



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

Students will look up and mark in their Bibles the passages to be used in the lesson.
Write on the board, "What are the biggest problems in our society today?"



Studying God's Word

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

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



Activity: Psalm 19 Study Sheet

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

- Print one Psalm 19 study sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.



Optional Activity: Looking Through Biblical Glasses

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- "Creation: Science Confirms the Bible Is True" video clip (3:50) from Resource DVD-ROM.
- TV and DVD player or computer



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, 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?" (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 beliefs of the Word of God, beginning in Genesis.

For a 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.



➤ Write on the board, “What are the biggest problems in our society today?” Have students make a short list for the opening discussion.

➤ As students arrive, have them find and mark Psalm 19:7–11, Psalm 86:11, and Psalm 119:105 in their Bibles.



Studying God’s Word

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 what we call *apologetics* (how we defend our faith) with Bible study to help strengthen your faith, answer your questions, and to equip you to answer challenges posed by non-Christians. *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.*

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 understand 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

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 figures of speech, 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.

Let’s start by asking a few questions about what we just read.

? In this passage, 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? *Walking 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. As time permits, read some of these passages.*

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



READ THE WORD

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

Psalm 119:105

EXAMINE THE WORD

We have a metaphor to examine in this passage. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase that usually means one thing is used to mean another, making a comparison. Just because the Psalms are written as poetry doesn’t mean that they don’t contain great truths; we just have to examine the language a bit more carefully to understand the ideas being described.

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

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? *These all refer to God’s revealed truth.*

Today, we have that recorded in the Bible.

? The metaphor is comparing God’s revealed truths to a lamp that lights a path. How does this relate to Psalm 86:11, the last verse we looked at? *The idea of walking in light of God’s words is common to both passages.*

As we walk in the dark, we take one step at a time. The lamp helps to light up the path in front of us so that we do not go off of the path or step into any danger. As we go about our daily lives, God’s words 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 confirm to the rest of us 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 be used 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 look at things from a biblical perspective. We will call this “wearing biblical glasses.” This means looking at all of life through the lens of God’s Word.

? As you came in, I asked you to think about the biggest problems in society. What are some of the problems you wrote down or thought of?

Answers will vary but will likely focus on social issues such as wars, school issues, government, crime, etc. Write some examples down on the board and ask how the world’s view of these issues differs from the Bible’s 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 things are problems within our society, they are really more like symptoms of an underlying problem. The real problem is that people don’t consider God’s view on these important issues. If God’s ordinances, precepts, and words were valued and followed, 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, teach evolution in the schools, etc.

When we put on our biblical glasses, the right choices in all of these circumstances come into focus. Rather than being the real 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 seems 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). What is 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 moral 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 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 an online chat room filter or a music video filter; we need to use the Bible as our absolute authority. All these problems are symptoms. The real problem is not seeing 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, the society will change. The Bible does not call us to change the world around us but to preach the gospel and make disciples of all men.

Discover the Truth

- ? Who can summarize the key principle we can draw from Psalm 119:105 and tell us how we apply it to our lives?

We must see God's Word as the absolute authority in every area of our lives, see the world through biblical glasses, and take every step in the light of His Word.



Psalm 19 Study Sheet

MATERIALS

- Psalm 19 study sheet for each student
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Distribute the Psalm 19 study sheets. Have the students split up into groups and look up Psalm 19:7–11 in their Bibles. They should identify the various roles of God's Word, complete the chart, and answer the two questions on the sheet. When they are done, come together as a group to discuss what they discovered and how they answered.

- ? Who would like to read their list of the different identities your group 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 the same ideas are expressed in different ways. This is a form of Hebrew poetry and communicates a broad understanding of what is contained in God's Word and how it impacts 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 words 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 a source of truth. It is when we move away from these truths that our lives (and, by extension, the society) slide into immorality and trying to walk through life 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 review 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 told us that the words of God are 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 in our society.*

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. A worldview is how a person views the world. It is a set of beliefs about life and the universe held by a person. Everyone has a worldview. As Christians, our worldview should be firmly founded upon the truths God has revealed to us in the Bible.

- ? **Everyone that you interact with has a worldview. In what areas do you see someone's worldview having the most impact on an individual's life?** *Lifestyle decisions (e.g., marriage, sexuality, money, raising children, voting) are determined by a person's worldview but, ultimately, every area of life is colored by a person's worldview.*
- ? **Where do you see a difference in worldview causing conflict in your life?** *Answers will vary but may include school, relationships with classmates, 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 not trustworthy.*

? **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?** *Allow for discussion.*

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?



Looking Through Biblical Glasses (Optional)

MATERIALS

- Resource DVD-ROM to show the video clip "Creation: Science Confirms the Bible Is True" (3:50)
- TV and DVD player or computer

INSTRUCTIONS

? **How might we compare the Bible to a pair of glasses?** *Allow for answers.*

We are going to watch a short video clip that explains this concept. Show the class the video clip "Creation: Science Confirms the Bible Is True." Stop at 1:27 if you are running short on time.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

In the video, Dr. Lisle compares worldviews to a pair of glasses. When a Christian looks at the world through biblical glasses, he sees the world differently from someone who sees the world through worldly glasses. What are some examples of things we see differently? Discuss different examples. Possible answers include relationships, science, history, morality, religion, etc. If time permits, watch the rest of the video clip, and discuss.





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.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

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

- Thank God for giving us His perfect Word which can make us wise.
- Pray that God's Word would be precious to each person in the class.
- Ask God for the faith to believe what His Word tells us and for the wisdom to defend it.
