

▶ God Speaks Through the Bible

IN FOCUS: *God's Word is His primary means of speaking to us.*



When you're stuck and need help—whether it's fixing something, cooking, or understanding Scripture—what's your go-to resource?

LOOK AT OUR WORLD

The internet is full of sites claiming to provide guidance on how to do whatever we want to do. Pick a subject, and there's someone to provide direction. This is nothing new. Solomon said, "There is no end to the making of many books" (Ecclesiastes 12:12). And there is no end to the human desire to share our opinions with others. While advice can be helpful, the ultimate guidance comes from God, and the primary way He reveals His will for us is through His Word. The Old and New Testaments are filled with God's revelation of Himself and His ways. His teachings are life-giving for us.

LEARN GOD'S WAY

IN FOCUS: God's _____ is His primary means of speaking to us.

Psalm 19 begins with a grand pronouncement that all of nature declares the glory of God and that the expanse of the sky above us and the enormity of the universe beyond it are manifestations of God's work (vv. 1-6). As splendid as the revelation of God is in nature, the revelation of God in His Word is even more so. Yes, nature "declares," "proclaims," and "pour[s] out speech" with exceeding power concerning God's majesty and wisdom (vv. 1-2). But God's revelation of His character, nature, and ways through His Word is far greater. As we read the Bible, every one of His words is inspired to be of essential benefit to us.

Psalm 19:7-9 ⁷ The instruction of the LORD is perfect, renewing one's life; the testimony of the LORD is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise. ⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right, making the heart glad; the command of the LORD is radiant, making the eyes light up. ⁹ The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the LORD are reliable and altogether righteous.

1) God speaks to reveal His _____ and _____.

Too often, the Bible is mistaken for a sort of rule book, but it's not. It's God's revelation of Himself to His people. It's the perfect instruction of God, the testimony of God. His revelation of His character and nature simultaneously becomes the basis for the life and action of His people. God's Word demonstrates the way of God, and, as His followers, we can take great delight in making whatever adjustments are necessary to join God in what He's doing and in the way He's doing it. As the Holy Spirit gives us understanding of the Word of God, we're revived, made wise, and filled with joy as we experience Him working in, through, and around us.

Psalm 19:10-11 ¹⁰ They are more desirable than gold—than an abundance of pure gold; and sweeter than honey dripping from a honeycomb. ¹¹ In addition, your servant is warned by them, and in keeping them there is an abundant reward.

2) God speaks to _____ and _____ us.

The Holy Spirit opens our eyes through God's Word. When His Word is active in our lives, it changes us. We're enlivened by it, motivated by it, and make confident progress by its light. God speaks through the Bible for the purpose of revealing His character and nature, His will, and His ways, to move us onto His agenda. God's Word keeps the wise person safely in the center of God's will. When He speaks, He not only lights our path, but He also forewarns us of possible pitfalls and demonstrates the rewards of godliness.

Psalm 19:12-14 ¹² Who perceives his unintentional sins? Cleanse me from my hidden faults. ¹³ Moreover, keep your servant from willful sins; do not let them rule me. Then I will be blameless and cleansed from blatant rebellion. ¹⁴ May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.

3) God speaks to _____ and _____ us in right living.

From the vantage point of adulthood, we look back on our childhood with gratitude for the corrective intervention of nurturing adults when we indulged in behaviors that could have caused us harm. Sometimes, those behaviors were willfully wrong; other times, they were innocent. We unintentionally, even naively, engaged in improper behavior. Either way, it was the disruption of those behaviors by a caring adult that brought harmful actions or words to light, convicted us of their gravity, reinforced healthy habits, and clarified the benefits of right behavior patterns. The psalmist celebrated the reality that the Bible plays a similar but purer function in our lives. When God speaks through His Word, He intentionally convicts us of wrong living and guides us onto the right path for His glory and our good.

ENGAGE

Reread verses 12–14 slowly, then write a prayer asking God to reveal any hidden faults and help you speak and think in ways that are pleasing to Him.

LIVE IT OUT

The ultimate guidance we need comes from God, and the primary way He reveals His will is through His Word. Commit to reading God's Word as you seek His will. Choose one or more of the following actions you will take in response to today's study.

VIEW OF GOD: What verses or passages of Scripture has God used in your life to demonstrate clearly His will and ways? What adjustments can you make to join Him in His agenda?

VIEW OF SELF: Identify a decision or situation where you feel uncertain. Pray for wisdom and seek guidance from Scripture. Write down what God's Word reveals and how it shapes your next steps.

VIEW OF OTHERS: Let your words reflect the joy and clarity God's Word brings. Be intentional about encouraging others, especially those who are discouraged or confused.

