CHAPTER 1 - START STARTING POINT
Ever since I was a little girl and could barely talk, the word “why” has lived and grown along with me . . . When I got older, I noticed that not all questions can be asked and that many whys can never be answered. As a result, I tried to work things out for myself by mulling over my own questions . . . So the word “why” not only taught me to ask, but also to think. And thinking has never hurt anyone. On the contrary, it does us all a world of good.

Anne Frank
SECTION ONE: QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What did your faith look like growing up?

2. Would you say you are currently at a starting, turning, returning, or other point? Why?

Faith is trusting in advance what will only make sense in reverse.

- Philip Yancey
CHAPTER 1 - START

It’s not that the Bible isn’t important, but Paul was challenging them to put their faith in a person. The question he left them with is the question that anyone exploring faith must eventually answer. It is the question that serves as the starting point for the Christian faith. The question is, Who is Jesus?

The apostle Paul traveled around the Mediterranean planting churches in the first century. He found himself with some time to kill in Athens. He met a group ... God." They were covering all their bases. If a new god arrived on the scene, they were ready for him. Or her. Or it.

Paul viewed this just-in-case altar as an opportunity to introduce his new friends to the central message of Christianity. He couldn’t begin his presentation with “The Bible says” because there was no New Testament. In fact, at this point in history, none of the four Gospels had been written. So Paul drew their attention to the fact that curiosity regarding God was universal. He argued there was something in every man and woman that wonders, questions, and seeks. He went on to say that God actually wants to be found . . . so much so that he entered creation in the form of a man—Jesus.

This God-man came to explain what God is like and to reconcile humanity to himself. All truths are easy to understand once they are discovered. The point is to discover them. That takes investigation. ✽ Galileo

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The first Christians didn’t use the Bible as a starting point for their faith. For the first two hundred-plus years of Christianity, Christians did not support their faith with a book. Their starting point was not something written; it was something that had happened.

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There are four accounts of Jesus’ words and works. These ancient documents are referred to as the Gospels. While most agree that the Gospels were written during the years immediately following Jesus’ life, they were not collected and published together until many years later. The term “New Testament” was first used around AD 250 in reference to one of the earliest collections of sacred Christian texts. Despite the fact that there was no Christian Bible, hundreds of thousands of men and women became followers of Jesus in the first three centuries. The starting point of their faith was not “The Bible says” or “The Bible teaches”; it was something else entirely. And we’re convinced that something else serves as an adult starting point for faith in our generation as well.

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The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, and of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries to merely comprehend a little of this mystery every day. ✽ Albert Einstein

1 Acts 17:16-34
SECTION TWO:
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What do you associate with the Bible?

2. How has your view of God changed during different seasons of your life?

Most people are bothered by those passages of Scripture they do not understand, but the passages that bother me are those I do understand.

Mark Twain
A religion that is small enough for our understanding would not be big enough for our needs.

Corrie ten Boom
At the end of the day, the questions we ask of ourselves determine the type of people that we will become.

Leo Babauta
Today is when everything that’s going to happen from now on begins.

Harvey Firestone, Jr.