

# Teach All Nations Inc.

## Know God's Word

*Kings and princes have studied it. It has fascinated lawyers and doctors, astronomers and housewives, farmers and physicists. A never-ending stream of humanity has been born, married, and buried under the sound of Bible Reading....No other book has such universal appeal --an appeal to all men of all temperaments, all races, all employments, all social standings, all economic means, and all gifts of intelligence.-- Bernard Ramm*

*The longer you read the Bible, the more you will like it;  
it will grow sweeter and sweeter;  
and the more you get into the spirit of it,  
the more you will get into the spirit of Christ--Romaine*

## God's Inspired Word

Year after year it remains the Number One best-selling book. Western civilization has been greatly influenced by it in literature, law, culture, and, of course, theology. Within its pages are history, poetry, hymns, literature, biography, proverbs, letters, legal precepts, parables, riddles, allegories, prophecy, and drama. Though an ancient book, it has stood the test of time through its relevance, majesty, and ability to change lives and nations. This marvelous book is called the Bible, God's holy and inspired Word. Its primary aim is to lead us to Jesus Christ and His gift of eternal life:

- *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:31 NKJV).*
- *These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God (I John 5:13 NKJV).*

How inspired is the Bible? We believe the Bible's inspiration is:

- Inerrant: There are no mistakes in God's revelation of Himself and His plan through the Bible. The original manuscripts are without error.

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- Infallible: Absolutely credible and totally trustworthy.
- Verbal: We know who God is by the Bible. Inspiration encompasses the very words themselves, not just the phrases or ideas.
- Plenary: The Bible is fully and completely inspired.
- Efficacious: Completely powerful and effective to bring to pass God's chosen plan.
- Clear: The Bible is clear enough to be understood and obeyed, particularly by all those whom God draws to Himself.
- Sufficient: The Bible provides sufficient revelation for an individual to understand the Gospel, believe it, and receive the gift of eternal salvation through Christ.

Consider the Bible's own testimony regarding its inspiration: *"Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee..."* God commanded Jeremiah (36:2 KJV). To Ezekiel He said *"The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest...and the hand of the Lord was there upon him"* (Eze. 1:3 KJV). Acts 1:16 (KJV) says *"...this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake..."* II Peter 1:21 (KJV) tells the origin of all Scripture when it says *"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"*.

God's inspired Word is sacred; we are not to add to it or subtract from it:

- Deuteronomy 4:2 (NKJV): *You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*
- Deuteronomy 12:32 (NKJV): *Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.*
- Proverbs 30:6 (NKJV): *Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.*

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- Revelation 22:19 (NKJV): *And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

The Bible's power to change lives is multi-faceted. Psalm 19 verses 7-11 tells us that God's word converts the soul, makes the simple wise, gives joy to the heart and light to the eyes, is more precious than gold, and sweeter than honey. Verse 11 gives a promise that by keeping God's word there is great reward. A wonderful promise to clutch onto (and not let go) is found in Proverbs 4:22 which says concerning God's Word "*For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh*" (KJV). What a fantastic tonic!

## Why Study the Bible?

### 2 Timothy 3:16,17 (KJV)

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

Salt and light integrity demands, not merely suggests, that you have a regular intake of the Word of God. It is the means whereby we come to know God, learn His standards, incorporate a value system that towers above the world's version, and lights our way to hope and a future. Those who live by the Word of God exhibit an authority, a soundness, and an exemplary lifestyle. It keeps us from going astray and fostering heart attitudes or hand actions that are detrimental to us and reproachful for the Kingdom of God. Our integrity is perfected through the four-fold application of God's Word, as II Timothy 3:16-17 outlines. Integrity is built and reinforced by Scripture's unassailable authority, rock-solid truth, and ever-increasing light.

