

Psalm 19 — Take Up And Read

January 10, 2021

Given our current political climate, I hesitate when it comes to using an illustration from the news because it can easily be misunderstood to be political. Today, I am going to use an illustration from the news, but don't take it as political! It is not intended to be political. Make sure you hear those words!

This even happened on Monday, before the news became crazy at the end of the week. CNN's Chris Cuomo mocked Senator Marco Rubio about his Christian faith. Cuomo said, "He is Mr. Bible Boy... (in his tweets) he has a Bible quote for every moment." That is what made the headlines. What I want to focus on is what Senator Marco Rubio tweeted back that some networks missed.

"The verses I tweet are usually the ones chosen by the Catholic Church for that day's mass... but the fact that he (Chris) thinks words written thousands of years ago are relevant to current events proves the Bible isn't just a book. It is the Word of God. Amen."

Rubio said the fact that Chris Cuomo thinks he is trying to tweet just verses that apply to the day's news proves the Bible is more than just an old book. It is the timeless and always relevant Word of God.

What is the Bible to you? Is the Bible just another old book? Is the Bible the timeless Word of God? If the Bible is the timeless always relevant Word of God, how should we treat it? How often should we read it? Those are some of the questions we are going to look at this morning.

Let's begin by seeing a few things the Bible says about itself.

But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.
James 1:25 (ESV)

The Bible promises that those who study God's Word, and don't just hear the words of the Bible but obey those words, will be blessed. The Bible says it is the key to a blessed life.

...since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God... 1 Peter 1:23 (ESV)

The Bible tells us it is not an ordinary book. It is a book the Holy Spirit uses to create spiritual life in people. This is why we preach the Bible. It is why we read the Bible. When the words of the Bible are taken to heart, the Holy Spirit harnesses the words of this book and uses them to create spiritual life so people are born again. God doesn't create spiritual life from any other book. Nobody becomes a Christian by reading Time magazine. Nobody repents of their sin and is born again after watching a Jason Bourne movie. That only happens with the Bible.

And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. Deuteronomy 8:3 (ESV)

The Bible isn't just used by God to create spiritual life but God's Words are essential for us to be sustained in our spiritual lives. Just as important as the meals we eat to maintain our physical lives are the meals we must eat from the Bible to maintain our spiritual lives. Those who content themselves with only a weekly dose of the Word of God on Sundays will not be spiritually dead but they cannot and will not become spiritually strong and mature because they are spiritually starved. They are spiritually nothing more than skin and bones.

We need regular time in the Word of God to be spiritually healthy, just like we need regular food to be physically strong.

I am going to do something different. Before I begin this message, I am going to tell you how I will finish the message. That way, you can be thinking about the actions I will ask of you at the end of our time together while we are studying together.

At the beginning of the year, pastors often challenge their church families to read through the Bible in a year. That is a good challenge. While most people who take the challenge start off strong they fizzle out before the end of January. This year, Pastor Jordan and I are trying something different. We are going to challenge you to join us in Bible reading but we are breaking Bible reading into smaller chunks and bite-size pieces. Today, I am only going to challenge you to join your church family in reading the book of Proverbs. We will start tomorrow. We will read two chapters a day for five days a week. If you fall behind, that gives you Saturday and Sunday to catch up. At that pace, we will finish the book of Proverbs in only three weeks. Reading two chapters of Proverbs a day doesn't take long. It took me 5:30 to read the first two chapters of Proverbs out loud. All of the Bible reading we planned will take less than 10 minutes to complete. Each of us has 1,440 minutes each day. I am asking you to give 10 of those minutes to reading your Bible.

In three weeks, after we are done with Proverbs, I will challenge everyone to join us in reading the Gospel of Luke in short segments that are less than 10 minutes. This gives those who want to unhitch from this plan a chance to leave, and it give people that are new to the church a chance to get on-board and join us. We will continue picking books of the Bible through the year for the church to

read together. There are more details on this challenge but I will save them for later this morning.

The focus of the rest of the morning is answering the questions we all have about Bible reading. Why should I make time in my life for reading the Bible? How will reading the Bible change me? Why is reading the Bible worth my time? To answer those questions, let's turn to Psalm 19.

