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# TRUTH *Flame*



A Publication of Bible Doctrines To Live By, Inc

Spring 2021

## Knowing Our Purpose

By Ev. Joel R McGarvey

Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:4

And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the **perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ.**

Ephesians 4:11-12

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery...

Ephesians 3:9a

In these three verses, the Apostle Paul sets forth the purpose of the Body of Christ, both as organizations and individuals. Our purpose is to be Christ and His present plan and program for this present dispensation. Some may look at Ephesians 4:11, and give a sigh of relief thinking that Paul is only addressing the "professional" minister and not the individual believer. But there are more than enough passages to demonstrate that the basic premise applies to every member of the Body of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 15:14-21, as he begins this particular section, Paul uses the word "all" in addressing his readers, indicating a broader range is in view than just the "professionals". He goes on to write that we (all) have been made ambassadors (Heavenly representatives) and have been given the "ministry" (active labor) and the "word" (Gospel message).

It is interesting that the practical implications of these verses have been lost to the average child of God. Much could be, and has been, written about the gifts listed in verse 11, but we will not take time to address that in this article. The final gift listed is that of pastor/teacher. Now anytime we are presented with a list of items given, we must ask ourselves one simple question, "**Why?**" Why was the gift given? In the case of Ephesians 4:11, the answer to our question immediately follows, unfolding the clear

work of the pastor/teacher, but more importantly, that of each member of the Body of Christ.

**For #1: "For the perfecting of the saints."** The Greek word translated "perfecting" is found only one other time in the Scriptures, but the usage here, combined with its other appearance (2 Cor. 13:9), gives to us a good understanding of the message the Apostle was conveying in the present passage.

The word perfection speaks of equipping or preparing. In the Corinthian passage the Apostle is speaking of a process through which he was pleased that the saints had passed. Along this same line, the Lord has given to the pastor/teacher his role to *nurture, equip, and perfect* the saints. As the pastor he is to protect them from error (Acts 20:28), and as the teacher he is to train his congregation in the Word of God in sound doctrine.

But then the question naturally arises, "**Equipped/ Perfected**" for what?

**For #2:** The Ephesian verse continues, "**for the work of the ministry.**" Now the real impact of the gifts begins to become evident. The word "**for**" indicates the "why" of the pastor's role as a "**perfector.**" The saints are nurtured, trained, equipped, and perfected to the end that they are to carry on the work of the ministry. An increasing number of people in the church today are content to go to church on Sunday and to do their "*thing for God*" and then live for themselves the rest of the week. If a problem arises, call the Pastor.

Yes, the Pastor visits the sick, consoles the hurting and shares the Gospel, but he should not be alone in this ministry. This is the "**work of the ministry.**"

In 2 Corinthians 5:20, the Apostle Paul relays that in Christ we have **all** been made ambassadors of Jesus Christ and made the ministers of reconciliation. As such, we have received the word of reconciliation. This involves the presentation of

### Christ Died for your sins

The Need:

"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

"For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23a)  
 "...there is none that doeth good, no not one." (Romans 3:12b)

The Result:

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Romans 5:12)

God's Response

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

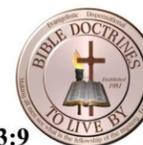
"In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins..." (Ephesians 1:7)

Man's Response

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved...For I delivered unto you that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that he was buried according to the Scriptures, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

**Believe it. Have Eternal Life**

To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery. Ephesians 3:9



the work of God in Christ, in and through Calvary: His death, burial, and resurrection. It is the proclamation of the Gospel that falls to every individual who has placed their faith and trust in the finished work of Christ. Evangelism **is not** the job of the preacher but, rather, it is the responsibility of every believer.

How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? **and how shall they hear without a preacher?** [Proclaimer, teller]  
Romans 10:14

But the challenge is given to those in Christ as the question is posed: How can any call upon Him if they have never heard? And more importantly, how can they hear unless someone tells them? This, my friend, is the **work of the ministry**.

