

5 FOUNDATIONS

The Word of God ~ God's Communication to You



The Foundations Bible Study Series

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God's Gift to You

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To say that the Bible is important is an understatement. Indeed, it is central to every part of Christianity. But why is it important? From where did it come? How can you understand it? How does it apply to you?

The answers to these questions are vital to your continued spiritual growth. As the cover to this lesson states, the Bible is "God's communication to you." You need to learn to understand the Bible and apply it to your every-day life, and there is no better place to learn about it than from the Bible itself. Let's dig in!

Inspiration of Scripture

II Timothy 3:16 is the key passage on the inspiration of the Bible. The beginning part of the verse teaches that the Bible is *inspired*. The Greek word which is translated as "given by inspiration of God" in the *King James Version* literally means *God-breathed*. The inspiration of the Bible refers to the process by which God "breathed out" the words of Scripture through human instruments – the writers. The result is that the Bible is God's Word, not merely man's.

Trombones and Trombonists

When a musician plays a trombone, he blows air through it. The trombone affects the sound, making it different from that of a trumpet or tuba. Yet, the trombone is not credited with creating the music. The talent and creativity belong to the musician. The music is *his*. Audiences applaud trombonists, not trombones. The musician *breathes through* his instrument to create his music. Similarly, God *breathed through* holy men. They were but instruments which He used to accomplish His purpose. The Bible is much more than the words of men – it is the Word of God!

Some people teach that the Bible merely *contains* the Word of God. Use **II Timothy 3:16** to discover what is wrong with that statement.

(Note: Many people believe that there is only one English version of the Bible that is inspired. That belief is not grounded in Scripture.)

How could the Bible be *God's Word* when it was actually put to paper and ink by men? **II Peter 1:20-21** tells us. What does verse 20 teach about the Bible? _____

The KJV statement "*no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation*" means that Scripture did not *originate* with men. The writers of Scripture did not write their own (private) opinions; they wrote God's Word.

What does verse 21 teach about the Bible? _____

Scripture writers didn't write of their own volition (*will*). Rather, they were *borne along** ("moved") by the Holy Spirit. They picked up pens to write, but the words were God's.

(*Acts 27:15 uses the same word for a ship being driven by wind. Just as wind fills a sail and drives a ship, God's Spirit filled and "drove" the writers of Scripture.)

Because the Bible is the Word of God, it is without error – a teaching referred to as the *inerrancy of Scripture*. In **John 17:17** Jesus states that God's Word is _____ . It is impossible for God to *breathe out* falsehood or error.

The Bible further teaches that Scripture is absolutely reliable. What does Jesus say about the Bible in **John 10:35b**?

Jesus is even more specific in **Matthew 5:18**. Read it. The *jot* and *tittle* He referred to are the smallest parts of Hebrew letters. The *tittle* is the very slight corner which makes two Hebrew letters differ.

Jesus' statement was similar to the modern phrase "*the dot of an I and the cross of a T.*" What was His point?



Matthew 5:18 teaches two essential aspects of inspiration:

- ① The very **WORDS** of Scripture are God-breathed and inerrant. (This is referred to as *verbal inspiration*.)
- ② The **ENTIRETY** of Scripture is God-breathed and inerrant. (This is referred to as *plenary inspiration*.)

Benefits of Scripture

We learned from **II Timothy 3:16** that the Bible is *inspired*. The verse goes on to say that the Bible is “profitable” – it is a *benefit* to those who read it. According to the last part of this verse, with what four areas does the Bible help?

- ① _____ (what *is* right)
This word specifically refers to the Bible as a teacher.
- ② _____ (what is *not* right)
This word refers to a strong rebuke. The Holy Spirit uses the Bible to prick our consciences about our sin. Scripture exposes to us our sinfulness.
- ③ _____ (how to *get* right)
This word is used of setting a broken bone or straightening a crooked spine. Scripture gives spiritual mending – it sets us right again.
- ④ _____ (how to *stay* right)
This word is used of child-training. As parent to child, the Bible trains and disciplines us, bringing us to spiritual maturity.

It is obvious that the Bible is helpful, but with what specific areas does it help?

① The Bible is essential for salvation.

What does **II Timothy 3:15b** say that Scripture is able to do?

Were it not for Scripture, we would not know our lost condition, much less that Jesus died to provide our salvation.

