

Air Bags

(Study The Word)

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman who needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. II Timothy 2:15

The Basic Bible Truth

Life is complicated and full of surprises. Each day we see new trials and tests blocking our path and we wonder how we are to respond. For the Christian, there is a handbook called the Bible. If we will study it and familiarize ourselves with its truth, the questions that arise each day often have answers that God has already put into print for us to see. But we have to be reading and studying to find them. Everything we need to truly succeed in life is written in the pages of the Bible—everything! But too many of us set our Bibles up on a shelf and simply use them as bookends. We have a treasure trove of information at our fingertips, given by God specifically for us to use to govern our lives and live His way.

The Object

Lightweight Air Bags



These lightweight bags can be purchased online through suppliers of educational materials like Steve Spangler Science. They operate on a scientific effect called Bernoulli's principle. We could get into a discussion of fluid dynamics at this point, but I won't. Basically, the key to this demonstration is that the most commonly thought of method to inflate the long tube is similar to the way one might blow up a balloon. Bernoulli's principle allows for a far more efficient method of inflating the bag. If done correctly, one big huff and puff of air, and it is filled to capacity.

The Lesson

As we begin, I typically ask for volunteers to participate in a race against me. After picking a few participants, I issue each a plastic bag, and inform them that we are going to race to see who can fill their air bag full first. We lay our bags out on the table, this makes progress easier to see, and tie the far end of each shut. On your marks. Get set. Go. And they are off huffing and puffing on their air bags, trying to fill them much like one would fill a balloon. I, on the other hand, begin talking about the lesson. They may stop in disbelief thinking I am not in the race after all, but I assure them that I indeed am in the race. I carefully watch their progress, as I easily have a few minutes to talk before I need to act. After they have huffed and puffed for awhile it is hard not to trash talk them a bit.

As we go through life, we will undoubtedly face many obstacles that we may have never seen before. It is the challenge of every Christian to continue to walk in the straight and narrow path that Jesus commands us to follow. The key word here is "follow". Jesus has gone before us and demonstrated what the Godly life is to look like, and how we are to react to circumstances in which we find ourselves. But how will we

know what to do if we have no first hand knowledge of the issues that we may be facing for the first time? We follow. And that requires that we watch a leader traverse the gauntlet successfully first. Then we may follow. Jesus has gone before us and blazed an amazing, perfect trail for us to follow.

There are no justifiable shortcuts in life. The most difficult lessons to learn take time. We can be good students, but they still require a commitment to stick with it and a willingness to learn. Moses spent 40 years in the desert before God had him where He could use him as a leader of His people. He was 80 years old when he walked in Pharaoh's court. Daniel was 90 when he was thrown into the lion's den. God painstakingly prepared these men for their place in history.

Now with the written Word at our fingertips, we have a distinct advantage over the Old Testament saints. We can look at their successes and failures in detail and study each and every step that they made and learn from their lives. And make no mistake, it does take study to accomplish this. Listening to a preacher give a good sermon is an excellent effort, but personal time in the Word will accomplish much more. The pastor may have doctorate initials behind his name, but his words are simply that—his own words. The Bible, however, does not just contain the Words of God, it *is* the Word of God. Taking His Word directly into our lives is so much more effective than we can possibly imagine.

I could show you many photographs that I have taken of my work over the years. I am a woodworker by trade and have had the privilege of working in some of the finest homes in the nation. My photographs show finished product and display our capabilities to a large degree, and you could probably learn some basic woodworking skills from my verbal descriptions. But, I have had many people over the years ask if they could come and work for me for free on their vacation, just to learn some of the technical skills that they want to perfect. Going to the source is much more effective. And so it is with God's Word. Personal time in the Word is never, ever wasted time.

God has ingeniously placed in the pages of Scripture all that we need to know about life and how to live it. It's like a giant manual for life. My daughter recently purchased a new car. I saw her soon after that, sitting down and reading through the entire manual that came with the car. It was extremely helpful. She learned many things about the car that the salesman had not bothered to explain to her. I recall a comic strip called "Frank and Earnest" many years ago, and in one comic panel, Frank was lamenting that it wasn't bad enough the Earnest didn't know what was going on, but that he didn't even suspect anything! How many go through life with no knowledge of God's plans and, in reality, don't even suspect anything.

Back to the air bag race. As I watch their progress, sometimes with a little taunting on the side, I wait until just before the first candidate is finished, pick up my bag, hold it about 6 inches from my face, and blow one big breath into the bag. The Bernoulli effect will use the surrounding air pressure differential to force a tremendous amount of air into the bag, filling it in just one second. I clamp the end off and proudly proclaim myself the winner.

I then make a simple comparison to the challenges in life. We can do it the hard way, like most of the unsaved world does, or we can do it God's way, which is always much better. But we can do it God's way only if we know what His way actually is. And that requires study on our part. Armed with the knowledge of Bernoulli's Principle, anyone can win the bag of air contest. Armed with the knowledge of God's Word, anyone can win in the game of life.

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