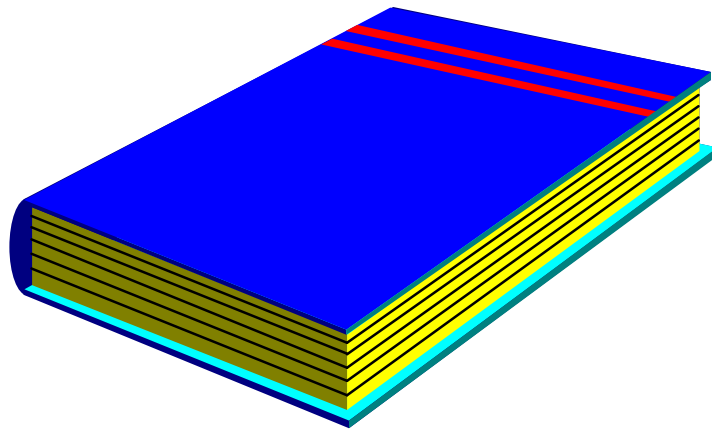


# THEWORD

## BIBLE TRAINING COURSE FOR LEADERS



## FIRM FOUNDATIONS COURSE

## PARTONE

### THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.  
(1 Corinthians 3:10-11)

## The object of this study is

### **TO DISCOVER AND PROVE:-**

There is no other foundation for the church than Jesus Christ.

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On completion of this study you will have:-

- Discovered the purpose of the Firm Foundations Course
  - Learned who is the foundation of the Church
  - Gained confidence to build HIS Church
  - Understood the relationship between Jesus and his Word
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### **NOTES**

There are four practical aspects to these courses; exercises, Bible reading, learning and questions. The following notes are for your guidance:-

1. **Exercises** are to be written in your own words and returned to the Course Administrator through whom this course was given to you or returned to the address below.
2. **Bible reading** is to be done at the point of the course where you are asked to read. Do not just read the passage but meditate upon it before continuing.
3. **Learning.** These are usually short passages of the Bible for you to learn so that you are able to speak them without reference to the Bible.
4. **Questions** are listed at the end of each study and are to be answered when you are satisfied that you have completed the study. Your answers can be sent back to your Course Administrator or e-mailed or posted to the address below.

Once you have completed the work you can e-mail it to [stangain@btinternet.com](mailto:stangain@btinternet.com) for assessment. On successful completion of the whole course a certificate will be sent to you.

If you were given this course by your Course Administrator then return your work only to him. If this course came to you direct from London then please post your work to:-

Stan Gain  
The Word Bible Training Course  
285 Montrose Avenue  
Welling  
Kent DA16 2QU  
ENGLAND

## **The Aim of the Firm Foundations Course**

In the Christian world there are estimated to be between one to one and a half **billion** adherents to the Christian faith.

Some are truly born again, spirit-filled disciples who are pressing on towards the goal for which Christ Jesus has called them (Philippians 3:14). Additionally there are many 'sincere' people who have made a genuine response to the Lord and are without question saved, but through lack of teaching and discipleship are still "babies in Christ" still drinking spiritual milk rather than eating solid spiritual food.

Far too many are Christian in name only and have had neither revelation of the Living God nor understand that they can have a personal relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. They are unregenerate (not born again). Many have not been challenged by the true claims of the gospel or the power of the Truth that would set them free. Many are held in the darkness of religion rather than the freedom of faith. Having a form of godliness but denying its power (2 Timothy 3:5)

**Exercise 1.** To show that you fully understand what it is to be born again write out your testimony of how you became a Christian.

The teaching in this course is based on the passage in Hebrews 6:1-3 which is written below for you to **Read and learn**.

"Therefore let us leave the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgement. And this we will do if God permits."

Many evangelists these days find that they are under pressure to get "results" when they preach the gospel. Modern experience shows that a successful evangelist always has people coming forward to respond to the gospel. This is not a biblical truth. The job of an evangelist is not to get results but to be faithful in preaching the **whole gospel**. A man that does this regardless of how many people respond will be successful in the Kingdom of God, and God will make his ministry fruitful. Because of this many people are accepted into the churches who are not necessarily saved.

The foundations mentioned in Hebrews 6:1-3, if properly taught to new Christians will give them a full assurance of faith and a security about their salvation. We do not wish to see those whom God has called spiritually under-fed.

**Exercise 2.** Write in your own words what you understand to be the gospel. Include in your answer the main steps that are needed to becoming a Christian.

