



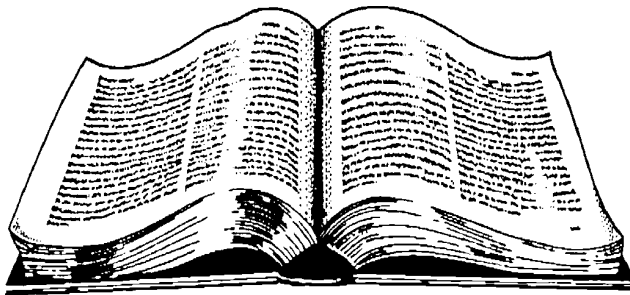
EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

THE WORD OF GOD

NOTES

Introduction

The Bible is God's revelation of Himself to us in written form. It contains 66 books divided into two sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament.



The Old Testament is divided into four parts.

- **The Law** — **5 books**
- **History** — **12 books**
- **Poetry** — **5 books**
- **Prophecy** — **17 books**

The New Testament is also divided into four parts.

- **The Gospels** — **4 books**
- **History** — **1 book**
- **The Epistles** — **21 books**
- **Prophecy** — **1 book**

Authorship and Inspiration

The Spirit of God Himself was the Author of the Bible. It was recorded by men of God to whom God spoke over a period of some 1500 years. Holy Scripture is *inspired* by God. The Greek word for **inspired** means **God-breathed**.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

(2 Peter 1:20-21)

This means that as our words come from our mouths with our breath, so the Word of God or the Bible actually proceeded from the breath of God's mouth. Men were not the authors—only the scribes.

In Revelation John records how Christ actually appeared to him and instructed him to write what was revealed to him. In verse 19 Christ says:

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

(Revelation 1:19)

Peter testifies that Paul's writings came from God's wisdom given to him and that these writings of Paul were actually Scripture.

And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

(2 Peter 3:15-16)

In Romans we see that the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, was inspired of God and necessary for a proper understanding of God.

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

(Romans 15:4)

The Old Testament declares 3,808 times that it is expressing the Word of God and 2 Timothy 3:16 affirms that:

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

(2 Timothy 3:16)

The fulfilled prophecy of the Old Testament in the first coming of Christ is another evidence of God's authorship and inspiration. Christ fulfilled 60 major Old Testament prophecies in His first coming. The probability of one person fulfilling just eight of these is 1 in 10^{17} . This is a staggering statistic but even more staggering when illustrated.

Visualize, to cover the state of Texas two feet deep with silver dollars would require 10^{17} silver dollars. Then, if a person marked one coin, blindfolded a man and asked him to find the one marked coin, this would be equal to the probability of one person's fulfilling eight of the 60 prophecies.

Authority of Scripture

Because the Scriptures are God's Word, they are to be the final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

Jesus Accepted the Total Scripture

Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

(Luke 24:25-27)

The Apostles Endorsed Its Authority

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

(2 Timothy 3:16)

Scriptures Used as Standard for Judgment

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

(John 12:48-50)

The Word of God is Eternal

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

(Matthew 24:35)

The Importance of the Word of God Reveals God and His Plan

God has given us the Scriptures to reveal Himself and His commandments to us. The Bible is of great value because it explains:

What did happen (past)

What is happening now (present)

What is going to happen (future)

Jesus used the Scriptures to reveal God's plan.

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

(Luke 24:44-46)

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

(John 5:39)

Cannot Mature Without It

The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

(Psalms 119:130)

The author of Hebrews said that everyone unskilled in using the Scriptures is a babe.

For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

(Hebrews 5:13)

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Paul advised his young converts:

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

(Acts 20:32)

Spiritual Food for our Souls

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

(Matthew 4:4)

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

(1 Peter 2:2-3)

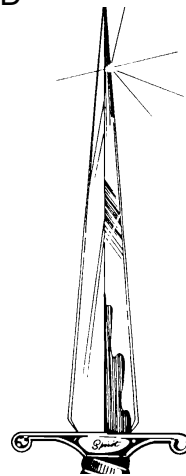
Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

(Jeremiah 15:16)

Weapon for Spiritual Warfare

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

(Hebrews 4:12)



And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

(Ephesians 6:17)

It Makes Us Like a Weapon as Well

Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made

me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

(Isaiah 49:1-3)

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Spiritual Seed to Sow

Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.
(Luke 8:11)

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

(1 Peter 1:23)

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

(Isaiah 55:11)

Keeps Us from Going Astray

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

(2 Timothy 3:16)

- Doctrine and instruction teach us what is right.
- Reproof and correction help us to know where we are wrong and to get back on the right track.

Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

(Jeremiah 20:9)

Because of God's Word within, Jeremiah was kept from error.

The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

(Psalms 37:31)

A veteran missionary who spent over thirty years in Asia once said:

In all my years in Christian service, I have never met anyone who was consistently reading, studying and memorizing the Word who has fallen into sin.

The Word of God is our only insurance against sin!

Strengthens and Produces Faith

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

(Romans 10:17)

It is an Eternal Investment

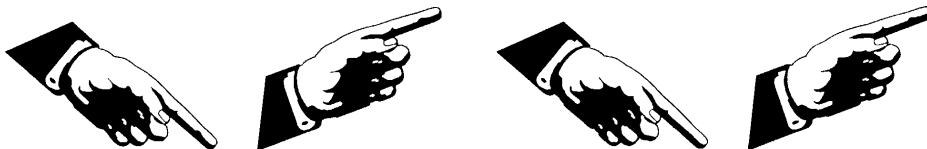
Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

(Matthew 24:35)

Getting the Word of God into Our Lives

We have looked at the importance and authority of God's Word and why it is necessary to get it into our lives. How do you do this? There are basically five ways of getting a solid grasp on the Word of God:

Hearing Studying Meditating



Reading

Memorizing

Hearing

Why?

