

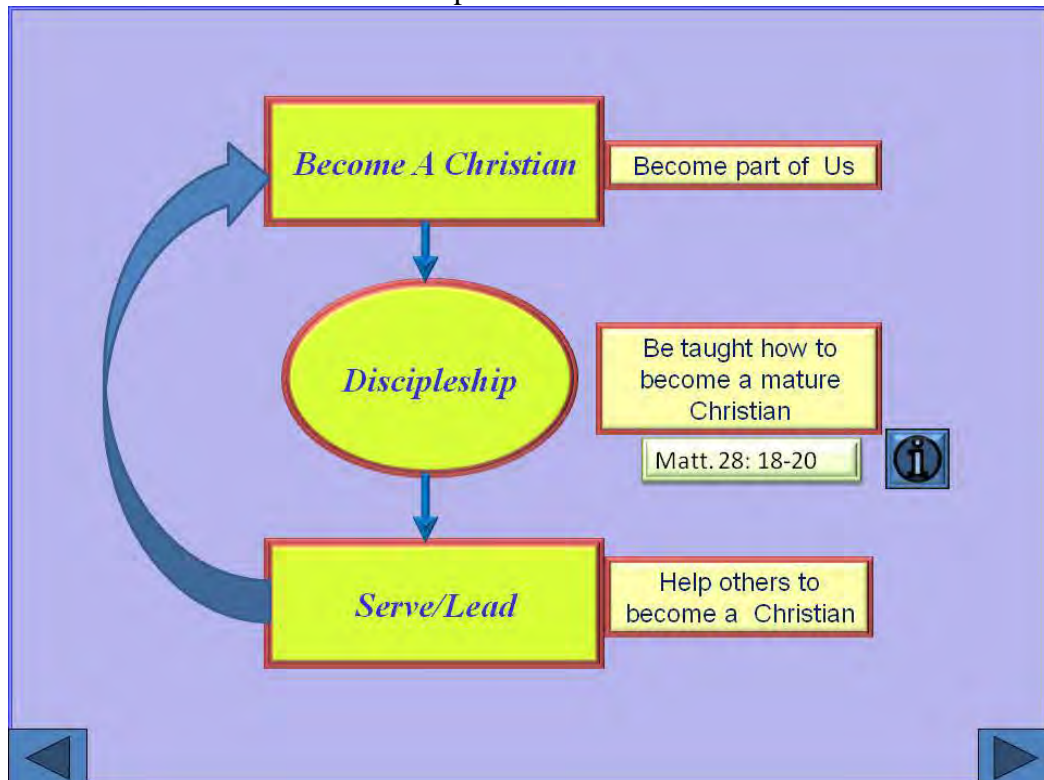
# 1. Why Another Book On Christian Discipleship

Bookstore shelves and Church libraries are stuffed with good books about anything anyone would want to know about Christianity. So why is another book about Christianity needed? Few books seem to be targeted to new Christians or Christians with overcrowded schedule (which is about everyone) or those practicing Christians who want more from their Christian experience.

Papaw has taught a course on the Basics of Christianity for over 35 years and has observed that *MOST* Christians really do not experience the basics though they may have good knowledge about Christianity! Many have been raised in a Christian family and have spent years in Church but do not experience the lifestyle taught by Jesus. It's called living in the Kingdom of God; NOW.

As an engineer, Papaw knows that any project should start by identifying its objective and any assumptions that apply. So, he set the objective of this book-writing project to "Clearly illustrate how experiential Christianity is supposed to operate." The project assumptions are:

- 1) God exists and wants everyone to clearly understand what His purpose is for their lives
- 2) God choose to have His truth written in the Bible as the principle means for communicating how Christians are to live
- 3) All people really want to know objective truth and will be willing to follow that truth if it can be understood and experienced



## 2. Where to Start

True Christianity is based on trust that what the Bible tells us is true. This is the reference or starting point for all Christian beliefs and practices. Most misunderstandings about Christianity have crept in over the years as a result of men's traditions which are not biblical.

