

Read the **BOOK**



An Ambassador College Publication

Read the BOOK

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More than seven million copies sold last year. Forty different companies print this Book and the total number of hundreds of millions of copies printed and distributed is impossible to estimate. It has now been translated into over 1400 different languages. Consistently every year's best seller by a very wide margin, the Bible is the most-printed, most-purchased, most freely distributed, little-read and certainly least-understood book known to man! Bruce Barton referred to it as "The Book Nobody Knows." You need to know this Book; to know it you have to read it.

WHY *are* there so many Bibles? If you could make a survey of the *use* of the myriad millions of Bibles that have been printed, the results would astound you. Think about it a minute — what *are* all those Bibles being used for?

Traditionally every family has its Bible. Many a person has been able to trace his ancestry, perhaps establish the date of his own birth, from the records kept in the pages of the Family Bible. Long before governments required record-keeping for their citizens, the Family Bible was the depository for the statistics of marriages, births and deaths — and in many instances that Family Bible was passed on from generation to generation.

Every preacher has a Bible, or Bibles. Bibles are used, or at least *appear*, at marriages, funerals and church services. Bibles occupy lonely vigils on the mantelpiece, the coffee table, the bedside light stand or somewhere else where it would *appear* that they are in daily use.

Many a Bible lies in lonely isolation in a hotel or motel room — its cover stained with coffee or highball rings, its pages never opened!

In the courts of the land (which cherish the principle of separation of church and state) Bibles were formerly part of the legal paraphernalia of every trial. Witnesses were once required to place their hands on this black Book, raise their right hands toward the ceiling and say: "I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God." Strangely enough, inside

the covers of that Bible, the One who inspired all of its 33 major authors over a period of about 1600 years, that One we call Jesus Christ of Nazareth, is quoted as commanding *His* followers, "But *I* say unto you, SWEAR NOT AT ALL! . . . But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these *cometh of evil!*" (Matt. 5:34-37.) Perhaps the people who devised this procedure never *read the Book?*!

Jesus had the same problem with the lawyers and preachers of His day. They were supposed to be great students of the Book, disciples of Moses, sons of David, followers of Abraham. They had spent great portions of their lives memorizing and learning by rote the million or so words of tradition *attached to* the Book by their venerable fathers. They knew Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, Chaldean and probably Egyptian hieroglyphics inside out and upside down. But somehow they missed the point. They couldn't see eye to eye with the One Abraham, Moses and David worshipped and wrote about so prolifically. Therefore Christ's constant advice to these great scholars was simply to "*Read the Book.*" (Matt. 12:3, 5; 19:4; 21:16, 42; 22:31; Mark 2:25; 12:10, 26; Luke 6:3.)

"The Simplicity of Christ"

Another friend and worshipper of Christ — Isaiah — summed up the problem that seems to face mankind in every generation. Mankind, presented with the instruction book from His Creator, is reluctant to apply its principles. The wise, educated and learned men, from the depths of their book-lined studies, look down their erudite noses at the One who says, "Please read this Book," and respond to Him, "I can't read that book because it's sealed — it wasn't meant to be understood or applied literally. It's just an archaic collection of superstitions whose meanings have been lost from us today." Take the same Book to the man in the street, ask him to read the Book and he replies, "I haven't got any education. How can I understand what's in the Book?" (See Isaiah 29:11-12.)

"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do

honour me, but have removed their *heart* far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men . . .” (Isaiah 29:13). People like to give the *appearance* of being religious. They like to have their pomp and ceremony — they like to have their *ceremonial* Bible — but they don’t want to apply it to their own lives. The same God who inspired Isaiah, inspired Paul to write, “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Titus 1:16).

People who are in control of the ecclesiastical and political machinery want to impress upon the masses the opinion that the Word of God cannot be understood, and certainly not by any layman. If this impression were not given and the Bible were read as the plain-spoken instruction book from God to man, then people would soon see that there are many things being done in high places which were in *direct contradiction to the Word of God* taken plainly for exactly what it says! This would never do!

