3. Responsibility to be obedient to publishing the Scriptures by printing:
   (a) The Word of God cannot REPRODUCE itself. A Bible cannot produce a Bible. That is why God has given the church the responsibility to preserve His Word and reproduce it.
   (b) The word of God cannot move itself. It needs a carrier. It may be by plane, by truck, by mail, or by a missionary.
   (c) Missionaries need the Word of God to get the job done (Romans 10:17).

Few Scriptures produce little work. Much Scriptures produce much work. To effectively reach this world for Christ, it must be done so with the printed page, the very Word of God.

TO SUMMARIZE
NATIONAL BIBLE PUBLISHING MONTH

NBPM is an opportunity for you to be involved in an effort to provide enough paper to produce Bibles and New Testaments for missionaries serving in places where Bibles are difficult or impossible to obtain. In reality, *NBPM* is an opportunity for you to have a part in the eternal rewards that come from multitudes of people receiving the glorious Gospel in their language. It is also an opportunity for you to be personally involved with the publishing of God's Word for those without it.

TEACHER NOTES:

TEACHER GUIDE NOTES

We have seen in the previous three lessons that God wanted to reveal Himself to mankind, and He ultimately did so through the written Word of God. Then, we saw that something as valuable as His Word should be handled in a very specific way. We also saw that if that were going to take place consistently, then a very particular group of people should be involved in the process. Now, we are going to look at the next step. Why did God command His people to produce His Word to an entire world?

There can be no debate that God expects every Christian to publish His words to people who have not heard. There are many verses that teach us that truth. Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:44-47, and Acts 1:8 are just a few to which we commonly refer. The part of publishing Scriptures that has been greatly left out in the modern era of the church (which was a part of life to the early Christians) is the copying and passing on of the Scriptures they received. Today, we seem content to leave the care, sanctity, and publishing of God's most Holy Book to those whom God never intended to involve in the first place ("strangers" - Ezekiel 44:1-8).

What position in your church would you be comfortable allowing a lost person to fill? For example, would you place an advertisement in the paper asking for individuals to come apply for the position of Sunday School teacher, youth pastor, or deacon at your church? Would you have them apply for a position in the nursery? Would you allow someone who is lost to come in and be involved with something as priceless as one of your precious children? Would you allow people to submit a bid to do the job of one of those positions at your church, and then fill the position by taking the lowest bid? We would never dream of doing something so foolish. Those people may be lost. They may not even be a member of your church, so why would they have your best interest in mind? Some may even say they could never do something so foolish because it goes directly against the plan described by God in His Word for appointing a man to the office of deacon.

All those reasons not to do something so foolish would be valid. Why then do we do that very thing with something as precious as the Word of God? We out source out its production to businesses, simply because they are the lowest bidder to do the job. We allow Bible societies, who employ many lost people, to produce it. It is no wonder there is such controversy and confusion surrounding "which Bible." This would not have happened if the intended people would have done the task that God gave—to protect, preserve, and publish His Holy Word.

LESSON **FOUR**

God's Purpose For Providing His Word to Every Generation

In this lesson, we will look at three examples of what God expected His people to do with the truths He had given.

I. Publish the Word in print so others may read it for themselves. (Habakkuk 2:2)

God had a message He wanted Habakkuk to convey to a group of people. This time, instead of just telling Habakkuk the message and he relaying it orally to the people, God did something different. To help Habakkuk's message be most productive and powerful, God instructed him to write it down. There was much benefit in the written message to go along with the spoken message.

A. Written for CREDIBILITY. The vision (Word of God) that God was giving was of such importance he had to write it down ("Write"). It was not enough that Habakkuk just tell the people what God said, he had to put it into print. Writing is a more permanent, accurate, and a safer method of seeing that God's Word is carried to the next generation.

B. Written for CLARITY. The vision (Word of God) that Habakkuk wrote was to reveal clearly ("plain") what God wanted them to receive. Without clear understanding, there could be no application.

C. It was written for CONVICTION. The vision (Word of God) that God was giving was of such importance that it was to be responded to immediately ("run").

II. Publish the Word in print so that all can obey it (Romans 16:25-26).

There is much value in every word that God wrote (II Tim. 3:16). The Apostle Paul makes reference to this fact in Romans 16:25-26. Each section of Scripture brings valuable information to the believer.

A. Grounding in the Word of God (spiritual maturity) comes through receiving all the Scriptures (verse 25).
   1. According to my Gospel - Pauline Epistles
   2. Preaching of Jesus Christ - Gospels
   3. Revelation of the mystery - Revelation
   4. Scriptures of the prophets - Prophetical Books
   5. Commandment of the everlasting God - Pentateuch
   6. Made known to all nations - Great Commission

B. Going with the Word of God has a two-fold plan.
   "...to all nations for the obedience of faith"
   1. Requires Scripture TRANSLATION for all nations (Romans 10:17).
   2. Requires Scripture PUBLISHING to all nations.

III. Publish the Word in print so that the church can send it (Colossians 4:16).

Just as God showed Habakkuk, there are some things the written Word can provide to the receiver that a spoken message alone does not. We can never get away from the fact that the church is supposed to be sending out messngers. Jesus told us to pray for more laborers (Mat. 9:28). Now, more than ever, our focus needs to be directed toward sending out **messengers**. In an effort to help in their effectiveness, we must equip the messengers and send them with the **message** in the language of the people they are going to win.

A. The written Word of God was to be a part of their lives ("when this epistle is read").

B. The written Word of God that they received was the result of someone being OBEDIENT to God's commands to provide it for them. What they received was not to stay with them. They were to copy it and pass it on ("cause that it be read also").
   1. Results of being obedient to publish the Scriptures by printing:
      (a) Publishing Scriptures is the key that unlocks the door of understanding (Psalm 111:10; John 14:21). Understanding comes from doing. Doing is putting into practice what you believe. How can you even begin the process without receiving God's Word for yourself?
      (b) The published Scriptures ("truth") make Jesus Christ known to the world (John 16:12-13; 17:17).
      (c) Anything spoken and written down by God is ALIVE today (inspiration) (Matthew 22:31-32). Jesus made reference to Exodus 3:6. This was a passage written some 1500 years earlier, yet Jesus said it was God speaking to them for today.
      (d) Putting published Scriptures into practice is the key to realizing the power of God in a person's life (Matthew 22:29).
   2. Reasons to be obedient to publishing the Scriptures by printing:
      (a) The Word of God endures. It can lay on a shelf, in a drawer, or in a closet waiting until it is needed and wanted.
      (b) The Word of God never needs a furlough. It stays on the job twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, three hundred sixty-five days year.
      (c) The Word of God never needs a visa to cross the border, and never needs to leave the country to renew a visa.
      (d) The Word of God never grows old, weary, or tired, for it never loses its power.
      (e) The Word of God will continue to work even when we are not there.