

Guidelines for Growth - Part 1

by J. Vernon McGee

J. Vernon McGee emphasizes the importance of thorough Bible study and its transformative power in the lives of individuals and society.

Duration: 1:12:48

Scripture: Proverbs 1:7, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, Hebrews 1:1-2

Topics: "Biblical Authority", "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses four important aspects of the Bible: revelation, inspiration, illumination, and interpretation. He emphasizes that God has spoken and communicated to mankind through the Bible, and that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit guarantees the truth of the Bible. The preacher also highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in illuminating the meaning of the Bible to believers. He concludes by describing the Bible as containing the mind of God, the way of salvation, and the glory of God, and encourages listeners to read it, believe it, and practice its teachings.

Transcript

Now, as we begin this series, we are naturally going to begin in Genesis, but before we do, I want to give a very brief series on guidelines for the studying of the Bible. I would like to speak today on the subject of the Bible itself, because this is the book that we are going to be studying. It is probably the most malign book that has ever been written.

It has been attacked as no book has ever been attacked, and yet today it has ministered and does minister to literally millions of people around the globe, and it's been doing that now for several thousand years. A book of this nature and with this tremendous impact upon the human family certainly deserves the intelligent consideration of men and women. Now, I want to say just a word about the Bible and what we are attempting to do in this Through the Bible program.

Many years ago in downtown Dallas, Texas, there was a church that had this very impressive message on a sign out over the sidewalk. The Bible as it is for men as they are. That to me is a tremendous statement.

Let me repeat it. The Bible as it is for men as they are. Now, that has been the goal of the Through the Bible ministry, and that is to give the entire Bible, the total Word of God, as it is, and give it to men as they are.

Let me just reach as it were in the air and call to mind some things that just come to me at this time. There's a little mother up yonder in Alaska, a little Eskimo mother who lost a son in the war. She lives in a little town that is snowed in during the wintertime, and she wrote and told us what this ministry meant to her.

Out yonder on a reservation in Arizona in Navajo land, there is another Navajo mother who tells me that in the summertime she puts her little radio outside at night and listens. And then in the wintertime, she has to leave it outside as she can't get it, but she has to sit inside. And through the flimsy curtain of the hogan, she listens to the Bible teaching.

May I say, if these were the only two, I'd think it would be worthwhile to broadcast, but I think of the preacher that's down yonder in the Caribbean who wrote and said, he said, keep coming our way because if you don't, I won't have any sermons to preach. Well, I'd like to help him. And then there are multitudes of others that are using this radio ministry, and then they get the tapes and are using it.

We're delighted for that. We'd like to actually expand this ministry and have it reach as many people as possible because we believe as others believe, and I hope we'll have time to give you some of those quotations today. So we are going to attempt to give the entire Word of God.

We believe that all the Bible is the Word of God and that all of it should be taught, not just some of it, not just the familiar books of the Bible. It's so easy, you know, to settle for that. Here's a little poem that came to me several years ago, and it's based on the statement in 2 Kings 23, 2. And he read all the words of the book, not just some of them, but all the words of the book.

And here is the poem. Let me share this with you today. I supposed I knew my Bible, reading piecemeal, hit or miss.

Now a bit of John or Matthew. Now a snatch of Genesis. Certain chapters of Isaiah.

Certain Psalms, the 23rd. Twelfth of Romans. First of Proverbs.

Yes, I thought I knew the Word, but I found that thorough reading was a different thing to do and the way was unfamiliar when I read the Bible through. You who like to play at Bible, dip and dabble here and there, just before you kneel a weary, yawning through a hurried prayer. You who treat the crown of writings as you treat no other book.

Just a paragraph disjointed, just a crude, impatient look. Try a worthier procedure. Try a broad and steady view.

You will kneel in very rapture when you read the Bible through. And so today we invite you to study with us the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Sixty-six books.

Every chapter and most of the verses we'll be dealing with. Oh, it's going to take five years to do it, and if the Lord spares our lives, we'll all, I'm confident, be better men and better women and have the most thrilling experience that we've ever had. And I trust that you are going to come along with us in this wonderful experience that we are going to have.

Now, I want to share with you some very outstanding quotations of men concerning the Bible because this is a book that has influenced the great men who, in turn, have influenced this world. And I am of the

opinion, and this, of course, is merely an opinion of a poor preacher here in Los Angeles, but I'm of the opinion the reason that we do not have great men today is simply because of the fact that we do not have men who at least respect and read the Word of God. Now, there have been great men of the past that you would not call them Christian, but they had a great respect for the Word of God.

And today the hatred and the bitterness that is exhibited, especially on the part of some so-called great men, and they're not great, it just means television and radio and the newspaper has given them a prominence they do not deserve at all. In fact, I'm sure that many of you recognize that we are given a pretty much of a lopsided viewpoint today. So let me go back, if you will, to way back in history and quote from certain ones that made a tremendous impact upon this world in which we live.

There was an African prince who came to England and was presented to Her Majesty Queen Victoria. And this prince made a very significant statement. In fact, it was in the nature of a question.

And he asked her, he says, what is the secret of England's greatness? And the queen got a beautifully bound copy of the Bible and presented it to the prince with this statement, This is the secret of England's greatness. And I wonder today, friends, the fact that England now has become not only a second-rate but a third-rate nation and England's having trouble getting friends as well as we are having today. I'm wondering if maybe that somehow or another that it's not tied up in the fact that England has gotten away from the Word of God.