**For #3:** This brings us to the third step in the unfolding answer to the question "why?" The passage in Ephesians concludes with the words, "**for the edifying of the Body of Christ.**" The word translated "edifying" is a term related to architecture, or construction and means "build-up" or to "expand." Both of these thoughts are related to the overall picture drawn in the passage. The Body of Christ is an invisible organism made up of all saved individuals from the present dispensation. As such, every time a person comes to Christ, the Body of Christ is expanded or built up. Therefore, the child of God is to be a construction worker (the *work of the ministry*) assisting in the overall expansion, or the enlarging of the Body of Christ.

It can also be said that the pastor/teacher plays a role here in that it is his primary function to teach the Word of God, and to declare sound doctrine in accordance with the Word of God rightly divided. In this the Body of Christ is edified, built up, or strengthened. This is an increasingly neglected area in the post-modern church. Doctrine is being set

aside and replaced with a fleshly-based, feel-good sermon. I believe most people would fail a test today if they were asked to answer questions as to what their church believes and why.

The role of the pastor/teacher is that of the instructor preparing his class (the congregation) for ministry in the field. Every child of God is to be a missionary in their home, at work, and in the community. The preparation (equipping, perfecting) takes place in the local assembly under the guiding hand of the pastor/teacher. From there the student moves out into the community as an affective laborer for the Lord Jesus Christ to do the work of the ministry and edify the Body of Christ.

But one fact remains firm: **the Lord is coming again and will, in a moment and in the twinkling of an eye, catch His Church away.**

That day could come at anytime and it is for that reason that we who know the truth and are **in Christ Jesus** need to be vigilant in our responsibility to live for, and to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

We live in a nation that desperately needs Christ. America is not a Christian nation. Some statistics place the number of true believing Christians between 7 and 10%. In a nation of over 300 million citizens, that leaves 270 million Americans **without Christ**. That translates into the fact that 9 out of 10 folks we encounter on any given day are without Christ. **America is a nation desperately in need of missionaries.**

Accept my challenge, know our purpose, and become an effective ambassador for the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a day when the Lord will call His Church home and close the door of this present-day of Grace upon multitudes. Judgment Day **is coming** and the knowledge of this truth ought to transform itself into action on our part to share the Gospel, to be about **the work of the ministry**.

# Traveling Bible Conference



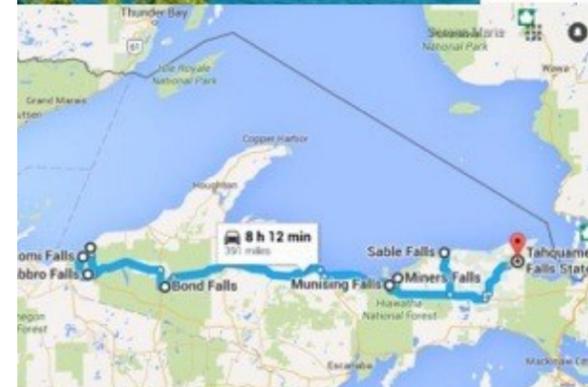
## September 12-18, 2021

Tour the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, visiting some of its beautiful waterfalls and sights along with a daily time of prayer and devotional, and close each day with an evening Bible Conference.

The tour is open to those sixteen and above. Keep in mind this is an RV or tenting trip, there is no guarantee of the availability of motel, or cabin facilities near, or at each camping area.

What is the cost? You pay the typical traveling expenses such as fuel, food, camping, park and entrance fees and food.

If you want to join us you **MUST** let us know by **July 1**, so that we can make the necessary reservations.

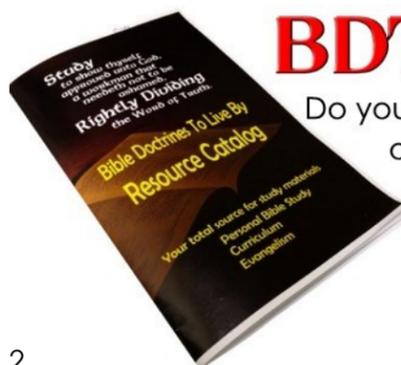


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principles without tying it all together as one book that records a historical account.

