Fundamentals Lesson 2 – The Word of God

"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12).

Today we are going to consider something essential to every believer: the importance of God's Word.

We live in a world filled with many opinions. People have different ideas about truth, morality, relationships, success, and the meaning of life. What one person calls right, another person calls wrong.

What one generation accepts, another generation may reject.

So in the middle of all the confusion, where can we find a trustworthy foundation for what we believe?

And as Christ followers here today, our answer must always be the Word of God.

If we build our faith and decision making on feelings, what happens when our feelings change?

If we build our convictions on popular opinion, what happened when popular opinion changes?

We need an authority greater than ourselves – and that is the word of God.

And as we continue our conversation about the fundamentals of the faith, we're going to focus today on the Word if God and look at 5 things:

1. The Inspiration of the Bible
2. The Influence of the Bible
3. The Accuracy of the Bible
4. The Authority of the Bible
5. The Application of the Bible

1. The Inspiration of the Bible

Second Timothy was written by the Apostle Paul to Timothy, a young minister facing the responsibility of being a spokesman for God during difficult times.

As a good mentor, Paul knew that Timothy needed more than talent; he needed more than enthusiasm. He needed a firm foundation of truth.

And so in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 he explains:

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The Greek word for "God-breathed here means "inspired."

Sometimes we say that human artists were "inspired" when they created a masterpiece.

But “God-breathed” inspiration is something unique to Word of God; and that means that the content of the Bible originated in the mind of God and was given to man.

It reminds is that the Bible is not merely a collection of human religious opinions. God worked through humans to communicate his truth.

In fact, 2 Peter 1:20-21 gives us further insight:

No prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet’s own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.

Peter says that God “moved” individuals as they wrote the holy text.

Here’s what’s interesting: the Biblical writers came from different backgrounds, had different experiences and different writing styles. Yet they all received the Scriptures as God’s special revelation.

And because the Word of God comes from the mind of God, it is amazing in it’s unity.

Think about it: the Bible’s 66 books were written over a span of 1,500 years by more than 40 human authors from all walks of life. They were kings and farmers, historians and fishermen, prophets and apostles. It was written in three languages—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek— and in four geopolitical regions: the Middle East, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, and Southern Europe.

The Spirit of God moved the writers of Scripture as they wrote in their own style and way, and yet the Bible is one harmonic whole.

And so how could you ever explain its harmony unless there is a mastermind behind it.

Today, we stand upon the Word of God because it comes from the very mind of God himself.

But now, secondly, I want you to consider:

2. The Influence of the Bible

Isaiah 40:8 – *"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever."*

The Bible is so true and so amazing, that the greatest writers of history have borrowed liberally from its pages. In fact, if you were to delete every biblical reference from the great art and literature of the world, our galleries and our libraries would shrink in half.

Artists, poets, writers, sculptors, and musicians have filled the world with their works based on biblical themes. No book in the world or in the history of the world has inspired more creativity than the Bible.

Around the world, The Ten Commandments form the cornerstone of jurisprudence, and the Sermon on the Mount is looked to as the foundation of morality and ethics around the world.

Today – the words of Scripture are everywhere.

- If you have ever made light of something or
- shown the patience of Job
- or noticed the signs of the times
- or called someone the salt of the earth or full of good works;

- if you have ever resolved to fight the good fight,
- been where two or three are gathered together,
- found that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak,

- and, in spite of the powers that be, decided to eat, drink, and be merry,
- or have been saved by the skin of your teeth, then you've quoted the English Bible in phrases etched into our daily language forever—for centuries.

Here's something else to consider: The Bible is the best-selling book of the year, every single year. In the United States alone, 50 Bibles are sold every minute, 72,000 every day, and 26 million every year. By comparison, the top five best sellers combined sold 12 million copies.

The total number of Bibles printed and distributed since they began to take note of it is between 6 and 7 billion Bibles. By comparison, the top best-selling single-volume books of all time are A Tale of Two Cities (200 million), The Lord of the Rings (150 million; Tolken wrote it as a single book).

In fact, the Gideons alone, during their 100 years of ministry, have distributed 2.5 billion copies of God's word in more than 190 countries around the globe and continues to distribute tens of millions of copies annually.

While best known for placing full Bibles in hotel and motel rooms, the vast majority of the 2.5 billion total consists of pocket-sized New Testaments (often including Psalms and Proverbs). Members distribute these in over 100 languages to students, military personnel, hospital patients, and prison inmates.

No wonder the Psalmists could say:
I will **delight** in your decrees and not forget your word . . . How I delight in your commands! How I love them! (Psalm 119:16,47).

Multiple studies on the state of the Bible (According to Barna, Lifeway, the American Bible Society, and YouVersion) all agree:

1. Today, print sales are at record highs

- 2025 was a 21-year high for U.S. Bible sales: 19 million units, up 12% from 2024 and double 2019 (Circana BookScan).
- UK sales are 134% higher than in 2008, when tracking began (SPCK).

