

The Bible: The Inspired, Inerrant Guidebook

"Life Foundations: Christian Faith Essentials", Part 2

Pastor Vince DiPaola

***THE BIG IDEA: THE BIBLE IS GOD'S INSPIRED, INERRANT AND INVALUABLE
GUIDEBOOK FOR A LIFE THAT PLEASURES GOD AND MAKE SENSE!***

"What is truth?" Pilate asked." (John 18:38a, NIV)

Jesus: "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." (John 17:17, NIV)

I) COMMUNICATING GOD'S TRUTH... AND HOW THE BIBLE DOES IT

1) Communicated by "Revelation" (*the source*):

Truth provided by God SUPERNATURALLY to us.

The Bible is God's revelation of truth to us.

"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways [revelation from God in the OT], but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son [revelation from God in the NT] ..."
(Hebrews 1:1-2a, NIV)

2) Communicated through "Inspiration" (*the process*):

Truth communicated by God through the AUTHORS OF SCRIPTURE to us.

The Bible is inspired by God and are literally His words of truth to us.

"...from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."
(2 Timothy 3:15-16, NASB)

Two key aspects: a) "Verbal" inspiration: God inspired the very words (not just the ideas).

b) "Plenary" inspiration: God inspired all of the Scriptures (not just parts).

3) Communicated with "Inerrancy" (*the product*):

Truth provided by God WITHOUT ERROR in all its teachings in the original text.

The Bible is God's perfect and accurate truth for us.

Jesus: "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished."
(Matthew 5:17-18, NASB)

4) Communicated to us by “Illumination” (the discovery):

Truth that is clearly UNDERSTOOD by us through God’s Spirit, though it already exists.

The Bible is clear enough for us to understand its truth.

“Then He [Jesus] opened their [the disciples] minds to understand the Scriptures.” (Luke 24:45, NASB)

5) Communicated through us by “Application” (the objective):

Truth that is PRACTICALLY LIVED-OUT in our daily lives to acknowledge God.

The Bible is applicable to us and help for every important area of our lives.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17, NIV)

II) HOW WE KNOW THE BIBLE IS TRUTH FROM GOD HIMSELF

(adapted and modified from T. Holladay & K. Warren, “Foundations: 11 Core Truths To Build Your Life On”, p.18-20)

1) The “external” evidence: the evidence observed OUTSIDE the words of the Bible.

a) The number of manuscript copies and the short length of time between the original manuscripts and our first copies of the New Testament.

b) The extreme care with which the Scriptures were copied by scribes.

c) The confirmation of historical places, dates and events in the Scriptures by archaeology.

2) The “internal” evidence: the evidence contained INSIDE the words of the Bible.

a) The majority of the Bible came from those who gave eyewitness accounts. (1 John 1:1-3)


b) The Bible’s content displays amazing agreement and consistency throughout its pages.

3) The “personal” evidence: the evidence of the IMPACT ON PEOPLE by the Bible.

a) The Bible was the first major book printed and has been translated into over 1,300 languages.

b) The direction of societies and millions of lives have been changed by the Bible’s message.

c) The Bible stands out above other alleged “sacred books”.
 (from T. Holladay & K. Warren, “Foundations: 11 Core Truths To Build Your Life On”, p.19)

 A Closer Look What’s the Difference?	
The Bible is translated from 24,000 copies of the New Testament alone, with millions of people having seen some of these copies. Those copies have been translated by thousands of schools.	The Book of Mormon is translated from a supposed single original that is claimed to have been seen and translated by one man: Joseph Smith (who was not an expert in languages). That original was “taken back”. There are no copies of that original.
The Bible was written by more than forty different authors spanning over fifty generations and three continents. It speaks with agreement on all matters of faith and doctrine.	The Qu’ran is the writing and record of one man, Muhammad, in one place at one point in history. It differs at many points with the Old and New Testament accounts of history.
The Bible provides God’s distinctive solution to man’s problem with sin and focuses on God’s work in actual, verifiable history.	Hindu scriptures claim all roads lead to the same place and focus on stories of things that happened in the “celestial realms.”