Often, people accept Christianity to be what they observe their parents or other respected Christians doing. When Papaw was in the ninth grade, he had to read Treasure Island as part of his English class. Long John Silver

THE BIBLE  
GOD SAYS

The Bible is the Written Word of GOD to man. It is one of the ways GOD reveals Himself and His will to us. It is a written account of His will. **All of our Christianity is based upon what we learn from the Bible.**

had torn the last page from a Bible to scribble a note. On this note was a warning to not add to or take away from the Bible! Good intending traditions are accepted as additions to or variations of the Bible and often are substituted as Bible mandates which can

mislead an earnest seeker.

THE BIBLE  
Is Truth.

*God Told Men What to Write In The Holy Bible*

The Bible is the book that contains GOD's Truth. GOD told (inspired) the writers what they should include in the Bible. No one can interpret the Bible without the aid of the Holy Spirit.

II Peter 1: 20,21  
John 17:17

Some Christians reason that they can “interpret” the Bible and tell where parts are myths or stories rather than absolute truth. Others accept that the entire Bible is absolutely true as inspired by God’s Spirit. Papaw didn’t think he was smart enough to figure out where the real truths

Bible 1

**II Peter 1: 20 – 21**  
 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 by the Holy Spirit

**John 17: 17**  
 Sanctify them (Christians) by the Truth; Your word is Truth.

and myths were so he resolved to just accept the whole compilation of Bible books as being what God intended to be communicated to mankind. This is the trusting faith needed to become a true practicing Christian and experience a close fellowship with God.

Unless you are willing to trust that God inspired the writers of the books of the Bible in what to express, then you may as well put this little book down because all of the remainder of the book is written on the assumption that you accept the Bible as being God’s instruction.

*What Is Truth?*

*Truth is What’s*  
*Really*  
*There!*

Truth stands whether or not you agree with it or understand it. A majority will not determine truth. Opinions or situations will not alter truth. GOD has established absolute truth by way of physical and spiritual laws that can be depended upon. They never change!

We can define Truth as “Reality”, “Substantive”, or as one of Papaw’s young students once said, “Truth is what’s really there.” The thing about truth is that it will stand whether we understand it, agree with it, or not. Students are asked if they believe that there are rocks on the other side of the Moon. Most will

respond with, “Yes, there are rocks on the other side of the Moon.” Though they have

never been to the other side of the Moon to observe rocks space travelers have photographed the other side. Yes, truth will support the presence of rocks on the other side of the moon though none of us have ever been there to pick them up or observe them. The point is that truth exists whether or not we have witnessed it. The Bible is God's recorded book of truth. *Christianity is based on God's insistence that we accept his written word in "faith" (because it is truth) even though we do not understand all of it nor have we experienced all of it (yet).* Even if one does not believe it, truth stands.

The Bible was written several thousands of years ago and has been preserved through the generations. Man has experienced many technological changes since the books of the Bible were written. The original manuscripts were penned on scrolls. Scribes would make copies of the scriptures by looking at a scroll and carefully duplicating it word for word on another scroll. Today, we just slap a copy in a duplicating machine, set the number of copies we need and impatiently wait for the machine to crank out very accurate

copies. Over the years, well intending Priests wrote clarifying notes in the margins. Some of these ended up in the main body of the scriptures. The original manuscripts were not divided into chapter and verse like we have today.

*There are some COPY Errors*

*There are NO Errors in the BIBLE that Disagrees With TRUTH*

Types of Copy Errors:  
1) Inter-Language Interpretation, 2) Chapter - Verse numbers, 3) Marginal Notes,  
No Copy Errors affect the fundamental doctrinal content of the Bible. We should study the Bible in its entire context rather than lift a scripture out to support a particular point.

Some of these artificial divisions could have been better placed to communicate the intended message originally recorded. The Bible has been translated into more languages than any other book. Translation from one language to another does not always completely communicate the emphasis as intended in the original. For example, we have one English word for "Love." In the Greek, the language of the New Testament, there are three words for "Love." Agape love is an all-giving love with no expectation of anything in return. Phillao love is a fraternal or brotherly love where equal sharing of care was intended or expected. Eros is a lustful love for only self-consuming gratification.

*Though some variances are present between Bible translations, there are NO errors that disagree with the overall body of Truth!*

The Bible is God's written word to mankind and it stands absolutely forever. It is a self-proclaiming text that will *never* pass away.