The average fellow on the street doesn’t want to bother to read the Book from his Creator for at least two reasons:

1) He feels that the professionals in the field of religion should be able to read and interpret *for* him whatever message God might have.

2) Deep down he may be afraid that he would discover something in the message of his Master which would require him to *change his mode of living!*

Therefore, almost everybody overlooks the simple request of Christ — “Read the Book!”

A Good Example

Perhaps the best example of this reasoning applied is regarding the book of Revelation. We are told by clerics and scholars that the book of Revelation is rife with symbols, allegories and similes — weird visions of beasts of fantasy — hidden in deep meanings which cannot be understood. We are told the book of Revelation is veiled, hidden and sealed — that *nobody* can really understand it — and that certainly it couldn’t be applied to anyone’s

The Bible Says

*“The SOUL that sinneth, it shall DIE”!
(Ezekiel 18:4, 20.)*

*“If a man have long hair, it is a shame
unto him.”
(I Corinthians 11:14.)*

*“Ye shall NOT surely die”! (Genesis 3:4.)
That was Satan talking to Eve — and
most of Eve’s children have believed that
Bible-recorded, Satanic lie of an “immor-
tal soul” ever since!*

*“The Son of man is Lord also of the sab-
bath.” (Mark 2:28.)*

*Jesus Christ said: “NO MAN hath as-
cended up to heaven”! (John 3:13.)*

*Jesus Christ said: “Think NOT that I am
come to send peace on earth . . . ” (Mat-
thew 10:34).*

*The Apostle Paul kept the seventh-day Sab-
bath as a Christian custom (Acts 17:2).*

*Christ said He spoke in parables to HIDE
“the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven”
(Matthew 13:10-13).*

The Bible Nowhere Says

The soul is immortal — the words “immortal soul” are not found in the Bible.

That the heavens and the earth are only 6,000 years old.

That heaven is the reward of the saved.

That Sunday is “The LORD’S DAY.”

“Adam fell” nor does it use the expression “the fall of man” — but Jesus said, “I beheld SATAN as lightning FALL from heaven.” (Luke 10:18.)

Birthdays should be observed. The only two birthday parties mentioned in the Bible — Pharaoh’s and Herod’s — resulted in someone being executed.

“Cleanliness is next to Godliness.”

“Spare the rod and spoil the child.”

The sinful dead suffer for eternity in the burning fires of hell.

The Old Testament Says

*“The Lord will give grace and glory” —
Psalm 84:11.*

*“Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your
HEART” — Deuteronomy 10:16.*

*“I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord”
— Genesis 49:18.*

*“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”
— Leviticus 19:18.*

*“And he believed in the Lord; and he
counted it to him for righteousness” —
Genesis 15:6.*

*“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all
thine heart, and with all thy soul, and
with all thy might” — Deuteronomy 6:5.*

*“Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that
I will make a new covenant” — Jeremiah
31:31.*

*“What doth the Lord require of thee, but
to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk
humbly with thy God?” — Micah 6:8.*

The New Testament Says

Christ judges and makes war — Revelation 19:11.

Think NOT (Christ said) that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets — Matthew 5:17.

There remaineth therefore a keeping of a Sabbath to the people of God — Hebrews 4:9.

“Out of his [Christ’s] mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” — Revelation 19:15

“The doers of the law shall be justified” — Romans 2:13.

“If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” — Matthew 19:17.

“But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” — James 2:20.

personal life or Today's World! Therefore it is recommended that you not bother to read it as it will just confuse you. Some even go so far as to claim that too much Bible study will drive you insane! And certainly the adherents to this general belief about the book of Revelation would agree that the book of Revelation fits this statement more than any other Bible book. In addition, the comments *men* have added to your Bible will probably show this last book as being titled: "The Revelation of St. John the Divine."

Now let's try an experiment. Let's just follow the instruction of our Saviour and "read the Book." Sure enough, my King James translation of the Bible says on page 326, "The Revelation of St. John the Divine." However when I "read *the* Book" I discover that in chapter one, verse one — which is the inspired Word of God and not some title man has placed upon it — *it* says, "The Revelation of *Jesus Christ*!"

