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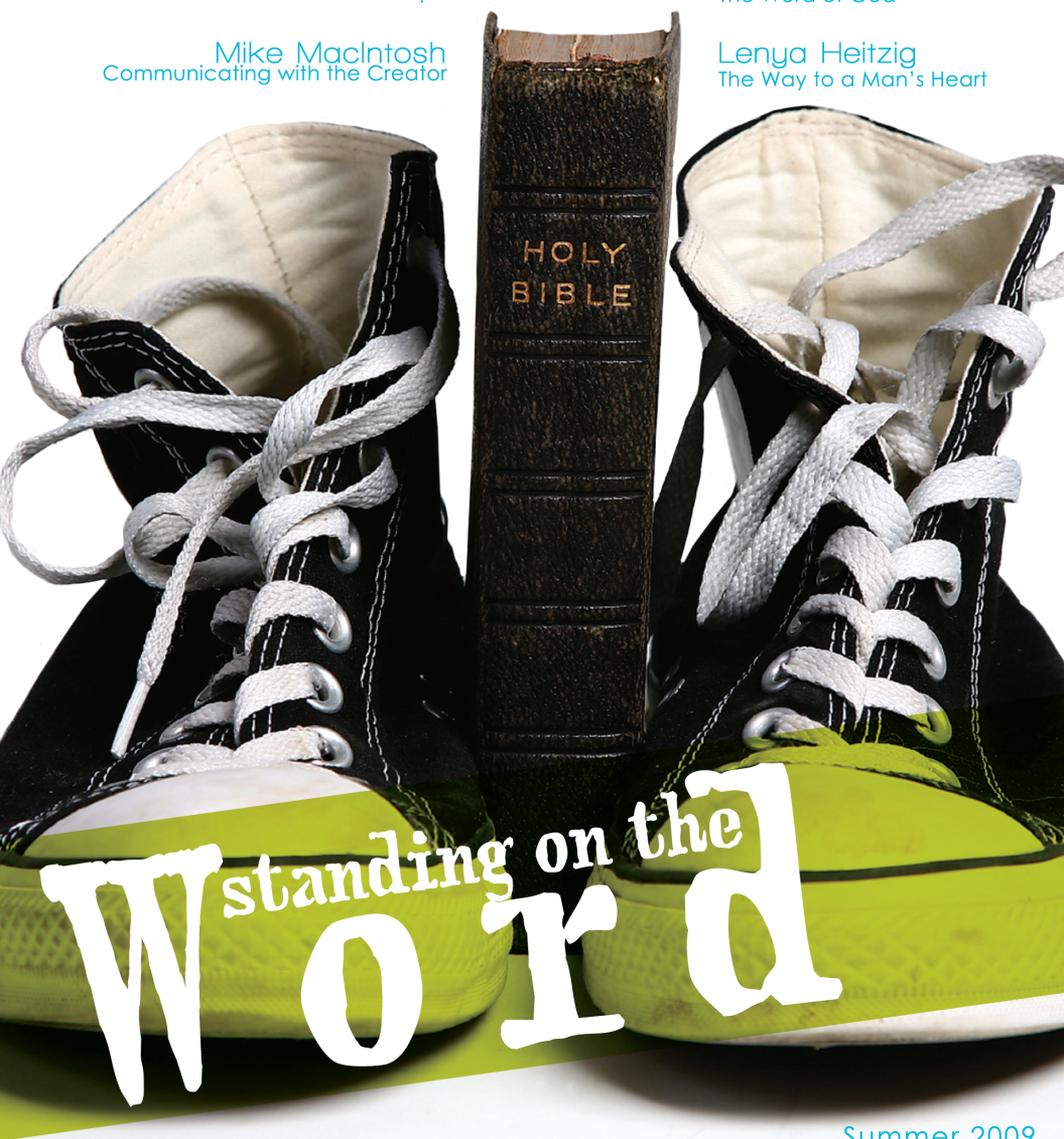
the magazine with Skip Heitzig

Skip Heitzig
God's Graph

Joseph Parker
The Word of God

Mike MacIntosh
Communicating with the Creator

Lenya Heitzig
The Way to a Man's Heart



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Summer 2009

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Skip's Note

Dear Friend,

Welcome back to the summer edition of *Connection The Magazine*! School is out, the malls are fuller, and the pools are sparkling. We have a little more time to relax and rest and—read the Bible! In this issue, we'll look intently at the Word of God and what purpose His Book should be serving in our own individual lives.

In 2 Timothy 3:16 we read: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." The Bible is inspired by God and is made available to thoroughly equip us for everything. There is no self-help book or daytime talk show that will ever come close! In fact, we need to determine whether or not we are willing to demonstrate a commitment and devotion to the Bible that is all-out—and at all costs.

Our Dead Pastors' Society features an article by Joseph Parker, a British pastor and Bible teacher. As Parker said, "Tell men that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and they will instantly find such and such objection." We'll examine some of these objections throughout the issue, including the hot topic debate between creation and evolution—and the argument for intelligent design.

Because we are looking so closely at God's Word, we've chosen Psalm 119 to study in this issue's Truth Connect. This psalm is the longest chapter in the Bible—and we're going to tackle it.

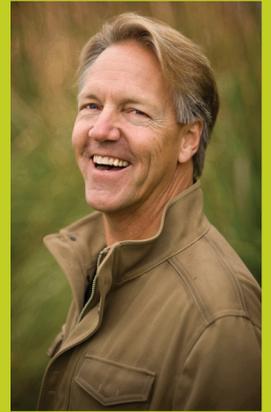
Finally, we address the issue of whether or not we can trust the Bible: are people correct who say that the Bible is filled with contradictions and/or mistakes? Is the Bible dangerous—and why does the ACLU want to put warnings next to God's Word? "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12).

We sincerely hope you enjoy the resources found in *Connection The Magazine*. And when you're finished with your copy, please pass it on to a neighbor or friend—or to someone you haven't even yet met.

In His Strong Love,



SKIP HEITZIG



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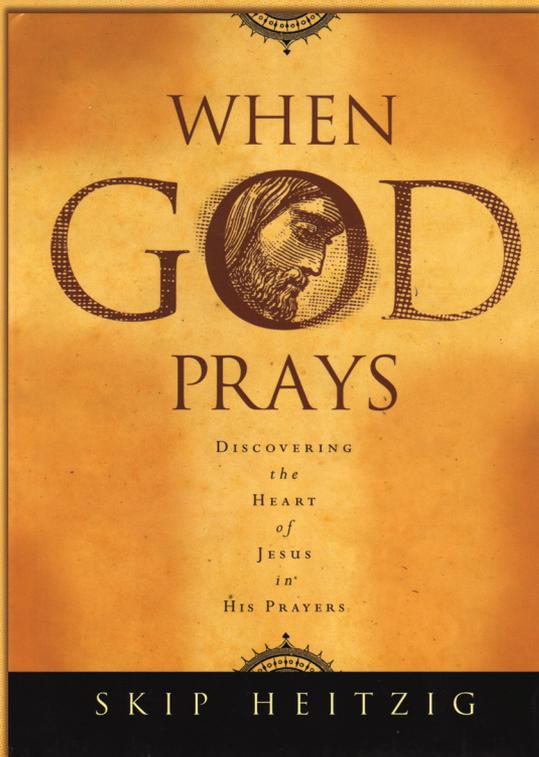
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SKIP HEITZIG



HOLY
BIBLE

GOD'S

BRING ME THE BOOK

According to *The Guinness Book of World Records*, the Bible is the best-selling, most widely distributed book in human history. Since the year 1815, 2.5 billion copies of the Scriptures have been sold. The Bible has been translated into 2,233 languages and dialects across the world. 92% of all the homes in America (including atheists and unbelievers) have a Bible. In the typical household that would own a Bible, the count is three Bibles per household. In homes like yours, there may be

more. But what about reading the Book? 75 million Americans say it's important to read it, but how many people who say it's important to read it, *actually read the Bible?*

Some of us might be like that gal in the small town whose pastor came to visit. When she saw him coming up to the door, she yelled out to her daughter, "Honey, quickly! Bring me the book that Mommy loves

so much!" So the little girl came back with the Sears Catalog and handed it to her Mommy.