The Israelites exited Egypt as a nation being led into the land God promised to give them. Before Moses' death, he left the people with many instructions. Deuteronomy 29:9 states, "Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do." These words were their salvation — faithfulness to the covenant. How many of us know what this covenant was? It certainly involved the Mosaic Law, but the Law was added to the Abrahamic Covenant. If you want to understand the Psalms, Minor and Major Prophets, Gospels, or Revelation, you need to understand the arrangement God made with Israel. They were a covenant nation!

If these people would obey his commandments, God would establish Israel in the land and all the other nations would fear them (Deuteronomy 15:6; 28:1, 9-10). Along the same lines, if other nations wished to partake in the blessings of Israel, they would need to recognize their place in this arrangement and succumb to the God of the covenant nation

Many think that the page-turn to the New Testament changes everything as the Bible suddenly becomes a Gentile-centric book. Yet, when the angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias to tell him about the birth of his son, what did the angel tell him? Part of what Gabriel said is "and many of the **children of Israel** shall he turn to the Lord their God." (Luke 1:16).

In the same chapter, Gabriel appears to a virgin named Mary to tell her that she had been chosen to deliver the Christ child. Note the words describing this child: "*the Lord God shall give unto him **the throne of his father David**: And he shall reign over **the house of Jacob** for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*" (Luke 1:32b-33). It is very important to understand the covenant with Israel to understand these words. During David's day, the Lord promised an heir of David would reign over Israel forever (1 Kings 9:5; 1 Chronicles 22:10; Psalm 89:3-4). Jesus was the eternal King of Israel (Isaiah 9:7).

Jesus' time on earth was focused on being the Messiah of Israel. Through His own words, Jesus was

sent only "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24). Before making this statement about Himself, Jesus specifically instructed His disciples not to go into Gentile cities. Rather, they were sent only to "*the lost sheep of the house of Israel*" (Matthew 10:5-6).

Furthermore, James was written to the twelve Israeli tribes scattered abroad (James 1:1). First Peter (1:1) was directed toward those outside the homeland (Promised Land). The book of Revelation (7:4) records 144,000 who are sealed from literal, flesh-and-blood tribes of Israel. There is much to be thankful for in the book of Revelation, but it is a Jewish book when God once again turns His focus back to His arrangement with Israel and the redemption of the earth.

This begs the question: Which New Testament author offers salvation to the Gentiles despite the actions of Israel? The answer is the Apostle Paul. It is Paul who tells us that Israel has been blinded for a season, the promises set aside, so that salvation can be offered to anyone despite nationality (Romans 9-11; Ephesians 3:1-11).

**If we are to understand how God is working today, we need to understand that we are not the covenant nation. We are not Israel. We have not replaced Israel.** As believers in Christ, we have become part of a unique organism entitled the Body of Christ. Verses such as "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22) are not written to us. It was an encouragement to the covenant nation of Israel. While this current age is a time when Israel has been set aside for a season, God leaves no doubt that His attention will one day return to fulfilling that which He promised to His created nation.

So, is every promise in the book mine? No. I am okay with that, because the Lord has promised the Body of Christ some pretty amazing things, blessings we can enjoy when we understand the Word rightly divided. The Apostle of Grace, Paul, was inspired by the Holy Spirit to record these Grace blessings in his letters.

## from the desk of the President

Joel R. McGarvey

Here we are with another edition of Truth Aflame and soon we'll be departing Grand Rapids for our Itinerant ministry. We had determined at the end of our tour last year that we were going to begin cutting back on the number of Family Bible Schools in 2021. However, last year we held eight sessions and this year nine. But we praise the Lord for health and strength and look forward to a fruitful summer.

