

GOD JUST TOUCHED ME - WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT

LESSON 1 - THE BIBLE

A. Description:

The Bible is not one book, but a whole set of books, starting with the book of Genesis and ending with the book of Revelation. The Holy Bible is unique among all literature ever produced. Many people worked over thousands of years to compile all that is in it, yet it has a statistically impossible unity throughout. The Bible is the Manufacturer's Handbook for the successful use and operation of the life you have been given. It does for life's journey what an updated exhaustive Atlas does for a physical journey. Documents used by other religions have gone through thousands of revisions to make them say what the current generation preferred to hear. For example, the Koran as originally compiled by Mohammed considered Jews and Christians to be brothers to Moslems, and not to be harmed. The Book of Mormon has also had many drastic revisions. Though there are various translations of the Bible, they all agree in content.

The original languages of the scriptures are Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Words in these languages are richer in meaning than English words. When scholars make a translation they determine the specific meaning intended from the context in which the word is used. We should feel at ease with that because we do the same with English. Take for example the word **cool** which can have three different meanings dependant on context. 1) You better wear something warm because it is **cool** outside. **Cool** identifies air temperature. 2) What did she do that you were so **cool** to her? **Cool** identifies an emotional state. 3) Hey man, that's **cool**! **Cool** identifies an approved novelty. The same word in the

original language can be translated differently in different passages because of the context of those passages. The various versions of the Bible use different but equivalent words in English. Since English is a living language the meaning of some words change. For example, prevent used to mean "go before", but now means stop. Comfort used to mean strengthen, as to comfort a sorrowing person. Now it is used to indicate ease and rest.

Bibles that are translated from the original documents by honest scholars can be trusted. However, not all modern versions are translated from the original. You need to carefully read the preface to ensure the text wasn't translated from a revision to the original language, or from some other language.

The Bible used by most Christians includes the Old Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures, and the New Testament, revelations following the life of Christ. Before the reformation and the split in the Church there were other books included in the scriptures. The Jews had two sets of scriptures, one written in Hebrew and one written in Greek. The Greek version had books not in the Hebrew version, but included in the first Bibles. After the reformation the Protestants took those books out. Some Bibles include them between the Old Testament and New Testament and label them The Apocrypha. They can be used for learning but not to establish doctrine. Some exclude them altogether, but the Roman Catholics leave them in the order they were found in the Greek Old Testament. The Bible contains different kinds of books, including historical, prophetic, poetry, law, and teaching, all of great value to God's children.

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B. Inspired:

The Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16&17). The written Word of God is His communications to us. God spoke the words, revealed Himself and His plan to trusted people who then wrote down the things God had said. They used their own style but wrote what God wanted written (2 Peter 1:20&21). The Holy Spirit inspired and guided the human authors so there would be no errors or misunderstanding of what God had told them (1 Corinthians 2:12&13). Being the author and giver of life, God knows how to communicate with His creation, and being all perfect and all knowing, He does not make mistakes, though we sometimes cannot, or will not, understand Him. He says what He means and He means what He says. Do we look at the Bible's contents as binding or as suggestions? Do we tend to consider the Bible as nice for the past but irrelevant and out of touch with today's world?

C. Integrity:

The Bible may not be altered by man (Deuteronomy 4:2). As the Creator and Sustainer God alone has the authority to make the rules. The Bible is the Word of God and it is complete. To add to it would make it a burden, to detract from it would make it incomplete. To presume to change God's Word is to assume authority over God. His Word as given to us is flawless (Proverbs 30:5). A warning is given to those who would purposefully distort the message (Proverbs 30:6, Revelation 22:18&19). We must handle the Bible with great respect (Proverbs 13:13). Some people do not like what the

Word of God says, particularly if they are guilty of wrong living. They want to either:

- a) Delete some passages.
- b) Add their own interpretation to some passages.
- c) Rewrite some passages to suit their preferences.
- d) Ignore some passages.
- e) Claim it is all only from men and full of error.

God will not tolerate adding to, deleting from, or twisting the meaning of His word to us. The oldest existing copies of God's Word are the Dead Sea Scrolls, thousands of years old. Careful comparison of them with today's Christian Scriptures show there is no change. The Holy Spirit protects them. Do we sometimes wish that the Bible omitted some things or said them differently? Do we ever try to identify a different interpretation for some verse to make them compatible with society's standards?