I believe that that's what made England great was the Word of God. It's known in history that England was in for a bloodbath and a revolution, the same as France. But God raised up John Wesley and a revival came to England at that time.

It might be interesting to note what some of our early presidents had to say. The first president, Adams, made the statement, and I'd like to read this to you. He says, I have examined all as well as my narrow sphere.

And he's speaking now, by the way, of the Bible. I'm reading, let me go back and read this then. I have examined all, that is, all of scripture, as well as my narrow sphere, my straightened means, and my busy life would allow me.

And the result is that the Bible is the best book in the world. It contains more of my little philosophy than all the libraries I've seen. And such parts of it as I cannot reconcile to my little philosophy, I postpone for future investigation.

And then there was another president, Adams, as you know, and the second president, Adams, said this. I speak as a man of the world, come men of the world, and I say to you, search the scriptures. The Bible is the book of all others to be read at all ages and in all conditions of human life.

Not to be read once or twice or thrice through and then laid aside, but to be read in small portions of one or two chapters every day and never to be intermitted unless by some overruling necessity. That's the end of the quotation. Now, friends, let me hear you top that one.

He was the president of the United States. And the very interesting thing is, there were presidents back in those days that made our nation great. They didn't get us into foreign wars.

They were able to solve the problems of the streets. Somebody says, well, they weren't as complicated then as they are now. They were for that day, my friend.

May I say to you that it's quite interesting to see that not only England, but that the United States today, we've gotten away from the word of God. And the farther we get, the more complicated our problems become. And right now, there are certain men that are in positions of authority in this land that are making the statement that there's no solution to our problems.

That's the reason we're teaching the word of God in all of its entirety, because we believe there is only one solution. And frankly, friends, I think we better get back to it. If we don't, we're gone.

Will you listen to another president, President Woodrow Wilson? And President Wilson, by the way, was the son of a preacher. He was a great man. He was an idealist.

He was a post-millennialist. And I never met a post-millennialist in my life that was not an idealist and who was one who never dealt with reality. But that didn't keep him from being an outstanding man.

And after all, he was president of Princeton and then became president of the United States. When I was just a student in seminary, they sent me down to preach at the First Presbyterian Church in Augusta, Georgia. They were having, I think, a little difficulty in that church, and they felt like a seminary student couldn't hurt them very much, either good or bad, so they sent me down.

And I went down and preached, and I never shall forget, it was a hot day, and a hot day in the spring. And it can get hot down there, and very humid. And they had me preach in a robe.

That's one of the few times that I've ever preached in a robe. And come to think of it, I think it was the only time. And I found out that if you'd strip to the waist and put on the robe, and then when you got up in the pulpit, if you'd make gestures by lifting your arms up and down, you'd create a draft and you could keep cool.

And somebody said to me, they said they'd never seen a young preacher make so many gestures. And I kept cool, I know that. But I noticed when I was preaching that there was a plaque down on the first pew there to my left.

I couldn't wait till after the service is over to go down and read that. When I did go down, I got down on my hands and knees and read it. And you know what it said? It said that Woodrow Wilson, when he was a boy, sat in this pew with his mother when his father was pastor of that church.

So may I say to you, I know something of his background and his belief because I was educated in that same tradition. And I know it does lead to a glorious idealism, but it does forget the great truth of the scripture that man today is a sinner and he's totally depraved. The League of Nations was ideal just as I suppose that today the little affair they have going on in New York City could be called that.

But you see, it doesn't deal with human nature as it really is. Well, now let me quote from Woodrow Wilson about the Bible. He says, I would be afraid to go forward if I did not believe that there lies at the foundation of all our schooling and all our thought the incomparable and unimpeachable word of God.

Now my friend, Woodrow Wilson couldn't say that today. He could say that back in the teens, that is 1914, 15, 16, on through there. But he couldn't say that today.

And that may be one of the reasons we're in such desperate condition today. I would not want to be President of the United States. And friends, that's not sour grapes either.

I wouldn't have it if they offered it to me. And if anybody's thinking about running me, I trust you'll forget it, friends. I'm not going to run at all.

Now let me give you some other quotations today of great men concerning this book we're going to study, the word of God, the Bible. And it was Gregory the Great that made this statement. He says, it's a stream where the elephant may swim and the lamb may wade.

And when I read that, I thought that about all we'd be doing would be like a little child at the shore or on the beach of a vast sea. And we'd have our little bucket and spade and be playing there. But out before us, there'd be a vast ocean that we'll not be able even in five years to comprehend.

What a glorious thing is ahead of us, friends. Judge Hale years ago wrote to his son this statement, There is no book like the Bible for excellent learning, wisdom, and use. It is one of understanding in them who think or speak otherwise.

I wish we had more judges like that today. Now Thomas Jefferson was a deist. Thomas Jefferson, I think by the standards of those of us today that are conservative, I don't know whether we'd call him a Christian or not, but I certainly don't want to argue that point.

And I'm not sitting in judgment upon this great man, but I would like to quote what he had to say about the Bible. He says, I have always said and always will say that the studious perusal of the sacred volume will make better citizens, better fathers, and better husbands. That's something to think over today, in a day when citizens are burning down the cities in which we live and divorce is running rife today.

