



cabin in Rocky Canyon. I can't believe someone would go ahead and build a house on Sandy Hill, especially after Mr. Simmons drew good plans and warned the owner about building there."

"Me neither," said Mr. Simmons, who had just come upstairs from his office. "But there are some foolish people in the world. They just don't think it's important to follow good plans for anything, even for building their own lives."

"What do you mean?" asked Ben.

"Well, just like the guy who wouldn't follow my house plans, some people try to build their lives the way *they* want to," replied Mr. Simmons. "They make their own decisions about what's right and wrong and what they want to do. And they ignore a very wise plan that's available to everyone for building their lives."

"What's that plan?" asked Ben.

"It's the plan for our lives that God gives us in the Bible. The Bible is God's Word, and it gives us every detail we need for building strong lives for God. But just like the man who didn't follow my plans and built on Sandy Hill, some people ignore God's Word. They don't build on the rock of God's truth. Instead, they build their lives on the sand of their own ideas. And that's why, sooner or later, they have real problems in their lives."

"And we're going to have a real problem with supper if you don't start cooking the hamburgers before the coals burn out," teased Mrs. Simmons as she handed her husband the platter of buns and hamburger patties.

"Come on, Ben," Jeremy said. "We can watch while Dad's cooking and make our plans for tomorrow. There's a really cool hiking trail up Bear Creek Mountain I want to show you."

"Did you say Bear Creek Mountain?" asked Ben, a little wide-eyed.

"Oh, that's just its name. People haven't seen bears on that trail for years. Besides, I'm gonna show you some really beautiful parts of God's creation. I promise."

### THINK ABOUT IT

- » How is the cabin in Rocky Canyon different from the house on Sandy Hill? Why does Mr. Simmons expect the Rocky Canyon house to last much longer than the other one?
- » Mr. Simmons is an architect. He designed a very nice house but warned the owner not to build it on Sandy Hill. But the owner of the house could choose whether or not to follow Mr. Simmons's plans. What were the consequences? How is this like our relationship with God?

## THE PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH BUILDERS

Jesus told those who had gathered on the mountainside, “Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

“But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash” (Matthew 7:24–27).

Jesus taught many truths using stories called **parables**. These parables are recorded in the New Testament books we call the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Jesus’ parable of the wise and foolish builders shows us the importance of building our lives on God the Rock and His Word. God and His Word are like the rock under the wise builder’s house. When we know and love and obey God’s Word, our hearts and minds will be strong like a well-constructed home built on a strong foundation. You see, it’s not enough to just *hear* God’s words.

Jesus says we also need to follow His Word and make it the building plan for our lives.

Why? Because life is not always easy. As the weather changes with the seasons, we enjoy winter wonderlands, followed by the freshness of spring, the warmth of the summer sun, and beautiful autumn colors.



Photo: [www.flickr.com/photos/lyng883/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/lyng883/)

## THE GREAT PYRAMID OF GIZA

Rising up on a plateau, ten miles west of present-day Cairo in Egypt, is one of the oldest structures in the world. The Great Pyramid of Giza, also known as the Pyramid of Khufu, was constructed over a twenty-year period around 2550 B.C. Built as a tomb for the Egyptian pharaoh Khufu, the Great Pyramid was constructed from more than two million blocks of limestone weighing over five thousand pounds each. Khufu’s pyramid stood as the tallest man-made structure in the world for more than 3,800 years.

The ancient Greeks hailed this amazing feat of engineering as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Of the seven man-made marvels on the list, five were damaged or destroyed by earthquakes many centuries ago. Another was plundered and burned to the ground. Only the Great Pyramid of Giza lives on today to the delight of millions of visitors every year.

How did the ancient Egyptians build something so huge and enduring in the harsh conditions of the desert? Although the Great Pyramid appears to be built on sand, it is not. The pyramid complex is built on a relatively level area of bedrock, which provides strength and stability.

Where will you build your life—on shifting sands or on the eternal Rock, who is the Lord our God?

But these same seasons sometimes bring with them crippling blizzards, violent thunderstorms, damaging droughts, and devastating hurricanes. Likewise, even the most devoted follower of God will experience the occasional storm in life—fear, temptation, disappointment, failure, and more. But if you have built your life on the Rock, if you have made it a habit to love God and to know and obey His Word, then when the storms of life do hit, you can stand strong.

### MAKE A NOTE OF IT

Keep a notebook, or journal, in which you write about what you have learned. When you see the “Make a Note of It” box, you will be asked to record in your notebook your answers to important questions.

For your first entry, think about what sand feels like in your hands and beneath your feet. Write about the experience of walking on a beach or in a sandbox. Now answer these questions: Why wouldn't you want to build your house on top of sand? What kinds of “storms” might come into your life? What will happen if you do not build your life on the Rock of God and His Word?

### WORDS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- » **Parable:** A short story that contains biblical truths for our lives
- » **Foundation:** The concrete or stone structure that supports a building from beneath
- » **The Rock of Truth:** God and His Word
- » **Wisdom:** Knowing, loving, and obeying God and applying that knowledge to make good decisions

### HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

*“For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God?” (2 Samuel 22:32)*

*He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he. (Deuteronomy 32:4)*

## SEVEN WAYS TO BUILD ON THE ROCK

Wisdom is knowing, loving, and obeying God and applying that knowledge to make good decisions. But what does it look like to know, love, and obey God? Here are seven things you can do to know God better, show your love for Him, and obey His Word.

### STUDY AND LEARN THE BIBLE

You probably have several textbooks in your home. But they're not doing much to help you if they're just lying around gathering dust. You get the most good out of a history book by picking it up and studying it and learning the lessons it teaches from thousands of years of human experience. You get the most good out of a math book by studying it and putting its principles into practice. How much more then you should study the Bible, which is an instruction manual for life written by God Himself!



*All Scripture is given by God and is useful for teaching and for showing people what is wrong in their lives. It is useful for correcting faults and teaching how to live right. Using the Scriptures, the person who serves God will be ready and will have everything he needs to do every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16–17, ICB)*

Make time to read and think about the Word of God every day. When you open the Bible to read it, remember that you are stepping into the very presence of God and that He is now going to speak to you. Every hour you spend studying the Bible is an hour of walking and talking with God.

Commit yourself to memorizing God's Word. Store it away in your mind and heart, and His Word will keep you from sin (Psalm 119:11), protect you from false teaching (2 Timothy 3:13–15), fill your heart with joy (Jeremiah 15:16) and peace (Psalm 85:8), provide you power in prayer (John 15:7), and prepare you to do good (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Throughout this book you will find scripture memory verses in the portions titled "Hide It in Your Heart."

### KNOW TRUTH, THINK TRUTH, AND FOLLOW TRUTH

If you spend much of your time listening to music, reading books, and watching movies or TV programs that tell you pretty lies, soon you're going to start believing those lies. And

*A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education.*

**Theodore Roosevelt**  
1858–1919



then you will begin behaving according to these false beliefs. The Bible warns us against such lies and tells us to instead focus on the truth as revealed in God's Word:

*Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.* (Romans 12:2, NLT)

*Be sure that no one leads you away with false ideas and words that mean nothing. Those ideas come from men. They are the worthless ideas of this world. They are not from Christ.* (Colossians 2:8, ICB)

### CARE FOR YOUR BODY AND USE IT IN THE RIGHT WAY

The apostle Paul wrote, "Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God . . . use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God" (Romans 6:13, NLT). You can glorify God by taking proper care of your body—eat healthy, exercise each day, drink plenty of water, wash thoroughly, and brush properly. Avoid putting anything in your body that can harm it, and never use your body for any purpose that will break either man's law or God's law.

