

## Life Principles Center

### Course: Bible Study

### T3\_CB\_L1: Reasons to Believe the Bible Part 1 (MA258)

#### Introduction:

Have you ever stopped to consider what an amazing book the Bible is? If it were only a history book, it would be indispensable in recounting the events of the ancient near east. If it were a mere book of poetry, it would be unmatched in its beauty and eloquence. If it were just a book of moral guidelines, it would be essential to successful living. But, the Bible is much more than that. It is the very Word of God, spoken to His messengers, passed down through time, and relevant to every generation. The Bible is God's magnificent revelation of Himself to the world.

Now some people, though, do not believe in the Bible's authority. In fact, there are many Christians who choose what parts of the Bible to believe and what parts to throw out. My friend, we cannot break up God's Word. We must accept the whole thing, from beginning to end. Now God never said anything by accident; therefore, we must understand that every word in Scripture is relevant to our lives.

In this course, we'll learn reasons why we can trust the Bible as God's holy Word. We will also see how to best handle the Bible so that it will have the fullest possible impact on our lives. I pray that as you work through these lessons, you will begin to see the unparalleled value of the living Word of God for your life.

#### Lesson 1, Section 1

**Objectives:** At the end of this section of Lesson 1, you should be able to:

- A. Recognize specific reasons for believing the Bible.
- B. Be able to provide clear scriptural support for the validity of God's Word.

#### Scripture

*Read 1 Peter 1:22-25*

*Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. For, "All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the word of*

*the LORD endures forever.” And this is the word which was preached to you.*

## Lesson 1

As believers in Christ Jesus, understanding the absolute truth and validity of the Bible is of utmost importance. What if someone asked you about the reasons for your faith? Most likely, you would point to a Scripture passage—John 3:16, for example—and say, “Well, it says right here that God loved me and gave His Son for me, so I believe it.”

But, what if they then asked, “So, just because the Bible says it, you’re going to trust it? How do you know the Bible is true?” I want you to be able to say without hesitation that the Bible is indeed the Word of God, and support that assertion with rock-solid reasons for your confidence. Therefore, this course will provide you with a ready response to those who might question your faith in God’s holy Word.

**The first reason you can trust the Bible’s truth is the very testimony of Jesus Christ Himself.** The Bible of Jesus’ time was what we know as the Old Testament, and it was intimately known by Jesus’ Jewish contemporaries. So, how did Jesus view the Scriptures? He had complete respect for them. In Mark 7:6-13, Jesus argues with the pious Jews because He believed them to be acting contrary to the Scriptures. Quoting a passage from the prophet Isaiah, He proclaims that the Jews have “invalidated the Word of God.” In this statement, Jesus both affirms the truth of the prophet and proclaims the writings to be the very Word of God.

Perhaps the best example of Jesus’ respect for the Scriptures can be seen in Luke 24:18-27. In this wonderful scene, Jesus walks with mourning disciples on the third day after the crucifixion. Temporarily concealing His identity from them, the Lord divulges the Old Testament references that point directly to the coming of a Savior, Jesus Christ. In doing so, Jesus put His stamp of approval on the fact that the Bible is indeed the living Word of God.

Jesus’ affirmation of the Bible’s validity is not only limited to the Old Testament; the gospels also clearly assert the trustworthiness of the entire Word of God. To refute this assertion is to say that Jesus must have been mistaken. How can a believer in Jesus Christ as the perfect, holy Son of God ever believe that He would have made a poor, uninformed, or ignorant decision? My friend, this is simply not an option. Therefore, we can trust the Bible as God’s Word because Jesus had this confidence Himself.

**The second reason we can trust the Bible is the evidence of fulfilled prophecy.** Over and over throughout the Word, we see the Spirit of God revealing prophetic messages to various men. Not only that, but biblical history also records the eventual outcomes of many of these prophecies. For example, Isaiah 7:14 and Micah 5:2 were both written well over seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus. However, these two prophecies give specific details about His coming, including the virgin birth and the name of the city from which He would come. Furthermore, Isaiah 53 gives tremendous detail about the life, mission, and death of the Messiah. All of these details were brought to life in the ministry of Jesus.

*Q1: Read the Scriptures below, and choose the ONE that most precisely fulfills the description you read about in Isaiah 53.*

- A. Luke 15:14
- B. Luke 14:13
- C. John 8:4
- D. Luke 22:37
- E. none of the above

## **Lesson 1, Section 2**

**Objectives: At the end of this section of Lesson 1, you should be able to:**

- A. Be able to provide clear scriptural support for the validity of God's Word.
- B. Understand the significance of prophecy in defending the truth of Scripture.

The Old Testament also contains many prophecies regarding the history of the nation of Israel. In Jeremiah 25:3-11, the prophet Jeremiah writes of the coming destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the wicked Babylonians. This prophecy came to fruition a short time later, as the Babylonians conquered Israel around 605 B.C. Jeremiah even named the exact number of years that the Israelites would remain in Babylonian captivity (70 years, Jeremiah 25:11), and Daniel 9:2 reveals that this is exactly how long their captivity lasted.

