



B.I.B.L.E. **Basic Instruction Before Leaving Earth**

By: Bonnie Terk

Parents often complain that children don't come with an instruction manual. They try to figure out why the infant is crying, when they've already been fed and had their diaper changed. They wonder why their three year old is biting, or the seven year old still sucks his thumb, or their teenager is rebellious. Life would be so much easier if only there was an instruction manual to give step by step instructions, with an index to problems, a troubleshooting section in the back and if all else fails, an 800 number to call for customer support!

So far, the best instruction manual for life, that I have found, is the Bible. One of my favorite t-shirts says it all, B.I.B.L.E., Basic Instruction Before Leaving Earth, I can only imagine how my life may have been different if my parents had used the instructions in the Bible for their lives. Our family might have been saved from the devastation of divorce, single mother parenting and financial struggles. My sisters and I would have been taught the Word and hopefully been spared some of the problems that we've had to deal with in our lives. If I had been taught, I could have taught my children while they were young. As far back as I can remember, going back to my Great Grandmother, I don't know of anyone in my immediate family who was a practicing Christian, therefore, I believe our family has seen generations of trials and tribulations that were unnecessary.

My Mother did what she thought was right. I was dropped off at Sunday school when I was five or six. I recall eating donuts but don't recall much of the teachings, since it wasn't reinforced in our home. Later in my adolescence, my Mother re-married and I recall us all going to the Catholic Church but never understood much of what was going on. As an adult when I started studying the Bible, I wondered where it had been my whole life. Actually, it was in the family cedar chest, safe and sound and hardly used.

If I have a problem with something mechanical, I am the type to try to figure it out before resorting to looking it up in the manual. It's only when I can't fix it on my own that I seek the manual. I was the same way with my life. As I studied God's Word, I was surprised to discover that almost every bad situation in my life could have been avoided, if I had known and followed the teachings of the Bible. In addition, if others in my life had followed those instructions, I believe the positive effects would have been amazing. I realized most of the problems and troubles in my life had been the direct result of committing a sin, either mine or by someone else.

God doesn't promise us a trouble free life, rather, he instructs us to avoid sin, because it adds to our troubles. When those troubles arise, he encourages us to give them up to him, to seek his Words of instruction and to have faith. "The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you." (Psalm 9:9-10, NIV).

We all came into this world with a manual and Jesus gave us all the basic instructions before he left earth. It's up to us to choose to read it. My study Bible contains an index by subject, a concordance for troubleshooting and just in case, I need it, I can call upon Jesus, toll free, for customer support.