Psalm 19 is about revelation. It tells us how God reveals himself. There are two ways God reveals himself to us. The first is by creation. That is called general revelation. Everyone can know something about God by looking at the fish, the trees, the birds, and outer space. From them we learn God is big. God is powerful. God values beauty. God is complex. The second way God reveals himself is found in the second half of this Psalm. God reveals more of himself in the Word of God than he does in creation. Let's read Psalm 19:1-11 together and we will see the two ways God reveals himself.

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat. The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. Psalm 19:1–11 (ESV)

While I read 11 verses, this morning, we will focus most of our attention in on verses 7-9. In those three verses, the Bible is described in six ways. There are also six results of what the Bible does in our lives. Let's read through these six statements to find six things the Bible is and six things the Bible does in our lives.

Why should I take time to read the Bible?

1. The law of the Lord is perfect. It revives my soul.

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul... Psalm 19:7 (ESV)

Let's begin by looking at the law of the Lord. What is God's law? God's laws tells us the way we should live. You can think of God's laws like a manual. A manual tells us the way something should work. It tells us the way something runs. Recently, I purchased a new-to-me snow blower. I read the manual, and I am thankful I did. The snow blower has a number of grease joints and if I hadn't read the manual I would have never found them. I wouldn't have realized how often they need to be greased. Apparently, the last owner of the snow blower never read the manual. He never greased the machine. He also never read about changing the gear box oil. That was in the manual. The gear box oil was gray with shavings. I needed changing, and if I didn't change it, I would have shortened the life of the blower. It turns out that reading the manual was a good thing. It told me a fair amount of maintenance I needed to perform that hadn't been performed. The Bible is the same way. It is our manual for how to live life. It guides us on how to live life successfully. If we ignore God's manual for life, we ignore it to our own peril. The directions the Bible gives us about how to live life successfully are things we need to know. The Bible tells us about sins to avoid. It tells us what passions to pursue. It tells us how to live our lives to the fullest. The

Bible tells us how to make the right moral choices and how to make the right spiritual choices. The Bible tells us not just how to find joy in this life but how to also find ultimate joy in eternal life. It is all found in this book. Why would we ignore reading the manual for life? Why would we content ourselves with just hearing about the Bible once a week when it contains instructions we need to live successfully every day of the week?

Psalm 19 says the law of the Lord is perfect. The Hebrew word for perfect does not mean perfect as opposed to imperfect but perfect as opposed to incomplete. When this says the Bible is perfect, it mean the Bible provides us everything we need to know to live lives that are pleasing to God. The Bible provides us everything we need to know to identify sin in our lives. The Bible tells us how to repent, which is the way we handle the sin we find in our lives. The Bible tells us we need to trust in Christ to be forgiven of the sin in our lives and be born again. The Bible tells us everything we need to know about God's will so we can live lives pleasing to God.

If we don't know what is the right and God-honoring choice in life, it is because we don't know enough about what the Bible says about the choice, so need to learn more about God's book. It could also be because we don't know enough about the choice we are facing to see how the Bible addresses the core issue behind the decision. The Bible is complete. It tells us everything we need to know to live lives pleasing to God.

Sometimes, when we run into trouble in our lives, our first instinct is to think we need a therapist. When two people are having trouble in their marriage,

the first thing they want to do is call a counselor. Many counselors and therapists are good and have their place, but in my experience, 95 percent of the marital counseling I have done is remedied by simply pointing people to the Word of God and what it says about themselves and their marriage. I turn them to 1 Peter 3 to see what a godly wife looks like. I turn them to Ephesians 5 to help them understand the way a marriage is supposed to work. The Bible contains everything we need to know to have transformed lives. It contains everything we need to know to live God-honoring lives, no matter what situations we face. God's Word is complete.

