An amazing discovery was made in Australia. A nugget of gold about nine inches long and weighing over twelve pounds was found by a guy who thought he had unearthed a car hood, until he saw the gold worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. What is fantastic about the gold find was that it was right in an area where hundreds of others had also searched. But, the treasure went to the one person digging in exactly the right spot.

All over the world people find nuggets of gold within easy reach. Another example is a California man who found an eight-pound nugget using nothing but the basic tools of metal detector, pick, and shovel or the treasure hunter in Mexico who found a huge boot-shaped nugget weighing over 32 pounds... yes pounds!

We’ve all, at one time or another, been reading through the Bible and discovered a wonderful truth just sitting there waiting to be discovered. We literally find spiritual gold, a treasure from God Himself. But, for many of us, that blessing is all too infrequent.

We have questions but don’t know how to find the answers on our own. We’d like to hear from the Lord more directly. We listen, but He just doesn’t seem to be speaking our language. What the Bible says to us and how we should apply it to our everyday lives is a mystery we can’t seem to solve.

This book will show you how to see more nuggets of blessing. You’ll learn to notice deposits of teaching, follow veins of truth into deeply dug shafts of learning, and have a complete mining system of better understanding.

No one has ever gotten rich in gold treasure by mining with a spoon. So, you’ll learn how to use proven Bible study methods and tools to dig deep and get real gold out of God’s Word. That’s what this book is all about.

You’re going to discover the amazing treasure God has in store for your personal Bible study. You’ll go way beyond just accidently seeing a blessing or two. You’ll know how to search out, find, and dig deeply into the words of truth the Bible holds for you personally.
How I Started Prospecting

Digging into God’s Word is a fantastic adventure I’ve enjoyed for over 45 years. I was in college and angry at the world – angry at my Mom and Dad for divorcing after 25 years of marriage; angry at my friends for not being, what I considered, true to my needs; angry at myself for not being more emotionally stable; and mostly angry at God for making me the way I was with all my problems, challenges, and shortcomings. In fact, I was so angry that I was actively planning the murder of my own father and the end of my own life. I believed that would show everyone, including God, just how seriously angry I was.

One night a fellow student met with me and patiently explained just how much God loved me. I learned that God not only loved me a little bit – He loved me enough to provide His own precious, sinless Son to die a terrible death on the cross specifically for me – to pay the penalty that my sin (especially my sin of anger) deserved.

As that young man shared the wondrous love and grace of Christ with me, I specifically remember being impressed at how he quoted the Bible at every point of his witness and in response to my every question or objection. Yes, I was impressed with his knowledge and memory. But, I was even more impressed with what the Bible had to say. It was as if this young man had discovered pure gold and he was freely sharing it with me.

I responded to the gospel message as millions have throughout time immemorial. As soon as the young man left my room, I thanked Christ for paying the death penalty I deserved because of my many, many sins and asked Him to be the dominant force in my life as my Lord. I praise God not only for the saving of my soul that very night, but quite literally saving my life and my Dad’s.

Within days of discovering what I had done, that same young man gave me my first Bible and suggested I read it. He also showed me his own Bible and suggested I mark “any part that spoke to me” with colored pens. Well, I read, and read, and read. I read in my room, I read in the library, I read before my classes, I read while waiting in the lunch line. I read – and I marked. In fact, by the end of two years I had to get a new Bible because there were entire sections that “had spoken” to my heart. God was speaking to me so much it got so that I couldn’t hear Him anymore because my colored pen markings got in the way and I couldn’t even read some pages for all the marks, underlines, scribbles, and notes. I was learning how to dig into God’s Word and enjoy every nugget of treasure I discovered.

That life-changing decision made back in January, 1968 quieted my anger, replaced it with peace, and launched my life into a wonderful adventure of discovery. An adventure I teach
as a 12-week, Bible Study Methods course at the Silverdale Bible Institute in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

**How This Mining Guide Works**

The methodologies in this book come from years of schooling, seminars, ministry staff training, and personal experimentation. I agree completely with Ecclesiastes 1:9 when it says, “That which has been is that which will be, And that which has been done is that which will be done. So there is nothing new under the sun.” Many of the methods in this book are not original with me. What I have attempted is a unique way of organizing them into an understandable system… literally a system of mining gold from God’s Word.

Each lesson contains blanks for the student to make notes. These notes should be taken during the class presentations. There are also open spaces for assignments and personal thoughts. Do the homework for the next lesson as best you can. If you get stuck try looking at the next lesson’s notes… that might help you along. Otherwise, find the gold God has for you and come to the next class ready to share your observations and discoveries.

