

Communication *from* God—The Bible

4

Central Truth:

The Bible is God's communication of Himself and His demands to mankind. Through it, the follower of Christ will know the heart of God and will be changed by His words.

INTRODUCTION:

Many competing ideologies and philosophies fight for the approval and embrace of our souls. For the follower of Christ, these philosophies can muddy our thoughts and distort our view of God, life, and godliness. At the end of the day, however, the need of our souls is not a dose of human reasoning or an explanation regarding the “how to’s” of living a Christian life. Our hearts, souls, and minds need to hear the voice of God. Fortunately, we are not left to our own sources. God has indeed communicated Himself and His instruction through the pages of His Word—The Bible.

1 THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

What have you previously heard said about the Bible?

Some people think the Bible is just another religious book of rules and regulations regarding spiritual things. Others see the Bible simply as a book of literature recording some of man's thoughts about God. The Bible, however, speaks of itself in very different terms.

The Bible is authoritative because its words came from God Himself.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16.

What word does Paul use to describe the origin of Scripture?

Read 2 Peter 1:20-21.

This passage says that the words of Scripture *did not* come from:

This passage says that the words of Scripture *did* come from:

God-breathed (or inspired by God)...

Scripture [affirms] that the Bible is the product of divine inspiration and that his [God] work extended through the human writers to each section and even each word of the original documents. The process of inspiration did not make the biblical writers automations, for their books reveal differences of vocabulary, style, and other matters of variation between one human author and another. But inspiration did overcome any tendency they may have had to error, with the result that the words they wrote were precisely what God, the divine Author, intended us to have. *

—R.C. Sproul

What makes the Bible an authoritative book regarding life and godliness is not that mankind made it a special book in any way. The words within the pages of Scripture are authoritative because they derive from God Himself. Because He is holy, His words are holy. The Bible did not find its origin in the wisdom or will of mankind. Rather, the words of Scripture came from the Holy Spirit through the conduit of man.

The Bible is a collection of authentic historical accounts.

Read 2 Peter 1:16-20.

How does the Apostle Peter describe himself and the other disciples? (v. 16)

Read Luke 1:1-4.

According to Luke, whom did he consult in writing his account of Christ's life and work? (v. 2)

How does he describe the way in which he conducted his research? (v. 3)

For what purpose does he write? (v. 4)

The Apostle Peter walked and talked with Jesus Christ—he was an eyewitness to the majesty He displayed. This was seen in the miracles Jesus performed and the supernatural interaction between Him and God the Father. Luke was a companion with the Apostle Paul. An educated and well-resourced man, he carefully researched the life of Christ through eyewitnesses of Jesus' life and ministry so that a *certain* account would be recorded. The Bible, therefore, is certainly more than just another religious book. It speaks with authority.

You may have heard it stated, "Why should I believe the Bible? It was written by men, and anything written by men must be flawed." Notice two problems with this argument. First, this argument overlooks the fact that the Bible claims to have been written by men under God's influence. Second, to believe this argument, one would be forced to disregard every historical fact one has ever read in a book. After all, humans have written every history book, every math book, every science book, and every other kind of book. Imagine a student standing up in her math class and proclaiming, "I cannot believe the Pythagorean theorem because it came from a book written by a man!" How ridiculous! Nevertheless, this is a consistent indictment against the Bible.

The question is not whether men wrote any book, but whether the information contained in that book is accurate and reliable. The reason we believe the Pythagorean theorem is that it works! The reason we believe a history book is that it is consistent with evidence and corroborated by other accounts. In fact, we often believe history books without such evidence. No one questions the validity of information based upon the fact that it is contained in a book written by a man or woman. Nor should we question the content of the Bible. The question should be, "Do we have reliable historical information?" And the answer is a resounding yes. *

—Voddie Baucham

2 THE CHARACTER OF THE BIBLE

Within the pages of the Bible, God uses beautiful imagery in describing the character and integrity of His Word. These adjectives and analogies set apart the Scriptures from other religious documents.

God's Word is eternal.

Read Isaiah 40:8.

God's Word is grounded on integrity.

Read Psalm 19:7-14.

List some of the adjectives the Psalmist uses to describe the integrity of the Bible.

