



HOW TO MAKE YOUR BIBLE COME ALIVE

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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How to Make Your Bible Come Alive

SERMON REFERENCE: Psalm 119

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2146

In order to have spiritual power, we need to be molded, motivated, and managed by the Word of God. Yet for many, the Bible remains a closed book. There's no magical way to understand the Bible. It takes work—joyful, thrilling work—to understand the Word of God.

Psalm 119 shows us how to make the Bible come alive.

First, we must appreciate its virtues: “Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven” (Psalm 119:89). The Bible is a timeless book, ultimate and indestructible; it is full of God-breathed truth. If we don't treasure it, we won't have any desire to understand it.

Next, we must assimilate the Word of God; we begin by praying that our eyes will be opened, our hearts stirred, and our minds enlightened. Then, with a pen in hand, we read and ponder it, ready to write down whatever the Lord reveals through it. When reading the Bible, we should use our sanctified common sense. We need a plan. Try not to jump into the middle of a chapter, the middle of a book somewhere, with no plan, no rhyme, no reason.

Third, we must preserve it and practice it, as Psalm 119:16-17 says, “I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word. Deal bountifully with Your servant, That I may live and keep Your word.” If we want to learn more of the Word of God, we should obey the parts of it we do know.

Next, we must proclaim it: “My tongue shall speak of Your word, For all Your commandments are righteousness” (Psalm 119:172).

Finally, we must appropriate the values of the Word of God. It's a source of victory, growth, joy, power, and guidance.

Adrian Rogers says, “The Bible addresses one problem, and that problem is sin. The Bible has one villain, and that villain is the devil. The Bible has one hero, and His name is Jesus. The Bible has one purpose, and that is the glory of God.”

Life Application

As you read Scripture today, dwell on these six questions:

1. Is there a promise to claim?
2. Is there a lesson to learn?
3. Is there a blessing to enjoy?
4. Is there a command to obey?
5. Is there a sin to avoid?
6. Is there a new thought to carry with me?



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) If we do not know, love, understand, practice and obey the Word of God, we will not be victorious Christians.
- b) Knowledge is power in any realm:
 - i) Business
 - ii) Athletics
 - iii) Theology
- c) If you knowledge in good things, you do good.
 - i) If you have knowledge in bad things, you are a wicked person.
 - (1) Potentially a powerfully wicked person, if you have knowledge.
- d) Cowardice dares not face new truth.
- e) Laziness accepts half-truths
- f) Arrogance thinks it has all truth.
- g) Knowledge and truth transforms us.
 - i) "We are not what we think we are. What we think, we are."
 - ii) Proverbs 23:7
 - (1) If knowledge is power, we need the knowledge of the Word of God to have spiritual power.
 - (2) We need to be molded, motivated and managed by the Word of God.
 - (a) But for many Christians, the Bible remains a closed book, a mysterious book; they do not understand the Bible.
 - (3) It is not impossible to understand the Bible; it is joyful and thrilling.
- h) Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible.
 - i) It is an acrostic.
 - (1) A writing that starts with a certain arrangement of letters that form additional words.
- i) Each verse in Psalm 119 deals with the Word of God so that we might know and understand His Word.
 - i) This is an acrostic on the Hebrew Bible
 - ii) There are 22 stanzas.
 - (1) Each stanza, although we cannot tell in English, starts with a different letter in the Hebrew alphabet.
 - (2) Each verse within the individual 22 stanzas starts with the same letter in the Hebrew alphabet.
 - iii) Each verse deals with the Word of God to help us to know and to understand the Word of God.

2) WE MUST APPRECIATE THE VIRTUES OF THE WORD OF GOD

- a) If we do not appreciate the virtues of the Word of God, then we will have no desire to learn or know the Word.