### WORSHIP GOD FAITHFULLY AND JOYFULLY

A popular song sung in many churches declares, "You and I were made to worship." The Bible commands us:

*Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.* (Psalm 100:2)

*Sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.* (Colossians 3:16)



We will look more closely at what worship means later in the book, but you should know that you can worship God anywhere at any time. Whether you're at church, at home, or riding in a car, you can lift your voice and heart to worship Him.

### PRAY TO GOD ALWAYS

The Bible tells us to "pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Elsewhere it says, "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done" (Philippians 4:6). So how do you pray all the time? Pray about everything!

Pray for your friends, pray for your family, pray about anything that might worry or concern you. Pray to thank God for who He is and all He has done for you. Thank Him for your food, your clothes, your home, your family, and your friends. Thank Him for the sunshine and for the rain. Thank Him for the things that bring you joy and for the things that bug you (which He can use to give you patience).

Remember, prayer is a two-way conversation between two people who love each other. James 4:8 says, “Come close to God, and God will come close to you” (NLT). Many people talk to God but fail to listen for Him to talk back. Yet if we are to pray continually, and prayer is a conversation, then God must be speaking to us all the time! That doesn’t mean He will send you an angel with a grand announcement, as He did with Mary, or speak to you from a burning bush, as He did with Moses. The most common ways God speaks to us are through His Word, through the Holy Spirit, through other people, and through our circumstances. We will look at these more closely throughout the series, but for now just remember two things:

1. God will never contradict Himself. If you think something you saw on TV is God’s way of trying to tell you something, compare it to what you find in the Bible. You can always trust what you read in God’s Word.
2. God wants you to know Him. He is not hiding from you. Talk to Him, then keep your eyes and ears and heart open. If you seek Him, you *will* find Him.

## STAND AGAINST SATAN AND RESIST HIM



*Temptation of Christ by Gustave Dore*

Satan, also called the devil, is God’s sworn enemy. He was created as a magnificent angel, “the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty” (Ezekiel 28:12). But he loved his beauty and status and decided he wanted to sit on a throne above that of God (Isaiah 14:13-14). Wick- edness—pride—was found in him, and Satan was cast out of heaven. He became the ruler of this world (John 12:31) and made it his mission to destroy God’s children. He ac- cuses us before God (Revelation 12:10), he tempts us to sin (1 Thessalonians 3:5), and he deceives us (2 Corinthi- ans 4:4). Jesus said of the devil, “There is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44).

Even though he was expelled from heaven, he still seeks to elevate his throne above God’s. Satan will do any- thing and everything in his power to oppose those who follow God, to keep them from doing good. The very name Satan means “adversary, or one who opposes.” And yet, because you are a child of God, you can overcome Satan simply by giving yourself completely to God and stand- ing firm against the plans of the devil: “So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). When you find you are tempted to do wrong, first pray and

ask God to help you. Determine in your mind and heart not to do what the devil wants. Then do as Jesus did and quote scripture to Satan. He will have no choice but to run away. After all, Satan has already been defeated, and his ultimate fate is sealed: He will spend eternity in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10). Until that time, he is determined to take as many people with him as he can.

### PUT GOD FIRST, NOT THINGS OR MONEY

A few years ago there was a man who went hunting in the wilderness. He soon found himself all alone in a quiet, secluded area grown lush with plants and trees and little animals. As he looked around at his pristine surroundings, he wondered if he might be the very first human who ever walked in this place. Then, to his surprise, he stumbled over what appeared to be the remains of a very old car that had been rusted over, sunk into the ground, and hidden by trees and bushes. A family of birds was nesting inside. The hunter realized he wasn't the first to step foot here. His "pristine" area had simply been reclaimed by nature.



Only God knows what this car was doing here. Perhaps it once belonged to a very rich man. This car may have been his pride and joy. However, such things do not last. Our possessions in this life are fleeting; they can be easily stolen or destroyed or ravaged by time and decay. You might think a rich man could simply go out and buy another car, but in this day and age, an entire fortune can be made and lost in a matter of minutes. The Bible warns very specifically against putting our trust in money or possessions. Jesus said:

*“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”* (Matthew 6:19–21)

This does not mean that there's something evil about owning things or earning money. What is important is where your heart is, what your priorities are. How do you spend your time? Where do you spend your money? Do you put your own desires and wants first, or do you put God first? Do you spend your time mastering a video game that will be obsolete in six months, or do you pursue the things of God by studying His Word and by serving others? Are you building your life on the shifting sands of possessions, money, and popularity, or are you building on the Rock?

## MAKE A NOTE OF IT

Title this entry in your notebook “Six Ways to Build the Foundation of Your Life on Sand.” The Old Testament tells us that God’s people often got into trouble when they did what was right in their own eyes. Refusing to obey God and relying on our own understanding are sure ways to build our lives on sand. Here are six things you will want to avoid doing if you want to build on the Rock. Write these in your notebook, then write out each of the Bible verses that warn us against these activities.

1. Deny the Existence of God — Psalm 53:1
2. Refuse to Obey God — Matthew 7:26; John 14:15
3. Trust in Myself Instead of God — Proverbs 28:26
4. Follow False Ideas — Colossians 2:8
5. Refuse to Thank God and Glorify Him— Romans 1:21
6. Put Money and Things Before God — 1 Timothy 6:9



## **A PRAYER**

Dear God, thank you for being the Rock on whom I can build my life. Help me to build my life according to your blueprints, and help me to ignore what the world says about how I should live. Help me to love your Word and to learn it well. Help me to know the truth and follow the truth. Help me to keep my body clean and pure. Help me to remember to pray about all things and to worship you daily. Help me to resist the devil. And help me to put you first at all times and not put my trust in money or things. I ask these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.

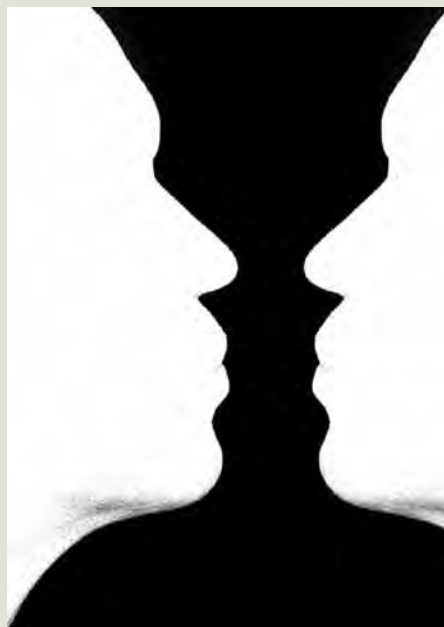
## LOOKING AT THE WORLD

People often don't see or understand things the same way others do. Even when two people are looking at exactly the same thing, each one may see it differently. For example, look at Picture 1. What is the *first* thing you see?