D. Purpose:

The Bible has a purpose (John 20:31). God's Word is not just another book to read and think about, but is a compilation of critical information from our Creator. Knowledge of the scriptures affects our attitudes toward the present and the future. The more we know about the past the greater the confidence we will have about what God will do in the future (Romans 15:4). The Old Testament causes us to remember what the Israelites learned about God so we don't repeat their mistakes (1 Corinthians 10:11). The scriptures were given that we might have eternal life (1 John 5:13). Do we see the Scriptures as applicable to our daily lives? Do we consider some portions of our lives as exempt from scriptural guidance?

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We need to study the Bible (Deuteronomy 4:10). You cannot understand or follow something you do not know. It is not a matter of casual attention, but focusing great time and effort on what God is saying (Deuteronomy 6:6-8, Joshua 1:8). We learn how to follow God by meditating on His Word, reading, thinking about it. To know God more closely we need to know what He says (Psalm 1:2). You only recognize a voice by listening to what it says and sounds like.

God's instructions to us are to study, meditate on the scriptures so that they become part of us. If we are to understand our God, learn of His nature, know His ways, and understand what He demands of us, we need to spend time in His word. You cannot recognize the voice of God in your life if you never hear it from His word. You cannot use scripture in battles with the devil if you do not know the scriptures. You can say a son sounds just like his father only if you are familiar with the father. So it is with God's voice and His children. What priority does the Word of God hold in your life? How much time do you devote to studying the Bible?

The Bible sets the standard for our faith (Proverbs 29:18). Your peers and associates, society, and the world are all forever trying to tell you what your values should be and what you should believe and be willing to accept. Where there is ignorance of God, crime and sin run wild. Public morality depends on knowledge of God and keeping His laws. This applies to nations as well as to individuals. God's Word shines and illuminates sin in our lives so we can deal with it (Romans 7:7). Rejecting God's Word leads to condemnation (John

12:48). It must be the foundation of our faith (Romans 10:17), and when accepted works in us for good (1 Thessalonians 2:13). Are you secure in your faith? Where do you look to find eternal security?

The Bible lights the way for us (Psalm 19:8). There are many stumbling blocks, pitfalls, and divergent paths to follow in this life, and the world's wisdom is a very dim light indeed. God's law points out danger and warns us, and points at success and guides us. If we are to walk safely in a dark place we need a light. The Bible shows us the way ahead, and reveals false values and philosophies (Psalm 119:105&130). It is truly a light shining in a place that will continue to be dark until Jesus returns (Proverbs 6:23, 2 Peter 1:19). How do you identify what is spiritually safe? What or who is your guiding light in life?

The Bible is trustworthy (1 Kings 8:56). God can neither lie nor do any evil because to do so would violate His very nature. We can trust the Bible simply because it comes from God (Psalm 111:7). God does not play word games, speak empty words, change His mind, or forget what He has said (Ezekiel 12:25). God's Word will remain stable and unchanged forever and ever (Matthew 5:18, Luke 21:33). Can you distinguish between the world's wisdom and God's wisdom? Can you distinguish between seeing with physical eyes and seeing with spiritual eyes?

The Bible has saving power (Romans 1:16). The spoken Word of God brought creation into being, the living Word of God restored eternal life, and the written Word of God

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is no less powerful. From the days of creation until Jesus came, people just didn't seem to get it. The world, the flesh, and the devil had little trouble leading people astray. Conditions are better following Jesus' arrival, but there are still many being led astray. God's Word points to Jesus, the only way back to God. When we are open to God's Word and the leading of the Holy Spirit amazing life-changing things happen. When the going gets tough where do you put your trust? Are you willing to give the Word of God an honest chance at proving itself?

Ignorance of the Bible is perilous (Matthew 22:29). Whenever you are on a journey to a place you have never gone before, you need maps and direction, or you will never get to where you need to be. Every time you take a wrong turn you err, and when the journey is over you find yourself someplace you really, really don't want to be. Do you know where you are going? Is that really where you want to be? How do you plan to get where you want to be?