Bernard Ramm, who was quoted earlier, makes this statement about the influence of God's Word:

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Statistically speaking the Gospels are the greatest literature ever written. They are read by more people, quoted by more authors, translated into more tongues, represented in more art, are set to more music than any other book or books written by any man in any century in any land. But the words of Christ are not great on the grounds that they have such statistical edge over anybody else's words. They are read more, quoted more and translated more because they are the greatest words ever spoken.<sup>1</sup>

Considering the above influence, we would do well to have a regular encounter with God through His Word.

When people receive the new birth, it is as if God rewires them to think new thoughts, perform new actions, and live new lives. A major and indispensable component of that new life is a new diet that consists of the ever-versatile Word of God. For the unbeliever it is the imperishable seed, grafted into the soul, whereby we are saved (James 1:21). To the newborn Christian it becomes the sincere milk of the Word (I Peter 2:2). To the mature it is as no longer seed or milk but high-protein meat (Hebrews 5:14). All Christians should bear in mind the precept "*that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live*" (Deut. 8:3) whereas Job declared "*Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips: I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food*" (23:12). For everyone, God's Word is quick, powerful, sharper than any two edged sword (Hebrews 4:12), life unto those that find it and health to all their flesh ( Proverbs 4:22), and, for those who crave divine guidance, it is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (Psalm 119:105).

It is assumed that those who love God will also love His Word, as it is written:

- Psalm 119:47 (KJV): *And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.*

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Ramm, Protestant Christian Evidence, Chicago: Moody Press, 1957, page 170.

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- Psalm 119:72 (KJV): *The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.*
- Psalm 119:82 (NKJV): *My eyes fail from searching Your word, saying, "When will You comfort me?"*
- Psalm 119:97 (NKJV): *Oh, how I love Your Law! It is my meditation all the day.*
- Psalm 119:140 (NKJV): *Your word is very pure; therefore Your servant loves it.*
- Jeremiah 15:16 (NKJV): *Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.*

The Bible, ancient as it may be, is a book for this day and for all time. Its value will endure forever. Consider: "*For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven*" (Ps. 119:89 KJV); "*The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever*" (Is. 40:8 NKJV); "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*" (Matt. 24:35 KJV); "*But the word of the Lord endures for ever*" (I Pet. 1:25 NKJV).

God's Word has power to change lives, purify hearts, and shed light, as the following testifies:

- Psalm 119:9 (NKJV): *How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word*
- John 15:3 (NKJV): *You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.*
- John 17:17 (NKJV): *Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.*
- Ephesians 5:26 (KJV): *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word*
- I Peter 1:22 (NKJV): *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart.*
- Psalm 19:8 (KJV): *The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.*
- Psalm 119:105 (NKJV): *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

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- Psalm 119:130 (NKJV): *The entrance of Your words gives light: it gives understanding unto the simple*
- Proverbs 6:23 (KJV): *For the commandment is a lamp: and the law is a light: and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:*
- II Peter 1:19 (NKJV): *And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.*

Study of the Scriptures is assumed, even commanded, in order to grow in the things of God. “*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 KJV), while Isaiah 34:16 (KJV) exhorts “*Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.*”

Would to God many Christians had the mindset of the Berean Church, for “*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 KJV). Good incentive for why the Scriptures were written and what it can do for us today is found in Romans 15:4 (KJV) “*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*”

When speaking about a regular intake of the Word, this means the entire Bible, all sixty-six books. These can be categorized under the following structure:

- The Law (the Torah or Pentateuch): Genesis to Deuteronomy 5 books
- History: Joshua to Esther; 12 books
- Poetry: Job to Song of Songs; 5 books

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| • <u>Major Prophets</u> : Isaiah to Daniel;                        | 5 books  |
| • <u>Minor Prophets</u> : Hosea to Malachi                         | 12 books |
| • <u>The Gospels</u> : Matthew to John                             | 4 books  |
| • <u>Acts</u> : Bridge between Gospels and Epistles;               | 1 book   |
| • <u>Pauline Epistles</u> : Romans to Philemon                     | 13 books |
| • <u>Other Epistles</u> : Hebrews to Jude                          | 8 books  |
| • <u>Revelation</u> : Prophetic culmination of redemption's story. | 1 book   |
| TOTAL                                                              | 66 books |

Of course, when Paul wrote II Timothy 3:16,17 (KJV), which says "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,*" there was no New Testament as an authoritative corpus of twenty-seven books recognized as the canon of Scripture. Jesus' and Paul's "Bible" was the thirty-nine books we now know as the Old Testament, and this is what the Apostle initially had in mind. The point being that Christian integrity cannot be dependent on the New Testament alone but by the entire canon of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments.

