



# **A Heart to Study God's Word**

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## Introduction

In the *Smaller Westminster Catechism*, the first question that is asked is, "what is the chief end of man?" This is a very pointed question and it is one that serves to speak to the greatest question that man tends to ask of himself: what is my purpose? The answer to the question is this, according to the confession: man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever. It doesn't get much simpler than that, but it is also one of the loftiest things that one can attain to do with their life, especially when you consider that we live in a fallen world.

With that, the next question then becomes, how do I do that? All throughout history, there have been books written by man that attempt to answer this question, the majority of which fail miserably in their conclusions. Both secular and Christian alike have wrestled with this issue, but the only piece of writing that can even make the claim of being able to answer such a weighty question as this is the Holy Bible. The Bible is the only book in history that has been able to answer both of these questions: what is our purpose, and how do we fulfill it?

It is with these two questions in mind that I want us to embark upon a series of Bible studies that seek to provide the foundation that we need in order to answer the question of how do we walk out our purpose in glorifying God and enjoying Him forever. In this four part study, we are going to cover the basics of the Christian faith and show how each is able to help us in fulfilling our God given purpose of glorifying His name. The four areas that we will cover in this study are as follows: 1) studying the Word, 2) prayer, 3) worship, and 4) walking the walk. To help you easily remember these four areas of study, I have titled this series "Read.Pray.Worship.Live.," which serves to give a quick description of the essentials for a healthy Christian life.

You see, in order for us to be successful as Christians and fulfill this glorious purpose for our lives, there are certain things that we need to do. We need to look at ourselves as professional athletes; they work extremely hard and do everything it takes in order to stay at the top of their game so that they can consistently perform at their best. With the athlete, we need to recognize that they didn't get there overnight and they started by learning the basics of their particular sport. Even after learning the basics and becoming a professional, the best athletes still work at the basics daily to remain sharp, while still working to learn and progress to new things. We're supposed to be doing the same thing; no matter how far along we get in our walk, we still need to continue practicing the basics because those are what we're going to need to rely upon on an everyday basis.

To kick off this study, we're going to look at first things first, we're going to take a look at studying the Word and seeing why it is so important for us to do so. Why here? It's the perfect place to start, considering that without this book, our faith would have no foundation to stand on. So, in this study, we'll be walking through the Scriptures and going underneath the surface so that you can see why we need to have a love for the Word of God.

## What's the Point?

It's granted that a good number of Bible believing Christians do not regularly read the book that they say they believe in. Yet, if you look at your friend of another major religion, you always see them doing those things that their religion requires of them. Why is that? What's the point? They know that by doing those things they are going to get closer to their god and reach heaven when they die (so they believe, anyway). Much like the children of Israel as recorded in the Bible, most Christians feel that they can put God on the back burner and not pay any attention to Him until they need something from Him; we figure that our pastor is perfectly capable of giving us everything we need from the Bible without having to dust it off and read it for ourselves.

We can even take a look at our own lives for a moment and we'll see that we innately are dedicated to almost everything other than God. We will spend countless hours studying, writing papers, and so on to earn our college degree so that we can get a higher paying job. We will work overtime at our job to impress our boss so we can get that promotion. We will even bend over backwards to impress that man/woman of our dreams. Just about everything we do is of temporary value, but what are we willing to do in order to achieve those things that are of eternal value? Pointed question, isn't it? Indeed it is, but it's one that every Christian needs to answer.

Why should we read our Bible? The answer is simple: we need to be just as devoted to the Word of God as we are to just about everything else in our lives, but more so. Our motivation for reading the Holy Bible should be so that we can work towards a closer relationship with our Father in heaven, as well as having a greater understanding of both His person and character. We see the dedication that those of other religions are putting into serving their false gods, so why aren't we able to put forth the same effort in worshiping the one true God?

## God's Word to Us

Above all else that we may believe or come to know about the Bible, there are a few essential points that we have to lay hold of before a study like this can have any significant meaning to us. These things are: 1) it is infallible and inerrant, 2) it is the testimony of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and 3) the Bible is God's word and revelation to us. In order for any student of the Bible to have any respect for this great work, these foundational elements must be understood and believed, otherwise any further study of the text will find itself to be fruitless. Let us walk through each of these points and see what the Bible has to say about itself.