TALK IT OUT

Want to go a step further? Gather with two or three Christ-followers. Read Psalm 19:7-14, then use the following summary and questions for a deeper discussion.

Psalm 19:7-14 celebrates the perfection and power of God's Word, describing it as life-giving, trustworthy, and more valuable than gold or honey. The psalmist highlighted how Scripture revives the soul, imparts wisdom, brings joy, and enlightens the eyes. It not only reveals God's character but also exposes human sin, prompting a desire for inner purity and integrity. It offers a heartfelt prayer for forgiveness of hidden faults, protection from willful sin, and a longing for one's words and thoughts to be pleasing to God. It's a call to let God's truth shape our inner life and outward behavior.

- ❓ **In what ways can our lives reflect the joy, wisdom, and clarity that come from knowing God's Word?**
- ❓ **How does your life reflect that you value God's Word as "more desirable than gold" and "sweeter than honey" (v. 10)?**
- 🎯 **Share one area where you want to grow in resisting temptation. Commit to praying for and checking in with each other during the week.**

DAY 1: God's Word never changes.

Read Psalm 19:7-9.

I had a powerful and unforgettable experience on a small island off the mainland of British Columbia, Canada. I was seated with my family just above the shoreline in anticipation of a magnificent summer sunset. We watched in silence, serenaded by waves lapping the beach and filled with wonder at the vast ocean before us, the clear but dimming evening sky, and the countless mountain peaks of distant islands rising from the water.

Just as the sun started to dip below the horizon, we were startled by a bagpiper behind us playing "Amazing Grace." He continued to play until the last rays of the sun left the sky. Then all was hushed. I was unexpectedly and deeply moved. In that precious moment, we caught a glimpse of God's glory and were reminded of His holiness, love, and grace. While nature reveals God's glory, His Word offers an even clearer and more intimate glimpse of His unchanging character and purpose.

We live during a time of constant change. The technology we use daily is hard-pressed to keep up with new developments and demands. The cell phone or tablet we bought only five years ago is nearly obsolete today. Fresh international conflicts, shifting borders and power dynamics, along with fluctuations in financial markets, debt management, and global currencies, all point to a world in perpetual flux.

In contrast, God's Word is relevant in every generation, culture, and setting. It's not affected by fads and trends. It won't become obsolete or need upgrading. When we anchor our lives in His Word, we find stability, clarity, and purpose. We can trust in the enduring truth of Scripture and let it shape our thoughts, decisions, and relationships today and always.

- ❓ Verse 8 says, "The command of the LORD is radiant." Spend some time in quiet meditation, asking God to illuminate an area of your life where you need clarity. Journal what He reveals to you.
- 🕉 Meditate on and memorize Psalm 19:14 this week as a reminder of the importance of responding to God's Word.

MEMORIZE

"May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, Lord, my rock and my Redeemer."

PSALM 19:14

DAY 2: God's Word lights our path.

Read Psalm 19:10-11.

Located deep within Lookout Mountain in Chattanooga, Tennessee, is Ruby Falls. After taking an elevator into the heart of the mountain and hiking through winding, narrow subterranean passageways, explorers emerge at the tallest underground waterfall open to the public in the United States. It's magnificent! And then someone turns the lights off for effect. I have never experienced such utter darkness. It was paralyzing, intimidating, and humbling. There was nothing we could do to remedy our situation until someone turned the lights back on.

My expedition to the falls is a parable of life. At best, our journey through is cloaked in darkness. We can't know the future. Certainty, at least absolute certainty, is elusive. Though we want the security of light for our path, we lack the ability to flip the switch. This is why the psalmist excitedly and reverently cried out, "Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path" (Psalm 119:105).

God's Word lights our path and fuels our progress. This is God's design: to speak through the Bible, revealing His character and calling us to align with His will. God's Word answers the cry of our deepest desires to know and enjoy Him. For millennia, people have sacrificially strived to secure riches that won't erode and obtain food that's delicious and sweet on the tongue and fulfilling in the stomach.

As desirable as fine gold and sweet honey might be, they pale in comparison to the unsurpassable richness of the Word of God. His Word is a storehouse of treasures that will never be exhausted and never run dry.

🕒 **Each morning, make reading Scripture a priority. As you read a passage, ask: *How can these verses guide my choices today?* Journal your thoughts and revisit them in the evening to reflect on how His Word shaped your day.**

A person stands in the center of a dark, wet road at night. A bright, circular light source, possibly a flashlight or a low sun, is positioned just behind the person, creating a strong backlight and illuminating the road surface in front of them. The road is flanked by dark, silhouetted hills or mountains. The sky is filled with large, dark, and textured clouds, with some light breaking through near the horizon. The overall mood is mysterious and dramatic.