We're now almost, well, here in Southern California, divorce is equal to marriage is today. I'd like to give a few more quotations because I'm anxious to let you see that though the Bible may be in disrepute in many quarters today, and we'll look at that in time, but that this is the book that in the past that's brought greatness to this world and we today somehow or another are losing that greatness. Will you listen to what Dr. Samuel Johnson, the great literary critic and writer of England, this is what he says, I'm quoting him now, and this is a statement that he made in his last sickness to a young man who sat up with him during the night.

And here is his statement to that young man. Quote, Young man, attend to the advice of one who has possessed a certain degree of fame in the world and also will shortly appear before his maker. Read the Bible every day.

End of the quote. And I say to you, that's a tremendous statement, is it not? Now I'd like to quote Daniel Webster. I have read it through many times.

I now make a practice of going through it once a year. It is the book of all others for lawyers as well as divines. And I pity the man who cannot find in it a rich supply of thought and rules for conduct.

That's end of quotation of Daniel Webster. And he read the Bible through many times. You see, today the tendency is even among our conservative folk to stay in familiar areas, especially when the other is so unfamiliar.

In the Gospel of John, no one goes wrong there. Philippians, and many of us stay in prophecy. But there are others.

One final quotation, and that is Thomas Carlyle. He was that Scotch philosopher. I'm quoting, A noble book, all man's book.

It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending problem, man's destiny and God's ways with him here on earth. And all in such free-flowing outlines, grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity, in its epic melody and repose of reconciliation. My friend, we're going to be for the next five years talking about the Bible, not about the Bible.

We are going to see what the Bible has to say. May I say to you that today we're talking about it. And the difference will be when we get underway in Genesis, we'll not be talking about the Bible then, or attempting to defend it, but we will be attempting to teach the total Word of God.

I believe it with all my heart. And so as we begin this great venture going through the Bible, it's a safari through scripture. Well, I'm inviting you to ride the Bible bus.

And you can get on at any corner. That is, any day you tune in, you can begin. Because when we finish, we'll start right over again.

But we're on the way, and we'll stop at your corner. And if you want on today, we'll be glad to have you join. Somebody says, well, then, what is it that you're asking us to do to make this a meaningful and enjoyable experience to us? Well, first of all, let me say, listen to the broadcast.

Now, I recognize that many are not able to hear it every day. I know a doctor down in San Diego. He makes a point of going from one hospital to another at noon in order to hear it down there.

But he says sometimes he has an emergency and that he misses it. So he gets the notes and outlines. And of course, down in that area, he has an opportunity to hear it on another station, which he does, he tells me.

And then there's a salesman back in Indianapolis, Indiana. And he's a salesman that covers a lot of territory. He says he just drives off the side of the road generally.

But sometimes he's with a customer that's giving him a big order. Well, you don't expect him to run out and tune on his car radio to listen to the broadcast. Well, I don't expect him to.

I'll be very frank with you. I want him to get that good order because he's a real friend of this radio ministry. And so the second thing that we ask you to do to write in for the notes and outlines which we are supplying, that will enable you to fill in the days that you have to miss.

Now, I have letters from people that tell me if they never miss the broadcast. I was amazed at that because I thought that no one could hear it every day. You want to know the truth? I missed it some days.

I'll tell you how I missed it. I made the tapes, but I wasn't around to listen to them any place. Well, I'm sure there are many people like that.

So the second thing, write in and ask for the notes and outlines, and give the notes and outlines a little time to get to you, especially if you live in the Middle West or on the east side of the Mississippi River

because, actually, it takes several weeks now. Mail is very slow. Did you know, frankly, we found out that Wells Fargo with the Pony Express and with the old stagecoach got mail across this country quicker than the post office departments getting it today? And I don't know what's the matter, but that's the way it is, and we have to live with it.

And I trust that if we're a little late getting to you. And then if you were on our mailing list and for some reason got off of it and you shouldn't have been, we'd like very much to put you back on. Then the third thing, and this is that which is all important, this is the most important thing for you to do.

Read the portion of scripture we shall be studying beforehand, if possible, and my suggestion is that you read it again after we have finished it. You will recall that last time I read quotations from great man Daniel Webster, for instance. He read the Bible every day.

May I say to you, it's a good habit to get into. This is the word of God, and this is a discipline for you. May I be very candid with you? This is the best discipline I've ever had.

A young preacher came into me some time ago, and he said, Dr. McGee, I want to start this through the Bible program. It seems to have helped you, and he could see I needed help. And he said, what way do you think that I ought to do this, and what will it do for me and my church? I said, the first thing it'll do for you is it'll give you a discipline, because I said I've been a minister for many years, and I've discovered that I can become sloven and careless also and not study the word of God.

But if I have a radio program that every day this radio says to me, boy, you are on, and you have to study. And believe me, it's been the most marvelous discipline for this poor preacher that you can imagine. And it's a good discipline for you, my Christian friend, and your Christian life is to read the word of God.

And if you'll just read it, and it's not much to read each day, we're going to average one chapter when we get underway in our study. Now, the fourth thing, and this, of course, is not essential, but to us it is essential, tell others about the program and encourage them to tune in. We get literally hundreds of letters that tell us, the man I work with, or my neighbor, or my school chum, told me about your program, and we'll appreciate you telling your friends about the program.