Now think just a minute. We only read the first *part* of *one* sentence of the Book and it has in plain, straightforward language contradicted the opinion of the scholars. 1) It is *not* the revelation of St. John — he is merely the scribe of the One who is giving the revelation — Jesus Christ. 2) It *is* however, called, "Revelation." Now, this is a correct translation of the original Greek, so let's check our dictionaries and see what the title of this book means. According to *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, "revelation" means "An act of *revealing* or communicating divine truth; an act of revealing to view of something that is revealed, especially an enlightening or astonishing disclosure."

Isn't that amazing? No definition given to indicate veiled, hidden or sealed!

Let's read this book some more. In verse three it says, "*Blessed* is he that readeth"! Your Creator Jesus Christ pronounces a direct *blessing* on you if you read the words of this book — and indeed the same blessing applies to every other word which He has written (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4). It would seem that Jesus had some reason for advising scholars and laymen alike to simply read the words

which they professed they held as their Holy Book — to simply read those words, believe them and do them! Let's read the rest of that third verse and then continue, "Blessed is he that *readeth*, and they that *hear* the words of this prophecy, and *keep* those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."

Something Old and Something New

The great body of "believers" in the Old Testament will try to inform you that the New Testament is not for them. The great body of "believers" of the New Testament will tell you the same thing about the Old.

DON'T BELIEVE EITHER!

When Jesus Christ was being tempted by Satan the devil, all His answers to that wily, subtle being came straight from the Word which He had inspired His holy men of old to write. The very first statement that He countered Satan with is recorded in Matthew 4, verse 4. "*It is written*, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Christ was always using this expression, "*It is written*." This particular statement, which is New Testament to the core, came from the heart of the Law in the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 8, verse 3. Read *that* Book!

Jesus' simple advice to the supposed religious ones of His day was, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. . . . For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me" (John 5:39, 46).

Besides all these reasons direct from our Creator, there are many other reasons to read this Book.

It's a consistent best seller every year.

As a literary work it is the most remarkable book the world has ever seen and its most ancient!

It stands unique among all books for its historical value alone.

It is at least *claimed* as the basis for all Judeo-Christian societies and so involves all Western civilization and much of the rest of the world.

It has contained within its pages many straight-

forward, plain, practical, simple pieces of advice on the conduct of daily life that are priceless.

Famous people from history comment:

“Give me liberty or give me death!” said Patrick Henry. Patrick Henry also said, “The Bible is worth all other books which have ever been printed.”

The father of the United States of America — George Washington — bluntly stated: “It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.”

Queen Victoria, at the helm of Great Britain when it became Great, stoutly claimed, “That book accounts for the supremacy of England!” And only by reading deeply in the pages of Scripture can you fully appreciate the truth of *that* statement!

Sir William Herschel put it this way: “All human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming more and more strongly the truths contained in the Sacred Scriptures.” Ambassador College has inscribed in stone at its Academic Center a motto which echoes this in different words: “The Word of God is the foundation of all knowledge.” Lord Tennyson stressed it this way: “Bible reading is an education in itself.”

How to Read the Book

Before you can read the Book, you have to *have* the Book. Just in case you do not have a Bible available, let me point out that you can purchase one of fine quality for less than a dollar from your local Salvation Army depot. Used Bibles are inexpensive — and as books go, used Bibles are very little *used*.

Silly as it may seem, I suggest that you begin reading this Book with the first chapter on page one. “In the beginning God created . . .” (Genesis 1:1). To begin reading any book which contained 1,189 chapters by beginning on chapter 930 (Matthew) would seem rather strange, wouldn’t it? So, casting all prejudices aside, how about beginning to read at the beginning like any other book and just read it through as rapidly as you can — don’t bother about studying now — don’t bother about solving problems now — just *read the Book!*

If you read at a bare minimum of slightly over 200 words a minute, and if you spend just ten minutes a day in this reading of the Bible, you will have completed your reading from Genesis through Revelation — you will have read the 773,746 words of Scripture by this time next year!

