

Influencer's Journey

Topic: How Can I Read and Understand the Bible?

2 Timothy 3:16-17

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

The Bible is the primary means by which God communicates with us and reveals His will.

I. THE WORD OF GOD IS INSPIRED.

Inspire: breathe in (air); inhale or breathe life into.

We believe that God inspired what the biblical authors wrote, that God saw what the biblical authors wrote as good, and breathed life into the Scripture.

Inspired doesn't mean God wrote the Bible, nor did he possess the biblical authors and tell them what to write; God gave the scriptures life. Man wrote the Bible, but God gave the Bible its power.

II. PICTURE OF THE WORD A. Overview

1. The Bible has 66 Books. The central figure in the Story of God is Jesus Christ.
2. The world was made by Him and for Him.

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.” (Colossians 1:16)

3. The Old Testament looks forward to Him.
4. The New Testament reveals Him.
5. The Bible provides a comprehensive picture of God's dealings with humanity.

B. Old Testament (Before the Birth of Christ)

1. The Old Testament has 39 books.
2. God's dealings with man from Creation until 400 years before Christ.
3. Old Testament Breakdown:

- a. The Books of the Law - The beginning of all things and the beginnings of Israel, the nation through which salvation by grace would be made available to the entire world.
 - i. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.
- b. The Books of History - These books depict the rise and fall of Israel over a thousand years.
 - i. Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.
- c. The Books of Poetry – These books, written as poetry, share the depth of the human heart and man's feelings, yet encourage us to trust in God alone.
 - i. Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.
- d. The Books of Prophecy – These books are not in chronological order. The Prophets – official spokesmen whom God raised to speak for Him, especially in times of unbelief and rebellion – came into special prominence during the decline and fall of Israel and Judah.
 - i. Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel.
 - ii. Minor Prophets: Hosea – Malachi.

C. New Testament

1. The New Testament has 27 books.
2. God's dealings with man during and after Christ.
3. New Testament Breakdown.
 - a. Gospels - These books record the earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ.
 - i. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.
 - b. Acts - This book records the early growth of Christianity through the Apostles, following Jesus resurrection and ascension.
 - c. Pauline Epistles (Letters) - These books contain the inspired correspondence of the Apostle Paul to churches and personal letters to his friends.
 - i. Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philemon.
 - d. General Epistles Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus.
 - i. Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John, Jude.

- e. Revelation - This is the climactic book of the Bible, offering a glimpse into the fullness of time, particularly into the future, with the culmination of all history in the events surrounding the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

III. PRACTICAL TIPS TO READ AND UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE

A. READ YOUR BIBLE DAILY EVEN IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.

Reading your Bible daily provides an opportunity for illumination or an “aha” moment. You may start with a verse or two a day, then develop into a chapter or even multiple chapters daily. Using various translations of the Bible may be helpful in your understanding.

B. READ WITH STUDY TOOLS, GROUPS AND OTHERS TO HELP.

Tools such as commentaries and Bible dictionaries provide background, cultural, and linguistic definitions. They are helpful tools for understanding the original meaning of scripture. Participating in group discussions with others will also provide you with a broader perspective. It also makes room for a deeper reflection on God's Word.

C. PRAYER BEFORE YOU READ AND ASK GOD TO SPEAK TO YOU.

Prayer and Bible reading are God's preferred methods of communication. Prayer gives you insight into God's Word and deepens your relationship with Him.