*J1: Why would it be important, in your defense of the inerrancy of Scripture, to note the Bible as a foretelling document of historical events? To what audience would this most likely be crucial? Do you know anyone*

*in whose life this knowledge would make a significant impact? Explain, and record your insights as a journal entry.*

So, why should you believe the truth of the Bible? Well, how else can you explain all of the different prophecies, written by so many different men across so many centuries, actually coming true just as they were written? These things came true just as God prophesied, because He was the One who told the prophets what to write. The Bible is a book that was written by God, not by man. Therefore, the Word is the evidence of God throughout the ages, whole and without error or inconsistency.

Once we realize that Jesus held unwaveringly to the truth of Scripture, and that history itself has proven the prophets' accuracy time and time again, we can begin to see the ultimate worth of God's holy Word, the Bible. In the next lesson of this course, we will continue this vital study by examining even more reasons for our confidence in the Word of God.

*Q2: Carefully read 1 Peter 1:23. Which passage of Scripture in Isaiah prophesied the everlasting endurance of God's Word as related in Peter's letter?*

- A. *Isaiah 47:9-11*
- B. *Isaiah 10:16-19*
- C. *Isaiah 40:6-8*
- D. *Isaiah 65:16-18*
- E. *None of the above*

## **Prayer**

Father God, what an amazing book the Bible is. Thank You for sharing so much of Yourself and of Your plan for us in the pages of Scripture. Help us, Lord, as we seek to grow closer to You by digging deeper into the Bible, and put in our hearts a ready defense for anyone that questions the truth of Your Word. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## **Homework**

### **Scripture Memory:**

The Scripture memory assignment for this course is given below. Be sure to commit this passage to memory before moving on to the next lesson. Then, practice reciting it over and over throughout this course.

*2 Timothy 3:16-17*

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

## Life Principles Center

### Course: Bible Study

### T3\_CB\_L2: Reasons to Believe the Bible Part 2 (MA258)

**Introduction:** Second Timothy 2:15 says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." For that reason, we encourage you to complete each assignment before progressing to the next lesson. This lesson is structured with two separate sections to help you maximize your study time.

#### Lesson 2, Section 1

**Objectives:** At the end of this section of Lesson 2, you should be able to:

C. Memorize 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

D. Understand what is meant by the term "unity of Scripture."

#### Scripture

*Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17*

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

#### Lesson 2

In the previous lesson of this course, we began our study of the Bible by looking at two powerful reasons why we can trust Scripture as the Word of God. You'll recall that we can trust the very testimony of Jesus Himself, who clearly taught that the Bible was the inspired Word of God. Also, we took a brief look at some of the biblical prophecies that have been fulfilled throughout history. Now, we will continue our exploration of this exciting, life-changing book as we examine more reasons to believe in the truth of the Bible.

**A third reason we can trust the Bible is the complete unity of Scripture.** At first glance, this may not seem to be a very convincing argument. You may argue, "Well, of course it is united. Most books I've read do have a unified message; otherwise, books just wouldn't make sense." We have to remember, though, that the Bible is no ordinary book. It was not written by a single author over the course of weeks or months. Rather, it is composed of 66 individual books, written by about 40 men on three continents, over the course of 1,500 years! Despite all

of the many hands, different cultures, and massive time frame, the Bible does not contain a single genuine contradiction. My friend, if God did not make this happen, then there is no way it could have been produced.

*J1: Memorize 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Knowing that the Bible is composed of 66 books, written by 40 different men on three different continents, how does this verse reconcile these facts and point to the unity of Scripture? Explain in your journal.*

What do I mean by the “complete unity of Scripture”? I mean that every piece of the Bible works to tell one story: the story of God’s redeeming love for mankind. You’ll remember from previous lessons that redemption is the purchase of someone in order to procure his freedom. So, Scripture is the story of how God has freed and liberated mankind to become the kind of men and women He wants us to be.

This redemption story is covered in greater detail in the course entitled “Now That You Believe.” Below is a brief excerpt from the lesson, “You Are Redeemed,”

Rather than simply being contained within the pages of the Gospels, the story of God’s redemptive plan spans throughout all of Scripture. In the first two chapters of Genesis, the creation of an earthly paradise and the first man points toward the fact that God planned our redemption. The next several chapters of Genesis (3-11) describe the Fall of Man and reveal that redemption was not an option, but rather a requirement or necessity for all human beings. The remainder of the Old Testament, which establishes the history of Israel and points toward the coming Redeemer, demonstrates that God prepared us for His redemption plan. Then, in the Gospels, Jesus’ life on earth marks the evidence that God’s redemption of man is real and alive. In the book of Acts, when the disciples go into the world to spread the Good News, we see the fulfillment of God’s plan to share His work of redemption with all people. The epistles have been recorded and included in the Bible to explain what redemption is, and finally, the Revelation brings the story to a close as God’s redemptive plans, preparations, and works come to completion. While the books of the Bible aren’t compiled in chronological order, they all fit together like puzzle pieces in time to tell one story—God’s redemptive love for you, me, and every other person who has lived or will ever live.

**Q1: True or False.** After reading this excerpt, evaluate whether the statement below is **true** or **false**.

*The story of redemption supports the unity of Scripture because both the Old and New Testaments explain God's original plan for His people, the Fall, and our atonement and restoration.*

There is no way that the unity of the Bible “just happened.” It is a whole, unified, and as indicative of an Intelligent Designer as Creation itself. Throughout the entire work, God is preparing and providing for us a book by which we can live and know that we are forgiven of our sins, that we are saved eternally, and that heaven is our home.