We love to quote the Bible. Greeting cards, plaques, and posters are emblazoned with Scripture texts. We buy them for others and emblazon them in our homes. Most times we mean well—and it's encouraging. But other times it's totally out of context.



GRAPH

A GOOD QUESTION

Awhile ago, a friend gave me this list of the top seven signs you may not be reading your Bible enough:

1) The preacher announces the sermon is from Galatians and you have to check the Table of Contents

2) You think Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob may have had a few hit songs during the '60's

3) You open to the gospel of Luke and a World War II savings bond falls out

4) Your favorite Old Testament patriarch is Hercules

5) You're frustrated because Charlton Heston isn't listed in either the index or the concordance

6) You catch your kids reading the Song of Solomon and demand, "Who gave you that stuff?"

7) You think the Minor Prophets worked in the quarries

Funny—but also truly sad.

The cover of *U.S. News and World Report* once asked, "Who wrote the Bible?" That's a good question. Did a bunch of men write the Bible or did the Bible come to us from the mind of God? If a bunch of men wrote it, we have a problem. There are two things that make the Bible a book like no other: 1) Its ability to predict the future hundreds of years before events ever happened and 2) The unity of forty authors who wrote a single document over a span of 1500 years on three different continents and in three different languages.

If we say that God wrote the Bible, we may have a bigger problem. Because if He did, why don't we treat the Bible as if God wrote it? Why don't we believe it, love it, study it, carry it, and memorize it as the very Word of God?

HIS PORTRAIT

The Bible is God's Self-disclosure—sort of like a picture frame that I carry with me when I travel. The frame has two pictures: one of my wife and one of my son. If I'm in a hotel for a few days, I prop it on my nightstand. When I look at the picture, I'm warmed by what I see. I don't have a relationship with the picture frame—I don't talk to the picture frame or kiss and hug it. But the images speak to me of the two people whom I love very much. In the same way, the Bible speaks to me of *the God I love*—it is His portrait and His disclosure to me. The Bible is God's picture of Himself—what He chose to reveal to humanity about His character and attributes.

REVELATION

The Bible is God's special revelation to humanity. General revelation is God revealing Himself through His creation and moral attributes. But special revelation is God revealing Himself through His Word. When we say that the Bible is part of God's special revelation to mankind, we mean that it reveals the *mind of God*. If I hadn't written down these words,

you wouldn't know what I was thinking. And we wouldn't know the mind of God unless He had told us what He thinks and desires through His written Scripture.

GOD-BREATHED

Charles Spurgeon once wrote: "A Bible that is falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't." I like that. This is the writing—the graph—of God. How does He do that? *By inspiration*. In 2 Timothy 3:16 we read: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Another translation states: "All

Scripture is God-breathed." And that's very literal. It combines the Greek words *Theos* (God) with

pneuma (breath or air.) All Scripture is a result of God's breathing His will through humans.

What exactly does that mean? It doesn't refer to "natural" inspiration—when you see a Picasso and go, "Wow, he was so inspired!" Some people lower the Bible to the level of a Picasso—as an inspiring work of art written by a bunch of smart men. *Smart men don't write a book that condemns them*. They wouldn't write a book that points to the only way of salvation as being outside of humanity.

And it doesn't refer to "concept" inspiration. Some people say that God just gave them the concepts, not the exact words. Some say God inspired Paul with the concept of love, so he sat down and wrote 1 Corinthians

THE BIBLE IS GOD'S
PICTURE OF HIMSELF

13. That's not what Paul said: "And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." (1 Corinthians 2:4). Concerning Jeremiah, Scripture says: "Behold, I have put *My words* in your mouth." (Jeremiah 1:9, emphasis mine). Not, "I'm going to inspire you with some thoughts, some impressions in your mind." God inspired the authors of the Bible to write the *actual words* found in Scripture.

NOT ONE JOT

What did Jesus say about the Bible? "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled." (Matthew 5:18). A jot is the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet—like an apostrophe—and a tittle is even smaller. Jesus said that not one of those tiny dots would pass away until *all of the words* are fulfilled.

Some believe that the Bible was written by "mechanical" inspiration. So they believe that God was sitting at some desk up in heaven and dictating: "Sit down, Paul, write this: Galatians... I, Paul..." Now, God could have done that if He wanted to. But He didn't. He used the unique personalities and writing styles of the many authors themselves. Luke didn't write like Peter and Peter certainly didn't write like Paul.

DESTINATION ALREADY DETERMINED

How did God do this? In 2 Peter we read that: "No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as

they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:20-21, emphasis mine). The italicized phrase is from a maritime term that speaks of a ship being carried along at the mercy of the winds. The Holy Spirit drove that boat of flawed men to the destination He purposed for them.

Each writer had his own personality and writing style. Within the "boat," he had all the freedom he wanted. But the destination was always determined by the wind. The destination of the Scriptures were the very words God wanted to say, even though the personalities of the writers were individual.

12 MINUTES

Now, if all of the above is true, if every word in the Bible is inspired by God, why don't we read it? Maybe we think it takes too long. Do you know what? If you read the Bible twelve minutes a day, you'll have finished it in a year. That's 12 minutes a day, 365 days a year. We can handle that! *But do we want to?*

The important things—the things that really count—are found in the graph that God has written. The Bible. If we're really saying that God wrote the Bible, and if we really believe that, then won't it become important to us? Let's commit to read and apply the Bible to our lives every single day. For at least 12 minutes.



Skip Heitzig is the author of the book *Beyond the Summer of Love* and is the Senior Pastor of Calvary of Albuquerque.

The Word of God

The Inspired Word of God

The Bible addresses itself to the greatest subjects: creation, providence, redemption, sanctification, destiny, etc. Upon all these subjects its tone is sure, solemn, and impressive. The conceptions of the Bible are as large as its subjects. It guesses nothing, postulates nothing, and apologizes for nothing. We may apologize for the Bible; the Bible never apologizes for itself. Thus the Bible is a sublime revelation of God... and because of this, I have no scruple in speaking of the Bible as the "Word of God."

Condensed it is this: "Tell men that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and they will instantly find such and such objection." So they may; but that is precisely what we refrain from doing. Speaking for myself, lest I should load others with responsibility, I never begin by giving the Bible a reputation. I simply say, "Read it;



Joseph Parker
(1830-1902)

read it all; read it with as little interruption as possible, then tell me what you think of it." I thus leave the Bible to do its own work. You could ruin any preacher, poet, musician, or artist, by giving a romantic description of him before he had an opportunity of showing his own quality in his own way. Much better to say, "Hear him, study him, get the key of his method, and then form your own opinion about him." That is all I ask for the Bible, or for the Redeeming Lord Himself, and I thankfully add that I never knew that method fail.

PASTORS SOCIETY

The Indefinable

As for defining what is meant by “the Word of God,” we must remember that there is no final definition. No man can define God, or Truth, or Life, or Love. They are original and indefinable terms. We know many things without being able to define them. Consciousness is larger than formal intelligence. It is possible to intellectualise religious thought and to reduce it to a species of literature – that is, to something that can be appraised and determined by grammar and lexicon and criticism. No wise man will despise any part of this literary apparatus, at the same time the apparatus must be kept within its own lines. The cry for definition may easily become both pedantic and frivolous. In all languages there are expressions which are symbolic rather than literal; idioms which represent our ideal condition or aspiration rather than words which can be separated

from one another and parsed independently. In the higher grammar quite a cluster of words may be but a single

nominative. The phrase “the-capital-of-England” may be but one hyphenated word, and may be treated not as

No man
can define God,
or Truth, or Life,
or Love.

an article, a noun, and a preposition, but as a consolidated substantive. When we speak of the Bible as “the Word of God” we may be using a symbolic idiom, an idiom which represents the supreme purpose of the Book – its vital content and soul – in a sense and measure which no merely literary definition can fully express. It is thus that the Bible may be, in my judgment, and is, in my practice, more fitly, more sensitively, more truthfully, described by the thrilling phrase “the Word of God” than by any alternative designation. We require a descriptive which is exquisitely nice, at once profound and delicate, to represent the whole meaning of the Bible.