Picture 1

Did you see a young girl first? Or did you see an old lady first? Can you now see both? What had to happen before you could see both a young girl and an old lady? Repeat this activity by looking at Picture 2:



Picture 2

Did you see a goblet first? Or did you see two faces? As you can see from this activity, our eyes often play tricks on us. Pictures like the ones above are called *optical illusions*. We can see them in more than one way, depending on how our eyes focus on the picture. In the case of optical illusions, the object one person sees is just as right as the object another person sees.

### A WORLD OF A DIFFERENT COLOR

Optical illusions are fun to look at. Even though some see one thing and others see something else, everyone can agree to disagree since what each person sees is right. However, truth is not an optical illusion. Yet many people look at the world in many different ways, and in these cases, how a person sees and describes something may be right, or it may be completely wrong.



Imagine, for example, people who always wear only green, yellow, or pink sunglasses. Do they see the world the same way you see it? If not, how do they describe it? Now think about people who wear clear eyeglasses or who have perfect vision and don't wear glasses at all. Do they see the world the same way you see it? If not, how do they describe it? Whose description of the real world is correct—the people wearing

colored glasses or the people wearing clear glasses or no glasses? Why?

Even though the people wearing colored glasses are looking at the same world as the people wearing clear glasses or no glasses, they don't see the world with all of its true colors. They see the world and everything in it as green, yellow, or pink. Not until they take off their colored glasses will they see the truth about the real world—the truth that the world is filled with many beautiful colors.



## MAKING SENSE OF LIFE AND THE WORLD

Have you ever had an eye exam? Were you able to read all the letters on the eye chart, or were some blurry or out of focus? Did your eye exam reveal that you needed glasses? If so, do your glasses now bring everything you see into focus? Until people who need glasses wear them, they don't realize they're seeing the world out of focus. Then after they get their first pair, they are likely to exclaim, "Wow! I didn't know everything in the world was so sharp and clear." They're now seeing the beautiful world as God created it.



Most people see the physical world correctly. Without colored glasses and with good vision, they see and distinguish clearly between people and horses, mountains and prairies, trees and flowers, and rivers and lakes, and they can accurately describe the colors of a rainbow. However, making sense of life and the world we live in involves much more than being able to see and describe everything in the physical world correctly. Making sense of life and the world requires finding answers to questions much more difficult and important than "What color is a pine tree, and what does one look like?" To make sense of life and the world, people want and need to know answers to many questions like the ones below. As you read each question, think about what you believe is the true answer.

### Questions About God

- » Does God exist?
- » If God exists, what is He like?
- » Can I have a relationship with God?
- » Do I have a responsibility to God?

### Questions About the Universe

- » Where did the universe come from?
- » Has the universe always existed?
- » Will the universe always exist?
- » Where did our planet Earth come from?
- » Why does the universe experience natural disasters?

**Questions About People**

- » Where did we come from?
- » Why are we here?
- » Why do we have to die?
- » What happens to us after we die?
- » What is our responsibility and relationship to the earth?

**Questions About Truth**

- » Is there such a thing as truth?
- » How can I know if something is true or not?

**Questions About Right and Wrong**

- » Are there such things as right and wrong?
- » What is right? What is wrong?
- » Why is there so much evil in the world?
- » Are there solutions to all the problems in the world?

**DIFFERENT WAYS OF VIEWING THE WORLD**

Imagine that people's beliefs about the correct answers to questions about life and the world are like a pair of glasses. We could call these glasses "belief glasses." People look at their lives and the world through their belief glasses, trying to bring everything into focus to make sense of it. For example, suppose some people's belief glasses include the idea that God does not exist. How do you think they would answer the question *Where did the universe come from?* How might they answer the questions *Where did I come from?* and *Why am I here?* How would your answers to these questions differ from theirs?

All people wear a pair of "belief glasses" to help them make sense of their lives and the world. If their beliefs are true, then the glasses they wear are like clear ones that provide a focused or true view of life and the world. However, if their beliefs are not true, or only partly true, the glasses they wear are like colored or broken ones. Such belief glasses give a person a blurry or untrue view of life and the world.

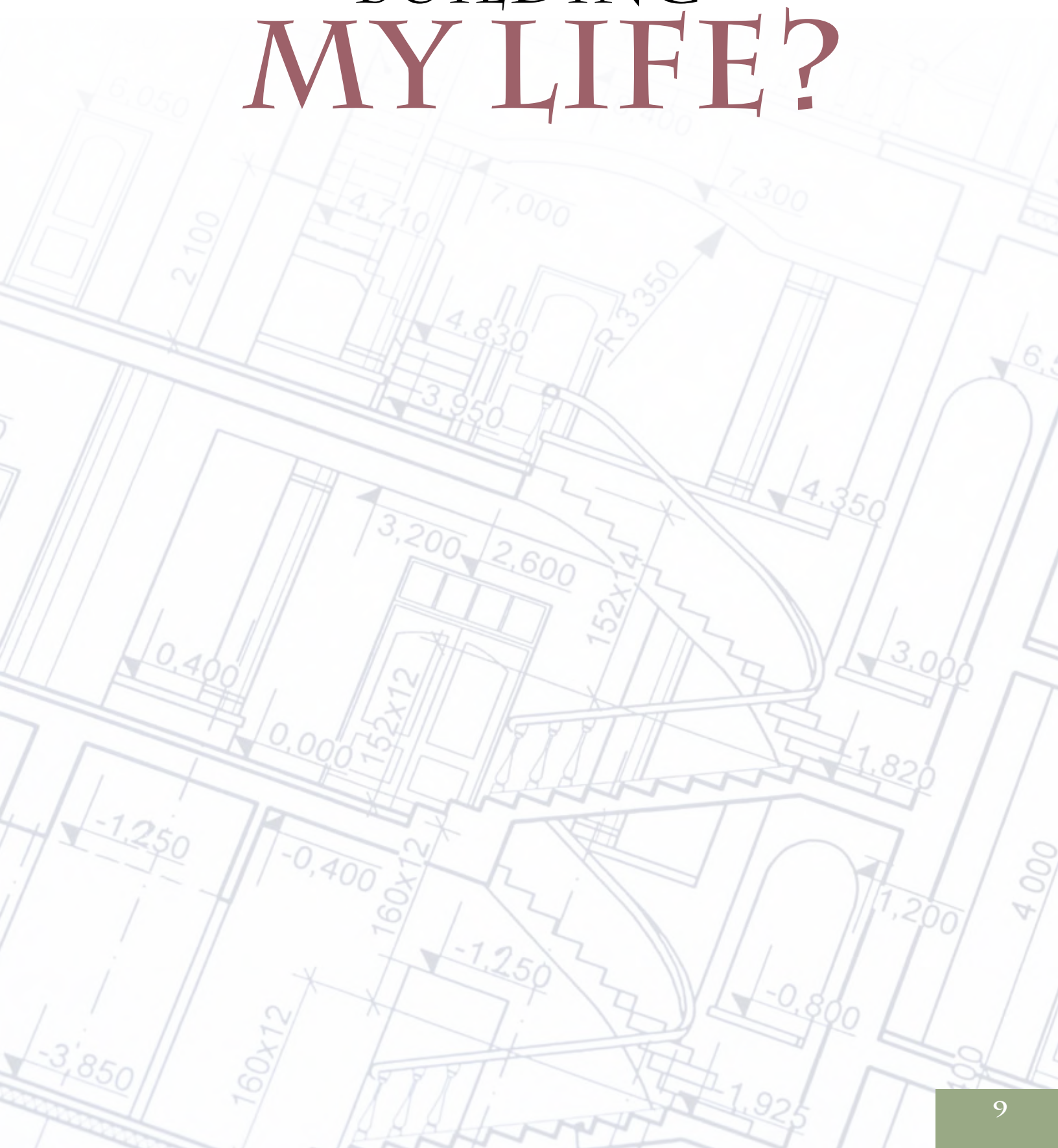
What kind of belief glasses are you wearing? Are your lenses perfectly clear? Or are you wearing colored glasses or even broken ones? Are the beliefs you hold about life and the world true? Do you see the world in focus as it truly is?