## **Lesson 2, Section 2**

**Objectives:** At the end of this section of Lesson 2, you should be able to:

- E. Personally apply to your own life the truth that God's Word is inexhaustible.
- F. Understand what is meant by the term “unity of Scripture.”
- G. Recognize reasons to believe the truth of the Bible.
- H. Understand the significance of the Bible as the *living* Word of God.

**A fourth reason we can believe the Bible's truth is the inexhaustible depth of the Word of God.** No one will ever be able to exhaust the truth of Scripture. Scholars have given decades to the study of small portions of the Bible, only to realize that they've just begun to scratch the surface of its full meaning.

Have you ever noticed that two different people can read the same passage and get different messages from it? This is why a thousand preachers could each deliver a sermon on the same text and no two would be alike. You see, part of what makes this amazing book the *Living Word* of God is that it is always *active*. No matter how many times you may read a particular passage, you will always discover something new every time you come back to it.

**J2:** Take some time to think about one of your favorite Scripture passages. Read that passage and look for something new, a message that you have never noticed before. What new insight is the Spirit revealing to you?

When the author of a book is merely a man, then the scope and information will be limited. Thus, it is entirely possible for another man to thoroughly exhaust every conceivable interpretation of each line in the book. However, when *God* writes a book, man has no hope of discovering every nuance, interpretation, and meaning within it. This does not mean that God has “hidden” anything from our view, but that He has given us a Word that is always fresh and relevant.

*J3: Case Study - Karen is a 32-year-old stay-at-home mom who has been praying about an opportunity that her pastor presented. She has always had a love for orphans, and there is the possibility of beginning a ministry through her church to a nearby orphanage. Because Karen is a busy mom, she and her husband want to make sure this new responsibility is of God before she commits. Take a few minutes to respond in your journal about how God might use each of the following Scripture passages to reveal His heart for her decision.*

*F. Isaiah 40:21-31*

*G. Psalm 32:8-11; Psalm 10:14-18*

*H. James 1:27*

The Bible has always been absolutely up-to-date, regardless of the time or culture in which it was read. It describes man and society perfectly for every generation and every location. It provides truths that are just as relevant today as they were two thousand years ago. And, if the world should last that long, it will continue to be adequate to meet each person’s needs two thousand years from now. It is the eternal, living Word of God.

In the next lesson of this course, we will conclude our study of the reasons to believe the Bible by seeing that the Word is the witness of the Holy Spirit, absolutely indestructible, and fundamentally important in the history of the world.

## **Prayer**

Lord, thank You so much for this living, breathing, always relevant Word of God. Help us to see its complete unity, as it paints a glorious picture of Your redeeming love for each one of us. Help us to find new meaning and new treasures within its pages every time we pick it up. And help us as we study it to become more like Your perfect Son Jesus, in whose name we pray, Amen.

## Homework

### Scripture Memory

Be sure to review your Scripture memory assignment for this course!

#### *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

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

**Q2: Fill in the Blanks with the appropriate numbers.** The Bible's unity testifies to its divine inspiration, because it consists of \_\_\_\_\_ books, written by \_\_\_\_\_ men in \_\_\_\_\_ different continents, over the course of \_\_\_\_\_ years.

## Life Principles Center

### Course: Bible Study

### T3\_CB\_L3: Reasons to Believe the Bible Part 3 (MA258)

**Introduction:** This lesson is divided into two sections to help you complete the entire lesson at your convenience. In order to renew your mind with God's Word and give you an accurate view of Him, it's very important that you take time to complete each assignment before moving on to the next lesson.

### Lesson 3, Section 1

**Objectives:** At the end of this section of Lesson 3, you should be able to:

- E. Apply the promise of Joshua 1:8 to your life.
- B. Understand and evaluate the witness of the Holy Spirit.

### Scripture

*Read Joshua 1:7-8*

*Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.*

### Lesson 3

So far in this course, we have looked at four specific reasons why we can trust the truth of the Bible as God's holy Word. Now, we will conclude this emphasis by looking at two final reasons for our confidence in the Bible.

*J1: Meditate on Joshua 1:8. What is meant here by the word "meditate"? What is the difference between memorization and meditation? How does this spiritual discipline impact your life on a daily basis? What is God leading you to do as a result of this verse? Record your insights as a journal entry before progressing on with the lesson.*

**The fifth reason for our confidence is the witness of the Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit is certainly qualified to be our divine Teacher.

In John 16:8-13, Jesus declares that the Holy Spirit will come into the world and teach us about sin, righteousness, and judgment. Furthermore, the Spirit will come to “guide (us) into all the truth.” How can He guide us into all truth if He is not all-knowing already? As we saw in our study on the Holy Spirit, He is indeed the omniscient, perfect Spirit of God.

*Q1: Match each characteristic of the Holy Spirit with its corresponding Scripture reference.*

- A. Our strength in the midst of temptation*
- B. He who equips us to do ministry*
- C. Helper by whom we remember Scriptures at appropriate times and recall what God has spoken to us in the past when we need it most*
- D. Giver of new life when we receive Jesus as Savior*

- 1. John 6:63*
- 2. John 14:26*
- 3. Luke 4:1*
- 4. Acts 1:8*

The apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:10-14 that it is the Holy Spirit who reveals truth to us and enables us to understand it. Apart from the Spirit of God, we simply cannot understand spiritual things. Therefore, we must be careful in listening to an unbeliever’s understanding or interpretation of Scripture. Because the Holy Spirit is only present in believers, all the unbeliever can do is approach the issue with his own human understanding. Needless to say, according to this passage in 1 Corinthians, mere human wisdom cannot adequately explain spiritual things from God’s point of view.