In this passage we learn that Scripture is profitable for doctrine--right teaching to grant us understanding; for reproof--setting aright bad actions; for correction--rectifying misunderstanding about the character, plan, or actions of God; and for instruction in righteousness--practical application of how to set our lives on the plain path that honours God. Considering the multi-faceted purpose of the Word in equipping the man or woman of God, it is remiss to allow our intake to be sporadic or seasonal.

As God's Word, the Bible carries and imparts authority, a heavenly authority. This authority comes from God Himself and extends through the Word to God's people. Those who preach and teach the Word will do so with authority because God decreed it as such.

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On the other hand, to ignore the Bible's authority is to undermine the church and society.

Michael Cassidy writes:

...the problem is that we have pulled back from the Authority of the Word of God and in matters of ethics, sexuality, money, family life we are shrinking from the clear teachings of the Word of God and obedience to them—witness the crisis in numbers of denominations on homosexuality etc. What a need therefore to heed the word of the great Dietrich Bonhoeffer who said: 'Deviating from the truth...can never be wise, however slight the deviation.' It is not our judgement in a situation, which can show us what is wise, but only the truth of the Word of God. Here alone lies the promise of God's faithfulness and help. It will always be true that the wisest course for the disciple is always to abide solely by the Word of God in all simplicity.

Your intake of the Word can come in several forms. Bible-based preaching is desirable, honourable, edifying, and sometimes convicting, but always necessary. Sound Scriptural teaching is recommended. Personal devotions in the Word are a must. Not just a cursory reading of the passage, but in-depth probing, cross-referencing, memorisation, and confession. Only then can you experience the nourishment and strengthening power of the Word. Life-change follows soon thereafter.

No one expects us to immediately know all the Word; but it is reasonable to expect us to live according to the Word we already know. To fall short of the standards will cause a rapid slide into the blindness and reproach of hypocrisy. Joshua and the Psalmist were told to meditate on God's Word day and night in order to prosper. Habakkuk received instruction to write the vision and make it plain so that the reader would run with it (2:2); Proverbs implores us not to let the Word to depart from our sight but keep it in the midst of our heart (4:20-22).

These varied and persistent calls to know and heed the Word are given for our instruction, edification, and transformation. As such, we need to take it in regularly, even daily. It is impossible to have God-designed integrity without it.

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### How to Study the Bible

*The Bible:*  
*Know it—in your head*  
*Stow it – in your heart*  
*Sow it – in the world*  
*Show it – in your life*  
**--Gregory the Great**

Once we acknowledge the need to study the Bible regularly, it is important to designate a time and place for this study to occur. It will not happen by chance or wishful thinking. For some, early in the morning is the best time to read the Bible while for others, late at night provides a minimum of distraction. Choose the time that is best for you and stick to it. If possible, find your own Bible study area, desk, or office, which you can set aside for regular study. Once you are seated in the place, your mind, body, and soul know it is time for the Word.

The following section provides basic Bible study tips. Though it is not an exhaustive explanation, it should be more than sufficient to get you started.

### Your Bible Study Tools

It is highly recommended that you purchase a good “study Bible.” A study Bible has the normal Bible text plus many helpful features, such as outlines, charts, commentary, maps, cross-references, and more. Some are so comprehensive that it is like having a mini-library within the pages of your Bible.

With so many study Bibles available, which one should you choose? The best way to find out is by spending some time in your local Christian bookstore perusing the various editions to see which one suits your needs. Alternatively, ask for the recommendations of

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your minister or friends. Consider purchasing the best cover possible, namely leather. It costs more but lasts longer than paperback, hardbound, or even bonded leather.

