

YOUR WORD IS TRUTH

Doctrine of The Bible

64 Days of Truth
Days 1-7
Heritage Bible Church

64 Days of Truth is designed to help Christians understand the great doctrines of the Bible. As you spend the rest of your life feasting on the word of God (the Bible), you should forever expand and deepen your knowledge of these things.

During the 64 Days, listen to the weekly messages with an open heart and an open Bible . . . Spend a few minutes each day to study on your own, using the devotional guides in this booklet . . . Spend an hour or so each week with a discussion group, talking about the importance of what you learn.

Most of all, "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen" (2 Peter 3:18).

Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.

DAY 1 Wednesday: Message, "Your Word Is Truth"

If you can, take notes, and pay special attention to these key points. (When you get to your discussion group, compare notes to help each other get it all.)

Jesus prayed for you to be sanctified ("set apart") as you live in the world. What is it that will sanctify you?

Define **Revelation**:

Define **Inspiration**:

Define **Inerrancy**:

Define **Illumination**:

Define **Canon**:

Define **Hermeneutics**:

Define **Exegesis**:

Begin memorizing 2 Timothy 3:16-17: *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

DAY 2 Thursday: How Important Is This Stuff?

You probably won't write a book on theology. You might or might not lead a Bible Study. You probably won't study Hebrew and Greek. So what *IS* your responsibility regarding Bible doctrine?

Read Ephesians 4:14-15. What are you commanded to do? According to 4:16, what should be the result? How are you doing with your responsibility?

Read 2 Timothy 2:15. What is the command here? Do your personal habits need an adjustment in light of this? Name one realistic thing you can do to better obey this command:

Fill in the blanks:

_____ for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

DAY 3 Friday: Learn To Love The Word Of God.

In one sentence, write how you feel about the Bible:

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter of the Bible, with 176 verses. It is an acrostic, with 8 verses starting with each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Read the stanza in verses 97-104, and list how the author of that Psalm felt about the Bible:

Fill in the blanks:

_____, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

DAY 5 Sunday: Putting The Pieces Together (Part 1)

Because God is perfect, His word is perfect—without errors or contradictions. Everything in His word *harmonizes* with everything else. If it looks to you like something contradicts something else, you need to study more—until you see how they fit together.

Look at the example of four passages which describe the same thing. (Hint: They do *not* contradict!) Read what the four gospels say was on the sign above the cross:

Matthew 27:37: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Mark 15:26: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Luke 23:38: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

John 19:19: JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

If none of these are wrong, what must have been the full inscription? (Check your answer with the box below.)

Fill in the blanks:

_____; _____, equipped for every good work.

THIS IS ^(Mt/Lk) JESUS ^(Mt/Jn) THE NAZARENE ^(Jn) THE KING OF THE JEWS ^(Mt/Mk/Lk/Jn). If one said, "This is Bob the Cowboy, the King of the Road," we would have a problem. They harmonize.

DAY 6 Monday: Putting The Pieces Together (Part 2)

Sometimes harmonizing passages isn't as simple as the example we used yesterday. When it has to do with the interpretation and application, the same principle applies, but often it takes more work to see how they fit together.

Read 1 John 1:8-10 and 1 John 3:9. Since both are true, what does it mean "he cannot sin, because he is born of God?" (Hint: Look at everything in both contexts, because "he cannot sin" does not stand alone.) How do you think these two harmonize?

This example shows again the importance of context, and it also illustrates the principle that "Scripture interprets Scripture." Clear and straightforward passages often help us understand more difficult passages.

In light of 1:8-10, the more obscure statement in 3:9 cannot mean that a Christian never sins. Doing some research will help you understand that the Greek verb tenses make it clear that 3:9 says that a Christian cannot *continue* in sin—he confesses and repents.

Write out 2 Timothy 3:16-17 from memory:

DAY 7 Tuesday: Review/Prepare

1. Write out 2 Timothy 3:16-17 from memory (as many times as you need to, until you know it by heart).

2. Tomorrow's message is on "Theology Proper," or the Doctrine of God. Read these passages, and make a few notes of what they say about God:

Jude 24-25

1 Timothy 1:17

Nahum 1:2-8

3. Write down your own definition of the Trinity. See how it compares to what you hear tomorrow.

**DOCTRINE OF THE BIBLE
THINGS TO REMEMBER**

Revelation: What God has made known in His word.

Inspiration: The process by which God gave His revelation.

Inerrancy: The Bible is without error.

Illumination: The ministry of the Holy Spirit to help you understand the Bible.

Canon: The 66 books of the Bible; the ones that "measure up" to the standard of inspiration.
The canon is closed.

Hermeneutics: The science and art of Bible interpretation.

Exegesis: The process of drawing out from the text all that God intended.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (Memorized!)

Your Word Is Truth
64 Days of Truth, Days 1-7: Bibliology
Discussion Guide

1. Review the definitions of the key words from the sermon:

Revelation:

Inspiration:

Inerrancy:

Illumination:

Canon:

Hermeneutics:

Exegesis:

2. What is the meaning of "*For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst?*" What is the reference? What is the subject in the context? What's wrong with citing this verse to verify Jesus' presence when Christians meet, such as in your group?
3. What is the verse that contains the "Golden Rule?" What is the part usually left out? What is the meaning in context?
4. Review the memory verses for this week. (A very good way to memorize is to write the verse on a card, carry it with you, and look at it often until you can recite it perfectly every time.)
5. Discuss the chart on the back of this sheet. It summarizes several aspects of hermeneutics.

Sermon Title: "Your Word is Truth" – Doctrine of the Bible
64 Days of Truth # 1 of 10

Speaker: Jim Harris

Scripture Text: Various

Date: 2-13-19

Our Father, how we thank You for Your marvelous Word. We hear that prayer of Jesus, that He wants us to be sanctified "in the truth." So have Your way with us for Your glory, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well I, obviously, have made a big deal out of this, because I consider this something big. I'm calling it "64 Days of Truth" because, by a strange coincidence, it's going to last nine weeks and one day; so I have nine weeks in this cycle of teaching, and then six days of devotions following that, and then the last Wednesday is going to be a wrap-up of all of this.

