

THE WORD OF GOD

week 1



NOTES

Welcome to the discipleship journey! Discipleship is an exciting time, but it is also very sacrificial. Thank you for taking the time and effort to grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ through this discipleship course.

A disciple is defined as, “fully committed follower of Jesus Christ.” After we have begun a relationship with Jesus Christ through salvation, discipleship is the journey that all Christians undergo to become closer to Christ while on this earth. If you have already accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, this course is something that will help encourage you in your discipleship process. If you have not already accepted Jesus as your Savior, now is a great time to talk to your discipler about taking the first step in beginning a relationship with Jesus Christ.

CONVERSATION STARTER: *Share your testimony of salvation.*

If the goal is to become a more committed follower of Jesus Christ, how do we know if we are making any progress? How do we gauge where we are and where we are headed in our discipleship?

John 8:31

³Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

The fact is, that we are either becoming a more committed follower of the world or a more committed follow of Christ through the Word. The only gauge we have in our discipleship process is the Word of God. Because the Word of God is the indicator of our discipleship, we will begin by developing a proper understanding of the Bible and the role it plays in our discipleship.

Before we begin uncovering some important truths related to the Bible, let's take the time to understand how your Bible is put together.

The Bible contains 66 books total. It is divided into two sections known as the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament contains 39 books and was written before Jesus came to earth. The New Testament contains 27 books and documents the life of Jesus while on the earth and the spread of the Gospel throughout the first century.

The Bible is not arranged in chronological order, but according to subjects. The first five books of the Old Testament pertain to Jewish Law. The following twelve trace the history of the Jewish people. The next 5 are classified as poetic books followed by 5 that are considered major prophets then 12 categorized as minor prophets.

The New Testament opens with four gospels which each give a unique perspective

of the life of Jesus Christ. The book of Acts stands alone as it accounts the history of the early church. Then we move to the epistles which include 13 written by the Apostle Paul as well as 8 penned by various authors. The Word of God concludes with the Revelation of John which serves as the prophetic book of the New Testament.

If the Bible and its content are new to you, feel free to use the table of contents in the front of your Bible while you begin to learn the order and layout. You can also refer to Appendix A in the back section of this curriculum which gives a visual breakdown of the books of the Bible.

GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF THE BIBLE.

The power of God's Word is not that it is ancient or diverse. Rather, the power of God's Word is found in the fact that God Himself is the sole author. There are two words we use to describe how God got the Bible to man:

Revelation: God communicating previously unknown truth to mankind.

Inspiration: God having His truth recorded by mankind.

In the next lesson, we will see how God has revealed Himself through creation, conscience, history, and many other ways, but the clearest way God has chosen to reveal Himself is through the inspired pages of Scripture.

2 Peter 1:19-21

To understand the magnitude of this verse, let's take a closer look at the context and some of the phrases:

The human writer of the verse is Peter. Peter was one of the twelve disciples who followed Jesus during his time on earth.

The book is written to fellow Christians. According to the introduction of the book, Peter is writing to "them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Some of these Christians would not have seen Jesus Christ in the flesh like Peter.

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy."

Although Peter had seen Jesus and some of these Christians had not seen Jesus, this passage teaches that the Word of God is more sure than even a first hand account. By having God's revelation of Himself written for us in black and white, we know it is true and that we can depend on it.

"Came not in old time by the will of man."

The reason we can trust the Bible is because it did not originate with humans.



"But holy men of God spake."

The recording of the Bible was done through holy men of God.

"As they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The holy men of God were not at the liberty to write whatever crossed their minds. God spoke to these holy men through His Spirit. The Bible word for this process is inspiration.

2 Timothy 3:16

The word inspiration has two definitions. The most common definition is used to refer to some type of idea or motivation to accomplish a creative or artistic task. For instance, we might say, "Beethoven was inspired to compose his famous Fifth Symphony." This is not the Biblical form of inspiration.

The less-used definition of inspiration is "the drawing of air into one's lungs; inhaling." When we see the phrase "given by inspiration of God," it literally means "God-breathed." God breathed the words of Scripture to human penmen who recorded them.

Because of the truths of revelation and inspiration, we can trust that the Bible is God's Word.

Even Jesus spoke to the fact that the Word of God was divinely inspired by God.