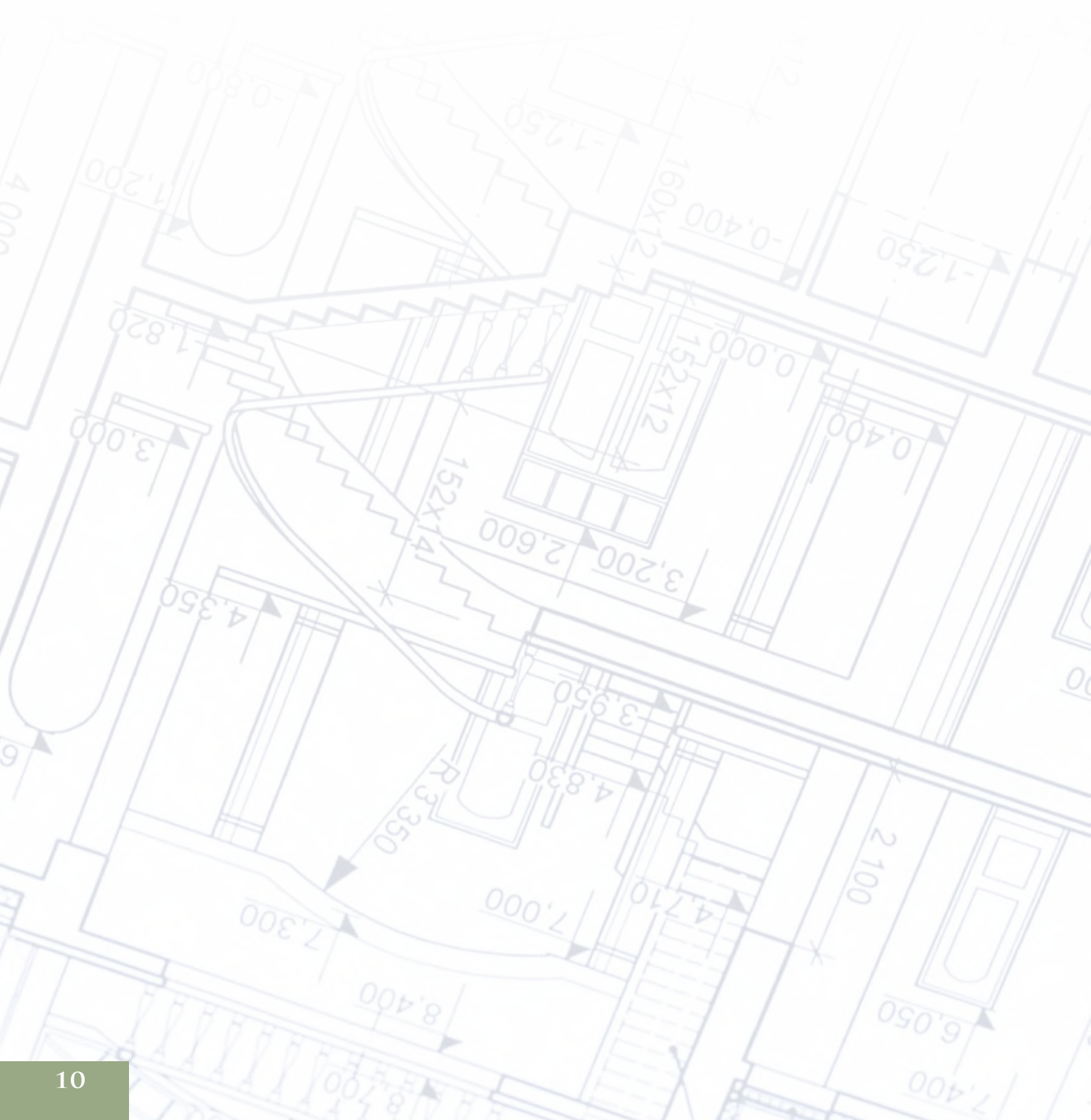


### EXPLORING THE WORLD OF BELIEFS

Throughout this book you will explore some of the beliefs that people hold about life and the world and particularly about God. You will study how people's beliefs and views differ. And you will find out why different beliefs lead people to behave and make choices about life in different ways. Most importantly, you will compare what people believe is true about life and the world with what God says is true. For it is God's truth as He reveals it to us in His Word, the Bible, that provides us with the perfect pair of belief glasses for rightly viewing, understanding, and living in the world.

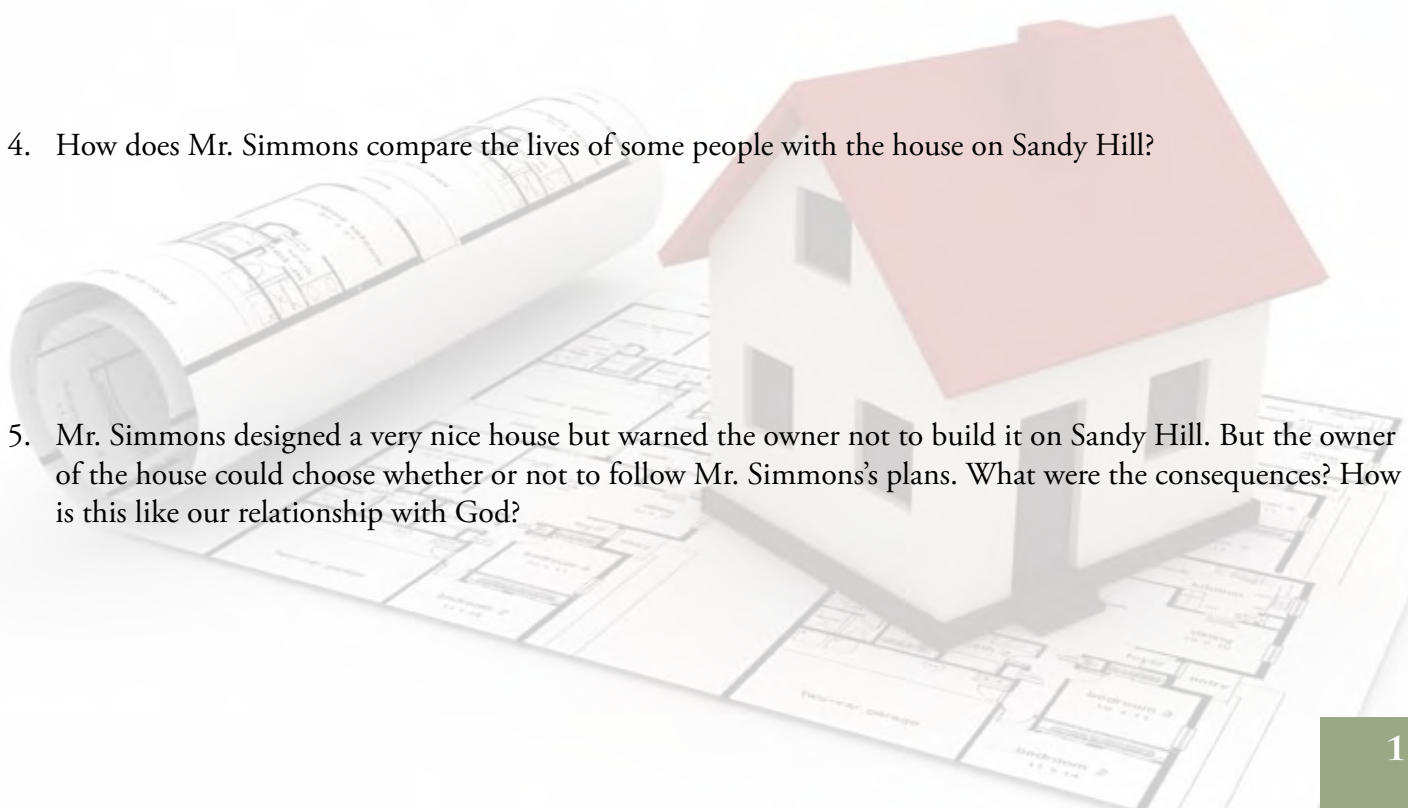
# WHERE AM I BUILDING MY LIFE?