The Christian book that sold the most in the past many years, began with a statement in the Introduction, and I remember vividly reading this. It says: "The Bible is clear that God considers 40 days a spiritually significant time period. Whenever God wanted to prepare someone for His purpose, He took 40 days." Now, did you get the words I emphasized? "Clear...whenever...He took 40 days." Now, that's why that famous book was written with the instruction that it was to be read, one chapter per day for 40 days; and the author, in the beginning of that book, gives seven examples that he says prove that 40 days is *the* time period that God uses to prepare someone for His purposes.

There is a Greek word for that: it's *bogus!* That is *absolutely insane!* And that sets the stage, in the Introduction of that best-selling book, for an ongoing pattern that goes all the way through the book. It's a tragic pattern that, if you happen to read that book—and if you haven't, I don't recommend you do—but if you read that book, you would find that the author *never* interpreted even one single Bible verse with reference to its historical and grammatical context—not once in the whole book. Not once! That is *not* God's chosen number of times to interpret verses in their context.

Now, there are some big ideas in that book that are laudable; but that told me that, the Christian world in which we live—the professing Christian population in America—will consume, in massive doses, a terrible example of building truth on error. You can't teach truth built on of a false claim, and it's a blatantly false claim that 40 days is *the* spiritually significant time! I know it rained for 40 days; I know Jesus fasted for 40 days; I know He told the Apostles to go wait, and He showed up 40 days later—but that doesn't make 40 days at all significant for you! So I was pretty exercised when I read that book, and I got exasperated by it, as a pastor. And I kept hearing of church after church *that I know knew better*, using that book as *the* example of, "Here's how to get your Christian life together!"

So, I managed to focus my exasperation down to doing something better. So, I did this once before, about twelve and a half years ago. What you're going to hear is very similar to it; there's a few of you here that heard it back then, and I hope you hear a few things that sound familiar to you. But as we launch "64 Days of Truth," please know: 64 days is *not* the spiritually significant period of time! What I'm shooting for is that, nine weeks from now, you will understand—better than you do now—what the shape of the foundation for your walk with Christ needs to be.

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64 Days of Truth # 1 of 10

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In these 10 studies, we're going to introduce you to an overview of the great doctrines of the Bible. Now, you know, at Heritage Bible Church, we have a Sunday School class that's called "The Glorious Doctrines of the Bible." We're not going to go as deep as that. But we live in a day when, by and large, most Christian churches—most *professing* Christian churches, anyway—and most parachurch organizations are either ignoring doctrine altogether, or *outright rejecting* historic Christian doctrine (see 2 Tim. 4:3-4; cf. Acts 2:42; 18:24; Rom. 12:2; Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:17; Titus 2:1; 2 Pet. 3:2). I said that 12 years ago, and it has gotten *much worse* since then (2 Tim. 3:13).

It's much more posh these days to speak of *unity* to the neglect of doctrine. Now, I'm all for unity—I'm not for *disunity*; I mean, "Sowing discord among the brethren" (Prov. 6:19, NKJV), that's a terrible thing, to be sure. But *true* unity is the unity of the faith! (see Jn. 3:20-21; 8:47; 10:2-5, 27; 14:23-24; 1 Cor. 1:2; 13:6; 2 Cor. 6:15; Eph. 4:3-4; 6:24; 2 Tim. 2:22; Titus 1:1-4; Jas. 3:17; 2 Pet. 1:1; 1 Jn. 4:6; Rev. 14:12) It is driven by our unified allegiance to sound teaching (see Acts 2:42; cf. Gal. 1:8-9; 1 Tim. 1:3; 6:3-5; Heb. 13:9; 2 Jn. 4, 9-11; Jude 3). Many who get the most *attention* today are not necessarily overtly anti-doctrine, but most simply ignore it (see Gal. 1:10).

There have been a number of people who have come to Heritage Bible Church over the last few years, and have told me that, in a previous church experience, they were told something like, "Well, we don't teach on that doctrine here—it's too confusing." Or, "We don't teach on that book of the Bible here because it's too divisive!" So a lot of times, it's just *ignoring* what really is the basis for our unity; and Scripture does not allow that, for people who really wish to please God (see 1 Cor. 14:37-38; 2 Thess. 3:14; Titus 2:1, 15).

So, without apology: this is a series on doctrine—it's about theology. Please don't run for the door—I don't want to scare you away. But I don't apologize for doing this! As a matter of fact, I'm as excited about anything that I've done in a long time. And I pledge that we will do all we can—by God's grace, in His power—to help you get as excited about Bible doctrine as I am. As I said it, this is not a seminary class. Any amount that you learn—Praise God, I will count that as success. This might be the beginning of a lifetime of fascination for you with the great doctrines of the Bible.

Now, why is this so important? It is what you *really believe* that shows up in and determines what you do in your life; it determines how you react to your circumstances (see Dan. 11:32). On the scale of geopolitics, we are living in an era in which doctrine is *extremely* important! Anybody remember where you were on September 11th of 2001? That was the day that theological doctrine hit the front pages *bigger than ever before*! That was *all about doctrine*! There are people who believe that they got an *immediate* promotion to heaven by killing a bunch of innocent people for *theological* reasons. Now, you can argue about whether the book that they say they believe actually tells them to do that or not; that's a whole different subject. But that was about doctrine. Bad theology, taken to its logical conclusion, can be murderous, as in that example (see also Jn. 16:2; cf. Acts 26:9).

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In your personal life, what you truly believe determines how you're going to use your money (see Acts 4:32-35; 2 Cor. 8:1-4); what you truly believe determines how you're going to spend your time (see Rom. 13:12-13; Eph. 4:21-24, 28); whether or not you're going to be able to have peace in the midst of struggles in this life, or if you're going to fall apart every time the boat rocks (see Ps. 119:92).