Of course as you read, you may get quite interested and spend more than ten minutes and therefore finish the Book sooner! There are all kinds of interesting things in the Bible, and as you get into it, you'll find it just as hard to put down as any gripping novel any author might put together. History, intrigue, sex, violence, poetry, logic, reason, prophecy — all march with quick tread through the pages of the Bible.

You'll quickly become acquainted with the main characters — Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, David and Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Malachi, Matthew, Jesus, John and Paul! These and many more we have no space to mention here (Hebrews 11:32). All these people living through events that seem so ancient will have direct meaning for you. All those events which occurred to those men in the distant past happened, and are written and preserved for us to read, so that *we* would profit from reading their examples in this last day of mankind before the intervention of Jesus Christ! (I Cor. 10:6-11.)

Surprises in Store for You

You'll discover that the Old Testament is neither done away, dead, or for that matter even "Old"! You will discover that there is a tremendous amount of New Testament in the Old Testament and an amazing amount of Old in the New Testament! You'll run across *many* statements, perhaps some in every chapter, which in plain, simple Bible language (like we read in Revelation) will *contradict* what you have always believed the Bible said. Just because some preacher pounds the pulpit and says, "The Bible *says* . . .," doesn't mean that the Bible *does* indeed say that. Jesus' admonition to anyone like that is the same as it was to the Bible pounders of His day — "Read the Book!"

As you read along, there will be questions that come

Men Died to Bri

The Bible was preserved by the blood of courageous, God-led men through the centuries.

As a record. For you and me. To read.

It took a slow, agonizing, painful process to put together, preserve, and place in your hands the present printed English text of Old and New Testaments we call "the Bible."

The Old Testament portion of Scripture is a record of the lives of men and women of faith. Of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Deborah, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and many others. *Without their lives, there would be no Old Testament* — there would be no scripture "written for our learning" (Rom. 15:4).

What sort of lives did they live so you could hold in your hands this God-inspired volume? Read it for yourself in Hebrews 11:33-38. They through faith "conquered kingdoms, ruled in justice and proved the truth of God's promises. They shut the mouths of lions, they quenched the furious blaze of fire, they escaped from death itself. From being weaklings they became strong men and mighty warriors; they routed whole armies of foreigners. Women received their dead raised to life again, while others were tortured and refused to be ransomed, because they wanted to deserve a more honorable resurrection in the world to come. Others were exposed to the test of public mockery and floggings, and to the torture of being left bound in prison. They were killed by stoning, by being sawn in two; they were tempted by specious promises of release and then were killed with the sword. Many became refugees with nothing but sheepskins or goatskins to cover them. They lost everything and yet were spurned and ill-treated by a world that was too evil to see their worth" (Phillips Translation).

ing You the Book

Jewish scribes carefully and faithfully preserved every "jot and tittle" of the Hebrew record, as did Greek scribes for the New Testament. Never was the task easy.

Periodic Roman persecutions against Christians were directed also against this Book. Diocletian, in perhaps the most severe attempt to destroy Christianity, ordered the burning of all its sacred books in the year 303 — yet the Scriptures survived.

After Constantine, Imperial attacks against the Bible came to an end, and Jerome's Vulgate translation into Latin at the end of the fourth century became the accepted standard of the Western world. But the day of persecution was not over.

In the 1500's, Tyndale was forced to go to Germany to do his translation of the New Testament from the original Greek. Church authorities in England had prohibited a new English translation. In 1536, only eleven years after he finished the first *printed* English New Testament, Tyndale was strangled and burned at the stake for his efforts after a year's imprisonment at Vilvorde.

Others also found it dangerous to be too closely identified with the translation or circulation of the English Bible. Coverdale narrowly escaped with his life; Cranmer and Rogers were brought to the stake; many others sought safety in flight. Even men who bought or sold these early English Bibles were threatened, sometimes tried for heresy, sometimes put to death.

Many were martyred to give us the book we could so carelessly lay aside. Their sacrifice becomes worthwhile only if we make it worthwhile by learning its lessons through diligent study!

to mind. I suggest that you take a pencil and draw a faint line in the margin where the question comes, so that later you will be able to go back and begin solving some of these questions. However, many of those questions will be solved by simply reading *through* the Book.