As you are aware we experienced a major loss in March as the hard drive on our server died. This drive contained all of our ministry information, including our entire inventory of literature. The cloud backup we thought we had, had not been backing up anything. We were stopped dead in the water.

After two months of waiting and several thousands of dollars the data was retrieved, new backups were installed, and we were back in business. We praise the Lord for His goodness.

Check out this issue of TA for announcements on the Camping / Bible Conference in September, the online broadcasts, and our itinerary for the summer months.

2020 was certainly a different year to say the least.

Truth Aflame is published by Bible Doctrines to Live By, Inc., and is an independent Bible study and evangelistic journal. We are a fundamental, evangelistic and dispensational ministry endeavoring to teach the whole Word of God from a mid-Acts Pauline perspective. We believe and proclaim that Christ died for all and that the offer of Salvation is extended to all and received by simple faith in the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Truth Aflame is published at least three times a year (Winter, Spring/Summer, and Fall) and is sent free of charge to all who desire to know and grow in their knowledge of the Word of God.

### Bible Doctrines To Live BY

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Contact us on the WEB: [www.bibledoctrines.org](http://www.bibledoctrines.org)

Email: [staff@bibledoctrines.org](mailto:staff@bibledoctrines.org)

Unemployment, shutdowns, layoffs, sickness and death, rules and regulations became the "new normal" (on a temporary basis anyway). With so much uncertainty, we praise the Lord that our partners in ministry continued faithful in their financial support of the ministry. We heard many stories that giving had dropped off, but we are blessed to say that any reduction in giving to BDTLB was minimal and for that we praise the Lord.

On a personal note, I had the honor of conducting the wedding ceremony for our son Joel and his bride Kaleigh on March 13. I have been privileged to do the honors at all four of my children's weddings.

Speaking of weddings, my granddaughter, Elise Turner is marrying Zack Klahn on June 26, 2021. Please pray for these to "kids" as they begin their lives as one. Pray for the Lord's leading in their lives and home.

Last, but far from least, our firstborn grandson graduated from Central Michigan University May 8, 2021. We pray for the Lord's leading in his life as well.

Keep looking up.

### STAFF

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Pastor Matthew Ritchey - Assoc. Exec. Director, Director Youth & Family Ministry Outreach  
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Cindy Lippincott - Office Manager  
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# McGarvey's Summer Intinerary

Date	Church
June 13-18	Grace Family Bible Church, Duncansville, PA FBS
June 20-23	Grace Bible Fellowship, Clearbrook, VA BC
July 4-9	Valley Bible Church, Stephens City, VA FBS
July 11-16	Grace Bible Fellowship, Ridgeley, WV FBS
July 18-22	Croton Community Church, Croton, MI FBS
July 25-30	Lakeview Bible Church, Carter Lake, IA FBS
August 1-6	Lincoln Hills Bible Church, Sioux Falls, SD FBS
August 8-13	Grace Bible Church, Oshkosh, WI FBS
August 15-20	Grace Bible Church, Beloit, WI FBS
August 22-27	Friendship Bible Church, Friendship, WI FBS
September 12-18	Camping Bible Conference

FBS = Family Bible School

BC = Bible Conference

## Ministry Opportunity Available

Bible Doctrines To Live By is looking for an individual seeking fulltime ministry opportunities. Ministries would include Family Bible Schools, Bible Conferences as well as other preaching and teaching opportunities. Office work will include assisting in the development and production of Bible Study materials.

This would ideally fit a married couple, though the travel schedule may prove difficult for those with young children. Should a married couple join the staff there would be ministry opportunities for both in and out of the office.

BDTLB is a Fundamental, Evangelistic, Mid-Acts Dispensational ministry working with the local church in the areas of evangelism and Biblical education. To carry out that purpose we are preaching/teaching and publishing ministry. Familiarity with desktop publishing is good, but not required for consideration. Additionally, there must be a willingness to travel.