When I talk about doctrine in this series, when I talk about theology, I'm going to be talking about "systematic theology." Now, what that means is nothing more than this: It is systematically understanding the themes of the Bible. Doctrine, as I'm going to use it in this series, means the same as systematic theology. It has been said that systematic theology is the *grandest* of all human endeavors. Now, if you want to, in your spare time, come up with a cure for cancer—I'm all for that. But nothing is going to lift your soul like understanding what God has given to us (see Ps. 19:7-11). So, systematic theology is the systematized summary of the perfect and complete revelation from God in His Word (Ps. 119:128).

One more thing I want to say. If you read a book on theology, you'll find a chapter called "Prolegomena," which means: "before we start talking"—the prelude, the introduction. One more bit of prolegomena: Systematic theology is *not* a method for interpreting the Bible. We should never say what a passage means *because of* our systematic theology. It's the other way around: Systematic theology is the *result of* interpreting each passage of the Bible carefully and accurately—in its own grammatical context, in its own historical context—and then, you take what you found in that passage and you put it side-by-side and harmonize it with the correct interpretation of every other passage on that subject. So each passage is like a building block, and you put the building blocks together, and you begin to see what the puzzle looks like—or, what the project looks like—and that is systematic theology.

Now, when you are studying the Bible, and you come across something in one passage that doesn't fit with another passage, you have a problem. What it means is: You need to go back and work harder on at least one passage, because God doesn't make mistakes (see Num. 23:19; Ps. 147:5; 2 Cor. 1:17-18; 1 Thess. 2:3, 13; Jas. 1:17b; 1 Jn. 2:21); God is not confusing (1 Cor. 14:33a); God is not sending us on a treasure-hunt to try to find hidden truth somewhere (Is. 45:19a)—He has made it known to us (Deut. 29:29; Jn. 15:15). So, when you try to put something together and it doesn't fit, you've got to keep doing your homework.

Now, I just very easily, smoothly said: You have to interpret each passage in its grammatical and historical context. That's not always easy! That's not always a first-glance kind of thing to do; you may have to do some homework (see 2 Tim. 2:15). Now, where *we* are in *our* time, we have a great advantage: We have nearly 20 centuries of history of Christian theology that can help guide us. But that doesn't mean that our work is all done. Mining the riches of the Word of God is a fresh and new adventure every day, in every generation. The *truth* never changes, but your *comprehension* of the truth can grow each time you read any portion of the Bible, and your need for a *wise application* of the truth is constantly changing. We are facing issues in our generation, in our century, in our millennium, that were never known before; so it's a constant process (see 1 Tim. 4:6, 15; cf. Jos. 1:8; Ps. 1:2; 119:97; Col. 3:16; 1 Pet. 2:2).

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Now, I want to assure you: 64 days will not finish the task. But once you have this foundation, keep building on it! Keep filling in the gaps by learning more and more of God's Word. Think of this as kind of the grid into which you're going to be placing all those pieces of the puzzle, every time you come to understand a passage new and fresh. So 64 days won't do it, but let's do this—let's finish these 64 days. And then, let's give it 64 *years* of diligently filling in our systematic theology. And then, let's compare notes, okay?

The Scripture is clear. One of the most remarkable testimonies to that, that I have ever known, was getting involved with Russia and talking to the people. I wasn't there right after the wall fell, but talking to the people who were—they had the church in Russia, heavily persecuted; a *lot* of people lost their lives. They were absolutely isolated from the rest of the world. Most of the best books were burned. Many churches had one Bible for the congregation; they would check it out to a family on Sunday, and that family could read it all through the week until Friday, when they'd give it back to the pastor so he could prepare for Sunday, and then the next family would get it. It was a dearth of anything like we have, by way of resources.

They had, basically, for 75 years, with no input from anywhere else, they had the equivalent of a King James Bible—a good translation, but in an archaic language—they had the equivalent of a King James Bible with no footnotes, and they had no commentaries, didn't even have a concordance; that's *all* they had. And that church then emerged from that era of communism *very pure*, with *very good* doctrine. Now, there were a couple of squishy places that leaked out around the edge; that's why they had me go teach over there. And they have welcomed fresh teaching, but they have *also* had a whole flood of stuff that came from the West and elsewhere that was hogwash; and I love the Russians' reaction to that: "*What? No! The Bible says...*" (see Is. 8:20; Ac. 17:11)

So, tonight, our target is the first segment of systematic theology; it is Scripture itself. If you would like the accurate, precise, and rather dry description, it is called: Doctrine of the Bible, or, Bibliology. After three and a half years of ministry on Earth, Jesus knew it was time to go to the Cross. In the sovereign plan of God, He was in exactly the right place at exactly the right time; He was to die on the Passover (see 1 Cor. 5:7)—He was "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29, NASB, and throughout, unless otherwise noted). His final meal was with His disciples, and it was a Passover meal. Right after that meal, Jesus instituted what we now call "The Lord's Supper," or, "Communion" (see 1 Cor. 11:23-26). When that was over, He spoke with them, some of the most powerful words that we have—John Chapters 13, 14, 15 and 16. And then, right after that, He went out and He prayed a great prayer; it's recorded for us in John 17.

The ones He was referring to directly in His prayer were His disciples; He was taking care of them. This was right before He was betrayed and arrested. They were about to go through the worst night of their lives, so He prayed for them. But He *also* prayed for you and me. John 17, Verse 20—in the midst of His prayer, He says: "I do not ask on behalf of these alone"—the Twelve Disciples—"but for those also who believe in Me through their word"—all the coming generations of believers.

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Now, look at what He said just before that: John 17, starting at Verse 14. He says: "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth."