Most of us begin to learn the Word and to know about God first through hearing it. Hearing the Word is an important part of Christian growth. We listen to God's teachers as they explain the Word to us.

Jesus said:

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

(Matthew 11:15)

Six times in chapters 2 and 3 of the Book of Revelation we are told by the Spirit of God to **hear** what God is saying:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith ...
(Revelation 2:7)

Paul tells us that our faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the
word of God.

(Romans 10:17)

However, just hearing alone is not enough because we retain only 5
to 10 percent of what we hear.

Reading

Why?

Moses instructed the leaders to read the law of God all the days of
their lives.

And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the
days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his
God, to keep all the words of this law and these
statutes, to do them:

(Deuteronomy 17:19)

Deuteronomy 17:19 gives us three reasons why we should read the
Bible daily.

- To learn to fear the Lord
- To keep all the Words of His Law
- To practice them

Paul commands Timothy:

Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation,
to doctrine.

(1 Timothy 4:13)

John says we are blessed if we read and keep God's Word.

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words
of this prophecy, and keep those things which are
written therein: for the time is at hand.

(Revelation 1:3)

Most people have never read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.
Somehow Bible reading is not a part of their lives. It is of little wonder
that they don't have a better grasp of the Word of God.

How?

If you read three chapters a day and four on Sunday, you will complete the whole Bible in a year.

However, reading is also not enough, because within 72 hours we retain only 30% of what we have read.

Studying**Why?**

Paul commended the Berean believers because they did not just accept someone's teaching lightly but went back to study the Scriptures themselves.

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

(Acts 17:11)

How?

There are four basic ingredients to a good Bible study program.

Personal Investigation

This means not only listening to someone else's discoveries, but discovering Bible truths for yourself.

Regular and Consistent

Not spasmodic

Written Reproduction

Write this down in your study

- Title and Key verse
- Observations
- Difficulties
- Cross-references
- Outline or paraphrase

Practical Application

This is **where the rubber meets the road**. We must take what we have studied and begin to put it into specific practice in our lives.

It is not until we begin to study the Bible for ourselves that we start to grow and mature. As we learn to dig out the hidden treasures of the Word, we will have spiritual food to feed others.

Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.
(Proverbs 2:3-6)

However, even study is not enough because we still only retain 35 to 50 percent of what we study.

Memorizing

Why?

In Deuteronomy we are commanded by God to memorize His Words.

Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.
(Deuteronomy 11:18)

The Word of God hidden in our hearts promises to keep us from sin.

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.
(Psalms 119:11)

The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.
(Psalms 37:31)

God promises that if we hide His Words in our hearts, the Holy Spirit will help us use them effectively.

Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge. For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.
(Proverbs 22:17-18)

The great value of Scripture memory is that we retain 100% of what we memorize. As we fill our conscious mind with His Word, it begins to actually change our entire thinking process.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
(Romans 12:2)

This is exactly what happens when we allow our minds to be filled with the Word of God.

In addition to using the Word in our personal lives, God also says that He will use the memorized Word in us to minister to others.

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

(Isaiah 55:11)

How?

Practical Hints for Memorizing

- Choose a time when your mind is free.
- Read and study the context of the verse.
- Include the reference and topic as you memorize.
- Memorize by phrases.

Meditating

Why?

God commands Joshua to meditate on the His Word.

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

(Joshua 1:8)

David says that one who meditates will be like a well-watered tree.

But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

(Psalms 1:2-3)

What is Meditation?

Meditation is **not** putting your mind in neutral and drifting off into some quasi-state of consciousness. It is prolonged thought directed to a single object. One Bible dictionary likens it to a cow chewing on its cud. Meditation is like digestion. Or it is like passing a light through a prism where the different light rays are refracted and separated.

How to Meditate
Basic Ingredients for Meditating

Analyzing

Taking a verse apart word by word and phrase by phrase.

Reflecting

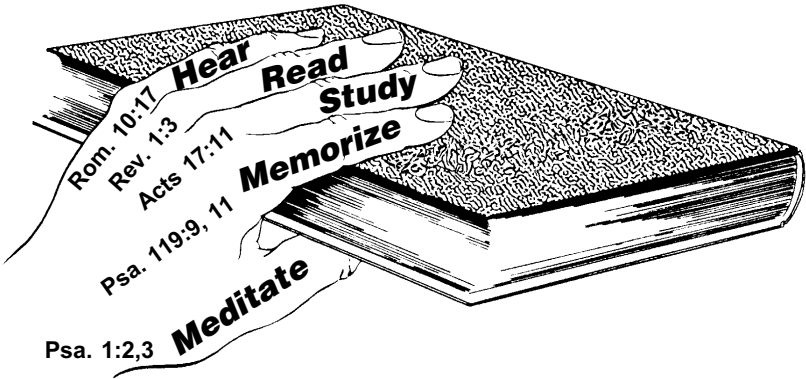
Calling up personal thoughts and applications in the light of the passage under consideration.

Questioning

Taking the verse apart by asking it:

- Who?
- Where?
- Why?
- How?

The Word Hand is an illustration to help you grasp and remember the five ways to MASTER THE BIBLE.



Five Ways to Know the Bible

Application

Fill out the following chart! Set new goals that are reachable! Do it now!

Method of Intake	My Present Weekly Program	New Goals and Plans
Hearing		
Reading		
Studying		
Memorizing		
Meditating		