



BASIC #2 GET INTO THE BIBLE

*A thorough knowledge of the Bible
is worth more than a college education.*

Theodore Roosevelt

The God of the Universe wants to talk to you! That ought to get your attention. God has things to say. The Lord wants to load you up with His Word. A huge treasure of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, revelation and faith awaits you as you start reading the Bible!

A LOVE LETTER, A MAP AND AN OWNER'S MANUAL

Have you ever loved someone so much that you just had to tell them? Have you ever written or received a love letter? How did you feel when you read words that were written just to you—so you would know how much you are loved?

How about a map? Ever needed your GPS to map out the route for a big road trip? How about an owner's manual? Ever read an owner's manual so you could operate all the options on your new car or technological toy?

God's Word—the Bible—is His personal love letter to you! It's His map—His global positioning system—for living. It's the owner's manual for every option in life. The Bible is God's living Word. When you read the Bible, God talks to your heart!

Sometimes people hope God will talk to them through a booming voice from the sky, or by writing on a billboard that comes floating down from heaven. God wants to speak to you, but in most cases, He won't speak

to you through booming voices or billboards from heaven.

The primary way God speaks today is through His Word—the Bible. Through spending time reading the Bible, you will get to know the Lord. You will hear Him speaking to your heart and you find out how much He loves you. You will find the route He wants your life to take. You will learn how to access all the options He's given you for driving through life. Let's take a look at the Bible.

THE BIBLE IS A SUPERNATURAL BOOK

The Bible is a supernatural book. It is unlike any other book on earth. It is alive! *"For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires,"* Hebrews 4:12, NLT.

There are two parts to the Bible: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament describes God's laws, prophecies and dealings with the Jewish people before Jesus was born. The Old Testament points forward to the time when Messiah, would come to save God's people from their sin. The New Testament reveals Jesus as the Messiah and details His life, ministry, death on the cross, resurrection and His coming again. The New Testament documents the age of grace revealed through Jesus Christ as well as the birth of His Church and purposes until He comes again.

THE BIBLE IS UNLIKE ANY BOOK ON EARTH.

There are sixty-six books in the Bible. Forty different authors who had various occupations wrote the Bible. It was written during a period of 1500 years in three languages—Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. The Bible has one consistent theme in both Old and New Testaments: Jesus Christ. The Bible is not a natural book. It is obvious to any reader that there is one Supreme Author of the Bible, the Holy Spirit of God. He inspired the prophets of old to convey His words: *"Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God,"* 2 Peter 1:20-21, NLT.

It's true. The Bible is a God-inspired book. *"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right," 2 Timothy 3:16, NLT.*

When you read the Bible, the Holy Spirit makes it come alive in your heart. Through reading God's Word, the Lord will speak to you and give you wisdom, knowledge, understanding and insights. He will reveal things to you. He will tell you secrets. He will guide you. He will give you information you need to know.

FIRST STEP: GET A BIBLE

Everyone needs a Bible. The first and most important thing to do as you get to know the Lord personally is to get a Bible and begin reading it. You might wonder, what type of Bible should you get?

EVERYONE
NEEDS A BIBLE.

There are several types of Bibles and it's helpful to understand the differences between them. One important thing to recognize is the difference between a *translation* of the Bible and a *paraphrase* of the Bible.

A translation of the Bible is more closely aligned with the original manuscripts as it has been translated from the original languages (Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic) into English. A Bible translation is a more accurate version of the Bible. You will definitely want to get a good Bible translation to read and study.

A paraphrase Bible is simply that—a paraphrase of the translation. The authors of the paraphrase Bibles did their best to paraphrase the meaning of the words to make the Bible more modern and readable. A paraphrased Bible is fun to read for a fresh perspective, but it is not the type of Bible you want to use for detailed study.

7 BIBLES TO CONSIDER

Here are seven versions of the Bible you may want to add to your personal library.

Widely Recognized Translations of the Bible

King James Version (KJV)
New King James Version (NKJV)
New International Version (NIV)
Amplified Bible Classic (AMPC)
New Living Translation (NLT)

Popular Paraphrase Versions of the Bible

The Message Bible (MSG)
The Living Bible (TLB)

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

In addition to your own hard copy Bible, you can obtain many of the translations and/or paraphrase versions of the Bible through various websites, apps or digital downloads that can be used on your digital readers. Check out these Bibles and tools.

