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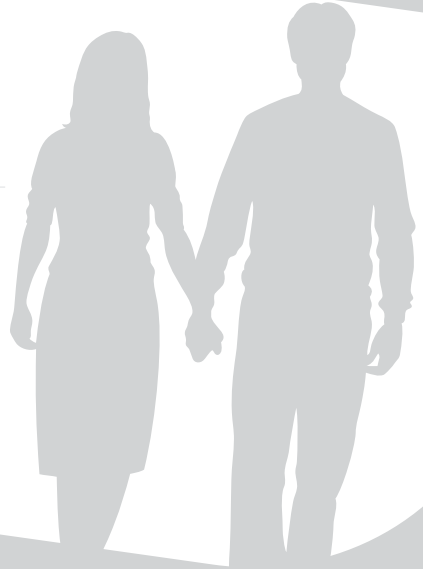
God's Word Guides Us

Key Passages

- 2 Timothy 3:16–17; 2 Peter 1:19–21; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:13–18

What You Will Learn

- That God's Word is true because He cannot lie.
- The roles of God and men in writing the Bible.
- The four ways God's Word guides us according to Scripture



Lesson Overview

All Scripture is inspired by God, who cannot lie. It is useful for teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

Memory Verse

Psalm 19:7–9

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;
the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.



Prepare to Learn

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

In his second letter to Timothy, Paul stated, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16–17). The Bible is the inspired (“breathed out”) Word of God, transmitted not by the will of man, but through holy men of God as they were directed by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20–21). These men, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote all that God instructed without error. It is the only inerrant, infallible Word of God, and we can trust it to guide us in all things.

How does it guide us? Paul tells us that it is useful for doctrine—teaching Christian truth; reproof—telling us when we are wrong; correction—showing us how to correct our wrong actions; and instruction in righteousness—teaching us how to obey God (2 Timothy 3:16–17). These are the general guidelines—they are expounded on again and again throughout the Bible.

God has spoken to reveal His plan for history, His purpose for mankind, and His will for us. More than 2,000 times the Old Testament states, “Thus says the Lord,” or something similar, claiming that God Himself is the author. In the New Testament we observe that Jesus preached the Word of God (Luke 5:1), the early church preached the Word of God (Acts 4:31), the Word of

God was preached to the Gentiles (Acts 11:1), and Paul preached the Word of God throughout all of his missionary journeys (Acts 13:5, 18:11, 19:10).

The Word of God is living and active (Hebrews 4:12), given to us by God Himself—to teach us the principles of our faith, to reveal our sin, to show us how to deal with sin, to instruct us how to live in a manner that pleases Him, and ultimately, to reveal to us how we can be redeemed into everlasting life through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

As Christians, we believe by faith that God’s Word is His true revelation to us and the foundation upon which we base our lives. Consequently, we have no need to “prove” its authenticity to others. We know that God’s Holy Spirit prompted select men to write the words of Scripture, and these words are inspired by a God who cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18).

However, we would expect a book that came from God to meet certain criteria, including historical, prophetic, and scientific accuracy; a tone of authority; and a life-changing message.

Having said that, we can offer the following evidences to skeptics who ask us why we believe the Bible is the inspired,

infallible, and inerrant Word of God.

- The Scriptures themselves proclaim to be God’s Word and true as noted above (2 Timothy 3:16–17; 2 Peter 1:21; Hebrews 1:1–2).
- The Bible’s message contains life-changing power. It transforms sinners into new creatures by the power of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- Neither man nor Satan has been able to destroy God’s Word—. . . but the word of our God stands forever” (Isaiah 40:8).
- Archaeological finds continue to confirm biblical truth. A renowned Jewish archaeologist once claimed, “It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference.” Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert* (New York: Farrar, Strous, and Cudahy, 1959), p. 136.
- The books of the Bible were written over a period of 1,600 years by 40 authors (from very different walks of life), writing in different places, times, moods, on different continents, in three languages, covering hundreds of controversial subjects—and yet they present absolute harmony from beginning to end.
- Old Testament passages give more than 50 prophecies of

the birth, life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ; and every prophecy (written more than 400 years before His birth) came true.

For those of us with faith to believe, these findings serve as confirmation that we worship a mighty God who does not change. He speaks to us through the consistently preserved Scriptures so we can know Him, His character, His purpose, and His plan to redeem a people to Himself for all eternity.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Bible is God’s very Word to us. It will guide us through everything we encounter as we rely on it (Proverbs 30:5–6; Psalm 73:24, 119:133; 2 Peter 1:3). Because of this promise, His Word has been precious to believers throughout history. It has been copied and translated more than any other book, as it continues to guide people around the world.

The Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament was used, along with hand-written manuscripts of the New Testament gospels and epistles, in the early church. However, as the gospel spread, it became important to provide the Scriptures in other languages.

In 405 AD Jerome translated the Old and New Testaments from the original Hebrew and Greek into Latin. This became known as the Vulgate. This text was understood

only by the elite, most of whom were priests. They were determined to keep the Bible from the ordinary people. Translation into common languages was discouraged and often severely prohibited.

Beginning in the fourteenth century, a new desperation developed to make the Scriptures available to the common man. For too long the Roman church had shackled the Scriptures, but they were about to be unleashed. God's Word would not be restrained—He intended for it to guide us through life.

The following represents some of the history of the Bible and when it became available.

- c. 1400 BC—The first written Word of God—the Ten Commandments
- c. 500 BC—Original Hebrew Manuscripts completed
- First century AD—All original Greek manuscripts of the New Testament were completed
- 1382—The Wycliffe Bible; a middle English translation from the Latin Vulgate
- 1526—The Tyndale Bible; a modern English translation

from the original Greek and Hebrew

- 1534—Martin Luther's German Bible is published from the Greek
- 1539—The Great Bible; the first English translation to be authorized for public use; commissioned by Henry VIII
- 1560—The Geneva Bible; the first study Bible published and the first English language Bible to include numbered verses to each chapter
- 1611—The King James Bible was printed and became the main Bible of the English language for the next 300 years

Today, the Bible continues to be the most translated book in the world. As of 2005, portions of the Bible had been translated into 2,400 languages. God is continuing to guide us with His Word as He continues to make His Word available to every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Revelation 5:9).

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



Studying God's Word

How do these letters relate to our last lesson? O, I, and A

Take notes as you study the following passages.

2 Peter 1:19-21



Impossible for God?

Complete the Impossible for God? worksheet.

2 Timothy 3:16-17



God's Word in the Real World

1. What is the ultimate source of Scripture and what passages can we use to support this idea?

2. How were the Scriptures delivered to us?

3. Why can we trust the Scriptures?

4. It is likely that you know people who doubt the truth of the Bible. They might say things like, “We can’t trust the Bible; it was simply written by men.” How would you go about discussing this idea with them?

5. Is it wise to leave the Bible out of the discussion about the Bible?

6. As we look to apply the four uses of Scripture we discussed, think about your personal devotion time or family Scripture reading. How could you put these four guiding principles into practice?



Prayer Requests