The Bible is a blessing (Luke 11:28). The Word of God is fruitful and brings good into our lives. The law revives us, makes us wise, give joy to the heart and light to the eyes. It warns and rewards. It is not chains to restrict us, but guidelines and light (Psalm 19:8-11). If you want a stable life you need a solid foundation to build on. Practicing obedience becomes the foundation in the storms of life (Matthew 7:24). Obedience brings great rewards (Luke 11:28, John 5:24). To believe the Word of God is to know we are winners (Revelation 1:3). Do you use the Bible to locate escape routes from the trials of life,

or to learn and grow spiritually? Can you identify any blessings the Word of God has brought to you?

The Bible is a weapon for spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:17). If we are not in spiritual battles it is because our lives are no threat to the devil and of no advantage to God. If we are in spiritual battles unarmed we are going to get hurt. When the scriptures refer to "sword", they are referring to a weapon of war, not just something used to cut. We are told that "it is sharper than a two edged sword, able to separate soul and spirit" (Hebrews 4:12&13). God's Word reveals who we are and what we are not. It penetrates to the core of our moral and spiritual life. It reveals what is in us, allowing us to take action and do something about it. When Jesus was baptized and led into the wilderness He was involved in a spiritual battle with Satan. If you check carefully you will find that He did not get into discussion with Satan, nor argue with him, but simply quoted the Word of God (Luke 4:4, 8&12). That was sufficient to send old slew-foot running. How can you recognize spiritual warfare? How do you prepare for spiritual warfare?

E. Types:

The Bible comes in a variety of flavors. There are different types of Bibles produced for different reasons. Some are plain unadorned scripture, and some have footnotes and cross-references included. It might surprise you to find out how much of the New Testament is either a quote or paraphrase from the Old Testament. Some Bibles have various tables and limited study aides included. Some have the words of Jesus in red so they stand out.

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There are three basic types of translations available. One type tries to capture the thought in a paragraph and restate it in modern terms. This type is probably the easiest to read, and is good to get a broad picture of what is in the Bible. Read it as a story of God and man that highlights God's goodness and points to man's failure. If you want to really dig into the Word and learn more of God, this is not the type of Bible to use because it is really an interpretation, not a translation. This type is subject to the interpreters understanding. You cannot relate its words to the original Hebrew or Greek. If you want a deeper understanding and really desire this type you can get a parallel Bible that has several types printed side by side. Another type is a paraphrase that keeps the verse structure of the original documents, but restates the content of the verse. This type of translation allows a deeper study than the first, but does not always have a translation for all the original words to allow going back to the original documents. The third type of translation is a word-for-word Bible. Every word in the original document is included. Since the Hebrew and Greek languages are so much richer than English you will find that different versions of the word-for-word translation use different but equivalent English words. The Amplified Bible is a word-for-word translation with the various shades of meaning included for selected words. The word-for-word translation is the best for deeper study because most study aides are tailored to this kind of Bible. What are your objectives in reading the Bible? What kinds of Bibles do you now own?

F. Study:

There are different ways to study the Bible, used for different reason. For a start you can study on your own or join

a Bible study group. Then, your group can be a bunch of people exploring the scriptures together, or a study class led by a trained teacher. It is also possible to set down and totally let the Spirit lead, or to use a prepared Bible study guide. Unless you have some mature Christians well versed in scripture within the group it is wiser to start with a prepared study guide.

One valid reason for studying the scriptures is to learn what is in them and gain personal growth. This is called devotional reading. You can start at Genesis and go straight through to Revelation, or you can read selected books. Front to back reading is good to get familiar with contents. Reading selected books promotes personal growth in the covered areas.

One type of Bible study is the study of a specific book. In this study you are looking for the message of the writer. You need to understand the context in which it was written, who it was written to, what was being addressed for the intended recipients, and how it applies to us today. The Word of God is timeless in application, and even if the conditions we find ourselves in are not the same, the principles involved are still valid. If we really examine our world we will find that conditions are not very much different than of old. People are still the same; just the trappings and gadgets are different.

