
The Book of the Ages

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Understanding the impact of the Bible on history and its relevance for our lives!

Is the Bible important? Have you ever wondered what the Bible's influence has been on you, personally, whether you read it daily or not at all? What about others around you? Have you considered the Bible's relevance and importance in the shaping of Western society and culture? The fact is, the Bible has sold more copies than all other books in history and has shaped the hands that built this country, the United States of America. Even in the days of eroding family values, and an academic and political backlash to remove the Bible and its relevance, the fact is the Bible is the most important document and influence in Western culture. It has been more influential than the U.S. Constitution, the Magna Carta or any philosophical or political idea. The Bible is so important it has influenced much we take for granted in the world from science, technology, and even our political system! And, I have not even brought up the Holy Spirit yet!

Is the Bible important?

If we know why the Bible is important, then we can study the Bible more effectively!

Over the years, I have asked people at various colleges and universities, from students to professors, what they thought about the Bible. During those conversations, I usually received an ear full of hostility. I would get responses that dismiss the Bible as an antiquated book of rhetoric that has no meaning for us in our modern age. Some of the Professors believe that the Bible was responsible for the problems of darkness and disgust of ages past. Savvier students would challenge me with all kinds of rhetoric such as, *why should we study such an antiquated book in an age of science and reason? Why study a book that cannot possibly be understood, where highly educated people fight against each other for its meaning, over which so many churches split, cause divisions and change, form different denominations, have such different thinking that varies so much, and has wounded so many? Why study the Bible, when for centuries people have used it to fight against each other in wars and violence? Why study a book that has caused countless thousands of people to die in its crusades? Why study a book that is filled with so many myths and contradictions? Why study a book that is boring, has no historical contribution and has no bearing on us today?*

I also posed the same question to people in various churches and denominations, and, would you believe, I received equally as many different answers and even some hostility for asking such questions. They usually believed in the merits of reading the Bible. Even at liberal churches, I would find people in support of the Bible. But, what amazed me was that some Christians did not see any relevance in reading it! In fact, some people got mad at me for even asking them if they read the Bible on a regular basis. They acted as if it were not worth reading, as if there were far more important things that needed that space of time such as sports, TV, parties, going out, reading romance novels, and so forth.

I wondered if the responses from the secular colleges were so different from many of the Christians who believed that daily Bible reading or study did not matter. One group says emphatically that they refuse to believe in the Bible's precepts, while the other group may believe in it but they do nothing about it. You see, from my perspective, both groups were doing nothing about it and only one group was honest about it!

To the secular historian, the thinking is that throughout church history, Christians have fought amongst themselves and shown no unity or proof that the Bible is the Word of God. They see the same answers echoed from Christians as those of the atheists who cry with antagonism; Christians fight and disagree, and atheists are honest and simply refuse to believe. This is truly sad. The Word of God becomes a tightrope that displays the acrobatic skill of its defender's oration, and then becomes the rope of a pulling contest to see who is right. Of course, the Bible's Defender is the Spirit of God; it stands by itself and defends itself. The Bible does not need our oration or rhetoric.

Although God is lifted up and believed in most churches, the Bible is still fought and argued about, and read so little. So, the same result comes to pass; the Bible is shown to the world as a book of strife and schism, a reservoir of conflict and division. Assumptions and rhetoric have replaced discipleship, trust, and obedience. And, I'm not speaking about the atheists here!

Christians who claim the Bible's truths and carry her under their arms to church may never venture into her pages; thus, an insult may occur to their will and intellect. Even the best intended disciples are under the duress of finding themselves incased in fatigue and mood in its reading that scatters them from its pages. Then, there are those who refuse to admit they do not know the Bible. They do not know how to study the Word, and, for the sake of pride, they will refuse to learn. They think, "I grew up in the church, I know the Bible!" Yet, they do not. Pride is an excellent way to lift one's self up, and arrogance makes an effective cover to the truth.

So, who would dare venture into the arms of a book that seems to represent so much hate and strife? Why, indeed, do we study the Bible? Why is the Bible important? If the Bible is important to you, do you also realize it is important to others around you, too?

Is the Bible really the ground that produces the crops of strife and division? Are its fruits bruised and rotten with contradiction and myth? Are her crops indigestible, having no place in the produce stand of reason? Are her pages filled with meaningless stories that bore us, the sheep, to sleep?

Those are the principle arguments that the atheists give. They are also the same reasons why most Christians do not read their Bible. Most Christians may not say that the Bible is full of contradictions, but they are being contradictory by claiming Christ but ignoring His Word. Most Christians may not personally believe that the Bible was the cause of society's problems, but they do not use it to solve theirs. Most Christians may even believe that the Bible is full of treasures and goodness for us today, but they do not harvest her crops, or use her treasures for their table. Then we wonder why our society is failing and our church is riddled with conflict and strife?

When we ask people in our seminars why they do not read the Bible, we get four primary categories: 1. It is boring. 2. It is too difficult to read or understand. 3. The Bible is too old to have any bearing on my life. 4. People fight over it too much. Although response three and four are rare for Believers, I believe most Christians have experienced numbers one and two first hand. I know I have. I also have asked, *how important has the Bible been to you?* And most would say a four or five on a scale of 1 to 10! And, these are the Christians who are attending a *How to study the Bible* seminar!

Even if we do not think it is important to us or to society, the Bible has always been true. We may attempt to dismiss its claims and its intrusion into our lives. However, the Bible has been the light in darkness, the strength in our weakness, our comfort in our troubles, and our guide for our lives. Because God's Word is *more precious than gold, than much pure gold; and is sweeter than honey.* (Psalm 19:10) When we try to live the Christian life alone without the guidance and support from the Word, we are like a doctor performing an operation without ever going to medical school.

Why has the Bible has been important throughout history?

The Bible has been important throughout the history of humanity and society. If the Bible has been true throughout history, the question we must ask ourselves is, *is it true for me?* If the Bible is the cradle for our knowledge and growth in Jesus, we must ask ourselves, *is Jesus is really true? If He is true for me, what have I done with this truth? If He is true, and His Word is true for me, does that mean He is true for others, too?* There is an academic debate in

scholarly circles stating that the Bible can only be personal and can never, or must never, be used to convict another person. To hold such a view is to deny the Bible's reality, power, promise, and relevance. It is also a denial of its past influence and its potential continual influence.