# THINK ABOUT IT UP SANDY HILL, DOWN ROCKY CANYON

1. What is Mr. Simmons's occupation? What does an architect do?
2. What is wrong with the house on Sandy Hill? How is the cabin in Rocky Canyon different from the house on Sandy Hill?
3. Why does Mr. Simmons expect the Rocky Canyon house to last much longer than the other one?
4. How does Mr. Simmons compare the lives of some people with the house on Sandy Hill?
5. Mr. Simmons designed a very nice house but warned the owner not to build it on Sandy Hill. But the owner of the house could choose whether or not to follow Mr. Simmons's plans. What were the consequences? How is this like our relationship with God?



# MAKE A NOTE OF IT SHIFTING SAND

Think about what sand feels like in your hands and beneath your feet. Write about or draw a picture of the experience of walking on a beach or in a sandbox. Then answer these questions: Why wouldn't you want to build your house on top of sand? What kinds of "storms" might come into your life? What will happen if you do not build your life on the Rock that is God and His Word?

## WORDS TO KNOW

PARABLE

FOUNDATION

ROCK OF TRUTH

WISDOM

# WHERE AM I BUILDING MY LIFE?

B C R I P G J W S T O R M S E Z J J N N  
 C P H H B E L I E F G L A S S E S O E F  
 C T R E S I S T T H E D E V I L I V P O  
 B I P R O C K O F T R U T H I S A I N U  
 Y A R B H S U O Z W H O O G U E D L G N  
 U D I I B N K L T Q D Z Z L H Y M N T D  
 X V O B L P A R A B L E L N Z B I C Q A  
 W E R L U Q D L S Y X I I H J D E J R T  
 X R I E C N H D H X L E D I L T F W V I  
 T S T L A K I G Z A R B B I I R V O R O  
 U A I S O M D Y C U G J U H E V E R E N  
 J R E Z A Z H I S J V B C Y W H U S W Q  
 C Y S R G S T A G G E R A J M T K H Q V  
 W J Y O I P E C Z Y A R M E M O R I Z E  
 J P H N O R K G O H P W I S D O M P D R  
 H E B L T Z L S C R I P T U R E T D C F

foundation

Rock of Truth

storms

Bible

building

sand

architect

wisdom

parable

pyramids

Scripture

memorize

worship

prayer

adversary

resist the devil

priorities

treasure in heaven

optical illusion

belief glasses





# MINI BOOK 7 WAYS TO BUILD ON THE ROCK

Find the instructions on page 221.  
Attach your finished mini book here.



# MAKE A NOTE OF IT 6 WAYS TO BUILD YOUR FOUNDATION ON SAND

The Old Testament tells us that God's people often got into trouble when they did what was right in their own eyes. Refusing to obey God and relying on our own understanding are sure ways to build our lives on sand. Follow the instructions on page 26 of *Who Is God?* to complete this activity.



# MY PRAYER



# PRAISE REPORT



# I SPY!



# THE FISH AND THE BOWL

Here's an optical illusion that's fun and easy to create! Find your materials and instructions on page 225.

If you wish, you may tape your project here.





## DO YOU REMEMBER?

1. If you build your life by hearing God's Word and obeying it, what will happen to you when "storms" come into your life?
2. Where should you turn for information to help you know whether the things you read and hear are true or untrue?
3. The Bible tells us to "pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). With all that goes on in your life, how can you pray continually?
4. What is temptation? What's the best way to resist temptation?

5. How can you keep “things” from becoming more important to you than God?

6. In order to see and understand life and the world correctly, what kind of “belief glasses” do you need?



## FIND OUT MORE

### BOOKS

Building on the Rock series by Joel R. Beeke & Diana Kleyn

*The House That Went Ker-Splat!: The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders* by Bill Myers (ages 4–8)

*Arches to Zigzags: An Architecture ABC* (ages 4–8)

*What Happens When I Talk to God?* by Stormie Omartian (ages 4–8)

*Building on Nature: The Life of Antoni Gaudí*, written by Rachel Rodríguez and illustrated by Julie Paschkis (ages 5–8)

*Amazing Optical Illusions*, IllusionWorks (ages 4–12)

*Pyramid* by David Macaulay (ages 9–12)

*The Power of a Praying Kid* by Stormie Omartian (ages 9–12)

*The Power of a Praying Teen* by Stormie Omartian (ages 12 and up)

*The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle (ages 13 and up)