Now, I would suggest, those of you who want to make a serious study, that you'll not only want the notes and outlines that we supply, but you'll need three books that are essential. I formally taught in a Bible institute, and in the classes, I had a question that I asked. And the question was, if you were wrecked on a South Pacific island, what three books would you want? And I got some very interesting answers.

One wag in the class, and I'll have to admit I had to pass him, he put down the three books that he would want would be the Bible and two copies of my book on Ruth, one to read and one to sell to the natives. Believe me, I had to pass that fellow for that answer, you can see, but that was not the answer I wanted. Actually, I asked the question like that because I'd said there are three books that are almost imperative and certainly essential for the study of the Word of God.

One of them is a concordance. A concordance is invaluable. And then the second, a Bible dictionary.

Now, I want to be practical here at the beginning. Somebody says, what concordance should you have? Well, there are three that are very good. Young's concordance and Strong's concordance and Cruden's concordance.

All three are good. And as a teacher of mine said, Young's concordance is for the young and Strong's concordance is for the strong, and Cruden's concordance is for the crude. Well, you take your pick, friends, but you do need a concordance and you'll find it helpful.

A Bible dictionary. What Bible dictionary do you recommend? Somebody says, well, the Davis Bible Dictionary is a good Bible dictionary, provided you don't get one that came out a few years ago. The old Davis Bible Dictionary is a good one.

Then they came out, a group of liberal editors got a hold of it, and believe me, it just didn't work out. Many reasons. It wasn't as scholarly as it should be.

I get a little weary today about the liberal telling me how intellectual he is and that we are an intellectual obscurantist, whatever that is. I don't think I'm that. But nevertheless, the Davis Bible Dictionary, at one edition, don't get it.

The last edition, I'm told, is good. I do not have the last one. I use the old one.

And then Unger's Bible Dictionary is one that you can recommend without any reservation at all. So that these are your Bible dictionaries and these are your concordances. And I would recommend that you have, somebody says, well, what is the third book? Well, I don't mean to mention the third book now.

This was number one. I hope you understood it was the Bible. And somebody said, well, what Bible do you recommend? Well, now I'm going to be talking about that probably next time.

And the Bible that we do recommend, that is, the version that we recommend. Now, today, I would like to talk to you about the Bible and the type of book that it is. The Bible is, in many ways, a most unusual book.

And it's a most unusual book in that it has a dual authorship. In other words, God is the author of the Bible. And in another sense, men are the authors of the Bible.

The Bible was written, actually, by about 40 authors over a period of approximately 1,500 years. Some of these men never even heard of the others. And there was no collusion of the 40.

Two or three of them could have gotten together, but the others could never have. And yet they have presented a book that has the most marvelous continuity of any book that has ever been written. And there is a collusion here, and that's the collusion of the Holy Spirit.

And when you say dual authorship, somebody says, you mean to tell me that the Holy Spirit is the author and that these men are the authors also. I mean exactly that. I mean that the Bible is a God-human book, a God-man book.

And in many senses, the Bible is very much like the Lord Jesus Christ himself. You see, he came to this earth and became incarnate. He was both God and man.

And John put it in this simple way, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And you know, you can almost say that about the Bible. The Bible became flesh and dwelt among us.

And it, on the divine side, is a book that we're going to talk about that and I hope I can get my foot in the door. There are four things on the divine side, on God's side, it's a God book. And that is revelation, inspiration, illumination, and interpretation.

I want to talk about those four. And by the way, somebody's saying this is getting to be rather complicated. May I say the notes that we have on guidelines for studying the Bible are available and they are the first ones that are being sent out.

If you'd like to have the full copy now, but these messages I'm giving are in print and will be sent out to those today that are listening, if you'd like to have them. Now, on the divine side, we want to talk about revelation, inspiration, illumination, and interpretation. Now, on the other side, the human side, and it's a very human book.

May I say it's written by man from all walks of life. There was the prince and the pauper. There was the very highly intellectual and then very simple man.

Actually, Dr. Luke writes almost classical Greek in a period when the Koinade Greek was popular. And did you know that his Greek is marvelous? But I have news for you, Simon Peter wrote some Greek also. He's not so good, if you want to know the truth.

But did you know that God used both of them? God, the Holy Spirit, used both of these men. And that has to do with inspiration. Now, that means that God was able to use these men without destroying their personality and he let them express exactly their thoughts, their feelings.

And you'll find they all did. And yet, through that method, the Spirit of God was able to overrule in such a way that God said exactly what he wanted to say. And that's the wonder of this book, the Bible.

That's the reason that it's a human book. It's like my Lord that walked down here and grew weary and sat down at a well and he talked with people down here and communicated with them. This is a book that communicates.

I want to talk a little about that, too, by the way, next time. I hear today that you've got to come down to the level of the hippie or the level of the group today that are immoral and that you have to enter into that. I don't agree with that at all.

This is a book that talks to man in all walks of life. And the thing that has thrilled us about this through the Bible program is this, that there is a professor in the University of Ohio that never misses one of these programs. There is another professor in a university in the South that encourages all of the faculty to listen to the program.