So Jesus is not looking to take us out of the world. Well, when it's time for the Rapture, He will. But He wants us to be sanctified—or, "set apart"—*in* the world, that we not be swept away in the devices of the evil one (see 1 Cor. 5:9-11). "Sanctified" means "set apart from sin and dedicated to serving God" (see Matt. 23:17, 19; 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 Thess. 4:4, 7; 2 Tim. 2:21). It means, literally: "made holy." And Jesus designed for you to be kept from the evil one and sanctified in the truth, in one and only one way: That's the job of the Bible. "Your word is truth" (Jn. 17:17; cf. Ps. 1:2-3; 119:11, 38; Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 2:2).

So, I'm going to ask and answer a couple of questions. First one: Why study the Bible? Now, I'm going to give you a memory assignment—please don't head for the doors! If you can't memorize something, don't worry about it, okay? It's God's Word—if you can't memorize it, then you can read it every day, and you can have it fresh every day. I would recommend, if you have trouble memorizing things—and I used to have a tremendously elastic mind; I learned 70 Greek vocabulary words every week for a year, and I missed two on the tests during that whole year...now, I can't remember what I had for lunch. And people are different, so, if memorizing isn't your thing, don't worry about it; just read it over several times per day this week—you'll have it in your devotions, anyway.

Okay, here's what I would hope you can commit to memory: two verses—Second Timothy 3:16 and 17. And some people are saying, "Ah! He chose two that I know!" A lot of you know this; that's okay. If you don't, that's okay, too. Second Timothy 3:16 and 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." Now, there's more to be said about the doctrine of the Bible, but these two verses are, without doubt, the most potent on this subject in the Bible. The subject of this sentence is: "All Scripture"; it refers to all of Scripture—every word of every verse of every chapter of every book (see Matt. 4:4; 5:18). Now, when this was written, the New Testament wasn't completed—but it is now (Rev. 22:18). You do not have anything more important to do in your life than to read and learn the Scripture. Nothing will reward you more than that (Col. 3:16). Now, that doesn't mean you do nothing else but study the Bible every hour of your day; it does mean that, if you're not taking in God's Word, you're starving yourself spiritually.

Now, all Scripture is "inspired by God." Those three words translate a compound word from the Greek that literally means: "God-breathed." It literally means, "God breathed it out"—every word of the Bible is the Word of God (see 2 Pet. 1:21; cf. 2 Sam. 23:2). I'm going to come back to the idea of inspiration in a few minutes, but look again at these verses.

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"All Scripture is inspired by God"—God-breathed—"and profitable." What does "profitable" mean? Well, it means, you gain something from it (see Ps. 19:10-11; 119:98-100, 104, 162, 165; Prov. 2:6; 24:14; Jer. 15:16). It makes you better (Ps. 119:1). It makes you richer (see Ps. 119:72, 127; Prov. 3:13-18; 8:10-11, 18-21). Spiritually speaking, it makes you more blessed (Lk. 11:28; cf. Ps. 1:1-3; Mic. 2:7b; 2 Tim. 3:15).

And notice, there are four things here that Scripture is profitable for. The first is: "teaching." The Bible is the truth (Ps. 119:128, 142, 160)—therefore, it's the foundation for teaching in the Church that is being built by Christ (Matt. 16:18; 28:19-20; Eph. 2:19-21; cf. 1 Tim. 4:6, 13, 16; 2 Tim. 4:2; 2 Pet. 3:2). The word translated "teaching," by the way, is the same word often translated—are you ready for this?...Drumroll—"doctrine"! (see Acts 2:42; cf. Lk. 10:16; Jn. 13:20; 1 Thess. 4:2)

First Timothy Chapter 3, Verse 15, defines the Church as "the pillar and support of the truth." (see Phil. 2:15-16) If there is a church that is not teaching what the Bible says, *that's not a church!* (see 1 Cor. 14:38; 1 Tim. 6:2-3; 2 Jn. 9) This is *the* purpose of the Church; this is *the* foundation, *the* background. Are there lots of other things we do? Yes, but it's all on the foundation of the truth (Eph. 2:19-20). An implication is that the Church, therefore, also needs to protect the flock from attacks against the truth (Titus 1:9; cf. Acts 20:28-32). So, it's "profitable for teaching."

Second thing it's profitable for: "reproof." We don't use that word really often, but it means that the Bible confronts sin, and it exposes everything in your life which does not please God (see Heb. 4:12; cf. Ps. 19:11a; Prov. 6:23). That's what being "reproved" means—it points out your error. If there's something wrong in your life, you need to shine the light of the Bible into all the corners of your life, until you see what needs attention (Ps. 119:105). That's how you will be letting God reprove you.

So, "teaching," "reproof"—the next logical step is: "correction." The Bible is the source of correction for false teaching, to correct it with the truth (Is. 8:20; 1 Jn. 4:6); it's the correction for sin, to lead to confession and to repentance (Ps. 94:12; 119:59). One of Satan's greatest strategies in our world is to get people, when something goes wrong, to try to find a pill or seek a therapist to make them feel better. What is really needed, in almost every circumstance, is repentance, and turning to the truth (2 Cor. 7:10; cf. 2 Tim. 2:25)—allowing God to work in your life through His Word (Ps. 139:23-24; Jas. 1:21-25).

So it's "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction," and then the fourth one is: "training in righteousness"—that's the result. The reproof and the correction is to make you more mature and more effective to be able to serve the Lord better. When you see people who are more spiritually mature than you are, I promise—it wasn't an accident, that they are that way. They got that way because they've been trained in righteousness by being taught, reproved, and corrected (see Heb. 5:14; cf. Eph. 4:13-15). Spiritual maturity is the long-term result of "training in righteousness."

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Now, the last verse there, Verse 17—"so that the man of God"—is going to be affected. "Man of God" is literally "the one who is of God" (see Jn. 8:47). Don't let the word "man" lead you astray—it does not let the female half of our fellowship of the hook (cf. Gen. 1:27). It does not refer to males only; there's no gender-specific word in this sentence. It actually, literally, means "*the one* who is of God." So, "the man of God"—the Christian, the Believer, the one who is growing in the faith—is used to describe every Christian, who is able to speak, then, as a representative of God (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 8:4; 2 Cor. 5:20).

