

### ***TO WHOM THE BIBLE IS ADDRESSED***

The Bible is Gods love letter to His "born again children". Those who know and love God will love His letters also, and those who don't know Him will not be able to understand what they are about, simply because they were not addressed to them.

1 Cor 2:10-16 Says. *"But God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: 'For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?' But we have the mind of Christ."*

To understand the thoughts and words of God you must first have the mind of Christ.

### ***THE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE***

When we purchase a new car, DVD, computer, or anything complex we expect to get an instruction manual with our purchase. This is so that we know when the service intervals fall due and generally how to maintain the item at its optimum performance level. Some instruction manuals are so complex, we need an instruction manual to teach us how to read the instruction manual. (It would be of no use to have a VW repair manual if we wanted to repair a Ferrari; they have very little in common. So it is with God's word, it is primarily for use by His children.)

The Bible is Gods instruction manual to His creation. It is like a light shining on the path of life, keeping us in the right direction. Psalm 119:105 *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."* Without it there would be no hope for us or the world. The Bible tells us where man went wrong and how to bring him back into the condition which we were intended to be. John 15:4-7 *"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 'I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."* It also can teach us how to maintain an open line to the Author of Life should we have a problem we can't find an answer too. John 14:26 *"But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."*

God has given us His Word to let us know how He feels toward us. John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* He loves us and wants us to spend eternity with him.

God's Word also teaches us how we should live day by day, giving principles and commandments for us to follow. If we follow His commandments He will bring blessings on us. Deuteronomy 28:1-14. If we choose to disobey we bring down a curse upon us. Deuteronomy 28:15-68.

Manufacturers of any product want satisfied customers. The best way to ensure this is to have a product which operates at its best for a reasonable amount of time. So good clear maintenance instructions can be just as important as the product itself. The best advertising is word of mouth from satisfied customers. God wants us to be satisfied in our relationship with Him and to be able to function at our best, so that His Name will be glorified in all the earth. Then the world will know there is one true God and Creator of all things.

### **THE SOURCE AND UNITY OF THE BIBLE**

God chose to write His book through human vessels even though God stands as the final author. 2 Tim 3:16 *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."* God had godly men write down His very own thoughts and words without making any mistakes. 2 Pet 1:19-21 *"And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."*

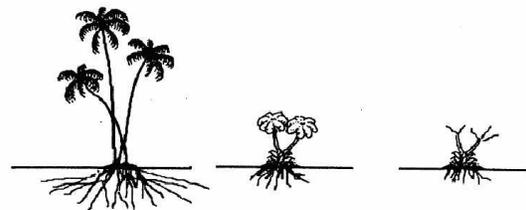
They were perfect writings of truth from God, through men. God has miraculously protected the entire Bible throughout history so that we now have the complete bible. Sixty-six books, forty writers, written and compiled over thousands of years all with one purpose. Here we have a unique book of books, where each writer not only agrees with the others but brings light to the other writers' work. How can this be considering the centuries involved? The answer is simple; many writers, one author; God.

### **THE POWER OF THE BIBLE**

The Bible changes us. It will actually transform the way we think and live as we practise its instructions and meditate on its truths. To meditate means; to think over, think on, or to consider the meaning or purpose of something. So by meditating on Gods' Word we are filling our thought life with his words and thoughts. Josh 1:8 *"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."* When we meditate on Gods Word, God by His Spirit washes out the evil thoughts and replaces them with His own pure desires. Jesus prayed to His Father for his disciples. John 17:16,17 *"They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your Word is truth."* So by his word we are sanctified (made clean). Paul wrote to the husbands of the church instructions in the way they should treat their wives. Eph 5:25,26 *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the Word."* Again we see the power of the Word to cleanse us.

Psalms 1:1-3 *"Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers."*

1. Look at the diagram. The last tree roots are shallow and has very little life.
2. The first tree has strong deep roots and strong healthy growth because it is able to draw from a deeper water source. God requires us to have a deeper knowledge of Him through his word so that we will have a strong and healthy spiritual life.



***THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE***

Just as we eat food to live and to grow, so we should eat the Word of God! This is the Christian's spiritual food Deut 8:3; Matthew 4:4; 1 Peter 2:2; Revelation 10:10. If we don't read the Bible, we become weak in our Christian life, just as our physical body becomes weak when it goes without food.

Here are some practical ways to eat God's Word and grow strong and healthy spiritually.

1. Ask God to speak to you by the Holy Spirit through His book as you read it. Read it with the purpose of finding something to apply to your life, such as a promise, a prayer, a provision, or a principle. The Bible is written to you personally, as well as to the collective church.
2. Read the Bible every day. Schedule fifteen minutes at the same time each day to meditate privately in the Word. This could be in the morning before you go to work, during your lunch break, or before you go to bed. This time of reading will soon become a habit and you will look forward to it. Read slowly and try reading out loud.
3. Follow a systematic plan of reading. One way to study the Bible is to read the whole Bible through in a year. There are printed plans available in any Christian book store that outline good schedules to follow. It should include the New Testament along with the Old Testament. Don't start at the beginning and read straight through to the end or you will go too long without the New Testament. Possibly skip some of the books that you can't understand and read them later.
4. Read book by book. Read through a whole book once or twice. This gives you the whole context and message of that book. Start with the Gospel of Mark and other basic New Testament books. After you have read several of these, go to the Old Testament books.
5. Memorise scriptures that speak to you. A favourite passage or applicable verse will always be available to your memory in this way. This will transform you as you run God's thoughts through your mind. A good way to do this is to write your favourite verses on 3" X 5" cards. Write the chapter and verse reference on one side and the word of the verse on the other. Carry these with you and whenever you have a spare moment, take them out and memorise them. It is amazing how many verses you can memorise this way!
6. Buy a small Bible handbook, such as Halley's Bible Handbook or Unger's Bible Handbook. These are very informative to read along with your Bible; they will give you information on the people of the Bible, the writers, the background of the books, and other interesting information.
7. Don't be afraid to ask trusted church leaders to explain anything you don't understand or have problems with. If they can't answer you on the spot, ask them to get back to you – chances are you will both be blessed!

Write out and memorise the books of the Bible as they are listed in your Bible's table of contents.

1. Read Psalm 119:9. What must we do?
  
2. Read Proverbs 2:6. How is the study of God's Word helpful to you?
  
3. Read Psalm 119:97-100,114. How will God's word affect you?
  
4. Write in your own words Psalm 119:105.
  
5. What are some of the benefits of God's Word to you? Psalms 119:165
  
6. If you read and study the Bible regularly, it will help you to keep your mind on God and His principles of life. What will be the result? Isaiah 26:3.
  
7. According to 2 Timothy 3:16-17,
  - a. Where does all Scripture come from?
  
  - b. What four things will the bible do in your life?
  
  - c. What will the bible do for the person who serves God?

8. Read Matthew 7:24-27 and fill out the following table:

	WISE MAN	FOOLISH MAN
What did he build his house on?		
What happened when the storm came?		
Who does Jesus say this house-builder represents?		

9. What are the promises God has for you if you read and obey His Word?

a) Joshua 1:8.

b) Psalms 1:1-3.

What is the most important truth you have learned today?

Write any questions or comments about any area of interest you would like to discuss here.