

"God's Word"

Of all the books in the world, no book is so holy and so true as the Bible. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to see many important reasons to hear and to follow the Bible. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scripture for God's will. The Scriptures show themselves to be true time and again! God gave us this unique and marvelous book to be the source of the truth that leads to eternal life. No other book has so many prophecies, practical advice, or relevance. The Scripture gives us the wisdom that we need to live as Christians and as heirs of eternal life in a world that doesn't always understand or appreciate us. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

God gave us His word so that we might know Him, know His heart, know His will for our lives, know His promises, and know His warnings. No book ancient or modern provides the exhaustive spiritual wisdom found in Scripture. It provides what we most need. God knows us better than we know ourselves, and He knows what we need. God has reserved the right to govern and to judge man by the words written in the Scriptures. And this should cause us to study and apply every word carefully.

And I challenge you to read the entire Bible. Reading God's Word and hearing His wisdom and His truth is the most valuable way to use your time. 1 Peter 2 verses 1 to 3 says, "Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you've tasted the kindness of the Lord." I hope you hunger and thirst for God's Word. Nothing else will bless you more than knowing and practicing the will of God!

We offer this study of God's Word free. And if you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our telephone number it's toll-free. And that number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Psalm 1, and then we'll explore the value of God's Word.

Our reading comes from the book of Psalms. Psalm 1, the first six verses. "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish." That's a reading from God's holy word.

Let's pray together. "Heavenly Father, help us to be people who delight in You word, and in doing Your will, and in following You and loving You, and keeping steadfast in Your ways. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen."

What is your delight? What is it you look forward to each day? The psalmist said the blessed person has a delight "in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night." The more one studies the word of God, the more they will become a delight. David said in Psalm 19 verse 10, "They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb."

Romans 1 and verse 2 calls the Bible the "holy Scriptures," and 2 Timothy 3:15 calls them the "sacred writings." Repeatedly, the Scriptures claim to be the very word of God. Henry Morris estimates that the Old Testament claims to be the word of God some 2600 times. The Lord Jesus considered the events of the Old Testament to be real history. And Jesus took Jonah's three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish as historical. Jesus used the punishment of Lot's wife as a means to warn his disciples not to turn back (Lk. 17:32). There's no evidence that Jesus ever regarded the creation, the flood, the crossing of the Red Sea, or any other story of the Bible as a myth or fable.

Jesus underscored the truthfulness of the book of Genesis when He referred to the "beginning" of creation as the time when a man and a woman were created and joined together by God in marriage. Jesus said, "But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.' So they're no longer two but one flesh. And what therefore God has joined together, let not man separate" (Mark 10 verses 6 to 9). By quoting from the creation account in Genesis, Jesus acknowledged its authority and truth. By using the words "What God has joined together..." He recognized God to be the author of these Genesis writings.

No one can destroy the word of God, because no one can conquer God. Just like God, the Scriptures are everlasting. Psalm 119:89 says, "Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven." The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."

The apostle Peter calls the word of God an imperishable seed. 1 Peter 1:22 to 25 says, "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. For, 'All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord endures forever.' And this is the word which was preached to you." Yes, the word of God is here to stay and will last till the end of time.

The Bible contains the mind and heart of God. We can know God best by reading the Bible. He loves us and has always wanted the best for us. 1 Timothy 2:3 to 4 says, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." From the beginning God has always wanted a close relationship with each person. He has wanted each to live godly lives, to stay away from the sinful things that destroy. The Bible is honest about people. It tells the good and the bad. Teaches how to live wisely and how to avoid the pitfalls. Psalm 119 verse 9 asks, "How can a young man keep his way pure?" The answer is, "By keeping it according to Your word." One can say along with the psalmist, "Your word have I treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You" (Psalm 119 verse 11). Have you treasured up the word of God in your heart? If you haven't, do you realize how you have cheated yourself?

The Bible offers us the precious gift of truth. We need the truth not a lie. We want to know what is real not a myth or a fantasy. I would rather know the truth that hurts for a short time but blesses me eternally than to hear a lie that pleases for now but costs me my soul. The Scriptures give us the key to sort through the many voices of our day and unlock the truth. The psalmist proclaimed in Psalm 119:160, "The sum of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting." The Lord Jesus could say in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." He promised in John 8 verses 31 and 32, that "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

The Lord Jesus prayed in John 17:17, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth." And the Lord Jesus told Pilate in John 18:37, "For this I have been born, and for this I've come into the world, to testify to the truth. And everyone who is of the truth hears My voice (and of course, that voice is in the word of God) ."

And because the word of God is inspired and true, we can have hope. Romans 15 and verse 4 says, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." The word of God tells us where we came from, why we're here, and where we're going, and what the promises of God are! They give us true answers and they give us hope that there's something better than this sinful and dark world. Sometimes we think we face problems that no one has ever faced before, but there's usually a circumstance in the Scriptures much like our own. God helped the saints of old, and He can help us too! God's character hasn't changed. He shows compassion on those who love and obey Him today, just as He did in earlier days. And He will help us through every struggle and every heartache.

