



# God's Word Is Our Foundation

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## Key Themes

- God's Word is the foundation for our lives.
- God's Word is the standard we use to judge every thought.

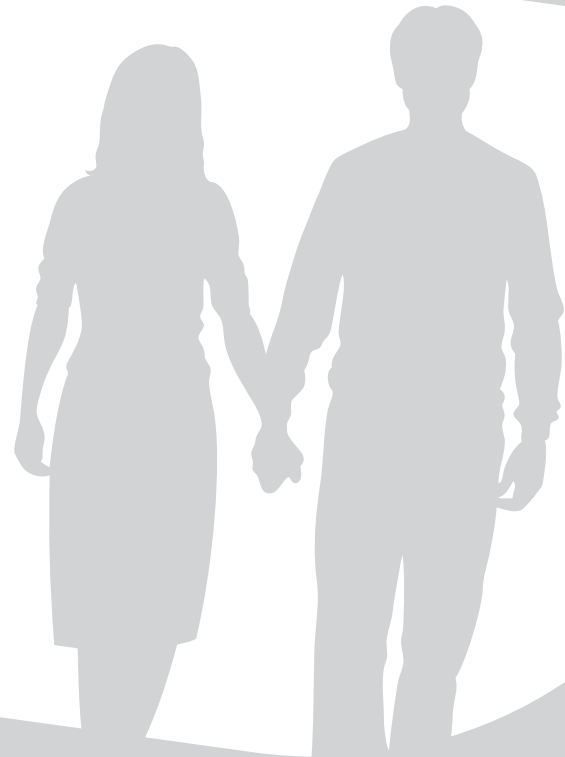
## Key Passages

- Psalm 19:7–11, 86:11, 119:105

## Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Analyze their use of the Bible as the starting point for making decisions.
- List qualities of God's Word from the study passages.
- Identify the ultimate source of problems in our society.



## Lesson Overview



### Come On In

Write on the board, "What are the most pressing problems in our society today?" Have students make a short list for discussion.



### Studying God's Word

As God's Word, the Bible must be the foundation for all areas in our lives. It is important for us to understand our worldview and ensure it is founded in Scripture.

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.

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### Activity: What Is God's Word?

Students will identify the role of God's Word in their lives from Psalm 19:7–11.

- Student Guides
- Pencils

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# Prepare to Share

## SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

In order to best prepare your heart and mind for the lesson this week, take time to read and meditate on Psalm 19, Psalm 86:11, and Psalm 119:105.

Ever since Satan in the form of a serpent cast doubt on God's instructions in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1–4), people have questioned the authority of God's Word. As descendants of Adam, we have inherited a sinful nature (Romans 5:12, Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8–10), which corrupts our human reasoning, questions God's authority, and prevents us from embracing the truth.

The Bible says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). This reminds us that we cannot move along the path of life without God's Word providing the light of truth to guide us. The Bible enables us to see the world as it truly is. Without the understanding that Scripture gives, we are lost in the dark, wondering how to accurately interpret good and evil, God and man, right and wrong. We are left with a distorted view of history, science, and society. The testimony of the Lord, however, is undistorted and sure (Psalm 19:7).

In Psalm 19, King David powerfully reveals the supremacy of Scripture. The perfection of the Word leads to conversion of the soul, the surety of the Word brings wisdom, the righteousness of the Word rejoices the heart, and the purity of the Word lights the way. The Word of God is clean, true, and righteous, producing the fear of the Lord necessary for repentance. Verse 11 summarizes the intention of the Word—that we may be warned to keep the commandments and achieve the promised reward.

Those who stand in awe of God, who are bound to Him without compromise, and who submit their minds to the teaching of Scripture are those who have a solid foundation and are able to connect the Bible to real life.

Our response to God and His Word should be to join the psalmist in praying, "Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name" (Psalm 86:11).

## APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

The proper role of apologetics is to confirm what we know of God through His Word. It is not a series of explanations attempting to prove that the Bible is true or that there is a God.

As Christians, we start with the assumption that God exists and that His Word is true. This serves as the starting point for our beliefs. This is called presup-

positional thinking because we are presupposing that what God says about Himself is true.

Jesus set the example for us in this way of thinking through His life, ministry, and teaching. All of Jesus's messages presupposed that the Scriptures were true.

He knew the Scriptures so well that learned men marveled (John 7:15).