How is saving faith developed in non-believers according to **Romans 10:17**? _____

What does **Romans 1:16** says that the Bible is “the power of God... _____.”

② The Bible is essential for Christian growth.

Scripture paints a vivid picture when it says that you are “born again” at the point of salvation. You are a Christian, but you are only a baby Christian. You need to grow!

1 Peter 2:2 describes the process of spiritual growth. From what do babies get nourished? _____

As a baby Christian, what is your *spiritual milk*? _____

(See *1 Job 23:12* and *Hebrews 5:13-14*)

How often do babies eat? _____

What would happen to a baby who didn't eat? _____

What does this passage teach regarding your “feeding” on Scripture? How often do you need it? Why? _____

(See *1 Thessalonians 2:13* and *Acts 20:32*)

③ The Bible is essential for godly living.

The writer of **Psalm 119:9** asked a question that every Christian struggles with: *how can I be clean from sin?*

What is his answer at the end of the verse? _____

Psalm 119:11 is very similar. Explain it in your own words.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven He prayed for His disciples and all future Christians, as recorded in John 17. One request was that we would be “sanctified” – *made holy*. How are Christians sanctified according to **John 17:17**? _____

Many Christians say they want to grow, yet they never spend time studying God's Word. Scripture is clear: *there can be no growth and no godliness apart from consistent, disciplined Bible study.*

④ The Bible is essential for knowing God intimately.

Remember, the Bible is not merely a book; it is God's word. It is God's self-revelation...what He has chosen to tell us about Himself. In the words of A. W. Tozer, *"The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts."*¹

Jesus tells us in John 5:39 that the Bible – even the Old Testament, written before His physical birth – “testified” of Him. To know God personally and intimately, you need to study about Him in His Word! Therefore, Christ gives us a command in John 5:39a: “_____.”

Think of Scripture as an Autobiography...

The main topic of Scripture is a Person, not a program. Scripture teaches us about sin and salvation. It addresses relationships with spouses, employers, children, servants and persecutors. It is filled with both good and bad examples. It tells us what God expects. It brims with promises. Yet, the Bible is first and foremost an autobiography. It is God's revelation of Himself. When you read it, don't just look for commands, promises and examples...look for God and what He's like!

Sufficiency of Scripture

For years Bible-believers have stated that “the Bible is our only rule of faith and practice.” However, many men and churches teach that the Bible is a good starting place, but must be supplemented by tradition, psychology, etc.

¹ A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1982), 10.

II Peter 1:3-4 teaches that God has given us “all things that pertain unto life and godliness.” What do these verses say about the sufficiency of Scripture? _____

We looked at **II Timothy 3:16** in our discussion about *inspiration*. Verse 17 goes on to say that the Bible will make Christians *spiritually mature* (“perfect”) and *fully prepared* (“thoroughly furnished”) for ministry. Based on the fact that Scripture can do all of those things, what “charge” does Paul give to the young pastor, Timothy, in **II Timothy 4:2**?

Sadly, many preachers today seem to preach anything *but* the Bible. There is a reason for that. **II Timothy 4:3-4** says that people will eventually refuse to hear the Bible. What will they want instead? _____

Although the Bible is thought by many to be antiquated or out of touch, Scripture teaches that God’s Word alone contains everything we need to know about how to live.

Christians from the city of Berea were commended for their attitude toward the Bible and Bible teachers. How did they respond to the preaching of God’s Word (**Acts 17:10-11**)?

Pastors are only helpful to the extent that they direct people to Scripture. Indeed, this very booklet is only helpful to the extent that it points you to Scripture. Your faith and convictions must rest securely on Scripture, not hearsay or opinion. The Bible alone is *God-breathed* and therefore is both *helpful* and *sufficient*.

Application of Scripture

Now that you know your *need* for Scripture, let's be very practical: How do you go about Bible study? **Joshua 1:8** gives a three-step process.

- 1 **Read it** – “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth...” (Joshua 1:8a)

What are some excuses that Christians (yourself included) give for not reading Scripture consistently? _____

How would you refute those excuses from Joshua 1:8?

