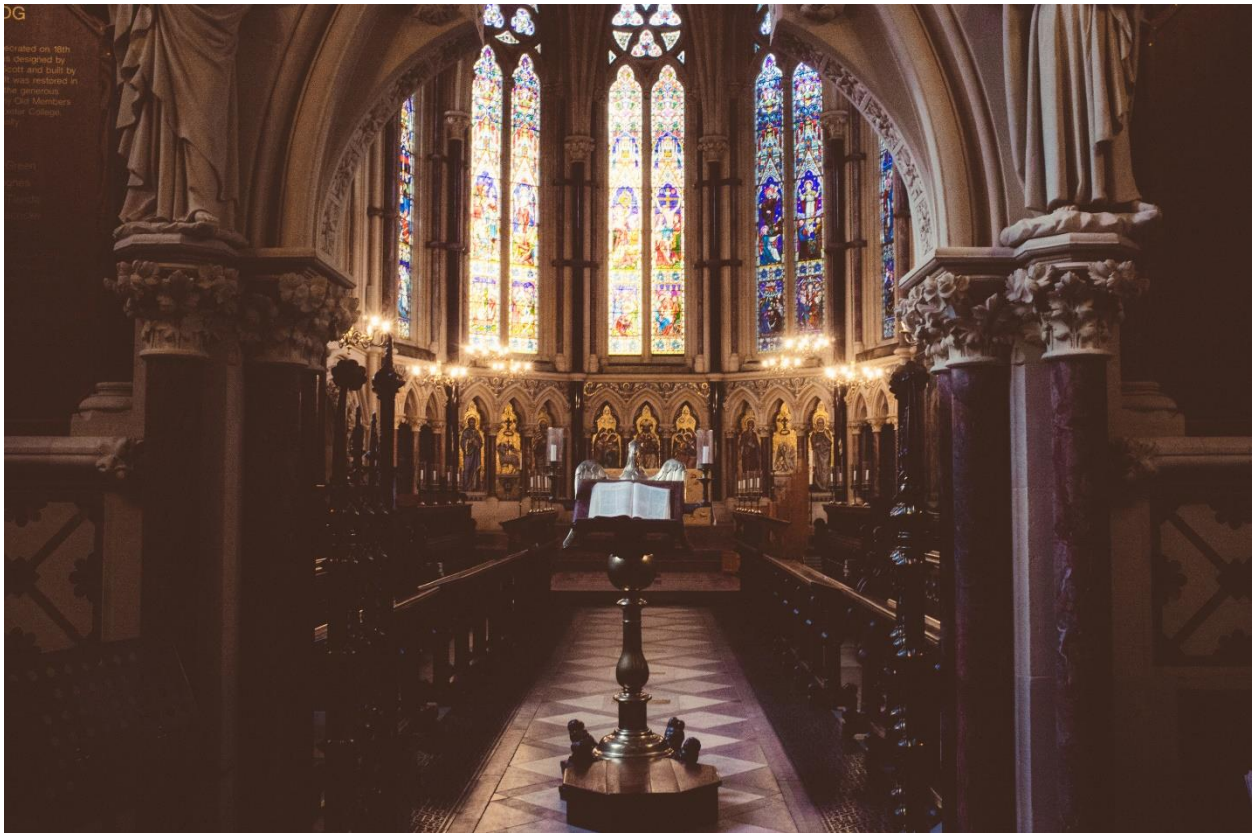




# The Inspiration of Scripture

Key Doctrines for Starting and Finishing Strong

## LESSON 5



*"The human words of Scripture are seen to be divine the way the human man Jesus was seen to be divine. Not all saw it. But the glory was there. And it is here, in the Scriptures."*

JOHN PIPER

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In this lesson, we will study three essential subjects:

- **The Facts of the Bible**
- **The Inspiration of the Bible**
- **The Translations of the Bible**

## Are the following statements true or false? (circle one)

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- The Bible is a man-made document. T F
- The Bible is unique like other unique books. T F

Be on the lookout for the answers to these questions as we study the Word of God.

