

The
Bible

God's Word to us



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Other booklets are available in this series as well as Daily Devotional material.

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Egerton C. Long

THE BIBLE – GOD’S WORD TO US.

If you were asked: ‘What would our world be like if we did not have the Bible?’ What would you say? Can you imagine what our world would be like if we did not have that remarkable book we call the Bible? What are some of the things we would not have?

When you think about it, what kind of a list would it be? Here are a few examples:

- We would not have an accurate knowledge of God, His existence, His love, His power or intelligence.
- We would not have an authentic knowledge of Jesus Christ: His coming to earth, His life and death, and His activities for us both on earth and also now in Heaven.
- We would not have any knowledge of how we could approach God.
- We would not have any certain knowledge of a future life.

We would have none of these if we were left to our own investigation or imagination.

It could also be said that we might not have any of the systems of government that we have in English speaking countries. So much is based on what we call the Ten Commandments which are found in one of the early books of our Bible. There is no end to what we would not have if we had no Bible.

BUT WE DO HAVE THIS REMARKABLE BOOK!!

The thrilling truth is **that we do have this wonderful Book** which God Himself has given us and in which He has revealed so much concerning His own nature and activity. It is not just one book. It is a library of 66 books written over a period of 1500 years by 40 different authors! It may have many different human authors, yet it is remarkably unified, showing the influence of the one Divine author – the Holy Spirit.

Here is what the Bible says about those who wrote it: *'Above all you must understand that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophets themselves. It was the Holy Spirit who moved the prophets to speak from God.'* (2 Peter 1:20-21 Living Bible) We need to recognise this truth. Another helpful passage is from 2 Timothy 3:14-17 (Living Bible): *'All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realise what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good work God wants us to do.'*

WHAT GREAT MEN HAVE SAID

Great men of God of the past and the present have spoken highly of the Bible and our need to read it and obey it:

- Martin Luther wrote: 'Would that this one Book was in every language, in every land, before the eyes, and in the ears and hearts of all men! Scripture without any comment is the sun from which all teachers receive their sight.'
- Michael Faraday, one of the greatest scientists of the 18th century, asked: 'Why will people go astray when they have this blessed Book to guide them?'
- King George V wrote: 'The circulation of the Holy Scriptures has done more than anything else to promote moral and religious welfare among young and old.'
- Lord Montgomery, the leading general of WW II, said: 'Gentlemen I read my Bible every day and I recommend that you do the same.'

OUR GOD SPEAKS.

One of the very first facts we learn in His Book is that our God speaks. Look at the opening verses in Genesis, the first book of our Bible. Those very first verses simply state that God spoke and action followed. That is something no other so-called god or idol has ever been able to do. But throughout the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, God is speaking to us, particularly to those who will believe in Him.

When we read His Book we are reading what He is plainly saying to us. We may never actually hear His voice but as we read His Book

He speaks to us. If we have doubts He says: *'believe Me, I have loved you with an everlasting love.'* (Jeremiah 33:3) If we feel we have sinned, He says: *'If you will confess your sin, I will forgive you.'* (1 John 1:9) Yes He speaks to us all the time.

Sometimes we may feel that a verse or passage was written just for us. That could be the Holy Spirit using the words or thoughts of Scripture to speak to our hearts, either reassuring us or telling us that is what God wants us to do or believe.

That is what makes this Book so different and why we need to read it often, so that it speaks personally to us. It is our instruction book therefore we need to read it every day of every week, letting it speak to us, reassuring us and if needed, correcting us.

QUOTING FROM THE BIBLE

Have you ever thought how often we say something that is really based on an incident or action found in the Bible? For example, here are some phrases which are that type of statement:

1. "Gospel truth" meaning what we are saying is as true as any statement in the Bible.
2. We say someone is a "Doubting Thomas." Thomas was the one who could not believe anything unless he had seen it first hand.

3. 'The writing on the wall' meaning here is a prophecy of something that is surely going to happen.
4. 'The wisdom of Solomon' meaning that someone is much wiser than we are ourselves.
5. 'Judas' was the betrayer of Christ. Sometimes when someone has betrayed a friend - someone very close to them - we may call them a 'Judas'.
6. 'David and Goliath' – a smaller person or organisation taking on and winning a battle with a larger one, say with the government.
7. 'The road to Damascus' – a radical change of heart or opinion.

There are many more such statements in which we quote or refer to an incident in the Bible.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU READ YOUR BIBLE?

Let me ask you a simple, direct question – what place does this Book, the Bible, have in your life? How often do you read it and study it? How much do you know about it? What use are you making of that knowledge?