2. Why are people turning to the Bible?

- Publishers cite a search for hope, community and stability in uncertain times.
- Political and social change, post-COVID effects, global wars, the rise of AI and a mental health crisis

have drawn people searching for answers to life's deepest needs.
- Today, readers are not just buying Bibles; they are trying to read and apply them.

And here's something encouraging:

3. Digital engagement in Bible reading is surging too.

- Print and digital are growing together, especially among younger generations.
- The YouVersion app (with its endless reading plans) recorded 150 million installs in 2025, up from 100 million in 2023.
- Studies such as The Bible Recap by Tara-Leigh Cobble (daily bible reading with 10-minute explanations) has a reported reach of 500 million podcast downloads
- And then there's The Bible Project (animated book-by-book videos) with 250 million resource uses in 2025 **(CHECK OUT GREAT RESOURCES)**

4. According to Barna, Bible reading is rebounding everywhere. (Let this encourage you).

- Weekly reading rose from 30% in 2024 to 42% in 2025 (50% among self-identified Christians).
- Millennials rose 16 points to 50%; Gen Z rose from 30% to 49% in one year; Gen X is at 41%.
- Today, young men now out-read younger women, reversing the historical pattern.

5. According to Lifeway research, attitudes and practices related to the Word of God are shifting.

- Today, fewer Americans call the Bible outdated (9%), bigoted (5%) or harmful (4%).
- 61% of U.S. Protestant churchgoers say they read the Bible a few times a week or more, up from 36% in 2007.

6. the American Bible Society, in it's State of the Bible 2025, found that

- Bible Users rose from 38% to 41%, about 10 million more adults.
- Millennial Bible users rose 29% and men 19%, closing the gender gap.
- Scripture engagement grew significantly among Millennials and Gen Z.
- **Millennials** jumped an unprecedented 16 points, reaching 50 percent—and half now say they read the Bible weekly.
- Survey base: 2,656 NORC AmeriSpeak interviews, January 2–21, 2025.

And then consider:

3. The Accuracy of the Bible

The more we learn about history, the more we see that in one historical study and archaeological dig after another, history and the Bible line up.

And we know why. The Apostle Peter said in **2 Peter 1:16**

For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

Peter says, "I'm not manufacturing a religious novel here. I'm writing a first hand documentary. I was there.

- I saw Him with my own eyes walk on water.
- I saw Him multiply the loaves and fishes.
- I saw Him heal my mother-in-law who was sick.
- I saw Him raise Lazarus from the dead.

It seems like each month in the news, we are getting new revelation of the accuracy of the Scriptures in discovery after discovery.

- In the news most recently: the discovery of **clay seals (*bullae*)** that verify individual names from the Old Testament
- Discoveries about the **fall of Nineveh** in Assyrian records matching the story of Jonah.
- And the Pool of Siloam mentioned in John 9, discovered by construction workers under the streets of Jerusalem.

And then, one of the great reasons we can trust the Word of God is it's predictive accuracy. Notice how Peter continues:

. . . we were with him (Jesus) on the sacred mountain. We also have **the prophetic message as something completely reliable,** and you will do well to pay attention to it (2 Peter 1:18-19).

You see – none of us has the capacity to predict the future with certainty. (Who could have know just two days ago that a riverboat would capsize on the Mississippi River, all flights would be cancelled, and Ole Miss and Oklahoma would be scheduled to play not on Saturday, but on Sunday.

Nobody can predict the future – but – the Bible has been 100% accurate in its predictions.

Listen - the Bible is full of predictive prophecy. The OT prophets predicted that the Messiah would come to Bethlehem.

He would be born of a virgin – He would be called a Nazarene. They predicted he would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver.

He would be executed among thieves – they would gamble for his coat – he would be buried in a borrowed tomb and be raised from the dead.

In fact – Psalm 22 suggests the method of his death as crucifixion (and it hadn't even been invented by the Romans yet).

Hundreds of years before the crucifixion we read the :

16 Dogs surround me,
a pack of villains encircles me;
they pierce my hands and my feet.
17 All my bones are on display;

people stare and gloat over me.
[18] They divide my clothes among them
and cast lots for my garment. Psalm 22:16-18, NLT).

And so how can you explain those accurate predictions about the coming of the Messiah unless the Bible contains the mind of God?

One mathematician calculated that the odds of just ½ of the prediction about Jesus coming true in one man were 1 in 10 to the 157th power.

That's 1 in 10 with 156 zeros behind it.

Men carried along by the Holy Spirit accurately recorded the Word of God.

And though men have tried their might to destroy it – it continues to stand. But oh, how man have tried.

There was a Roman emperor whose name was Diocletian.

In 303 A.D., Diocletian banned the Bible, had all of the Bibles that he could find in his kingdom burned, and then over the ashes of one of these Bibles he erected a monument, and it was a monument to the destruction of the Bible. And, the monument said, "The name of Christian is now extinct."

And, he thought he had done away with Christianity.

But, a few years later, in 325 A.D., Emperor Constantine made the Bible the infallible judge of truth for his entire empire.

French humanist Voltaire, who lived between 1694 and 1778, boastfully proclaimed, "Fifty years from now, the world will hear no more of the Bible."

