

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Christianity Made Simple*! This book is composed of a series of short topics that are logically grouped together for the purpose of progressively facilitating an increase in the reader's spiritual maturity in terms of knowledge, wisdom, and understanding.

*For the Lord gives wisdom;
from his mouth comes knowledge and understanding.
He holds success in store for the upright,
He is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,
for He guards the course of the just
and protects the way of His faithful ones.
(Proverbs 2:6-8)*

Because this is a topical approach, the table of contents is purposely lengthy in order to facilitate use of this book as a quick reference guide. In other words, this is not a book to read and then put on a shelf to gather dust. It is packed full of information that may benefit the reader later in personal study, teaching, discipleship, or evangelism.

Topics

The content of *Christianity Made Simple* is designed to facilitate comprehension, contemplation, conviction, and inspiration. There are twelve major sections:

Fundamentals composed of five chapters: Foundations of Christianity, Aspects of Jesus, Christian Disciples, Core Teachings of Jesus, and the Spiritual Realm which present the basics.

Bible History composed of two chapters: Bible Origin and Biblical Archaeology which focus on history and archaeological discoveries that substantiate the integrity of the Bible.

Jewish Culture & Religion composed of three chapters: Culture, Worship, and Messiah which provide details that facilitate understanding the Old Testament and its interrelationship to the New Testament.

Make Disciples 1 – 12 Steps composed of five chapters: Essential First Steps, Communicate with God, Develop Character, Reach Out to Others, and Accountability which address the actions that a disciple of Jesus needs to take.

Make Disciples 2 – Maturity composed of three chapters: Disciple Making, Prayer & Fasting, and Bible Study which provide specific techniques to apply for some of the actions identified in Make Disciples 1 chapters.

Biblical Virtues composed of four chapters: Adversity, Good Works, Relationships, and the Heart which delve into application of the Fruit of the Spirit, Beatitudes, and the Theology virtues of faith, hope, and love.

Sin composed of two chapters: God's Perspective of Sin and Where's the Line which focus on a select group of sins and how God views sin relative to believers vs. unbelievers.

Theology composed of seven chapters: Disciplines of Theology, Interpretation Approaches, Covenants, Essentials of Doctrine, Prophecy, Visions & Dreams, and Biblical Imagery which address various aspects of theological studies.

Church History composed of two chapters: Dogma and Denominations which press in on the history of Christianity including conflicts and controversies.

Bible Books Overview composed of two chapters: Old Testament and New Testament which provide a short synopsis for each book in the Bible including trivia about authors.

Bible Events Chronology composed of three chapters: Old Testament Events, Old Testament Prophets, and New Testament Events. This presents the storyline of the Bible in an easy-to-read format organized chronologically with dates. Side notes regarding relevant world history, archeological sites/artifacts, and practices are included at relevant points in the storyline's chronology.

Controversial Topics composed of twelve chapters that use a biblical perspective to address sensitive subjects that can be sources of division and controversy within the body of Christ:

- Morality – Government vs. Religion.
- Distinctions – Christianity vs. Religions/Cults .
- Destiny – God's Sovereignty vs. Man's Free-Will.
- Rituals – Sacraments vs. Ordinances.
- Marriage – Secular vs. Biblical.
- Roles – Men vs. Women.
- Money – Tithes & Offerings vs. Giving.
- Practices – Piety vs. Prosperity.
- Worship – Sabbath vs. Sunday.
- Revelation – Four Views.
- Origin of America – Christian vs. Secular.

Targets

This book is designed to:

- Help readers experience a growth spurt in knowledge and understanding of core aspects of Christianity.
- Provide a wealth of information and insights that would typically take years to accumulate and absorb.
- Organize material in such a way that it can be quickly referenced in the future when questions arise.
- Provide helpful charts, inspiring scriptures, lists, and images to facilitate learning.
- Provide personal assessment tools including term/definition matching exercises for each section (located after the Controversial Topics section) and spiritual development checklists (imbedded in relevant section). If desired, try working the knowledge checks before and after reading.

*My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge;
because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you.
(Hosea 4:6)*

Objectives

Knowledge, wisdom, and understanding are important takeaways from reading this book; however, the primary objective is to facilitate encounters with God. There are endless encounter possibilities based on God's purpose and the reader's spiritual state. A few cause and effect examples include:

- Healing through brokenness arising from sense of God's presence.
- Spiritual renewal arising from inspiration by God.
- Desire to know God arising from recognition of God's grace.
- Repentance arising from conviction of sin.
- Zeal to serve God arising from new insights about God.
- Sense of purpose arising from connecting with God.
- Humility from experiencing the fear of God and elimination of pride.
- Maturity from struggles with challenged beliefs and acceptance of divine truths.

Whatever the cause and effect, God wants to interact with the reader in a unique way that confirms that He cares about every person.

Approach

This book inherently addresses four potential stages of the spiritual life:

The stage of **unbelief** is analogous to being single and alone. A person can encounter the individual that could be their spouse someday but be oblivious. 5% of this book is devoted to those who ignore or reject Christ and are unbelievers.

The stage of **belief** is analogous to dating. A person can be attracted to and go on a date with the individual that could become their spouse but not be prepared to make a commitment. 10% of this book is devoted to people who know about Christ and may even go to church but haven't committed their lives to Him.

The stage of **commitment** is analogous to newlyweds. A person who realizes that he wants to spend the rest of his life with a certain individual gives her a ring as a token of his commitment, weds her and learns how to abide with her. 30% of this book is devoted to people who have made a commitment to trust and obey Christ but must first learn how to function on a daily basis (abide) in this relationship.

The stage of **discipleship** is analogous to lifelong marriage. A person who has gone through the newlywed stage develops a secure and stable relationship but must still learn and make adjustments as required. 55% of this book is devoted to people who desire to learn and grow in their lifelong commitment to Christ.

*A little faith will bring your soul to heaven;
a great faith will bring heaven to your soul.*
Charles Haddon Spurgeon