Clearly, then, only the Holy Spirit is qualified to guide us into all truth. After all, it was through the Spirit that the Bible was written; we can therefore trust Him to reveal those truths to us. Moreover, the Spirit not only delivers information, but also the *transformation* that is essential to our mature Christian walks. In Romans 8:16, we are told, “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.” This means that the Spirit is not only indwelling each of us, but that He is also impressing upon our hearts the assurance that we are children of God. It is from that position of complete trust and intimacy that He guides us in the truth of Scripture.

## Lesson 3, Section 2

**Objectives:** At the end of this section of Lesson 3, you should be able to:

- A. Evaluate the impact God's Word has had on your life.
- F. Evaluate the Bible's historical impact.

**The seventh reason for our confidence in the Bible is the unquestionable impact it has had in this world.** We see this in individuals and nations alike.

*J2: Ask yourself, "Where would I be if not for this Word of God? How would I know God? What would I think of God? How would my life, my morals, and my values be changed?" Record your answers as a journal entry.*

In many parts of the world, the Bible is simply taken for granted. Many, many believers probably never even remember the first time they saw a Bible. However, this is not the case around the world. There are parts of the world in which the Word of God is not allowed. It is illegal to own a Bible or to read from it. But, let me tell you that untold thousands of people have died for this book. It is the most precious thing you could ever hold in your hands. Never forget that it is not just a book; it is the very Word of God.

I receive letters from believers all over the world, and I am always amazed to hear the testimonies of those who were raised in countries in which the Bible was not allowed. These people remember in vivid detail the first time they heard a Scripture passage read. Some have related that they began to hear these stories about God and about this man named Jesus, how He lived and died, and then rose again. Over time, these Scriptures just erupted in their lives in a fount of understanding, love, and utter brokenness because the Spirit of God broke through their unbelieving hearts and planted the seed of faith in Christ.

Today's world tends to downplay the power of the Bible. However, this was not always the case. Alfred the Great, one of the great kings of England who led that nation into power, declared that everyone should be educated in the Bible before learning anything else. Likewise, Queen Elizabeth the First was later crowned as she put a Bible to her lips. The result? England erupted as a mighty world power under her reign. Later,

Queen Victoria was asked for the basis for England's rise to power. She replied simply, "It is only the Bible."

Contrary to many skeptics' beliefs, America was clearly founded upon the bedrock values of the Word of God. The English Puritans brought with them to the new land their faith in God as revealed through Scripture. I find it amazing that even those who do not claim faith in Jesus Christ still refer to the Bible as authoritative and sufficient to provide the principles by which to live. Many of America's founding fathers did not even believe the claims of Scripture, but they still knew that it was filled with truth. Clearly, it made a tremendous impact on these important historical figures.

For centuries, the Bible was used in American schools as a wealth of literary and spiritual truth. However, in the 1960's, the governing body of the United States decided to remove the Bible from our schools. What we have seen since is that when you remove the Word of God, you leave a void that cannot be filled with anything else.

Since the 1960's, we have seen many attempts to fill the void created by the absence of Scripture in schools. Instead of the principles of God's Word, we have violence, drugs, sex, alcohol, weapons, and fear. Sadly, the American school system has given the world a shining example of the horror and tragedy that follows when the Bible is outlawed.

***Q2: In answering this question, keep in mind the aforementioned historical precedents of those who supported the Bible and those who did not.***

***True or false? It is safe to say that the Bible is not a mere book; moreover, it is powerful and sustaining when obeyed whereas disobedience and disbelief carry with them both personal and societal consequences.***

The value of the Bible cannot be calculated. It is the timeless, holy, inerrant Word of God. It is God's own message to His people. This is not just a book. It is the Book of books. And, if you want to live a life that is fulfilling, successful, and steeped in the will of God, you must live your life by the Book. There is simply no other way.

## **Prayer**

And Father, God, send revival to this nation of ours. We don't deserve it. We ask You to have mercy upon us. We pray that the Spirit of God will begin to work in the hearts and minds of Christians all across this

nation. And Father, we understand why Your judgment has not come. There are at least enough of your children praying, crying out, interceding before You, attempting to live a godly life that You have withheld Your judgment.

Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus we pray that each one of us examines our hearts, repents of our sin. Get our focus in the Word of God. Get our focus upon You. Raising godly children, raising godly grandchildren, raising up a generation of young people whose lives and whose testimony and whose witness will bear testimony to the living resurrected Christ. Not only in this nation but around the world. For we ask it in Jesus' name and for His sake, amen.

## **Homework**

### **Scripture Memory**

Be sure to review your Scripture memory assignment for this course!

#### *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

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

## **Assignment**

Record in your journal how the obedience or disobedience in your country's recent history supports the power of God's Word.

## Transcript of Audio/Video Teaching Clip *The Indestructible Book*

Over the past few lessons, we've studied several different reasons why we can trust the Bible as God's holy Word. As we talk about the Bible's impact throughout history, I want to share an important lesson with you: God's Word is absolutely indestructible.

I want you to think about this for a moment. There has never been a single book in history that has been as hated as this book. The enemies of God have done everything possible to hunt it down and destroy it.