Matthew 4:4

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

The Bible also protects its own purity, reminding us that God's Word did not come from mankind, but from God.

Proverbs 30:5

Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

The Holy Spirit used forty different men from a variety of backgrounds over a timespan of 1,500 years. The writing took place on three different continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe) and in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek). Yet, the entire book has been validated by history, archaeology, and science.

In today's culture, for every author who writes their viewpoint on a controversial issue, you will find conflicting opinions. The Bible covers many controversial subjects from many different writers and still agrees. The only reason this can be possible is because there is one author - God.



GOD PRESERVED HIS WORD.

Understanding God is the author of the Bible is vital to our discipleship journey. Following the inspiration of the Bible, God began the process of preserving His Word. The Word of God is unique in the fact that it speaks to its own preservation and the process by which it would be preserved for future generations.

Preservation begins with the promise that God would preserve His Word.

Psalm 12:6-7, Psalm 119:89, 152, 160, Isaiah 40:8

1 Peter 1:25

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Matthew 24:35

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away

Not only did God make the promise to preserve His Word throughout the Bible, but He also lays out the process by which He will preserve His Word. The process began by commanding people to write His Word.

Moses -

Exodus 17:14

And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

Isaiah -

Isaiah 8:1

Moreover the Lord said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Mahershalalhashbaz.

Isaiah 30:8

Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.

Jeremiah -

Jeremiah 30:2

Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book.

Habakkuk -

Habakkuk 2:2

And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.



OLD TESTAMENT PRESERVATION

Following the writing of God's Word, God instructed people to copy His Word.

In the Old Testament, God specifically ordained the fathers and leaders of families to preserve His Word as well as the priests and kings of the kingdoms to preserve His Word.

Fathers -

Deuteronomy 6:7-9

⁷And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

⁸And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

⁹And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

Priests and Kings -

Deuteronomy 17:18

And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites.

NEW TESTAMENT PRESERVATION

Many of the same processes were used in the Old Testament were also used in the New Testament, but God added another entity to the process of preserving His Word - the church.

1 Timothy 3:15

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Throughout history, no other book or piece of literature has undergone such tedious work to guarantee its preservation. Because the people of Israel and the church received God's Word as divinely inspired, a high emphasis was placed on keeping it for future generations. There are thousands of manuscripts of the New Testament alone. Each manuscript was copied with the utmost care.

Some believe that the Bible has been corrupted through the years. As a result, they choose not to trust God's Word and develop or rewrite God's Word to match their religious beliefs. These actions and claims go directly against the Word of God and the process of preservation found within its pages.

TRANSLATION

The careful process of preservation guarantees that we have God's Word in the original languages. These preserved copies have allowed for the Word of God to



be translated into thousands of languages including the English language. Many languages, including English, have developed multiple versions or translations of the Bible. In our church we use the King James Version of the Bible for two main reasons:

Purity - We believe the King James Version is God's preserved Word for English-speaking people. We have developed this belief from the historical research of the purity of the translation process and the origin of the manuscripts used to translate. You can learn more about the research, the process, and the manuscripts in the Appendix section of the discipleship course.

Practicality - The Bible teaches us that God desires His work be done "decently and in order." Because the Bible is the book on which we base all matters of faith and practice, we believe that uniformity of Scripture best portrays this principle. You will never hear a teacher or preacher at Franklin Road Baptist Church preach or teach from a different version of the Bible. All notes, handouts, articles of faith, and purposes statements are derived from the King James Version. We believe this provides a certain amount of clarity and order in the church.

GOD SPEAKS TO US THROUGH HIS WORD.

Because the Word of God has been inspired and preserved by God, it can speak to us today! It is God's way of speaking to us. Found within the pages of Scripture, you will find guidance, hope, wisdom, and much more. Some people have described the Word of God as "God's instruction manual for life." Let's take a look at some of the ways the Bible can make a difference in your life.

THE WORD OF GOD HAS THE POWER TO CHANGE LIVES.

Most of what you see and hear promises to change your life. As we become more committed followers of Jesus Christ through His Word, we will discover that God's Word can truly change our lives through its principles and teachings.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart

THE WORD OF GOD TEACHES US WHAT IS TRUE.