### SONGS

“Are You Building on the Rock?” by Barney E. Warren

“The Solid Rock” by Edward Mote and William B. Bradbury

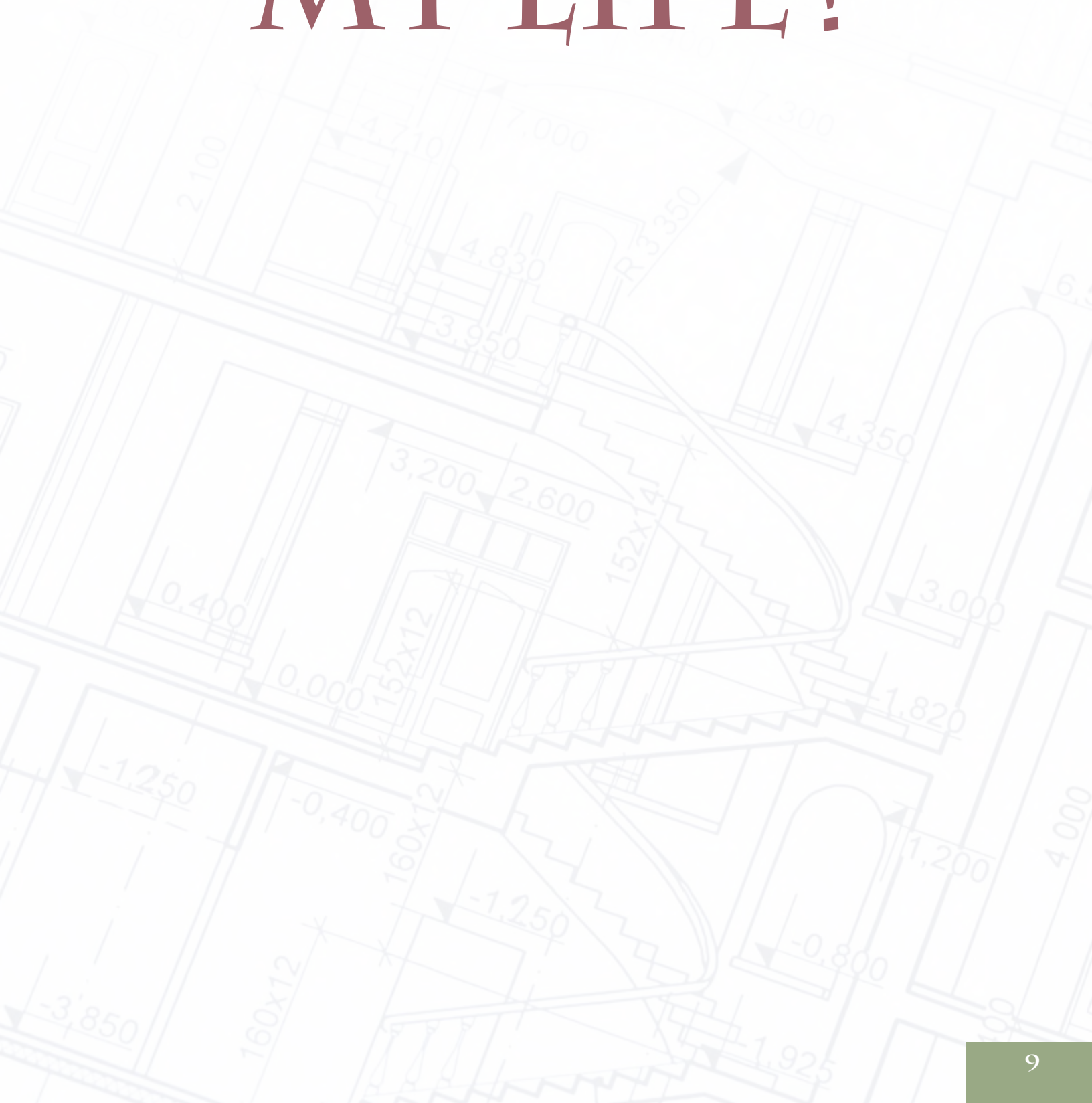
“Rock of Ages” by Augustus Toplady and Thomas Hastings

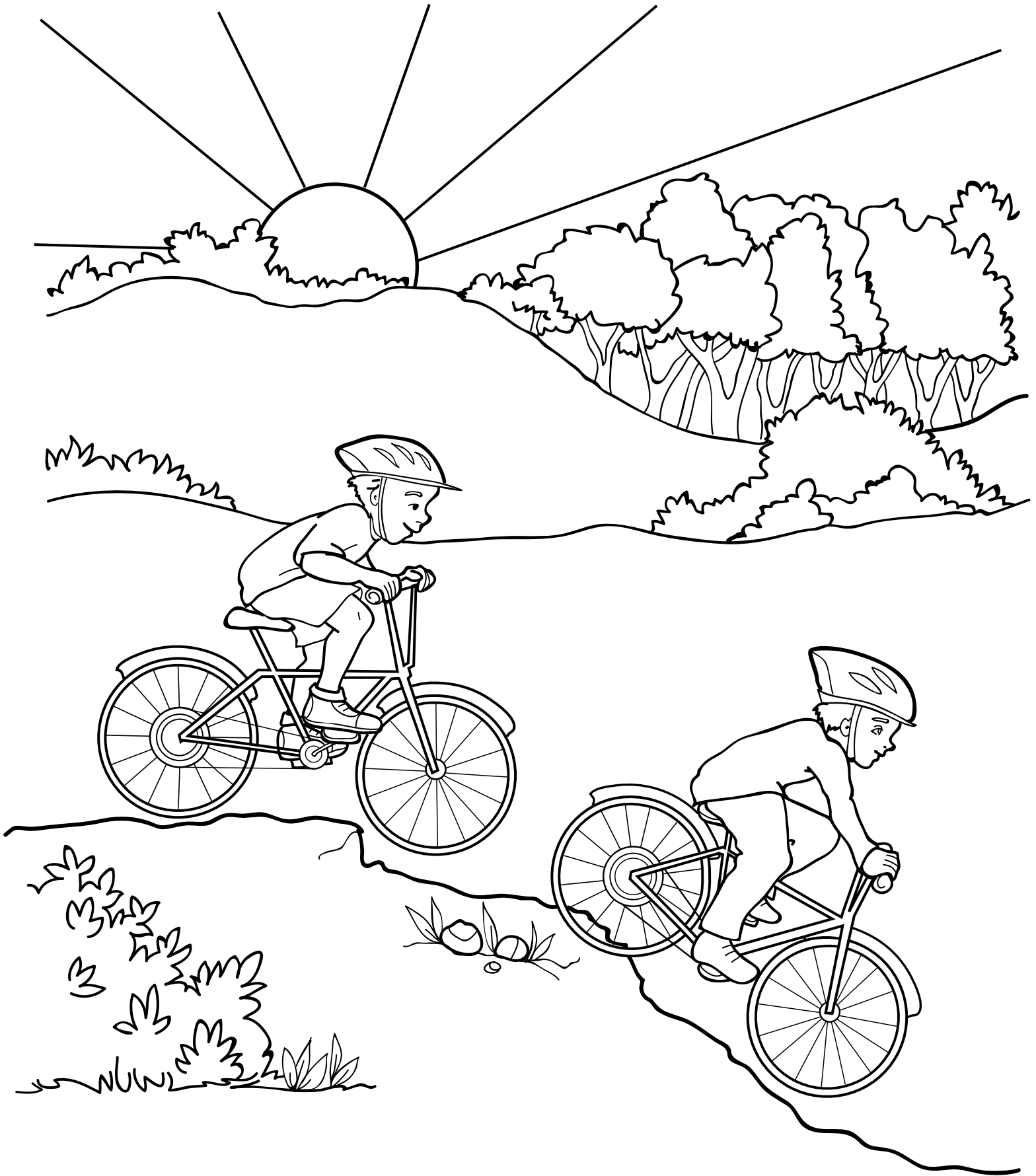
### WEBSITE

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Optical Illusion Page



# WHERE AM I BUILDING MY LIFE?





Up Sandy Hill, Down Rocky Canyon

## MAKE A NOTE OF IT SHIFTING SAND

Think about what sand feels like in your hands and beneath your feet. Now draw a picture of the experience of walking on a beach or in a sandbox. Why wouldn't you want to build your house on top of sand? What kinds of "storms" might come into your life? What will happen if you do not build your life on the Rock that is God and His Word?

## WORDS TO KNOW

Jesus told a \_\_\_\_\_ about two men. One built his house on the sand.

The other man built the \_\_\_\_\_ of his house on the rock.

When the rains and floods came and the winds beat against the shore, the house that was built on sand fell down with a mighty crash. But the house that was built on rock stood strong.