The foundations of Hebrews chapter 6 appear to be something that the writer would expect every Christian to understand and to have as a part of their Christian life. He says we are to leave these foundations and go on. We are not to keep on laying again the same foundations but to have this teaching set firmly in our hearts, minds and experience so that we may go on in our growth to **maturity**.

There are six foundations mentioned in the passage which will form the basis of this twelve part Foundations Course:-

1. Repentance
2. Faith in God
3. Baptisms
4. Laying on of Hands
5. Resurrection of the Dead
6. Eternal Judgement

It may seem that some of these subjects are not the ones that you would choose to include in a course about foundations, but I am convinced from my experience of teaching that those who have all these issues settled in their hearts have a great confidence in God and security in their salvation.

These studies are for disciples - whether they are new Christians or have been saved for many years. They are written for training of leaders - pastors, teachers, evangelists, youth leaders, women's leaders etc. They are for the strengthening of leadership in the Church so that these foundations may be built into the teaching that is given to the members of the Church. Once you have learned these foundations - teach them! They focus on the following:-

- The person of Jesus Christ
- The redemptive work of Jesus Christ
- The practical steps that a person must take to receive Christ's redemption and to become a member of His people, the Church.
- The basic provisions that Christ has made for living the Christian life in all its fullness.
- The fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith which every serious Christian needs to know thoroughly.

As you begin these studies, approach them with an open heart and mind. Be teachable. Be prepared to let God speak to you about any foundational areas in your Christian life that may not be complete. Join the countless millions of brothers and sisters in all ages that have proved the strength of these teachings and have gone on to maturity.

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## **The Foundation of the Christian Faith**

**Read** the following passages and see what they have in common:-

Jude verse 20 - 1 Corinthians 3:9 - Ephesians 2:22

**Learn** at least one of these verses.

These and many other passages instruct us to **build** ourselves up in our Christian life. However the first and most important part of any building is not what is seen but what is not seen - the foundations. The depth and strength of the foundation determines the strength and height of the building that can be erected. A strong foundation can support a large and strong building. There is then a relationship between the foundations and the building.

In the same way it is true in our spiritual lives. If our foundations are not properly in place then the building of our Christian life will not be strong. Many Christians set out with full intentions of building a ministry but after a short time their Christian life begins to weaken and often what they build collapses completely leaving their faith in ruins. It lies buried beneath the rubble of broken promises, good intentions and unfulfilled prayers.

The reason? ..... **The foundations were not put in place!!**

**Exercise 3.** What practical steps do you think that you can take to make sure that you have the proper foundations in your Christian life?

There is an appointed foundation for the life of every believer and every community of believers as seen in this local church.

**Read and learn:-** 1 Corinthians 3:11

1 Peter 2:6 reads:- “Behold I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone (foundation), elect and precious and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.”

**Q.** Compare this verse with Isaiah 28:16. What do you think is this foundation for the church?

Both Old and New Testaments agree that the true foundation of the Church and therefore of the Christian life is Jesus Christ himself. Nothing else! It is not the church. It is not a set of beliefs. It is not your denomination. No ceremony. No ordination..... **NOTHING.**

It is Jesus Christ alone and “no-one can lay any other foundation.”

A study of Matthew 16: 13-18 would be helpful at this stage.

“When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, ‘Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?’ So they said ‘Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ He said to them ‘But who do you say that I am?’

And Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.’

‘And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.’

It has often been suggested (particularly by the Roman Catholic church) that these words of Jesus mean that Peter is the rock on which the foundation of the Christian Church is built rather than Christ himself. This question is of such vital importance that it needs including in any teaching about Christian foundations.

**Read** the following passages about the life of Peter. Some are taken before the Day of Pentecost (Acts chapter 2) and some after.

Matthew 16:13-23;

John 20:1-8

Acts 10:1-23

Matthew 26:69-75;

John 21:1-14

Acts 11:1-18

John 13:6-10

Acts 5:1-11

Acts 2:1-21

**Exercise 4.** Before continuing with this study using the above passages and looking for other references to Peter in the Gospels write in your own words what sort of man you think Peter was. What were his strengths and weaknesses? If you were in the position of building the Church as Jesus is would you choose a man like Peter as the main foundation?

**(FOR YOUR OWN REFLECTION AND NOT FOR SUBMISSION TO YOUR COURSE ADMINISTRATOR. As a leader in the church and one to whom the members look to for help and strength, take time to reflect on what you think are your own strengths and weaknesses. How can you strengthen yourself in areas of weakness?)**

It appears that the character and strength of Peter is neither more nor less than that of any other man and he is therefore not a suitable foundation for something as important as the building of the Church of Jesus Christ.

