



***FAST  
START  
IN  
CHRISTIAN  
LIVING***

**A 12-LESSON BIBLE STUDY FOR  
NEW BELIEVERS ON THE BASIC TEACHINGS  
OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH**

**DR. RICHARD BOOKER**

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*Fast Start in Christian Living*

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In ministry for over thirty years, Richard traveled extensively for fifteen years teaching in churches and at conferences. He and his wife, Peggy, lead yearly tour groups to Israel where, for eighteen years, Richard was a speaker at the International Christian Celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. This gathering is attended by 5,000 Christians from 100 nations.

Dr. Richard and Peggy Booker founded the Institute for Hebraic-Christian Studies (IHCS) in 1997 as a ministry to educate Christians in the Hebraic culture and background of the Bible, build relationships between Christians and Jews, and give comfort and support to the people of Israel. Through this ministry, they have conducted a monthly celebration event in Houston, a formal school on the Biblical Hebraic roots of Christianity, and work with the Jewish community and the government of Israel to stand against anti-Semitism and give comfort and support to the people of Israel. Their tireless work on behalf of Christians and Jews has been recognized around the world.

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## INTRODUCTION

When someone desires to build a house, they must make sure they have a good foundation. The foundation is the most important part of the house. If it is weak or cracked, it will not support the house.

The house may have beautiful doors and windows, straight walls, and expensive roof, but if it does not have a firm foundation, the house will easily be shaken.

### **A Spiritual Foundation**

As a believer, you are the spiritual house of God (I Pet. 2:5). He desires to build you into a strong person of God so that you can stand firm in your Christian faith.

Yet too often, believers have a weak or cracked spiritual foundation. They are easily shaken when the enemies of their soul blow against them.

This is why it is necessary for Christians to have a strong biblical and spiritual foundation. They can have beautiful spiritual doors and windows, straight spiritual walls, and an expensive spiritual roof, but if they do not have a solid spiritual foundation, they will forever be unsettled in their walk with God.

### **Building Your Foundation**

The purpose of *Fast Start in Christian Living* is to help you lay a strong spiritual foundation for your life. You will accomplish this by learning the basic teachings of the Christian faith in a simple, systematic manner.

*Fast Start in Christian Living* is unique in the way the information is organized.

#### 1. Easy-to-Understand

The information is presented in a question and answer format. This is one of the oldest and most effective ways to communicate as it makes the information easy-to-understand regardless of your level of education.

The workbook is divided into twelve basic lessons with five important questions for each lesson making a total of sixty questions.

#### 2. Speed-Learning

In our fast paced world, it is important for you to be able to learn as much as possible in a very short period of time. The information is presented in a way that allows for speed-learning.

Each question is answered twice on one page. The first answer is a short statement found in a gray-screened box which immediately follows the question. You can read this quick answer in a few seconds. A more detailed answer follows and is limited to the one page which you can read in a few minutes.

#### 3. Personal Study Guides

You can more easily understand and retain information when you review it. To assist you, a Personal Study Guide is included at the end of each lesson. You can complete the Personal Study Guide by writing your responses in the spaces provided.

May God bless you as you lay this strong foundation of His word in your life.

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## LESSON 1 – KNOWING THE BIBLE

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### 1. WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The Bible is the written revelation of God to mankind. He gave it to us so that we might know who He is, what He is like and how to walk in fellowship with Him.

#### God's Holy Word

The Bible claims to be the Word of God.

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

#### God's Word Revealed

When it was time for God to give us the Bible, He chose certain men to write down, guided by His inspiration, the thoughts and words He wanted to communicate.

*Above all you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along (inspired) by the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 1: 20-21 NIV)*

#### The Focus of God's Word

Although the Bible comments on many different aspects of life, it is primarily a book about our relationship with God. This relationship with God is made possible through faith in Jesus Christ as one's personal Lord and Savior.

*...you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (2 Tim. 3: 15 NIV)*

#### The Integrity of God's Word

Down through history people have tried to destroy God's Word because they did not like its message. But God has preserved it so future generations could read it for themselves.

*The grass withers, the flower fades. But the word of our God stands forever. (Is. 40: 8)*

*Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away. (Matt. 24: 35 NIV)*

#### Studying God's Word

Because the Bible is God's Word, He expects us to read and study it for ourselves. And He promises to help us understand it.

