

# EQUIPPED

## Five Foundations of the Faith

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**Salvation and  
Identity**



**The  
Bible**



**Spiritual  
Disciplines**



**The Local  
Church**



**Mission &  
Purpose**

## Personal Study Guide



# The Bible



Lesson Question: How do I gain knowledge and confidence as a Christian?

Main Idea: The Bible is God’s inspired Word to humanity. It is the guidebook for knowing God and living for Him.

## Key Terms

General Revelation: God’s revelation of Himself to man through creation.

Special Revelation: God’s revelation of Himself to man through His Word.

Inspiration: The process of God using human authors to convey His Word.

Authority: As God’s Word, the Bible tells us what to believe and how to live.

Sufficient: The Bible contains all we need to know God and live for Him.

We live in a world full of opinions. Many people invent ideas about God. We may rightfully ask, what sets these ideas apart from the Bible? Why is the Bible considered truth, while my neighbor’s idea of God is in question? These are fair questions. By the end of this study, I hope that you have confidence in the Bible as the only authoritative resource for knowing God and how to live for Him.

The way that God has chosen to present Himself to humanity is known as revelation. It might be thought of as an unveiling of the curtain so that we can see who He is. As the eternally existing one, God had to pull back the curtain to show us what already was, and He did that over a long period of time.

There are two types of revelation: General

Revelation and Special Revelation. General Revelation is the evidence of God that we observe in nature. It is described in Psalm 19:1, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.” General Revelation tells some things about God but little about His character. Special Revelation is God’s revelation of His personality and mission through the prophets and events recorded on the pages of Scripture.

### **Question 1:**

**What are some examples of General Revelation? How is it limited?**

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# A New Foundation

## Bible Verses

### 2 Timothy 3:16

The Bible is God’s Special Revelation to us. It might be thought of as God’s special presentations of Himself, particularly of His character and mission.

General Revelation reveals that God is powerful, orderly, and creative; however, Special Revelation teaches His love, grace, faithfulness, forgiveness, mercy, etc. This revelation of God’s character and mission makes up the Bible.

The Bible was constructed over 1500 years by about 40 different authors on 3 continents through the compilation of 66 books. These 66 books are broken down into two segments: the Old Testament and the New Testament. They are inextricably linked. The Old Testament contains 39 books and the New Testament contains 27.

The Bible was written as God inspired men to pen the pages through events or motivations linked with fulfilled promises through a progressing narrative. The authors retain their individuality while producing God’s intended message. Paul confirms this to Timothy, “All Scripture is breathed out by God” (2 Timothy 3:16a). Under divine inspiration, the authors produced a unified, progressive message of the revelation of God’s mission to send Jesus to save humanity. In doing so, it saw age-old predictions, called prophecies, fulfilled. It is estimated that Jesus fulfilled over 300 prophecies from the Old Testament.

#### **Question 2:**

**What is the most surprising Bible fact to you?**

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#### **Question 3:**

**How does the fulfillment of prophecy affirm biblical authority?**

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### Fast Facts About the Bible

- Contains 66 Books
- Written over 1500 Years
- About 40 different authors
- 3 different continents

<u>Old Testament</u>	<u>New Testament</u>
39 Books	27 Books

# A New Foundation

One amazing characteristic of the Bible is that it is not simply a collection of philosophies or ideas. It contains those things, but the major events of the Bible root themselves in historical events. There is a certain boldness in this because the Bible opens itself up to scrutiny and questions. Still, revelation born into history does not change. We can’t rewrite history; therefore, history is a brilliant medium for God’s revelation or “unveiling” to humanity. Not to mention, narrative is the universal language. Despite differences, every culture throughout every age has told stories. It doesn’t matter if they had a written language or not. In fact, stories allowed history or cultural identity to be passed on in many cultures without a written language. Thus, the use of narrative history serves as a great vehicle for the distribution of the biblical story.

In addition to narrative, there are several literary genres found in the Bible. See Figure 1. As previously noted, the Bible is full of stories. Each story is unique; however, these all work together to produce an overarching story. This is known as the metanarrative of Scripture.

A metanarrative is a word meaning a second narrative or overarching narrative. The biblical narratives all have unique plots, settings, and characters, but they all inform the grand plot overarching the Bible. It is God’s story of redemption. This grand story begins with a creation that is perfect. One where God walked with man. The perfect creation is broken by man’s fall and sin against God. This begins a cycle of a need for redemption and struggle with sin that plagues God’s people until restoration comes in the Gospels through Jesus. The story of redemption is God’s pursuit of restoring the fellowship lost in the Garden of Eden.