As far as the Bible's influence and social impact in history, did you know it has had more influence than any person, group, philosophy, or idea—bar none? For this argument, let us take a look at my home country, the United States of America. The U.S. is less than three hundred years old whereas most countries can look back at thousands of years of history. The U.S. has less productive farm land than its neighbor, Mexico, and far less natural resources, too. So, why is the U.S. the only super power and the world's economic and political leader? Why is Mexico a third world country? After all, most countries have a deeper history, more resources, and better strategic placing. The answer is a single Book, the Book of the ages that shaped the minds of its founders and builders and gave the principles for America's success. America was shaped by the Bible to create liberty and freedom, whereas Mexico was formed from a skewed combination of socialism and Catholicism which created corruption and oppression. Mexico has separation of the Church and State as its foundation; the United States does not even though many people believe it does. Mexico also has provisions to discourage individual capitalism and industrialism the key components for socioeconomic growth. The first objection to this argument is that Europe has had the Bible for over a thousand years longer; why are they not a super power? The answer is, they are—or, at least were until they fell to bankrupt philosophies.

The primary principle that motivated the Puritans to leave England and terraform a new world from scratch was *freedom*. They lived in a theocracy where the government was oppressive and riddled with corruption. Where religion was used to tyrannize and hold back the people. This made the people downtrodden and demoralized. The government used the name of the Bible to oppress the people, but this is not what the Bible taught; rather, it was what the leaders said it taught. It was used as a sword of tyranny and not the cradle of Truth. So, instead of spiritual growth prospering a nation, the people lived under autocracy with oppressive agendas for limited personal gain for the select.

So, the Puritans sought to exercise the principles of Scripture, and that principle was freedom. Freedom, human rights, and liberty are what give hope to the individual; this builds community and fuels a successful, educated society. The founders of America were heavily and primarily influenced by Biblical precepts. This is the idea that made America great and inspired the booming economic prosperity. It is the Bible that gave a higher work ethic and a government free from oppressive corruption. With oppression and corruption out of the way, its people were given the highest standard of living the world has ever known. This inspired cooperation, personal development, and education which led to the advances in inventions, medicine and science. All this was from the pages of the Bibles.

A case in point: Can you name one hospital or college founded by atheists? What hospital or major college was founded by the Muslims or Hindus, or Buddhists? Virtually all hospitals in America were started by churches, although since taken over by big business, but that is another issue. Virtually all the Ivy League and private colleges and universities were started by churches. Education and liberty are Biblical themes, not rooted in atheism, other religions or most philosophies.

A lot of professors and researchers in academia have claimed that the classic philosophers, as well as the European thinkers, gave birth to American idealism and freedom. But, this is, in fact, totally false. It is the Bible that inspired the stand against corruption and feudalism. I have read extensively the classic philosophers and theorists and no one has crafted and promoted an argument for freedom and personal liberty—not Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and definitely not Nietzsche, the Stoics, Existentialism, Secular Humanism, Logic, Reason or Psychology!

Europe was oppressed by the Holy Roman Empire after the collapse of Rome, which collapsed after Christianity devalued into corruption and decadence. The Bible was blamed for its collapse and oppression. The Bible was the flag in name only—not by its precepts—in these early political systems. Corruption reigned, and the Dark Ages followed. The Bible was not read or studied; therefore, its exploit was in vain. It was not even allowed to be translated. Many great men of God gave up their lives valiantly to translate the Bible for people to know the real God and how their lives could benefit. The political leaders fought against them vehemently and burned people like Wycliffe, 200 years before the Reformation, to the stake. The corrupt leaders were in great fear of the Bible because the people would see they had rights and overthrow the government, which is exactly what happened after the Bible was translated and distributed. The Reformation succeeded because the Bible was mass-produced by means of the new invention, the printing press, and the corrupt governments could no longer keep the people in the Dark Ages! The quest for knowledge and the Bible in everyday language help give birth to the Renaissance, which helped the Reformation. The Reformation gave birth to a modern and culturally prosperous Europe.

Most academics would counter that it was the Magna Carta that gave birth to personal rights in 1215 A.D. The Magna Carta is considered the first binding document that gave birth to the concept of rights and individual freedom to people in Europe from the oppression of kings. Although it took centuries and the Black Death in the 1300's to be accepted and exercised, it led to the ending of the feudal system which then led to economic and societal growth. The Magna Carta, in fact, did as they said; however, what influenced it? The Magna Carta tells us God grants us our Rights, our Wisdom, and our Dignity, and that all men are free. It was totally instilled with Biblical principles and quotes; in fact, it makes

an excellent Bible Study! Here are just a few quotes: *by the grace of God, regard to God, and for the salvation of our soul, unto the honor of God, and the advancement of his holy Church, we have granted to God, that the English Church shall be free, God's Law is followed from our Lord, under supervision of the Church, for God and the amendment of our kingdom, kept in good faith.*

It took the Reformation in the 1500s to further challenge the world that there can be personal freedom. The Magna Carta gave birth to modern Europe and its prosperity. Even the French Revolutionaries who blamed the Bible for their oppression received their quest for freedom from Biblical precepts. They wanted liberty as taught from the Bible. But, they also blamed the Bible for their oppression. They did not realize their King and Church were not using the Bible, only their pride in the name of the Bible. And, if you read the U.S. Constitution, you will see that God is the One who gives us our rights, freedoms, and liberty, and that the Constitution is filled with Biblical ideology!

Academics will counter this argument that it was science, not the Bible that birthed reason and Americanism. What about the pursuit of science? The inductive Bible Study methods we teach at *Into Thy Word* were envisioned by the early Church Fathers and Augustine, who searched them out from the Bible (Acts 17:10-12). The quest for Logos is the quest for reason and wisdom. The inductive method is the primary hypothesis and logic behind real scientific principles. Proverbs is a book dedicated to wisdom and the scientific method. Virtually every great inventor and scientist obtained their precepts and thought from Biblical insertion, whether avert, obscured, or subjugated.

I had professors in College and read textbooks that claimed that the Founding Fathers of the U.S. were all or mostly all Deists. A type of pseudo Christian religion that denounces the supernatural, denies revealed religion, basing their belief on the light of nature and reason. Yet, with just a little research you will find that virtually every one of the 55 writers and signers of the United States Constitution were members and active in their Christian denominations: 29 were Anglicans, 16 to 18 were Calvinists, 2 were Methodists, 2 were Lutherans, 2 were Roman Catholic, 1 was a Quaker and Anglican, and 1, yes just 1 was a open Deist, Dr. Franklin who also rigorously attended and contributed financially to various churches, and who called for public prayer. He was not much of a Deist, just curious with the practice of faith and reason together! The Continental Congress and the early sessions of the United States Congress also included several hours a day of prayer and fasting! The prayers have gone down in eminence but still continue today. A secular nation does not pray and defiantly does not fast!