When I build my life on God's Word, it's like building my house on the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. When I know, love, and obey God, I show  
\_\_\_\_\_.

foundation

parable

Rock of Truth

wisdom



# HIDE IT IN MY HEART

Write your favorite translation of the verse below and memorize it.

“Who is the Rock except our God?”

2 SAMUEL 22:32

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline, repeated ten times.



# WHERE AM I BUILDING?

R M Y S B K Y T U M T H L K  
 G M I Q V Q Y Z S T O R M S  
 C W O R S H I P N F Q G I Q  
 P P L E D J F H J H C W P D  
 Y A H W J C O E A C Q I R P  
 L Q D K Y K U O X E C S A J  
 J F K F H I N R L X G D Y G  
 Z B D D B U D F E I S O E O  
 E N J S I Y A F S L V M R W  
 F J K Y B R T O X T S G J F  
 C Z J Q L O I Z Z N A S J Y  
 F I U U E C O W B P N W Q H  
 L Z H E J K N K Z M D T J B  
 E A P H G I W N X Z M N K Y

FOUNDATION

BIBLE

SAND

WORSHIP

STORMS

ROCK

WISDOM

PRAYER

# MINI BOOK 7 WAYS TO BUILD ON THE ROCK

Find the instructions on page 153.  
Attach your finished mini book here.





*He is the Rock, his works are perfect.*  
Deuteronomy 32:4

# HIDE IT IN MY HEART

Write your favorite translation of the verse below and memorize it.

“He is the Rock, his works are perfect.”

DEUTERONOMY 32:4

Handwriting practice area with multiple sets of lines (solid top and bottom lines, dashed middle line) for writing the verse.

# MY PRAYER



# PRAISE REPORT



# I SPY!





How do YOU see the world?



## FIND OUT MORE

### BOOKS

Building on the Rock series by Joel R. Beeke & Diana Kleyn

*The House That Went Ker-Splat!: The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders* by Bill Myers

*Arches to Zigzags: An Architecture ABC*

*What Happens When I Talk to God?* by Stormie Omartian

*Building on Nature: The Life of Antoni Gaudí*, written by Rachel Rodríguez and illustrated by Julie Paschkis

*Amazing Optical Illusions*, Illusion Works

### SONGS

“You Can Tell the Lord That You Love Him” by Colin Buchanan

“Are You Building on the Rock?” by Barney E. Warren

“The Solid Rock” by Edward Mote and William B. Bradbury

“Rock of Ages” by Augustus Toplady and Thomas Hastings

### VIDEO

*The Little House That Stood*, Veggie Tales



# LISTEN TO AUDIO SAMPLE



# WHAT WE BELIEVE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Why should I teach a biblical worldview to my children?

Your children are bombarded daily with competing messages. Every song, movie, book, TV show, blog, and game is full of ideas—ideas about God, people, truth, beauty, and right and wrong. Not all of these ideas are true. Many are deceptive and even destructive. A biblical worldview will help your children learn to discern the truth by distinguishing what God says in His Word from the lies and half-truths coming at them from books, music, TV, movies, the Internet, their peers, etc.

The What We Believe series is designed to help kids navigate a world of conflicting messages and ideas and discern the truth by using God’s Word, the Bible, as a perfect lens through which to view the world around them. As your children come to understand *what* they believe as Christians and *why* they believe it, they can begin to build every part of their lives on an unshakable foundation of truth, the immovable Rock that is God and His Word.

## Can I really teach biblical worldview at home?

Teaching a biblical worldview is not nearly as difficult as it sounds. To help explain what a worldview is, the authors use the term “belief glasses.” Every person is trying to make sense of the world around us, even from an early age. To help us bring the world and its ideas into focus, each of us wears a pair of belief glasses. If the beliefs we hold are true, then the glasses we’re wearing are like clear prescription lenses that provide us with a true picture of life and its meaning.

However, if the beliefs we hold are *not* true, or only *partly* true, then the glasses we wear are more like colored lenses or even broken lenses. These kinds of belief glasses give us a false, distorted view of life and the world around us.

The What We Believe series makes it easy to equip your kids with belief glasses that will help them to clearly see the truth and the world as it really is.

## What is covered in the What We Believe series?

The series includes four volumes. Volume one is called *Who Is God?* and focuses on the characteristics of God, His love, His provision, His creation, the destructiveness of sin, and God’s plan for our salvation. Volume two is *Who Am I?* and is all about what it means to be made in the image of Almighty God and how we are called to become more like Christ every day. Volume three is *Who Is My Neighbor?* and it focuses on how every believer is to follow Jesus’ example by serving others and loving God’s family, the church. The fourth and final volume is *What on Earth Can I Do?* and is about what your children can accomplish for God’s glory as good and faithful stewards of their time, talents, and possessions.

## How long will it take for us to work through each book?

Anywhere from four to eight months. A detailed suggested lesson plan is provided in the companion notebooking journals. Lessons are formatted

to allow students to learn at their own pace. You can easily customize the amount of time you spend on each lesson, depending on your children’s ages and attention span. Most of the lessons can be covered in two- or three-week segments.

## Can I use the books with more than one child at a time?

Yes. The What We Believe series is designed for use with ages 6 to 14. Engaging stories, activities, thoughtful notebooking assignments, and Bible interaction make this multi-grade curriculum fun and easy to use with the whole family. The series is written at a fifth- to sixth- grade reading level, so while older students can read and do the activities on their own, younger children will need an older sibling or parent to read along with them.

## How should we use the notebooking journals?

Encourage your children to personalize and capture what they’re learning in a keepsake they can revisit as they grow in Christ. Each journal includes lesson plans, colorful graphics, imaginative writing and drawing prompts, crossword puzzles, word searches, activities, and full-color mini books. Children should make this book their very own by filling it with their words and illustrations. Each journal includes an “About the Author” page with space for your child to place his or her picture and write a brief autobiography. At the end of each journal are blank pages for “endorsements” where friends and family can write about what they’ve seen God doing in the child’s life during the course of study.

## What is the age range for the junior notebooking journals?

The junior notebooking journals are designed to be used by ages 6–9 and students with limited writing skills. We recommend the original notebooking journals for ages 9 and up. The junior notebooking journals offer age-appropriate activities including fun drawing assignments, easier crossword puzzles, no-stress word searches, and fill-in-the-blank vocabulary exercises. Scripture copy work pages come with larger spaces and dotted guidelines for kids who are still developing their fine motor skills. We’ve also included some of the best pages from our What We Believe coloring books.

## How can I know which notebooking journal is right for my kids?

The real key is where your children are in terms of their ability to express themselves in writing. The original notebooking journals can certainly help children develop this skill. But if a nine-year-old child is not yet comfortable writing out his thoughts in complete sentences and short paragraphs, the junior notebooking journal is probably the better choice.

Download and compare samples from both the notebooking journals and junior notebooking journals to decide which version is right for your kids. Check these samples out by visiting the Apologia store at [www.Apologia.com](http://www.Apologia.com).

Are the junior notebooking journals different enough so that if we do the series a second time, my children can use the regular notebooking journal and get something new out of the study?

Yes, this is a great idea! We've already heard from some moms who have finished the series and are starting it over. Their kids are now four years older, and they'll get something new out of the lessons if only because of the increased life experience they bring to the study. And graduating to the "older" notebooking journals will add a whole new level of life application!