## Looking at the Bible Facts

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Webster defines “*unique*” as: “1. One and only; single; sole. 2. Different from all others; having no like or equal.” Truly, the Bible is a unique book. It is different from all others in several ways, but especially in its continuity.

Here is a book that was:

- Written over a span of 1,600 years
- Written over 40 generations
- Written by more than 40 authors
- Written in different places
- Written at different times
- Written during different moods
- Written on three continents
- Written in three languages (Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic)

Yet it has one theme, one message, and one focus: *the coming, death, resurrection, and reign of the Savior, Jesus Christ*. The Bible, from cover to cover, points to the redemption of man through the Lord’s Messiah.

## Answering the Bible’s Critics

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Here are some common objections critics have to the Bible and answers to these objections:

- A. The Bible is no more inspired than other inspiring books.

Some contend that the Bible is inspired in the same way all great literature is, but this does not make the Bible unique, or divine, in origin. To answer this objection, we must clearly understand the difference between what the Bible means by inspired and what men mean by it.

1. According to 2 Timothy 3:16, what does the Bible claim about its origin?

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(*"Inspired,"* Greek "Theopneustos," means God-breathed)

In this passage, Paul's emphasis is not only on the Bible's *inspiration*, but on its *sufficiency*. God's Word is sufficient to meet every need we have and to equip us for every work God has given us to do.

2. Some say that only parts of the Bible are inspired: just the parts that deal with spiritual matters, not the portions that deal with moral, historical, or scientific matters. But how far does 2 Timothy 3:16 say the extent of inspiration goes?

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- a. Revelation is concerned with the communication of truth that cannot be otherwise discovered.

- **1 Corinthians 2:9-10**—*"but just as it is written, 'THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.' For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God."*

- b. Inspiration has to do with the recording of revealed truth.

- **2 Peter 1:20-21**—*"But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."*

- c. Illumination has to do with the understanding of the truth that has been revealed and recorded.

- **1 John 2:20, 27**—*"But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him."*

- B. Why, then, are there so many translations?

Manuscripts from around 1600 B.C. to A.D. 100

Translations

385-404: The Vulgate, Jerome's Latin translation

700-1000: Various Anglo-Saxon partial translations

1382-1395: Complete Middle English translations by John Wycliffe and followers

1522-1534: Martin Luther completes German translation and publication

1525-1535: First printed English translation by William Tyndale

1560: Geneva Bible  
1611: King James Version  
1885: English Revised Version  
1901: American Standard Version  
1952: Revised Standard Version  
1960: New American Standard Version  
1966: Jerusalem Bible  
1971: Living Bible (*paraphrase*)  
1973: New International Version (*dynamic version—for easier reading*)  
2001: English Standard Version

Some translations [such as the *New International Version* (NIV)] are “dynamic” versions, meaning they are not *word-for-word* translations, but rather translated to make it easier for the reader to understand. These versions do this without changing the theology and context of the passage, and are reliable for the most part.

There are other translations (such as *the Living Bible*) that are “paraphrase” versions, meaning they are written as expressions of people’s view of the text.

The most accurately translated versions are the *word-for-word* translations from the original manuscripts [such as the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB) and the *English Standard Version* (ESV)]. For further study on Bible translations, see [ligonier.org](http://ligonier.org).

C. If the Bible is so inspired, why do people interpret it differently?

Often the disagreement is not so much with interpretation, but with application. Of those who believe that the Bible is inspired by God, the majority have no problem agreeing on the central teachings of the Bible like:

- Man being created in the image of God
- Sin
- Christ as the Son of God
- Faith in Christ’s death and resurrection as the only means of having a relationship with God.

D. Reasons some may interpret the Bible differently are:

- Lack of hermeneutic (*Bible interpretation*) skills like *context, history, grammar, and systematic theology*.
- Literal versus *figurative language*

E. Remember this very important principle:

All Scripture has one intended interpretation, but many applications. Here is a good rule for interpretation: if the literal sense makes good sense, seek no other sense, lest you come up with nonsense.