*...meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. (Josh. 1:8 NIV)*

*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things... (John 14:26)*

#### Keys to Effective Study

There are two keys to effective Bible study. The first key is that your Bible study must be systematic. You must have an orderly routine that you follow regularly.

The second key to effective Bible study is that you must be consistent. You should read your Bible at least fifteen minutes a day and then study the Bible in more depth at other times. Your objective is to read the entire Bible each year, year after year.



## LESSON 1 – KNOWING THE BIBLE

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### 2. WHAT IS THE STORY OF THE BIBLE?

The basic story of the Bible is about a loving creator God who desires fellowship with us. He has made this possible through the innocent sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins. When we commit our lives to Jesus Christ, we enter into a covenant with God with the promise of eternal life with Him.

#### God Loves Us

God loves us, but our sins separate us from Him.

*And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him. (1 John 4: 16)*

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Rom. 3: 23)*

*For the wages of sin is death ... (Rom. 6: 23)*

#### God's Love in Jesus Christ

Because God loves us, He has made a way for us to be reconciled to Him. He prepared a body and came to earth in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, a Jew by birth.

*But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:8)*

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3: 1.6)*

*God was in Christ reconciling the world to*

*Himself, not counting their sins against them. (2 Cor. 5: 19)*

#### God's Covenant of Love

Because Jesus never sinned, death couldn't hold Him in the grave. He was resurrected three days later and ascended to heaven. By accepting His death on our behalf, we can have our sins forgiven, be declared righteous and enter into a glorious covenant relationship with God.

*Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Heb. 13:20 - 21)*

#### Entering the Covenant

The Bible says that Jesus is knocking at the door of every human heart. He desires that all will enter into blood covenant with Him by accepting His death on their behalf. This is His covenant of love, and He makes it available to all of us.

When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, He sends His Spirit to live in you. The Holy Spirit joins your own human spirit to God and bears witness to it that you have become a child of God.

You no longer are afraid of God in the negative sense of the word. You have become His beloved child.

*For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, Abba Father. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. (Rom. 8: 15-16)*

## LESSON 1 – KNOWING THE BIBLE

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### 3. HOW IS THE OLD TESTAMENT ORGANIZED?

The Bible consists of sixty-six books put under one cover. It is divided into two divisions. The first division is called the Old Testament, or Covenant. It contains thirty-nine books. The second division is called the New testament, or Covenant. It contains twenty-seven books.

The Old Testament is traditionally divided into four sections.

#### **The Law**

The first five books are referred to as the Law of Moses because Moses wrote the books in this section. The major portion tells about God giving His laws to Moses and the Hebrew people.

The Law includes the books of Genesis through Deuteronomy. They tell a continuous story covering the period of time in man's history from about 4000 to 1451 BC.

#### **Historical Books**

The historical books include the next twelve books of the Bible (Joshua through Esther). They also tell a continuous story beginning with Joshua leading the Hebrews into the land, their time in the land, their captivity out of the land and finally their restoration to the land. This covers a 1000-year period from about 1451-400 BC.

#### **The Books of Poetry**

The next five books in the Bible are the books of Poetry. They are largely written in poetic style.

The books of poetry include all the books from Job through the Song of Solomon. They do not tell a continuous story, nor do they cover a specific period of time.

#### **The Prophets**

The last seventeen books in the Old Testament are the books of the prophets.

A prophet is one who speaks for God. God raised up men to speak His words to the people and also to point them toward the future when the Messiah (Christ) would come. Each prophet uniquely revealed something about the coming Messiah Savior. When taken as a whole, they form a complete picture of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The prophet books are divided into two divisions. These are the Major Prophets and the Minor Prophets. This classification is based on the length of the books and not their value.

The Major Prophets are the five longer books consisting of Isaiah through Daniel. The twelve Minor Prophets consist of the books from Hosea through Malachi.

The prophetic books do not form a chronological historical narrative. Therefore, it is important to determine the time in which each prophet lived and to relate the historical setting to the events recorded in the historical books.

It is wise to begin reading the Bible at the book of Genesis and keep reading until you have read through the entire Bible. The best way to do this is to read three chapters a day for fifteen minutes each day of the week.

## LESSON 1 – KNOWING THE BIBLE

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### 4. HOW IS THE NEW TESTAMENT ORGANIZED?

We have traditionally divided the New Testament into four sections. These are: The Gospels, Church History, The Epistles and Prophecy.

#### The Gospels

The word "gospel" means good news. The good news is that God has entered into an everlasting covenant for us and with us through the blood of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel books are the first four books in the New Testament. These are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They tell about the life of Jesus with each writer giving us a unique but harmonious story.

As we read the Gospels, we realize that each Gospel writer is presenting a slightly different view of Jesus, depending on to whom he is writing. But when we view all four Gospels together, we are able to see the complete portrait of Jesus God wants us to have.

#### Church History

The next section of the New Testament tells about the early spread of Christianity. This is why we call it church history. Luke wrote this for us in the books of Acts.

Jesus told His followers to spread the Gospel throughout the whole world, beginning at Jerusalem. The books of Acts tell how this happened.

One of the most important characters in the

book of Acts is a man named Saul. He became a follower of Jesus and changed his name to Paul.

God used Paul to write many of the New Testament letters and spread the Christian message to Europe, Asia, Rome, and through Rome, to the world.

#### The Epistles (Letters)

The next and largest section of the New Testament contains the epistles. These are twenty-one letters written by Paul, James, Peter, John and Jude. They are called epistles because of their formal style.

Paul wrote thirteen of these epistles and possibly also the book of Hebrews. The main purpose of these letters is to properly interpret the gospel to believers while showing how to apply it to everyday life situations.

Paul's letters were written to a specific group of persons and usually addressed one particular problem. The other letters were written to a larger, more general audience and cover a variety of subjects. They are usually set apart from Paul's letters and referred to as general epistles.

#### Prophecy

The last section of the New Testament is concerned with prophecy. It contains one book called Revelation.

John wrote the book primarily to relate his vision of Jesus in all His glory and to tell us about future events that would transpire at the end of our present age before Jesus returns to earth. He concludes his book with a view of life on earth with Jesus ruling as King, and the new heaven and new earth. This is a difficult book to understand without a good knowledge of the whole Bible.

## LESSON 1 – KNOWING THE BIBLE

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### 5. HOW DOES STUDYING THE BIBLE HELP ME?

Studying the Bible will help you:

Become a Strong Christian  
Be Cleansed of Sin  
Bear Spiritual Fruit  
Learn How to Pray  
Know God's Will

#### Becoming a Strong Christian

Studying the Bible will help you become a strong Christian.

*As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby. (1 Pet. 2:2)*

In order for little babies to be strong and healthy, they must drink their milk. There is no substitute for Mother's milk. Babies must have their milk everyday to grow, and Mother's have a regular feeding program for them.

It is the same way with Christians. The Bible is your spiritual milk. You must feed on it to grow and mature as a Christian.

#### Being Cleansed Of Sin

Studying the Bible will cleanse you of sin.

*Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against You. (Ps. 119: 11)*

God's Word cleanses you from sin as you allow Him to apply it to the spiritual dirt in your life. It washes you spiritually as the Holy Spirit refreshes your soul, removing the unclean from your life.

#### Bearing Spiritual Fruit

Studying the Bible will help you bear spiritual fruit.

*I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)*

You cannot produce the fruit of God's life yourself. God must do it for you. This spiritual fruit is produced in you as you study God's word.

#### Learning How to Pray

Studying the Bible will help you learn how to pray.

Jesus said:

*If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. (John 15:7)*

God has a plan for your life. As you seek Him through prayer, He will reveal His plan to you and guide you each step of the way.

#### Knowing God's Will

Studying the Bible will help you know God's will for your life.

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (Ps. 119: 105)*

God has given us principles in the Bible to help guide our lives. Perhaps 90% of all the guidance you will ever need from God is found in these principles. God's word will guide you and help you make good decisions. But only if you know what it says and will apply it to your life.

**LESSON 1 – KNOWING THE BIBLE**

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**PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE**

1. Psalm 119 tells the many benefits of God’s word for your life. The writer uses various expressions to refer to God's word such as law, testimonies, ordinances, commandments, statutes, Read the entire Psalm and list below six ways God's word can help you.

A.Verse \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B.Verse \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

C.Verse \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

D.Verse \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
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E.Verse \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

F.Verse \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. How can you apply what you have learned in this lesson to your life?

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