Interested parties need to have a solid foundation in Mid-Acts dispensationalism and have a heart to reach lost souls for Christ.

BDTLB is as an Missionary endeavor and operates in Faith-based manner. By this is meant that each staff member is responsible to raise their personal support with assistance from the office. This is done in numerous ways.

Please pray about your involvement and if interested call, **616-785-3618** or send an email to: **[jrmcgarvey@gmail.com](mailto:jrmcgarvey@gmail.com) or [staff@bible doctrines.org](mailto:staff@bible doctrines.org)**.

Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you.

## Every Promise in the Book is (Not) Mine

By: Pastor Matthew Ritchey

You may have sung, "Every promise in the book is mine. Every chapter, every verse, every line." It certainly sounds nice, doesn't it? But is it true? For example, there is a promise in Numbers 14:35 which states, "*I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.*"

Care to redo the song? Somehow I don't think "Every promise in the book is mine except-for-Numbers-14. Every chapter except-Numbers-14, every verse except-for-those-verses-in-Numbers-14, every line except-for-those-lines-in-Numbers-14" will have the same impact. It doesn't really fit the melody.

There are countless promises and arrangements in God's Word that Christians erroneously assume apply directly to them. Unfortunately, in claiming these promises and arrangements as their own directives, they quote a few verses and gloss over the context in which these promises and arrangements are found. Another example is found in 2 Chronicles 7:14, which reads: "*If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*" Many Christian leaders quote this verse with the presumption that America is God's people, but let's keep this verse in its context. Who is God's people in this verse? God's people is unmistakably Israel; this verse was not directed to America. God has no peculiar nation today; instead, He has a particular people – the Body of Christ, members of all nations.

When we read the surrounding verses (i.e., 2 Chron. 7:12-17), we learn that this passage is describing a historical event in the history of Israel. The dedication of Solomon's temple is the context of this passage. God had made a covenant with Israel regarding blessings for obedience to His Law as well as judgments for disobedience to His Law. The verses also talk about the people repenting at

this Temple in Jerusalem. Are we under the Temple system? Is the entire nation of America supposed to go to a church in Washington D.C. to be forgiven of sins?

You may think I am being factious, but if we are prepared to change "Israel" to "United States" and "Temple" to "Church building" in this passage, where does it end? When we stop interpreting Scripture in the way God intended it to be understood and, instead, only view it through how it affects us directly, we have headed down the slippery slope to making the Bible of private interpretation (see 2 Peter 1:20 for a warning against this practice). The first rule of correct Bible study is to study it in light of what God intended to communicate. This is called exegesis. Only after understanding a verse in its context are we then able to pull out any principles the passage holds for us.

We are not the covenant nation to whom God made the earthly promises. We cannot take Israel's blessings and apply them to the Body of Christ. I am not telling you to ignore the Old Testament. We need to understand the Old Testament. I am imploring us to read the scriptures as God intended them to be read. It is certainly true that natural blessings come upon people who do things the Lord's way. When God said, "Israel, I will give you a land of milk and honey," He did not mean, "Body of Christ, I will give you a land of milk and honey."

One important aspect of context is to properly understand the progression found in the Bible. One such progression commonly missed is that to properly understand the New Testament we must understand what was promised in the Old Testament. God chose Abraham as the man from which God's special people would derive. The covenant made with Abraham involved a great nation dwelling safely in a promised land. The entire Bible, excluding Paul's epistles, has the fulfillment of this arrangement as its centerpiece. Yet, most of us just turn to the Old Testament for

# From the Mailbag

Dear Friends in Christ,  
Thank you for your continued service for our Lord. I always enjoy your Facebook messages and the Truth Aflame magazine. Thank you for your faithfulness in sharing the truth rightly divided.