If you determine to read the Book, it will be the most rewarding thing you've done in a long time. Every article that you read in *The PLAIN TRUTH* and other literature you receive from Ambassador College will come alive more than ever before. You will for the first time be *able* to follow the example of the Bereans as mentioned in Acts 17:10-11, where they listened to what Paul had to say when he preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Then they "searched the scriptures *daily*" to confirm the things he said.

You will experience a special joy that comes from realizing that the most simple mind, guided by the Spirit of God, *can understand* God's plain-spoken, simple, straightforward Truth! You'll begin to feel like King David who said, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me *wiser* than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have *more understanding* than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I *understand* more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way" (Psalm 119:97-104).

Even if you have read *parts* of the Book before, I still suggest that you read right through from the beginning to the end as rapidly as possible. Get the flow and the feeling of the Book your Creator wrote to you.

One personal request — I would appreciate very much hearing from you to know whether or not you are indeed going to read the Book. And when you *finish*, I would very sincerely appreciate hearing that you have *accomplished* what you set out to do.

One more, and *most* important thing. God tells us through Isaiah the *attitude* we should have as we read His Book: “But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and *trembleth at my word* . . . Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name’s sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed” (Isaiah 66:2, 5).

May God richly bless you as *you* READ THE BOOK!

Part II

Here's how you can REMEMBER SCRIPTURES

“Oh, I just can't remember scriptures!” is the anguished cry of many who do read the Book. Just how important is the ability to memorize hundreds of verses? And how can you develop and improve your ability to recall scriptures?

MANY have suffered needless frustration because of fruitless efforts to retain certain passages of Scripture in their memory. Perhaps *you* have tried and repeatedly failed to commit to memory important verses from our Maker's Instruction Book.

Is Memorizing Word for Word Necessary?

Let's understand that *salvation does not depend on one's ability to quote chapter and verse from the Bible!* If it did, it is conceivable that none of the original apostles and authors of the New Testament would ever have qualified for the Kingdom of God!

Why? Because in the days of the twelve apostles and the writers of the New Testament, the Old Testament writings had not yet been divided into chapters and verses. In fact, it was not done until long after those men were all dead!

The sole exception to this was the Book of Psalms. The Psalms are actually songs. They were composed by a number of authors and originally intended to be set to music. Therefore it was necessary to divide them into chapters and verses for musical and poetical expediency. And as songs, of course, they were intended to be memorized. For ease of memorization the verses were sometimes arranged acrostically (alphabetically).

Now consider this fact: The New Testament authors quoted directly from the Psalms 116 times — yet in only one instance did they mention the *chapter* from which

they were quoting! This one case is Acts 13:33: "... as it is also written in the *second* psalm..." The remaining quotes from the Psalms make *no mention* of either the chapter or the verse.

Other than those from the Psalms, the New Testament contains 167 more direct quotations from the Old Testament and, of course, no chapter or verse is referred to in a single instance. In some cases, when quoting from the Old Testament, the speaker or writer did not even mention the name of the person or the book he was citing. Take, for example, the time when Jesus Christ was being tempted by the devil. Jesus quoted *directly* from the Book of Deuteronomy, which was written by Moses, yet he did not even mention the author or the name of the book! Check that for yourself in Matthew 4:4, 7 and 10. In other instances where the prophets of old *are* referred to, they are simply mentioned by name, but, of course, no verses or chapters are given. For some examples, read Matthew 2:17; 8:17; Luke 4:17.

The Bible was not divided into chapters until about 1250 A.D. when Cardinal Hugo composed a Latin concordance or index of the Scriptures. Over 300 years later, in 1560 A.D., the first Bible translation *wholly* divided into chapters and verses was produced in Geneva, Switzerland. It was known as *The Geneva Bible*.

It should be apparent, then, that the ability to quote chapter and verse from the Bible like a *human computer* is not necessary. If, however, a person is gifted with an exceptional memory for scriptures, it is certainly to his advantage *if* he exercises his ability in right humility for an honorable purpose. There is absolutely nothing wrong with having an excellent memory!