We have learned what the Bible is. Now let's see what the Bible does. This verse says the Bible restores the soul. The Hebrew word for soul means the inner person, the real you. When we read the Word of God it restores our inner persons. The Word of God transforms us from the inside out. Earlier we learned that the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to birth spiritual life in people. Here we see God also uses the Bible to heal broken people. Have you ever found yourself facing times of weakness, or have you ever felt overwhelmed, discouraged, depressed, and anxious? When we feel that way, we need the Word of God. God uses the Bible to bandage the wounded soul. God uses the Bible to heal the broken heart. This is not just theory. I need the Bible to do this in my life as much as you need to Bible to do this in yours. When I feel overwhelmed with problems in my family and my heart is broken, I need to run to the Word of God to heal my heart. When COVID hit our community so attendance dropped and we took a financial dive, I was concerned. We have 10 families on staff that need salaries. I

was anxious. Where did I go to find peace and guidance? Where did I go to calm my heart? The Word of God. In those days I needed more time in the Word, not less. Have you experienced God's Word healing your heart and bringing you peace in troubled times? Has God's Word reminded you of his love when the world feels out of control? Has God used his Word to give you peace in anxious times? That is what this verse tells us the Bible does in our lives. If this book is the bandage for a broken heart and it is the only way to peace in a hectic out-of-control world, how can we content ourselves to read this book only on Sunday? We need God to heal our souls more often than just once a week.

2. The testimony of the Lord is sure. It makes the simple wise.

...the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple... Psalm 19:7 (ESV)

We began by looking at God's Word as law. God's laws are like a manual that tells us the way life should be lived. The second part of this verse looks at God's Words as testimony. The Bible is God's self-disclosure. It reveals to us what God is really like. Looking at creation reveals some of God's awesomeness, creativity, love for beauty and amazing power. The Bible is the rest of God's self-disclosure. The Bible tells us things about God that we cannot know from his creation. The Bible reveals that the problem in this world is always sin. The Bible tells us the only solution to the problem of sin is Jesus. The Bible tells us where we came from and where history is going. Outside of creation, the Bible is the only other place where God reveals himself so we know him truly.

Maybe you heard about the opening prayer of the 117th Congress. Emanuel Clever gave the prayer. He closed his prayer by trying to be gender-inclusive so he ended it by saying, "Amen and awomen." Just so you know, amen

has nothing to do with men. It is a translation of the Hebrew word for truth. It means “so be it.” It has nothing to do with men and women so it cannot be a gender-biased word. While the news media focused on his gender-inclusive amen at the end of the prayer, I want to point out the words he said just before he closed the prayer.

We ask in the name of the monotheist God, Brahma, and God known by many names and many different faiths, amen and awomen.

According to Clever's prayer, the truth about God is known in many different faiths. He thinks God is called many different names, sometimes Brahma, sometimes Allah, and sometimes Jehovah. His prayer qualifies for the prayer-fail blog. Not only was his gender blender ending weird but what he said before that is just patently untrue. The Bible tells us the only way to know God other than creation is from this book. It is not from other books and other faiths. Other faiths are counterfeits. They are inspired by demons. They are not equally acceptable ways of worshipping God and knowing God. That is a lie from hell.

One of my favorite verses to point out the trustworthiness of the Bible to reveal God to us as he actually is comes from 2 Peter 1:19. To understand this verse, we need some background. Just prior to this verse, Peter talked about how he, James, and John were privileged to be on the Mount of Transfiguration and see Jesus transfigured before their eyes. They saw Jesus in all of his glory. If you remember from our study in the Gospel of Mark, on the mountain, Jesus shone as bright as the sun. Jesus' clothes flashed as bright as lightning in the night sky. Peter, James, and John had the ultimate in spiritual experiences. They saw Jesus in his glory. That was God revealing himself as he truly is to those

three men. Look what Peter said about the Word of God that we hold in our hands and how it compares to the transfiguration, the ultimate in spiritual experiences.

And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts... 2 Peter 1:19 (ESV)

Peter said that the Word of God we hold in our hands is more revealing of God than the transfiguration. We can know more about God and what he is actually like by the Word of God we hold in our hands than if we were with Peter, James, and John experiencing the transfiguration on the mountain. This is why Peter said we better pay attention to this book. It reveals to us God as he actually is.