1. There are two words that are used to describe the extent of Biblical inspiration.
  - Plenary, which means *full, complete, extending to all parts*.
  - Verbal, which means it *extends not just to the thoughts, but also to the very words*. Every word of the Bible is important, according to Jesus. (*Read Matthew 5:17-19*)
2. What warning does the Bible declare that emphasizes its sacredness? (*Read Revelation 22:18-19*)

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F. How can a book written by man, who is fallible, have no errors?

According to 2 Peter 1:20-21, what four facts are revealed about the Bible's inspiration?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

God used living men, not dead tools, in the recording of Scripture. He did not set aside human personality, but rather used the very personality and literary talents in the penning of His revelation. Under the complete control and guidance of the Spirit of God, the result in every word of the original documents is a perfect and errorless recording of the exact message which God desired to give to man. This is why it is called verbal inspiration, not mechanical dictation.

## What about all the contradictions?

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If, in fact, the Bible contains contradictions (*and it doesn't*), it would show that at least those parts could not have come from a perfect, all-knowing God. It is easy to accuse the Bible of inaccuracies, but it is quite another thing to prove it. The first thing we need to answer is: What constitutes a contradiction? The law of non-contradiction states that a thing cannot be a and non-a at the same time, in the same place, and in the same manner. It cannot be both *raining* and *not raining* at the same time in the same location. When facing what seems to be a contradiction, remember these important points:

- Two statements can differ from each other without being contradictory. Distinguish between a *difference* and a *contradiction*.
- Some translations are not as accurate as they should be. Again, the *word-for-word* translations are the most reliable (NASB, ESV, RSV), rather than the dynamic or paraphrase versions (NIV, *Living Bible*).
- A knowledge of *the original language* could solve some apparent contradictions.
- The *context* and *historical background* dispel some apparent contradictions.

**Illustrated:** A story recounted of Ravi Zacharias may help to illustrate this. While teaching this concept to a local seminary class, Zacharias illustrated the law of non-contradiction in a simple either/or proposition. In other words, Either Paul is an apostle or he is not. Either Jesus is the Son of God or he is not. Either Christianity is true or it is not. Irritated by the illustration one professor of philosophy pushed back that the "either/or" concept was exclusively a western philosophical idea. He said eastern philosophy uses more of a "both/and" construct (i.e. Paul can be both an apostle and not be an apostle, Jesus can be both the Son of God and not the Son of God). Zacharias opposed this view with a simple statement: "So you are telling me that it's **either** the both/and system **or** nothing else, is that right?" The professor understood the point he was making with the question.

## Considering the Biblical Structure

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The Old Testament is in the New revealed (Promises/Anticipation of Christ).

- 5 books of the Law (Pentateuch)
- 12 historical books
- 5 poetic books
- 17 prophetic books

The New Testament is in the Old concealed (Manifestation of Christ).

- 4—The Gospels
- 1—History
- 21—Letters
- 1—Prophetic

## Discovering the Bible's Value

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What are the proofs of the inspiration of the Bible?

- Its indestructibility—Only a very small percentage of books survive more than a quarter of a century; a much smaller percentage last for a century; and only a small number live a thousand years. After years of effort to exterminate the Bible or rob it of its authority, the Bible is still the number one best seller. The fact of the indestructibility of the Bible strongly suggests that it is the embodiment of a divine revelation.
- Its prophecy—John Piper once wrote, "It should be said that the sheer fact of fulfilled prophecy is a revelation of the glory of God in Christ—not just the way it happens, but that it happens." (*A Peculiar Glory: How the Christian Scriptures Reveal Their Complete Truthfulness*, p.231)

- Its continuity—The Bible is one complete Book consisting of Old and New Testaments. In other words, there is direct continuity of divine revelation and authority running through all sixty-six books of the Bible. No part contradicts another part, and if one part were to be missing there would be an obvious gap. (*Is.40:6-8; Matt.5:18; 1 Pet.1:25*).
- Its ability to bring salvation—Jesus said in John 6:63—“*It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.*” James wrote, “*In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures*” (*James 1:18*). Peter said, “*for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God*” (*1 Pet.1:23*).