I love the promise of 1 Peter 5:8 to 10, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you."

Were it not for the Scriptures, we would know very little about God and His ways. We wouldn't know what the eyewitnesses said about Jesus. We wouldn't know anything about creation or heaven. We'd be as ignorant as the Stoics and Epicureans who built an altar to an unknown God. Scripture opens up God's heart, God's truth, and His promises to us.

God gave us His word to save us. The apostle Paul said in Romans 1:16, "For I'm not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." James 1:21 says, "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls." When Peter came to Cornelius' house, he brought "words" by which Cornelius and his household were saved (Acts 11 verse 13). Romans 10 verse 17 says, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." 2 Corinthians 5:19 says of the gospel, it is the "word of reconciliation." Philippians 2:16 calls it the "word of life." The Lord Jesus said in John 6:63, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I've spoken to you are spirit and are life."

Because the word is inspired and true, it has power to reach into our hearts and souls. Jeremiah 23:29 says, "Is not My word like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock?" At some point the word of God hits us between the eyes with a truth that we need to hear. Its truth sometimes stuns us, sometimes cuts us to the heart, but in the end it blesses us. Acts 2 tells about the response of the Jews when Peter preached about the death and resurrection of Jesus. Verse 37 says: "Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Verse 38 gives the answer, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

They were guilty of his death on the cross. And I'm sure they didn't at first want to hear about their sin against God. They didn't want to know they had crucified the Lord and the Christ who was the Son of God, but they needed to face the truth. The word reproves us and rebukes us, not because it's cranky or mean-spirited. The Scriptures speak out against sin but don't leave us hopeless and

unredeemable. The scriptures inform us to protect us from evil and to deliver us from sin. It helps us see when we're going in the wrong direction, and it gives us a direction that is for life, and not the direction that will cost our souls.

In Proverbs 2, a father is trying to impart God's wisdom to his son. And He wants his son to "seek her (that is wisdom, God's wisdom) as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures." Now if his son pays attention and treasures up God's wisdom, God "stores up sound wisdom for the upright; And He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones" (Proverbs 2:7 to 8). Many books can give you the wisdom of men, but only the Bible can give you the wisdom of God.

Beyond this, the Scriptures help us to see ourselves spiritually. Yes, there times we need to see ourselves, so that we can make the changes necessary to please God. James 1:22 to 25 says, "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he's like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But the one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does." Don't just listen to God's Word, do it!

Now why does this matter? It matters, because our relationship with God is involved. Listening and obeying is the basis of our relationship with God. The apostle John said in 1 John 2:3 to 5, "By this we know that we have come to know Him(that is, have a relationship with Him), if we keep His commandments. The one who says, 'Well, I've come to know Him,' and doesn't keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected." When you listen and obey the Lord, you show true and perfect love for God. Do you love God? Do you listen to His words?

Let's pray together. "Father, help us to love You with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. Help us Father to listen to Your word, to take it into our hearts and to treasure it up there. And to be obedient to Your will, so that we might show You how much we love You. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen."

Robert Johnson of Longview, Texas, recently wrote: "We must never be ashamed of the gospel, because it is God's will. It possesses those same qualities that God Himself possesses, endued with His divine authority. It will never fail. Though everyone has free will, and many will choose to ignore it, or try to alter it, or reject it altogether, the gospel will endure. The one who has committed his or her life to it will not be disappointed, as through His word, God will accomplish His good work of salvation. May we be committed to its principles and precepts, to living them out in our daily lives, and faithfully communicating them to those around us. Those who take their refuge in the enduring word of God, shall endure forever with Him. 'Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him'" (Proverbs 30 and verse 5). Thanks, Robert.

When people distort God's word to fit themselves, they cheat themselves and those who agree with them. Sadly, people often try to make the Bible teach something false. They're only fooling themselves. A distorted doctrine makes a distorted disciple. The Bible frequently says, "Be not deceived," because people often lie to themselves rather than face the truth. That's why we must continually listen closely to Scripture.

I worry about those who think they've been saved but haven't listened closely to the Scripture. Don't be fooled. The Bible teaches that one must believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God to be saved

(John 8:24). Out of love for God, one must repent of sin and turn to righteousness to be right with God (Luke 13:3). A loving, penitent believer then must confess their faith and be baptized into Christ. Just as those on Pentecost needed to be baptized to have their sins forgiven, and so do we. Baptism is the time when God sets us free from sin (Romans 6 verses 3 to 7). And I hope that you will listen to God's Word and obey.

We hope today's study about the word of God has stirred you to buy the truth and not sell it. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. And you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." And be sure to like the programs that you watch; this helps us spread the program. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

Focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.