The next objection from the academics is that John Locke (1632-1704), a Philosopher, Political Scientist, Historian and Physician was the main influencer of our Founding Fathers. Well they are correct for the most part. Locke was the most influential philosopher in the 1760-1780's as was Jonathan Edwards. Locke

was a committed Christian who emphasized faith and rational thinking (Letters concerning Toleration) and pleaded for religious liberty. He emphasized in his main work "Of The State of Nature," that people "will reasonably acquiesce to the institution of some government in order to avoid self-destruction." He also emphasizes that government had to have a system to realize and control our natural "sinful" state so tyranny and corruption can be avoided. This was realized and accomplished by the "Checks and Balances" of our three government branches, Legislature, Judicial and Executive. So no one branch has control and for extra redundancy the Founding Fathers, influenced by John Calvin, instituted two legislative bodies, Congress and the Senate.

Locke was heavy and passionately infused by Scriptural principles! Locke believed that our Almighty God gave us faith and reason to be the main instruments of setting up a Government. This was crucial to prevent absolute individual power and corruption and empower leaders to execute judgment on behalf of the people. Edwards produced the quintessential theology of Christian spirituality for his age. He was the second major influencer of the Founders. The Founders then blended Lockean philosophy and Calvinist theology together which produced the U.S. governmental system. Political revisionists can say no all they want, all you have to do is read Locke and the Federalist Papers for yourself.

The skeptics then counter that the Bible says nothing about personal freedom, liberty, and the establishment of government. Well they probably never read it, here are just a few passages: Genesis 41:25-57; Deuteronomy 16:18-17:20; 2 Samuel 5:3; 2 Chronicles 17:7-9; 23:3, 11; Jeremiah 34:8-11; Daniel 1:3-20; Romans 13:1-7! The Founding Fathers clearly recognized that justice and civil authority are legitimate extensions of Divine Law (Natural law) through a covenant relationship with Almighty God. The establishment of a civil government which exists primarily to administer justice is from Biblical precepts. The Bible gives us rather explicit guidance on basic rules of adjudication, rules of judicial procedure, rules of evidence, rules for capital punishment, and guidelines for the establishment of an appellate system.

"Third World" countries, where people are starving in the streets, do not operate on Biblical principles. They do not have freedom and liberty as their *mantra*. So, they do not have truth or tolerance for free thinking. In fact, they are infused with corruption—corruption that removes hope and that oppresses the people. I have traveled and personally researched this thesis all over the world. I have seen India produce more food than it needs, yet many of its people starve and are oppressed in a caste system based on religious dogma. I have seen my neighbor, Mexico, do the same. I was in Russia just before and after the collapse of communism and saw how corruption and organized crime took over. I held babies who died in my arms and saw several families crowded into a single studio apartment.

While in Japan, I was curious how a defeated Feudal Imperialism went from economic depletion to one of the world's great economic powers in less than two decades—without the resources or infrastructure. I found out there that General MacArthur inspired their rebirth by a constitution with Biblical values. The people saw that the West had a better plan and the freedom essential for their recovery, so they adopted our system, even though less than 2% of the population claims to be Christian. When the Japanese received their freedom, they became inventive, cooperative, and practiced social change that gave them business, jobs, and a higher standard of living. If they had won the war, the people would still be oppressed and in a Feudal system of corruption and oppression. In fact, the best witnessing tool I have found for the Japanese is to show them their prosperity compared to their past and what inspired their economic and social development!

I have seen the same diversity of success versus social breakdown within the same economic and social issues. Take a close look at countries with the same culture and resources that have split. One side flourishes while the other is reduced to dire poverty and oppression. Just take a look at North Korea versus South Korea, East Germany versus West Germany and Haiti versus the Dominican Republic. For the most part, it is the same people groups and same social situations at the start. Then they split; one side in an oppressive regime with communist or social ideology, and the other side with liberty and freedom stemming from the Bible. On which side would you rather live? You did not see people fleeing from West Germany into East Germany, nor do you see people fleeing from South Korea into North Korea. Do West Germany and South Korea have to build walls and security systems to keep the people in? We have to ask why that is, and why would we not want to build a political system that creates cooperation and not corruption!

Haiti and the Dominican Republic are a part of the same Caribbean island, yet two distinctive nations. One side is a hot vacation spot filled with freedom, beauty and prosperity the other side people are rioting, starving and oppressed. One side has a Biblically based constitution the other a totalitarian regime. Another case is when President Lincoln with the Emancipation Proclamation freed the slaves most were given the opportunity to establish their own country back in Africa with better resources and opportunity than their forefathers had. Seems like a great opportunity, fortunately just a small percentage took advantage of this. Those who left established Liberia, and this country never ventured from its fourth world status. The people are destitute, impoverished, hopeless and in constant civil chaos. The Slaves that stayed in America even given the oppression and prejudice they received had it a hundred times better than those who left.

Did you know it is the Bible that birthed most of the world's written languages that were used to build community? All over the world, from Russia to tiny islands in the South Pacific where no written language existed before, Bible

translators gave most of the world its language. From language came society. India, for example, was a county of numerous feudal, languages and religious systems all fighting and competing with one another; the English missionaries united India and gave to the masses written languages, such as URDU and Hindi. Prior Sanskrit, the only other written language that I am aware of, was reserved for the highest caste and priests only. The county realized from the missionaries that it could have freedom and liberty, and even though Gandhi was not a Christian, he used Christian and Western precepts to obtain India's freedom without bloodshed and formed a Western-based constitution. All India has to do now is remove the corruption and adhere to their constitution to become a political and social success complete with prosperity and liberty. The Bible made, and can continue to make, this possible!

Even though the U.S. courts may disagree and secular thinking professors and activist judges will fight with all their might against the Bible's influence throughout history, the fact remains that the Bible is the foundation to American and Western society. The Muslims know this better than we do; that is why they so passionately hate us. They do not want freedom, democracy and liberty; they want theocracy and jihad. Which would you rather live under, oppression, or liberty? If you want a country to prosper, you first have to get rid of the corruption and give the people liberty, rights, and freedom, and the Bible tells us how. This allows the people to work together to build a society; when they are oppressed, only the oppressor lives well—and on the backs of the oppressed! The Bible is important in history to social and economic growth. Imagine what it can do for your personal growth!

What about the Inquisition and Crusades? Again, the Bible was used in vain by corrupt people who were getting their insights from Islam and jihad. "Kill the infidel," "subjugate the people," as well as "take over Jerusalem," and "burn the heretics," are Islamic principles—not Biblical! What about slavery? Many Christians approved of slavery and tried their hardest to use Scripture to defend it. But, their arguments stemmed from pride and were financially based, not Scripturally. It was the Abolitionists, who were devout Christians, who gave rise to freedom for the slaves; and, a great President, infused with Biblical principles, gave the slaves their freedom at great cost. In fact, slavery was banned in Europe in the first millennium by the Church, and did not rise again until corrupt and greedy people exploited the New World and subjugated its people for personal gain. Slavery, as practiced in Europe and the U.S., is not a Biblical position; freedom is!