## Discovering the Bible’s Benefits

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List five reasons for knowing God’s Word.

- A. 2 Timothy 3:16: \_\_\_\_\_
- B. 1 Peter 2:2: \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Psalm 119:11: \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Psalm 119:38: \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Psalm 119:105: \_\_\_\_\_

Here are three benefits that will come your way if you study, apply, and rely on God’s Word:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ (*Ps.119:98*)
  - How has this benefit been experienced in times of trials?
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ (*Ps.119:99*)
  - How might knowing God’s Word give you this benefit in an intimidating situation?
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ (*Ps.119:100*)
  - Are you satisfied with your level of maturity?

What is the proper response to the Word of God?

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ it. (*John 6:68*)
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ it. (*2 Tim.2:15*)

C. \_\_\_\_\_ it. (*Job 23:12; Ps.19:9-10*)

D. \_\_\_\_\_ it. (*Ps.119:97*)

E. \_\_\_\_\_ it. (*Ps.119:4*)

F. \_\_\_\_\_ for it. (*Jude 3*)

G. \_\_\_\_\_ it. (*2 Tim.4:2*)

## Closing:

**Application questions:** Being a Doer of the Word

- **2 Timothy 3:16**—*“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching [what is right], for reproof [what is not right], for correction [how to get right], for training in righteousness [how to stay right]; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”*
1. What did I learn (“teaching”)?
  2. Where do I fall short (“reproof”)?
  3. What do I need to do about it (“correction”)?
  4. How can I make this a consistent part of my life (“training”)?



## Answer Key:

Are the following statements true or false?

- F
- F

Answering the Bible's Critics

A.

1. inspired by God
2. all scripture

E.

2. Plagues to those who add, loss of part of the tree of life to those who take away

F.

1. no prophesy is by man's own interpretation
2. no prophesy is an act of human will
3. men were moved by the Holy Spirit
4. men spoke from God

Discovering the Bible's Benefits

List five reasons for knowing God's Word.

- A. it is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, training in righteousness
- B. grow up in respect to salvation
- C. so we do not sin against God
- D. It produces reverence for God
- E. It is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path

Here are three benefits that will come your way if you study, apply, and rely on God's Word:

- A. wisdom
- B. insight
- C. understanding

What is the proper response to the Word of God?

- A. follow
- B. study
- C. treasure
- D. love
- E. obey
- F. contend
- G. preach

# Holy Habits Weekly Devotion



This week's memory verse: **1 Timothy 3:16**—*"He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory."*

This week's holy habit: **The Lord's Supper**

Christ died for His church, and the Lord's Supper is a celebration feast for those who are in Him. Through the remembrance of this selfless act, believers can fellowship at the table of grace and mercy. The Lord's Supper reminds us of the necessity of trusting in Him alone for forgiveness, the ability He furnishes us to follow His commandments, and that He and only He provides us the way to eternal life. Preparing to partake of the Lord's Supper properly requires that we search our hearts and deal honestly with our attitudes and actions. Turning from sin to Christ is continuous. We need not wait for the symbolic elements to be present. As believers, we can and should examine ourselves and remember the Lord's Supper daily.

## DAY 1 Read 1 John 6:51-58.

- What does it mean to you to have true food and drink on a daily basis?

## DAY 2 Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-29.

- Examine yourself. What are some of the attitudes and actions that you need to get in check? Repent of them and get right today.

## DAY 3 Read 1 Corinthians 11:1-34.

- Paul often admonished believers to avoid putting on appearances and focusing on rituals. In what ways might you still be holding on to ritualistic behaviors and/or be concerned with appearances? What can you do specifically to be more of an imitator of Christ?

## DAY 4 Read 1 John 1:9.

- Just as we are forgiven, we need to forgive others. Call to mind any debts that you are holding—such as wrongdoings of others, present circumstances, discouragements from life, and others. Pray earnestly that you can begin to release them.

## DAY 5 Read Hebrews 12:2.

- The cross made your salvation possible. Pray for the salvation of someone who previously has wronged or presently wrongs you or your family.

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