In a world that is consumed with dishonesty, we can trust that what the Bible says is true and the teachings found within it are truthful. In fact, throughout Scripture, the Bible refers to itself as "truth."

John 17:17

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Psalms 100:5

For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.



THE WORD OF GOD PROMISES BLESSINGS TO THOSE WHO READ, STUDY, MEDITATE, AND OBEY IT.

Just as it would never make sense to ignore the instruction manual of a product you were putting together, neither does it make sense to ignore God's Word and instructions for this life. Because the contents of the Word of God are so transformational, God encourages us to read and study it by promising blessings.

2 Timothy 2:15

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Joshua 1:8

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Psalms 1:2-3

² *But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*

³ *And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

THE WORD OF GOD GUIDES US IN LIFE.

It is easy to find bad advice and guidance in life. The Bible is the one book that promises to never give bad advice or guidance. Many of its principles dealing with leadership, finances, and other topics have been used by people both saved and unsaved. It is for this reason that the Bible will be our guidebook for the remainder of this course. We want everything that we do and say to not be based on us but on the Word of God.

Truly the Bible is a book like no other. We want to place a high priority on God's Word throughout this discipleship course. The Bible that you hold in your hands is vital to your spiritual growth and discipleship journey.

As you review over the main points of this lesson, take the time to apply and commit to the following statements:

Because God is the author of the Bible, I commit to taking the words found within not as man's advice, but as the Word of God for me.

Because the Word of God has been preserved for me, I commit to cherishing it and studying the principles and truths found within.

Because the Word of God promises to speak to me, I promise to approach my study of God's Word with an open heart and mind seeking to become a more committed follower through God's Word.



ASSIGNMENTS

Write out 2 Timothy 2:15 in the space provided below. Plan to study and memorize the verse through the week so that you can quote it by your next meeting.

Read the four daily readings for each day and answer the review questions for this lesson on day five. The daily readings will help reinforce what you have learned during this lesson. The review questions will help remind you of some of the key principles that you discussed with your discipler.

Choose one of the daily Bible reading plans and begin discovering God's Word for yourself. It's okay if you do not understand everything right away. These reading plans are intended to get you into the discipline of studying God's Word and applying it to your life. As you read, if you have questions, write them down and present them to your discipler next week.

DAY 1: THE GOOD AND THE BAD IS FOR ME

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶ *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

¹⁷ *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

In the last lesson, we spent some time on that first phrase of 2 Timothy 3:16 discovering that the Word of God was inspired by God. One of the greatest discoveries of understanding the Word of God is inspired by God is found in the rest of verse sixteen and seventeen.

According to this verse, the divine inspiration of God makes the Bible a book that is profitable for us to learn doctrine, for us to be reproofed, for us to be corrected, and for us to learn righteousness. Sometimes the Word of God shows us something that is enjoyable. Consider these promises that will encourage you:

You have eternal life that can never be taken away.



John 10:28

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

God will never leave you.**Hebrews 13:5-6**

For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

God's grace is sufficient for your needs.**2 Corinthians 12:9**

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

God will reward your faithfulness.**Galatians 6:9**

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

These are just a few of the encouraging promises found in Scripture, but sometimes the Bible has to reprove or correct something in our lives. We will be tempted to ignore the teachings that we do not enjoy.

When we are tempted to reject the teachings of reproof or correction, remind yourself of why God is doing this according to verse seventeen. His desire is that you would become a man or woman of God that is becoming more like Him. In other words, you are becoming a better disciple.

In today's culture, you do not have to look hard to find someone who will agree with you or tell you what you want to hear. Many times, these are the people that we run to because we don't like to hear that we might be wrong. If we are honest, always listening to this type of advice has probably gotten us into some trouble before. God knows what is best for our lives, and part of becoming a better person and a better disciple is understanding that sometimes you have to hear what you are doing wrong.

As you begin to discover some matters of reproof and correction in God's Word, refer back to your first commitment at the close of this lesson and understand that this is God's way of revealing Himself to you. It is now your choice whether to ignore or obey.



DAY 2: THE TIMELESS TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD**1 Peter 1:25**

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Having a copy of the Word of God in our language is a privilege that we can take for granted. God took careful steps to ensure that His Word would endure forever. One of the great things about the Word of God enduring forever is that we can take it and share it. This is the same Word of God that was used to preach the Gospel to you!