**Why This Course?**

I love a statement used by The Navigators to sum up the purpose of the Christian life in six words… “Knowing God and Making Him Known.” Many of us may have the desire to make Him known but understand that knowing Him more fully needs to come first. This desire can bring real struggle because we just don’t know how to go about the task. And pastors, preaching from a Sunday pulpit, don’t have the time or structure to go deeply into the methodology of spiritual growth. This can lead to frustrated believers who have a desire for a closer walk but stumble, become discouraged, and all too often just give up.

This is exactly why Silverdale Baptist Church started the Bible Institute – to offer serious believers a structure for serious study. This course is part of that institute.

Besides just knowing God, there are many believers who have a genuine desire to make Him known by sharing the gospel with friends, family, and neighbors. But they hesitate. There’s fear of questions, fear of objections, fear of making mistakes when sharing Biblical content. Where can I go for answers? How can I find the information I need from the Word? I don’t want to mess up my friend’s understanding of God, so I will remain quiet and try to get them to go to church where a “professional” will give the gospel and reap the harvest.
It is the objective of these lessons and this workbook to assist any believer, no matter what level of education or intellect, to be able to discover:

**Nuggets** of blessing, defined as an easily seen truth sitting in plain sight where no real digging is needed – A Biblical Treasure that’s simple to see and obvious in the Scriptural text.

**Deposits** of truth, defined as those commands, lessons, and truths found in the area immediately surrounding a discovered Nugget – Blessings found in the text before and after a found nugget.

**Veins** of God’s revelation, defined as a line of inquiry using basic tools to investigate a point of interest – Following a word, concept, or doctrine through the Scriptures digging for personal treasure and application.

**Shafts** of deep insight, defined as a point of study where tools are used to go deep into meaning, understanding, and application – A deeper Bible Study using more sophisticated tools and methods.

**Complete Mine Systems** of understanding from the Word of God, defined as a group of shafts of study with central doctrinal – theological themes or organized groups of notes from various shaft studies of Scripture representing a more comprehensive study of Biblical themes.

These will absolutely help in a person’s fellowship with the Lord, and give confidence in sharing discovered treasures with others both inside and outside the faith. We know this
can make a huge impact in your faith and Christian walk from the many, many comments we’ve received from former students.

The tools are there for any believer to use. Ephesians 6:10-17 describes the spiritual war we fight every day and lists the equipment every believer needs to successfully fight that war…

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.” (emphasis added)
I would submit that the only offensive weapon in the list above is the Word of God. We could easily use it as the only tool. When facing our enemy, Satan, or when sharing Christ with others, the only effective tool we possess is the Bible. Therefore, learning how to use that tool to the best advantage is essential to any Christ-follower.

2 Timothy 2:15 commands every Christian to, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”

What does “diligent” mean? You may have read that verse a hundred times and never asked yourself that question. A Bible study tool we’ll talk about in Lesson Four is the Merriam Webster’s Dictionary. It defines “diligent” as, “characterized by steady, earnest, and energetic effort.” Would this describe your personal Bible Study?

This book teaches what’s involved in applying steady, earnest, and energetic effort in searching for spiritual treasure, the process of being a workman, and the tools we use to accurately handle the Bible.

The following pages will help you handle a number of tools for digging into God’s Word, then finding, processing, and polishing the treasures of truth. That’s Gold!
We’ll look at basic tools and more advanced tools – all to help dig more deeply and find much more spiritual satisfaction from your Bible. The mining metaphor is a perfect picture for our purposes. In the Lessons to come you’ll learn how to choose the right territory in which to find treasure, how to make and maintain your treasure map, and know the differences between Nuggets, Deposits, Veins, Shafts, and Complete Mine Systems!

It is my goal that at the end of these pages you will be “equipped” for digging and be ready to begin a more enjoyable mining experience.

**Respect Not Worship**

Throughout this entire course we will discuss the importance of the Bible in the Christ-follower’s life. We’ll see in the next lesson that God has gone to supernatural lengths to give us a trustworthy guide to His plan, desires, and instructions. I strongly agree with the Baptist Faith and Message, © June 14, 2000 that says, “The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.”

It is extremely important to stress that for all the care, deference, and respect for the Bible as God’s inspired Word to us, we DO NOT worship it. God has given us these pages as a gift of communicating as the verses on the cover of this mining guide suggest. We will see in the next lesson that the Bible is the ONLY place we can go to find the divinely inspired, complete instruction for our lives as believers. I want to make it crystal clear the book is NOT divine. It IS divinely inspired.

It is my prayer that the mining methods in the following Lessons would radically change your perspective on personal Bible study. And that your walk with Christ would deepen and broaden with each lesson you put into practice.

The ultimate purpose of this book IS NOT to help you know the Bible better. It IS NOT even to help you be a better Bible student. It IS to help you know God in a more direct and intimate way. Can you dig it?
It is vital for every Christian to know how to study the Bible. You should be able to dig into God’s Word yourself to glean and to gain all the riches that the Bible contains.

John MacArthur