The Revelation of God

To describe the Bible as “the Word of God” is, in my view, to describe the Book by its supreme purpose, which purpose is the revelation of God in such degree and proportion as the human mind is able to receive it. If I must characterize the Bible either by its human workmanship or its divine purpose – assuming it to have a divine purpose – I deliberately elect to regard it as “the Word of God.” In making this election I choose the less

of two difficulties. I cannot escape mystery in receiving the Bible, but I escape the greater mystery by receiving it as a message from God. I know that the

penmanship is human – I know that whatever is human is imperfect – yet that does not affect the divine purpose except in the sense that

the limited instrument necessarily modifies the illimitable music. The impassioned pianist crushes the keys and strings of his instrument because it can only tell half his thought. Embodiment always means contraction. Incarnation means locality. The kingdom of heaven is larger than its parables though they be shaped and coloured by the King himself. It must be remembered that we are dealing with no less a theme than the revelation of God. How to bring it into words! Eternity is incommoded when endeavouring to typify itself upon the dial-space of time. It is the culmination of irony.

The Bible never apologizes for itself.

The Gold of Thought

The Bible is the revelation of God – ineffable – in the only setting or framework possible in the present conditions of life. To bring God into language is to bring him within limitations. Words are constantly trying to define themselves, and even to do what they were never meant to do. Words may be better used when simply pointing to what is infinitely greater than themselves, than when trying to say everything inclusively and finally. There are points in religious thinking at which reverent and adoring silence must supersede impotent definition. Even human history, even autobiography itself, must suffer from embodiment in any one set of terms. The verbal accommodation is too small. The only way in which national or personal history can be written, under present conditions, is the way of one-sidedness, partiality, incompleteness, and badly

lighted colour. Beyond all the most elaborate and balanced expression stands in silence the Motive, the Thought, the Impulse, the quenchless Immortality for which there are no words, – the gold of thought which cannot be expressed in the bronze of speech. So when I am challenged to define the phrase “the Word of God” I am not ashamed to own that to my mind the phrase typifies a reality which it is impossible fully to express in terms which would not themselves require to be defined.

The Word of God

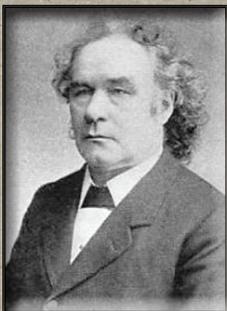
But is not the Bible a piece of literature? Only in a very limited sense, and of course within that limited sense it is open to partial dissection; but from my point of view the Bible is infinitely more than a piece of literature, and just as it becomes more it passes out of the region of dissection. We can dissect literature, but can we dissect revelation? We can dissect the body, but can we dissect the life? We can dissect the rose, but can we dissect its fragrance? What is called the dissection of the Bible is not undertaken irreverently. On the contrary, it is claimed that the botanist dissects the flower because he loves it. I think, however, that the analogy is imperfect. There is a botanist's flower and there is a poet's flower. A mother may view her infant's body in one way and an anatomist may view it in another. But is not the infant an anatomical structure? Yes, and infinitely more, and in that glorious “more” the technical anatomist has no rights. So with the Bible. It is literature and it is revelation. It is history and

it is insight. It is discipline and it is holiness. The altar can be measured in cubits, but the sacrifice which is offered on it is a magnitude upon which no measuring rod can be laid. Unless, therefore, the term "dissection" be very carefully guarded and limited its importance as a method may easily become exaggerated.

The Bible is impregnated through and through with one infinite and glorious purpose. Take out every passage that refers to God, that accounts for creation, that relates to man, that dwells upon redemption... and what is there left? So immensely do these great subjects overshadow all other subjects, and so exquisitely do their several modes of treatment constitute one noble harmony, that it would be a conscious injustice... to hesitate to pay homage to the Bible as verily and abidingly, "the Word of God."

D

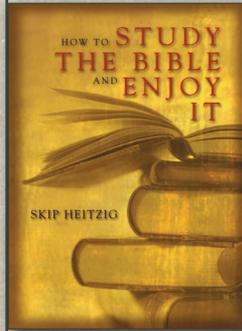
Joseph Parker (1830-1902)



Joseph Parker was a preeminent preacher and orator and his published works are chiefly sermons and expositions. Born in England, Dr. Parker was twice chairman of the London Congregational Board and twice of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

The Dead Pastors' Society is a class Skip Heitzig teaches at the School of Ministry in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In this seminar, he introduces students to the preachers of yesteryear.

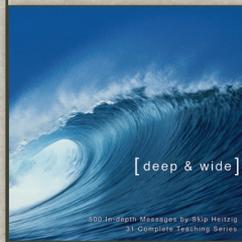
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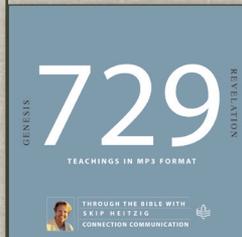
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GUEST
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O
T

Mike MacIntosh
COMMUNICATING with
the
Creator

I sat face-to-face with a man who had a five-inch scar running down his left cheek from ear to chin.

The cut, gouged into his flesh by the butt of an army rifle, had never been stitched closed, nor had it ever been given medical attention. The result was an unsightly scar to say the least. But often it is the scars—either physical ones or emotional ones—that serve as reminders of what really matters in life.

It was 1976—six years after I first discovered the power of God’s Word—and I sat on the floor across from this man in a thatched-roof hut in the jungles of what was then known as Burma. Only a small, low table separated us. The one-room house where we gathered—which was built on stilts above the ground—had twenty-five other people jammed inside. Most of them were relatives who had come to meet this special family member, whose personal faith and courage seemed to stand as tall as Mount Everest.

As I would soon find out, Jonathan Chan was an amazing person, a man with a love for God that oozed from the pores of his skin.

Jonathan had traveled for two weeks through dangerous mountains and jungles just to meet with us and make arrangements to distribute Bibles. He would take thousands of copies, even tens of thousands, if our ministry team could provide them.

We had been told that Jonathan wanted to give Bibles to the people of his country on the border of Burma. But it was a perilous mission. **The government had banned the Bible and made it a crime** punishable by imprisonment to preach, evangelize, or distribute Christian material of any kind. This law, I would soon learn, was the reason this man bore the nasty scar on his face.

Jonathan was a preacher of the Scriptures, and he had traveled far and wide telling people about God's love. He knew the laws of his country forbade him to speak openly about God and Jesus, but he believed his allegiance to the King of Kings triumphed earthly rules and decrees. He had a higher authority to answer to. Eventually, he was arrested and thrown into prison.

Being jailed did little to silence the man, so great was his faith that God's Word was the true source of freedom. He began telling fellow inmates about the God of the Bible, and many accepted God's redeeming love. Even the prison guards would listen to him expound from the stories of the Bible, and some of them, too, made commitments of faith.

After a few months of moving Jonathan from one cellblock to another, from one prison to another, the authorities made him an offer. It was a plea bargain of sorts. He could go free

if he would only stop preaching and renounce his faith in God. **If he would publicly proclaim that his stories about Jesus were bogus, he would be a free man.**

One morning, authorities took Jonathan to the village square of his hometown, stood him up on a box, and positioned armed soldiers around him. There, he was given his opportunity: denounce the Bible, and tell the gathering of people—including neighbors, family, and friends—that Jesus was not God's Son, nor was the Bible "God's book," nor was it true and accurate. He would then be released on his word that he would never again try to promote the Bible.