Your study Bible may be the only book you need for a lot of your devotions. Additional resources for your library can include:

1. Concordance: This is possibly the single most important resource you can have, next to the Bible itself. A concordance lists each occurrence of every word in the Bible with the Scripture reference beside each usage. As such, it can help you navigate through the Scriptures like nothing else. Unfortunately, most concordances in the back of study Bibles are limited, hence, the necessity of having a separate one. Famous concordances include Strong's, Young's, and Cruden's.
2. A Bible paraphrase: These include The New Living Bible and the Good News Bible.
3. A Dictionary in your own language: Do not hesitate to use one when you do not know the meaning of an important word, or would be hard pressed to offer a definition if asked. A dictionary is a great tool to unlock meaning.
4. Bible Dictionary: This is good for defining words not readily used in everyday speech.
5. Bible Handbook: This can offer a lot of useful information on background or content of the Bible. It often includes a survey of each book in the Bible.
6. Bible Commentary: This provides the usually well considered comments of a Bible scholar, i.e. can be of use when trying to understand difficult passages.
7. Vine's and other expository dictionaries of Bible words: Someone once said that reading the Bible through a translation, instead of the original Hebrew and Greek, is like kissing through a napkin. Maybe, but with the help of Vine's, the napkin could well nigh have a hole. Vine's gives you the meaning of the words in the original New

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Testament Greek, without having to study the language. Whether through Vine's or some other help, the enrichment process that can result from word studies is beyond calculation.

## Types of Bible Study

A well-balanced diet in daily devotions can include an Old Testament portion, New Testament portion, and Psalms/Proverbs; here are some other possibilities:

1. Book Study: The Bible has sixty-six books. Before reading, find out who wrote it, its theme, key verses, original purpose, type of book (prophecy, law, epistles, etc.), and portrait of Christ. Yes, every book in the Bible has one or more distinct portraits of Jesus. This should not be surprising since the purpose of Scripture is to point to Christ and make Him known. It is a good idea to read the book in its entirety first, then read it more slowly and devotionally.
2. Chapter Studies or Chapter Portion: You have 1,189 from which to choose. Assign to it a title and theme, making sure it is consistent with the book. For example, Jonah's ministry to Nineveh will not have a chapter or title about how to go fishing, Ruth on how to harvest barley, or Esther on how to host a royal banquet after a fast.
3. Theme Studies: These are unlimited. Salvation, healing, love, victory, faith, peace, and so much more. Use a concordance and/or Bible dictionary to find your theme. Of course, a good study Bible will help you locate one quickly. Choose a theme that is on your heart and pursue it with vigor.
4. Word Studies: A key word can shed a lot of light on practical Christian living. Vine's can be useful here, as well as a concordance or dictionary, or Hebrew-Greek lexicon. Search for meaning as a miner pans for gold. It can revolutionise your life.

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5. Biographical Studies: Many Biblical heroes and characters are waiting to be discovered. A study of the patriarchs, prophets, kings, apostles, women of the Bible, or the life of Jesus, will inspire your faith. Do not just study major figures; the message and themes in the lives of minor figures (e.g. Hannah, Enoch, and Nimrod) can be life changing. You will be amazed how relevant these ancient heroes are for today.

## Observation

Employing the survey method of serious Bible study consists of three parts: observation, interpretation, and application. Keep these points in mind and you will be a candidate for personal transformation. To make sure this happens, start your time of Bible study with prayer and ask God's Spirit to open the Scripture to you.

We begin with observation, which lays the foundation for sound interpretation and life-changing application. Observation answers the question: what does the text say? Utilise the famous investigative questions

- “Who” (is speaking, to whom is he speaking; who are the main players)?
- “What” (is the incident, subject, or person addressed; or is being said)?
- “When” (did these things happen, do they happen, or are going to happen)?
- “Where” (did these things happen, do they happen, or are going to happen)?
- “Why” (is this being said; did this happen, or is going to happen)?
- “How” (did it happen or will happen; do we understand what God is saying)?