It IS Important to Retain Knowledge

We are told to "grow in grace and in knowledge" (II Peter 3:18). As Christians, we should be continually *increasing* our knowledge of God's Word. Peter also instructs us, "... *be ready always to give an ANSWER* to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with *meekness and fear*" (I Pet. 3:15).

Memory is therefore one of the important attributes that God has given to humans. For most people, however, remembering does not come easy. It seems many have difficulty retaining even the *simplest* things! Perhaps YOU have that difficulty.

If so, then you can take heart from this fact: Even though most of the Bible was not originally written with chapters and verses, the Bibles we use today ARE! And since they are, we can certainly *take advantage* of this valuable aspect of modern translations.

The present chapter and verse divisions DO make it easier to locate the scriptures we need, and to do it in a systematic way without having to wade through whole books and sections of the Bible to find them. By increasing our memory of scripture locations, we can improve our overall knowledge of God's Word and be better able to "rightly divide the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15).

We should *stand in awe* of the authority of the scriptures inspired by the great Creator of mankind! We should *tremble* before the Word of the living God! (Isa. 66:2.) We should FEAR to misuse, twist, or *misquote* the Bible! A fast, flippant answer, hastily given to "save face," is often inaccurate and wrong! Therefore it is *important* that we come to REALLY KNOW OUR BIBLES and develop the ability to *use them* correctly as Peter said.

Understanding More Important Than Rote Knowledge

It may be impressive to be able to "rattle off" dozens of scriptures from the Bible. But it is MORE impressive and vastly more profitable to have a GOOD UNDERSTANDING of the Scriptures!

Solomon, in his God-given wisdom, recognized the transcendent importance of gaining understanding. He said, "... lift up your voice [pray] for *understanding* ..." "... HAPPY is the man that findeth wisdom and the man that getteth UNDERSTANDING." He said we should "... get UNDERSTANDING" (Prov. 2:3; 3:13; and 4:5). There is a tremendous *joy* and a sense of *exhilaration* in realizing you

have grasped and understood a spiritual principle for the first time!

Why is it so much more important to have understanding of the Scriptures than merely to be expert in locating and quoting them? Simply because the ability to cite verses and chapters from the Bible is merely a *mechanical* operation. But comprehending their meaning is a SPIRITUAL accomplishment! Read Romans 7:14 and I Corinthians 2:14 in this connection.

Surely you can see that the important thing is to STUDY FOR UNDERSTANDING, and not merely to memorize by rote!

Of course, it is also fine to want to increase your skill and ability in rapidly locating and citing scripture verses. And since it is, here are some pointers that will help you — if you practice them habitually — not only to *understand*, but also to be better able to *recall* verses of the Bible.

More Difficult to Remember

But before we begin expounding these pointers, one caution should be mentioned here for our *senior citizens*.

When an older person tries to remember past events, his or her memory is much sharper in recalling events of childhood and early adulthood, than in remembering events of ten years ago or of even a relatively short time ago.

Human beings learn more the first year of their lives than any succeeding year. Each year they learn *a little less* than the year preceding.

Therefore, it follows that students can *learn* more readily — pick up *new* knowledge in a new field faster — than their professors of a much riper age.

But this does *not* mean that young students know more than their professors! Not at all. For the elderly have the accumulated knowledge of many more years, plus much added experience.

So, senior citizens should *not* be at all discouraged because they cannot recall scriptures as rapidly as younger people. Our just God judges us on what we do with our *individual abilities* — NOT on how we compare with others.

With that brief digression, we begin expounding and explaining several helpful points on how you can better understand and memorize scriptures.

Get the Overview of the Bible

Many have failed to recall the location of certain scriptures because they have thought of God's Word as a disjointed and disconnected collection of thousands of unrelated verses. Therefore, you should strive to see the Bible as an organized whole. Get the Big Picture! Learn the BOOKS of the Bible first and try to have a GENERAL idea of what they are about. Become familiar with the basic divisions of the Bible, the types of books, and the general subject of each book. (For more information on how the Bible was put together, write for our free reprint article "Do We Have the Complete Bible?")