He quoted Scripture as historical fact, referencing some of the most-attacked accounts in the Bible, including Creation (Matthew 19:4–5), Noah and the Flood (Matthew 24:37–39), Sodom and Gomorrah (Matthew 10:15, 11:23–24), Lot and his wife (Luke 17:28–32), and Jonah and the fish (Matthew 12:39–41).

He said the writings of Moses are more powerful than even someone rising from the dead (Luke 16:29–31).

He defended Himself against Satan with God's Word (Matthew 4:4–10).

In the same way, we must rely on God's Word as the starting point for all of our judgments and beliefs. Others may insist that we "leave the Bible out of it" when discussing God, creation, absolute truth, morality, science, or the Bible itself. However, we cannot and must not. Christians stand on the Word of God—it is our foundation (Luke 6:47–49). Everything we believe and how we live are based on what it says.

Disregarding the Scriptures would result in disaster because our foundation would be destroyed. Our starting point is and must always be the Bible. If we give up our starting point—our foundation—we will lose the battle before it begins. We must assume that the Bible is the trustworthy starting point from which we interpret all of life.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

We are no longer a culture that depends on God's Word. Today people doubt that the Bible's history is even true. The history of mankind shows over and over that when the Bible is rejected, then man himself becomes the measure of all things. How have we gotten to this age of man-centeredness?

Ever since the Garden of Eden, there has been a battle over the authority of the Word of God. The serpent asked Eve, "Did God really say that?" (See Genesis 3:1). And the Apostle Paul warns us that just as the serpent deceived Eve so our minds can be corrupted to believe lies that deny biblical truth (2 Corinthians 11:3).

The book of Genesis provides the foundation for the Bible and the gospel message of redemption. It

wasn't too long ago that Genesis was taken literally and there was little controversy over its interpretation.

In the late 1700s and early 1800s, the history of Genesis came under attack by scientists who began to accept the idea of millions of years of history rather than the thousands of years God records in His Word.

This interpretation brought compromise in the areas of biology—Darwinian evolution replacing God's creation of kinds; geology—millions of years replacing the Flood history of Genesis; anthropology—man descended from ape-like ancestors replacing God's creation of man in His own image; astronomy—the big bang replacing God's amazing account of speaking the universe into existence.

As our culture has adopted these secular views, the Bible has been disconnected from reality and consequently is becoming less and less relevant. Even many in the church have separated "church" life from "all other" life. These compromises have torn down the foundations of biblical authority and trust in God's Word. The result? Jesus gave us the answer when He asked Nicodemus, "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" (John 3:12).

Many no longer believe the earthly things that Jesus was referring to. And, consequently, even the

heavenly things—redemption, hope, eternity with God, forgiveness, Christ's Resurrection, the Trinity, and judgment—are no longer of any interest to us. It is time to get back to the foundational teachings of the Word of God, beginning in Genesis.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



## BEFORE THE THRONE

Dear Lord, I know that you have given me your Word so that I would have everything I need in order to trust and obey you. Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Help me to have great confidence in your guidance through Scripture and to pass along that confidence to those I teach. Help us to show honor to you through studying and valuing your Word. I pray that all of us will come to recognize the truthfulness of your Word, not only about the heavenly things, but about the earthly things, too.

► **Pace your lesson!** You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.





# Studying God's Word

➤ Write on the board, "What are the most pressing problems in our society today?" Have students make a short list for discussion later in the lesson.

Today we begin a journey that will take us through three years of study of the Bible. You will probably find this study different from studies you have done in the past. It will blend apologetics (defending the faith) with inductive Bible study to help equip you for answering challenges posed by skeptics and to strengthen your own faith.

We are going to start by taking a look at several passages from Scripture that talk about using the Bible as our starting point. The key theme of our lesson today is the authority of God's Word in every area of our lives. At the end of this lesson, I hope you will be able to identify some of the important qualities of God's Word, analyze how you use God's Word in your life, and evaluate how the authority of God's Word impacts our society.

## READ THE WORD

Psalm 86:11

Let's read Psalm 86:11 together. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

## EXAMINE THE WORD

➤ Since this is the first lesson, you will be laying some groundwork for the lessons to come. The early lessons are intended to build a solid foundation on the authority of the Word of God.

Now that we have read the text, let's take some time to observe what it is saying to us. This process is an important part of understanding what God's Word is telling us.

### Observe the Text

You are probably aware that the Bible is filled with figurative language, especially in the poetic verses of the psalms. We are going to look at how that figurative language is used to refer to the words of God and how they apply to our lives.