At this point in the course, Papaw asks his students if they can identify anything else that will never pass away. This discussion always ends with the declaration that people's souls never pass away. A life starts at conception and never ends. All of us are eternal beings. The Bible states that one of the attributes of God is that He is constant; His character or nature never changes. Thus as one studies the Old Testament, one can learn much about God and that the same characteristics recorded in the oldest books of the Bible correctly describe what God is presently like.

***The Bible is the Written Word of GOD***

***IT WILL NEVER PASS AWAY***

**The Word of GOD is Eternal, it will never pass away. It can be counted upon**

Luke 21:33  
I Peter 1:25

Some will teach that there is no absolute truth and everything is relative. This is not the basic teaching of Christianity. Christian absolutes never change. Our cultures change over the years (even in Papaw's lifetime) and

Christians must be careful to not substitute culturally accepted conduct or morals for the absolutes of the Bible.

The Bible has a single message or theme from its beginning through the last page of the last book. That theme is that God wants all human beings to be restored to the same kind of close fellowship with Him as pictured in the first chapters of the first

***The BIBLE has  
One Theme***

***Sovereign God's  
Salvation of Man***

The Theme of the Bible relates to GOD's ultimate intention to redeem (Return what was lost) man to become adopted children of His family like His Begotten Son Jesus. The Old Testament method by which GOD accepted man's faith was through the death of substitute animals. GOD presently accepts our Faith in the Lamb of GOD, Jesus' sacrificial death for our sins.

He wants to restore us to the same relationship as with Adam and Eve!

book of the Bible. Adam and Eve were created in God's image in a beautiful garden called Eden. The imagery of those first chapters displays daily walks and times of discussions between Adam, his wife Eve and God. They ended up disobeying God and were cast out of the garden apart from the presence of God. The Bible calls disobedience to God **SIN**. God is sovereign and He is Holy. Holy means being totally set apart from sin. God's character defines goodness or holiness. Since holiness and sin are opposites, (like light and darkness which is the total absence of light), holiness is the total absence of sin. When Adam and Eve

***The BIBLE Tells  
Us How To Live***

***Thy Word is a Lamp Unto My Feet,  
and a Light Unto My Path***

Twenty-First century man can make his daily decisions based upon the teachings-commandments-instructions of the Bible. It is truth to live by.

Psalm 119:105    **i**  
II Timothy 3:16,17

were cast out of the garden, they were forbidden to reenter because they could not bring their sin back into the presence of Holy God. In spite of the sins of man, God's desire is that all be returned to a close fellowship like that portrayed by Adam and Eve before they sinned. Thus the theme of the entire Bible is preserved for us to understand how to enter God's presence without our sin problem. This is

Kingdom living.

The Bible is an instruction manual on how we should live today. During the days of the Bible writers, most did not travel at night and those that did depended upon a small lamp to light the way before them. Remember that they did not have

Bible 3

**Psalms 119: 105**  
Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

**II Timothy 3: 16 – 17**  
All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

U

streetlights. They didn't even have streets! Paths were the most common way to get from point to point. These paths were usually narrow and would wind their way through wooded areas, open fields, and sometime mountainous terrain. There would often be obstacles in the paths such as rocks, logs or just discarded items. The paths could also travel along steep grades and cliffs. Most people did not attempt to travel at night due to the hazards along the pathway. Those that had to travel at night used their small oil lamp to help light up the area immediately in front of them. We can use the Bible like one of these small lamps to direct our way through the pathways of life. Christians come to trust the Bible by identifying the best way to live and get along with other people while here on Earth. They also know what to expect after leaving the Earth.

*We Are To Study  
The Bible* Acts 17:11

*The Scriptures Have Power  
to Make You Wise* II Timothy 3:15 i

Christians should practice daily reading, study and meditation of the Bible. The Bible should become a part of the Christian's daily life. Each Christian should pray for the Holy Spirit's explanation of GOD's word each time it is read.