Now there's the word "that" there—"that the man of God..." It doesn't stand out in English, but it's significant. That tips you off that there's a purpose clause. We have the Word of God. It *is* "God-breathed." It *is* "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so *that*"—every person who belongs to God—"may be adequate, equipped for every good work." "Adequate" translates a word that means: "properly fitted for the task." One source says that in this context, it refers to "a special aptitude for given tasks." So, if God's going to call you to do something, He's going to equip you to do it by you understanding His Word. "Equipped" is a strengthened form of the word translated "adequate." "Equipped" means, "furnished perfectly," or, "completely outfitted"—"fully ready" (see 2 Pet. 1:3). It was a word used to describe a ship that was fully rigged and fully stocked for a long voyage. If you want to get through the long voyage of the Christian life, this is how you do it (see Rom. 12:2; Col. 3:16; 1 Thess. 2:13).

And then, at the end of Verse 17, this is the payoff: that you may "be adequate," "*thoroughly* equipped for"—look at this phrase—"every good work" (NKJV). Your Bible contains everything you need in order to be adequate and fully equipped for every single good thing that God wants to do through you. This is your spiritual food—your vitamins, your minerals (1 Pet. 2:2).

Now, you should know by now that I'm all in favor of Bible study. I'm all in favor of groups that study the Bible, classes that teach the Bible. I'm zealous to get you to study the Bible on your own. But don't miss the point here: If Bible study does not lead to more and more good works in your life, it's pointless! (see Lk. 11:28; Jas. 1:21-25) Bible study, without serving the Lord, is nothing but spiritual pride (1 Cor. 8:1; cf. 1 Jn. 5:3). It's there *for the purpose* of making you "adequate, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

So when you study the Bible, ask God to help you understand, "What does this mean?" And then, when you understand what this means, now: "How should I apply this?" Now, "Lord, what will You have me do? What might need to be corrected here? Or, what initiative should I take to put this into work?" Only then, when you get to that stage, are you going to see the prayer of Jesus answered, because that's you being sanctified "by the truth" (see Ps. 119:18, 29, 33-37, 59-60, 66, 73, 80, 88, 101, 112, 133, 173). So, Bible study that doesn't produce good works is useless (see Lk. 6:46; cf. 2 Pet. 1:5-9). It might be satisfying, but it will just nauseate God. He says, "I gave you that to *equip you!* And now, you're just sitting there with a warehouse full of equipment, and you never open the door and go out and use it! Get with it!" (see Matt. 25:14-30; Lk. 19:12-27) Alright, why study the Bible? Well, study the Bible to be "trained in righteousness," "adequate, equipped for every good work."

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64 Days of Truth # 1 of 10

Speaker: Jim Harris

Scripture Text: Various

Date: 2-13-19

Now, let's talk *about* the Bible. What makes the Bible unique? Brace yourselves—prepare to comprehend seven words which I consider the backbone of Bibliology. Every theology book you read is going to outline it differently. This is *my* take on these things. I like to pick out these seven words.

The first one is the word "revelation"—and I don't mean the book of the Bible with that name. "Revelation" is the act of God by which He makes Himself known to His creatures. The word "revelation" literally means: "to uncover, to show something that was previously unknown" (see Deut. 29:29; cf. Matt. 11:25; 1 Cor. 2:10; 2 Tim. 1:9-10). The word "revelation" is a word that you know an English word from—it's the word *apokalupsis*—"apocalypse." We associate the "apocalypse" with things in the *Book* of Revelation because it is the making known of the plan of God; what He's going to do in the end through Christ. So the Bible is revelation from God. It makes known things which *would not be known* if God did not uncover them in His Word. We would not know how the world came into existence, except—God told us. Do you understand that? You wouldn't know it if He didn't make it known (1 Cor. 2:9-16).

Now, what theologians refer to as "*general* revelation" is: the stuff that God made. Romans Chapter 1—people are "without excuse" because they can look at creation and know that there is a God, and they are "without excuse" for rejecting God (vs. 19; cf. Ps. 19:1). But that's *general* revelation—you're without excuse if you reject Him; but it's only by the written Word of God that you can come to know Him personally through Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 3:15). So the distinction is between *general* revelation—you know, creation implies a Creator; the watch implies that there's a watchmaker. So, that's the idea of "general revelation." Theologians call the written Word of God "special revelation," or, "specific revelation." In the 66 books of the Bible, you have all the revelation that God intends for you to have. He says that in that book is "everything" you need for "life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3), because He has made it known.

Second word—and by the way, you may show your face in church on Sunday, even if you can't recite all seven of these words; but, start getting them in there, okay? Number 2—"inspiration." Inspiration is the work of the Holy Spirit in the human authors of the books of the Bible, which guarantees that they wrote, in an exact and authentic way, the message received from God (see 2 Sam. 23:2; cf. Mk. 12:36; Acts 4:25; 28:25; Heb. 3:7; 2 Pet. 1:21). So, "revelation" is *what* God made known; "inspiration" is the *process* by which He put it in writing for us. "Inspiration" guided the human authors, even to the extent that they used their own words, but they were kept from error and omission (see 2 Chr. 20:20; Ps. 12:6; 19:7-9; 119:128, 140, 160; Is. 48:19; Matt. 5:18; Jn. 10:35b; 15:20b; 1 Cor. 14:37; 1 Thess. 4:2, 8).

The human authors were not turned into machines or typewriters or tape recorders, but they were guided and guarded and used by God. Remember Second Timothy 3:16—"All Scripture is"—what?—"inspired by God," or, literally: "God-breathed." "Inspired" is actually sort of the backwards of what the Greek word means. "Inspire" is kind of like, "Okay, we've got something here, and we're going to put something into it." This word is actually *theopneustos*—"God-Breathed"—it's "God breathed it out." So "inspiration" is actually God *breathing out* His Word and guiding, taking care of, the authors (see Jn. 16:13).