You may not be able to answer all of the above each time; if not, just pass on to the next question.

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- Mark, circle, use symbols, underline, and/or colour code key words and phrases. See if they are repeated, look for synonyms (a different word or phrase that has the same meaning as the key word e.g. “Lamb of God” is a synonym for Christ) as well as antonyms (words that mean the opposite e.g. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble shows the underlined words are opposite to each other).
- Note comparisons and contrasts, like Proverbs 10:27 (KJV) “*The fear of the LORD prolongs days, but the years of the wicked will be shortened*” which compares the different outcomes for those who fear God as opposed to those who are wicked. One will have long life while the other will not.
- Identify lists and see if there is any progression. For example, II Peter 1:5-7 lists the qualities Christians need to add to their faith in order to become resistant to backsliding. These include virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. Peter speaks of the benefits bestowed on those who add these qualities to their lives and well as the liabilities if they are neglected.
- Keep your eye open for transitional phrases or expressions of time such as “finally, therefore, when, afterwards, until, etc.”
- Write comments in a study diary or even in the margins of your Bible. In this manner, you personalises your study greatly. Do not worry about offending God by marking inside your Bible...it is the words that are sacred, not the paper they are printed on.

## Interpretation

Interpretation is the second stage of our study. It answers the question, “What does the text mean?”

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It is important to properly interpret God's Word. Misinterpretation can lead to serious, even damaging error. Remember Jesus' piercing words to the Sadducees, "*You are mistaken, not knowing the Scripture nor the power of God*" (Matthew 22:29 NKJV). The Lord was not criticising their lack of Scripture knowledge; indeed, they were part of the priestly class and by rights were very knowledgeable. His target for rebuke was their wrong interpretation of Scripture, which led them to the erroneous conclusion that there is no resurrection from the dead.

Proper interpretation begins with the conviction that the Bible is God's infallible, inerrant, and inspired Word. Unless you hold this foundational conviction, your understanding of Scripture will neither be inspiring nor life changing. Some other points to consider are:

1. Remember the author and his circumstances when writing the book. The Epistle to the Philippians is a very remarkable book because it talks repeatedly about having joy, even though its (human) author, Paul, was in prison when he wrote it. Such circumstance-defying joy can only be a work of the Holy Spirit. John was an elderly man in exile on the Isle of Patmos when he was "called out of retirement" to receive and write the Book of Revelation.
2. Keep in mind the historical and cultural background of the book. Daniel was written from exile in Babylon; Esther was written from and about the Persian court; the Gospel of Matthew was written in the first century A.D. initially for a Jewish audience as shown by the many references to fulfilled Old Testament prophecy.
3. Remember the general theme of the book. James is about "Faith that Works," I Corinthians is "Long Distance Church Discipline," while Acts is about "The Birth and Growth of the Church."

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4. Make sure you understand the correct meaning of words. Do not hesitate to use a regular dictionary or Bible dictionary when you are not sure.
5. Most importantly, interpret according to the context of the book. Is your interpretation of the chosen verse consistent with verses before or after it; with the book it is found in; and with the entire Bible? In other words, check any cross-references and parallel passages. Does your understanding of the verse harmonise with or contradict other Scriptures?
6. Interpret Scripture literally—at face value—in its natural, normal sense. When symbolic or figurative speech is used, find the literal meaning behind the verse. One example is John 10:7 where Jesus says, “*I am the door.*” Obviously Christ is not a real door that swings from hinges. What He means is that as a door, He is the entry way to eternal life.
7. Base your interpretation also on the type of literature studied.
  - a) Poetical books include Job and Psalms;
  - b) A proverbial book is Proverbs;
  - c) Prophetic books include Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and twelve minor prophets;
  - d) Biographical books include Matthew, Mark, and Luke;
  - e) Historical books are I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I & II Chronicles, Acts, as well as others;
  - f) Didactic literature (or teaching) is Romans;
  - g) Specifically addressed letters or epistles are all the books from Romans to Jude

Keep these principles in mind and you cannot go wrong.