If he complied with those conditions, he would be free to rejoin his family and move on with his life. When his hands were loosed from the ropes that bound him, however, he told the people boldly that the Bible is indeed the Book of Truth and that it declares the wonderful story about the Creator of all things. He proclaimed that this God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, to die on a cross for our sins.

This humble and soft-spoken man told me what happened next. "It was at

**T h i s
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man loved Bible, would our glorious jungle encounter walk the busy streets of San Diego with a new view of life and faith.

this moment in my brief sermon that the soldiers threw me to the ground and beat me with their rifles,” he said.

As the crowd stood stunned at the demonstration of brute force, the military personnel issued a gruff threat to everyone present and then left the area. Jonathan’s limp body lay broken and motionless on the damp ground. Frustrated with dealing with this relentless man of faith, the authorities gave up and left him for dead.

Little did I know that my meeting with Jonathan

would have a major impact on the rest of my life. Without a doubt, my pastor, Chuck Smith, had instilled in my heart a great appreciation for the Bible. But Jonathan had demonstrated to me the concept of devotion and commitment to the Bible – at all costs. This man truly loved the Bible, and I would leave our jungle encounter and walk the busy streets of San Diego with a new view of life and faith. The citizens of “America’s Finest City” would be encouraged for the rest of my life to read the Bible and to discover God’s greatness on every page.

Jonathan’s story has been etched in the depths of my soul for three decades now. Even though I have

met thousands of Christian men and women from dozens of countries over the years, his story has remained vivid in my mind. There was something very special to learn from this particular man.

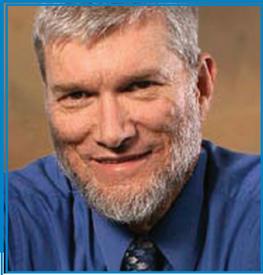
This humble man of faith was willing to endure suffering, imprisonment, beatings, and even death for one simple yet powerful truth: God’s Word is the expression, the representation, and the articulation of God Himself. The Bible is not paper, ink, and binding – it is power, strength, and truth. It has a life of its own. And when its truths become real for the reader, the Bible’s power transforms even the hardest skeptic.

There is a supernatural component to the Bible that elevates it far above the millions of other books written and published through the centuries. The writer of Hebrews tells us that “the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (4:12). We may read other books that are exciting or insightful or helpful—but only the Bible is the Holy Spirit-inspired, life-giving, joy-producing revelation from heaven. That is why people dedicate themselves, even under perilous circumstances, to preaching and teaching the Bible. It has the power to change everything about our earthly lives and our eternal destination. **G**

Pastor Mike MacIntosh is the senior pastor of Horizon Christian Fellowship in San Diego, California.

*Excerpt from *Falling in Love with the Bible*.

Off the Cuff



Ken Ham

Skip Heitzig had the privilege of talking with Ken Ham, founder and CEO of *Answers in Genesis*. Ken has authored many books on Genesis, including a best-selling book entitled *The Lie: Evolution*. As Ken has said in his teachings: “If you can’t trust Genesis, it is difficult to trust the rest of the Bible.”

Skip: There’s always great publicity surrounding the evolution issue. Could you tell us about the philosophy of intelligent design?

Ken: First, when we talk about intelligent design there’s a difference between intelligent design arguments and the intelligent design movement. Romans 1:20 tells us that if you don’t believe in God you are without excuse because it’s obvious that there’s a Creator. And there’s lots of intelligent design arguments we can use looking at the structure of the eye, for instance, or looking at the structure of a flagellum on a cell or looking into the cell and what are called biochemical machines or getting down and looking at the DNA that makes up our chromosomes and our genes – all the information there, the code system that reads books of information. All “intelligent design arguments” say that you have to believe there’s an intelligence behind the universe. There’s no way life could have come about by random processes.

Skip: You know—you hit on something. What is it with the words “intelligent design” that frightens evolutionists? I notice that they’re scared by both creationism language and intelligent design

arguments—that there’s a real aversion in that community. Why is that?

Ken: As soon as you admit the possibility that there is a Creator and that you didn’t arrive by natural processes—if there’s a Creator then the Creator made us, is responsible for us, then He owns us, then He sets the rules and we are to be in submission to our Creator. That is the reason they get so emotional about all of this. And of course, if we’re talking about the Creator God of the Bible, then we’re also talking about the fact that we’re sinners, we’re in rebellion against God, that marriage is one man for one woman—it can’t be two men or two women—and so it goes on. And what we find today is that the armed atheist, the secular humanist, really oppose any argument that questions the idea of naturalism—that *they* arose by natural processes; that the *universe* arose by natural processes. Because if we’re just here as a result of natural processes, then the bottom line is that we own ourselves and if we can get away with it, we can do whatever we want. We can set our own morality. You know, it’s like it says in the Bible in the book of Judges concerning the Israelites, when they had no king to tell them what to do, no absolute authority, “they all did what was right in their own eyes”. That’s the reason for the emotionalism of this argument.

Skip: And Ken, in playing into that argument, is it true that there just hasn't been enough time for randomness or natural processes to develop what we see in our natural world?

Ken: If people want to believe that natural processes gave rise to life, they certainly can't have a universe that's thousands of years old, or even just millions of years old for that matter. They need billions and billions and billions of years. In fact, they can have all the time that they want and it's still not going to work. But when you look at it historically, what happened was this: back in the 1800's, the idea of "millions of years" started to be popularized by certain people who were deists at best, or materialists. These were people who wanted to try to explain life without God and so they started to popularize the idea of an old age for the earth. Then, Darwin took that old-age idea in geology and applied it to biology and said, "Give it enough time, one kind of animal's going to change into another." But it's the time that's needed. And really, it was the time factor that allowed Darwin to popularize his ideas; because without the time, without all those millions of years, they wouldn't be able to do that.

Skip: Talk about some new developments in scientific development. Are there any new developments taking place in your field concerning creationism?

Ken: We have a Ph.D. in astrophysics on staff with us, Dr. Jason Lyle, and I think astronomy is one of the areas where there have been the least answers in the creationist field. He's getting together with other astronomers now and they're coming up with some phenomenal answers to the issue of how you can believe in a young universe if light travels from stars that are billions of light years away and things like that. They're coming up with some fascinating insights and are giving us more and more answers concerning

the fact that the universe could not have come into being by a "big bang"—that obviously, God created it as He said in Genesis with the earth first, and the sun, moon, and stars on day four. We've also had a symposium here recently with a number of people getting together looking at a very powerful argument. When you look at DNA, the basic molecule of heredity that builds life, what you're looking at are books of information that are read by a code system or a language. And scientists have found that languages also come from an intelligence and information only comes from information. This is some of the most cutting edge information that cries out that God created. "In the beginning God" not "in the beginning hydrogen" or "in the beginning the cosmos." And other scientists have been doing a lot of research concerning natural selection. Yes, we do see

If you can't trust Genesis, it is difficult to trust the rest of the Bible.

speciation—but, for instance when you look at dogs, you know wolves, dingoes, foxes... they're all the one kind and what we're seeing is great variation within a kind. We're seeing mechanisms for how speciation can occur, but that each kind keeps its boundaries so that that great variation that Darwin thought was evidence of evolution is only evidence of the incredible amount of information that God put in the genes to start with. He put in cat genes, or dog genes, or elephant genes, and so on. And so, there's more and more information now available to help people see that exactly what the Bible says concerning creation, you can trust. And Darwinian evolution, molecules to man, is bankrupt, it doesn't work! 

SKIP HEITZIG

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The Way to a Man's Heart

is through his ears?

I was a brand new believer when Skip and I met. Our first dates were over dinner. Things seemed to be going great until I told Skip an off-color joke. He looked at me firmly and said, "Don't tell me another joke." It was the beginning of the end of our relationship.

He was pastor material, but I was raw material. I definitely had some spiritual growing up to do.

art...