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 is a similar passage. According to these verses, *when* and *how often* should you place yourself under the influence of the Bible? _____

Reading Scripture with understanding is not easy. You need help! **1 Corinthians 2:14** teaches that the unsaved (“natural”) man cannot and will not “receive the things of the Spirit of God” (Scripture). Why not? _____

By contrast, the Christian (“he that is spiritual”) is able to discern (“judge”) Scripture. Why? Because – through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, he has _____ (v. 16). As a Christian, you have the Author of Scripture living in you, helping you to understand and apply what it means!

(Note: The ministry whereby the Holy Spirit helps you to understand Scripture is called “illumination.” It will be covered in Foundations book 9.)

Write out the prayer uttered in Psalm 119:18 and explain it.

“Texts will often refuse to reveal their treasures till you open them with the key of prayer.”

C.H. Spurgeon²

② **Think about it** – “but thou shalt meditate therein day and night...” (Joshua 1:8b)

Meditation in Scripture is not thoughtlessness. Rather, it is thinking about Scripture with an emphasis on *personal application*.

“Hmmm...”

The Hebrew word which is translated as “meditate” in Joshua 1:8 literally means to *moan* or *mutter*. It communicates the idea of deep thought, as though someone were muttering to himself under his breath, so consumed in his concentration that he is oblivious to those around him. God commands you to meditate – to think about the Word, especially regarding its application to your life. (see Psalm 1:1-2 and 119: 97, 99)

Included in meditation is *Scripture memory*. You cannot always carry a Bible, but you can carry portions of it in your memory. Read **Psalm 119:11** again and explain how it addresses Scripture memory. _____

③ **Obey it** – “that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein...” (Joshua 1:8c)

² C.H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1990), 42.

Here is the most difficult step of the three, yet the most important. Reading the Bible is good, but *doing* it must follow directly on its heels. You must apply what you read in Scripture to your every-day life!

James 1:22-25 discuss two different kinds of people. Who are they and what is the difference between them?

Obedience to Scripture demands a difficult thing: *change*. You must be ready to *begin* doing things the Bible commands and *stop* doing things the Bible forbids. This process of change has a final goal: that you should become more and more like Jesus Christ (see **II Corinthians 3:18**).

*"The Holy Spirit of God uses
the Holy Word of God
to make me more like
the Holy Son of God."*

Ken Collier
The Wilds Christian Camp

Your goal for every time you read the Bible should be to *change* in order to be more pleasing to God! Stuart Custer, the godly Bible teacher and scholar, writes, "*What is in the Bible is not there just to give you historical background or theological precision; it's there to make you what you should be and to mold your understanding of Scripture, so that it may mold your character and transform you into the kind of person that God wants you to be.*"³

Joshua 1:8 does not end with a command, but with a promise. If you *read*, *apply*, and *obey* the Bible, you will be rewarded with *spiritual prosperity* and *success*! Get busy!

³ Stewart Custer, "Biblical Balance" in *Balance*, vol. 20, No. 4, p. 2.

Let's review what we've learned:

The Bible is *inspired* – it is God's Word, not man's.
It is therefore without error.

The Bible is *profitable* – it tells you
what you need to know about life and eternity.

The Bible is *sufficient* – it is our only rule for faith and
practice. It needs no supplement.

The Bible must be *applied* – read it, think about it and obey
it. The goal of Bible study is change to Christlikeness.

Scripture Memory

II Timothy 3:16

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for
doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

I Peter 2:2

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye
may grow thereby:

Psalms 119:18

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out
of thy law.

Check Your Progress

What are the three most significant lessons that you have learned
in this Bible study? Why are they important?

- ① _____

- ② _____

- ③ _____

Answer the following questions to measure your understanding of the Word of God:

❶ What is meant by the following terms?

Inspiration (p. 2) _____

Inerrancy (p. 3-4) _____

Sufficiency (p. 6-7) _____

Illumination (p. 8) _____

Mediation (p. 9) _____

Application (p. 10) _____

❷ What three steps of Bible study are found in Joshua 1:8? (p. 8-10) _____

❸ What is the goal of your personal Bible study? (p. 10)

❹ What can you do to begin to benefit from your own study of God's Word? _____

❺ Check off the following verses only when you can say them from memory:

II Timothy 3:16

Psalm 119:18

I Peter 2:2

Do you believe that you know this material well enough to teach it to someone else? _____ If not, review it until you do!



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“That we should be to the praise of His glory.”

Ephesians 1:12



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