- ? Who is speaking and who is being spoken to? *David is talking to God.*
  - ? What two requests does David have for the Lord? *To be taught God's way and to have his heart united to God's so that he might fear God.*
- Some translations use the idea of having an undivided heart—one that is committed totally to God. David is asking God to give him a single focus in his life.
- ? David also talks about walking in God's truth. What does he mean by this phrase? *Walk is often used in Scripture to refer to a pattern of life.*
  - ? Can anyone think of any other passages where the "Christian walk" is referenced? *Answers may include John 8:12; Romans 6:4; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Ephesians 4:1; and many others.*
  - ? How could we summarize (or restate) David's desire from this verse? *David desires to live his life in light of God's truth.*

## Discover the Truth

David's desire to live his life according to God's principles should be the goal of every Christian. This truth is one that we see throughout the Bible and we will look at several more examples today.



## READ THE WORD

Let's read Psalm 119:105 together to see another metaphor used to talk about this idea. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

Psalm 119:105

## EXAMINE THE WORD

We have another metaphor to examine in this passage. Just because the psalms are written as poetry doesn't mean that they don't contain great truths; we simply have to examine the language a bit more carefully to understand the ideas being described.

### Observe the Text

If we scan ahead through verse 112 in this psalm, we see that it is filled with phrases like "righteous ordinances," "Your word," "statutes," and "precepts."

- ? **What are all of these phrases referring to?** *They all refer to God's revealed truth. Today, we have that recorded in the Bible.*
- ? **The metaphor is referring to God's revealed truths as a lamp that lights a path. How does this relate to the last verse we looked at?** *The idea of walking in light of God's words is common to both passages.*

As we walk, we take one step at a time. The lamp helps to illuminate the path in front of us so that we do not go off the path or step into any danger. As we go about our daily lives, God's Word should guide our decisions just as the lamp guides our feet.

Another way we could think about this is looking at the world through a pair of glasses. Any of you who wear glasses or contacts can attest to the fact that the world looks fuzzy without them. You might see a sign ahead, but you can't read it to give you direction. The Bible can function in that same way. If we look at the world through the lens of Scripture, we see things very differently from the way the world sees things. Because we trust what God has revealed to us, we view things from a biblical perspective.

- ? **As you came in, I asked you to think about problems in society. What are some of the problems you wrote down or thought of?** *Answers will vary but will likely focus on abortion, family structure, marriage issues, government, crime, etc. Write some examples on the board and ask how the world's view of these issues differs from the Bible's*

➤ Recognizing the type of literature is an important part of accurately interpreting a passage of Scripture.

teaching. For example, the world looks at abortion as an issue of choice and convenience, but the Bible teaches that it is murder.

While there is no disputing that these ideas are problems within our society, they are really more like symptoms of an underlying problem. The real problem is that people don't take God's view of these issues into account. If God's ordinances, precepts, and words were valued, these issues wouldn't exist. If people's hearts were truly united to God's and they used His words to guide their steps, they would not choose to have an abortion, abandon their families, or teach evolution in the schools.

When we put on our biblical glasses, the right choices in all of these circumstances come into focus. Rather than being problems, all of these social ills are symptoms of a lack of authority. God's Word has been set aside by a majority of those in our society. Rather than using God's Word to guide their steps, they look inside themselves for inspiration and do whatever is right in their own eyes. Just like in the time of the judges, the King of kings is not honored and each person does what is right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6, 21:25). The root of the problem? The Bible is not the authority in the lives of individuals.

- ? Is it more important for people in our country to get back to traditional family values or to depend on the Bible as the absolute authority? *This is likely a touchy subject in many circles; so take care to say this with the right tone. Many may not have thought about this issue from this perspective. It is probable that many people have not thought of this from a biblical perspective. Ask them to consider their answer in light of Scripture and provide passages that would support their thinking.*

This is what it means to put on biblical glasses—every thought must be taken captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 1:4–6). We can't look at everything through a talk radio filter or a coffee chat filter; we need to use the Bible as our absolute authority. All these problems are symptoms. The real problem is rejecting the Bible as the authoritative source that it is. As we proclaim the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Bible, people's hearts and minds will be changed through God's transforming power. As individual lives are changed, society will be impacted. The Bible does not call us to transform the culture, but to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations.