Men have confiscated it. They have passed laws against it. They burned it. They even chained the Bible to church pulpits to prevent common people from reading it for themselves. Why did these men think it was so important to prevent the Bible from being distributed around the world? It is because when men and women begin to read the Word of God, they become free.

So, people throughout history have done their best to destroy it. They have done everything possible to convince people that the Bible isn't true, that it isn't important.

But their arguments proved to be completely false.

One example is Voltaire, a famous French scholar who died in 1778. He proclaimed that within a hundred years of his death, the Bible would be a forgotten book. Ironically, just 25 years after Voltaire died, the old publishing house that had printed his atheistic philosophies was used by a Bible society to publish the Word of God.

Another example is the story of William Tyndale. He was the first person to use the printing press to produce a complete New Testament for widespread distribution. The leaders of that time were so enraged that Tyndale was exiled from England. When he finally returned, they caught him, strangled him to death, and then burned his body. Why? Because he attempted to make the Word of God available to all people.

Just before Tyndale died, he uttered a prayer to God to open the eyes of the king so that that the Bible could be produced. One year later, the king affirmed the printing of the Bible and it was distributed among the people.

This Book we hold in our hands has cost a lot of people their very lives. All of your possessions combined cannot even come close to the value of one single copy of the Word of God. It is powerful, it is without error, and my friend, it is completely indestructible.

## Life Principles Center

### Course: Bible Study

### T3\_CB\_L4: How To Handle the Bible Part 1 (MB158)

**Introduction:** Second Timothy 2:15 says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." For that reason, we encourage you to complete each assignment before progressing to the next lesson. This lesson is structured with two separate sections to help you maximize your study time.

#### Lesson 4, Section 1

**Objectives:** At the end of this section of Lesson 4, you should be able to:

- G. Understand the implications of God's promise in Isaiah 55:11.
- H. Recognize the power and personal relevance of the Bible.
- I. Evaluate your assumptions about how to handle the Bible.

#### Scripture

*Read Isaiah 55:9-11*

*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.*

#### Lesson 4

We live in an age in which we can just click a few buttons on a keyboard and bring the entire world into our living rooms. Within seconds, we can use a computer to find the answer to almost any question. In fact, many of today's youth do not even remember a time when questions had to go unanswered for a few days while information was collected. Truly, the Information Age has changed the world.

And yet, despite the tremendous value and power of computers, it is not enough to simply own one, is it? If you have a brand new, state-of-

the-art computer sitting on your desk but have no idea how to use it, then you won't be able to find any answers. Well, the Bible is just like that. There are a lot of people who own a Bible but simply do not know how to use it. The issue is not merely *owning* a Bible; the real issue is knowing how to handle one.

Remember, this is the book that teaches us how to know God, how to relate to Him, how to be forgiven of our sin, how to live successfully in this life, and how to die unafraid and spend eternity with God. No other book has been able to do what this book does. However, the power of the Bible cannot be unleashed in your life until you open it up and begin to work through it. Whenever I see a nice, clean Bible in someone's hand on Sunday, I know that they probably do not even open it up at all during the week. The last thing you want is a Bible still looking new. A well-used Bible will get broken in and dirty fairly quickly with fingerprints, marked pages, and tears.

*The truth is, how you and I handle something depends entirely upon the value we place upon it. If I do not think something is valuable to me, then even if I own it, I will not be interested in getting involved in it. When dealing with the Word of God, we see this quite often. The Bible is the best-selling book of all time, but of all the people who have purchased a copy, do you think they have all worn their copies out by reading and re-reading its pages? The answer, sadly, is no—because most of these people do not know the value of what they have.*

**J1:** Carefully read Isaiah 55:11. How does this verse support the statement that the Bible is the only book that has the power to change lives? What does this verse tell you about the Person and character of God? What does it tell you about God working in **your** life where you are today?

*Now, let us take some time to examine the benefits of God's Word. **First, the Word helps us get into a right relationship with God.** First Peter 1:23 reminds us that we have been born again through the living, abiding Word of God. That means that it was the Bible that helped us to see our dark condition and utter need for Jesus Christ. In Christ, then, we have become inheritors of eternal life, and we have the assurance that we will rejoice with the Lord forever. How would we have made this decision if not for the Word?*

*J2: Even if you did not read the Bible at all before coming to know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, it was the truth of Scripture that you came to believe. Take some time to brainstorm ways you can use scriptural truth—both directly and indirectly—as a witnessing tool to those around you.*

**Second, the Bible serves as our guide.** Psalm 119:105 rightly describes the Word of God as a “lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.” This means that when we need direction for our lives, we can find it in Scripture. Usually, though, we call our friends or seek another person’s counsel. While there is tremendous benefit in the wisdom of godly friends, why would we not first go to the source of all truth, the holy Word of God?

**Q1:** Below are some reasons that we may not first turn to God’s holy Word when we’re in need of direction and counsel. Which one of these do you most struggle with?

- A. In our hearts, we struggle to believe that a holy God would actually speak to us about the directions, no matter how small, of our lives.
- B. We struggle to trust God’s ways and His timing.
- C. We are too impatient to wait on God to reveal His way to us.
- D. We do not believe the Bible.
- E. We do not know enough about the Bible to know where to look for answers.
- F. We do not understand the practicalities about how God might guide us through Scripture.
- G. We are not close to God or have unconfessed sin in our lives, which makes us not want to go to Him.
- H. We haven’t grown into the pattern of seeking Him first according to Matthew 6:33.