If the Bible is true to history, then it is true to you and it is also true to others. This may be a bad argument in logic, but not in the scope of Who the Influencer is—and that is the God of Ages employing and empowering His Book of Ages! Without the Book of Ages, we are left with Imperialism, Feudalism, Communism, Socialism, Dictatorships, and Oppression—all of which are heinous and do not work either to the benefit of humanity or to God's glory! Without the

Book of Ages, your life will have no hope, no prosperity and the society you live in is meaningless, destitute, and destined to destruction and chaos!

Dr. John Eidsmoe's book "Christianity and the Constitution" is a well-documented source of the Biblical principles found in American government. He lists fifteen Biblical principles that are either derived from, or at least compatible with, Christianity and the Bible, they include:

1. A belief in God and His providence.
2. A belief that God's truth is revealed in the Bible.
3. A belief that human reason is a God-given power to be used to learn the truth.
4. A belief that man is neither perfect nor perfectible and that government institutions must take that into account.
5. A belief that God has ordained human government to restrain the sinful nature of man.
6. A belief that God has established certain physical laws as well as moral laws for the governance of mankind.
7. A belief that God has revealed his moral law through scriptures and that His truth is discoverable through human reason and human conscience.
8. A belief that human law must correspond to the divine law. Human laws that contradict God's law are non-binding and are to be resisted.
9. A belief that the revealed law and the law of nature include unalienable human rights which include life, liberty, and property.
10. A belief that the revealed law and the law of nature form the basis for the law of nations (international law) and this law of nations includes the right of a nation to defend itself against aggressors.
11. A belief that governments are formed by covenant (or compact) of the people in order to safeguard human rights.
12. A belief that governments have only such powers as are delegated to them by the people in the said covenants or compacts and that when governments attempt to usurp powers not so delegated, they become illegitimate and are to be resisted.
13. A belief that, human nature being what it is, rulers tend to usurp more and more power if given the opportunity.
14. A belief that the best way to prevent governments from usurping power is to separate their powers and functions into legislative, executive, and judicial branches.
15. A belief that, human nature being what it is, a free enterprise economy is the best way to give people an incentive to produce and develop national prosperity.

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The Authority of the Bible

Before we can get into what the Bible says about itself, we need to clear the skeptics away. First, you need to remember that the Bible is not merely one book, but a library of 66 books, all with a unifying theme and purpose that is all divinely inspired by our Lord. This is important because the primary objections for using the Bible to claim authority for itself is considered a logical fallacy by academia and educated skeptics. To them, it would be just plain dumb to consider the Bible relevant because of its age and using just "one source" (itself) to prove itself. It would be like quoting a single magazine article which says it holds all of the truth, and using that same article to prove it, versus using scores of separate research and information to state the case. Using one source is what crazy people and cult leaders do! But, the Bible is not just one book! So, there is no logical fallacy in using Scripture to support Scripture!

Let me give our scientific friends a thought; in the scientific field of physics, the *Holy Grail quest* is to find a theorem to unify all the fields of physics and natural law, to tie all of these scientific statements of facts such as gravity, things measured, and things observed together in one neat package. Sound easy?

Well, all of these fact-based sciences contradict one another, and sometimes even themselves! This would include quantum mechanics, Newtonian law and string theory, to Einstein's relativity. This quest is called the "Unified Field Theory." Some of the brightest minds that have ever existed, such as Steven Hawking and Einstein himself, spent all of their professional lives in search of it, but no one can find it. Why is this important or relevant? Because, all those disciplines of science "facts" contradict one another! The Bible does not; and it was written over a 1,500-year period of time. Even Shakespeare, author of the greatest English works of literature of all time, does not come close! So, we can take a confident look into God's Word to see what the Bible says about itself!

Why should we listen to a Book? Why is the Bible to be our authority for faith and practice—for life? Because, God tells us so! God is the author and has given it to us so we can, as the Army says, "be all you can be!" So, again, some would ask, *why should we heed this instruction; what right does the Bible have to rule over us?* Well, it does not rule over us; God, as Creator, has chosen His right to exercise divine guidance and authority, and has given us the institutions in written form, the Bible. As it is "God breathed," the Bible is the only infallible, authoritative truth we have; thus it is true in all that it says and what God requires of us. The Bible is actually the voice of God to His children—us. Thus, because He is God and we are not, we should, we must, submit to His authority through His Word. He has the right to command, and we are his troops called to proclaim His glory.

On the dark side, we must be aware that many people, including some Christian leaders, misuse the Bible for their own gain and pronounce their authority into it. The Reformers freed the Bible from the captivity of those who would not allow her pages to be read. We have to remember that the Bible can never say what it does not, or mean what it does not. Yet so many replace the truth of His Word with human lies, manipulation, and deception. We must free the Bible from those who dare tread their will upon its pages, and hide its truth for self-gain and self-gratification. We must claim God's Word for what it is, His Word, His authority, and His right to command and teach us.

So, what about all the objections?

There are three primary objections to the Bible. They all fall under the premise that people generally do not want to venture into it because of a fear of being convicted. I had a good friend who was a committed Christian who said he did not like to read the Bible. His fear was he would be convicted to become a missionary in a far off place and be miserable. I told him that God would never call you to something that you are not gifted and suited for and that if he did indeed receive a call to go to Outer Mongolia (his greatest fear); he would also have the burning desire and the gifts to go there. But, we like to cover up our fears of being convicted with arguments of reason and logic. That is to say, if we can prove our point, we do not have to listen to it. If we can put down the Bible,

then we can elevate ourselves, so we can think and do as we please. We do not need to be convicted by a book that is untrue. As for my friend, he dove into the Bible, and learned all that he could. What I find so funny is, he ended up in Russia, and he loved it!

First: The objection that the Bible is full of contradictions and myths.

As did so many others, I set out early in my liberal-mind-set life to prove that the Bible was full of contradictions. I majored in Psychology and Comparative Religions in a secular University to prove the Bible's irrelevance. I believed that all religions were the same—as my professors taught. So, I looked and looked, read all of the “scholarly” books that refute the Bible, and came to the conclusion that there are no real contradictions in the Word of God. And, believe me I tried hard to find them. There are none! I had to rethink my theology, and go from a “wrong” flaming liberal to being a down “right” conservative!

So, when somebody tells me that the Bible is full of contradictions, I politely ask them to show me. Most of the time, they get louder in their objections (as I once did) but provide me with no examples of contradictions. When there is a verse or passage that they feel is a contradiction, we look it up and discover it was either out of its context, or just not there. You may not have the expertise and savvy to answer such objections; that is OK! I get stumped occasionally and have to research it. That is why there are so many good books out there on Apologetics, such as Josh McDowell's “Evidence that Demands a Verdict.” We have lots of great links for apologetic websites on our *Links* channel.

Second: The Bible is too difficult to understand.

