

Discipleship Lesson 1

The Word of God

Key Memory Verse:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16–17



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As you study this lesson you will understand why the following statements are not true.

1. The Bible is just another old religious book written by fallible men.
2. Only a pastor or religious leader with years of formal education can understand the Bible.
3. In order to understand the true meanings of Scripture, you must study Greek and Hebrew.

What Is the Role of the Bible in My Life?

Two major points separate Christianity from any other form of religion in the world. One, which will be discussed in Lesson Two, is the means by which a person can obtain eternal life. The other point claims that the Bible (Old and New Testament) is the absolute written authority from God.

Knowing the Word of God is essential to a Christian's growth in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. The Bible is not only God's Word but it is the standard by which a Christian governs his or her life.

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to establish the Bible as the sole authority for faith and practice for the believer. It acquaints the new Christian with the basics of the Bible and how it relates to his or her everyday life.

The author sets the Bible apart from all other books. Note 2 Timothy 3:16. The word *inspiration* means God-breathed or that which comes out of God's mouth.

How much of the Bible is inspired?

I. An Introduction to the Bible

- A. It is universally accepted that there are two fundamental sources of human knowledge: **reason and experience**. Both are essential to the understanding of the world around us. Yet, reason and experience do not answer the most profound and important questions of life. **Where did I come from? What is the purpose for my existence? Where am I going, if anywhere, after death?** Is there another source of knowledge that carries us beyond the limitations of human reason and experience—a source that answers the three most important questions of life?
- B. There is a third source of knowledge called **revelation**. Revelation is found primarily in the Word of God. The Bible reveals God Himself and His will. In the Bible we have direct access to the infinite and personal God who created all things for His pleasure.
- C. The Bible describes two forms of revelation, general and special.

Read Psalm 19:1–6 and Romans 1:18–21. God has revealed Himself to us through His _____

1. This **general revelation** is available to all. The Bible also teaches that God has implanted the knowledge of His existence in every human heart (Romans 1:18–19; 2:11–16). Verse 18 speaks of men suppressing or holding back the truth from within them. Both of these instances are examples of God's general revelation to mankind of Himself and His glory, so that men are without excuse.

This answers the question "Does everyone in the world have an opportunity to believe?"

2. God's **special revelation** involves a more direct communication, including dreams, visions, angels, the person of Christ Himself, and the Bible—God's written revelation. The Bible presents God's plan of redemption for mankind. It reveals God's general will for man and speaks of an individual plan for every believer. God's plans, including past, present, and future, are the theme and focal point of the Scriptures.

Notes and Questions

Notes and Questions:

- D. God chose to reveal Himself in a progressive way. As time passed, more and more was revealed and recorded about God, His will, and His ways. At the completion of the New Testament, God's written revelation was complete. Read Revelation 22:18–19; Deuteronomy 12:32; Proverbs 30:6. Does God give special revelation to people today, i.e., a "Word from God," a "Prophetic Word," or a "Word of Wisdom" that is equal to Scripture?
- _____

E. Review

1. What are the three types of knowledge?
Reason, experience, and _____.
2. What are the three questions that reason and experience cannot answer?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
3. What is the difference between general and special revelation?

II. The Bible Is Unique in Several Ways

- A. It is unique in its production. The Bible is a book composed of sixty-six books, written by approximately forty authors over a period of one thousand six hundred years, making one complete, integrated unit. Who wrote the Scriptures, and what was their source according to 2 Peter 1:19–21 and 2 Timothy 3:16?

Men who were inspired by the

Notes and Questions

- B. It is unique in its **preservation**. “The survival of the Bible through the ages is very difficult to explain if it is not in truth the Word of God. Books are like men—dying creatures. A very small percentage of books survive more than twenty years, a smaller percentage last a hundred years, and only a very insignificant fraction represents those that have existed a thousand years. Amid the rack and ruin of ancient literature, the Holy Scriptures stand out like the last survivor of an otherwise extinct race. The very fact of the Bible’s continued existence is an indication that, like its Author, it is indestructible” (Christian Theology, 101, Emory Bancroft, DD.) (Matthew 24:35; 2 Kings 22:8, NKJV).
- C. It is unique in its **proclamations**. Over 25 percent of the Bible was prophetic in nature when it was written. It touches the subjects of heaven and hell, eternal salvation and judgment, and eternity past to eternity future.
- D. It is unique in its **product**. No other book has so profoundly influenced the course of history and the lives of men. How is God’s Word described in the following verses?
1. Hebrews 4:12 _____

 2. 1 Peter 1:22–23 _____

 3. In your own words, what makes the Bible different from all other books?

Notes and Questions:

III. What Is God's Purpose in Giving Us the Scriptures?

The Scriptures are inspired and have been preserved by God so we might have an infallible guide to bring us to salvation and daily Christian growth, that in the end we can fulfill God's objective of glorifying His name by doing His will (Matthew 28:19–20, Mark 16:15–16, NKJV).