#### **Lesson 4, Section 2**

**Objectives:** At the end of this section of Lesson 4, you should be able to:

- A. Recognize and understand the Bible’s various functions in your life.
- B. Apply the Bible’s roles in your own life.

**Third, Scripture shows us how to become wise.** Psalm 119:104 explains that if I want to have understanding and wisdom, then I must get in the book that gives me the greatest wisdom, a book that

helps me understand my God, my Savior, my very Guide. The Bible shows us how God thinks and acts, in that we can find the greatest expression of wisdom imaginable.

*Q2: Compare Psalm 119:104 and Isaiah 55:8-9. Then, complete the question:*

*True or False? Reading the Bible will help me know everything God knows.*

**Fourth, the Word strengthens us in our grief.** (Psalm 119:28) When we are struggling with sorrow, we can always find comfort in the Word of God. In its pages, we are reminded that God loves us and is personally interested in us. My friend, it is impossible to be overtaken by feelings of hopelessness when you are in steadfast assurance of the abiding, indwelling, intimate love and protection of almighty God.

**Fifth, the Bible works to turn our sadness into joy.** We see in Psalm 119:111 that the testimonies of the Lord are the joy of our hearts. Quite simply, this means that we cannot stay depressed and stay in the Word at the same time. The message and assurance of God's intimacy and provision will turn your sadness into joy because you will realize that God Himself is living within you. This is why the apostle Paul instructs us to rejoice in the Lord *always*. (Philippians 4:4) Paul knew the dangers and heartache of the world, but his hope in the Lord outweighed all of his troubles. We, too, can share in that confidence and comfort.

**Sixth, Scripture puts an unshakeable peace in our hearts and keeps us from stumbling.** (Psalm 119:165) Peace is an important theme in the Bible. Paul tells us that there is a peace that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7), and Jesus promised to give us the very peace of God. (John 14:27) How in the world can we have peace in the midst of horrible difficulty? It is only because almighty God puts places of peace in our hearts. It runs deep within us and we cannot put our finger on it; however, we know that no matter what happens, there is a tremendous sense of godly assurance that comes into our lives. And, that word of security comes to us in the Word of God.

**Seventh, the Bible enables us to build up an inner strength and resistance to sin.** Psalm 119:9-11 shows us that when we fill our minds with God's Word, He sharpens our minds and provides a strong faith with a greater resistance to sin. The treasure of the Word in our hearts is stronger than our heart's desires for worldly pleasures.

**Eighth, the Word of God gives us hope.** Psalm 119:49 states a simple prayer in which the psalmist asks God to help him remember the

Word, in which he has found hope. Hope is certainly a valuable commodity in this fast-paced, often heart-breaking world.

**Ninth, Scripture calls us back to God when we are praying, which restores our souls.** (Psalm 19:7) Simply put, when we read the Word of God, we come under conviction for those things in our lives that are outside of God's will and are called back into a closer relationship with God.

**Tenth and last, the Bible enables us to live a godly life and experience growth in our walk with Christ.** First Peter 2:1-2 shows us that the Word is as important to us as believers as milk is to a newborn baby. It is absolutely essential for our growth, maturity, and development as believers in Jesus Christ. It is impossible for us to become the disciples of Christ that God wants us to be if we do not become intimately involved with the Word of God.

*Q3: Choose the three answers that best complete this sentence:*

*Three functions of the Word of God in my life are . . .*

*It brings such condemnation on me for sin that I turn to God.*

*It comforts me and turns my sadness to joy.*

*If memorized enough, it makes me know all that God knows.*

*It convicts me of sin and leads me to restore my relationship with Christ.*

*It weakens my resistance to sin.*

*It empowers me to become the child God has always planned for me to be.*

*B, D, and F*

*A, C, and F*

*B, D, and E*

*We have seen here ten arguments in support of the value of the Word, but obviously, this only scratches the surface of the endless benefits of Scripture. In the next lesson of this course, we will build upon these benefits by exploring specific ways in which we should use the Bible. Until then, I pray that you grow in your understanding of Scripture's immeasurable value and act upon that realization by digging into the Word with a fresh excitement and vigor.*

## **Prayer**

Lord, there is simply no way for us to comprehend the fullness of Your holy Word. Its value is immeasurable. Its worth is inconceivable. Its truth is unshakable. Thank You for providing us with this amazing book,

and help us as we seek to grow closer to You by diving deep into Your Word. In Jesus name we ask it, Amen.

## **Homework**

### **Scripture Memory**

Be sure to review your Scripture memory assignment for this course!

*2 Timothy 3:16-17*

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

### **Assignment**

In your quiet time today and tomorrow, spend some time meditating on Scripture. As a journal entry, record how God uses a particular passage in your life. Does He comfort you, give you peace, convict you of sin, turn sadness into joy, etc.? Write about it and note key verses that may help you in future struggles or circumstances.

## Life Principles Center

### Course: Bible Study

### T3\_CB\_L5: How To Handle the Bible Part 2 (MB158)

**Introduction:** This lesson is divided into two sections to help you complete the entire lesson at your convenience. In order to renew your mind with God's Word and give you an accurate view of Him, it's very important that you take time to complete each assignment before moving on to the next lesson.