The Holy Bible is infallible, that is to say that this text is 100% perfect and free from error. All of the information in the Bible is perfect, true, and accurate. Even in the eye of possible contradictions, each can be easily resolved, keeping the Bible's record pure and untainted. Throughout the course of history, countless men have set out to disprove the Bible,



only to have many come to the faith, or fail miserably in their attempts. Now, there is the need for a bit of clarification in regard to this topic, as the question will arise asking why there are differences in manuscripts and such. The answer to this question is simple: the original texts, as written by their author are the only copies that are 100% perfect and without error. When copies started being made, errors began to be introduced in the form of grammar and spelling, as well as missing text. Thus, the manuscripts that are used for translation today are copies of copies; but by having thousands upon thousands of copies, it has become easy to spot the errors and correct them to have a fairly solid and accurate text that we believe closely resembles the original or oldest manuscripts. Even the Bible describes itself in this manner, by calling itself: pure ([Psalm 12:6](#); [119:140](#); [Prov. 30:5](#)), true ([Psalm 119:160](#); [John 17:17](#)), and perfect ([Psalm 19:7](#)).

The next thing that we will look at is the Bible being the testimony of Jesus Christ. If we look at the Bible as a whole, we will find that every book, chapter, and verse of the Bible points directly to Jesus Christ, either in His coming, His earthly ministry, His present position, or His future return to rule and reign. When we compare [John 1:1-2](#) with Genesis 1-2, we see that Jesus was pre-existent and was involved in the creation of everything that exists today. If we skip ahead to [Genesis 3:15](#) and Genesis 22, we see types and shadows of the promise of Jesus Christ and the work that He would come to do. If we fast forward to the gospels, we receive the written account of His earthly ministry from the immaculate conception of Mary all the way to His first resurrection. In the epistles, we receive instruction for how the church is to prepare themselves to be eternally married to Jesus Christ, and finally in Revelation we receive information on the glorious return of Jesus Christ to rule both heaven and earth. Even with all of that, we can see even direct indications that the Scriptures testify of Jesus; we find this in passages like [John 5:39](#); [Acts 10:43](#); [18:28](#); and [1 Corinthians 15:3](#). From alpha to omega, beginning to end, the Bible is the written testimony of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Just like the Bible is God's written testimony of Jesus Christ, it is also His personal revelation of Himself to us. It is only through the pages of the Bible that we are able to learn of the nature and characteristics of our God. If we didn't have the Bible, we would not know of His omnipotence ([Romans 15:19](#)), omnipresence ([Ephesians 1:3](#)), love ([John 3:16](#)), mercy ([2 Corinthians 1:3](#)), and so on. Everything that God has allowed His creation to know of Him can be found in the Bible, and in the Bible alone. The Bible is not just for learning and knowing about God, it is also intended for us to use in order to live out our purpose. We find in [Romans 15:4](#) and [16:26](#) that it is written for our instruction and intended to be used by all, even to the point of being our guide ([Proverbs 6:23](#) & [2 Peter 1:19](#)). Scripture also tells us that it is profitable for both doctrine and practice ([2 Timothy 3:16, 17](#)), as well as being able to make us wise to salvation through faith in Christ ([2 Timothy 3:15](#)). In all ways, we are able to see that the Bible is intended to be our guide for life, teaching us how we should live in order that we might glorify God.

What does this have to do with us and our desire for reading the Word? This in and of itself should be enough motivation for us to want to get into the Word on a daily basis! Just by reading the Bible, you're having several things happen: 1) you're reading the testimony of the

Lord and His chosen people, 2) you're gaining a greater understanding of who God is and why He does things the way He does, and 3) God is speaking to you through the words that are contained within the pages of your Bible. Let us not forget the fact that this book is perfect! How many books can claim that?!

## Keeping the Sin Monster at Bay

Sure enough, if just the thought of learning more about your Lord wasn't enough, there are more reasons why we should take advantage of reading the Word. The next reason why we should have a love for the Word of God is that it will help to keep us from sin. The psalmists truly understood the concept of reading and studying the Word in order to keep himself away from sin, especially the author of Psalm 119. He clearly stated this in [Psalm 119:11](#) where he wrote: "Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!"