### Discover the Truth

- ? Who can summarize the key principle we can draw from Psalm 119:105, and how can we apply it to our lives? *We must see God's Word as the absolute authority in every area of our lives, seeing the world through biblical glasses and taking every step in the light of His Word.*





# What Is God's Word?

## MATERIALS

- Student Guides
- Pencils

## INSTRUCTIONS

Have the students look at Psalm 19:7–11 and identify the various roles of God's Word. They will fill out the three-column chart in their Student Guides. The first one is done for them. Take a few minutes to fill in the columns with the descriptors from verses 7–9, and then discuss them as a group (or in several small groups if you have a large class).

- ? Who would like to read your list of the different identities you found in this passage? If someone was using a different version, what other words were used in your version? *Allow responses.*

As we mentioned earlier, the psalms are written in poetic form. In this passage we see that many parallel ideas are expressed. This is a form of Hebrew poetry and communicates a broad understanding of what is contained in God's words and how they impact our lives.

- ? What adjectives are used to describe God's revelation to us? *Perfect, sure, right, etc.*
- ? And what roles in our lives should God's Word play? *Making us wise, converting our souls, etc.*

## CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

These may be ideas that you are familiar with, but when is the last time you really sat down and examined your life in light of God's Word? As Christians, this should be our standard of truth, our guide for every step in our lives, and the truth that we proclaim to those who are outside of the faith. When we face a trial or question in our lives, we can always look to God's Word as the source of truth. It is when we move away from this truth that our lives (and, by extension, the society) slide into sin and we begin to walk the path in our own strength.



# Applying God's Word

## WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Now that we have looked at several passages about the usefulness of God's Word, and there are many more we could examine, let's take a minute to recap what we have learned. After that, we'll discuss how we put these ideas into action in our lives.

- ? What roles should Scripture play in our lives? *Scripture should be the authority that we look to in every area of our lives. It is a lamp to light our path, a source of unity with God's heart, a tool for making the simple wise, etc.*
- ? Psalm 119:105 tells us that the Word of God is like a lamp that lights the steps in our path. In what way can we think of the Bible as a pair of

**glasses?** *If we look at the world without filtering what we see through the teachings of Scripture, we see things in a distorted way. The truths from the Bible help us see the world “clearly”—as it really is.*

- ? **What are the consequences for individuals and societies that do not see the Bible as the authority they must submit to?** *Immoral behavior gets excused, and everyone does what is right in their own eyes. We see excuses for abortion, homosexuality, divorce, and even murder.*

## **GOD’S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD**

So now that we have uncovered some truths from Scripture about the usefulness of God’s Word, let’s think about how we can specifically apply these ideas to our lives. What we have been talking about is called a worldview. Everyone has one. As Christians, our worldview should be firmly founded upon the truths God has revealed to us in the Bible.

- ? **Everyone with whom you interact has a worldview. In what areas do you see someone’s worldview having the most impact on an individual’s life?** *Lifestyle decisions are determined by a person’s worldview (i.e., marriage, sexuality, money, raising children, voting), but ultimately, every area of life is colored by a person’s own worldview.*
- ? **Where do you see a difference in worldview causing conflict in your life?** *Answers will vary but may include raising children, relationships with co-workers, etc.*
- ? **Why do people reject the Bible as the absolute authority?** *Many people want to be in charge of their own lives and reject God’s authority. Others believe the Bible is outdated, full of myths, or mistranslated and untrustworthy.*
- ? **How would you attempt to change a person’s understanding of the Bible’s authority and reliability?** *Many will be unsure about this question, and this would be a great time to assure them that this course is designed to help equip them to deal with such challenges. Ultimately, the gospel is the only thing that can change hearts and minds. We can get people to live moral lives by punishing disobedience, but true change only comes through a heart renewed by the gospel.*
- ? **After thinking about the authority of the Bible in light of the problems we noted in society, has your view of the true problem changed? How?**

You made a list of the descriptions and roles of God’s Word. Throughout the week, I would encourage you to meditate on this passage and think about your life. Are there any areas where you are not submitting to the clear teachings of Scripture? Are you clear about how to look at the world in light of Scripture? What decisions are you facing, and how does Scripture inform you about those decisions?







## MEMORY VERSE

### Psalm 19:7–9

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;  
 the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;  
 the statutes 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 judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

We will be working on memorizing a passage every six weeks. This week, we start with the passage we looked at today—Psalm 19:7–11. Throughout the week, take some time to meditate on each of these phrases and begin to commit this passage to memory. We will continue to work on this together over the next few weeks.

*Consider providing an incentive for those who memorize the passage.*



## GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Praise God for His unchanging character.
- Thank God for His justice and mercy toward sin.
- Ask God that each person would have boldness to share the hope of Christ with others.

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