**C. Important Note:** Today's lesson will likely require more time than many of your previous lessons. The additional assignments are crucial to applying these truths to your life, so divide the lesson into increments of time that allow you to be attentive and complete the assignments in their entirety.

#### Lesson 5, Section 1

**Objectives:** At the end of this section of Lesson 5, you should be able to:

- A. Understand the promise of blessing in Psalm 1:1-3.
- B. Evaluate your daily habits/practices and their relationship to what you value.

#### Scripture

*Read Psalm 1:1-3*

*How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.*

#### Lesson 5

In the previous lesson of this course, we saw that our respect and esteem for something is directly related to the value we see in it. When we talk about the Bible, its value to us is seen in how much we read, study, and incorporate its truths into our lives. Now that we have examined several benefits of Scripture, let us spend this lesson outlining specific ways in which we can use the Word of God.

Of course, **the first thing we must do in order to benefit from the Bible is to read it.** The question I am most often asked

about Bible reading is, “When, or how often, should I read it?” There is no specific answer that fits every believer as far as what *time of day* they should read, but there is one thing I can say with the full support of Scripture: ***You should read the Bible daily.***

Consider the words of Jesus. When being tempted in the desert, Satan tried to get Him to break His fast by offering Him a feast. How did Jesus respond? He said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4). So, He equates God’s Word with our spiritual sustenance.

Later, when teaching the disciples how to pray, Jesus asked God to “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11). Again, Jesus is not talking about food alone. He is declaring that we should seek our “bread” of the Word every day, not every other day, not every week, not every month. What did he say? “Give us this day our daily bread.”

*J1: Meditate on Psalm 1:1-3. Then in your journal, answer the following questions:*

- A. *What is it that makes a man or woman happy?*
- B. *In what does a truly happy person find his delight?*
- C. *What is the result of his delight and obedience?*

If you do not think you should read the Bible every day, then I encourage you to take Jesus’ connection between food and Scripture study seriously. If you don’t think you should read the Bible today, then why don’t you try to not eat today as well? If you feel your body getting weak and hungry from not eating, remember that your spirit is also hungering for the Word.

How much should you read each day? Well, there really is not a set amount. Some people read a chapter a day, others read about specific topics every day, while others read for a set time period. How much or how little you read is not the important thing. What is crucial is that you are, in fact, walking in the Word each day.

*J2: Take a few minutes and ask God to speak to your heart as you consider the following questions. Record your responses as a journal entry.*

- I. *The Hebrew word for “blessed” in today’s Scripture memory verse literally is translated “Oh, how very happy!” Would you describe yourself that way in this season of your life?*

- J. Consider a time in your walk with God when the above description applied to you. What daily practices and/or disciplines were your priorities?*
- K. Recall a time when you would not have (in general) used the Psalm 1:1 depiction of a happy person to describe yourself. What practices were you neglecting? What practices were you undertaking?*
- L. Based on your own personal experiences in correlation with the Word of God, what changes does God want you to make in your current daily practices? In what pursuits does He want you to continue?*

## **Lesson 5, Section 2**

**Objectives:** At the end of this section of Lesson 5, you should be able to:

- A. Understand the difference between reading the Bible, studying it, and meditating on its wisdom.
- B. Examine your resources, and discover how you can apply them to grow in your understanding and application of God's Word.
- C. Develop a record of how God has used His Word to change your life.

**The second thing we must do with Scripture is meditate on what we have read.** How is meditation different from merely reading a passage? Well, it is possible to read a passage without really thinking about it. We do this when we are in a hurry, or when we think we already know what the section says. However, when we meditate, we must actively engage the text. Meditation requires time, stillness, silence, and concentration.

When we meditate on a passage, we target a specific piece and prayerfully and patiently seek to extract its full meaning. When we approach Scripture with a desire to meditate on its message, the Bible stops being simply a book and we begin to see it as a gold mine of endless treasures that God can use to enrich our walk with Him.

*Q1: True or False? The difference between reading a passage of Scripture and meditating on it is that meditating on it actively engages your mind.*

*Q2: Which of the following is NOT required for meditating on a passage of Scripture?*

- I. concentration*
- J. time*

- prior knowledge*  
K. *stillness*  
L. *silence*  
M. *none of the above*

**Third, aside from reading and meditating, we must actively study the Word of God.** Now, this is where many people fall away. It is surprising how many people simply do not know how to study the Bible. The truth is, genuine Bible study can take many forms, and it can be as easy as focusing on a single word or phrase in a passage.

For example, if I am reading a passage and come up to the word “prosper,” as we see in Psalm 1:3, then I may ask myself, “Well, what does it mean to prosper? How does God want me to prosper?” These questions can lead me to examine that same word in other passages to trace the idea of prosperity throughout the entire Bible.

For greater insight, I would most certainly want to incorporate other resources into my study. I would consult a Bible dictionary, a concordance, and perhaps a topical Bible to shed light on that issue. I would also use a commentary to see a full explanation of the historical and theological background for the passage I am reading. There is even a great deal of Bible software and online resources that I could use to really open up the full impact of what I am studying.

You see, when we study God’s Word, we should not settle for merely scratching the surface. We should be motivated to dive in and excitedly discover exactly what God wants to teach us. We can do this by tracing these words and doing word studies, by following certain themes or topics throughout the whole Bible, or by doing a book-by-book study of Scripture. There are many, many ways to study God’s Word, and they all offer a rich experience and the blessing of revealed truth.

