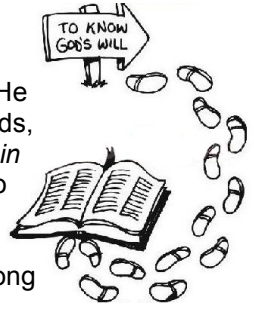


# Preparation

(“Just follow the instructions”)

The psalmist David asked the question “*Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?*” He then answers himself with “*By taking heed thereto according to thy word.*” (Psa 119:9) Afterwards, to assure success, he made this commitment, “*Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee*” (v.11) David wisely knew that God’s word is “a lamp unto *our* feet and a light unto *our* path” (v.105) - in its pages are all the things we need to know. Let’s just say that the letters

B.I.B.L.E. stand for **B**asic **I**nstructions **B**efore **L**eaving **E**arth. Call it your “owner’s manual” on how to get from here to Him and what to do if things turn ‘rough’ along the way. Your Bible can be your most important ‘tool’ for ‘taking on’ life!!



**The Bible came to us through** many men over many years, but every word originated from God Almighty, delivered by the Holy Spirit (read 2Pe 1:20-21). Peter tells us that the prophetic word was not “*from the prophet’s own understanding, or from human initiative*” but that they “*were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.*” [New Living Translation] Though the Lord used the individual personalities of the ‘scribes’ and incorporated the local customs of the times to add ‘flavor’ and ‘variety’, the words are still His, the theme unchanging, the message consistent throughout.

This has not deterred skeptics in every Age from trying to attack God’s word. Plenty have come and plenty have gone but **the Holy Bible continues to stand true!**

Just keep in mind that when someone speaks of misunderstanding. Often those same critics of God nor recognized its central message: that Jesus Christ is Lord and the hope of this world. There really is no excuse for such ignorance, however, since archeology and the historical sciences have long since ‘proven’ the many scriptural issues once disputed.

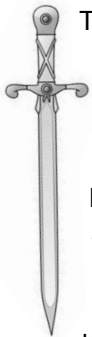


No, at the **‘heart of the matter’** is just that - the heart (not what man knows but what he wants to know.)

Peter speaks of people being “willingly ignorant” (2Pe 3:5) yet Paul proclaims, “*the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent*” (Acts 17:30. Read why in verse 31) Problem is - without Christ - people are spiritually blind and cannot see or accept the truth [we’ll cover that in another lesson - for now, read these two passages by Paul: 2Cor 4:3,4 & Eph 4:17,18]. Before you let some obstinate ‘big-mouth’ trouble you about your beloved Bible, just practice the advice that Jesus gave to his disciples in Mat 15:14, “Let the blind lead the blind.”



There is a good reason some people start out reading the Bible but never finish and that others fail to be consistent in its study. God’s word is like a sharp sword that surgically reveals and remedies whatever isn’t as it should be in our soul or spirit (see Heb 4:12) The Apostle James tells us that God’s Word is like a mirror which lets us see ourselves as we really are (though some of us don’t like what we see! Read James 1:21-25) By ‘doing’, not just ‘hearing’, we let scripture accomplish its purpose in our life, which is to help us “Be-Like-Christ” [“*So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.*” 2Cor 3:18 New Living Translation] I know it seems like some of us have a long way to go but don’t worry, the Lord knows how to get you there - just “follow the instructions!”



Read 2Tim 3:16,17. **The way the Bible can work in our life** is perfectly summed up in these verses. First, we are reminded again that this is God’s Word!! (‘*inspiration*’ literally means ‘*God-breathed*’) and that His Word makes us complete (“*perfect*”) and prepared (“*thoroughly furnished*”) for whatever the Lord may ask of us (thus the title of this lesson - Preparation.) But secondly, we must acknowledge scripture’s four important functions:

## Doctrine      Instruction Reproof      Correction

**Finally**, though Jesus said, “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*” (Lk 4:4) we need to **‘feed first’** on what our spirit may **‘need first’**. If you are just starting out (scripture calls you a “babe in Christ”) you should “*desire the sincere milk of the Word.*” (1Pe 2:2) Learn about Jesus [Luke is a good place], and how the early believers did it [Acts of the Apostles - also written by Luke], then some basics on Christian living [I suggest James & Philipians.] After that, the New Testament completely before the rest of the Bible [remembering that the Psalms, at any time, will be a source of comfort and encouragement.] Whatever you do - **read and pray every single day!!**