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# Application

After the issue of interpretation is the important question of application. Application asks the question, "How can I take what God is saying through His Word and apply it to my life?"

- How does God's word work in daily living?
- What principle can I learn?
- What command to keep?
- What promise can I claim?
- Is there an error to avoid?
- What sin should I forsake?
- What verse can I memorise to guide and inspire?
- What portrait of Christ do I learn to model or take courage from?

A careful survey of most Bible books reveals a high degree of "how to" for daily living. Dr. Bruce Wilkinson estimates that even the Book of Romans, considered to be the most doctrinal book in the New Testament, is at least fifty-percent practical application.

This principle of application is so vital as to be a two-edged sword. By observing it there is great blessing. Ignoring it is to build your house upon the sand, waiting for its quick and permanent demise in the next big storm. Failure to apply God's Word could very well be the single most important explanation for the increase of evil in society and the scandalous lack of integrity found in some church circles. Even dutiful Christians grow cold and backslide when they do not apply the Word. Conversely, and positively, application and walking in the Spirit are the keys to personal revival...coming alive again

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to God. Hence we preach and teach God's Word regularly so as to keep one another on track and alive unto God.

That is why it is important to take notes on what you learn from the Bible. It is the first step to living by God's Word. Then put it into practice.

## Meditation

A famous teacher stimulated the curiosity of his students by offering an iron-clad guarantee to achieve high grades in school, a good job, great opportunities, the ability to do just about anything they set their mind to, and success in everything, **if** they would do just one simple practice. Students were encouraged to guess what this exercise could be. Since it was obvious that no one was going to guess the right answer, the teacher opened his Bible to Joshua 1:8, which says:

*This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success (NKJV).*

He also turned to Psalm 1:1-3, which reads:

**1** *Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2* *But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3* *He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper (NKJV).*

How will you make your way prosperous and have good success? How can you become an individual who succeeds in whatever you do? Simplistic as it may sound, the answer to achieving all the above goals, and more, is by practising the art of Scriptural meditation.

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Derived from the Hebrew word *haga*, which means to utter, moan, meditate, mutter, devise, or plot, meditation conjures up the image of the moaning of a dove on low volume. *Haga* is used in Psalm 1:2 (KJV), which says “...in his law doth he *meditate*.” Psalm 19:14 (KJV) says “Let the words of my mouth, and the *meditation* of my heart...” using the Hebrew word *higgayown*, which means a musical or murmuring noise. Another rendering is Psalm 119:99 (KJV) “...Thy testimonies are my *meditation*” utilizing *Siychah*, or “to contemplate; deep reflection and devotion.” In the New Testament, Paul uses the Greek word *meletao*, “to allow to revolve around in the mind, to muse,” when he says to Timothy “*Meditate on these things...*” (I Timothy 4:15 KJV).

The Bible uses other terms to describe the discipline of meditation. These include “remember,” “ponder,” “consider,” “think on these things,” “behold,” “muse,” “let this mind be in you that was also in Christ,” “let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly,” and “set your mind on things above.” The benefits promised are phenomenal: joy and sweetness in outlook (Psalm 104:34), prosperity (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2-3), a greater love for God and His Word (Psalm 119:97), zeal for ministry (I Sam. 12:24; I Tim. 4:15), the peace of God (Phil. 4:8,9), great insight (Ps. 119:99; II Tim. 2:7), growth and stability in Christ (Ps. 1:2-3, John 15:4), repentance and clean living (Ps 39:3; Rev. 2:5), ability to make clear decisions (Matt. 6:33, Col. 3:2), and an effective prayer life (John 15:7).

While the wicked meditate on their plots and schemes, the righteous can also meditate day and night in order to reflect on God's superlative Word and draw insight, inspiration, and strength for the coming days. The process is not unlike a cow's digestion; it chews its cud, alternatively swallowing, regurgitating, swallowing, and repeating the process. Similarly, this circuitous meditation actually draws out great wisdom and depth in God...so much so, that the person who meditates emerges as a man or woman with

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wise answers, great purpose, unmistakable authority, and the blessing of God following them wherever they go.