And did you know that there are men that are working right here in Los Angeles, right down here on the war? They don't speak very good English. In fact, there's some of them barely speak it. They understand it and they listen to the program.

One man has written in. He said, I don't write very well. I just don't quite, not able to express myself.

And all you'd have to do would be to read his letter to agree with him. And may I say to you, the college professor and the man that is not even have an eighth-grade education, they all get the message when this book speaks. And then they talk about the generation gap.

I'm amazed today that there are young people that are listening right south of us down at San Diego at a college right now. If you're listening to this program around the noon hour, there's a group down there that meet every day to listen to the program. And some argue about it, some disagree, but they listen.

And may I say to you, the Word of God communicates, friends. It'll get through to you. We have children that listen to it.

We hear from them. And then we have retired people. May I say to you, friends, the Bible knows nothing about a generation gap.

It speaks to mankind today. A Bible as it is, a man as they are. How important that is, it's a God book.

I hold in my hand right now a book that's supernatural. And in this book, God says 2,500 times, God said, the Lord has said, thus saith the Lord. He's made it very clear that he's speaking through this book.

And if you have a blood-tipped ear, you'll hear him, my friend. May I say to you, this is a God book. But it's a man book, a human book.

The book I have before me here, it's pretty well worn. To begin with, it's a very human book, if you want to know. I got it marked up here.

And it's a translation. It's not really the original at all. If it was the original, I couldn't read it.

It's put in a language that I can understand. And we're going to talk about some of these versions. I suppose we'll get around to that next time.

But the point I'm trying to make today, friends, is that this is a book that on one side is a God book. This is a book that can communicate a life to you. And that today that you can even become a child of God, begotten not by corruptible seed, but by incorruptible, the word of God that liveth and abideth forever.

And then on the other side, it's a very human book. It talks to you about your aches and pains and your groanings. And Paul says we that are in this body, we do groan.

And I'm at the age right now where I find out I do groan, friends. And I'm for being scriptural. I do a lot of groaning.

My wife tells me sometimes you ought not to groan. I said, I'm being scriptural. The Bible says that we groan in these bodies.

And I'm going to groan. This is a human book, friends. But it's a God book.

Yet there's no book to compare to it. Why in the world do you read these little old paperbacks, these silly things? I watched the other day a person over in the Hawaiian Islands sitting on a hotel, reading one of these dirty little filthy paperback books. And out before it was the gorgeous tropical scenery.

Why read these books when you got the Bible, friends? And it's a thriller. It's a thrilling story. By the way, if you're not on the Bible bus, get on right now.

Write in and ask for the notes and outlines. Let us hear from you. We'd like to take you along because right now in a few days we'll be beginning in the book of Genesis.

Now, I said last time that the Bible is a most unique book. No book to compare to it in many ways, but this way primarily. It is a book of dual authorship.

And what we mean by that is that there is the divine side and the human side of the Bible. On the divine side, this is God's book. He's communicated to man.

He's spoken here. And he's got through his entire word, so much so that if God had anything else to say that he hadn't said in the Bible, well, he's already said it. And if God spoke out of heaven right now, he'd just repeat himself because he said all that he wants to say to this generation.

And by the way, he didn't learn anything when he read the morning paper. And when man went to the moon, he didn't discover anything that God didn't already know when he gave us the word of God. And you know, friends, it doesn't look to me like man discovered very much up there either.

And it's a pretty expensive trip just to get a sack of rocks to bring back, by the way. And I'll be perfectly willing to go out here on the desert and get them a whole wagon load of rocks and sell them lots cheaper than that. And I think they're very much the same.

You see, it's the same God that created this universe that we are in today. May I say to you that that's a thrilling day in which to live, by the way, so that God has communicated with man. And that book is the Bible.

That's the divine side. But it's a human book. God used about 40 authors over a period of 1,500 years.

Each one spoke, expressing his own feelings and his own generation. He had his limitations. He made his mistake.

Poor old Moses made mistakes. But when Moses was writing the Pentateuch, somehow or another, there's no mistakes that got in there. The interesting thing is that I read in seminary many years ago a little book called *The Mistakes of Moses*.

I always thought that whoever that author was, that book ought to be called *The Mistake of the Author* because his mistake was writing on the mistakes of Moses. Now today, I'd like to develop these four subjects in reference to the Bible. That is, revelation, second, inspiration, and third, illumination, and fourth, interpretation.

Now, revelation means that God hath spoken and that God has communicated to man. Inspiration guarantees the revelation of God. And illumination has to do with the Spirit of God being the teacher and not this poor preacher here in Los Angeles.

If the Spirit of God does not communicate to you, I can't communicate to you, but the Spirit of God can. And since he wrote the Bible and we give it out, I find out he'll communicate. And that's the wonder of it.

That's the glory of it, friends. And then the fourth is interpretation, and here's where we all pull each other's hair. Really, the problem is not that the Bible teaches many, many things.

The problem is there are many, many people that are interpreting the Bible. Unfortunately, they all don't interpret it my way. I wish they did, but they don't, and we'll just have to go along with them and be patient with them because when we all get into his presence, there'll be perfect agreement then.

Now we see through a glass darkly, then face to face. I'll be changed, you'll be changed, and we both will be made right. Someone has said there's always three viewpoints, your viewpoint, my viewpoint, and the correct viewpoint.

