

# Preparation

 (“Just follow the instructions”)

[<<Teacher: Read or have a student read only the passages marked **READ**>>]

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.

[<<Teacher: we say that the Bible “has all the answers” but certainly not for every possible question. Ask students, “What kind of things DO we need to KNOW?” Some good answers would be ‘Who is God & what is He like’ (which could not be known without His help), ‘Why am I here?’ , ‘What happens after this life?’>>]

Let’s just say that the letters B.I.B.L.E. stand for Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth. 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. [<<Teacher: It is believed that as many as 40 persons wrote the Bible over a span of about 1,600-1,700 years from locations in different countries, often around the same time, yet it has perfect harmony throughout!! This website gives a listing of who wrote what: <http://www.allabouttruth.org/how-many-people-wrote-the-bible-faq.htm>>>]

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!** (Remember: the anvil outlasts the hammers!!)

[<<Teacher: Read this inspiring poem by John Clifford: “I paused last eve beside the blacksmith’s door, And heard the anvil ring, the vesper’s chime...And looking in I saw upon the floor...Old hammers, worn with beating years of time... ‘How many anvils have you had?’ said I... ‘To wear and batter all these hammers so?’ ... ‘Just one,’ he answered. Then with twinkling eye... The anvil wears the hammers out, you know’ ... And so, I thought, the anvil of God’s Word... For ages skeptic’s blows have beat upon, ... But though the noise of falling blows was heard ... The anvil is unchanged, the hammers gone.”>>]

Just keep in mind that when someone speaks of misunderstanding. Often those same critics nor recognized its central message: that Jesus really is no excuse for such ignorance, sciences have long since ‘proven’ the many



‘contradictions’ it is usually from their own have never actually read the whole Word of God Christ is Lord and the hope of this world. There however, since archeology and the historical scriptural issues once disputed.

[<<Teacher: the most important findings include records of persons and discoveries of places mentioned in the Bible once thought to be fictitious. Also, findings of ancient scrolls continue to confirm the reliability of our present Bible.>>]

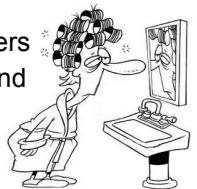
No, at the ‘**heart of the matter**’ is just that - the heart (not what man knows but what he wants to know.) Peter speaks of people being “willingly ignorant” (2Pe 3:5) yet Paul proclaims, “*the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent*” (Acts 17:30. **READ** 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.” **{READ**



[<<Teacher: Remind students that the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines “obstinate” as “perversely adhering to an opinion, purpose, or course in spite of reason, arguments, or persuasion <obstinate resistance to change” >>]



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 (**READ** 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:



[<<Teacher: Point out that this illustration is of someone who started out on the 'straight and narrow path' {Doctrine} but for some reason went 'astray'. Then the Bible stopped them in their 'error' {Reproof}, got them back in the right 'direction' {Correction} and afterwards showed them how to remain on the 'right path' {Instruction in Righteousness}. Discuss the term 'Doctrine' - which some church folk today almost think is a 'bad word'. It just simply means "a body of principles presented for acceptance or belief." Anything believed upon as a part of the Christian faith is a "doctrine". Ask students to name a few. (Anything believed about Jesus would be a doctrine such as His virgin birth, deity, life, death, resurrection, etc. ) In other words, for a church to say, "We don't teach doctrine - just Jesus" is a logical contradiction. Everything that church stands for would be its 'doctrines'. To say they don't believe in doctrines is to say they don't 'believe' in anything!! It could also leave them exposed to any error or heresy that came along.]

**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.*" (**READ** 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 & Philippians.] 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!!**

[<< Teacher: If any time remains you may wish to discuss that the Old Testament covers the period in Israel's history from the beginning of time until the arrival of Christ. It is filled with many important stories of God's relationship with His people and especially how He was preparing man for the arrival of their savior. Tell them how it is divided into sections (the Books of Moses, The Historical Books, Wisdom literature, Prophets -major and minor, and also that the new Testament is laid out by types (or purposes) of the books rather than in chronological order (the Gospels, Acts, Church Epistles of Paul, Prison Epistles and Pastoral Epistles, etc.) The best guide in reading will be the leading of the Holy Spirit, but it is also good to study within a group having a specific objective and course to follow.]