Scriptural meditation has no set pattern nor do you have to commit a lot of time to practice. But by all means, set a few minutes aside, particularly in a relaxed setting. Take a given passage of Scripture. Recite the verse over and over, taking time, not rushing, repeating key phrases and pondering even individual words.

For example, take Psalm 1:1 "*Blessed is the man...*" A meditation dialogue might go something like this:

- "Blessed is the **man**."
- "The **man** is blessed."
- "Blessed? How blessed?"
- "**By God** is the man **blessed**."
- "How much is the man blessed?"
- "The man is blessed *immeasurably*."
- "The parameters of blessing include a tree planted by the rivers of water."
- "He, like a tree, brings forth his fruit in his **season**."
- "In his **season**. This means there is a time to grow, to prepare, to be in training, and there is a time or **season** to bring forth the fruit."

Why not take the meditation challenge? Set aside a few minutes, perhaps five to ten daily, and meditate on God's Word. Try it for a few weeks. See if you do not notice a change "in your season" and every season.

## Know God's Word

# Confession

Confessing the Bible is a healthy and profitable practice. Take the passage that contains the promise you need and begin to confess it aloud, several times if necessary. For example, if you are battling with temptation and sinful thoughts, confess Romans 6:6,11,14 (KJV) because “*our old man is crucified with him,*” to reckon yourself “*to be dead indeed unto sin,*” and “*For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*”

For even greater impact, have the verses in front of you as you confess. Proverbs 4:21 promises that people who do not let God's word depart from their eyes, but keep it in the midst of their hearts, will find life and health. Regular confession of God's Word, done devotionally and not mechanically, as a means of drawing near to the Lord and not some magical formula, is guaranteed to build your faith (Romans 10:17) and bring the desired results.

We are called by God to confess from our mouths the quickened word in our heart, not just once but on a regular basis. Heartfelt, Holy Spirit-controlled confession of Scripture, is a healthy exercise in prayer, preaching, and/or testifying. The Bible can literally become your prayer book as you take promise after promise and confess them aloud before the throne of grace. It is also a legitimate and healthy exercise to personalize the Word; for example, when Romans 8:37 (KJV) says “*...in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us,*” the individual can confess “*...in all these things I am more than a conqueror...*” Gently rely on God's glorious grace when this time of confession comes, whether before Him in prayer or people in church or public.

## Know God's Word

Meditation and confession are to ensure that God's Word finds its ultimate resting-place in our hearts. Only when the Word is in the heart can it bear fruit and bring incalculable blessing. Ponder these Scriptures:

- Deuteronomy 6:6 (NKJV): *And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.*
- Deuteronomy 11:18 (NKJV): *Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.*
- Psalms 119:11 (NKJV): *Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!*
- Luke 2:51 (KJV): *And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.*
- Romans 10:8 (NKJV): *But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach):*
- Colossians 3:16 (KJV): *Let the words of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

Our goal in studying the Bible is to learn more about Jesus Christ so we can become more like Him. In so doing, we become the light of the world, salt of the earth. Innumerable blessings await you as you embark on the journey of living by the Book.

### ***Chapter Synopsis***

The link between Biblical knowledge/practice and salt-and-light integrity is indisputable. Different methods of Bible study were outlined to get the Word into your heart so it can shine out of your life.

## Know God's Word

### *Study Questions*

1. List several benefits of studying and knowing the Bible.
2. Name the three parts of sound devotional study (or Bible survey).
3. Which one brings transformation?
4. What adjectives describe the Bible's inspiration?
5. What benefit does Scriptural meditation bring?

### *Read and Reflect*

*"1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper"* Psalm 1:1-3 NKJV

1. What things does the blessed man do and not do?
2. What does he do with the law of the Lord?
3. What results does he achieve by doing this thing?