Another type of study is the topical study. This study searches the scriptures for everything that is said about a particular topic, and it covers all the books of the Bible. You pick a specific topic, such as salvation, or prayer, or angels, or whatever topic of which you want a deeper understanding. You will be richly rewarded if you check out every mention of

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the topic in all of scripture, and will frequently be amazed by what the Holy Spirit reveals to you. You can just slog through the Word looking for your chosen topic, or you can use study aides, which are the result of someone else doing the slogging.

There are many Bible study aides available to help you. These include:

- Bible Commentaries, in which dedicated scholars have read and explained the contents of most of scripture. Many commentaries explain the setting and conditions when the scripture was originated
- Bible Dictionaries, which define words used in the context in which they were intended.
- Concordances, which identify the words used in the original language and give the various shades of meaning they have. The concordance will also identify every place in scripture that a particular word is used. A concordance is usually related to a particular version of a word-by-word translation. Some concordances are limited in coverage, and some include every word used in every place it is used.
- A Topical Bible, which identifies every place a specific topic is mentioned in the Bible. Like the concordance, there are different levels of coverage in different topical Bibles. Also, you may find that some things you are looking for are not categorized the way you expected.
- A Bible Handbook contains a wealth of information about the Bible, such as a general overview, archaeological discoveries, notes on each book, historical data, and more. Like the concordance and

topical Bible, various handbooks have different levels of coverage.

- Bible Atlas, which contains maps showing the various nations and boundaries that are associated with the different biblical ages.
- A variety of books about the people, customs, and society associated with the different biblical ages.

When you study you will want to follow all cross reference, and look up all words you are not sure about. Never make assumptions and never give any verse of the Bible an interpretation that is repugnant to the rest of scripture. You need to understand the various text within the context in which they were written. Read the scriptures before and after. Never ever take a text in isolation and try to make a doctrine of it. All of scripture is God breathed and in unity. One rule that Bible scholars always follow is that if you can understand how a specific word is used the very first time it appears in the entire Bible, that is how it should be interpreted every time it is used. To get a feel for the content of scripture get a modern paraphrase and scan through it. To dig deeper use a study bible that is a word for word translation of the Hebrew and Greek. Use study aids such as bible dictionaries, concordances, and bible handbooks. Ask the Holy Spirit to open up the scripture to your understanding, and compare insights with other mature Christian. Do you seriously desire a greater understanding of God and a closer walk with Him? Are you willing to really commit to a specific study for a specific time?

To recap, the Holy Bible:

- Is the inspired word of God

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- May not be changed by man
- Has a purpose
- Is to be studied
- Sets the standard for our faith
- Lights the way for us
- Is trustworthy
- Has saving power
- Is a blessing
- Is a weapon

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SCRIPTURE	MAIN POINT	CONSIDERATIONS/QUESTIONS
A. 2 Timothy 3:16&17 2 Peter 1:20&21 1 Corinthians 2:12&13	The Bible is the inspired Word of God	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The written Word of God is His communications to us. 2) Do we look at its contents as binding or suggestions? 3) Do we tend to consider the Bible as nice for the past but irrelevant and out of touch with today's world?
B. Deuteronomy 4:2 Proverbs 30:5 Proverbs 30:6 Revelation 22:18&19 Proverbs 13:13	The Bible may not be changed by man	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) As the Creator and Sustainer God alone has the authority to make the rules. 2) Do we sometimes wish that the Bible omitted some things or said them different? 3) Do we ever try to identify a different interpretation for some verse to make them compatible with societies standards?
C. John 20:31 Romans 15:4 1 Corinthians 10:11 1 John 5:13	The Bible has a purpose	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) God's Word is not just another book to read and think about, but is a compilation of critical information from our Creator. 2) Do we see the Scriptures as applicable to our daily lives? 3) Do we consider some portions of our lives as excused from scriptural guidance?
D. Deuteronomy 4:10 Deuteronomy 6:6-8 Joshua 1:8 Psalm 1:2	We need to study the Bible	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) You cannot understand or follow something you do not know about. 2) What priority does the Word of God hold in your life? 3) How much time do you devote to studying the Bible?
E. Proverbs 29:18 Romans 7:7 Romans 10:17 1 Thessalonians 2:13	The Bible sets the standard for our faith	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Your peers and associates, society, and the world are all always trying to tell you what your values should be and what you should believe and be willing to accept. 2) Are you secure in your faith? 3) Where do you look to find eternal security?
F. Psalm 19:8 Psalm 119:105&130 Proverbs 6:23 2 Peter 1:19	The Bible lights the way for us	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) There are many stumbling blocks, pitfalls, and divergent paths to follow in this life and the world's wisdom is a very dim light indeed. 2) How do you identify what is spiritually safe? 3) What or who is your guiding light in life?

