



**THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS
PURE, ENDURING FOREVER.
THE ORDINANCES OF THE
LORD ARE SURE AND
ALTOGETHER RIGHTEOUS.
THEY ARE MORE PRECIOUS
THAN GOLD, THAN MUCH
PURE GOLD; THEY ARE
SWEETER THAN HONEY THAN
HONEY FROM THE COMB.**

PSALM 19:9-10

Introduction

The word *Bible* simply means “book.” But this is no ordinary book. It has appealed to people from every tribe and nation throughout the ages. No other book has so changed individuals and transformed societies. The Bible is actually a collection of 66 books, written over a span of more than 1,500 years, with at least 40 different authors from different countries, social levels, and occupations.

Yet this book has a unity and cohesion that leaves a discerning person only one logical explanation: There is ONE AUTHOR and that Author is the great I AM. Almighty God! Of all the inspired books ever written, only this Book can claim with credibility to be the fully inspired Word of God. Let’s look at this amazing Book.

The Bible is a Book that... Transforms Human Hearts

No other book has so altered history. The Bible has guided leaders, influenced educators, healed the broken-hearted, and transformed the hearts of millions of people. The Bible reveals how to live our lives according to God’s precepts. It has given moral stability to cultures, formed the basis for religions, and provided a foundation of truth for science and law. How can the Bible do this? Because it reveals the message of life that can transform individuals, who in turn impact their world.

Augustine lived over 31 years in virtual torment as he sought answers to his philosophical searching, release from the strong desires of his flesh, and peace in his heart. One day in the privacy of a garden in Milan, he heard a small child say, “Take and read! Take and read!” So he picked up God’s Word and read. He was transformed by “the power of God” (Romans 1:16), the word which is “living and active” (Hebrews 4:12). He soon became an influential leader for the Church. His writings continue to influence Christian thinkers. His is a story that has been repeated over and over throughout history.

Through God’s Word, we can be...

- **born spiritually** by its power (1 Peter 1:23)
- **nourished** by its sustenance (Matthew 4:4)
- **cleansed** by its truth (Ephesians 5:26)
- **encouraged** by its wisdom (Joshua 1:8-9), and
- **satisfied** by its goodness (Psalm 119:103)

Why does the Bible have such power to transform lives? Because it points us to the Bread of Life, the Giver of Life, the Sustainer of Life—Jesus Christ, God’s one and only Son.

The Bible is a Book that... Reveals the Work of God

The word *revelation* means “unveiling.” God has divinely revealed Himself — made Himself known — to mankind in a general way through His creation. The psalmist

MAN DOES NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT COMES FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD

MATTHEW 4:4

declared: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (Psalm 19:1). The Apostle Paul warns people that anyone who ignores the witness of creation and denies the existence of God is without excuse (Romans 1:19-21).

The Bible reveals that from the beginning God has also desired to make Himself known to each of us in a personal, intimate way. When He made Adam and Eve, He walked and talked with them in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1 and 2). With deliberate disobedience, they turned their backs on Him. Their sin brought terrible consequences for everyone.

In the Old Testament, God sometimes revealed Himself directly to people. He appeared and spoke to Abraham (Genesis 12:7); He spoke to Moses out of the burning bush (Exodus 3:1-6). At other times, He sent angels as messengers, as when Gabriel came to the prophet Daniel (Daniel 9:20-21). God's message also came through visions and dreams (Genesis 28:12-16; Daniel 7).

The Bible is a Book that ... Communicates the Heart of God

One of God's most common methods of communicating has been through His prophets. The word *prophet* means "mouthpiece" or "spokesperson." But the greatest spokesperson came at God's appointed moment in history when He sent His Son: "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son..." (Hebrews 1:1-2a).

Jesus walked the earth speaking the truth. In John 14:6, He says, "I am...the truth." After He was crucified (to pay the penalty due for all of mankind's sin against God's perfect, righteous standard), He was resurrected by divine power which proved that God the Father was satisfied with the penalty His Son had paid. Finally, after Jesus ascended into heaven, God the Father sent His Holy Spirit to bear witness to His Son and to His Word, and to empower His Church for service (Acts 1:8).

The Bible is a Book that ... Contains Unique Teachings

God: Most religions believe in many gods or in a single god who reigns alone. But the Biblical concept of one God in three Persons (the Trinity) is unique to Christianity. The Bible is the only trustworthy account of God's nature as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Christ: Never before or since Christ has there been a record of a perfect person. Many religions have savior images, but none matches the unique claim of Christianity that the Almighty (the only true and living God) became a Person, without sin, that He might die and rise from the dead so that everyone who believes in Him might live eternally (John 1:12; 3:16).