- b) Virtues of the Word of God:
 - i) It is a timeless book.
 - (1) Psalm 119:89
 - (a) The Bible is not the book-of-the-month, or the book-of-the-year, it is the book of the ages; it is an unchanging book.
 - (2) Psalm 119:152
 - (a) It is done; it is settled in Heaven.
 - (3) Psalm 119:160
 - (a) Other books come and go; the Bible is here forever because it was founded in Heaven.
 - (i) Thousands of years have passed.
 - (ii) Empires have risen, fallen and are gone.
 - (iii) Civilizations have changed and re-changed.
 - (iv) Yet, the Bible stands.
 - 1. Emperors have decreed the extermination of the Bible.
 - 2. Atheists laugh at and have railed against the Bible.
 - 3. Agnostics cynically sneer at the Bible.
 - 4. Liberals move Heaven and Earth to remove the miracles from the Bible.
 - 5. Materialists ignore the Bible.
 - 6. Radicals and cultists rave over it.
 - 7. One way to know the Bible is the Word of God; it has stood up under so much shoddy preaching.
 - 8. Dr. Robert G. Lee stated, "All of its enemies have not torn one hole in its holy vesture, nor stolen one flower from its wonderful garden, nor diluted one drop of honey from its abundant hive, nor broken one string on its thousand-stringed harp, nor drowned one sweet word in infidel ink."
 - (4) 1 Peter 1:25
 - (a) God's Word endures forever.
 - (5) The Bible is timeless and indestructible.
 - ii) It is a truthful book.
 - (1) Psalm 119:142
 - (2) Psalm 119:151
 - (3) Psalm 119:160
 - (4) John 17:17
 - (5) In a world that has lost its appreciation for truth, we can say without stutter or stammer that the Bible is true.
 - (a) There are many frontal attacks by those who rail against the truth of the Bible.
 - (b) Others want to substitute their experiences or feelings for the truth of the Bible.
 - (i) 1 Corinthians 14:37-38
 - 1. There were some in Corinth who had gotten off track into tongues and prophecies and visions and ecstasies and Paul was trying to set them straight.
 - (c) Others attack from the flank; the sides. They do not necessarily deny the Bible, but they want to replace it with their modern psychology and philosophy.
 - (6) If you are actually looking for truth, you can find it in the Bible.
 - (7) 2 Timothy 3:16



- (a) This speaks of all holy writings, referring to the Scriptures.
- (b) The word “inspiration” is used only once in the Bible; it is “theopneustos,” which literally means “God breathed.”
 - (i) “Theo” means “God.”
 - (ii) “Pneustos” meaning “the breath of God.”
- (c) All Scripture is God-breathed; it is the breath of God.
- (d) Matthew 4:4
 - (i) This passage refers to the Bible.
 - (ii) It is not simply that God breathed into the Scriptures; God breathed the Scriptures out.
 - (iii) He used human penman but their writings were the voice of God as God was speaking.
 - 1. 2 Peter 1:21
 - (iv) The Bible is true, because a God of truth cannot speak error.
- (e) The phrases: “the Word of the Lord,” “the Word of God,” “God spake,” “the Lord said,” or “thus saith the Lord” can be found 3,808 times in the Old Testament.
- iii) It is a treasured book.
 - (1) Psalm 119:72
 - (a) Is the Bible better to you than gold and silver, rubies and diamonds, bonds and stocks?
 - (2) Psalm 119:103
 - (3) Psalm 119:127
 - (4) Saints, heroes and martyrs have pillowed their head on the Word of God as they walked through the chilly waters of death.
 - (5) The early church loved the Word of God.
 - (a) They never questioned it.
 - (b) They argued very little about it.
 - (c) They preached it
 - (d) They proclaimed it.
 - (e) They pronounced it.
 - (f) They poured it forth like hot lava.
 - (g) They loved it.
 - (h) They lived it.
 - (i) They practiced it.
 - (j) They trusted it.
 - (k) They obeyed it.
 - (l) They claimed it constantly.
 - (6) The Bible is treasured because, “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.”

3) WE MUST ASSIMILATE THE VITALITY OF THE WORD OF GOD

- a) “Vitality” means “alive.”
- b) The Bible is a living book.
 - i) Hebrews 4:12
 - (1) The word “quick” means “alive.”
 - (a) It is the word we get our word “zoo” and zoology” from; it is “zoan.”
 - (b) “Energies” means alive and is the word we get our word “energy” from.



