

## What's the Bible All About?

### 8 - Reading & Applying the Bible

What, Why & How (2 Tim. 3:16,17)  
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#### WHAT IS IT? Is the Bible the Word of God?

1. The Bible itself claims to be the Word of God.

- 2,000+ times in the Old Testament alone, the Bible claims God spoke the words contained therein.
- The phrase "Word of God" can be found over 40+ times in the New Testament.
- Jesus refers to the Old Testament as the "Word of God."

**Mark 7:13** "... thus making void **the word of God** by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do."

2. In the book of Acts, Luke focuses on the Word of God spreading like wildfire as the first-century church was taking shape.

**Acts 6:7** "And the **word of God** continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem..."

**Acts 12:24** "But the **word of God** increased and multiplied."

**Acts 19:20** "So the **word of the Lord** continued to increase and prevail mightily."

3. The New Testament writers knew they were writing the very Word of God.

**2 Pet. 3:15,16** Peter refers to Paul's letters along with "**the other Scriptures.**"

4. The original readers & hearers accepted it as the Word of God.

**1 Thess. 2:13** "And we also thank God constantly for this, that when **you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God**, which is at work in you believers."

5. God has preserved his Word over the centuries, through tens of thousands of copies, and thousands of translations.

*"Because there is an abundance of existing ancient Old Testament and New Testament manuscripts, ... the exacting science of textual criticism has been able to reclaim the content of the original writings to the extreme degree of 99.99%, with the remaining 0.01% having no effect on its content. The sacred book which we read, study, obey and preach deserves to unreservedly be called The Bible or 'The Book without peer,' since its author is God and it bears the qualities of total truth and complete trustworthiness as also characterizes its divine source." ~ John MacArthur*

#### WHY READ IT?

**2 Timothy 3:16,17** "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable **for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.**"

Paul gives us **4 key reasons** to read the Bible:

- "Teaching"** – The Bible gives us everything we need to know to live a life that is pleasing to God.

**John 17:17** "Sanctify them in the truth; **your word is truth.**"

2. **“Reproof”** – The Bible rebukes us for our sinful thoughts and actions, and enables us to deal with them.

**Heb. 4:12** “For the word of God is **living and active**, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and **discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**”

3. **“Correction”** – The Bible is able to restore us to how we were intended to be, and enables us to be useful in serving God and others.

**Psa. 119:11** “How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”

4. **“Training in Righteousness”** – The Bible doesn’t just tell us how far off the mark we are, but also instructs us in living a godly life.

**Acts 20:32** “And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, **which is able to build you up** and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

**Psa. 119:11** “How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”

## HOW SHOULD WE READ IT?

- Daily & consistently.**
- Find the time!** Figure out a time period that works best for you, and schedule it for yourself.
  - Reading before going to bed is fine, but probably shouldn’t be the only time you read. It’s best to have Christ fresh on your mind while you’re living life every day, not just laying down every night.
    - ~15 minutes of Bible reading/day takes you through the Bible in ~1 year.
    - ~5 minutes of Bible reading/day takes you through the Bible in ~3 years.
- Make a plan!** Most people who read the Bible randomly tend to drop the practice before long.
  - Whatever your plan, make sure it takes you through the entire Bible (Matt. 4:4; Rev. 1:3)
  - 3 chapters/weekday + 5 on Sat & Sun takes you through the Bible in ~1 year.
  - 3.5 chapters/day (“cover-to-cover,” Genesis to Revelation) takes you through the Bible in ~1 year.
  - 3 chapters OT + 3 chapters NT daily takes you through NT twice & OT once in ~1 year.
- Listen to it!**
  - Play it aloud (online, on CD, MP3, etc.) and read along.
  - Listen to it in the car, while you work out, etc.
- Meditate on it!** Pick a word, a phrase, a verse that you’ve read, and meditate on it. Spend time thinking about it. Pray about it. Compare Scripture with other Scripture and see what God’s Word has to say about it (cross-references).
- Write about it!** Forcing a thought from your mind, down your arm, through your fingers, to a pen, and on paper is a great way to meditate on God’s Word.
- Memorize it!** Index cards, repeated reading aloud (alone or with another), listening to it.

*I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes! With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth. In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word. ~Psa. 119:11-16*