Bible Apps and Digital Downloads

Bible!
YouVersion Bible
Olive Tree Bible Reader
Blue Letter Bible

Bible Study Tools Websites

www.biblestudytools.com
www.biblegateway.com
www.blueletterbible.org
www.biblos.com
www.ebible.com

To get started, I would recommend that you obtain a hard copy and/or digital Bible right away. You might want to start with an easy to read translation. The New Living Translation (NLT) is a good choice for beginners because it's easy to understand.

As soon as you are ready to dig a little deeper, I would recommend you get additional translations of the Bible including: the New King James Version, the King James Version or the New International Version. When you want to go even deeper in the Word, I recommend you get the Amplified Bible and use some of the online Bible tools websites for great studies.

BUST THE DUST

It's great to have a Bible, but the secret for getting to know God, is to read it! There are a lot of Christians that need to “bust the dust” and start reading their Bibles again.

If you are new in the Lord, you might be unsure of where to start reading in the Bible. Of course, the entire Word of God is alive and powerful, but here are a few recommendations on where to begin reading.

As a rule, as a Christian you should spend most of your time reading the New Testament, since you are living under the New Covenant and these books were specifically written to Christians. However, reading the Old Testament is extremely beneficial and will give you a great historical overview. The Holy Spirit will speak to your heart as you read both the Old and New Testaments. Consider these thoughts:

THE
WORD OF GOD
IS ALIVE AND
POWERFUL.

The Old Testament: The Old Testament gives you the history of God's dealings with His people and His promises concerning the coming Messiah. In the Old Testament, the major divisions include: the Law, Historical, Poetry and Wisdom and Prophetic books. Through the Old Testament, you will see what it was like to live under the Law. This helps you understand the riches of God's mercy in the New Testament—under the New Covenant of Grace. God will reveal Himself to you as you read the Old Testament and will point you to the coming Messiah—Jesus.

The New Testament: The New Testament can generally be divided into these divisions: Gospels, History, Letters and Prophecy. The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) give you eyewitness accounts of Jesus—His life, ministry, death and resurrection. In the Gospels, you see Jesus preaching the good news everywhere as He fulfilled the Old

Testament Law, closed out the Old Covenant and ushered in the New Covenant.

History, Letters and Prophecy (Acts all the way to Revelation) make up most of the New Testament and these are written specifically to believers after Jesus died on the cross and was raised from the dead. The Letters give you the most detailed revelation concerning your redemption, the abundant life and what it means to be—in Christ. Revelation, the last book of the Bible, tells you about things to come.

READERS ARE LEADERS

It's true; readers are leaders! The more you read God's Word, the more wisdom He will give you. Being filled with God's wisdom will always make you a better Christian—and a great leader. There are many good

READ THE BIBLE.

reading plans that will help you read God's Word in a systematic way. Here are some recommendations on where to start reading in the Bible.

Start with the Gospel of John: One of the best books to start with is the Gospel of John. When you read the book of John, you will learn about Jesus, His life, ministry, love and truth. When you read the Gospel of John, you fall in love with Jesus.

Read Romans: The book of Romans can be a little deep, but if you are the type of person who trusted in your own good works before you became a Christian, the book of Romans will help you to get a comprehensive view of the gospel—God's goodness and free gift of salvation through grace and faith. When you read the Book of Romans, you will want to shout, "Thank You, Jesus!"

Read Psalms: The Psalms are in the Old Testament and are great heart-felt poems written by various Psalmists. It's easy to relate to the Psalms because many of them describe the cry of your own heart at times. When you read the Psalms, you will learn how to express your heart to the Lord in honest, heart-felt ways.

Read Proverbs: The book of Proverbs is in the Old Testament and it is loaded with practical, godly wisdom for life. You will obtain God's insight for almost every area of your life—knowing Him, relationships,

work, school, marriage, parenting, money, words and so much more. When you read the book of Proverbs, your heart will be filled with the most important thing: wisdom!

Read Acts: The book of Acts is like reading an adventure-filled drama. You will be inspired by the boldness, influence—and persecution—of the Spirit-filled believers in the early church.