When we began courting again, things were different. While we'd been apart, I'd spent a year and a half serving Youth with a Mission in Hawaii. I had witnessed to pimps and prostitutes, handed out tracts to tourists, and shared my testimony with defiant youths at a detention center. During Christmas break over dinner I shared all that God was teaching me. He said, "You're really ministering to me!" Soon after that, Skip and I were engaged. *I had learned that the way to my man's heart was through his ears!*

One of Jesus' favorite ways of teaching was through parables—telling earthly stories with heavenly meanings. In the Parable of the Sower, He taught that the way to our hearts is by hearing God's Word.

WAYSIDE SOIL

Picture the highly productive Galilee region—a patchwork of fields, crisscrossed and divided by roads and footpaths. These roads were narrow, separating one field from another. Farmers and travelers walked on them from one part of the country to another.

Jesus traveled on these paths with His disciples and the crowds following Him, listening to the stories He told. Imagine Him as He told the Parable of the Sower, "Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them" (Matthew 13:3-4).

This soil was untilled and hard packed from footsteps, wagon wheels, and animal hooves. Seeds that happened to fall here could not take root. Birds would circle overhead waiting for the seeds to fall so they could swoop in. The exposed seed would be snatched as

soon as the farmer was down the path.

WAYWARD HEART

Jesus explained that those whose hearts are hard packed tend to have a wayward heart because Satan, like the birds, tries to rob us of God's Word before it can take root. Jesus explained: "Anyone who hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart" (Matthew 13:19).

The word "understand" means to hear intelligently with focused attention, diligent consideration, and the intent to obey. The question is: Do you hear and understand? Or has God's Word been filched from you? Maybe you're like the three-year-old girl who was playing while her mother was folding laundry. She called out to her daughter to pick up her toys. After calling two times with no response, her mother gave her the full name call: "Beverly Elizabeth Smith, did you hear me?" The toddler answered, "Yes, Mama. My ears did, but my legs didn't." Why don't you listen with your ears and your heart?

STONY SOIL

Jesus also spoke of seed falling on stony soil: "Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away" (Matthew 13:5-6). In other words, the seed is on the soil, in the soil, but not down in the soil. The roots couldn't penetrate the rock, so the plants shot up quickly. These plants briefly appeared hardier than those in

the good soil because they showed above ground in abundance. Sadly, the lack of a good root system prevented the plants from absorbing moisture and nourishment. The heat from the sun scorched these fragile plants. They disappeared as fast as they appeared.

SHALLOW HEART

There are many seeming Christians who are all top-growth: they pray big prayers, sport lots of Christian bumper stickers, and have an exaggerated testimony. They look and sound like Christians on the outside, but on the inside they're fakes. Their hold on the Word is superficial. When hard times hit, they seek another way. Jesus put it this way: "He who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles." (Matthew 13:20-21).

Moody Magazine ran an article in 1985 that bears repeating: "During the Korean War, a church service was disrupted by communist soldiers barging in with machine guns shouting, 'Line up against the wall!' They congregants did as they were told."

"Throwing a picture of Christ to the floor, a soldier demanded, 'One by one, I want you to spit on this picture, and curse Christ's name!' Terrified, the first three men in line did as the soldier said. The fourth in line, a high school girl, dropped to her knees and wiped the saliva off with her skirt. She cried, 'Please kill me, for I cannot curse His name.'"

"The soldiers blindfolded the schoolgirl and the three men, dragging them out behind the chapel. Three shots were fired. The soldiers reentered with the girl—alive. They said, 'Anyone who gives up what they believe that easily is not fit to be a communist.'"

As you take a soil sample of your heart, ask yourself if it is stony and shallow—is it easily swayed when the troubles of the world crash in? Or do your roots go down deep?

CHOKED SOIL

Another type of unfruitful soil is choked soil. Jesus described it this way: "Some [seed] fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them." (Matthew 13:7). Here you'll notice that the seed is on the soil, in the soil, and able to take root down in the soil, but it does not come up. This soil isn't hardened like a trodden path or shallow with a rocky substratum. It's good soil with one drawback:

it has other permanent residents competing with other root systems. The good seeds were "choked"—literally taken by the throat, throttled, or strangled.

CROWDED HEART

Jesus explained: "He who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful." (Matthew 13:22). I look upon these people as those who have a crowded heart.

There are many people like this—those who come to church but never become committed to serving. These people have weed-infested hearts with cases of mistaken priorities. I've learned that whatever takes your time will take your heart. If your heart is crowded by a longing for pennies, possessions, prestige, position, and power: WARNING! The apostle Paul said, "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith" (1 Timothy 6:10).

FERTILE SOIL

The best type of soil is fertile soil. Jesus told how the sower sowed these seeds: "Others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Matthew 13:8-9) This is the good seed

that is on the soil, in the soil, down in the soil, and comes up bearing fruit. Why? Because it was planted in good, fertile soil. It was sown away from the path in loose, soft soil in sufficient depth to support healthy plants. And it was weed free!

Not only that, because of the favorable conditions it yielded a better than average crop. In New Testament Palestine, a ten-fold crop was well above average. The yields Jesus spoke of—thirty, sixty, and one hundred—were truly phenomenal.

FRUITFUL HEART

Jesus interpreted this parable in this way: “He who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” (Matthew 13:23). One commentator said, “The good-ground hearers present the optimistic side of this pessimistic parable.”

Jesus makes it clear that the only barrier to salvation is unbelief. Anyone who is willing to accept Jesus Christ on His terms has a heart that is good soil. They hear the word of the gospel with honest, open ears; they understand the gospel with a heart of humility and repentance—and will bear fruit.

FRUIT INSPECTION

How do you know that you have good soil? Sometimes it's necessary to do a little fruit inspection. Which of the following fruit do you see evident in your life? Which do you need to cultivate?

Fruit of Repentance:

“Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance” (Matthew 3:8).

Fruit of Righteousness:

“Be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness” (Philippians 1:10-11).

Fruit of the Spirit:

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23).

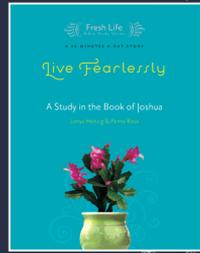
Fruit of our Lips:

“Let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.” (Hebrews 13:15).

The ultimate sign of good soil is bearing fruit. It is not enough to simply hear or understand. We must also bear fruit. This is the point of the Parable of the Sower. Jesus said, “Therefore by their fruits you will know them.” (Matthew 7:20). May you hear with your ears, understand with your heart, and bear much fruit in your life! **L**

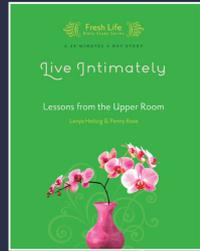
Lenya Heitzig is an award-winning author and sought-after speaker at conferences and retreats worldwide.

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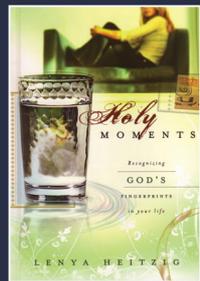
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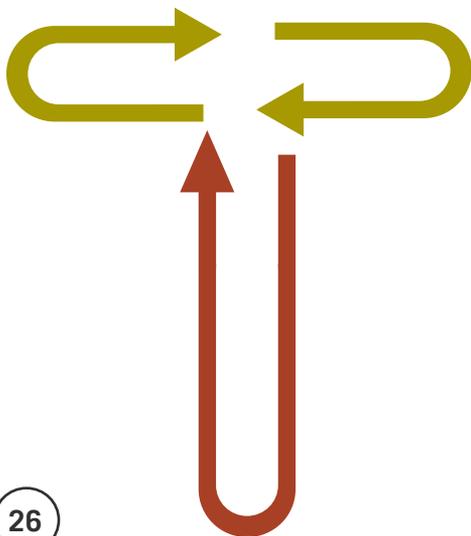
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TRUTH CONNE

Truth Connect is a road map for your spiritual journey. Each quarter we'll help you "unpack" what God has to say to you. You can use this personal Bible study in any way that meets your lifestyle.