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Now, extra credit: The fancy terms to *add to* "inspiration" are the words "verbal" and "plenary." "Plenary" means: *all* of Scripture is inspired (see Ps. 119:128). All of it is the Word of God; there's not parts of it that are *more* inspired than the others—it's all inspired. "Verbal" means that *every word* is inspired, not just the ideas (Ps. 119:160; Matt. 5:18; 24:35). In other words, it is written just as God wanted it. And without taking time to show you all the details, that's what the Bible claims for itself (e.g. Prov. 30:5). You might just want to do some reading somewhere, and explore that a little bit more, if you're interested in it.

The best description of this process that we call inspiration, from the Bible itself, is Second Peter 1:21. Peter says: "No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will"—the Apostles didn't sit down and have a meeting, and say, "Okay, we need a letter to the Romans. James, you'd better write one to all of the Jewish believers scattered around. Peter, there are a bunch of Jews and Gentiles mixed up, and they're scattered—alright, you do that." It was not man's choice! Not "an act of human will, but"—here's the description—"men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." "Inspiration" is God working through human authors—without destroying their personalities, without changing their style, without totally modifying their vocabularies—He used those human authors to produce His written word in human language (2 Sam. 23:2). So every book of the Bible, then, has "dual authorship." It is *Paul's* Letter to the Colossians; it is the first epistle *from Peter*—those guys wrote it. It *is* from those men, but, it's the Word of God (2 Pet. 3:15-16). There's dual authorship—that's the way to describe that.

Third word is: "inerrancy." "Inerrancy" means that the Bible is totally without error in its original manuscripts. Now, what do we mean by "original manuscripts"? When Paul finished it and signed his name, there were no mistakes; there were no errors. And so some people say, "Well, this is just a theoretical doctrine, because we don't have the original manuscripts." Yeah, but we have ways of knowing, with *extreme* accuracy, what the original manuscripts said; that's another subject for another time. But here's what we mean by "inerrancy": Whatever the Bible affirms is true, is true; whatever the Bible affirms is false, is false. So whatever Peter or Paul or Moses or Isaiah taught, God taught. And this also means: there are no errors or contradictions in the Bible (see Ps. 119:128, 160). We don't have time to deal with this at length, but we have excellent confidence; we know what those manuscripts originally said, and we have extremely accurate facsimiles of the original manuscripts.

"Inerrancy" is a necessary and direct correlation of "inspiration." Just think about this: "Revelation" is what God wants to tell us. "Inspiration" is the process by which He told us. So, think about it this way: I don't know anybody who believes in God, who would disagree with this little statement: God cannot err. How can a perfectly holy, perfectly righteous One, make a mistake? Okay, so, God can't err (Jn. 7:18; Titus 1:2). Therefore, the Word of God cannot err. A perfect God cannot give a Word that doesn't reflect His nature (see Ps. 138:2b). So, if God cannot err, His Word cannot err. Any Word from God must be without error. So the Bible, which *is* the Word of God, cannot err (Jn. 17:17; cf. 1 Jn. 2:21b). So the people who want to say there *are* errors in the Bible, there *are* mistakes in the Bible, there are contradictions in the Bible—where does that go wrong? If there are, it's not the Word of God! (see Dt. 18:22) And if you want it to be the Word of God, it can't have errors! There's some pretty tight logic there.

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Now, let's move on. Revelation, inspiration, inerrancy. Number 4—"Illumination." "Illumination" is the ministry of the Holy Spirit helping believers to understand and apply the Word of God (see Acts 16:14; cf. 2 Cor. 3:17-18; Ps. 119:18; Ezek. 36:27). This is the work of the Holy Spirit *in you*—this gets personal (see Lk. 24:45; cf. Deut. 30:6; Jer. 24:7). It is possible for an unbeliever to pick up and read the Bible and understand the facts. As a matter of fact, that's a very good way to evangelize people: get them reading the Bible, because the Holy Spirit actually uses that to "convict" of "sin and righteousness and judgment" (Jn. 16:8). But without the Holy Spirit, an unbeliever cannot understand how the Word of God actually connects to life (see Jn. 3:3, 5; 6:44; 1 Cor. 12:3b; cf. Jn. 1:40-41 with Matt. 16:16-17 and Jn. 6:45).

The New Testament mentions this ministry of the Holy Spirit in many ways. That night before He went to the Cross, Jesus promised the Apostles He was going to send the Holy Spirit; He said, "He will guide you into all the truth" (Jn. 16:13). He'll bring to your minds what He wants you to teach in every situation (see Lk. 12:12). There's a similar description in 1 John Chapter 2, Verses 20 and 27, where it's extended to all believers; it says that we "have an anointing from the Holy One," which is a reference to the Holy Spirit, and He "teaches" us.

First Corinthians 2:14-16 says that true believers, who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit—come in the next few weeks, and you'll have a really good idea of what it means to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit (see Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13-14)—we are able to understand the Word of God. That's "illumination." If you walked in tonight and none of the lights were on, and the switches didn't work—in our era, you'd probably pull out your cell phone and turn on the flashlight, right? To "illuminate" shows you what's there. That's what illumination is.

Number 5—"canon"—only two Ns, not 3; not 2 in the middle. "Canon," or *kanōn*, means "a ruler." It actually comes from a word that describe a piece of bamboo. It's a measure, or a ruler; and, by extension, it means: "that which is measured," or, "that which measures up," "that which meets the standard." The "canon" of the Bible is the collection of books—66 of them—which "measure up" to the standard; and the standard is: inspiration. They were canonical the minute that they were written. It's very popular for people to attack the Bible by saying, "Well, the Bible wasn't even made up until the fourth century!" No, no, no, no, no! Those books were *fully* inspired, *fully* "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness" as they were circulated and read among the Churches (see 1 Cor. 14:37; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27; 2 Thess. 3:14; 2 Pet. 3:15-16). It was *universally agreed* that these are the ones that measure up. That's how the canon came to be recognized.