So, God's Word is true testimony about God that reveals to us God as he actually is. What is the result of God's Word in our lives? The Psalmist says the Bible makes simple people wise. What does that mean? In Hebrew, a simple person is described as an open door. That is a very practical description. That means simple people have little discernment. They let anything into their lives. They have no ability to guard their lives and keep harmful things. Proverbs calls this person the fool. Some people claim they have open minds and want to try everything. The Bible calls that person a fool. You don't need to try everything to know there are things you don't want as part of your life.

There is a reason you have a door on your house. There is a reason you have a lock on that door. We don't let just anyone into our homes. We do not let just anybody around our wives and children because we know many people can, and will, cause great harm. That is why we have doors. That is why we keep our

doors shut. We keep our doors locked. We filter who we let into our lives and what we let into our homes. Just as we have locked doors on our houses and are careful about what we let into our lives, a wise person has a locked door on his or her heart and is careful about what he or she puts into his or her mind. You don't have to watch all movies to know that some movies are trash. They rot your mind and tear you apart. Only a simple person, a fool, will keep the door of his or her mind wide open and put that kind of garbage in his or her heart. The same is true with the Internet. On the Internet there is a ton of filth and garbage. It is all designed to rot your brains from the inside out. A wise person puts a door on his or her brains and only lets good things in the door. That door keeps the rotten stuff outside.

How does a simple person with an open mind become a wise person that carefully protects his wife, their children, and his heart? Read the Word of God. It makes simple people wise. This book will make you skilled in daily living.

Do you want to know how to be successful in life? It doesn't come from a college degree. There are plenty of simple people, foolish people, with college degrees. A successful life does not come from taking the right psychology class or the right business class. A successful life comes from a man or woman immersing himself or herself in the Bible. God's Word transforms the inner person from being a simple fool to being a man or woman of wisdom for everyday life.

[Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation. Psalm 119:98–99 \(ESV\)](#)

Only the fool would be content to just touch the Bible once a week on Sunday. This book is the path out of a foolish life and the path to a wise life. Who would want to deny themselves of a good and wise life?

3. The precepts of the Lord are right. They bring joy to the heart.

The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart... Psalm 19:8 (ESV)

We have seen the Bible described as laws. It is a manual on how to live life. The Bible is described as a testimony. Outside of creation, the Bible is the only way God has revealed himself and his will to us. Here we see the Bible is described as a book of precepts. A precept is a principle. It is a guideline. It is a truth to follow. The Psalmist says God's precepts are right. This is not right as opposed to wrong but right as principles that will get us on the right path in life. The principles of the Bible are like a guidance system, a road map on how to live. If someone is living life without God's Word, that person has no idea where he is going. He has no idea the right way to live.

Have you tried to drive some place and used the map program on your cell phone? Has it ever happened that you were deep into Minnesota and you are without your charging cord and your cell phone battery dies so you no longer have your map program? At that moment, you are completely lost. It doesn't matter how fast you drive or how slow you drive. At that point, you don't know where to drive. You have nothing guiding you on the right path so you have no idea where you are going.

That is what life is like for people who don't read the Bible. Some of them are all energetic and living life at 60 mph. Others are like slugs and are only making 5 mph of progress in life. For the energetic people and the sluggish

people, it doesn't matter how fast or how slow they go because they don't have a map to tell them where to go.

The Bible is full of precepts that tell us how to live life. Those precepts tell us the right path to go in life. The Bible guides us into making good choices in life, wise choices in life, healthy choices in life. If this is what the Bible does for us, why would we deny ourselves this book? Why would we content ourselves with getting so little of it in our lives when every part of it we study does good for our lives?

What effect does the Bible have on us? It brings us joy. It rejoices the heart. If you want to have joy in this life, spend time in the Word of God and let the Word of God guide you. God's Word doesn't necessarily direct us on an easy road but it always directs us into joy.

And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. 1 John 1:4 (ESV)

John knew that when he was writing the Word of God he was writing to give his readers joy.

Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart... Jeremiah 15:16 (ESV)

Jeremiah saw God's Word as the source of joy and delight in his life. Where are you going to find joy? Where are you going to find satisfaction in life? Where will you find happiness in your life? It is found in drinking in the Word of God. We read the Word daily because it brings joy and happiness to our days. Are you a bitter person? Read the Word. Are you an angry person? Read the Word. Are you a complaining person? Read the Word. Are you a fearful person? Read the Word. If you are miserable then the answer to combatting your misery

begins by getting back into reading the Word. Getting on the right path where the Word of God is flowing through our hearts and pumping through our veins brings us joy. Would you rather be who you are today with the Word of God or would you rather be Elon Musk and own Tesla but not have the Word of God? There is more joy in this life being just who we are with the Bible than being rich and famous without the Bible.