Maybe you've always wanted to explore God's Word but just don't know where to start.

1. For instance, on Monday: Read the passage; Tuesday: Review the passage; Wednesday: Reach Up to God; Thursday: Reach Out to others; Friday: Reach In to believers; Saturday: Remember the Scripture passage.
2. Complete the study one day during the week; then take the rest of the week to memorize the Scripture and ponder the lessons learned.
3. Gather with some friends and complete the study together.



Truth Connect is divided into six simple steps:

Read: Your journey begins when you study the Scripture passage. 2 Timothy 3:16 explains that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" and is therefore worth in-depth exploration.

Review: This section offers insight into the historical context of the passage, as well as teaching you key words, concepts, or phrases that add meaning to the message.

Reach Up: At this time, you'll want to ask yourself: "How does this Scripture enhance my relationship with God? How does it cause me to reach up to Him?"

Reach In: Here, you'll see how the passage encourages you to use your gifts to "be of real help to the whole church" (1 Corinthians 14:12 NLT).

Reach Out: This section focuses on the portion of the passage that exhorts Christians to help people in need.

Remember: Here, you're encouraged to memorize a Scripture passage so that you will have it at your disposal whenever you need it.

Fast Facts: Psalm 119

Author:

Unknown. Some scholars, like Matthew Henry and Charles Spurgeon, believe that David wrote this psalm. Others suggest it was written by a scribe like Ezra the priest or the prophet Jeremiah.

Date:

Unknown. Several believe it was written during David's life (c.1025-970 BC). Others believe it was post-exilic, when renewed focus on Bible literature and religious duties were reemphasized.

Themes:

The theme of Psalm 119 is to inspire love for God's Word. It has twenty-two sections, each corresponding to a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Many believe this style allowed for easy memorization of the psalm. Others believe it looked ahead to Jesus Christ who said, "I am the Alpha and the Omega" (Revelation 22:13).

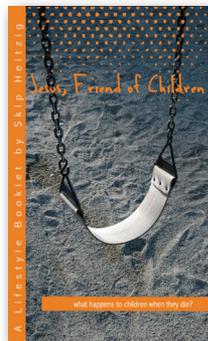
Key Words:

- **Law:** Torah: Direction or instruction.
- **Way:** Jesus' Self-description: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6).
- **Testimonies:** Specifically, the Ten Commandments written on the two tablets of stone and handed down to Moses; God's revealed Law.
- **Precepts:** Synonym for mandates or commandments.
- **Word:** Logos: Used in the New Testament to refer to Jesus: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1).
- **Judgments:** Judicial pronouncements of God's divine Law.
- **Righteousness:** God's Word is holy, just, and true; it provides humanity's only acceptable standard for living.
- **Statutes:** Literally, something cut, prescribed, or engraved. Refers here to God's moral law carved into one's heart.

July-September
The Benefits of God's Word

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JULY

Week One-July 1st-11th

Read: Psalm 119:1-16

Review: Psalm 119 is the longest psalm in the Psalter—in fact, it is the longest chapter in the Bible! Almost every verse speaks of God’s Word. In the original language, each verse begins with a letter corresponding to the Hebrew alphabet. In these two sections, we study the *Aleph* and the *Beth* of the Hebrew alphabet and discover that those who study God’s Word are both blessed and cleansed.

Reach Up: In these two stanzas, the word “blessed” is repeated. Explain how a person is blessed (Psalm 119:1-2). Why do you think the psalmist describes God as blessed (Psalm 119:12)?

Reach In: Read through the sixteen verses, then focus on the “Oh” statements of the psalmist in verses 5, 8, and 10. Which of these statements do you most relate to? How will keeping God’s Word help you stay near to God?

Reach Out: How have your “lips declared” the good news of God’s Word to those who haven’t heard it? (Psalm 119:13).

Remember: “I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.” (Psalm 119:16).

Word Study: Blessed

(Psalm 119:1,2,12): This word speaks of prosperity or happiness that comes when a superior bestows his favor on a person. In most instances, the one bestowing favor is God. Most often, this word is used in the books of poetry or the Gospels.

Week Two-July 12th – 18th

Read: Psalm 119:17-32

Review: Today we read the *Gimel* and *Daleth* sections of Psalm 119. The psalmist acknowledges that we are all pilgrims on life’s journey. We need God’s Word for strength when the road grows difficult. If your path seems rocky right now, take heart! God will bring you delight.

Reach Up: This portion of the psalm reveals who we are in relation to God. Which verses point out God is our Master and we are His servants? That we are the strangers and He is our Guide? What other metaphors does the psalmist use?

Reach In: What key words let you know the psalmist’s condition? How did he ask God to help him? Describe a time you have felt this way and reword your favorite part of Psalm 119:17-32 into a personal prayer.

Reach Out: Think of someone whose “soul melts from heaviness” (Psalm 119:28). According to these stanzas, how can you reach out and help this person?

Remember: “My soul clings to the dust; revive me according to Your word.” (Psalm 119:25).

Notes

Week Three-July 19th – 25th

Read: Psalm 119:33-48

Review: In the *He* and *Waw* sections of Psalm 119, we see the contrast between the worthless things of the world and the wondrous truths found in God's Word. We find that true freedom comes from investing time in the Scriptures. Rather than longing for those things that will fade away, ask God to set your heart on eternal things.

Reach Up: In verses 33-40 the psalmist turns to God as his instructor. Describe the benefits of God teaching you (Psalm 119:33), giving you understanding (Psalm 119:34), and establishing His Word to you (Psalm 119:38).

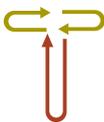
Reach In: In verses 41-48 the psalmist declares that he "will" or "shall" do several things. What are they? How does God's Word enable the psalmist to do them? Reflect on your life. How has spending time in the Scriptures helped you in the same ways?

Reach Out: Who is the most powerful person you know? Make it your prayer to "speak of Your testimonies... before kings, and...not be ashamed." (Psalm 119:46).

Remember: "And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts." (Psalm 119:45).

Notes

Psalm 119



Week Four-July 26th – 31st

Read: Psalm 119:49-64

Review: Here the psalmist uses *Zayin* and *Heth* from the Hebrew alphabet. He remembers that God's Word brings comfort to the afflicted. Despite being persecuted by the wicked, the psalmist affirms his determination to obey God's commandments. When others scoff at you for your relationship with the Savior, allow a psalm to soothe your soul.

Reach Up: Where did the psalmist find comfort? Describe a time when you have been comforted this way.

Reach In: Read through the psalm and look for clues to what time of day the psalmist seems to have felt the need for solace. Why do you think this is? Have you or someone you know ever experienced this?

Reach Out: Explain the wisdom found in Psalm 119:63. How do you live this principle?

Remember: "I made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments." (Psalm 119:60).

Word Study: Comfort

(Psalm 119:50,52): From the Hebrew word *nacham*. Literally, it means to repent or turn away. It speaks of a feeling of consolation or a change of attitude. The implication is to dispel grief by imparting courage or cheer.

Notes

AUG.

Week One-August 1st – 9th

Read: Psalm 119:65-80

Review: As we study the *Teth* and *Yod* stanzas of Psalm 119, we find the psalmist asking God to teach him his Word because he had gone astray. He realized that God's Word was far more valuable than gold or silver. If you have wandered from God, ask Him to restore the riches found in His Word.

Reach Up: In Psalm 119:65-72 we learn some "good" things about God and following God. List these good things and describe how you have seen them at work in your life.

Reach In: The psalmist was confident that "those who fear You will be glad when they see me" (Psalm 119:74). Why was he able to say this? What assurance do you have that this is true in your life?