There are many ways to read the Bible. For example: to gain **knowledge**, **comfort**, **teaching**, even **correction** from it as you read. Psalm 23 is one of the simplest passages in the Bible but it is so wonderfully filled with the most comforting words you could ever imagine.

You can also find remarkable **assurance** in reading your Bible. Look at 1 John 4:13 *'If you believe in Jesus Christ as your Saviour, right now you have eternal life.'*

Reading your Bible can bring real **encouragement**. In Deuteronomy 32:25 there is a promise that your strength will be equal to the demands of each day. The Bible can **instruct** us – Psalm 32:8: *'I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go. I will guide you with my eye.'* What an encouraging promise!

This Book can give us a remarkable appreciation of God's ultimate purpose for our lives. We can ask God to help us realise how wonderful it is to have this Book where our God can speak to us, daily, hourly, continually, assuring us of His love and His plans for us.

HOW DID WE GET THIS REMARKABLE BOOK?

What makes this Book different to any other? The answer is very simple: God gave it to us. He chose men to whom He gave the ability to record what He said, or to describe historical events in the lives of His own people. Also, of course, He used writers to give us details of the birth and earthly life and death of His Son, Jesus Christ.

The word which describes that God-given ability is 'inspiration.' Revelation covers the revealing of truth. Inspiration covers the communication and recording of that truth. Illumination and application have to do with our receiving, understanding and obeying what God has said to us.

WHAT ARE WE TO DO WITH THIS REMARKABLE BOOK?

The answer is simple – **read** what it says, **believe** what you read, **obey** it and **act** on it day by day. When we buy any kind of gadget or machine, we usually receive an instruction book and as soon as we can, we sit down and read it carefully. Next we do what it has told us to do in order to use what we bought.

If later we have a problem with the gadget or machine, we go back to the instruction book again. Usually that solves the problem for us because it tells us exactly what we should do. The Bible is God's instruction book and we need to read it and then do what it says. That is one more reason why we should read it every day - to receive our instructions for our life for that day and to know what God wants us to do.

DO YOU KNOW THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK?

The Bible is really the only book where you need to know the author in order to understand

the book. Have you ever accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour? God has not left us without instructions for coming into a relationship with Him. He has included them in His Book. He has said plainly '*If anyone hears My voice and believes on Him who sent me, that one has eternal life.*' There are many verses which speak to us just like that. Look up Romans 10:9 and John 5:24. Both of these verses can give you real assurance that you belong to God through Jesus Christ.

If you have accepted what God has said, and meant it sincerely, then the Holy Spirit is living within you. One of His activities in your life is to help you understand and apply to your own personal life what you read in your Bible day by day. Many Christians read it just before going to bed – that can be the sleepest part of our day, but it can also help us to quietly put ourselves in His hands for that night and for the days ahead.

We need to read this Book. We need to study it, obey it and apply it to our lives. Let it strengthen your faith and let it tell you what God expects of your life and service. Read it every day. Read it constantly in all the circumstances of your life. Let it speak to you as it gives you new assurance for the days ahead.

HELPS IN YOUR READING

There are several ways you can receive help in your reading of God's Word. For example it is good to have a companion booklet with notes on the suggested reading for that day. It can help you understand and apply what you have read. Christian Literature Ministry (who published the booklet in your hand right now) has a series called 'Day by Day with the Bible'. Write and ask for a sample copy. Or ask for six booklets covering twelve months. Scripture Union and several other organisations also provide daily readings and notes. Ask at your church for help in obtaining these notes.

ONE FINAL WORD

Let me say it again: **The Bible is the Book you need to read over and over** – read it daily, read it when you have doubts, read it before you pray each day. As you read it ask the Lord to speak to you through His Word, then make sure you take what you have read and do what it has said for you to do.

God will bless you as you read His Word.

HOW TO RECEIVE JESUS AS YOUR SAVIOUR

If God has been speaking to you as you have read this booklet and if you are willing now to take Jesus Christ as your Saviour, here is what you should do:

Confess – tell God in your own simple words that you are a sinner, needing a Saviour. (Read Romans 3:23)

Accept – tell God that you see Jesus Christ your only Saviour and will accept Him now. (Read Romans 6:23)

Believe – that Jesus Christ has saved you because you asked Him to do so. (Read Romans 10:13)

If you have made this decision today then sign your name here and tell someone else what you have done. Join a church where you can hear God's Word preached and have fellowship with other believers.

I acknowledge myself to be a sinner in God's sight.

I accept Jesus Christ now as my Saviour.

I thank Him for saving me.

Date _____/_____/_____

NOTES

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