We'll get the correct one someday. Now let's look at these. First of all, revelation.

And again, may I repeat it, God hath spoken. And 2,500 times we have in the Bible, thus saith the Lord. The Lord didn't want you to misunderstand that he had spoken, and you will find that in the first chapter of Hebrews, he made it very clear that God hath spoken.

Let me turn and read that. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world. Now, will you note here, first of all, revelation.

Wherever you'll find two persons endowed with a reasonable degree of intelligence who harbor the same feelings and desires, who are attracted to each other more or less, you will find a communication between them. Persons of like propensities, separated from each other, they delight in getting in touch with each other. Communication, we call it.

And they rejoice in receiving a communication from another. And this innate characteristic of the human heart explains the post office department, the telephone and the telegraph, friends write to friends, husband away from home writes to his wife, and the boy or girl at school, they write home, asking for money. And ever and anon, they send an epistle of a girl to a boy, and then the boy to the girl, and the sentence not so good there.

All of this is called communication. It's the expression of the heart. The scripture says, deep calls to deep.

You will recall the story of Helen Keller. I remember the thrill that came to me when I heard her story and read the account of it, of how this woman shut out from the world in so many ways, blindness, deafness, and no way to communicate it would seem. And then that way was opened up, and she could communicate probably better than many of us who can see and talk today.

And now, may I say on the basis of that, I'd like to ask you a reasonable and certainly an intelligent question. Isn't it therefore reasonable to conclude that God has communicated with His creatures to whom He's committed a certain degree of intelligence? Those He's created in His own likeness? May I say to you, if we did not have a revelation from God right now, I think that you could just wait there at your radio, and He'd be speaking to you because of the fact, my friend, we could expect God to speak to us. Now, I think that God has communicated more ways than through the scripture.

You'll notice that the writer to the Hebrews says that God in the Old Testament spoke through the prophets, and He now has spoken through Christ. And both the prophets in the Old Testament and the revelation of Christ in the New Testament both are in the word of God, of course, and that's the only way you'd ever know about the communication from either ones. But I think God communicated through creation.

Paul says that, that the invisible things are seen by the things that are made. And the heavens do declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. But I'm not interested in dealing with that.

I believe also that God has communicated with man through the human heart. Don't misunderstand me. Not through visions or anything like that.

But I believe that today God has communicated through the experiences that you and I have. I'm sure that many of us can look back on our lives and we can see the hand of God in our lives. But the thing that

we're concerned about here is that God has communicated to us through the Bible.

And that is His revelation. And this book has 66 books. And I have in my notes that we send out how you can get the Bible on one hand.

And if you have that, and I hope you do, if you don't know the books of the Bible, learn them like that. You put the Old Testament on the tips of your fingers and you put the New Testament down in the valleys between the fingers. And on the thumb, you just start out there and put the Pentateuch, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

Then go over to the finger, the index finger, and on that you put the historical books of the Bible, Joshua and so on. And then you come to the poetic books, the next finger, middle finger. And you begin there with the book of Job.

And then you put the prophetic books, major prophets, on the ring finger. And you begin with Isaiah. And then you put the minor prophets, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, and so on, on the little finger.

Now down between, between the thumb and the forefinger, put down there the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. Then you put the historical book of the New Testament, book of Acts. Then you put the epistles in the next valley.

And then in the last one, you put the prophetic book of Revelation. May I say to you that that's the way that God's spoken to us. And there is today an attack that's made upon the word of God.

I recognize that. Dr. Elmer G. Homringhausen, former dean of Princeton Theological Seminary, in his book Christianity in America Crisis, he's made this statement. Few intelligent Protestants can still hold to the idea that the Bible is an infallible book.

Some might still claim for the original copies of the Bible an infallible character. But this view only begs the question and makes such Christian apologetics more ridiculous in the eyes of sincere men. May I say that's a terrible indictment coming from a professor in a seminary.

But it was made, by the way. And then the seminary up in New York, Union Seminary, a professor there, he made the statement that no intelligent person could believe the Bible is the word of God. Well, I believe the Bible is the word of God.

And according to that, I guess that I would not be considered intelligent, according to these men. May I say they boast of the fact that they are humble. I wonder what kind of humbleness is that, that says everybody that does not agree with them is a fool, and they are the only intelligent people.

That's a dangerous position for anyone to take in any way. But the very interesting thing is there have been some very intelligent people that have believed the Bible. And there have been some that haven't been so intelligent, apparently, that have brought in, may I say, damnable heresies that are a curse to the world today and plague our society.

Let me give you this statement from Dr. Greg. He says, Aristotle's philosophy was the learning of the schoolman. It clustered the Bible.

It worshiped bones in the churches in an attempt to link them with the apostles. The 10th century was the darkest. But in the 20th century, Aristotle's philosophy, through Maimonides, Spinoza, Hegel, and Darwin,

worshiped bones in the universities and museums in an attempt to link them with the apes.

It has also given us Unitarianism through Emerson in America, Reformed Judaism through Moses Mendelssohn, and Bolshevism through Karl Marx. It is the doctrine of demons and seducing spirits. May I say to you, I like that statement very, very much.