Now there are 66 books which are canonical. At least in *our* part of the world, it's rougher on you—you've got to remember, there's 66. There's a lot less in some other places; not because they have less stuff—they just clump them together, like we have "the Minor Prophets"—in the Hebrew Bible, that's one book. Not fair—we've got to memorize 12, they only have to memorize one. 66 books—it breaks down this way: 39 in the Old Testament, 27 in the New Testament. Do you want to remember those numbers? Did you take third grade math? 3 times 9 equals 27, okay? 39, 27—"3" times "9" equals "27".

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Now, there are many books which are *pretenders* to the canon. If you have come from a Roman Catholic background, you probably are aware that, in the Catholic Bible, they add a number of books to the end of the Old Testament, called "the Apocrypha". These are "wannabe" books. There are others. There's the Jewish "pseudepigrapha." You might have heard of a group called the "Gnostic Gospels"—they are fraudulent Gospels that were circulated in the second century by the group called the Gnostics. By the way—those made a splash not too long ago; have you ever heard of "The Da Vinci Code"? That was a fantasyland doctrinal experience, playing off of one or more of the Gnostic Gospels.

Alright, Number 6—and my last point's going to go really fast, so don't worry about us lingering this long on the seventh. Number 6 is the word "hermeneutics." A lot of you have been around Heritage for a while; you know the word "hermeneutics." His brother was Joe Neutics, who played for the White Sox in 1927. "Hermeneutics" is the science and art of Bible interpretation. The word comes from a Greek word that literally means: "to interpret." The word is *hermēneuō*—it's actually derived from "Hermes." Now, in mythology, Hermes was a messenger—delivered the message, made it known (see Acts 14:12). So that's where the *word* came from; I'm not saying that the Bible is agreeing with who Hermes was (see Acts 14:13-15).

We say hermeneutics is a science because, there are specific rules to follow, and they always apply. It's a science for that reason. It's an art because, there is skill and wisdom involved in *using* the rules of hermeneutics; and you gain that skill, you improve that skill, by experience. Hermeneutics is a really crucial issue these days. It's under assault on a number of fronts, and we don't have time to deal with any of that, right now. But the Bible is, as Peter says, not a matter of individual "interpretation." There are objective guidelines for interpreting it accurately (see 2 Tim. 2:15); and we actually have a course available on Hermeneutics—it's one of my favorite ones to teach.

Alright, Number 7—God's perfect number, right? Seven words—the seventh one is "exegesis." "Exegesis" is the process of "extracting from"—you know, whenever you have surgery, and it ends in "—ectomy"? *Ek* is "out of," and *tomē* is "to cut"—cutting out something. "Getting something out"—it's ex-e-ge-sis. It's extracting from the Bible all the meaning that God intends it to have (see Jer. 23:28b). The opposite of exegesis is "eisegesis"—that means "reading into" the Bible. "Exegesis" is what we *want* to do—we want to get everything from it that we possibly can. Eisegesis is abusing it by importing into the Bible meanings that aren't there (see 2 Pet. 3:16).

So, here's the summary for you: "Revelation" is what God made known to us; "inspiration" is the process that He used to make known His revelation; "inerrancy" is the truth that, because God "cannot lie" (Titus 1:2), His word cannot contain any errors; "illumination" is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to help you understand His inerrant, inspired revelation; "canon" is the final collection of the 66 inspired books; "hermeneutics" is the science and art of Bible interpretation; "exegesis" is the process of gleaning from the Bible all that is there.

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Now, you may have in your hand a Bible. These days, it may look a whole lot like a phone or a tablet. But I'm so old, I remember when there were *pages* in the Bible. And most of you carry a Bible. Let me talk for a minute about the books of the Bible. May I be so bold as to say, it's a really good idea to memorize the names of the books of the Bible? Now, you might do fine until you get to Joshua and Judges and, uh, what comes after that? First and Second Hezekiah, Third and Fourth Gear—what is all of that stuff?

Okay, I have an idea for you: go ahead and work on memorizing it. You can do it—there's only 66. And I'll show you some logical connections, but—I can tap my phone or use my computer and search things really fast, but I think it is one of God's *wonderful* gifts to mankind to invent these little tabs that, if they don't come *with* your Bible, you can actually install them. I've installed them in several different Bibles. I have learned—it's not a good idea to watch football when you do that; because more than once, I have sealed together a few pages, and once I got into the pulpit, the first time that I went to turn to a page, I went from Matthew 1 to Matthew 4. So, just be careful when you do it. But, learn your way around the Bible. Now, if you can come up with a good reason *why* you *shouldn't* memorize the books of the Bible, let me know. But if you didn't grow up in an environment that made you learn the books of the Bible as a kid, do it now. I had to do it in my late teens, because I didn't have a chance to grow up with it.

Now, let me break it down for you. The Old Testament contains 39 books, right? You know that now; you've got that fact memorize by now. And you can think of that as coming in five groups of books. And there's kind of a rhythm to it; you only have to remember two numbers: 5 and 12. There are 5 books of the Law: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Then, there are 12 books of history: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, First and Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. Then, there are 5 books of poetry: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Then, there are 5 books that we call Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Now, Lamentations kind of gets grandfathered into the Major Prophets because it is connected, sort of like a sequel, to the book of Jeremiah; it's more like the length of the ones that are called Minor, but that's okay—a lot of tradition behind that, and it makes the rhythm of the numbers work out right. And then, the Old Testament concludes with 12 books of Minor Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. So, 5, 12, 5, 5, and 12—5 Law, 12 history, 5 poetry, 5 Major Prophets, 12 Minor Prophets.