Reach Out: In verses 76-80 the psalmist asked God to "let" five things occur in his life. Rephrase these into your own personal prayer. For example: "Lord, let me learn your Word so that people in need can turn to me" (Psalm 119:79).

Remember: "The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver." (Psalm 119:72).

Notes

Week Two-August 10th – 16th

Read: Psalm 119:81-96

Review: The *Kaph* and *Lamed* sections of Psalm 119 remind us that God's Word is faithful. Though we may grow faint, God is able to revive us through His life-giving testimonies. This week, remember how many times God has been faithful to you.

Reach Up: At this point the psalmist was in dire circumstances. Yet he found hope by continually looking to God. Using the personal pronouns "You" and "Your," what did the psalmist remind himself about God? How might this help you when you are suffering?

Reach In: The psalmist asked God: "When will you comfort me?" (Psalm 119:82); "Execute judgment on those who persecute me" (Psalm 119:84); "Help me!" (Psalm 119:86); "Revive me according to your lovingkindness" (Psalm 119:88); "I am Yours, save me" (Psalm 119:94). How did God's Word meet each of the psalmist's needs?

Reach Out: Are you or someone you know in one of the situations mentioned above? How can you use this psalm to point to God in the midst of this trial?

Remember: "Your faithfulness endures to all generations" (Psalm 119:90).

Word Study: Faithfulness

(Psalm 119:90): Literally, it means firmness. Figuratively, it means security. Morally, it speaks of fidelity. Faithfulness is a constant biblical theme, especially in regard to God's relationship to His followers. It speaks of His dependability and loyalty. God's faithfulness should make us faithful.

Week Three-August 17th – 23rd

Read: Psalm 119:97-104

Review: In the *Mem* section of Psalm 119, the psalmist proclaimed his love for God's law and praised God for His enduring precepts and the way they saved him in times of affliction. When you find yourself in times of despair, follow the psalmist's example and turn your pain into praise.

Reach Up: According to verse 97, how long did the psalmist meditate upon God's law and why? How do you think it's possible to do this and still continue with your daily tasks?

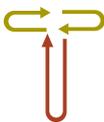
Reach In: One of the themes of this portion of the psalm is understanding. According to these verses, what type of understanding did the psalmist gain, how did he come by it, and what are the blessings of attaining this type of understanding?

Reach Out: Contrast what the psalmist loved (Psalm 119:97) with what he hated (Psalm 119:104). How did knowing God's Word inform his passions? How has knowing God's precepts helped shape your passions for godly things? How has it shaped your decision making?

Remember: "Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day." (Psalm 119:97).

Notes

Psalm 119



Week Four-August 24th – 31st

Read: Psalm 119:105-112

Review: The psalmist proclaims in the *Nun* segment that God's Word is "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105). How has God enlightened your mind and pointed you in the right direction?

Reach Up: The psalmist proclaimed, "Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart." (Psalm 119:111). Write your own personal praise to God, using a metaphor explaining how much His Word means to you.

Reach In: The psalmist said that he had "not strayed from [God's] precepts" (Psalm 119:110). When you find yourself confronted by the false values in this world, how often do you return to His Word to point you in the right direction?

Reach Out: By obeying the Word, we may avoid the snares of Satan. Ask a friend to keep you accountable. Memorize one complete verse of Scripture in order to avoid the personal temptations you face.

Remember: "Accept, I pray, the free-will offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me Your judgments" (Psalm 119:108).

Word Study: Offering

(Psalm 119:108): Primarily, it means "to bring to." The word can also mean to furnish, offer, present, or supply. We were created to praise God and to bring our offerings of praise to Him. Hebrews tells us that Jesus Christ "offered up prayers and supplications" (Hebrews 5:7).

SEPT.

Week One-Sept. 1st – 6th

Read: Psalm 119:113-128

Review: In the *Samek* and *Ayin* stanzas we see the psalmist once again concentrating on his oppressors. By turning his feelings of disappointment and anger over to God, he found comfort in the righteousness of God's love. Though men may treat us falsely, we can always trust God to treat us mercifully.

Reach Up: The psalmist declared, "You are my hiding place and my shield" (Psalm 119:114). How has God shielded you from certain circumstances and hidden you from danger? Offer a prayer of thanksgiving to Him for His divine protection.

Reach In: In verse 113, the psalmist said "I hate the double-minded, but I love Your law." (Psalm 119:113). To be double-minded means you are unable to choose between right and wrong. Are you wavering in certain decisions or are you making a conscious decision to follow God?

Reach Out: In this psalm we read, "I have done justice and righteousness" (Psalm 119:121). What does this mean to you? Do you strive daily in your own sphere of influence to do justice and righteousness?

Remember: "Hold me up, and I shall be safe, and I shall observe Your statutes continually." (Psalm 119:117).

Week Two-Sept. 7th – 13th

Read: Psalm 119:129-144

Review: The *Pe* section begins with wonder and ends with weeping. How much of your life seems to be that way? The *Tsadde* portion returns our focus to the trustworthiness of God's Word—reminding us that when trouble overtakes us, God's commandments will bring delight. This portion of the psalm tells us that though our feelings may change, God's Word is changeless.

Reach Up: Scan through these verses and examine how God's Word is described. For instance, in verse 129 the psalmist declares, "Your testimonies are wonderful." Proclaim these truths aloud this week.

Reach In: The psalmist was full of zeal because his enemies had "forgotten Your words" (Psalm 119:139). What motivates you to minister to those in your church? In the world?

Reach Out: The psalmist was moved to tears by the state of the sin surrounding him, "Rivers of water run down from my eyes, because men do not keep Your law." (Psalm 119:136). What in the world causes you sorrow? Pray about this issue and take a specific personal step to alleviate whatever it may be.

Remember: "Make Your face shine upon Your servant, and teach me Your statutes." (Psalm 119:135).

Word Study: Zeal

(Psalm 119:139) Literally, it means jealousy or envy. It speaks of enthusiastic devotion, allegiance, or single-mindedness. It is contrasted with the double-minded whom the psalmist hated in v.113. When Jesus cleansed the temple, the disciples remembered this verse and considered it prophetic.

Week Three-Sept. 14th – 20th

Read: Psalm 119:145-160

Review: As we draw near the conclusion of Psalm 119, we sense a feeling of urgency in the *Qoph* and *Resh* portions. The psalmist prayed wholeheartedly to God, trusting in the power of His Word. Why was the psalmist so sure of the power of God's Word? He knew, "Your Word is truth" (Psalm 119:160). There are many things vying for our attention in this world: ringing phones, text messages, and advertisements. Be sure that you listen for true Word.

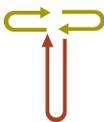
Reach Up: Three times in Psalm 119:145-147, the psalmist would "cry out" to God. Why was he calling on God and what did he promise Him? Have you ever been in a situation where your only hope was God? Did it seem like He delayed in answering you? How did you keep going?

Reach In: Read Psalm 119:148-152 and describe how the psalmist persisted in prayer despite the wicked seeming to prosper against him. How can you follow this example in a situation you're facing?

Reach Out: Describe the characteristics of God listed in Psalm 119:153-160. For example, the psalmist proclaims, "Great are Your tender mercies" in verse 156. List some ways you can show these attributes of God to those around you this week. What do you think will enable you to exhibit these godly characteristics?

Remember: "Revive me according to Your word." (Psalm 119:154).

Psalm 119



Week Four-Sept. 21st – 30th

Read: Psalm 119:161-176

Review: As we conclude our study with the *Shin* and *Tau* portions of the Hebrew alphabet, we find the psalmist in awe of God's Word. We see throughout the psalm a harmonious balance of faith: hating what God hates and loving God's law, waiting for God's salvation while hoping in His Word, enduring life's trials while trusting His testimonies. As you conclude this study, ask yourself whether you are willing to follow God's precepts even while the world seeks to persecute believers.

Reach Up: Restate all of the "I" proclamations in this portion of the psalm. Which of these statements means the most to you personally? Which area do you most need to spiritually grow?