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SCRIPTURE	MAIN POINT	CONSIDERATIONS/QUESTIONS
G. 1 Kings 8:56 Psalm 111:7 Ezekiel 12:25 Matthew 5:18 Luke 21:33	The Bible is trustworthy	1) God can neither lie nor do any evil because to do so would violate His very nature. 2) Can you distinguish between the world's wisdom and God's wisdom? 3) Can you distinguish between seeing with physical eyes and seeing with spiritual eyes?
H. Romans 1:16	The Bible has saving power	1) The spoken Word of God brought creation into being, the living Word of God restored eternal life, and the written Word of God is no less powerful. 2) When the going gets tough where do you put your trust? 3) Are you willing to give the Word of God an honest shot at proving itself?
I. Matthew 22:29	Ignorance of the Bible is perilous	1) Whenever you are on a journey to where you have never gone before you need maps and direction, or you will never get to where you need to be. 2) Do you know where you are going? 3) Is that really where you want to be? 4) How do you plan to get there?
J. Luke 11:28 Psalm 19:8-11 Matthew 7:24 Luke 11:28 John 5:24 Revelation 1:3	The Bible is a blessing	1) The Word of God is fruitful and brings good into our lives. 2) Do you use the Bible trying to locate escape routes from the trials of life, or to learn and grow spiritually? 3) Can you identify any blessings the Word of God has brought to you?
K. Ephesians 6:17 Hebrews 4:12&13 Luke 4:4, 8&12	The Bible is a weapon for spiritual warfare	1) If we are not in spiritual battles it is because our lives are no threat to the devil and of no advantage to God. If we are in spiritual battles unarmed we are going to get hurt. 2) How can you recognize spiritual warfare? 3) How do you prepare for spiritual warfare?

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SCRIPTURE	MAIN POINT	CONSIDERATIONS/QUESTIONS
L.	The Bible comes in a variety of flavors.	1) There are different types of Bible produced for different reason. 2) What are your objectives in reading the Bible? 3) What kinds of Bibles do you now own?
M.	There are different ways to study the Bible	1) There are different ways to study the Bible used for different reason. 2) What are your reasons for reading the Bible? 3) Are you willing to really commit to a specific study for a specific time?

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SCRIPTURE	WORDS	MEANING OF ORIGINAL LANGUAGES
A. 2 Timothy 3:16&17	INSPIRATION	1) Greek theoneustos, <i>teh-op'-nyoo-stos</i> , divinely breathed, inspired by God
B. Deuteronomy 4:2	ADD DIMINISH	1) Hebrew yacaph, <i>yaw-saf'</i> , add more, augment 2) Hebrew gara, <i>gaw-rah'</i> , scrape off, remove, take away
D. Deuteronomy 4:10	HEAR TEACH	1) Hebrew shama, <i>shaw-mah'</i> , make to hear, make obedient 2) Hebrew lamad, <i>law-mad'</i> , teach, instruct
E. Proverbs 29:18	VISION	1) Hebrew chazown, <i>khaw-zone'</i> , revelation, vision
F. Psalm 19:8 Psalm 119:130	PURE ENLIGHTNING	1) Hebrew bar, <i>bar</i> , pure, clean 2) Hebrew ovr, <i>ore</i> , luminous, glorious, give light, set on fire
G. 1 Kings 8:56	FAILED	1) Hebrew naphal, <i>naw-fal'</i> , cease, perish
H. Romans 1:16	SALVATION	1) Greek soteria, <i>so-tay-ree'-ah</i> , rescue, deliver, salvation
K. Ephesians 6:17	SWORD	1) Greek machaira, <i>makh'-shee-rah</i> , knife, dirk, sword