

Focus on the Story

I'm always amazed at how easily and with how much excitement my daughters can tell me the plot, characters and key events of the films they watch. A detailed description of a blockbuster film can be delivered in just a few minutes over dinner. My point is this: how easily can many of us who claim to love the Bible do the same with the world's bestseller? Why is it that the intricate plot of *Star Wars* or *The Lord of the Rings* is relatively straightforward, but the Bible remains a challenge? It would seem that even the most biblically literate might know something of Genesis, the Gospels and maybe Revelation, but the rest remains a bit of a mystery.

A couple of years ago, my eldest daughter persuaded me to take her to see *Avengers: Endgame*, the concluding film in the popular Marvel series. She had watched many of the previous films, but this was my first one! After a quick crash course on the plot, characters and events, off we went to the cinema. I have to say it was a spectacular movie – three hours of special effects and dramatic scenes kept me enthralled – but I confess it was hard to follow. At times, the audience got incredibly excited, especially towards the end, but without knowing the backstory, or having experienced any of the other key films, it was hard to enter their experience. Whether it's *Star Wars*, *Lord of the Rings* or *Avengers*, knowing the whole story is key.

When it comes to the Bible, we have created a number of resources that help people to understand, experience and love the whole story. *The Bible Course* has been incredibly popular, not only because of the storyline visual that helps people to 'see' how the Bible comes together, but because it reveals how all the main events, characters and books form a unique story that leads us to Jesus. *The Bible Course* helps bring clarity, whether you are new or a seasoned Bible reader, and is ideal for couples, small groups or large churches to do together. With the recent release of *The Bible Course* online, there is no reason to wait until lockdown restrictions are lifted.

As part of our desire to serve the church during this Covid-19 season, we have developed a number of video resources that can be streamed online, including The Bible Series. This seven-part series provides a wealth of free video resources for your whole church to experience the big story of the Bible and discover how it connects with our deep human need for meaning, freedom, peace, love, community and hope. With resources for children, youth groups, mid-week groups and Sunday services, The Bible Series is a great opportunity for your church and community to experience a better story. Why not run The Bible Series in your church, and then run *The Bible Course* in small groups for those newly inspired by the Bible and hungry to deepen their knowledge?

One of the keys to increasing our confidence in the Bible is to bring clarity to the whole story of the Bible. For too long we have encouraged Bible reading like pieces of a jigsaw without showing how it all fits together to form a clear picture. Our hope is that resources like *The Bible Course* and The Bible Series will help generations of people talk about the big story of the Bible as easily as their favourite big films.