

“Foundations” – Lesson #2

READING THE BIBLE

The Bible is one of the main ways that God has provided for us to know, love, and enjoy Him.

- If we want an intimate, personal, one-on-one relationship with God, we need to get into the Bible for ourselves.
- We cannot have a personal relationship with God through somebody else’s teaching.
- Others can help and encourage us, but personal Bible study is where we will best connect with God.



“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”

Psalm 119:105

“For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light,
and the corrections of discipline are the way to life.”

Proverbs 6:23

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Memorize: II Timothy 3:16-17

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

- Original Greek literally translates “God-breathed” or “inspired”.
- We need to look at the Bible as God’s love letters to us.
- God sharing His heart, mind, and thoughts with us.
- II Peter 1:20-21 Prophecy was God speaking through men.
- All Scripture was written by men who were moved by the Holy Spirit.
- The Bible feeds our soul. It is the food for our spirit.

I. PICTURE OF THE WORD

A. Overview

1. How many books in the Bible? 66
2. Who is the central figure of the Bible? Jesus Christ
 - The world was made by Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16)
 - World history will culminate in Him (Revelation 11:15)
 - Old Testament looks forward to Him.
 - New Testament reveals Him.
3. The Bible gives us a sweeping picture of God’s dealings with man. It records primarily what God has to say to man about:
 - Who He is – His character, thoughts, feelings, heart, actions.
 - Who we are – Our sin and its consequences.
 - How to live in a dependent relationship with God through Jesus.

What is the common denominator? God’s plan of redemption!

B. Old Testament

1. How many books in the OT? 39
2. God’s dealings with man from creation until 400 years before Christ
3. Breakdown:
 - a. The Books of the Law – Pentateuch
Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy (the beginnings of all things and the beginnings of Israel, the nation through which salvation by grace would be made available to the entire world)

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- b. The Books of History
Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther (these books picture the rise and fall of Israel over a 1000 year period)
- c. The Books of Poetry
Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon (written as poetry to share the depth of human feelings, yet to trust in God alone)
- d. The Books of Prophecy
Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi (These books are not in chronological order. The prophets, official spokesmen whom God raised up to speak for Him, especially in times of unbelief and rebellion, came into special prominence during the decline and fall of Israel and Judah)

C. New Testament

- 1. How many books in the NT? 27
- 2. God’s dealings with man during and after Christ
- 3. Breakdown:
 - a. Gospel – means *Good News*
Matthew, Mark, Luke, John (These books record the early life and ministry of Jesus Christ)
 - b. Acts
This book records the first church and early growth of Christianity (through the apostles) after Jesus’ resurrection and ascension.
 - c. Epistles
Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, III John, Jude (These books contain the inspired correspondence of the apostles and those chosen by our Lord to communicate His truth to His children, followers of Jesus.)

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d. Prophecy

Revelation (This is the climactic book of the Bible giving us a glimpse into the future and the culmination of all history in the events surrounding the second coming of Jesus Christ.)

II. POWER OF THE WORD

A. What promise do we find in Isaiah 55:11?

Never return void

B. What are the results from meditating on the Word? (Psalm 1)

Well watered, fruitful, solid, secure wisdom; success

III. PERSONAL APPLICATION OF THE WORD

- The Bible is a “who” and “what”, but most importantly a “why” book.
- The Bible is mainly a relational book, telling the story of God’s dealings with mankind.
- The Bible is a very historically accurate book.
- Reveals that people are the most valuable asset to God.
- The Bible will never contradict itself.
- The Bible is inerrant. (*translated without error in doctrine*)

Choosing your Bible:

There are numerous Bibles to pick from. Many are “Word for Word” translations of the original writings in Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) into English. “Translations” provide the most accurate and in-depth reading and study because they are as close to the original as possible. A “paraphrase” takes the meaning of a verse or passage of Scripture and attempts to express it in “plain language” – essentially the words the author of the paraphrase would use to say the same thing. Some people read a paraphrase alongside their translation to help unlock the meaning of a passage.

A. Popular Translations: New International Version, New Living Translation, New King James Version, New American Standard Version (closest to original Greek manuscripts)

B. Popular Paraphrases: The Message, The Living Bible, Phillips Translation

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HOW AND WHERE TO START READING YOUR BIBLE

This is to help begin the habit of listening and talking to God each day. Find a quiet time and space to read your Bible, preferably at the same time each day. Many people find that reading scripture in the morning helps to get their day off to a focused start.

Remember, the purpose of reading the Bible is to know who God is so that we might grow in our relationship with Him. So, before you read, pray and ask God to reveal Himself to you that you might fall more deeply in love with Him each day.

Things you'll need besides your Bible:

- Paper or journal
- Pen
- Highlighter (dry highlighters do not bleed through thin Bible pages)

Using the S.O.A.P. Method of Bible Reading:

S.O.A.P. stands for Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer. It's a great way to delve more deeply into your Bible reading, and record your thoughts, emotions and connections when studying scripture. S.O.A.P. is meant to be a journal you create with your regular Bible reading, using the process as you read each day, but it can also be an effective tool to help you connect with particular passages. You can use it with any Bible reading plan, whether you're reading straight through from Genesis to Revelation, or following a reading plan from your church, study Bible or the internet.

1. Complete the “S” by reading the scripture. Don't just skim through it, but really think about what it means. Imagine what the people involved were experiencing. Write down a verse or two that really stood out to you in your journal.
2. Complete the “O” by writing down observations about the scripture you just read. You may want to write your own summary of the passage, but more importantly, think about what God has to say to you through this part of his word.
3. Complete the “A” by writing down how this Bible passage applies to you right now, in your daily life. For example, in the parable about the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), which character do you identify with

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most: the loving and merciful father, the son who squanders his life and then repents or the resentful older brother? Do you see similar situations in your life right now? How can you respond in the way Jesus taught?

4. Complete the “P” by writing down a prayer. This is a personal message from you to God, so don’t worry about getting the perfect words down. Just make it honest and heartfelt. Remember that God always listens, and already knows your needs. He just wants to hear from you.

Another method of Bible study you may want to try seeks the answers to four questions:

- What does the passage say?
- What does it mean?
- How does it apply to my life?
- What am I going to do about it?

Some suggested books to begin reading:

1. John – This will walk you through the life of Christ
2. Acts – The story of the 1st Christians
3. Mark – The life of Christ seen from a slightly different perspective
4. James – A very practical guide for living.
5. Philippians – Positive attitude during difficult times
6. Psalms – Honest prayers and poems to and about God
7. Proverbs – Christian wisdom.

WITH THE BIBLE, THERE IS ONE INTERPRETATION BUT MANY APPLICATIONS!

IV. PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR THE WORD

- A. “Halley’s Bible Handbook.” (gives a summary of every book and chapter in the Bible: who wrote it, when it was written, etc.)
- B. Study Bible (NIV Study Bible, Life Application Bible, Teen Study Bible)
- C. Concordance (look up a word and it will tell you what verse include that word, most Bibles have one included)
- D. Bible Dictionary (lots of information about a topic)
- E. www.biblegateway.com (online Bibles and a whole lot of other info)