Humankind and Salvation: According to many religions, humans are either gods or worthless. The Bible is unique in its balanced view. Humans are not divine but originally created in the image of God. We are not gods, but can share in God's divine plan. Every person who ever lived is so valuable to God that He was willing to sacrifice His only Son to

**I DELIGHT IN YOUR
DECREES; I WILL NOT
NEGLECT YOUR WORD.****PSALM 119:16**

restore the broken relationship between humankind and Himself. The Bible tells us that through our faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice we are forgiven and restored. More than that, we are promised a future glory surpassing all imagination (1 Corinthians 2:9). Other religions are man's attempts to reach up to God. In Christ alone, God reaches down to man. We need only cry out to Him for help. Just reach out to receive. Have you? Will you?

The Bible is a Book that ... Endures Forever for the Glory of God

Although there have been attempts from the earliest days of the Christian era to destroy the Scriptures, the popularity of the Bible continues unabated to this very day.

Thomas Paine predicted that the Bible would soon be an extinct species. He said, "When I get through there will not be five Bibles left in America." And yet today, if one were to count the number of homes that have five or more copies, they would be met with an insurmountable task.

Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Luke 21:33). In the study ahead, we will consider some reasons why the Word of God has endured for generations, why one can believe it is uniquely inspired, and why its dynamic, life-changing power is just as effective today as it was when it was written over 1,500 years ago. The Bible has been studied by more people and published in more languages than any other book and remains the most widely-read book in the world. Its influence has been so vast and all pervasive through the centuries that if every copy were somehow destroyed today, it could be restored in its major parts by gleaning quotations from books found in the public library.

Summary

Imagine our loss if God's self-disclosure to humanity had not been recorded! The greatest story in the world would have been hopelessly mixed with centuries of man's ideas and theories—mere legends and myths. THANK GOD for preparing, giving, and preserving the Bible. It is the only true account of God's divine plan of redemption. Through it, we can know the will of the Father and His loving plan for the people He created. No wonder people have called this precious book God's "love letter" to the world—to you and to me.

Spending Time With God

This six-week study series is entitled "God's Amazing Book." The devotion questions are written for your personal study. The discussion questions are designed for small groups. Members who answer the questions ahead of time can bring more insight into their small group meeting. The digging deeper questions are for those who wish for more personal or small group study. As you spend time with God, may His Word enrich your life and enhance your daily walk with Him. Begin by praying to God for understanding as you earnestly seek to *know Him better*.

Devotion (Personal Study)

1. What one insight from this week's sermon or commentary especially spoke to you?

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2. Read the following Scriptures and record how the Bible is different from every other book.

Psalm 119:89

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Psalm 119:97-100

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3. Using a dictionary, define *law* and *commandments* (You may want to compare with a Bible dictionary.)

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4. Read Exodus 19:5-6; 20:1-20. In your own words describe why God gave the Ten Commandments.

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5. The phrase *The Word of God* is a good parallel to the Old Testament use of the word *Law*. Read Psalm 19:7-14, noting how David loved God's Word. Record the verses that best express your feeling about Scripture, and tell why. Pray for God to deepen your love for His Word.

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Discussion (Small Group Study)

6. Complete this sentence: "If God didn't leave us with the Bible, I think these things would be different in my life, in the Church, or in the world..."

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7. Read Isaiah 55:10-11. Give an example of a time that God's Word has significantly changed your life or corrected your direction.

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8. Read the story of Josiah (2 Kings 22:1-20; 23:1-25). How did God's Word alter his path?

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9. Read Hebrews 4:12-13. Restate these truths in your own words.

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10. It has been said that God's Word has always been central to great revivals of the past. Can you think of an example of this truth, either in Scripture or in history? Take a few minutes to pray that God would bring a Word-centered revival in our day.

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Digging Deeper (Further Study)

11. Think about the promise in 1 Peter 1:24-25 "... the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands for ever." It is amazing to consider how God's Word has survived and thrived despite opposition on earth. Do you think we will find God's Word also in heaven? Explain.

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12. People often think of the "God of the Old Testament" as harsh and unforgiving in contrast with the "God of the New Testament." However, what do the following verses say about the unchanging nature of the God of the Bible: Exodus 34:5-7a; Lamentations 3:22-23; John 3:16-17

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13. Read Psalm 136. Now list at least two reasons the Israelites were thankful to God for His love. In what ways have you seen God's steadfast love demonstrated in your life?

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14. After the Israelites settled in Canaan, they turned away from God to idols. God sent them prophets again and again in an effort to win them back. Read Jeremiah 3:1 and Hosea 3:1. What did these prophets say that the unfaithful Israelites were like? What does this tell you about God?

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15. Read Isaiah 62:5b and Revelation 19:7-9. What is God's ultimate plan for all who believe? Pray for God to open our eyes to the greatness of His love for us (as did Paul in Ephesians 3:16-19).

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"Knowing the Word of God and obeying it will bring joy to your heart, the kind of joy you would have if you found a buried treasure or inherited a fortune. Along with joy, you will experience love, peace and hope — treasures money cannot buy." — Warren Wiersbe

SCRIPTURE FOR MEDITATION
...I LOVE YOUR COMMANDS MORE THAN GOLD, MORE THAN PURE GOLD...
PSALM 119:127