4) The “Divine” evidence: the evidence of the WORDS of Jesus Christ Himself.

“[Jesus] answered and said, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’”
 (Matthew 4:4, NASB see also 4:7 &10)

“Jesus replied, ‘You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.’”
 (Matthew 22:29, NIV)

“He replied, ‘Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.’” (Luke 11:28, NIV)

“For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”
 (Matthew 5:18, NASB)

“... the Scripture cannot be broken.” (John 10:35, NIV)

See also Matthew 10:15, 12:40, 19:4, 22:40, 24:15, Luke 17:26.

III) HOW WE KNOW THE “BOOKS” INCLUDED IN THE BIBLE ARE THE RIGHT ONES

(see articles at end of this section “How Our Bible Came To Us” and “The Cannon” from C. Ryrie, “Basic Theology”, p.117,105-109)

The “Canon”: The collection of books that meet the CRITERIA for acceptance into the Bible.

Criteria #1) The apostolic authority and/or reputation of the AUTHOR.

Criteria #2) The ecclesiastical acceptance by the majority of CHURCHES.

Criteria #3) The doctrinal soundness of the CONTENTS of the book in question.

Criteria #4) The promise of God himself to **PRESERVE** His Word.

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

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever." (Isaiah 40:8, NASB)

Criteria #5) The element of **FAITH** that we need to trust God for everything.

IV) INTERPRETING AND APPLYING THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE TO OUR LIVES

(adapted and modified from T. Holladay & K. Warren, "Foundations: 11 Core Truths To Build Your Life On", p.30)

The basic rules of hermeneutics (or interpretation) and Bible study methods:

(see articles at end of this section "Bible Translation Chart" & "How The New Testament Fits Together" by H. Hoehner, DTS notes)

Rule #1) Rely on the Holy Spirit, through prayer, to understand and interpret the Bible.

Rule #2) Develop and implement a Bible reading plan that is balanced and comprehensive.

Rule #3) Learn the skills of: **a) Investigation** (making observations from Scripture), **b) Interpretation** (understanding the text), **c) Implementation** (how to apply it), and **d) Integration** (correlating what you read in light of the whole of Scripture). *For more information, see Lakeshore series M15 "Understanding And Enjoying The Bible" (New Horizons 202) available for purchase.*

Rule #4) The best way to interpret Scripture is with Scripture. Look for cross-references.

Rule #5) Interpret the Old Testament in light of the New Testament (i.e. the progress of revelation).

Rule #6) Interpret unclear passages in light of clear passages of Scripture ("perspicuity" of Scripture).

Rule #7) Understand words and verses in their context. For every "text" there is a "context".

Rule #8) Understand historical passages in light of doctrinal passages (i.e. the progress of history).

Rule #9) Subject every experience, belief and decision to the authority of the Bible.

***SUMMARY THOUGHT: READING AND LIVING BY THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE
EVERY DAY LEADS TO A GODLY LIFESTYLE!***

V) QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION IN GROUPS OR FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

1) Review the definitions of “revelation”, “inspiration”, “inerrancy”, “illumination” and “application” provided earlier. Do you understand them? How new are these terms to you? What are some other ways you can reword those definitions to say the same thing?

2) Why do you think that it is important that the Bible has more than one “evidence” that verifies that it is truth from God (see point II) above)? Shouldn’t we just believe without evidence? Wrestle with this idea: “While Christianity is a faith, it is an informed faith not a blind faith.”

3) Review the rules of interpreting and applying the Bible covered above. Do these rules of interpretation (or hermeneutics) make sense? Are they clear? Notice how many involve using Scripture to understand other Scripture— what does that say about the unity of the message of the Bible from old testament to new testament times?

4) What are some ways you can get started in getting a good Bible reading plan in place in your own life? Find two or three ways in which you can apply this session to your life.