If the Bible is the Christian's handbook for living, then the Christian must know what is in the Bible. Discipline is necessary to set aside time to study the Bible. There is no quick substitute for such discipline. Most modern Christians believe that they do not have time

to study the Bible or their brief efforts have left them confused and uncertain about what the Bible says. They depend upon frequent (or sometimes infrequent) visits to the local church in hopes that they can pick up some good pointers about Christianity rather than put out the effort to learn firsthand from the Bible. This was certainly the case with Papaw!

The Bible is divided into two major sections called the Old Testament and the

Bible 4

Acts 17: 11

Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

II Timothy 3: 15

How from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

*A Testament Is A  
Contract or Covenant*

*The Bible Has An Old  
Testament and A New  
Testament*

God has made a contract with Christians; "IF YOU WILL OBEY, THEN I WILL BE YOUR GOD." Fundamental to Christianity is our willingness to OBEY GOD. Too many Christians try to live good lives apart from GOD!!

John 15:5



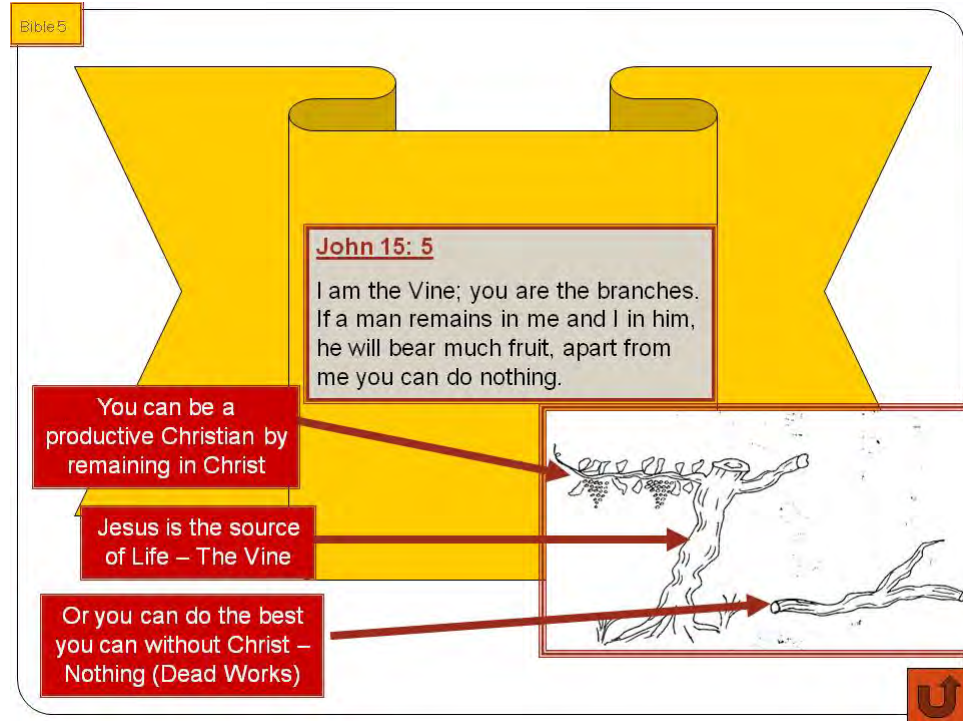
New Testament. The word testament is the same as "Covenant" or "Contract." The Bible can be thought of as a contract between God and you. The conditions of the contract are recorded in the Bible. The Christian is a cosigner of the agreement or contract.

Contracts can be broken and the Christian often does. God never does. Breaking the covenant is sin and it must be dealt with.

Recall earlier, Papaw said that God was sovereign and holy. Sovereign means that He has the highest level of authority. There is no court of appeal above Him. The Bible says that He created the world and all that is in it. Also recall that Papaw said that the Bible is the reference or starting point in basic Christianity. It is the book of truth. So if the Bible says

that God is sovereign and holy and created the world and all that is in it, then the Christian accepts that as being true.

Since Adam's sin, which is referred to as the Fall of Man, all have inherited a nature that is bent toward disobedience to God or sin. Another way of expressing this is that all have a sin nature, which has been inherited from great ancestor Adam.