In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. Psalm 119:14 (ESV)

Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart. Psalm 119:111 (ESV)

The Word of God is more enjoyable than all the happiness riches can offer. The Word of God brings more joy to our hearts than anything else. Why would we deny ourselves this book? Why would we content ourselves to read it for only a few minutes on Sunday?

4. The commandment of the Lord is pure. It makes hard questions easy.

The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes... Psalm 19:8 (ESV)

This verse views the Word of God as commandments. In the last verse we saw the Word of God giving us principles for life. Here we see the Word of God giving us commands in life. If you struggle with authority, like most Americans, you will struggle with this statement. The Bible doesn't just give us principles for living. It gives us commands for living. As the Word of God, the Bible is the authority over us to tell us what is right and wrong.

The Psalmist says the commandments of the Bible are pure. What does that mean? The word pure means clear. Something is not cloudy. It is easily

seen. The way to picture this is a clear glass of water compared to a dirty glass of water. A clear glass of water is pure. If there is a fish in the glass, you can see it without a problem. If the glass of water is filled with dirty water and algae, you can't see the fish. You can't find the fish because the water isn't clear. The Psalmist says God's commands are clear. They are easy to see. They are not hard to understand. God's commands are hard to obey, but they are clear. They are easy to understand.

For example, take the ninth commandment. Do not lie. That is clear. That is easy to understand. So, a husband goes to leave work and the guys from the office invite him for a drink at a the bar before he goes home. After having a beer and some time with his friends, he heads home. When his wife asks him why he is late, he decides that it wouldn't be wise to tell her he was at the bar, so he decides to tell a white lie and just tell her he had to work late. Problem solved. She didn't need know the details of what really happened. Is that OK? The Bible would say, "Absolutely not! Do not lie. Period. Not a white lie, a black lie, a grey lie." Pick whatever color you want. The Bible says let your yes be yes and your no be no. Just tell the truth. It is not hard to understand. It is clear. However, it is hard to obey.

As another example, take the seventh commandment. It is clear. Do not commit adultery. This doesn't just pertain to extramarital sex after people are married but to premarital sex before people are married. God says save sex for marriage. Period. This is not hard to understand. It is hard to obey, but the command is clear. It is not difficult to comprehend. There is no mystery here.

For another example, remember when Jesus was asked for the two greatest commandments? What did he say? “Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. The second commandment is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself.” That is simple. That is clear. A child can understand these commandments. The problem comes in obeying them, not comprehending them.

What result does the Word of God bring in our lives? The Psalmist tells us God’s Word enlightens the eyes. What does that mean?

Maybe the best way to understand this is to tell you what happened early this morning. I was up before dawn to get ready for the day. Cindy, my wife, was still sleeping, so I didn’t want to turn on the light in the bedroom. I was looking for my black “Reach” bracelet in a pitch black room. I was not having much success. I couldn’t see anything so I had no idea what I was doing. If the lights were on, I could have instantly found my bracelet. That is what the Bible is like. In many choices in life we are groping around like we are in a dark room. We have no idea what the right thing to do is. We are not sure what God wants in our lives. Then we read the Word of God. The commands of God are clear and are like someone turning on the lights in our lives. God’s Word enables us to clearly see what is right and what is wrong. The Word of God enables us to see choices we need to make and situations we face as they really are.

For examples, “Should we live together before marriage?” Read the Bible. Do not commit adultery. End of discussion. The lights went on. God made that one really clear. The wife is washing the dishes after the meal and I am sitting on the couch watching television. Does God want me doing that? The Bible says

love your neighbor as yourself. If you would want your wife to help you wash the dishes then get off the couch and help her wash the dishes. The Word of God turns on the lights in your life and makes things like that simple and clear.