Please use the enclosed check where needed. God's richest blessings as you continue to serve Him. You are always in my prayers. In Christ, WA

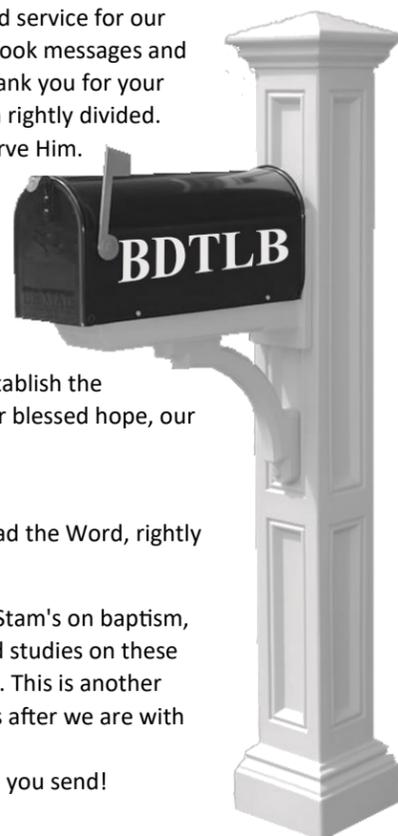
Thanks to everyone at Bible Doctrines to Live By. We appreciate this ministry and pray for you all. Listening and learning from Joel's Bible Study hour on Sundays and Tuesdays Bible Time. Very good. Looking forward to the next online Bible Conference. PA

Joel, Susan, Matt and Cindy,  
We praise God for your labor of love in preaching the gospel of grace and sound doctrine to establish the saints. We are blessed to co-labor together with you all and pray daily for you all. Looking for our blessed hope, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. IL

Dear Pastor McGarvey,  
Thank you for your ministry. I follow you on U-tube. Please accept this offering to further spread the Word, rightly divided. Please send me a chart, "Rightly Dividing the Word." Thank you. NY

Just forwarding a note from Percival who is thankful for your book on the mystery. Along with Stam's on baptism, he received a lot of light on the subject when teaching I Cor. 1:17. We are so thankful for sound studies on these important doctrines. We knew years ago the value of printing the truths and doctrines of grace. This is another example. If the Lord doesn't come in our life time, these books may continue to bless the saints after we are with Him.

The Filipino saints love receiving their Bibles, we always appreciate including them in the boxes you send! grace and peace, IL



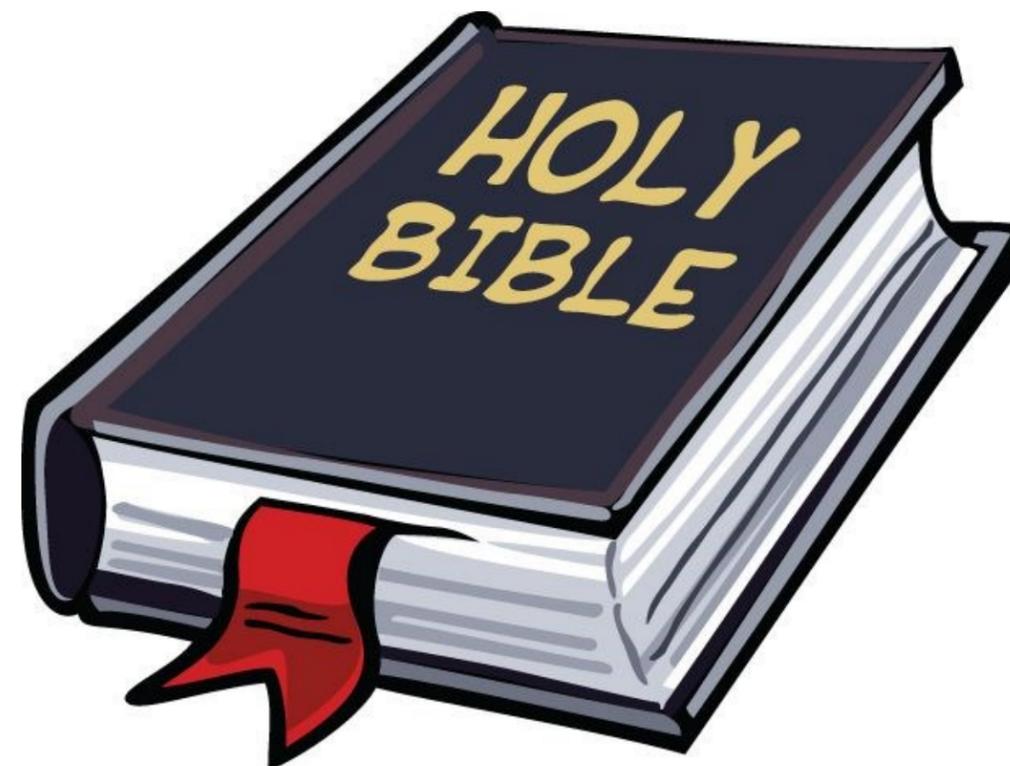
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Volume 4. Number 3.