If the reader will agree with this premise, then try to accept the following contractual agreement between God and mankind during the Old Testament period:

***The Bible Has 66 Books***

***39 Old Testament Books  
& 27 New Testament Books***

***The Bible was written over a period of 1500 Years***

***Written By Kings, Peasants, Poets, Herdsmen, Fishermen,  
Scientists, Farmers, Priests, Tent Makers and Governors***

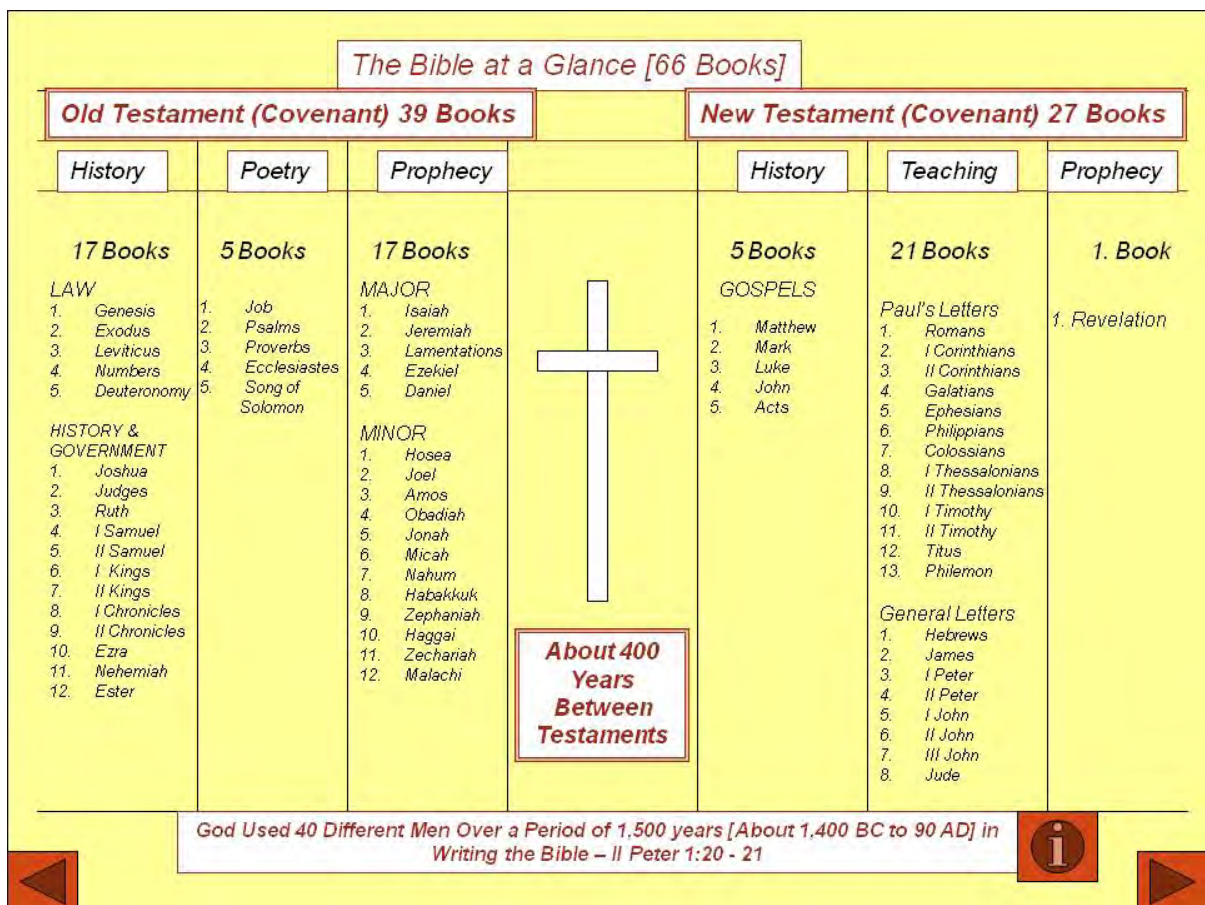
***Covers Topics of Philosophy, Poetry, Prophecy,  
Theology, History, Science and Sociology***

The complex block is set against a light beige background with a dark border. It consists of five stacked rectangular boxes, each containing text in a bold, italicized serif font. The boxes are arranged in a slightly staggered, descending fashion from top to bottom. At the bottom left and bottom right corners of the entire block, there are small dark red triangles pointing inward.