In order to get the overview of the Bible, you should at your earliest opportunity quickly *read* through the ENTIRE BIBLE from Genesis to Revelation. Studying just bits and pieces, here and there, will never enable you to grasp the broad picture — the panorama of the Bible.

To read the whole Bible through, you need to set up a program. Review Part I of this booklet for details.

Study by Subject or Chapter

Many chapters in the Bible were made chapters because of a natural *subject* content. For example, I Corinthians 13 has been called the "love chapter" because it primarily deals with that subject. Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 both discuss the Ten Commandments. Revelation 20, I Corinthians 15 and I Thessalonians 4 are concerned with the resurrection.

Hebrews 11 is known as the "faith" chapter. Psalm 51 is David's psalm of repentance after his sin with Bathsheba. Psalm 119 deals extensively with the Law of God. Isaiah 11 speaks in detail of the millennial reign of Christ. On and on we could go.

It is easier to remember the subject of an entire chapter than individual verses. But to really remember what is in entire chapters, you need to familiarize yourself with

them by **STUDYING** and poring over them. Doing this will help your overall ability to retain Bible knowledge! And when you do learn the overall content of some of these basic chapters, you will begin to more rapidly locate individual scriptures on the subjects covered in them.

Be Impressed With the Verses You Are Studying

If you were driving a nail into a board and you tapped very lightly on it with the hammer, it would not penetrate the wood very deeply. Your mind is the same way.

Our minds adequately retain for instant recall only those things that have left a **DEEP IMPRESSION** on them. Unless you are sufficiently *impressed* with something the first time you hear or study it, chances are it will soon fade from memory. Therefore, you must allow the verses you are studying to make a **DEEP MENTAL IMPRESSION!**

If you are merely reading superficially over verses, simply skimming them, they will leave little or no impression! There is a proverbial saying to the effect that if you eat Chinese food, half an hour later you will wonder what you ate. If you study superficially, half an hour later you will wonder what you read!

It is imperative, therefore, that you *dwell on and CONCENTRATE INTENSELY* on what you are studying! Let the words of the Creator *sink deeply* into the innermost recesses of your mind.

Associate What You Study with Real-Life Situations

Do not allow your Bible study to be merely academic or impractical. Relate what you are studying in the Bible to actual situations in this life. Relate it to history or future events in world affairs.

When you study prophecy (about one third of the Bible deals with prophecy) ask yourself, "Has this ever happened? Is it happening *now*? Or is it yet *future*?" Then, as you read the daily newspaper, and as things happen on the world scene, certain verses from the Bible will *spring to mind!*

When you study a section in the Book dealing with a law or some aspect of Christian conduct, ask yourself, "Am I obeying this? How can I *perform* this?" Then when you come up against a situation in daily life which involves that principle, the verse will come to mind.

If in your mind the Bible is *relevant to life*, both past and present, its verses will spring to LIFE! They will become LIVING ORACLES which have a definite BEARING on human life in general — and *yours* in particular! This will make them much easier to retain and recall.

Meditate on the Verses You Have Studied

The old cliché "out of sight, out of mind" applies here. After you have closed the Book, unless you continue to mentally digest its words, they will tend to fade from conscious thought. They will be crowded out by other things.

The example of King David of Israel applies in this case. He said, "Oh how love I thy law! It is my MEDITATION ALL THE DAY" (Psalm 119:97). David's mind was perpetually on the things of God. Not to the *exclusion* of his responsibilities as administrator of the kingdom, but INCLUDING those principles in his rulership as well.

God's Word is TRUTH (John 17:17). We are admonished by the Apostle Paul to THINK ON (meditate on) the truth (Phil. 4:8). The more you do this, the more the verses and chapters of our Maker's Instruction Book will become real "MIND STICKERS"!

Drill Yourself in the Scriptures

To "drill" is to indulge in *mental exercise* aimed at perfecting facility and skill by regular practice.

Drilling yourself in the verses of the Bible is one of the finest ways of committing them to memory. Many have found the use of "flash cards" helpful in this respect. These can be made very simply by purchasing a supply of 3x5 index cards and writing or typing the scripture out in full on one side, and then the chapter and verse location on the

other side. Use these cards for key scriptures you wish to recall.