YOUR

WORD

DAY 3: God's Word guides and warns.

Read Psalm 19:10-11.

God's Word transforms those who invite the Holy Spirit to apply its truth to their lives. It keeps the wise anchored in the center of God's will. When He speaks, His Word not only illuminates our path but also warns us of dangers ahead and reveals the blessings that come from living in obedience.

It's become common to use GPS to help us navigate to a desired destination. We rely (perhaps too readily) on its impersonal positioning, navigation, and timing services as if it's infallible. Then the signal is lost, or the roadways haven't been updated, and we're stranded without a map. God's Word has a transforming effect when we allow the Holy Spirit to apply what He says. I take solace in getting directions from a Guide who is present with me and knows the way. He knows both the journey and the trouble areas to avoid. I gladly follow His lead.

A servant (v. 11) is a person committed to the will of someone else, either by appointment, office, or choice. A servant takes personal responsibility to execute the will of another. In truth, that is precisely what we are as Christ-followers. We've pledged ourselves to serve under the lordship of Jesus Christ. His will is now our will. His plans are now our plans. His ways are now our ways. His agenda is now our agenda. And He's promised that He'll care for us out of the very storehouse and storeroom of heaven. He will make good on His promise: "Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29).

? What things do you spend the most time, money, and emotional energy on? Do you desire these things more than God's Word? What would it look like to desire God's Word most?

DAY 4: God's Word brings awareness to our hidden faults.

Read Psalm 19:12-14.

In the same way the sun dominates the daytime sky (vv. 4-6), the Word of God dominates human life. God speaks through His Word to impact our motives and actions. Just like the sun, the Word of God is essential. It's a scientific certainty that life on this planet would cease to exist without the sun. It's a spiritual certainty that no meaningful human life can thrive without the revealed Word of God in the Bible.

God's Word penetrates and examines us. God isn't content to leave "unintentional sins" and "hidden faults" (v. 12) unaddressed. He loves us too much to do that. If left unchecked, our faults can lead to overt, presumptuous, and deliberate sins. Often, our "hidden faults" aren't hidden because they're too small to see or too inconsequential to matter. Rather, they're hidden because they're too characteristic of us to register; we don't see them. They're too much a part of our "normal."

When I took the position of president of a seminary in Canada, there were some areas of the campus in disrepair. Nowhere was this more obvious than at the entryway to the parking lots for our academic buildings. Every time it rained, a deep pool of water the size of a small pond collected in the middle of the road. Without conscious thought, driver after driver simply drove onto the shoulder to get around. The behavior was instinctive. The gross blemish on our beautiful campus didn't register with seminary personnel. Why? Because it had become "normal." We all have "hidden faults" in our lives that we navigate around without knowing it. Through His Word, God will bring those to our awareness and remove them.

- 🕒 **Spend some time in prayer today, asking God to reveal any hidden faults He wants you to address. Submit to His leadership and use the space in the margin to identify some action steps you can take to address these issues.**

"It's a scientific certainty that life on this planet would cease to exist without the sun. It's a spiritual certainty that no meaningful human life can thrive without the revealed Word of God in the Bible."

ROB BLACKABY

DAY 5: God still speaks.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

In a world filled with noise, opinions, and ever-changing messages, it's easy to wonder where to find genuine truth. God still speaks clearly, powerfully, and personally through His Word. Scripture isn't just a historical document or collection of moral teachings; it's alive with His presence and purpose.

When we open the Bible, we're not just reading words; we're encountering the voice of God. He teaches us what's true, lovingly corrects us when we stray, and trains us to live in a way that reflects His heart. Through the Holy Spirit, God uses His Word to shape our character, guide our decisions, and equip us for every good work He calls us to do.

Second Timothy 3:16-17 is a cornerstone for understanding the authority and purpose of the Bible. Paul, writing to Timothy, emphasized that all Scripture—not just parts—is “inspired by God” (v. 16), meaning it originates from God Himself. Paul outlined four key functions of Scripture:

- **Teaching.** It provides truth about God, humanity, salvation, and how to live.
- **Rebuking.** It exposes sin and false beliefs.
- **Correcting.** It restores us to the right path when we've gone astray.
- **Training in righteousness.** It shapes our character and conduct to reflect God's holiness.

These functions aren't just theoretical; they're deeply practical. The goal is that every believer may be “complete, equipped”—fully prepared and capable—“for every good work” (v. 17). God's Word equips us to live out our purpose and serve those around us.

 **When have you sensed God speaking to you through His Word? How are you making space in your life to listen to Him?**