In verse 18 of Matthew 16 that we read above we see that Jesus refers to Simon Peter by his full name. Some have suggested that Jesus was giving a new name to him. However this name was already his as we see in Matthew 4:18. (also Matthew 10:2)

Jesus is using Peter's name as a parable to teach his disciples a truth about the church. He is not changing his name but making a serious point. To understand this we need to look at two Greek words which Jesus used in verse 18.

“Also I say to you that you are Peter (Greek **PETROS**) and on this rock (Greek **PETRA**) I will build my Church”

The meaning of these two different Greek words is as follows:-

**PETROS** - a detached stone or boulder, a stone that may be easily thrown or moved.

**PETRA** - a mass of rock

Jesus is definitely not establishing Peter as the foundation of the church but is contrasting Peter's strength with His own. What he is in effect saying is this:-

“Your name is small stone but I am solid rock. On the solid rock that you have been shown by revelation from my Father - that I am the Christ, the Son of the Living God - I will build my Church.”

It would be ridiculous for Jesus to build His church on a small stone or a boulder. Common sense and the Bible confirm this. If the Church were to be built upon Peter it would be the most insecure and unbalanced organisation in the world.

**Read** Psalm 62.

**Learn** verses 1, 2 and 7.

Our rock is God. Our salvation is from God. Nothing could be more clearly understood. These two are found in just one person - The Man Christ Jesus.

“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus”

### **Building with confidence**

Knowing that Jesus is the rock we can begin to learn how to build with confidence upon the rock. If we return to the moment that brought the statement from Peter, “*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!*” we can see exactly what happened between them. There are four stages to this encounter which places a man on the **rock**. These stages are necessary for everyone who wishes to build their Christian life with confidence. These four stages are as follows:-

1. Meeting - a face to face encounter with Jesus
2. Revelation - a spiritual God-given understanding
3. Acknowledgement - a confidence in our salvation
4. Confession - a speaking out of what we know

## **Read and Study** Romans 10:8-18

This passage underlines these four steps. It is impossible for us to take any of these steps for anyone else but ourselves. In leadership we can introduce people to Jesus but we cannot build their Christian life for them. Each man is responsible for their own destiny.

Romans 10:17 says that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Verse 14 asks how 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? This is the responsibility of all Christians and the particular responsibility of those in leadership.

### **Exercise 5.**

- A) Having studied Romans 10:8-18 describe what the passage says about the responsibility of 1) the leader and 2) the new disciple in taking the steps of **meeting, revelation, acknowledgement and confession** in the first days of the Christian life. What other Bible verse do you know to support your answer?
- B) What does it mean to have a personal faith in Jesus?

This individual and personal experience of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, revealed by the Holy Spirit, once acknowledged and confessed remains the **one** unchanging rock, the **one** unmovable foundation upon which all true Christian faith must be based.

Creeches, churches, denominations, men, opinions - all these may change, but this one true rock of God's salvation by personal faith in Jesus Christ remains eternal and unchanging. Upon it a person may build his faith with **confidence** and security that nothing can move.

### **Building on the Foundation**

We have established that we now have a firm foundation upon which to build. A sure foundation which cannot be moved.

- ? If you have any doubts about your own foundation please talk to or advise your
- ? Course Administrator or send a separate note to The Word Bible Training Course
- ? at the address on page 2.

The remaining studies in this Firm Foundation Course for leaders will look at the materials that we need to build a strong Christian life. Before we can finish this first study we must learn **how to build!**



**Read** Matthew Chapter 7 verses 24-27.

This passage is key to understanding how to build on our foundation.

The two buildings that are built represent our Christian lives. From the passage there is no difference between the houses on the outside. We can assume that both men had the same building materials available to them. We can assume that both men had the same tools to use and the same understanding about buildings. There is no difference that can be seen.

Each house has to withstand the same storm and wind and floods. Christianity is not a storm-free passage to heaven. We are told in Acts 14:22 that we must go through many tribulations to enter the kingdom of God. Any preaching of the Gospel that does not preach this truth is not the full Gospel. Is there any difference between the two houses?

Yes, there is a difference. One man has built his home on a firm foundation - Jesus describes this foundation as **rock!** We have already discovered that the rock upon which to build our life is Jesus. Here we are taught how to build on the rock.