God is sovereign which means that He sets the rules of His created universe. God established that He would provide a way by which people's sins could be forgiven. The consequence of sin is spiritual death!! People were to bring one of their animals, such

as a choice lamb without any kind of blemish, to a priest for a sacrifice. God further established that the person must assert faith that his sins would be transferred from him to the animal by placing his hands on the head of the animal. Sovereign God contracted to accept the death of the animal as full payment for the sins of the person making the sacrifice. In other words, the animal would serve as a substitute for the person and holy God would accept the animal's death as payment for the person *who asserted faith* that the animal took his sins upon itself before being slaughtered. God would then look upon the person as having no sin. The reader may consider this a strange agreement, but remember that God is sovereign and He makes the rules. It is not necessary that the Christian understand or agree with the rules but it is mandatory that he obey the contract if he expects to be its beneficiary.

The Bible is a collection of sixty-six books. The Old Testament includes thirty-nine books and the New Testament has twenty-seven books. Most of the writers that God inspired, did not know what the other authors had written. The writers were from a very diverse set of backgrounds. Upon reading the Bible, the student will realize that the writers represent all types of people. Some were kings and others were peasants. God intentionally included this range of characters to show that his theme of returning people to a fellowship lifestyle



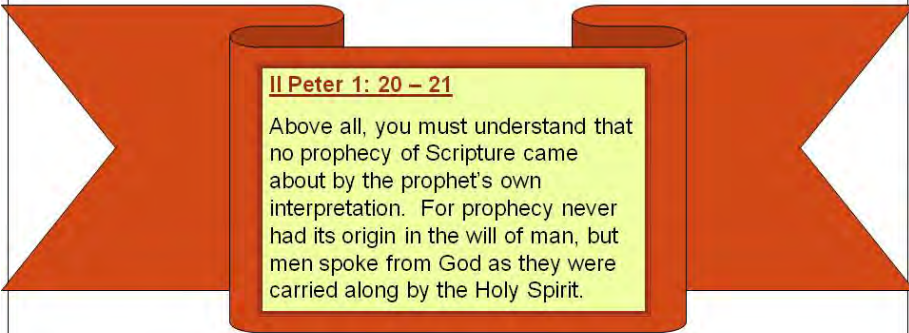
illustrated by Adam and Eve applies to everyone and not just to a special class.

Though the books of the Bible were written over a period of 1500 years, there are no conflicts or disagreements in the books. Don't just slide over this statement, our country is only a little over 200 years old and the content of the Bible was being prepared over a much longer period. The last Bible book was written about 2000 years ago! Some may reason that the Bible is outdated for modern times but remember that God created the world and all that

is in it including time. He has established a contract with us and He does not change as our culture changes.

There were no Bible books written for approximately four hundred years between the Old Testament period and the New Testament period.

Bible 5.A



**II Peter 1: 20 – 21**

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 by the Holy Spirit.

In other words, men did not make up what they wrote in the Bible. They were inspired of God's Holy Spirit what to write. The same Holy Spirit in the Christian interprets the Bible



People that follow

their natural instincts seek an independent lifestyle. No one really wants to be under anyone else's authority. This includes independence from God which is the nature we have inherited from Adam. Independence and selfishness is the same

**Non-CHRISTIAN  
or Humanist**

Jeremiah 17: 5,6

**CHRISTIAN**

Jeremiah 17: 7,8

thing. The Bible consistently warns us to embrace God's contract and forsake our independent,

selfish nature. These contrasting verses portray the lifestyle of those who contract with God as Christians and those who do not. The Bible is like the stream of water that supplies sustenance to the tree. Without the aid of the stream (or Bible) people live dry and unproductive lives.

Bible 6

**Jeremiah 17: 5 – 6**  
This is what the LORD says:  
Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord. He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives


**Jeremiah 17: 7 – 8**  
But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that send out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green.