This was my first objection. I became a Christian and tried to read the Bible and I was stuck. I did not understand it. I found it confusing. And, I was no idiot; in fact, I was taking graduate courses in Nuclear Theory, Relative Field Theory, and Quantum Mechanics. I was 16 at the time (yes I was an egghead-geek), and the Bible was mysterious to me. The Bible I was reading was the one my Grandmother gave me at my confirmation. It was a beautiful leather Bible with very thin parchment. The text font was very small and you could see the back side almost as well as the front. It was also the King James Version. The combination of antiquated language, small print, and paper that was hard to read compounded with my dyslexia caused an unreadable document. No wonder I found it difficult. Then, a friend gave me the “Good News” Bible and the words and precepts flowed like a well-written, exciting novel. However, for years I refused to read the Good News Bible or any translation that to me did not look like a “real” Bible.

The objection I have heard over the years is, “the Bible is for pastors; I just do not understand it”. When I ask them to tell me about the Bible that they are reading, I find as it was as with me, that the translation is too old and the print too

small. And, sometimes they start with Revelation, and get confused. Yes, there are parts of the Bible that are hard to understand, but over 95% is as crystal clear as the daily newspaper. So, if you can read the newspaper, you can read the Bible!

Third: The Bible is boring.

This always dumbfounds me. The Bible is filled with stories of wonder and excitement. What grand Hollywood epic has more special effects than Genesis or Exodus? What TV soap opera has more excitement, sex, and betrayal than that of Judges? What novel have you read that has the elements of passion, wonder, crime, betrayal, lust, remorse, and heroism, with deep philosophy and truth? Shakespeare himself said he could never top the Bible; no one ever has; no one ever will. So, if you find the Bible boring, then life and death are boring. The excitement of love and the remorse of death are of no consequence. There has never been anything in all of human history that has so much for so many. The fears, struggles, problems, and solutions that the Bible characters face are what we face. They may not have had a flashing 12:00 on their VCR, but all that there is in life that matters, such as relationships, life, death, and the pursuit of life is what they had, and is what we have and deal with daily, too. The Bible is alive and incredibly exciting; if you find it boring, then switch to a better translation, and reboot your attitude.

The objections concerning the Bible are neutered, castrated from any threat to the reasonable mind. There are no contradictions in it, it is as readable as any magazine, and it is definitely not boring. The Bible has been relevant and impacting throughout history, and without it, humanity is destined to destruction. The question is, what is stopping you from examining its pages?

The Bible requires an effort.

There are three forces that pound and tear at the foundation of a growing Christian: pride, laziness, and dishonesty. And, the result of those three is usually the lack of motivation. I struggle with it. Sometimes I just do not feel like reading the Bible or even getting out of bed, and I am a pastor, and the director of a ministry that promotes Bible reading. Yet, we all can be besieged with the lack of desire. That is when we need to drop to our knees in prayer and seek His face! There is also a labor factor that is required for any endeavor, and the Bible is no different than any other reading. To read a novel, you have to first be willing to sacrifice the money to go buy it, then set aside precious time for its reading, and then gather the necessary effort to be able to begin. Then, after all that expense, time, and effort, you still need to remain committed so you will be able to finish it. It is the same with the Bible!

As for study, well, study is even more labor intensive. So, when we fail to get into His Word, it is more of an unwillingness to work at it. Are you committed

to a magazine or a novel? Is the time and effort put forth for *People* or *Hot Rod* the same as for your devotions? How much time do you spend watching TV? Did you know that half of a sitcom is 15 minutes, and all it takes is 15 minutes a day for you to read though the entire Bible in a year?

The above objections are mere excuses that cloak us from responsibility. Our fallen nature is to be lazy and seek the easy way out, and it will get in the way of being His disciple more than any other hindrance we could ever face. Even in the mist of harsh persecution, the Bible and Christian growth flourishes. I used to sneak Bibles into Russia, and would see hunger for the Word as I never have felt or seen personally—in others or myself. Now, the long iron curtain has fallen and we are training those once hungry Christians to teach the Bible. Do you have that hunger to know His Word? If not, what is stopping you? With me, it was pride and the thought that I already knew it!

It is when we are comfortable and complacent that our lack of willingness clouds us from growing in our Lord. The problem is our neglect, not the Bible!

Why should we study the Bible?

Do you realize that if you are a Christian, and have read the entire Bible, you are in the minority? Does this scare you? Well, it should! If you study the Bible yourself, you are in an even greater minority that even most pastors do not fall into! Yet, all of them would have an opinion of the Bible, teach, and make decisions based on their understanding of the Bible. If you were not scared before, you should be now! Do you realize that most seminaries are turning out pastors who are Biblically illiterate? They may, at best, have taken just a couple of classes in Bible—if any at all. I took all of the Bible courses that were offered when I was in seminary, but I felt poorly prepared. Fortunately, I undertook the study of His Word myself. I was fortunate to go to a good seminary—Fuller, in Pasadena—that gave me a good foundation and the tools to be a good exegete (how to study the Bible), but they did not teach me all that was in it. It was up to me to take the tools that I had learned and apply them so I could be a good exegete. But, many pastors are going into their pulpits ignorant, either not knowing the tools or how to use those tools.

This is why a lot of pastors are not leading Bible studies in our churches, and why so few churches even have a Bible study. In one church I served, there was only one adult Bible study, and an ex-missionary led it. Everyone else felt they were too old and/or busy to lead one. A godly woman, who was 100 years old at the time, led the one and only Bible study at that church! She was a true saint and committed to Christ as Lord; the rest of the church simply did not get it! It is sad that a lot of pastors feel that they are not able to lead Bible studies, and

even discourage others from doing so, lest they may be “shown up!” Now, you should be terrified!

I recently was on a committee to examine seminary grads seeking ordination *Preparation for Ordination exam*. I saw several seminary graduates unable to answer simple Sunday school questions. I had high school students in the inner city that would blow them away (in Bible knowledge). So many pastors are attending seminary, but then are leaving ill prepared to teach His most precious Word. (Now, you should be hiding under the bed!) I knew one pastor who lived in mortal fear of teaching the Bible! He felt that he was a fraud; his sermons came from a magazine or the internet and he concentrated on counseling (at which he was good). It took a lot of arm-twisting to get him to learn the Bible. He was embarrassed that people would find him out. Now, the pastors overseas whom we are reaching have the same problem with the lack of Bible knowledge. But, their reason is that they do not have seminaries or those great resources that we have!

Do not get me wrong; I am not seminary, or even pastor, bashing, I am pointing out a critical problem in a lot of our churches today. They create “pew-sitters” who go to church in name only, but do nothing with their faith, even refusing to learn and grow in the Word. This is a problem both in our leadership and in the pew, where the people do not want to follow a good leader. They allow pride and laziness get in the way of knowing His Word. Or, they seek sensationalism and personality over truth and relevance. Not learning and adhering to the precepts of Scripture effects every decision and action that the church faces and makes.