Reach In: One of the greatest statements in this psalm is, "Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble." (Psalm 119:165). Review Psalm 119 and recall why those who love God's law are able to stay on the right path.

Reach Out: The psalmist admits at the end of this psalm that he had "gone astray like a lost sheep" (Psalm 119:176). Ask God to "seek" someone you know who has gone astray. Pray that they will remember God's commandments.

Remember: "Let Your hand become my help, for I have chosen Your precepts." (Psalm 119:173).

Notes

From the **blog**

with Pastor Skip Heitzig



The Bible is God-inspired, but man-authored. God guided men through His Holy Spirit to write the words in the Bible. God illuminated and revealed His will in the mind and souls of the human authors to record His truth in the pages of the Bible.

Question:
Pastor Skip, I have several friends who tell me that the Bible has many mistakes in it and can't be trusted. My question is: Can we trust the Bible?

Answer:
Yes. We *can and should* trust the Bible!

The word "Bible" simply means "book." This is fitting—considering that the Bible is made up of 66 different books, divided into two sections. The Old Testament is the historical and moral record of salvation prior to the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The New Testament tells of Jesus Christ's life on earth and of His earliest followers. The total history covered in the Bible is from creation to consummation—the beginning to the end.

But can the Bible be trusted?
This question depends on whether or not the Bible is actually God's Word. The answer is that the Bible *is absolutely trustworthy*. Here are four major reasons why we can trust the Bible:

1. Accurate historical record.

The Bible describes real places (Egypt), talks about real people (King Nebuchadnezzar), and portrays real events (the fall of Jerusalem.) The Bible is not fiction—it isn't a myth, legend, or fairy tale. It speaks of true historical occurrences and is verified by extra-biblical writers and records.

2. Accurate scientific record.

The Bible describes an accurate scientific understanding of our universe. The Bible teaches that the earth is round. This may not seem like a big deal now—but the biblical authors wrote this over 1,000 years *before* scientists “proved” that the earth is round! Within the last 100 years, many archeological discoveries have demonstrated the Bible’s accuracy. Biblical cities have been uncovered and artifacts of

people, events, and places that have a *real* location on earth. The ancient city of Ur, written about in Genesis, was re-discovered in the 1900’s.

4. Fulfilled prophecy.

Prophecy is the God-given gift to accurately predict the future. God inspired the prophet Isaiah to write about Jesus’ birth (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6) and God inspired David to write about the agony of Christ’s death (Psalm 22). Both of these prophecies were written hundreds of years before the actual event happened. Jesus Christ fulfilled *over 400* Old Testament prophecies during His life on earth!

This is only a short list demonstrating why we can trust the Bible. However, it’s a good place to begin your quest not only to believe the Bible is reliable, but to internalize the truths it teaches.

Thanks for your question!

In His Strong Love,



Pastor Skip Heitzig

P.S. If you are really interested in studying this topic, check out Norman Geisler’s book, *A General Introduction to the Bible*.

To read more of Pastor Skip’s personal blog, visit his website:

SkipHeitzig.com



The Bible was
God-inspired,
but
man-authored.
So what does
that mean?

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3. Accurate geographical record.

The Bible gives *real* geographical descriptions that can be verified through extra-biblical records and findings. The Bible describes *real* mountains, rivers, and ancient cities. It describes

If all the books published—ever—less than 1% of them will survive seven years. Compare that to the Bible. If you consider both the Old and New Testaments, it has lasted over 3,300 years. People have died for the Scriptures. People have cherished and defended them. People have read, re-read, and read their Bibles again and again. I doubt that any one novel is read even ten times in a row.

One of the most beautiful and intense sections of the Bible is Psalm 119. All told, it is a book within the Book—speaking about God’s Word. Not only is it the longest psalm in the book of Psalms, but it’s also the longest chapter in the Bible—with 176 verses. It records seven benefits that God’s Word has in the life of the believer. In fact, it’s an acrostic psalm. The first 8 verses all begin with the letter *Aleph* in the Hebrew alphabet—that’s our ‘A’. The next 8 verses begin with the letter *Bet*,

LITERAL BELIEF IN THIS BOOK MAY ENDANGER Y

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S P O T S

By Skip Heitzig

which is like our 'B'; and so on. From A to Z (or from *Aleph* to *Tau*), the Word of God covers the gamut of life—helpful in every way for absolutely any need you will ever face.

In almost every verse, the theme of this psalm is the Bible. It uses a lot of synonyms: the law, the testimonies of God, His precepts, the commandments, God's statutes, the way of God, the judgments, and the word. But all of these titles signify the ultimate truth of God and the Scriptures.

When you read the Word and begin to apply it in your life, things happen—changes occur. The Gideon Society knows this. They believe that if a person is exposed to truth, *something will happen*. In Indiana, there are six inns in state parks. In each room, a Gideon's Bible is placed in the bureau next to the bed. The ACLU decided to file a lawsuit against the state of Indiana unless a warning pamphlet was placed next to each Bible. No joke! The pamphlet shows a

picture of the Bible and in huge red letters it says, "WARNING: Literal belief in this book may endanger your life and health."

How dangerous is the Bible? In Psalm 119:2 we read: "Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart!" Notice the exclamation point—the Bible produces joy! Are you scared yet? We find similar thoughts throughout this psalm (see vv. 47, 77, and 92). In verse 111 we read: "Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart." See how dangerous this book is? It actually produces *joy* in the person who reads it!

Is the Bible dangerous enough to come with a warning label? Maybe a "Must Read" label! If the Bible does *that much good* (it does) and if God's truth can change a life *so much* (it will) that the ACLU wants a warning label on the Bible—why don't we who are born-again Christians read it? Start-ing now. 

YOUR LIFE AND HEALTH.

HOLY BIBLE

ING



connecting The dots

1 Recognize the Bible as God-breathed—thoroughly able to equip you for anything.

2 Read the Bible as God's own Word to you—His personal letters for every day of your life.

3 Retain the verses of Psalm 119—and the assurance of blessings for those who heed His Law.

4 Remember that how we hear God's Word determines the fruit we bear for His kingdom.

5 Rebel against this world's foolish debates—realize Genesis 1:1 is the true Truth.

6 Reconcile yourself to Jesus Christ. He desires a real relationship with you.

*If you have **not** already accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and personal Savior—do it now. Please don't wait. With a sincere and repentant heart, simply pray:

"Father, I know I am a sinner. I repent of my sin, and turn away from it. I turn to Jesus. I believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose again, saving all who believe in Him. Fill me with Your Spirit and come into my life. Transform me. Make me into a new creation. I pray this in Jesus' name."

If you prayed this prayer, please contact
Calvary of Albuquerque
505.344.0880



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A Lifestyle Booklet by Skip Heitzig

Radical Joy

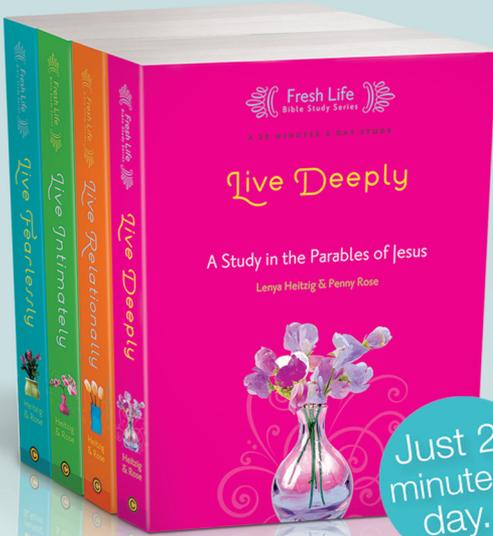


letting His light shine through you

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From Calvary Albuquerque Women's Ministry Leaders
Lenya Heitzig & Penny Rose

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Bible Study Series



Just 20
minutes a
day...



Bible studies for
women *on the go*