May I also add that there have been men that have been intelligent, men that have believed the Bible. Years ago, B.B. Warfield, it is said of him that he probably had the most giant intellect of any man that America has ever produced. Would you like to know what he says? He says the Bible is the word of God in such a sense that whatever it says, God says.

I like that, my friend. And Bishop Hadley said there is more meaning in every word of Holy Writ than we shall ever get out of it. And I personally believe in what is known as the plenary verbal inspiration of the scripture.

That means that we believe that the Bible is an authoritative statement and that every word of it is the word of God to us and for us in this day in which we live. And may I say to you, that's very important for us to see today. The words are inspired.

I heard that little story several years ago of a girl who had taken music lessons, singing lessons from a very famous teacher. And she was giving her recital. And he came.

And after it was over with, why, she was anxious to know what he said. He didn't come back to congratulate her. And she said to a friend, what did he say? Well, he said that you sounded heavenly.

She just couldn't believe he said that. And so she asked again. She says, did he say I sang heavenly? He said, yes.

He said that. She said, well, I want to know exactly what he said. What did he really say? Give me the words that he said.

Well, if you really want to know the words, he said that was an unearthly noise. May I say to you, friends, an unearthly noise doesn't mean it sounds heavenly. And believe me that it's the words of scripture that are inspired.

And we need to recognize that. We need to keep that before us today. And I'd love to have time to develop that a great deal.

I want today to move on to this matter of inspiration. For inspiration guarantees the revelation of God. And that's exactly what this book says.

And two men, Paul writing to Timothy and Peter writing his last epistle, and 2 Timothy is Paul's last epistle, they had something pretty definite to say about the Bible. It's all scriptures given by inspiration of God. It's profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, instruction, and righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, truly furnished unto all good works.

That is 2 Timothy 3, 16 and 17. All scriptures given by inspiration. The word inspiration means it's God-breathed.

God said through these men as he said here through Paul exactly what he wanted to say. He hasn't anything else to add. And the way Peter expresses it, he says in 2 Peter 1, 21, for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Now, that's very important to see that these men were moved. They were, as it were, carried along by the Holy Spirit of God. It was Bishop Westcott.

He says the thoughts are wedded to words as necessarily as the soul is to the body. And Dr. Kuyper said you can as easily have music without notes or mathematics without figures as thoughts without words. It's not the thoughts inspired, it's the words that are inspired.

Satan was not inspired to tell a lie, but the Bible records he told a lie. It's the words that are inspired. And the Lord Jesus said it is written.

It's what the word of God said. And these men are giving out what God has to say. It's a perfectly human book, but it's an absolute God book.

Not any more human because it is a God book, and it's not any less being a God book because it's a human book. God used these human writers without destroying their free will, their expression and style. They were not fountain pens that he turned upside down and wrote with them.

They are expressing their thought. The gospels and the word of God present that which is the living word of God. And may I say that it follows from that in illumination that only the Spirit of God is the one that can teach us today.

That's what Bishop Hadley meant when he said, there's more meaning in every word of Holy Writ than we shall ever get out of it. And it was Dr. Robinson, pastor in Leyden, who reminded the pilgrims when they set out from Holland, he said this to them, the Lord has more truth yet to break forth from his holy word. Luther and Calvin were great shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not the whole counsel of God.

Be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written word of God. And that, my friend, is the thrill of going through the Bible like this. You know what? I've never been through it and I've been through it now a dozen times teaching it like this, one-year program, one and a half-year program, two-year program, two and a half-year program, and now a five-year program of going through the Bible.

And very candidly, every time something new breaks forth from the page because the Spirit of God must be our teacher, we're in for a wonderful treat if we'll just listen to that still small voice of the word of God as he speaks to us from the page of scripture. And he's wanting to speak to us. Now, interpretation has to do with the interpretation that you and I make.

That's the human side, and that's the reason there are Methodists and Baptists and Presbyterians and Vernon McGees because we all have our interpretations. And may I say to you, some of us are evidently wrong. The Bible doesn't teach everything or doesn't teach two things.

It teaches just one thing, and that has to do with our interpretation. There are certain rules that we'll follow and we'll call attention to them as we go along. No scripture should be interpreted by itself.

I think that is a very important thing. I do not think any of us have any right just to lift out one verse and build a doctrine on that verse. And no doctrine should ever be built on an uncertain text of scripture or a group of them, any solid teaching.

And it was Dr. Westcott and Hoyt who said that actually in our translation only one word in ninety was ever involved in any question at all and none regarded doctrine, none regarding that which is vital. You and I can be sure today that the text we have is a reliable text. But there are many versions, and that's confusing today.

And may I say this to you. I have all the versions. Every time a new one comes out, I put it in my library.

I'd look at them generally, but I still stick with the authorized version. I personally have before me right now the old Schofield reference Bible. I find it very helpful.

I have the new Schofield, but I have difficulty finding my way around in it. It's so new. But may I say to you that the authorized version is still a good version.

And many of these others are helpful to turn to. Someone asked me if I thought even Living Letters was a good translation. I think it's a marvelous interpretation, but not a translation.

And there are some very fine versions today, but most of them are clouded with the personal viewpoint of the one who gave them to us. Now, this gives us something of the background of the book that we are going to look at. And I think that probably we ought to look at the definition of the Bible in closing.

This book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy.