The Bible has been debated much and read little over the centuries. All kinds of theology have been excavated from its pages. Great nuggets of inspiration have been found in the precepts of its truth, while other schemes, falsehoods, and crazy doctrines have been cleverly placed where they do not belong. The quest for grandstanding and sensationalism to gather as many followers as possible has clouded the pulpit and airways from the Truth. Where truth once reigned, comes confusion and spurious doctrines. Yes, people follow the personalities and charisma of its leaders, but where is the Truth; where is the Word; where is the discipleship?

On the positive side, we have seen the rising interest in home Bible studies since the early 1970s, which, for some strange reason, were a rarity in the U.S. beforehand. We have seen the development of dozens of new translations, Bible helps, resources, and even software that cuts research time to a mere fraction compared with the past. There are more ministries (including *Into Thy Word*) that are teaching and distributing His precious Word more than ever before in history. On the dark side—at the same time, more and more people are going astray from His Word more than ever before.

So, what has happened? We have the same Spirit, the same Word, more and greater resources, more translations, more ministries, and more Bible studies than ever before. Yet, many churches close their doors every year, and people are leaving the church. More false doctrines are spreading and taking over the truth more than ever before, too. So, we have more resources and more Bible studies, yet fewer churches and more false doctrine; this does not make sense. Or, does it? To the committed disciple and Bible lover, this is extremely frustrating. I sometimes even wonder if it is worth the time and effort to teach truth when false teaching is so enticing and claiming so many.

So, why? How do two contradictory events make sense? When something good of God begins to work, Satan and our evil, fallen nature will synergistically combine to thwart it. We may not sit down in a dark, smoke filled room in the back of a bar to hedge a deal with a guy in a red suit smelling of brimstone, but nevertheless, the results are the same. Satan pulls out all the stops, and we seek to glorify ourselves and try to get into the action, even if we have to make stuff up to get our piece. This, too, synergistically combines with the lack of solid Bible leaders and Bible knowledge to produce a weak church, ripe for false teachings and political power plays. (I can only guess that all those great resources just look good on the shelf, when they need to be put in action.) All these factors, joined together, result in thousands of people each year leaving the church hurt, confused, and disillusioned.

So, when all the home Bible studies and resources were spreading, Satan was too, and is there in force with his entourage (demons) to manipulate the results. And, many leaders were there too, arguing, spreading confusion, backstabbing, and engaging in their own manipulation. The home Bible studies and the expository preaching from the pulpit are to teach the truth of God's most precious Word. And, this has been happening, as many great churches have sprung up while others rekindled their call. In the most part, the home Bible studies have been essential, and must build and continue. But, we need to be aware that at the same time of growing Bible studies, human, fallen thinking is walking hand in hand with Satan to spoil the work of our Lord. Personal political agendas and power quested individuals are entering in the Bible study and pulpit with a self-purpose mentality to take the spotlight away from God in most of His churches. How many sermons have had the pastor's experience and stories as their central focus; how many Bible studies have been led by leaders with their own agenda? As I travel around and speak and teach in churches, I am astounded at the degree of "self-worship" and "pastor worship" that is in the church. Either the pastor is worshiped or the pastor is on trial in the court of pew sitters who do not want to be convicted. And, there is lack of Christ's shed blood being lifted up and preached. We have to not only continue home Bible studies, but also reform them, train the leaders, and infuse a passion for the truth of His Word so that the focus becomes growth and discipleship, not personalities, personal agendas, or even programs.

Those of us in ministry are never to look at ourselves as above others! We are not, we serve Him who serves. A prideful church leader is a heinous sight before our Lord and they are the ones who are truly blind! Blind to His Word! A leader is to lead others into the depths and precepts of Christ and is not superior in anyway. We do this with our love for the Lord empowering our love for others (Matt. 20:20-34; John 3:30; Gal. 2:20-21; 2 Cor. 4:5; Phil 3:10-14; 4:12)!

I have to confess; I too have struggled with this, as I was very arrogant and condescending in my early pastoral days. In the opposite sense of Biblical ignorance, I overpowered people with the Word. I figured since I was so much smarter and educated, I had all the answers. I would engage in conversations with my rhetoric skill, while my ears took a break. Maybe I had good answers, but I was not listening or being encouraging to people. And, when I taught, my teaching came across as patronizing. I even swooped in to take over Bible studies that were defective instead of discipling those already in the lead. I may have even crushed hearts and calls when I was supposed to lift up and glorify Christ. I would speak so highly above people's heads that no one understood what I was saying. God had to swat me a few times before I got it right. I had to learn—it is about Christ and not about me. It is His Word, and I am just His servant.

The result of our political games and lifting of ourselves instead of the Lord has created an enigma in place of the Word. In the early days of Billy Graham's ministry, all he had to do was say, "the Bible says..." and people had a general grasp of its contents and that it was indeed His Word. Today, when Billy Graham says "the Bible says..." most people will wonder what Bible; what is in it; whose opinion; whose interpretation. Has Billy changed his message? No. Has the Bible changed? No. We have created the enigma of argument in place of a solid, comforting foundation of truth—as it is. No longer does the Bible present a unified identity. To the non-Christian, it is a document of conflicting and changing meanings. It no longer makes sense; it is a piece of clay that can be sculptured to our own image and needs.

This not only hurts our outreach endeavors, but the church as well! Because, even though we have all these wonderful ministries and resources, very few people are actually reading the Bible and using those resources, especially the leaders in the church! As a former church growth consultant, I was amazed at the lack of basic Bible understanding when I conducted leadership retreats and had church leaders develop vision and direction from God's Word. Many could not find the books of the Bible nor had even a basic understanding of the theological principles of the denomination that they were representing. That is why people in denominational conventions promote crazy stuff such as homosexuality and re-imagining God, because they do not know better. They infuse their agenda over God's. The church has forgotten to train and disciple its people so they can know Him better and be poured out to Him (John 14-15; Gal. 2:20; Phil.1:6; 3:10).

While in seminary, I worked as a cooperate trainer for a major bank; one of the things I did was train tellers how to detect counterfeit money. I received my training from the American Secret Service who not only guards the President but whose principle duty is to track and thwart counterfeits. I was commissioned to train the managers of bank branches. In our training, I had them feel real \$100 bills with their eyes closed to get to know the real one. Then I gave them sample counterfeits; just by the feel of them, they were able to quickly detect phony \$100 bills. We also had elaborate displays of various counterfeits from the Treasury Department as well as all kinds of things to memorize, electronic gadgets, ink dabs, and other ways to detect the counterfeit bills. But, I found if you spent the time to know the real one, the fakes were easily spotted; the gadgets were not necessary. As Christians, we must be willing and able to stop the phony teaching and the apathy that is rampant in our churches. The best way we can do this is by knowing the real One, and spreading the real message and Truth.