If the Holy Spirit takes the commands of God and uses them to turn on the light in our hearts to make the tough choices in life easy choices in life, why would we deny ourselves of this book? Why would we content ourselves to only be in this book for one hour a week?

Guys, next time you want to find a tool in the garage, try finding it with the lights off. You will probably not get very far because you are in the dark. You need light. Let that remind us that when we deny ourselves the Word of God, we are groping around in darkness when the Word will turn on the lights and make the tough choices of life into the easy choices of life.

5. The fear of the Lord is clean. It endures forever.

The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever...Psalm 19:9 (ESV)

What is this verse talking about when it talks about the fear of the Lord? Another way to talk about the fear of the Lord is to talk about the reverence of God. That is the worship of God. The Bible is a manual that tells us the right way to worship and adore God. Look what the Bible says about worship:

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises! Psalm 98:4 (ESV)

We are to worship the Lord with singing. That is why Pastor Andy wants us to sing really loud. The Bible tells us to sing.

Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Psalm 150:3–6 (ESV)

The Bible tells us to not just worship God in song, but the entire band should get in on the act of worshipping God! The Bible guides us into clear worship, good worship. I am glad it does. If you look at other religions, you find they are filled with false worship, evil worship, dark worship.

For example, in the Old Testament, one of the ancient Israelite's neighbors worshipped a god named Molech. The way you worshipped him was by throwing your newborn children into the fire to be burned alive. That is bad worship. The Bible tells us that is not the way to worship God. That is not clean worship. That is not good worship. Let's move from the Old Testament to the New Testament. One of the gods the Romans worshipped was called Bacchus. He was the god of alcohol. The way you worshipped him was by getting hammered then going to the temple prostitutes to finish your worship once all your inhibitions were gone. That is not good worship. That is not clean worship. God says, "I don't want you to worship me that way. My book is a manual to guide you into good, wholesome and clean worship."

What is the result that we find with God's Word? It endures forever. That means the words of the Bible do not die. They are relevant forever. Some words in the Bible were written 4,000 years ago. Others were written 2,000 years ago, but they are just as relevant and applicable today as the day they were penned.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. Mark 13:31 (ESV)

God's words last forever. They are relevant forever.

...since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God... 1 Peter 1:23 (ESV)

The Bible is described as the imperishable seed of God, not the perishable seed of God that has a “best if used by” stamp on the side of it. No matter what culture you are part of, no matter how old you are or how young you are, the Bible is relevant. Is it relevant to the children in AWANA. It is relevant to the seniors Bible study that meets during the week. No matter how old people are or what culture they come from, the Bible is relevant and effective at creating spiritual life in their hearts.

One day, a British preacher named Charles Spurgeon was asked how he could justify preaching from the Bible, such an old and outdated book. Spurgeon said that he didn't have to defend the preaching of the old Bible. The Bible was like a lion. All he needed to do was let it out of its cage and the Bible would defend itself as it created and nourished spiritual life in the people who heard the words.

If the Bible is always relevant and needed by us, why would we content ourselves with just reading it once a week?

6. The rules of the Lord are true. They are completely fair.

The rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. Psalm 19:9 (ESV)

Now we are talking about the rules of the Lord. If you look at the footnote in some of your Bibles you will see that this word could also be translated as judgments. What the Bible tells us about God's judgments and the way history will wrap up is true. Those who die apart from Christ will be judged by Christ. They will end up in the lake of fire for the rest of eternity with the devil and his angels. That may not be what we like to hear. That is not politically correct to speak, but that is what the Bible says will happen. That is the truth. Another

judgment the Bible tells us about is for Christians. This is not a judgment of our sins. Those were already paid for by Jesus. This is a judgment of rewards during which the Lord will reward believers for how they lived for Christ and served Christ after they came to Christ. This is the truth. The Bible tells us the truth about God's judgments.

It also tells us God's judgments will be fair. They will be right. They will be just.

7. The Word of God is our greatest pleasure and our greatest possession.

More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Psalm 19:10 (ESV)

The word of God is more desirable than the most desirable possession of the world, the gold bars of Fort Knox. It is better to have a Bible in your hand than to have the gold bars of Fort Knox in your hands.