*J3: Take the next few minutes to examine your Bible study resources. The first step is to start with your Bible. Go through your Bible and note the various study aids, graphs, maps, and commentaries it provides. Then make two separate lists in your journal:*

- I. The study aids I currently use and how I use them . . .*
- J. The study aids I currently do not use and how I could use them . . .*

**Fourth—and this is vital—we must believe what we are studying.** If we simply explore the Bible for the sake of intellectual

curiosity, we are missing the whole point of it. The Bible was not given to us for mere information, but for complete transformation.

This is made clear in Hebrews 4:1-2, in which the author asserts that the Word of God will not profit a man unless it is united with his faith. Someone may ask, “Well, if I don’t believe the Bible, how am I going to start believing it?” The answer is to simply start reading it. This may not sound reasonable, but it works. In fact, quite often, this is all it takes. Remember, this is not a mere book; it is the very Word of God. The Holy Spirit will work through His Word, and that message will never come back without attaining its purpose. (Isaiah 55:9-11)

*J4: Carefully read Isaiah 55:11. Then, think about the specific Scriptures that God has used in your life to guide, challenge, and comfort you, or to change your thinking or transform your relationships with others. This journal entry will serve as a personal record of the truth in Isaiah 55:11, which says that God’s Word will accomplish what He desires.*

**Fifth, proper handling of Scripture requires that we apply it.** Like we saw above, the business of the Bible is transformation. If we can read it without it changing our lives, then we have a very serious spiritual problem. Whenever we discover a new truth, then our lives should be changed to some degree. When we study Scripture, the Word of Truth, then there should be no way to avoid the radical transformations that should become evident in our lives.

Applying God’s Word requires two things: courage and discipline. Obviously, anytime God calls us to do something that goes against the ways of the world, we will be scared. So, we must have the courage to face those obstacles knowing that we are supported by the truth of the Word. (Joshua 1:7) Discipline is also crucial, because it is not easy to change our habits or to deny our worldly cravings. However, the thing that really makes a difference in our lives is not the simple desire to change, but the discipline—the determined action—to apply God’s Truth to every aspect of our lives.

**Sixth and last, in order to rightly handle the Word of God, we must share it with others.** The Bible contains the most dynamic, important, life-changing news in history. Why on earth would we want to keep that message from those around us? And, when you share the truth of God’s Word, I assure you that no one will benefit more than you. When we take the challenge to share what we have discovered, our spiritual

maturity will begin to skyrocket, because we will have made that bold commitment to fully follow the Lord in obedience.

There is no book in the world like the Bible. When we read it, meditate upon it, study it, believe it, apply it, and share it, something happens to us. We become living, walking treasure houses because we become wealthy in the things that matter. Money cannot buy the wealth that we have; death can't take it away. In God's Word, we find eternal wealth.

My friend, I have only had one purpose throughout this course on the Bible, and that is to help you understand that the most valuable thing you own is the treasure of the Word of God. As we conclude this course, I pray that you continue to explore the richness of the Bible throughout your entire Christian life. Nothing will draw you closer to God or enrich your walk with Him more than the wonders contained in the pages of Scripture.

## Prayer

Father, we love You and praise You and thank You for Your Word. Pray the Spirit of God will sink this message deep. Every parent who cares anything at all about their children will take to heart what they've heard. All of us who are adults, young people, college students, where we are in life. Remember that You said we're to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." Not just something that has wheat in it, but that which has truth in it, the Word of God. For we ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.

## Homework

### Scripture Memory Review

Fill in the blanks to complete this course's memory verse.

*All \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ by God and \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_,  
for \_\_\_\_\_, for \_\_\_\_\_, for \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_; so  
that the man of God may be \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ for every  
\_\_\_\_\_.*

*2 Timothy 3:16-17*

In this course, your understanding and application of the Bible should have expanded and challenged you to make specific changes in your daily practices. Spend some time in prayer, and ask God to help you set specific goals in one or more of these areas. Pay special attention to any

of the Bible practices below that continually come to mind. Then, list clear, measurable goals (either in your journal or using the Institute's goal-setting feature) that relate to the way you handle the Bible.

### **Old Testament Scripture Reading**

**Topical Multi-book (more than one book of the Bible) Study**

**Book-by-book Study (focusing on one particular book of the Bible)**

**Read-through-the-Bible Program**

**Understanding Scripture's Historical Context**

**Scripture Memory**

**Cross-referencing**

**Study of Scripture's Word Meanings**

**Daily Bible Reading and Meditation**

**Obedience to Scripture**

**Trusting Scripture in Real-Life Situations**

**Using Different Resources for Bible Study**

**Increased Consistency and Time in the Word**

### **Conclusion**

By now, I pray that you have taken a fresh look at the Bible that so many people take for granted. It is so much more than a morality tale or history book. It is the very Word of God! The Bible speaks to every concern, question, or obstacle you face in life. Is your Bible in arms reach right now, or is it where you left it when you got home from church last Sunday?

My challenge for you is to get your Bible dirty! When I see a perfectly clean Bible on Sunday morning, I know for sure that it is only clean because it wasn't opened at all during the week. Friend, if you aren't opening its pages every day, pouring through God's Holy Word, then you are missing out on the extraordinary growth He has in store for you.