If the leaders are not grounded Biblically, then we are in trouble. Because, they are making decisions based on human reasoning and not God's—for God's house! This scares me. I sat through many, many committee and council meetings over the years and listened to some of the most foolish discussions and circles of rhetoric—with nothing getting done for Him. These same elders had no devotional life, did not know the Word, and, I would guess, did not care. Their position was political—as whom they were in society and not who they were in Christ. So, the decisions they made seriously hampered the church. It amazes me how this goes on and on; I guess people just do not get it, and are blinded by their arrogance and Satan's influence.

Why should we study the Bible? Because, to be a growing, effective Christian, we need to get what is in the Bible. We can avoid the counterfeit by knowing the real One. We have to end the apathy, arrogance, confusion, and falsehoods coming out of the church. We have to stop our self-grandstanding and keep preaching the message of Christ crucified, because it is about Him—not us. We are the recipients of His truth and grace. We are not the message, nor are we the opinion. We are the means by which He chooses to work. We have to give away our self-motivations, leaving them at the foot of the Cross.

The *why* of studying the Bible is to bring our mindsets in line with His truth. We cannot do that when we refuse to yield ourselves to our Lord. We cannot do that when pride and arrogance are piloting at the helm, or apathy is running the bridge. We can not ignore the Bible's relevance in history or in our personal lives. If we do, we will have closed off churches and will reap corrupt governments and broken and hopeless lives. Remember, He is Lord—not co-pilot, or vice president, or divine bellhop. He is God and Creator and King of the universe who loves us and desires the best for all of us. Thus, when we yield ourselves to His precepts, we are giving Him glory which is the primary fruit from studying the Bible.

More thoughts on why should we study the Bible

- The study of the Bible matters! We must study the Bible because it is the foundation for life. God even commands us to study His Word as the priority before we do anything else (Deut. 6: 6-9).
- Because we are to love Him (Deut. 6:4-5).
- Because He demands we teach others the Word (2 Tim. 3:14-17).
- Because we are to fear, trust, understand, and respect Him (Prov. 1:7; 3:5: 9:10)
- As a Christian, we need to live a life of distinction; and the only way to receive the knowledge of that distinction is to get into the Word!
- We do not want to be “barcode” Christians who do not care what is in the box because only the label matters, or that Christianity is just “fire insurance” from hell!
- We must seek out the truth and the answers that we need from the final authority, and not the ways of the world!
- If we do not study the Bible, then we set ourselves up as the final judge and authority, and not God. We will lead ourselves to societal corruption and personal loss of freedom and hope—all leading us down the road to hell made from the paving of false truths and distractions.
- The point of Christianity is to be a transformed person through self-surrender to our Lord’s holiness, through His Word and prayer! This is what glorifies our Lord!
- The response of grace is to be a transformed person, through self-surrender to our Lord’s holiness and through His Word and prayer!
- REMEMBER: *THE BIBLE IS GOD’S LOVE LETTER TO YOU!!!*
- We need to get into the Bible ourselves. One of the problems of Christianity today is that we are conditioned to be taught from the Scriptures but not to do it for ourselves.
- The cults place their authority elsewhere, and not in the Word!

- The Bible brings us in line with His Holiness, and with reality! Science may have explanations, but they change completely every few years. However, the Word of God never changes. What a great comfort!
- Science can never explain love, justice, peace, goodness, purity, or sin because you cannot quantify it in a microscope or scientific instrument! *Why we do what we do* cannot be scientifically measured and hypothesized; that is why there are so many theories in science and psychology and they are always changing!
- The Bible is read much, but studied little! Be the person who reads and studies it, and apply the precepts to all aspects of your life!
- The truths of Scripture will transcend any other subject, discipline, or passion!
- The Bible gives us a greater reality that cannot be seen, but is clearly felt, and to deny it would be like living in Huntington Beach in Southern California and never seeing the ocean!

Yes, indeed the study of the Bible does matter so we do not become the counterfeiters to His truth!!!

The importance of Bible study

What does the Bible itself say regarding the importance of Bible study? A lot; but, for this article, we will take a look at two passages, one in the Old Testament, and the other in the New. Both of these passages are the foundation to scores of centuries-old theological works. They convey to us the power and importance of what is important in life—why we do things, how we can do things right, and what we can do to be the best we can be. The basic “meaning of life” stuff.

The first important passage is Deuteronomy 6:4-9, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.” (NIV)

This verse starts out what is called the *Shema*; it means to hear what God has to say. This saying was, and still is the Jew's rallying cry to know their Lord. This verse also points to the imperative of the next two verses that, in a nutshell, are about memorizing and knowing and doing God's Word. God is commanding us to teach ourselves and our children His Word, so that it penetrates our hearts, minds and will—that is, every aspect of who we are. And, then, we are to write it down and bind it to all our daily aspects of life. That call is still for us today.

The second important passage is 2 Timothy 3:14-17, "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (NIV)

Paul, in this passage, gives us a similar call to heed God's Word. Here is the call to scrutinize, understand, and then apply Scripture. This is the basic inductive precept. This passage is not an instruction to give the Bible the occasional "once over." It is the clear, uncompromising call to continue in our studies constantly and passionately.

To make a point, I recently received an e-mail from a young man who believes he is anointed to bring God's Word to the world. OK, that sounds good, but he went on and on that study is a waste of time, and at 17 years of age, he did not need to go to college or seminary or be disciplined. He says he knows all that he needs to be a great teacher. So, I asked him what he would be teaching. He responded "God's Word." I again asked him what he would be teaching and he replied the same. So, I asked him specifically what some of his lesson outlines and subjects were. He said he was "anointed" and did not "need all of that;" all he needs to do is show up, and be like Paul in Acts.

So, I was curious, and decided to check up on him. Perhaps he is "anointed" (whatever that may mean to him). Would you believe he just proclaims nonsense in incomplete thoughts, jumping from one point to another point without any explanation or conclusion, on to another disjointed thought with no substance, and so forth. His audience was intrigued because of his extreme emotion and gestures. But, when I interviewed some of the attendees on what he said, they could not reply to my question. Why? Because, he did not say anything; his lips were moving, words came out, but nothing made sense. This young man with great energy, enthusiasm, and ability decided to put off the call of Scripture and engage in the call of the stage. He may have had the call to preach, but not the obedience to learn and grow, so he was not able to be his best and truly do his call. His audience was not able to gain any substance from his message, only an emotional tickle. Of course, he was more than capable to deliver a message without formal education, but this young man would not even

learn basic Sunday School stuff. He did not believe in what the Bible calls us to in these two passages.