Christian knowledge is essential to the Christian life but it is not sufficient unto itself. Knowledge must precede experience. In other words, people may be able to pass a written test on Christianity yet not be fulfilled productive Christians. They may not even be Christians! The contract with God demands obedience.


Everyone is seeking fulfillment and happiness in life but many seek it the wrong way. Since God designed us in His image, there is only one way to find contentment and happiness and that is the way our designer has established. We must discipline ourselves to commune with our creator by studying the Bible and doing what it instructs us to do. *There is no substitute for this.* It will require time devoted to that purpose. Each has been allocated about 70 to 90 years to experience God.

***Happy Are Those  
Who Hear the Word of GOD  
and Keep it***

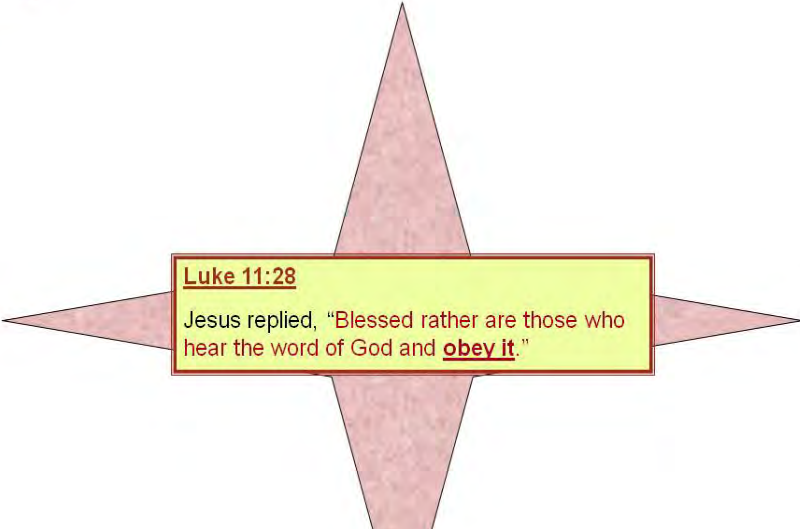
*Jesus Speaking in the Book of Luke*

Luke 11: 28 

The way to happiness is Obedience to God. People go through life seeking happiness in many different ways. There is only ONE WAY to eternal happiness. Seek GOD's direct word rather than council from men. A DAILY habit of prayer and Bible study is absolutely necessary.



Papaw illustrates the Bible as a bridge. God demands our faith and trust. Remember that knowledge will come first and then we are expected to act on our knowledge, which is trusting faith. Let's assume that you are on one side **of a deep canyon and want to get**



to the other side. There is a bridge that crosses from one side to the other and people are walking back and forth over the bridge. You may become convinced that the bridge will safely hold your weight to cross over to the other side. You may talk to people who have used the bridge and

they assure you that it is safe. Emotionally you may want to use the bridge but until you trust yourself to the bridge, you will not be able to cross over. That's the way it is with the Bible; you must entrust yourself to it and experience the results it brings.

### We Can Trust The Bible

*Believe  
Trust  
Faith*

*Knowledge (Believe):  
Watching others will convince you that the bridge will hold you.*

*Emotion:  
I want to cross over the bridge.*

*Action (Trust-Faith):  
Must be exercised before the bridge will provide any help.  
Committing to the bridge will transport you to the other side.*

*The Christian must obtain Knowledge from God's Word, desire GOD's promises and ACT upon his Knowledge. Jesus Christ Is The Bridge To Eternal Life.*

When you read your Bible each day (Papaw does early each morning), ask God to open His word to new spiritual insights. Though you have a very busy day ahead, do not rush but meditate upon every sentence – re-read passages if you are not sure about its application to today's life situations. Daily prayer (unrushed) and Bible study is your main source of growing into a mature Christian and we are all instructed to continue our spiritual growing process – It is called sanctification.

Christianity can only be experienced through trusting faith! One must believe that God exists and will reward those that search for Him. The Bible is the source of information about God and Christianity. God's Spirit inspired the writers of the Bible and will assist the Christian in its study and understanding.

Following the session on the Bible, select a time and place in your home each morning to read the Bible. Start with the first chapter of the book of John if not already into a daily Bible reading discipline. Read a chapter a day.