God's Words are the words of life.

Read Matthew 4:4 and 1 Peter 2:2.

What is the significance of comparing the Bible to spiritual food?

What verb does Peter use to identify the way in which you need to approach the Scriptures?

Thinking about your bodily dependence upon a healthy diet of food for physical sustenance, what does the above analogy infer about spiritual sustenance?

DID YOU KNOW?

The Bible was originally written in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) on three different continents (Asia, Europe, and Africa) by more than 40 different authors spanning approximately 1500 years. Yet, one message clearly rings out—the Fall and Redemption of mankind for the glory of God.

SUMMARY: The Scriptures are also known as God's Word. The Bible says that His Word will stand forever—long after the opinions and philosophies of man have faded away. His Words also stand on the grounds of integrity. They are perfect, trustworthy, full of wisdom, right, radiant, pure, eternal, more desirable than gold, and sweeter than honey. These words are the words of life because they nourish the soul. Just as the physical body is dependent upon food for a healthy body, so the soul is dependent upon the Scriptures for spiritual sustenance. One cannot grow as a devoted follower of Jesus Christ without consistently feasting on God's Word.

3 THE APPLICATION OF THE BIBLE

God's communication to you through the Bible is not information to simply be read, but rather words of life to be applied to your heart so that you might grow into greater likeness of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Read Joshua 1:8.

What promise is given when you consistently immerse yourself in God's Word?

God's Word is the primary means of your sanctification.

Read John 17:17.

In the last session, you saw that one of the works of the Holy Spirit within you is to sanctify you (or make you holy). In this verse, you hear from Jesus that this is done through what tool?

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

In this passage, the Apostle Paul gives 5 important workings of the Bible in your life. List them here.

Paul lays out the application of the Bible in this way. As you read it, you learn the things you need to believe about God, you, and life (teaching). When you read the truth of His Word, you recognize areas where you don't measure up or sinful ways you need to change (rebuking). Not only does the Bible show you *where* you need to change, but it also shows you *how* to change (correction). As you continue in this process, you will grow to be more like Jesus (training in righteousness) and lead a godly life (godliness).

Knowing God's Word gives you power to resist temptation.

Read Psalm 119:9-16.

Living your life according to God's Word produces what inside of you? (v. 9)

In dealing with temptation of sin, what instruction does the Psalmist give to you? (v. 11)

Read Matthew 4:1-11.

In this passage, Jesus Christ is tempted by Satan in three different areas...

1. He is tempted physically. (v. 3-4)
2. He is tempted to test God. (v. 5-7)
3. He is tempted with power. (v. 8-11)

Each time He is tempted, with what does Jesus battle the temptation?

In each temptation, Satan challenges Jesus to partake of His 'bait'—even twisting the words of Scripture to do so (v. 6). Each time, Jesus responds with the words of God. That is the power of Scripture. The Apostle Paul says that the word of God "performs its work in those who believe" (1 Thessalonians 2:13). As you grow in understanding the Bible, you will have the resources needed to respond to the temptations in life with the truth of God's Word.

Knowing God's Word allows you to teach others the truth of God.

Read Ezra 7:9-10.

What pattern is illustrated here in how Ezra sought to apply Scripture to his life and to others? (v. 10)

According to verse 9, what was the source of Ezra's success in service to God?

Ezra's approach to the application of Scripture is an excellent model to follow in your own life. First, he set in his own heart to diligently study the Scriptures in order to understand how to live a godly life. Second, he obeyed that which he studied. Third, as Ezra applied the truth of God's Word to his own life, he sought to teach those statutes to others. This pattern should be followed as you grow in studying the Bible as well.

SUMMARY: The Bible is more than just another religious book. It is the authoritative communication from God to the people whom He has created. The words of Scripture are eternal and true and contain the words of life and godliness. A consistent meditation and study of them will prosper you in righteousness and holiness as they work in you the knowledge and power to resist the temptations of this world. As you grow in the study of Scripture, you will possess the words of life to pass on to those around you.

NEXT TIME...

"Communication to God—Prayer"...Following Jesus Christ is not about pursuing a religion, but rather growing a deep relationship with God through consistent communication with Him.