God has already taken care of the preservation process, but, as Christians, we can continue to pass the Word along to others by sharing the Gospel, inviting others to church, and sharing our testimony of what God has done in our life. If someone came to you today and handed you the keys to a new car, would you be able to keep that to yourself? No way, you would tell everyone about the good thing that had just occurred to you. Your salvation is a gift from God. Begin telling someone about what God has done for you.

God has also given us His Word to learn more about Him. As you refer to your second commitment of lesson one, think of how you can begin to cherish the book that has been preserved for you. Choosing to cherish and study your copy of the Word of God will be life changing to you.

Although the Bible is thousands of years old, the truth contained within still applies to our lives. The principles, stories, and teachings of the Bible are timeless. While the world around you changes and fades, come back to the timeless truth found in the Word of God.

Isaiah 40:8

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

DAY 3: BIBLE STUDY BRINGS SUCCESS**Joshua 1:8**

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

The world around us constantly chases success. We often define success by money, power, or fame, but the Bible only uses the word success once and it is in Joshua 1:8. The verse teaches that our success is not found in our bank account, how many people we oversee, or how popular we might be. Rather,



true success comes from our relationship to the Word of God. This verse gives three relationships to the Word of God that will help us judge our success.

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth..."

What are we talking about?

As a Christian, we should always be ready to share what God is doing in our life or to give an answer to someone who may ask about the change they have seen (I Peter 3:15). "This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth does not mean, you spend your day reciting Scripture, but it does mean that when given an opportunity to share your faith or the work God has done in you, will you take it?"

"Thou shalt meditate therein day and night..."

What are we thinking about?

Let's be honest, you will not be able to spend all your days talking about God and His Word, but what are you thinking about or meditating on throughout the day? If we are constantly thinking about the problems and pressures of this world, we are choosing to live for the here and now, rather than keeping our minds on what God has done for us and is going to do for us!

"Thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein..."

What are we obeying?

It is not simply enough to just talk and think about the Bible, we must put it into action in our daily lives. As we begin to obey the Word of God, we will become successful in the eyes of God. Here's a secret though; as we obey God's laws, the Lord will send earthly blessings. Many people equate heavenly success with the lack of earthly success. Some of the most successful men and women throughout the Bible and throughout history were followers of Jesus Christ.

Psalm 1:2-3

² *But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*

³ *And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

God is able to bless committed followers of Him who are growing in His Word. There are going to be times where you question whether or not to obey parts of Scripture or where you may wonder if your study of the Word of God is even worth it. During those times, determine to claim the blessings of God and be defined by God's success.



DAY 4: THE LIGHT OF THE WORD OF GOD*Psalm 119:105**Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

In life, many people choose what is called a career path. Sometimes this deals with a dream job that they want to get to or a promotion they would like to see occur. Whatever the case may be, there are necessary steps you take to move along your career path. Some of those steps deal with college or training or associations or how you present yourself. Each step is important to going further down the career path.

Throughout this course, we have referred to discipleship as a journey. In other words, it is a path. Just like any other path, there will be times of darkness where you may not know where to take the next step. The Bible gives us a beautiful picture in Psalm 119:105, when it says, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

You have read and heard a great deal about the inspiration of the Word of God, the preservation of the Word of God, and how God uses His Word to speak to us today. The Bible is the light on your pathway to becoming a more committed follower of Jesus Christ. It is intended to illuminate the next step during those times of darkness and doubt. The Bible was inspired by God to help you with the issues of life. It was preserved to give clarity to you. It can speak to you if you allow it to. Choose today to trust the light of the Word of God on the path of your life.

DAY 5: REVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions are intended to reinforce what you learned during last week’s lesson. Feel free to look over the notes to find these questions. We would encourage you to write down any Scripture references associated with the answers to help you familiarize yourself with the Bible passages. You will begin the next lesson with your discipler by going over these review questions and any other questions that may have come up through this week’s material.

What is a disciple?



What is the clearest way God has chosen to reveal Himself to mankind?

What earthly author said, “we have a more sure word of prophecy?” Why was this so important?

What is the Biblical definition of inspiration?

How did God choose to preserve His Word in the Old Testament?

What entity did God choose to preserve His Word in the New Testament?

What is one example of how the Word of God speaks to us today?