Read James: The book of James is a very practical book. In James, you will learn how to handle trials, how to live out your faith, how to control your tongue, how to pray and how to live a balanced Christian life.

Read Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Galatians: These four letters will fill you with insights and wisdom about your life *in Christ* and will help you live out your Christian life with joy, by faith.

Of course, the whole Bible is living and active—so no matter where you start reading you can count on the Lord to speak to your heart.

BELIEVE IT AND DO IT

God expects believers to believe Him! When we read His Word and hear Him talking to our hearts, He wants us to believe it. Faith pleases God.

On the other hand, be advised, your enemy doesn't want you to believe. One of his first tactics is to cast doubts on your faith. The devil wants to steal the Word before it can take root in your heart, so the best thing to do, even when you have doubts, is to keep reading the Word. His Word is alive, and as you allow the Lord to speak to your heart, He will answer your doubts with His living Word.

When you read something in the Bible, don't just believe it—do it! If you read a passage that tells you to seek God—believe it and then do it. If you read a passage that tells you to flee from sin or ungodly influences—believe it and then do it! If you read a passage that says God loves you and has forgiven you—believe it and then act like you believe it. If you don't know how to put God's Word into action, just ask Him. He will give you

GOD EXPECTS
BELIEVERS
TO BELIEVE.

the wise insight you need to believe and do His Word.

Here's an example of the importance of believing God and doing His Word. In 1 John 1:9, it says, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness,"* and 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, *"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."* (NKJV)

These passages are true. God wants you to believe them and act like you believe them. However, here's what can happen. Let's say you sin and feel guilty and full of shame. If you don't believe or do the Word, you will stay trapped in feelings of guilt and shame. God doesn't want you to live in a state of guilt, shame or unworthiness; He wants you to believe in His mercy, forgiveness and gift of righteousness.

Because of Jesus, your sins have already been forgiven and He has made you righteous. When you confess your sins, you will experience that forgiveness along with instant freedom from the guilt and shame.

Can you see that? The Lord wants you to believe that He has forgiven and cleansed you from all unrighteousness. He wants you to believe that He has made you the righteousness of God—as righteous as He Himself—because of Jesus. Then, He wants you to act like you believe it. If you will believe His Word, and act like a person who is forgiven and free from guilt and shame, you will experience great freedom, joy and gratitude!

DON'T LISTEN TO HATERS

One final word: don't let the haters lead you astray. Listen to this caution from the Bible, *"...I fear that somehow you will be led away from your pure and simple devotion to Christ,"* 2 Corinthians 11:3, NLT. There have always been, and will always be haters—people who hate, mock, dismiss, and ignore the Bible. There are some who want to rewrite or eliminate the Bible. The devil definitely hates the Word of God and the power it holds. He doesn't want any Christian to get, read, believe or do the Bible. Don't let the enemy or the negativity or ignorance of those who do not know God short-circuit your faith—get a Bible, read it, believe it, do it and watch God go to work in and through your life!

SCRIPTURES TO READ

- ✓ Psalm 119
- ✓ Luke 6:46-49
- ✓ Luke 8:4-15
- ✓ 1 Peter 1:24-25



STUDY GUIDE

Please review the previous chapter and use this Study Guide to journal the things you're learning about the Bible.

1. Do you have your own Bible? What version(s) do you have? List them all - hard copies, digital, apps, etc.

2. When you read the Bible, do you sense God speaking to your heart? Describe it.

3. What book(s) of the Bible are you reading right now?

4. What verse or passage of Scripture has hit home with you lately? What does it mean to you?

5. As you've read the Word, have you sensed the Holy Spirit asking you to start doing anything new? Has He asked you to stop doing something? Describe.

STUDY GUIDE

Please review the previous chapter and use this Study Guide to journal the things you are learning about the Bible.

1. Do you have your own Bible? What version(s) do you have? List them all - hard copies, digital, apps, etc.

2. When you read the Bible, do you sense God speaking to your heart? Describe it:

3. What book(s) of the Bible are you reading right now?

4. What verse or passage of Scripture has hit home with you lately? What does it mean to you?

5. As you've read the Word, have you sensed the Holy Spirit asking you to start doing anything new? Has He asked you to stop doing some things? Describe: