

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

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Activated Basic Course 3 • The Word of God

A COMPASS FOR LIFE'S JOURNEY

The guidebook for life

The Bible and You

Studying God's Word

A Soldier's Great Faith

A miraculous healing

The Future Foretold

Jesus' Second Coming





ACTIVATED

ACTIVATED BASIC COURSE 3 • THE WORD OF GOD

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

A COMPASS FOR LIFE'S JOURNEY

The Bible covers God's revelation about Himself, His love for humanity, the means of salvation, and the relationship He wishes to have with humankind. It also contains instruction on how to live in a manner that is pleasing to Him, which is the foundation for a happy, fulfilling, and productive life in harmony with God and others.

God's Word includes practical instruction and principles which serve as the compass of our life and help us face our daily challenges. It conveys principles which guide us in our interaction with others and our decision-making, helping us to know the difference between right and wrong. It sets the tone for our moral standard, our ethics, our attitudes about life, love, the world, the environment, and relationships.

Though the Bible doesn't specifically deal with every possible situation that a person may face, it reveals the principles needed to navigate the complexities of life in a manner that is pleasing to God. These spiritual principles are meant to serve as a compass throughout the journey that is our life. They help us to face each challenge with the confidence that we can make good and wise decisions, and we can develop proper attitudes about life and others. They show us how to respond when we face obstacles or conflict. They help us to know what direction to take at every crossroad.

Being connected to God—the source of life—and being aware of the truth of His presence, the words of guidance He has given, and the marvel of being able to communicate with Him, gives us the ability to live our lives in relationship with Him. We hope that this edition of the Activated Basic Course will encourage you to take time every day to study God's Word.

For more information on *Activated*, visit our website or write to us.

Website: activated.org
Email: activated@activated.org

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NAVIGATING LIFE

THE BIBLE IS THE MOST MARVELOUS BOOK IN THE WORLD. It not only tells us where we're going, but also how we got here, why we're here, how to survive and be happy while here, and how to have love, joy, and peace forever.

In the Bible you can find drama, romance, poetry, prophecy, history, mystery, and more. But most important, the Bible contains the very Spirit and life of God Himself (John 6:63). As you read the Bible you will find that it is an amazing and inexhaustible source of wisdom and knowledge, out of which you will constantly find treasures new and old (Matthew 13:52).

And the most wonderful thing about the Bible is that through its words we can get to know its author, for the Bible is God's great love letter to us. Its life-giving words make it the greatest book in the world, with the only author who can guarantee life and love and eternal life by believing in its main character, the One who loved us so much that He gave His own life to save us—Jesus Christ, the Son of God!

SOUL FOOD

The Bible tells us that like newborn infants desire to be fed, we should desire the pure milk of God's Word, so we may grow thereby (1 Peter 2:2). The prophet Jeremiah said, "Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jeremiah 15:16 NKJV). If you sincerely pray, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things from Your Word" (Psalm 119:18), you won't be disappointed.

In Luke, chapter 10, we read the story of Mary and Martha. When Jesus came to visit, Mary "sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word," but Martha was so busy trying to be a good hostess that she didn't have time to listen to Him. So Jesus gently told her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41-42). What is the "good portion" that Mary chose? She sat at Jesus' feet and listened to His words.

"But," you say, "I've got so much work and so many other things to do. How am I ever going to find time to read the Word every day?" Trust that as you put the Word of God first, the Lord will always help you find the time to take care of those other things. When you see the difference it makes in your life, you'll wonder how you ever got by without it! ■



BIBLE INTAKE

BY PETER AMSTERDAM

CHRISTIANS WHO DESIRE A FLOURISHING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD and are interested in spiritual growth recognize that spending time taking in and absorbing God's Word is of utmost importance. It is within the pages of the Bible that we learn about God and His love for humanity, about Jesus and His message, and how to live in harmony with God and our fellow human beings.

God is the Creator, and He wants to be in relationship with His creation. In order to make that possible, He has revealed Himself to us through the Bible. In it, He tells of His love for us and of the actions He has taken to make it possible for us, as imperfect and finite beings, to be in relationship with Him. The more we abide in His Word, the more we understand how to live our lives in accordance with His will, and in a manner that reflects Him and His love, especially in our interactions with others.

Setting aside time daily to read the Bible provides the opportunity to connect with God each day. It opens us up to letting Him speak to us through what we read, to His instruction and guidance, to His help through life's problems and difficulties. Regular reading of God's written words to us reminds us of the moral code which we are meant to fashion our lives around and provides us with guidance when we are faced with decisions.

As we abide in His Word, we become more and more aware of the value He places on each individual, and the love and compassion He has for every human being. As we begin to absorb the truth contained within these pages and as we apply them to our daily living, we begin to anchor our lives on the foundation of the truth of God and we seek to pattern our lives after the life and teachings of Jesus.

Each day we are flooded with a barrage of input from a wide variety of delivery systems, which influences us in one way or another. Taking time daily to read what God has said to us provides a way to navigate through the maelstrom of information and input that we are faced with. It enhances our spiritual ability to discern truth and



falsehood. It makes it easier to keep our hearts centered on those things which are important to living lives of inner peace and in alignment with God and His will. It helps us to endure and overcome all that life brings our way.

Take the time to commune deeply with God through His Word. It will change your life.

PETER AMSTERDAM AND HIS WIFE, MARIA FONTAINE, ARE DIRECTORS OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL, A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF FAITH. ■



MEETING MY BEST FRIEND

BY KEITH PHILLIPS

I WAS 21 WHEN I READ THE BIBLE FOR THE FIRST TIME. Someone had suggested I read the Gospel of John first, but I knew so little about the Bible at the time that I didn't understand the Gospels were four separate accounts of Jesus' life and ministry. So I started at what seemed the more logical place, at the beginning of the New Testament with the Gospel of Matthew.

By the time I got to the Gospel of John, I was fascinated with Jesus. He had the perfect answer to every question and always knew exactly what to do. But more than that, He seemed to understand me and know exactly what I needed. I realized that His words are powerful and alive, He is alive!

His words reached across nearly 2,000 years and touched me in a way I had never experienced before. When I finally came to John 15:15—"I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you"—I felt He was speaking directly to me. Jesus called me His friend! I got so excited I couldn't sit still. I wanted to tell the whole world.

I had prayed to receive Him as my Savior a few months before, but nothing much changed until I began reading His words with an open, receptive heart. His words are powerful and alive and, best of all, personal. I discovered that Jesus still speaks directly and personally to the hearts of His followers today through His Word and provides guidance for our lives.

KEITH PHILLIPS WAS *ACTIVATED*'S EDITOR-IN-CHIEF FOR 14 YEARS FROM 1999 TO 2013. HE AND HIS WIFE CARYN NOW WORK WITH THE HOMELESS IN THE USA. ■

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

THE WORD BIBLE IS DERIVED FROM THE GREEK WORD BIBLION, meaning “book,” but it is far more than a mere book. It is “the Word of God” and the foundation of Christian faith and living. It reveals God to us, it tells us of God’s basic plan for humankind, and it contains unparalleled truth and instruction. Its words are spirit and life (John 6:63). By them we are able to partake of the divine nature—to become more godly, more like Jesus (2 Peter 1:4).

The Bible is actually a collection of books—66 in all—which were written by about 40 people under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Bible tells us that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16 NKJV).

The Bible contains two major sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. (Testament in this case means “covenant” or “contract,” so the Old and New Testaments can be thought of as the old and new binding agreements between God and man.) The dates that some of the Old Testament’s 39 books were first recorded is uncertain, but scholars generally agree that they were written over a period of about 1,000 years, from the fourteenth to the fourth century BC.

The Old Testament prepared the way for the New, which was ushered in with Jesus’ coming. The 27 books of the New Testament were written within the first

century AD in Greek. They tell of Jesus’ life and ministry and the growth of the early church, and they present the basics of Christian faith.

In the Old Testament covenant God promised to bless the Israelites if they would worship Him only and be ruled by His law—which He gave through Moses around 1300 BC. Over 600 years before Jesus was born, the prophet Jeremiah foresaw a day when God would make a new covenant with His people. Under this new covenant, God would write His laws on people’s hearts rather than on tablets of stone (Jeremiah 31:31–34). Jesus said



He was the fulfillment of the old covenant even as he ushered in a new one (Matthew 5:17).

The New Testament contains five narrative books—the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. The Gospels deal with the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The book of Acts tells of some of the major happenings of the early church over the next 30 years and is a sort of sequel to the Gospels.

Twenty-one letters, or epistles, follow the Gospels and Acts. Thirteen of these letters were clearly written by the apostle Paul, while the remaining eight were written by other apostles or other people closely associated with the apostles. In the last book in the New Testament, Revelation, the apostle John recounts prophetic visions of Jesus' Second Coming.

The first mention in the Bible of anyone writing anything down is when God told Moses to “write this for a memorial in the book” (Exodus 17:14). The stories of the patriarchs found in Genesis had been passed from generation to generation by word of mouth before this. The messages of the prophets were usually delivered orally before they were written.

Narratives of the life and ministry of Jesus were repeated orally for years before they were written down. Many ancient fragments of early biblical documents, some dating to the second century AD, have been recovered—including multiple copies of some portions. The Bible translations we have today are based on those copies. ■

READING THE BIBLE DAILY

One of the very best habits you can ever form is that of spending a little time each day reading and studying the Bible and Bible-based Christian literature. Start by devoting 15 minutes a day, and then increase it to 30 minutes or more as time goes on. As you read God's Word and try to follow it, your life will become deeper, you'll have more peace of mind, and you'll have more love for and understanding of others. It doesn't all happen in one day, but it does happen.

Having an ongoing reading project—reading through all four Gospels or the New Testament or the book of Psalms, for example—will help you get the most out of the time you dedicate each day to reading God's Word.

When reading through the Bible, pray for the Holy Spirit to help you understand what you read, but don't worry if you don't understand everything the first time you read it; no one does. Keep at it. The more you read the Bible, the more you will understand, and often when going back to reread a certain passage, you'll find new meanings and “treasures” that you hadn't noticed before.





THE FOUR GOSPELS

BY PETER AMSTERDAM

THE GOSPELS WERE WRITTEN A FEW DECADES AFTER THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST BY BELIEVERS OF THAT DAY.

Thanks to their accounts of Jesus' story, His life, His words, His actions, and His promise of salvation have been preserved and shared over and over throughout the centuries. Two thousand years later, we continue to read and study the same gospels as did the first readers.

Historians date the writing of the first three gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—between AD 45 and 69, and the last one, John, at about AD 90. While no one knows for certain, the Gospel of Mark is generally considered to be the first gospel written, with Matthew and Luke being written later, and the Gospel of John being written decades after the other three.

The focus of the gospel writers wasn't to provide a detailed account of Jesus' life. Rather than presenting Jesus' actions in detail, these are often summarized in phrases such as "He healed them all" (Luke 4:40), or "He traveled through all the towns and villages teaching and preaching" (Mark 1:38–39). John wrote at the end of his gospel that there were many other things Jesus did that weren't included in his gospel (John 20:30–31).

The gospel writers only described those parts of Jesus' life which they felt would best inform the readers who Jesus was, what He preached, and what it all meant in terms of His death and resurrection and our salvation. The main purpose was to share the good news, to call

others to faith in Jesus, and to provide a means of teaching new believers about Him and the message He preached, so that they could in turn share it with others.

Prior to the writing of the gospels, much of the content contained in them would have been circulated orally. There were apparently also some written accounts of things Jesus said and did, as evidenced by what Luke wrote at the beginning of his gospel:

“Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught” (Luke 1:1–4 NIV).

It became important for the information about Jesus and His teachings to be put into written form

at that time for two reasons: One was that the gospel had been spread throughout much of the vast Roman Empire of the day. This meant it was no longer possible for the apostles and other early believers to travel to the remote corners of the empire to personally share what they had learned at Jesus’ feet. The other reason was that the original eyewitnesses were getting older, and some of them were dying. The story of Jesus, His life, and teachings needed to be written in order to be preserved and shared beyond the capabilities of the people who were delivering it orally.

Within the first half of the second century, perhaps within a decade or two of the writing of John’s gospel, the four gospels began to be circulated together. During this same period, there was also another collection of writings which were circulating among the churches—the body of Paul’s letters, referred to as epistles. In time, Acts became the connector between the gospels and Paul’s letters, which when combined with the other epistles eventually became the New Testament. ■



POINTS TO PONDER TREASURES NEW AND OLD

Many books in my library are now behind and beneath me. They were good in their way once, and so were the clothes I wore when I was ten years old; but I have outgrown them. Nobody ever outgrows Scripture; the book widens and deepens with our years.

—*Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892), British preacher and writer*

I have found in the Bible words for my inmost thoughts, songs for my joy, utterances for my hidden griefs, and pleadings for my shame and feebleness.

—*Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834), British poet*

The Bible is a rock of diamonds, a chain of pearls, the sword of the Spirit; a chart by which the Christian sails to eternity; the map by which he daily walks; the sundial by which he sets his life; the balance in which he weighs his actions.—*Thomas Watson (c.1620–1686), English preacher and author*

All human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming more and more strongly the truth contained in the Sacred Scriptures.

—*Sir William Herschel (1738–1822), British astronomer*

We must make a great difference between God’s Word and the word of man. A man’s word is a little sound, that flies into the air, and soon vanishes; but the Word of God is greater than heaven and earth, yea, greater than death and hell, for it forms part of the power of God, and endures everlastingly.

—*Martin Luther (1483–1546), German reformer*



BY JASON RAE AND
SHANNON SHAYLER

HOW WILL READING GOD'S WORD MAKE YOUR LIFE BETTER?

Truth and freedom. It seems that everywhere you look today, someone is marketing “the truth” in the form of some new book, program, or product. Who are you supposed to believe—and how much will it cost you? Well, Jesus is the real deal. “If you abide in My word,” He promises, “you are truly My disciples. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31–32). You can rest assured that the Bible tells the truth, and is the standard by which you can measure all things.

Growing in faith. Faith comes by hearing and receiving the Word of God (Romans 10:17). To grow in our faith and become mature Christians, we need to read and believe God's Word. As you read

and study the Bible with an open mind and receptive heart, your understanding and faith will grow.

Living in His joy. Lasting joy comes from following Jesus' loving example and His commandments. Jesus said, “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love. ... These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full” (John 15:10–11). When disappointments, obstacles, and setbacks wear on you, taking time to read God's Word will help put things in proper perspective.

Finding God's will. God has a plan for your life. He knows what's best for you. God's Word recorded in the Bible is the known, sure, revealed will of God. So, when you're faced with a decision, look at what He's said before. Pattern your decision on a similar

situation in the Bible, or on the foundation principles of God's Word. You can also ask God to speak to your heart directly and show you what His will is for you in that particular situation. "In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:6 NKJV).

Models for godly living. The Bible is full of stories about otherwise ordinary men and women whose faith and love for God saw them through thick and thin and made them great in His eyes. Much can be learned and much strength can be drawn from their examples. "Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

God's promises. God has promised in His Word to protect and keep His children, to provide for them, and to be with them in times of trouble. Some of His promises are universal, such as, "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). Others were originally made to certain individuals or groups of people, but we can apply the spiritual principles and ask God to intervene on our behalf, as He has in the lives of others.

More love. It is difficult to follow Christ's injunction to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39) when your "neighbors"—those you interact with on a regular basis—are sometimes the most difficult people to get along with, much less love. As you draw close to God through His Word, His Holy Spirit will help you to be more understanding, compassionate, and tolerant toward others. ■

The Promises of God

BY VIRGINIA BRANDT BERG

I CAN NEVER FORGET THE DAY WHEN IT DAWNED UPON MY CONSCIOUSNESS AS A REALITY, a fact, that the promises of the Bible are practical, that they could be applied to my everyday needs. It was a revelation to me that God meant exactly what He said in the numerous promises given in His Word, and that I could put my faith in them and trust Him to fulfill them.

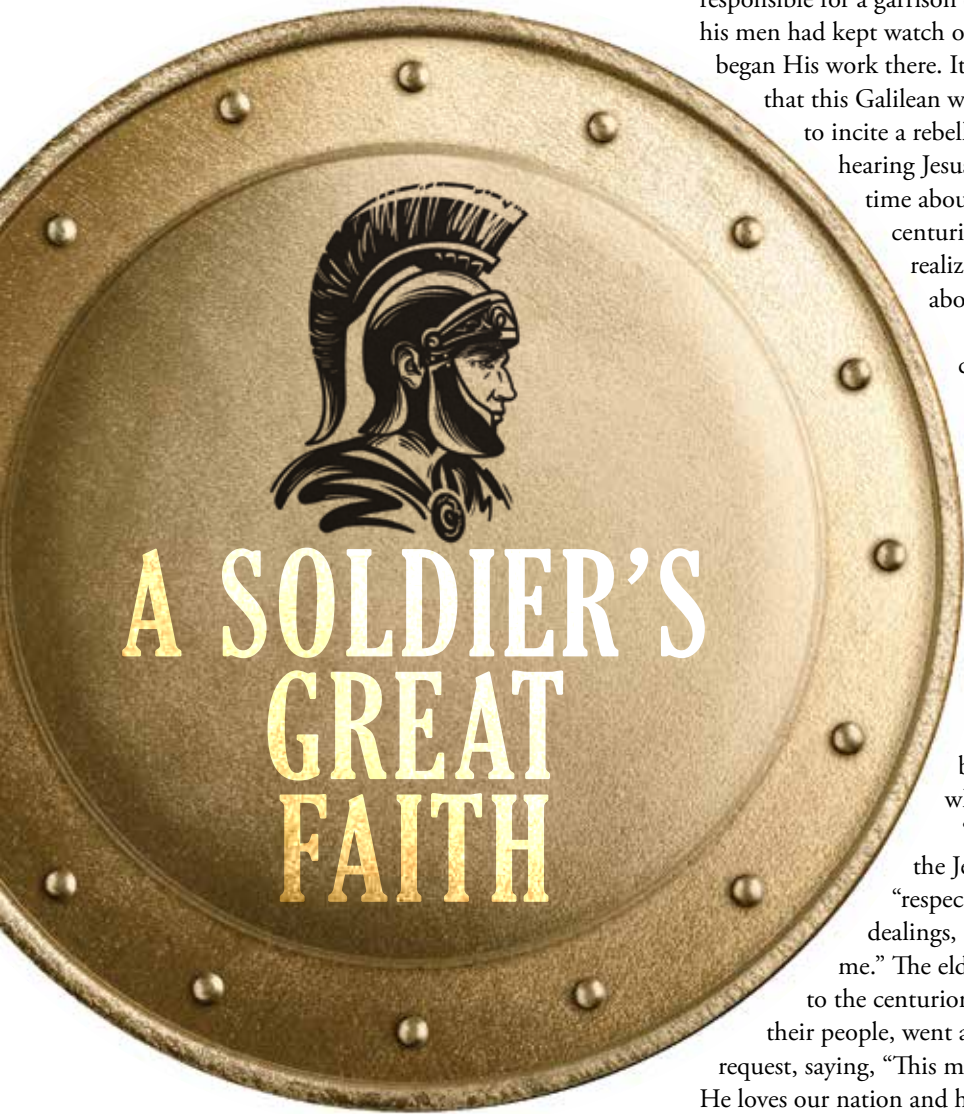
God's Word says that we have been given "exceedingly great and precious promises," that through them we might be "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4 NKJV). But previously, due to my limited understanding, for me those promises were only beautiful scripture language, never meant to be taken seriously or applied practically.

The Word of the Almighty God is true and trustworthy. When I first learned this I realized that the Bible had never been a living, vital thing to me, but rather a sort of combination of creeds, doctrines, wise sayings, and printer's ink. I hadn't known the power in the Word of God.

I had considered myself a Christian all my life, but I had never really believed God's Word, nor had I met Christ personally. It was through a little gospel tract that I had that glorious experience. Christ came into my life to fully satisfy. Gone was my unbelief and the accompanying sense of futility and disappointment in life. There was born in my soul something that has never changed from that day onward: an abiding, unshakable faith in God's Word.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). What He has promised, He is able also to perform (Romans 4:21 NKJV)!

VIRGINIA BRANDT BERG (1886-1968) WAS A WELL-KNOWN AMERICAN EVANGELIST, AND ONE OF THE FIRST RADIO EVANGELISTS IN AMERICA. ■



IN THE CITY OF CAPERNAUM IN ISRAEL, there lived a prominent officer of the Roman army, a centurion responsible for a garrison of a hundred soldiers. He and his men had kept watch on Jesus' doings ever since He began His work there. It was their duty to make sure that this Galilean wasn't doing or saying anything to incite a rebellion against Rome. But after hearing Jesus teach the people from time to time about God's kingdom and love, the centurion had come to respect Jesus, realizing that the kingdom He talked about was hardly a threat to Rome.

One day when the centurion's closest servant became deathly ill, he thought of all Jesus had done for the sick and the lame, and he wondered, "Could it be that He could heal my servant?" But how could he, a Roman, approach a Jew for help in a day when most Jews despised the armies of Caesar? Could it be that this Jesus, known for His love and care for all people, would be willing to help someone with whom the Jews were at odds?

"Surely I can call some of the Jewish elders," he reasoned, "respected men with whom I've had dealings, and they can talk to Jesus for me." The elders, who were greatly indebted to the centurion for the favor he had shown to their people, went and told Jesus of the centurion's request, saying, "This man is truly worthy of Your help. He loves our nation and has helped finance the building of our synagogue" (Luke 7:3-5).

Jesus agreed to go, but as He was approaching, the centurion sent some of his friends with a message saying, "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have You come under my roof. Just say the word and my servant will be healed! For I am a man in authority with soldiers under my command, and I say to one, 'Go,' and

A DRAMATIZED BIBLE ACCOUNT

he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes. And if I tell my servant, ‘Do this,’ then he does it” (Luke 7:6–8).

When Jesus heard these words, He marveled, and declared to those who followed Him, “I have not found such great faith, not in all Israel!” Here was a Roman soldier, a prominent officer, who believed that Jesus could heal his servant at a distance. And that is exactly what happened!

The Bible says that Jesus met the centurion outside his house, and at the same moment that Jesus commended him for his great faith, his servant was instantly healed. Jesus said, “Go. It will be done just as you believed it would,” and his servant was healed in that same hour (Matthew 8:13).

There is a wonderful message for us today contained in the true historic accounts of the Son of God in the Bible. The day of miracles is not past! God is still in the business of transforming the lives of people. Jesus is just as real as ever. God is alive and working just as powerfully as ever among those who trust in Him. He says, “I am the Lord, I do not change” (Malachi 3:6 NKJV). And “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). ■



THE BIBLE AND YOU

BY MARIE ALVERO

A FEW YEARS AGO, I determined to read the entire Bible, cover to cover. I loved discovering the symmetry between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Many of the great sermons and passages in the New Testament were delivered to people who were very familiar with the Old Testament, and the point was to establish that Jesus was the fulfillment of the promises and prophecies that the Old Testament contained.

I have learned that studying God’s Word is one of the best ways to get to know Him better and allow Him to shine a light on our hearts and lives. I also listen to podcasts of serious students of the Bible, and that continues to motivate me to grow and learn more about what God is telling me in those pages.

If you come to a passage that you don’t understand when reading the Bible, ask a friend or mentor who is more familiar with Scripture, or look for an explanation or study resources online. The important thing is to stick with it. Make the daily habit of opening the Bible, reading, meditating on it, and letting it seep into your mind and heart.

MARIE ALVERO IS A FORMER MISSIONARY TO AFRICA AND MEXICO. SHE CURRENTLY LIVES A HAPPY, BUSY LIFE WITH HER HUSBAND AND CHILDREN IN CENTRAL TEXAS, USA. ■



PRAYER FOR THE DAY New Every Morning

Thank You for giving us this beautiful day, and for bestowing upon us Your mercies, which are new every morning (Lamentations 3:22–23). Lord, I pray that You will show me the tasks that You wish for me to perform today, those things which You desire for me to do that will be pleasing in Your sight as I go through this day.

Thank You for all that You are and for all that Your Word is for me. Your Word is a part of You that I can see, hear, and experience personally, and through it, know that I’m seeing, knowing, and hearing You—because it is You. Thank You, Jesus, that Your words are spirit and life, and they will never pass away (Matthew 24:35).



THE FUTURE FORETOLD IN THE BIBLE

THE BIBLE IS FULL OF MANY PROPHECIES AND PREDICTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE THAT WERE WRITTEN BY GOD'S PROPHETS THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO.—Prophecies that accurately describe world conditions and events that are taking place in our world today. We are now living in the period of time the Bible calls the last days, which refers to the period of human history before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the kingdom He will establish on earth.

The Bible warns us that a powerful one-world government will arise at the very end of the last days, ruled by a dictator known as the Antichrist, who will try to force all the world's people to worship him. (See 2 Thessalonians 2:2–12.) People who have rejected Jesus Christ will be deceived by this Antichrist and will be given the “mark of the Beast” in their right hand or forehead. Without the Beast's mark or number, no one will be allowed to buy or sell. The Bible tells us that his number is 666 (Revelation 13:16–18). The Antichrist's seven-year reign will bring about the worst time of trouble the world has ever known. (See Matthew 24.)

But during this darkest night of world history, the brightest dawn will suddenly occur! For at the end of the Antichrist's reign, Jesus Christ Himself will return “in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” to rescue His children from the persecution of the Antichrist and his forces (Matthew 24:29–31). All Christians who have

already died will then receive immortal resurrection bodies and will rise up from their graves. Those who are still alive on earth will be instantly changed as they receive new eternal bodies too. Then we'll all rise up into the sky “to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thessalonians 4:14–17).

After we are all united in heaven, Christ and His followers will return to earth to defeat the forces of the Antichrist in the supernatural Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:11–17). Then Jesus and all of His resurrected children will organize and run the world with truth, justice, and righteousness—the kingdom of God on earth (Revelation 20:4).

After a thousand years of this wonderful reign of Christ on earth, God's great heavenly city will descend onto the beautiful, re-created new earth where we will all live with Him forever (Revelation 21:1–7). And that is the happy ending.

God will dwell with them, and they will be his people. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.
—Revelation 21:3–4 ■



EVERYDAY

ENCOURAGEMENT

FEEDING READING

THE BIBLE IS MUCH MORE THAN A HISTORY OF GOD'S INTERACTIONS WITH INDIVIDUALS, PEOPLES, AND HUMANKIND IN GENERAL. IT WAS ALSO WRITTEN FOR THE PRESENT TIME AND ADDRESSES THE CARES AND TROUBLES MANY OF US FACE TODAY WITH WORDS OF DIRECTION, COMFORT, AND ASSURANCE.

FINANCIAL INSECURITY

Matthew 6:31–33 NKJV: Do not worry, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Philippians 4:6 NLT: Don't worry about anything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.

DISCOURAGEMENT

Psalms 42:11 NLT: Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again.

Psalms 55:22: Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you; He will never permit the righteous to be moved.

TIMES OF CRISIS

Psalms 46:1–3 NKJV: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its

waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling.

Hebrews 4:16 NKJV: Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

LONELINESS

Psalms 23:1–3: The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul.

Deuteronomy 31:8 NIV: The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.

STRESS AND STRAIN

Matthew 11:28–30: Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Galatians 6:9: Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not give up.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Jeremiah 29:11 NIV: For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Romans 15:13: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. ■



FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

THE LIGHTHOUSE

My Word is like the beacon of a lighthouse, shining in the darkness to guide vessels through the sometimes dark and stormy sea of life and into My safe harbor. I placed it on the shore, facing the sea, so that as many as possible will see its light and be drawn to Me.

You are like a sea captain piloting his ship through rough waters on a dark night. If you had no light, you could not see the shoreline and your ship could be dashed against the rocks and lost. But because I love you, I send out My Word like the huge beam of a lighthouse to help you find your bearings. My light illuminates the dangers and points the way home.

My Word is a lamp to your feet and a light to your path (Psalm 119:105). Look to it for light and guidance, so you can make it safely to port no matter how dark the night or how intense the storm.