- A. Describe three things we have been told to do in the passages listed above. (This is called the great commission.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

- B. We find the teachings of Scripture divided into four major categories. According to 2 Timothy 3:16, those divisions are profitable to us as:

1. _____ what is right.
2. _____ what is not right.
3. _____ how to get right.
4. _____ how to stay right.

“That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”

(2 Timothy 3:17).

IV. Basic Principles of Bible Study

The following is a list of ten points that should be a help to you as you study the Bible. These are a few of the basics of true biblical interpretation.

- A. **The literal translation must always be examined first.** Take the actual meaning of the words at face value, looking at their literal historical meaning as a guide to understanding what the passage is saying.
- B. **Allow the context of the passage to determine the meaning of the words within the passage.** Each verse should be examined in the paragraph, section, chapter, and book in which it is written. In addition, attention must be given to the audience, while considering its cultural, geographical, and grammatical context.

- C. **The Bible will interpret itself.** By that we are saying that Scripture will best explain Scripture. This can be seen in simply cross-referencing one passage with another. This can be referred to as “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).
- D. **God teaches us through the use of simile** (a comparison using *like* or *as*; the use of something similar to relate your point), hyperbole (an obvious exaggeration for effect; not to be taken literally), analogies, and figurative language. These are to be considered only after applying the first points (John 3:3–6, 10:9, 15:5).
- E. **Scripture will never contradict itself.** Therefore, we should never violate a clear passage of Scripture with one that is more obscure.
- F. **Never base a doctrine on a question or a rhetorical or hypothetical statement.** For instance, Paul asks a question in 1 Corinthians 15:29 about being baptized for the dead. The rest of Scripture is silent concerning such a practice. Therefore, we do not make Paul’s question into a reference on which we would base any particular doctrine.
- G. **Never try to establish or base a doctrine on any single verse or part of a verse of Scripture.** An example would be 1 Corinthians 13:1, where Paul makes a statement concerning the “tongues of men and angels.” His teaching is not that there is a special language of angels. His point is not that angels have a special language, but that the most important aspect of ministry is the attitude in which it is conducted.
- H. **Determine the difference between principles and promises and which apply to you personally.** Never misinterpret a passage of Scripture to gain a personal blessing or illustration. No single passage of Scripture can be used for a personal or private interpretation (2 Peter 1:20).
- I. **Always interpret personal experience in the light of Scripture and not Scripture in the light of personal experience.** The Scripture must always be the filter through which we judge every experience (2 Peter 1:16–21).
- J. **The Bible must be understood with a sense of order and consistency.** Although the Bible was written many years ago, the words are still true and can cross cultural lines and borders to be applied successfully to our lives today (1 Corinthians 14:40; Hebrews 13:8).

Be prepared to discuss which **three of these points you find most helpful** in understanding the Bible. Also, note any points you do not understand.



Notes and Questions:

V. The Bible Is the Source of Absolute Truth—John 14:6

- A. “Seventy percent of today’s generation, both church and non-church youth, claims that absolute truth does not exist, that all truth is relative. Most of them say that everything in life is negotiable and that ‘nothing can be known for certain except the things that you experience in your own life.’ In other words, they don’t believe that anything can be definitely defined as right or wrong. Our society has so emphasized personal choice and tolerance that almost every teenager rejects any absolute standard for right and wrong” (*Right From Wrong*, Josh McDowell).
- B. **What is absolute truth?** Absolute truth is true for all people, for all times, and for all places. Absolute truth is truth that is objective, universal, and consistent.
- C. When people reject truth as an objective standard, their view of life becomes distorted. When their view becomes distorted, they easily accept counterfeits. When they accept counterfeits, they begin to make wrong choices. When they make wrong choices, they suffer consequences.
- D. Name any two absolute truths from Exodus 20:1–17.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____

VI. Practical Application

- A. What does it mean to make the Bible the **sole authority** of your life?
- B. Relying upon Scripture as our sole authority demands that we be submissive and teachable. This is not always easy. What areas of life could you point to as those you have already submitted to God's Word?
- C. Studying God's Word each day is one way to demonstrate that it is our authority. Do you have a regular time set aside each day for reading God's Word? Explain.
- D. Name two important truths or principles that stood out to you from this lesson.
1. _____
2. _____

Remember—"God always gives His best to those who leave the choice with Him."—Jim Elliot

Notes and Questions