Alright—the New Testament: 27 books, and you can also think of them in terms of 5 categories, or 5 groups. There are 4 Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Then, there's 1 book of history—only 1 book that is purely historical; the Gospels *are* historical, but, 1 book of history, the transition from the Old Covenant to the New: that's the book of Acts. Then, there are 13 letters of the Apostle Paul; he wrote almost half the books of the New Testament: Romans, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First and Second Thessalonians, First and Second Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Then, there are 8 general epistles, written to general audiences, if you will: They are Hebrews, James, First and Second Peter, First John, Second John, Third John, and Jude. And yes, there are people that

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you will be in heaven with who will, until they arrive there, think that Paul wrote Hebrews. They'll get straightened out when they meet Paul, and we figure out who the mystery-man is that wrote Hebrews. And then, the New Testament ends with one book of prophecy, which is the Book of Revelation. Now, there's prophecy elsewhere, but that one is devoted to prophecy. So, 4 Gospels, 1 history, 13 Pauline letters, 8 general epistles, and then one book of prophecy.

That's my overview of Bibliology. Now, I have a third category. Each week, starting tonight: with every doctrine, I want to show you some of the problems that arise from ignoring that doctrine, or twisting it—twisting what the Scriptures teach on a subject (2 Pet. 3:16; cf. Matt. 22:23-29). So, what problems come from faulty Bibliology? Now, there are *lots*, but let me just give you a few to chew on, and you can start recognizing them when you see them

Number 1 is: not accepting the closed canon. A lot of people allow for continuing revelation—that God is still speaking today. That opens the door to *all the cults*; they all share in common, believing in written revelation beyond what the Bible says. Now, there is good reason, exegetically, based on exegesis; theologically, based on the study of doctrine; and historically, observing what has developed in history—there are good reasons why we know that the canon is closed (see Rev. 22:18; cf. Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Matt. 15:9; Acts 2:42; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 2:20; 3:4-5; 2 Pet. 3:2; Jude 3; see also Heb. 1:1-2 with Jn. 13:20 and 1 Cor. 9:1 and Rev. 21:14b). But *far* too many people who claim to follow Christ, also allow for new revelation.

In addition to the cults, there's a major rift among professing Christians in this generation, that was caused by the arrival of the Charismatic Movement that caught fire in the 1960s. Some in that movement—not all of them—believe that God speaks today as He did in the Apostolic era (Col. 2:18; cf. Jer. 14:14). Never did *any* segment of the church—*never* in the first 1800-plus years of Christianity—none of them ever believed that, until this last generation. And it causes confusion—at least in what I call the "truth by experience" syndrome. Now, when I say there's nobody that ever did—there have been fringe groups; but they were always fringe groups, and they were always *recognized* as fringe groups, and they were *never* accepted as the norm.

Second one: Denying inerrancy. That dilutes everything that the Bible teaches; it makes man the judge of the Word of God, rather than the Word of God being the instrument that He uses to judge man (Heb. 4:12). A lot of people in our world today don't regard inerrancy as important; or, they thin it's just a theoretical thing, but it's very important (see Is. 8:20; 45:19; Matt. 5:18; cf. Num. 23:19; 2 Chr. 20:20; Ps. 12:6; 119:42; Prov. 16:20; 22:19). And there really *aren't* any contradictions in the Bible (2 Cor. 1:17-18).

Third one: The issue of inerrancy was tackled 40 years ago by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy; there's great writings on that stuff—we've got that pretty much nailed down. But *now*, the battle that demands our attention today is the people who assault the *sufficiency* of Scripture. Some people will say, "I believe it's the Word of God. I believe it's inerrant." But they *don't* believe that it actually equips you "for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:17). They don't believe that it actually has "everything" you need for "life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3).

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I rather randomly happened to be looking at something else, and I thought, "I wonder if I can find anything about Bibliology her?" I went to the website of a mega-church—big church, *thousands* of people—and here's what they said about the Bible: They said, "The Holy Spirit speaks to the believer in many different ways, but He is most often sensed through a nudge of the heart or conscience." So they say *the* most common way for you to hear from God has nothing to do with the Bible. Bad, bad stuff!

Maybe you've heard of a pastor of a huge church in the south who, these days, says we need to unhitch from the Old Testament. And they asked him, "What do you mean?" And he explained, "Well, it means things like, Christians are not required to obey any of the 10 Commandments." We have a whole bunch of preachers today—and my ilk is the *worst* at this—it's *preachers* who are violating this more often than anything else; it's preachers who feel like the Scripture needs their help in order to be relevant. No, it doesn't! It's *always* relevant (see 1 Pet. 1:23b)—it will *always* teach, *always* reprove, *always* correct, *always* train.

One other thing that can go wrong: there's a lot of people that confuse revelation, inspiration, and illumination. They'll say, "I was *inspired* when I read..."—no, no, no, no. If you want to get *really* technical—I hope you were *illuminated* when you read something (Lk. 24:45). The writers of Scripture were the ones that were inspired (2 Pet. 1:21). So, "revelation" is complete; "inspiration" was the process that led to the completed "revelation"; "illumination" is what you need today (Ps. 119:18, 27, 34, 73, 125).

And finally: shoddy hermeneutics—just not paying attention to how you interpret the Bible is *the way things are* these days! I'll give you a jump-start on the course on hermeneutics. I'm going to give you the top three most important rules of interpreting the Bible: Number 1—context. Number 2—context. Number 3—context. If you don't understand a verse, back up and read the whole chapter, from beginning to end. Still don't get it? Read the chapter before, and that chapter, and the next one. Still don't get it? Read the whole book. Resort to a Study Bible. Use your tabs. Go find what you need to find, and you'll be surprised. Do you know where the phrase, "Where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst"? (Matt. 18:20). Do you know, that has absolutely *nothing* to do with prayer meetings or Christ's presence at a church? Do you know where the verse is that's the "Golden Rule"? "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you" (Matt. 7:12)—really good thought; do you know the rest of the sentence?

I just pray that Christ' prayer will be answered in your life: "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth" (Jn. 17:17).

Father, please make that so in each of our lives, that we might be equipped for every good work that You desire to do through us. For we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.