How does reading the Word keep us from sin? It's quite simple, if you take a moment & think about it. The more we read the Word, the more we know about God and the things that He likes and dislikes; and the more that we know about Him, the more we will desire to please Him, which means turning away from sin. You see, it's near impossible to have any kind of intimate relationship with the Lord and continue to have sin in your life. The more time You spend fellowshiping with the Lord by reading His Word, you begin to become more like Christ, in whom there is no sin. It's just like it says in [Romans 12:2](#) where we are told to "not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." If we truly seek to know and understand God, our mind becomes renewed and the thoughts of sin decrease and become less effective in our lives because we are focused on Christ.

Another point of reference for this is [1 Peter 1:15-16](#), which reads, "as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" We see here that we serve a God who is holy and unable to even tolerate having sin in His presence. As a result of having a holy God, He also desires for His creation to be holy, just as He is; and we are able to do this because of what Jesus Christ did for us. If we are able to keep commandments like this in mind, we will keep ourselves from sin because we will continually be in the process of making ourselves to be more like our God who is perfect and holy. This is not to say that we will become a god, but we will have his nature, which is sinlessness. If we find ourselves concerned with holiness, then it will be that much harder for us to sin or even have it anywhere near us.

Yet another passage worth looking at is [Joshua 1:8](#), which reads, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." How does this relate to keeping us from sinning? Easy; if we meditate on the Word day & night and do all that is written in it, then we will not be in sin. If you're observing everything that is written in the Bible, then you are not sinning; it's as simple



as that. But notice the latter part of the verse, as well; if we do meditate on the Word and keep our lives free from sin, then God will make our way prosperous and give us success. Who doesn't want success, especially a success that is victory over sin and living a life pleasing to God? I know that I do; so that means that I need to keep the Word hidden in my heart which will keep me close to the Lord and far from sin.

## Study to Know the Truth

With the wave of false prophets and false teachings that are rising in our time, it's important that we know and understand the truth of Scripture. With the ever increasing rise of false teachings, we should be studying the Word so that we can remain firmly planted and keep from being swayed. Paul tells us in [2 Timothy 2:15](#) to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (KJV)." We are also told to "give attention to reading, to exhortation, [and] to doctrine" in [1 Timothy 4:13](#). Not only that, but we are even warned in [Jude 3-4](#) that we need to "contend earnestly for the faith" because of these false teachers creeping in; in other words, we are commanded to fight for the truth of Scripture, which can only be done by being prepared and studying the Word.

It's important to understand that the only way we're going to be able to know the truth of Scripture is to be engulfed in the studying of it. There's no way in the world that we, as Christians, are going to be able to testify against false teachings unless we know the Word for ourselves and know how to interpret it. At the same time, we should be able to follow up in the Scriptures after hearing our pastor preach in order to make sure that everything they have said lines up with what is written ([Acts 17:11](#)). There is no reason that today's Christians should be lemmings who mindlessly follow after anything that sounds good; we should all be well versed in the biblical texts and know how to exegete (interpret) Scripture. We have to be wary of having itching ears and allowing ourselves to fall prey to false teaching just because it sounds or makes us feel good, like many today are doing ([2 Timothy 4:3](#)). Just so we're on the same page, this does not mean that you have to go to seminary or Bible college; it simply means learning how to study the Word of God and how to use a Bible dictionary and commentary so that you can correctly interpret the texts.

Again, there is so much false doctrine floating around today, so it's more important today to know the truth than it ever has been before. If anything, contending against false doctrine should be one of your motivations for having a heart to study God's Word.

## Not By Bread Alone

Brothers & sisters, we can't live by bread alone. We are told in [Deuteronomy 8:3](#) that "man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord." No matter how much we want to think that we can prosper and grow in our Christian walk without studying the Word, we just cannot do it. Man lives by every word that

proceeds from the mouth of God. He spoke the world into existence; the words in the Bible are words that came from His mouth, and they give us life, but only if we take time to learn it!

We are blessed to have been left a written account of God's interaction with His people. With that in mind, the least we should do is to take advantage of those words and soak them up with every ounce of our being. God desires to have relationship with us, and the Holy Bible is the ground floor and escalator that will lead us into fellowship with Him. We cannot live by bread alone, which is this life without God; we need to live by the words of God, which are found in the Holy Bible.

Take the steps today to begin to have a heart and passion for the Word, as well as developing an intimate relationship with the Lord. If you have lost that passion, take a look at one of the many reasons above and let that be your motivation to get back into the Word and begin to seek after the Lord again. I assure you, this is the first step you need to take in order to begin living out your purpose, which is to glorify God; without this, the rest of the areas that we are going to study in this series are useless. So, start today!