In addition, the Bible is the greatest pleasure in the world. It is more pleasurable than honey. At this time, honey was the sweetest thing available. Chocolate was not invented or they would have used it in this verse in place of honey. The Psalm is saying there is no greater pleasure in this world than this book.

This is a consistent theme in the Bible.

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Psalm 119:103 (ESV)

Therefore I love your commandments above gold, above fine gold. Psalm 119:127 (ESV)

8. The Word of God keeps us away from disaster and leads us to eternal reward.

Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.
Psalm 19:11 (ESV)

God's Word warns us about sin. It steers us away from disaster. God's Word is filled with warning signs, like "Bridge out ahead." Those signs are good. They keep us from disaster.

God's Word is not just full of directional signs that stop us from heading into disaster but it is full of delightful signs that point us to a great reward.

What a good blessing. Why would we want to deny ourselves this book? Why would we want to take away the crucial warning signs on the road of life? Why would we want to get rid of the signs that point to great reward and blessing in our lives? Only a fool would be content with only satisfying himself with a tiny bit of this book once a week.

Let me remind us what the Bible does for us. The Bible creates spiritual life in a dead soul, and it revives and heals the weary and broken soul. The Bible makes simple people wise. The Bible makes the heart rejoice. The secret to joy in life is found in this book. The Bible turns on the lights in our hearts and makes the tough questions of life into easy questions in our lives. The Bible endures forever. It is always relevant, no matter our culture or our age. The Bible is the most precious possession in the world. It is the greatest joy in the world. It warns us of disasters and it points us to blessings.

So I ask you, "How can we content ourselves with not reading this book?"

Application

I told you at the beginning of the message that Pastor Jordan and I are challenging the church family to read a small portion of the Bible five days a weeks, Monday-Friday, with Saturday and Sunday for catch-up if we fall behind. The size of the Bible reading portions are small, all less than 10 minutes. Tomorrow, we are starting the book of Proverbs. We are reading only two chapters a day. Reading two chapters of Proverbs straight takes a little more than 5 minutes. As you read, I am asking you to do two things. First, highlight in your Bible anything the Holy Spirit makes stand out to you as you read. Second, I am asking you to have a notebook where you write down just one thing, just two or three sentences of something that stood out to you from your reading. Write it down in your own words. Why am I asking you to do that? When we write one thing down in our own words, we are much more likely to remember it for the rest of our day. If we just read things, it is easy to forget. Highlighting and writing one thing down will help us remember what we read.

On Wednesdays, Pastor Jordan and I are going to try something. We are going to do the Wednesday reading in Proverbs together on video. Jordan will read one chapter and share one or two things that were important to him from the chapter. I will read the next chapter and share one or two things that were important to me from the chapter. The total length of the video will be less than 10 minutes. It will be posted on our Facebook page at 7 a.m. on Wednesday. It will also be send out via e-mail at 7 a.m. on Wednesday. Look for that brief video each week as we share with you how we read and apply God's Word in our lives.

As I said earlier, in three weeks, after we finish Proverbs, we will move to a different book of the Bible. That will give more people a chance to commit to joining us in our Bible reading. Remember there are 1,440 minutes on the clock each day. I am challenging you to give up 10 or less of those minutes to put your finger in the text and be blessed from this book.

Before I close, you will see response cards. We have paper response cards in the bulletin. If you are joining me in the three-week journey through Proverbs, turn in the paper response card with your name on it and write the word “Proverbs” on the back. If you are watching online, go to our electronic response card found at www.tinyurl.com/CWSLSunday. Once you are there, choose the prayer response tab and write Proverbs in the prayer request section with your name.

That response is not for me. It is for you. When we sign our names to something or write down with our hands that we will do something, we are much more likely to follow through on our commitments.

Will you join me in reading the book that revives weary souls, the book that makes the simple wise, the book that brings joy to our hearts, the book that turns on the lights in our minds and makes tough questions easy, the book that is always relevant, the book that is our greatest possession, and the book that is our greatest pleasure? The Bible.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, time with his family and wrestling with his sons. His favorite topics are preaching and ancient rhetoric. Feel free to contact him at www.Christ2RCulture.com (www.c2rc.com)

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