Figure 1

<u>The Books of the Bible</u>		
<u>By Genre</u>		
<u>Old Testament</u>	<u>Major Prophets</u>	<u>History</u>
<u>Torah (Law)</u>	Isaiah	Acts
Genesis	Jeremiah	<u>The Epistles</u>
Exodus	Lamentations	Romans
Leviticus	Ezekiel	1 and 2 Corinthians
Numbers	Daniel	Galatians
Deuteronomy	<u>Minor Prophets</u>	Ephesians
<u>History</u>	Hosea	Philippians
Joshua	Joel	Colossians
Judges	Amos	1 and 2 Thessalonians
Ruth	Obadiah	1 and 2 Timothy
1 and 2 Samuel	Jonah	Titus
1 and 2 Kings	Micah	Philemon
1 and 2 Chronicles	Nahum	Hebrews
Ezra	Habakkuk	James
Nehemiah	Zephaniah	1 and 2 Peter
Esther	Haggai	1, 2, and 3 John
<u>Wisdom</u>	Zechariah	Jude
Job	Malachi	<u>Apocalyptic</u>
Psalms	<u>New Testament</u>	Revelation
Proverbs	<u>The Gospels</u>	
Ecclesiastes	Matthew	
Song of Solomon	Mark	
	Luke	
	John	

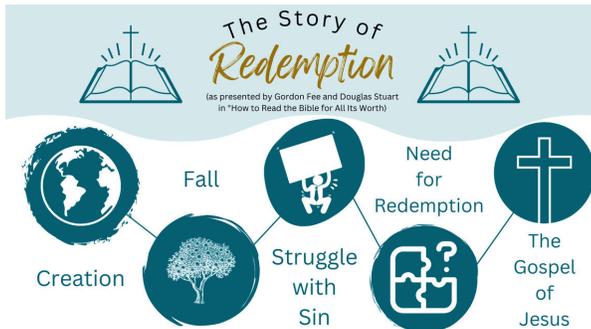
# A New Foundation

## Bible Verse

Luke 24:27

This metanarrative or grand story of redemption can be found on every page of Scripture. In every story, you can find an example of the result of the fall, a struggle with sin, a deep cry for restoration, or the action or description of the restoration. See Figure 2

Figure 2



A hermeneutic is a way of reading the Bible. What Jesus says is that at any point in the Bible, you can find a connection to Him. This is because there is a solid, unified thread running through the Bible pointing to Jesus. Found in the fulfillment of prophecies and covenants, the struggle with sin, and the cry for redemption is a continuous thread pointing forward to Jesus.

## The Ultimate Hermeneutic

There is a story shortly after the death and resurrection of Jesus, where He is walking with two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24). The disciples do not recognize Him until He reveals Himself to them. Once He does, the Bible says that “beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:27). The phrase “Moses and the Prophets” was another way of saying “all of the Bible, at least what had been compiled by that point.

### Question 4:

**What is your favorite book of the Bible and why?**

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### Question 5:

**How does the metanarrative of Scripture help to put all of the Bible in a proper context?**

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# A New Foundation

## The Bible's Goal

The Bible's goal is simple. Let's revisit 2 Timothy 3 :16, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." Therein lies the goal: the Bible is God's inspired Word to humanity to reveal His character and mission and align our lives with His purposes as we mature in the knowledge of Him. Sometimes that takes teaching, reproof, correction, or training, but all these are designed to equip us to fulfill God's purpose. The Bible is sufficient to fulfill this task.

## Bible Translations

The Bible was originally written in Hebrew and Greek, with a little Aramaic in parts of Daniel. The Bible has since been copied into several different languages. The goal of biblical translation should be to produce a text that retains the message of the original language in a clear, contemporary form of another language. There has been much debate over Bible translation. I do not desire to input one way or another.

There are three main types of translations: Literal, Dynamic, and Paraphrase. A paraphrase often reads more like a commentary than a translation. In other words, it is not faithful enough to the original to be useful as a standalone resource for personal spiritual formation. Therefore, we will focus on Literal and Dynamic.

It is impossible to directly translate from either language. The word order would be too awkward to provide much benefit. The Literal translations opt for a word for word. If there are 14 words in a Hebrew sentence, Literal translations opt for 14 in English. Notable Literal translations are the KJV, NKJV, NASB, ESV, and CSB.

Dynamic translations disregard word count and try to convey thought-for-thought. If it takes 14 words to say something in Hebrew, it might not take 14 in English; therefore, dynamic translations opt to convey the thought without respect to the word count. Notable Dynamic translations are the NIV and NLT. Most of the well-known translations, Literal or Dynamic, are similar and will adequately facilitate personal Spiritual formation.

# A New Foundation

## Where do I start?

Many people often ask, “Where should I start?” This is a great question. The Bible can seem like a mammoth to the new reader. It certainly is worthy of respect; it is God’s Word after all. I want to offer three books as options for starting places with explanations.

First, you could begin with the gospel of John. John chronicles the life, ministry, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus from a very personal point of view. If all of the Bible is pointing to Jesus, this is a good place to start.

As an alternative, you might begin with Acts. Acts is a historical narrative describing the formation of the church. The church has not always existed as it does today, and Acts tells of how it came to be.

Another great choice is I John. In addition to his Gospel, John wrote three epistles. His first epistle is written with the specific goal to help its writer find assurance of their salvation and new identity as a believer.

## Bible Reading Strategies

1. Your goal is to observe, interpret correctly, and, when applicable, apply the text to your life.

2. Take care to read the Bible without a bias. Let it inform you, not the other way around.

3. The author had an intended meaning when He wrote the book; it is your goal to find it. The text can’t mean something that it wouldn’t have meant to its original audience.
4. The Bible is primarily God’s story of redemption. Avoid reading yourself into every story. Your goal is to draw out themes and apply them to your life.
5. Remember that no verse, when properly understood, will contradict another verse.

### Question 6:

**What is wrong with equating human ideas about God with Scripture?**

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### Question 7:

**Which Bible reading strategy stood out to you most and why?**

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