# THE BIBLE



GOD'S WORD SAYS: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God..." 2 Timothy 3:16.



The Bible is the word of God. God, in a special way, gave the words to men to write down. These words make up the books in our Bible. Since the Bible is God's word, it is the most important book. The Bible tells us how we came to be and that God sent His Son to save us from sin. We should spend time with the Bible and use it to know what to believe and how to live.

## In Memorial

In memory of Art LeFeber by Maureen LeFeber

In memory of Lee Homoki by Chariton Hills Chapter of the FCC

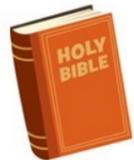
In memory of Marty Hunter by Nancy Giacometto  
(Marty and Finley were greatly used by the Lord in the lives of my family. )

We were requested to pass along the following information. Mike Szafranski was a close friend of Lee and BDTLB. He was an Elder at the Grace Bible Church in Buffalo, NY area.

SZAFRANSKI - Michael Rene

January 30, 2021, of Venice, FL formerly of Buffalo, NY, went home to be with his Heavenly Father. He is survived by his beloved wife Linda, son Timothy, daughter Amy, grandson Landyn, granddaughter Stella, and brother Raymond. Besides spending time with his family, he enjoyed music, nature, photography and Buffalo pizza. His greatest passion however, was knowing Christ. His zest for life was contagious and we are all blessed to have known and loved him. Mike was teaching Elder of Grace Bible Church in Buffalo from 1987-2001 and started the website <https://www.hopeoftheglorry.com/>. Arrangements were held by FARLEY FUNERAL HOME, on February 6, 2021 by virtual service. Please Call 1-941-488-229.

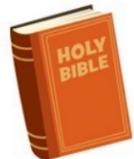
# 1. Read the Bible



**GOD'S WORD SAYS:** "...give attendance to reading..." 1 Timothy 4:13.

If we want to know God, we have to read the Bible. If we want to know what is true, we have to read the Bible. If we want to know how to live, we have to read the Bible. If we want to know where we will go after we die, we have to read the Bible. We won't know what God wants us to do if we do not spend time reading God's words in the Bible. It is okay to need help reading the Bible. You can ask an adult to read it with you. It is also good to listen as your pastor and Sunday School teacher teach you from the Bible.

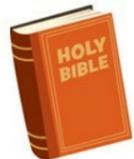
# 2. Memorize Bible Verses



**GOD'S WORD SAYS:** "Thy word have I hid in mine heart..." Psalm 119:11.

We also need to memorize verses of the Bible, or hide it in our hearts. Pick a verse to learn each week. God will use these verses in your life to help you live for Him.

# 3. Share the Bible



**GOD'S WORD SAYS:** "That...I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" Ephesians 6:20.

God wants us to tell others what we are learning for the Bible. He wants us to share Jesus with others and tell them the Gospel so that they can be saved. We are not to keep God's word to ourselves but are to share it with others.

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