“Whoever hears these sayings of mine **and does them** I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the ROCK”

It is not just enough to **hear** the word of God. Jesus continued:-

“Whoever hears these sayings of mine **and does not do them** will be like a foolish man who built his house on the SAND”

If in your churches your object is just to teach and preach, your ministry will not prosper. It is not enough just to educate your listeners. You must encourage them to put in to practice those things that you are saying.

If you have an animal that you feed and feed and feed but do not allow it to walk and exercise it will do nothing but grow fat. In the same way if all you are doing in your church is teaching and teaching and teaching but do not allow your people to put your words into practice they will not grow, neither will your church or your ministry.

**Learn** Philemon verse 6. The KEY word is:- **Active.**

“I pray that you will be **active** in sharing your faith so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing that we have in Christ”

Building on the **rock** consists quite simply of hearing and doing the words of Christ. Once the foundation - Christ the rock - is laid we begin to build by doing what we here Him say. Studying and applying His teaching to our lives.

It is God’s word alone - as we hear it and do it; as we study it and apply it - that will build up within us a strong secure faith that will not be shaken by the “storms of life”.

**Exercise 6.** Read through Jesus' teaching in The Sermon on the Mount - Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7. These words of Jesus are for us to put into practice. Now read them through a second time slowly and prayerfully. As you read them ask The Holy Spirit to show you any areas in this teaching that you are not practising in your own life. Before completing the last part of this study come to God in repentance and ask His forgiveness in Jesus Christ remembering that "If we confess our sin He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

### **The Word of God**

To finish this study, let us move on to a subject of utmost importance in the Christian faith. This is the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Bible. This will help us to understand the relationship between the Christian and the Bible.

**Read** John 1:1-5 and **Learn** John 1:14.

To whom or to what do these passages refer? The answer is in Revelation 19:11-16.

JESUS IS THE WORD OF GOD

**Read** 2 Peter 1:20-21 and Acts 20:28-35

To whom or to what do these passages refer? The answer is in 2 Timothy 3:16.

THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD

**Learn** 2 Timothy 3:16

The identity of the above name of Jesus reveals an identity of His nature. The Bible is the Word of God and Jesus is the Word of God.

Each alike is a divine, authoritative, perfect revelation of God. Each agrees perfectly with the other. The Bible perfectly reveals Christ and Christ perfectly reveals the Bible.

The Holy Spirit reveals God through His written Word, the Bible, also reveals God in the Word made flesh - Jesus. Therefore if we say that we love Jesus then this will be reflected in the way that we love His Word.

Jesus said "If any one loves me he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me does not keep my words."

Obeying the Word of God is not just a proof of discipleship.....

..... **it is a test of love!!!**

## Questions

1. What do you understand by the word “regeneration”?
2. What are the 6 elementary principles for a strong foundation in Hebrews 6:1-3?
3. How can we go on to maturity?
4. Write out one verse that talks about Christians “building themselves up”.
5. Why do some ministries and Christian lives collapse?
6. Who is the only firm foundation for the Church?
7. Who do you say that Jesus, the Son of Man is?
8. Explain the difference in meaning of the two Greek words **Petra and Petros**.
9. What are the four stages that place a man on the rock of Jesus Christ?
10. What is the responsibility of a preacher?
11. Are you certain of your salvation? What is it that gives you this certainty or uncertainty?
12. What do you understand to be the meaning of the parable of the two men who built their house in Matthew 7?
13. Is there anything in your ministry that could be regarded as “building on the sand” or is all that you do on the solid rock of Jesus?
14. How can you have a full understanding of the Word of God?
15. Which of the following is the Word of God: Jesus or the Bible?
16. What does 2 Timothy 3:16 say?
17. What do you think were the main strengths of Simon Peter/? What were his main weaknesses?
18. Complete this verse:- “But let each one take heed how he builds on it (the foundation). For no other foundation.....
19. What, if any, is the area of responsibility that you have in your local church?
20. Do you believe in the authority of the Word of God in your life?

# **THE WORD**

## **BIBLE TRAINING COURSE FOR LEADERS**

This Bible study is part of a course for developing the understanding of church leaders of the practical aspects of Christian Doctrine. It is written in simple language and attempts to avoid religious and theological words.

If there is any part of this study that you fail to understand or any phrase or word whose meaning you are not clear about then please ask either your Course Administrator or write to the address on page 2.

If you have any suggestions for future subjects for study we would like to hear from you.

If you know of others who may be interested in the course feel free to share the details with them. Freely you have received, freely give.

We would be pleased to hear from you if you have any additional comments about any aspect of this course.