### Why are there What We Believe coloring books?

We offer a 64-page companion coloring book for each of the four volumes for younger family members and students who learn best while their hands are busy. Lovingly illustrated by award-winning artist Alice Ratterree, each drawing depicts a story or teaching from the textbook to reinforce important lessons. A free guide to using the coloring book is provided with your purchase of the main textbook.

### Do these books require heavy preparation time to teach?

Not at all! Each volume in the What We Believe series is written directly to the student in a conversational tone designed to engage children and help them develop a personal relationship with God. Of course, we suggest you read the text for yourself in order to discuss it with your child, and a few activities in the book may require your participation, depending on your children's age. Otherwise, your preparation time should be minimal.

### Do I need a teacher's manual to teach this course?

No. As with all Apologia curriculum, these textbooks are designed to stand on their own, without the need for additional teaching materials. However, for your convenience, free downloadable teacher helps for each and every lesson are included with your purchase. A password is provided in the introduction to each book. We believe you will find the What We Believe series easy to use and an important addition to your home school or co-op. However, should you have any questions during the course, contact us at [biblicalworldview@apologia.com](mailto:biblicalworldview@apologia.com). We'll be happy to help!

### What is included in the online teacher helps?

The free online teacher helps are downloadable files designed to enhance your teaching and, subsequently, your child's learning experience. Please keep in mind that every element of the teacher helps is optional. These pages are provided to help you, not to overwhelm you. The helps include lesson overviews, key themes, lesson objectives, suggested activities, child-directed discussion questions for each topic covered in the lesson, as well as a recommended reading list for deeper study of the themes, people, and places discussed in the text.

### Does this course include a Bible survey component?

No. A survey course works through one or more books of the Bible, often beginning with Genesis and studying the Scriptures in chronological or book order. Although the teaching in the What We Believe series requires the student to explore the Scriptures in detail, a Bible survey component is not included.

### Can't a course in biblical worldview wait until high school?

Research by the Barna Group has shown that a person's lifelong behaviors and beliefs are largely developed during childhood and early adolescence. In the overwhelming majority of adults, their moral and spiritual foundations are already in place by age *nine*. It's during this early stage of life

that most of us develop our long-term perspectives on truth, integrity, and ethics. Thus, a child's spiritual identity is pretty well set by the age of 14.

David Kinnaman of the Barna Group says the reason so many young adults leave the church is in part because their experience of Christianity is shallow, and so their faith is easily shaken when exposed to the world outside the home. He says that one of the primary reasons that churches' ministry to children and teens so often fails to produce a lasting faith is because our kids are not being taught to *think* about what they believe.

In order to encourage our children to walk with the Lord for a lifetime, we must intentionally *disciple* them, and discipleship means helping them to think through what they believe and why. If our children's lifelong values, beliefs, and attitudes will largely be set in place by the time they're 14, then we must equip them *now* to stand firm in their faith when the inevitable winds of change and storms of life hit them during the teen years and into young adulthood.

If we disciple our children when they're young, when their worldviews are still being shaped, then we will set them on a rock that cannot easily be moved. The What We Believe series will not only help you provide your children with a clear foundation in the essential beliefs of the Christian faith, but it will also help them stand firm in the truth as revealed in Scripture.

### Can my high school student earn credit for this course?

We do not recommend that you award high school credit for this series. For high school students, we suggest you check out the online worldview courses offered through Apologia Academy at [www.apologiaacademy.com](http://www.apologiaacademy.com).

### Can I use these books in a small group or classroom setting?

Yes. The What We Believe series have been successfully used in family-oriented small groups, homeschool co-op classes, intergenerational Sunday schools, and even adult discipleship classes.

### What Bible translation does the curriculum use?

The What We Believe series does not intentionally promote the use of one Bible translation over another. Bible verses in each lesson are taken primarily from the NIV, or New International Version, although a number of translations are employed. For the sake of clarity, the authors have also made extensive use of the New Century Version (NCV) and the New Living Translation (NLT), as these versions use vocabulary more accessible to younger students. We recommend, however, that your student use your family's preferred translation for the purpose of memorizing Scripture.

### What is the denominational perspective of the curriculum?

The authors of this series are committed to leading students into biblical truth, not to conform to a particular religious tradition. The entire What We Believe series is intentionally nondenominational in content. The authors of the curriculum come from two different denominational backgrounds, and they have purposely omitted from the course points of doctrinal difference that may divide and separate Christians in order to focus on the larger issues that historically define our faith. Whatever your family's denominational preference, you can easily expand on the books' lessons to cover what your church teaches about such topics as water baptism or spiritual gifts.

### What is the "integrated learning" component?

Throughout each text you will find interesting articles that take an age-appropriate approach to topics related to the main text. These articles are de-

signed to help your children pursue the book's ideas and concepts across the fields of art, math, science, history and more. The beauty of this interdisciplinary approach is that it gives kids a broader understanding of the main subject while showing that a biblical worldview applies to all of life.

### What is the difference between this course and "Building on the Rock"?

The What We Believe series is published in partnership with Summit Ministry and is based in part on Summit's Building on the Rock (BOTR) curriculum. However, several important elements distinguish the What We Believe series from the original:

The original BOTR curriculum was designed for use in Christian school classrooms, whereas the What We Believe series has been designed specifically for use by families and homeschoolers.

The BOTR curriculum is designed to be taught over a six-year period, whereas the What We Believe series can easily be completed in two to four years.

The BOTR curriculum is published for use in Christian schools and can be cost-prohibitive for use in the home. The What We Believe series was designed to be an affordable alternative for families and homeschoolers.

The BOTR curriculum is designed to teach biblical worldview for the first half of the school year, followed by a Bible survey component in the second semester. For the What We Believe series we have removed the Bible survey component in order to make the series more concise and affordable.

The BOTR curriculum is teacher-directed, whereas the What We Believe series is student-directed. The What We Believe books are written to the student in a conversational style to engage the student and personalize the teaching.

### What is the House of Truth?

The House of Truth is a memory aid, a visual model constructed one step at a time throughout the What We Believe series. As new concepts are learned, the foundations, walls, and roof of the house are constructed, giving the child a concrete way of thinking about his or her life within the kingdom of God. In the first book, children complete the foundation and the first wall of the house. A new wall is added in the second, third, and fourth volumes of the series. The House of Truth can be used figuratively, drawn in the student's notebook, or built with items you have on hand, such as LEGO blocks.

### What have you heard from parents about their experiences using the books with their children?

Parents love the What We Believe series! Here are just a few exciting comments from their e-mails and blogs:

"My daughter has worked through the first two books in the series, and she has moved to a new level in her personal walk with Jesus. I cannot imagine anything blessing me more as a homeschool mom than that."

"I can't even describe how much I love sitting down with my kids and reading through this material together. This book is truly a blessing."

"Watching what is happening within my 11-year-old's heart as we work through these books is a sight to behold. I have tremendous hope for his future as a devoted, compassionate man of God."

"My daughter quickly saw that no matter how young or old you are, we all matter and we all can make a difference for Jesus. I can already see the fire burning in her little heart getting stronger and stronger, and I am so excited to see what the Lord has in store for her life."

"There have been moments where the written word spoke to my children's hearts in a way that I would not have been able to."

"Truly, as I read these stories and affirmations of God's purpose for the lives of each person on the earth, including each of my precious children—and myself—it soaked into my soul a little bit more, too."



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