It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It's a traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, the Christian's charter. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, the gates of hell disclosed.

Christ is its grand object. Our good is its design and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, guide the feet, read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully.

It's a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It's given you in life. It'll be opened in the judgment, will be remembered forever.

It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents. Very candidly, we are dealing with a book today that's under attack as no book has ever been under attack. Dr. McGiffert years ago made this statement.

He was a great professor, by the way, of history, but he took this viewpoint. And I'm quoting him now. And there are probably few Protestant theologians today who treat the early chapters of Genesis as sober history.

And may I say to you, these statements like that could be multiplied ad infinitum. For instance, Dr. C.H. Dodd, he said long ago, it became clear that in claiming for the Bible accuracy and matters of science and history, its apologists had chosen a hopeless position to defend. The harm has been done to the general conscience by allowing the outworn morality of parts of the Old Testament to stand as authoritative

declarations.

Now, may I say to you, these are very serious attacks and they can be multiplied today. And even in some of our so-called conservative seminaries today, some very strange things are being said. In Vassar College, for instance, and I was interested in noting this, that Mary McCarthy, writing on the Vassar Girl, back some time ago in Holiday Magazine, she said that the curriculum of the college was as it had always been, with just one exception, and the curriculum went something like this.

The English language, its literature, other modern languages, the ancient classics, and so on and so on. And then finally it says, and I'm reading now, last and most important of all, the daily systematic reading and study of the Holy Scriptures as the only and all-sufficient rule of Christian faith and practice. And Mary McCarthy said, the curriculum, except for the last proviso, remains the basis of the Vassar education.

In other words, the Bible has been kicked out lock, stock, and barrel. Now, let me put over against this some very interesting statements because of the fact that we are living right now in a day when the divisions among so-called Christians just doesn't happen to be according to denominational lines. And it was as far back as 1902 that a cabinet minister in Great Britain made this statement, and I'm quoting him, the old denominational barriers are growing shadowy and unreal.

The real division that is coming is between those who believe that the Bible is the word of God and those who do not. And that's where we are today, by the way. And I personally resent the statement that some of these men make that no intelligent person today believes the Bible and that no intelligent person could believe the Bible.

Let me quote from Gladstone, probably one of the greatest legal minds Great Britain ever produced, and they've had some giants, by the way. Here is what he says, and I'm quoting him now. Talk about the questions of the day.

There is but one question, and that's the gospel that can and will correct everything. I'm glad to say that about all the men at the top in Great Britain are Christians. Now, that was back in 1902.

And may I inject something else? That may be back of Great Britain's present problems. Now, I'm reading again from Gladstone. I have been in public position 58 years, all but 11 of them in the cabinet of the British government.

And during those 47 years, I have been associated with 60 of the masterminds of the century. And all but 5 of the 60 were Christians. May I say to you that's a tremendous statement.

I personally think that part of the problem we're having in the world today is that we have too few Christians at the top, and therefore we have too few who know the most important book in the world, which happens to be still the Word of God itself. Now, not only is that true of this man Gladstone, but may I say that other great men down through the history of the world have taken that position. Michael Faraday.

And I suppose that he was the greatest scientific experimenter the world has ever seen. And there's a very few men that enter a laboratory today and pour acid in a test tube or look through a microscope that don't have to pay tribute to this man here. He was a genius.

And this is what he said. But why will people go astray when they have this blessed book of God to guide them? And then Sir Isaac Newton, he was born way back yonder and he was a scientist, and he made this

statement. He says, if the Bible is true, the time will come when men shall travel 50 miles an hour and Voltaire, the skeptic in that day, answered like this.

Poor Isaac, he was in his dotage when he made that prophecy. It only shows what Bible study will do to an otherwise scientific mind. May I say, we can see today what it did do.

It proved that Voltaire was very much mistaken and proved to be very much a fool in many respects in his attack upon the Bible, and that Sir Isaac Newton probably knew something that he did not know. May I say to you, these are remarkable statements that we have given to you here. And I could multiply these and bring in today many that believe the Bible.

Now, that leads me to say a word concerning the first of these four very important subjects that relate to the Bible. Revelation means God hath spoken, and thus saith the Lord occurs over 2,500 times in the scripture. And the scripture does claim that it is plenary verbally inspired of God.

Now, that brings me to the second great subject, which is inspiration. And inspiration guarantees the revelation that we have from God. It was not too many years ago that Great Britain bought Codex Sinaiticus from the Russian government for the British Museum.

And that was back, by the way, in 1933. And they paid at that time 100,000 pounds. That's half a million dollars to get that document.

And it's interesting, the Communists have said that religion is the opiate of the people. And they were pretty good at peddling dope themselves, weren't they? They got quite a price for that which they considered nothing in the world but dope and worthless. Well, anyway, this is what Sir George Kenyon, who was the late director and principal librarian of the British Museum, and here was the statement he made, and I'm quoting, "...thanks to these manuscripts, the ordinary reader of the Bible may feel comfortable about the soundness of the text, apart from a few unimportant verbal alterations natural in books transcribed by hand, the New Testament, we now feel assured, has come down intact." May I say to you, that was one of the most important discoveries that was ever made.

You can be sure today that we have that which is as close to the autographs as anything possibly can be. And not only that, inspiration still guarantees the revelation that we have.

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