Go through the cards regularly by reading the quote and then trying to recall its location by chapter and verse. Then turn the card over and check on yourself. You could reverse this process by reading the chapter and verse first and then trying to recall its wording. Since every translation varies, don't necessarily try to memorize word for word, but just the key thought, subject, or point of the verse. This method will provide you with a helpful REVIEW of the scriptures and is a valuable means of aiding your memory.

Drill yourself also on the subjects of basic chapters such as those mentioned earlier in this booklet. You'll find that REPETITION is indeed the best form of emphasis!

Ask God for Help

Jesus Christ promised His disciples: "But the Comforter (Greek *paracletos* — "one called alongside to HELP"), which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your *remembrance*, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

God's Spirit is intended to help and assist you in both understanding and recalling to mind the words of Jesus Christ. *Utilize that help*. Ask God to help you apply the principles in this booklet daily. Practice them and work on them faithfully. Develop right study habits and stand in awe of the words of the living God. As you continue to submit to God and respect His Word, He will help you in your efforts to study and retain scriptures.

Don't become discouraged if you don't become a "walking concordance." Remember the ability to *understand* scripture is vastly more valuable than the ability to merely *quote* it! □

ADDITIONAL READING

Ambassador College publishes many colorful, informative booklets on a wide range of biblical topics: Four are listed below.

How To Study the Bible

Why is the Bible the most misunderstood book in all history? Are there any solid keys to clear up all the confusion? If you apply the simple, basic rules given in this booklet, you will begin to really understand God's Word.

What Do You Mean . . . Salvation?

What is salvation? Is it a place, destination, condition, or reward? Not one in a hundred knows what salvation is or how to receive it. Do you?

All About Water Baptism

Is water baptism essential to salvation? What about the "thief on the cross"? Was he saved without it? What is the proper form or mode — sprinkling, pouring, or immersion?

What Is the True Gospel?

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Write for your personal copies of the above booklets. They are sent free as an educational service in the public interest.

The Bible is a *NOW* Book

BELIEVE it or not, the Bible was written for our day, this age — this generation! The Bible is the most up-to-date book you can read today.

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But ironically, this "Book of all books" is the LEAST UNDERSTOOD of all books!

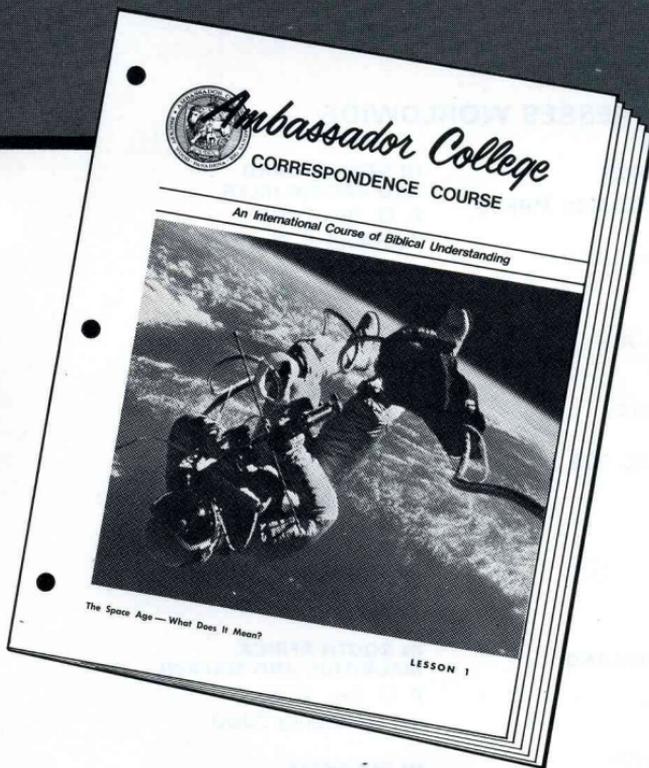
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Simply because when most people try to read the Bible, they can't understand it. Consequently, they assume it's out of date and irrelevant in our modern age.

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