Yet, in the year of his boast, the British Museum purchased a manuscript of the Greek New Testament from the Russian government for $500,000 while a first edition of Voltaire's book was selling for 8 cents a copy.

And then - 50 years after the death of Voltater—listen to this—Bibles were being printed by the Geneva Bible Society in the very house where Voltaire had lived and on his very own printing presses.

Don't you think God has a sense of humor?

In fact, it was the French Protestants known as the Huguenots pictured the Word of God as an anvil surrounded by three blacksmiths. And beneath the picture, they inscribed this little poem:

"The more they pound and the more they shout, the more they wear their hammers out."

We've seen the inspiration of the Bible
The influence of the Bible
The accuracy of the Bible

And now – I want to talk a moment about:

4. The Authority of the Bible

It was the Apostle Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, who said:

For this reason, we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God.... (1 Thessalonians 2:13)

Today we hod in our hand, the authoritative Word of God. And with that being true, we must give our lives to uncompromisingly stand upon it, to let it be our guide, and to know the word with all our might.

(Since my youth, I was taught to memorize the Word of God. (List of 100 verses every Christian should take to heart). As a young man while working with my grandfather, I was taught the habit of writing important verses down on index cards, and one of the first verses I ever learned was this:

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV).

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People say, "How do you know so much about the Bible?" Well – first, I'm always learning. And second – I devote my life to it.

You need to know the word.

You need know the word. That means, when one of your children ask you a tough question – maybe about making good decisions or cheating, or truth-telling—you are able to give an answer.

Here's another verse I learned early on:

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).

It's a sad thing to be a parent, and not be able to give an answer.

To have a co-worker ask you a Bible question, and you be completely clueless. (That doesn't mean we have to know it all – but we need to prepare ourselves and be ready to speak with clarity about what we believe). SOMETHING WE WANT TO HELP YOU WITH IN THE NEW YEAR.

As Christ followers, we need to know where to find things in the Bible; we need to know what the Bible says about social and ethical issues, abortion, same sex marriage, worry, finances, and marriage, and so on.

If you haven't studied – you won't know it.

And so we need to be like the Bereans in the Book of Acts. (Another verse I memorized early on):

Now the Bereans were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul said was true (Acts 17:11).

Now, why is that so important? Because we are living in a day and age where it's not always so easy to tell what's true.

Social media platforms have made it easier than ever to share information, but it has also made it easier than ever

to spread misinformation, half-truths, rumors, and outright lies.

And that's why we need to be able to tell the difference.

Listen – here's what Satan knows:

A lie believed as truth will affect your life as if it were truth.

Why we have to know the Word of God, because there are several important reasons why we need to know what we're talking about:

1. Not everything that sounds true is true.

People often share information because it sounds believable, confirms what they already think, or comes from someone they trust. But a convincing story is not necessarily an accurate story.

David Rand

MIT professor who researches misinformation and human decision-making.

Here's what he says: people often share misinformation not necessarily because they intend to deceive, but because they fail to stop and consider whether something is accurate.

And his advice is: Slow down and think before sharing.

2. Social media rewards attention, not accuracy.

Social media platforms often promote content that generates strong reactions. Anger, fear, outrage, and controversy tend to get people's attention.

Unfortunately, the most shocking story is not always the most truthful one.

Lesson: Just because something goes viral doesn't mean it deserves to be believed.

Third - we need to make sure the Word of God is our standard, because

3. Our personal biases can influence what we believe.

We are especially vulnerable to information that supports our political, religious, or personal opinions.

When something confirms what we already believe, we are less likely to question it.

This is called *confirmation bias*.

Lesson: We should be just as willing to question information we agree with as information

And that's why we need to word of God – to correct us. In an age when people will believe anything and pass on anything without verification, we need the principles of the word of God.

"To answer before listening—that is folly and shame" (Proverbs 18:13).

Don't rush to conclusions before you have all the facts.

"In a lawsuit the first to speak seems right, until someone comes forward and cross-examines" (Proverbs 18:17).

This is particularly relevant to social media. The first version of a story may sound convincing until someone investigates it.

"Test everything; hold fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Paul doesn't tell Christians to doubt everything you hear. He tells them to examine it.

"The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps" (Proverbs 14:15).

This may be the most direct biblical warning about believing everything we encounter.

And so in an age when everyone can publish information, everyone has a responsibility to exercise discernment. We should be people who seek truth, speak truth, and refuse to spread something simply because it supports our point of view.

5. The Application of the Bible

Here's the last thing: we can know all the things that I have just shared – but in the end, it's to no avail, unless we apply the Word of God.

And that's why the Psalmist says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

The Center for Biblical Engagement just published a study. They looked at over a **hundred thousand people** over eight years, asking the question: **What is the single greatest indicator that somebody is growing spiritually?**

You know what it is? Read the Bible four times a week. Read the Bible regularly if you want to grow in your spiritual life. You know that's true because you don't know any spiritual giants who don't know the Scriptures. It's not going to make sense otherwise.

Readers – share a passage of scripture

Forever, O Lord, Your word is **settled in heaven**. (Psalm 119:89)

Let's pray for each other – that we night know the Word of God.