So, I decided to share with him, in a kind and gentle manner, what Scripture calls us to do. I did not want to quench his enthusiasm. But, he just went on and on how Paul was not educated. I tried to explain to him that Paul graduated from the highest academia of his day and was educated as all of the disciples were. But, he would not listen. So, I gave him some books on discipleship; he said he did not need them. I asked him if he read the Bible, he said he does. But, he reads just his favorite passages (out of context) over and over. He will not read through a whole book, because the Holy Spirit told him he was anointed and did not have to! So, I just keep him in prayer.

Now, what if this young man was discipled and was teaching God's Word? Then his audience would go away with "substance", "profitable for teaching!" The context of this passage in Timothy is that he was writing to correct false teaching, people misleading others with twisted Scriptures out of context. The Bible clearly states that a person without knowledge is ignorant. And, when we are without wisdom, we are a fool. It does not come to us magically. Paul had a special "anointing" and was preaching before the advent of the New Testament. Paul was also well educated, as all the apostles and early church preachers were—even the fishermen! Peter went to a rabbinic school as all Jewish children did then. They learned the O.T. Scriptures as well as learning to read and write. The Jews believed in a firm education for all of their people. I know a lot of Bible commentators like to pick on Peter as an example of a non-educated person teaching others, but this is not true. Just check up on Jewish history and customs. If he were not educated, how did Peter write? He could not have done so without the training he had. Yes, we have the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit uses the Word, too!

Scripture calls us to be instructed.

These two Scriptures call us to live our lives as pleasing to our God, as countless other passages do, such as Proverbs 1, "...fear the Lord...", which is the understanding and vigorous reverence of God. It is not the fear a child has of what is under the bed. It is the *wow*, the wonder, awe, and majesty of God. And, this understanding is wisdom to deal with life, to make the most out of what He gives us in our gifts and opportunities.

These passages give us the reason and the opportunity. We can teach ourselves and each other to bring the Word of life in to all that we do. And, we can rest in the assurance that the Word is directly inspired; it is His words to be put into our actions, by His guidance and support. Thus, the opportunity is given to us to seize His Word so we can be wise and live our lives with purpose, direction, and meaning. In this way, we can impact our society with dignity and liberty, giving hope and showing the Way. Or, we can ignore Him, as most

people do, and live in a meaningless rut, or, as the Bible says, to be foolish. Or worse, we can be teachers of the Word yet refuse to be disciplined ourselves, exchanging the truth of the Word for our arrogance and wanderlust!

These two Scriptures lay a clear foundation that we need to be educated from the Word. The command from Deut. Chapter 6, to teach and be taught, combines synergistically with Paul's proclamation in 2 Timothy: 3 that the Bible is profitable for teaching. The words *useful* (NIV), and *profitable* (NKJV), imply that we actually profit from God's Word. But, this type of profit is not in the money, as we may see from some TV preachers, but in what is important in life. God the Creator of all things, Who has our best interests in mind, desires that we learn and grow. And, we do this through His Word! Thus, we gain our values, our moral center, which is how we are to be to God and to those around us. We also gain our wisdom and knowledge through the Word, as well as learning for our lives. Without the Word, we may have knowledge from life, but we will not have wisdom! As I pointed out before, a bank teller can identify phony money better by knowing what a real bill is like. The Bible shows us the real One, as well as both who Christ is and how then we are to live. The Bible gives us our instructions on how to live!

The Bible is not just about a list of dos and don'ts, but a love letter that lets us know what is best. The Bible does this by its honesty with its characters, how they failed and how they succeeded. It shows us how we are to view God and each other, how we are to conduct ourselves, and how we are to measure our ideas and activities. It contains all we need to know for salvation and godly living.

Now what? Now I know why; what do I do?

So how do we study the Bible? Countless copies of Scripture are sold and sit on shelves and bookcases unread! Why? Because, people do not know how to engage it or how to read the Word of our Lord. They are too apprehensive with fear of conviction or unsure how to go about it. This is what we do at *Into Thy Word Ministries*. We teach you how to study the Bible and give you quality discipleship tools so you can *continue* to learn and grow in Him!

God Himself gives us the directions and the ability to proceed.

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened (Matt 7:7)".

"He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me (John 14:24)".

“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him (James 1:25).”

We can make the Bible real in our lives; so, let us not be filled with fear or with apprehension, but put our discouragement away and have confidence that we can go before God by the power of His Spirit, through His Word!

So jump in and envelop yourself into the study of God’s Word. You may start off with Genesis or with Matthew or John. You may want to do a little OT and NT each time in which case I recommend the “One Year Bible” by Tyndale. Check out our Bible reading charts and how to information, we are here to help you!

We must be people who remove the objections, and study the Bible. We have to be willing and able to build the bridges to create the right common ground, so people can get more out of what is in the Bible. We also need to look at how we can avoid the counterfeit teachings and self-grandstanding that takes places in a lot of our churches and airwaves. We have to know the real One and avoid the distractions. We have to end the apathy, arrogance, confusion and falsehoods coming out of the church and keep the focus on the message of preaching Christ crucified. And we did this because it is about Him not us! All this is centered on the crucial point why we study the Bible. And that ‘WHY’ is because we need to study the Bible to bring our mindsets in line with His truth. We cannot do that when we refuse to yield ourselves to our Lord. We cannot do that when pride and arrogance are piloting our helm, or apathy running the bridge. And when we do get what we are supposed to do, we are then able to yield ourselves to His precepts. And when we are giving Him glory we are fulfilling our call and dispensing the primary fruit from studying the Bible.

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Remember these resources are free for you! Most ministries only sell there materials, we feel we are doing what God has called us too, by going ahead and offering the best materials possible for free and seek support for doing so. There is no obligation but please consider supporting our ministry if you are able to do so. As these materials have cost us a tremendous amount of time effort and financial resources that have taken us years to develop for you!

Feel free to pass this around to any pastor who is overseas or on the mission field who may need it! We also have several other “Pastors Training Packs” available in various languages on: “How to Study and Teach the Bible,” “How to Lead and Manage the Church” and many more. As a missions and discipleship organization it is our call to train pastors and provide resources to Christians and Church leaders all over the world. They may printout any

information we have posted, reproduce it, make the needed cultural changes and translate it. All we ask of you is to keep us in prayer, keep the name of our ministry and any copyright information on the resources, and tell other pastors what we have to offer. If anyone does translate any of our material, please let us know and give us a copy so we can make them available to others in their language and culture!



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Francis A. Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership Development
www.churchleadership.org/

Richard Joseph Krejcir is the Director of 'Into Thy Word Ministries,' a Missions and discipling ministry. He is the author of several books including, Into Thy Word as well as numerous articles, curriculums and solid Biblical resources. He is also a pastor, teacher, speaker and a graduate of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena California and currently completing his Ph.D in practical theology. He has amounted over 20 years of pastoral ministry experience, mostly in youth ministry, including serving as a church growth consultant.