- (2) The Word of God is living and energetic.
- ii) John 6:63
 - (1) The Bible is vital and pulsates with life.
 - iii) No matter how much we appreciate the Word of God, if we do not assimilate it what good is it to us?
- c) How do we assimilate the Word of God?
 - i) Pray over it.
 - (1) Psalm 119:12
 - (a) Ask God to teach you; to be your teacher.
 - (2) What will happen when we pray over it?
 - (a) Our eyes will be opened.
 - (i) Psalm 119:18
 - 1. There are scales over your eyes until God takes them off so that you can read His Word.
 - (ii) Luke 24:45
 - (b) Our hearts will be stirred.
 - (i) Psalm 119:36
 - 1. If you do not have a desire in your heart for the Word of God, ask God to incline your heart, move your heart, open your eyes and stir your heart.
 - (c) Our minds will be enlightened.
 - (i) Psalm 119:73
 - 1. Ask God to give you understanding of what you are reading.
 - (d) When we pray our eyes are opened, our heart is moved and our mind is enlightened to understand the Word of God.
 - ii) Ponder it.
 - (1) Psalm 119:15
 - (2) Psalm 119:147-148
 - (a) Get up early in the morning and have a quiet time with the Word of God and the Lord.
 - (b) It takes time to ponder the Word of God; whether you have to stay up late or get up early.
 - (c) Read the Bible with a pen in hand so that you can write down anything that God gives you while you read.
 - (i) This shows that you are expecting to receive a word from God.
 - (ii) The weakest ink is better than the strongest memory.
 - (d) Don't just jump into the middle of a book with no rhyme or reason.
 - (i) Have a plan for your reading.
 - (3) When reading the Bible, remember that it contains many different forms of speech:
 - (a) See poetry as poetry,
 - (b) See prophecy as prophecy,
 - (c) See precept as precept,
 - (d) See promise as promise,
 - (e) See proverb as proverb.
 - (f) Do not try to make a proverb a promise; a proverb is a proverb.
 - (i) Proverb: a general principle, generally applied that brings a general result.



- (g) When reading the Bible, ask yourself, “Is this a precept, a prophecy, prose, proverb or a promise?”
- (4) The Bible is to be interpreted both figuratively and literally.
 - (a) The Bible is full of symbols.
 - (i) In Revelation, the devil is symbolized as a huge dragon.
 - (ii) His tail is so long it sweeps a third of the stars from Heaven.
 - 1. The stars are the fallen angels.
 - (b) When we read symbolism in the Bible, find out what the symbol stands for and then literally apply it.
 - (i) When you get in to the Word of God: pray over it, ponder it and then ask God to teach you.
- (5) Six questions to ask when studying the Bible:
 - (a) Is there a promise to claim?
 - (b) Is there a lesson to learn?
 - (c) Is there a blessing to enjoy?
 - (d) Is there a command to obey?
 - (e) Is there a sin to avoid?
 - (f) Is there a new thought to carry with me?
- (6) You read it through, you think it clear, you write it down, you pray it in, you live it out, and you pass it on, and it's yours.
- iii) Preserve it.
 - (1) Psalm 119:11
 - (2) Psalm 119:16
 - (a) You preserve it and hide it down in your heart.
 - (3) Memorize the Scriptures.
 - (a) We function by memory.
 - (b) Memory comes with concentration, motivation, and use.
 - (c) Our mind can be like a decorative box; beautiful on the outside but full of junk.
 - (d) Our mind is like a garden that needs to be weeded to allow the flowers and vegetables to grow.
- iv) Practice it.
 - (1) Psalm 119:1-5
 - (a) It is not enough to recite the promises without obeying the commandments.
 - (2) If you want to learn more about the Word of God, then obey the parts you know.
 - (a) Luke 8:18
 - (i) The more you obey, the more you learn.
 - (ii) “It is not that part of the Bible that I don't understand that gives me so much trouble, it's the part I do understand.”
 - (3) You can understand when the Bible gives clear and plain commandments.
- v) Proclaim it.
 - (1) Psalm 119:13
 - (2) Psalm 119:27
 - (3) Psalm 119:46
 - (4) Psalm 119:172
 - (a) Give it away; let the Word of God be constantly in your mouth.
 - (b) Stow it in your heart, show it in your life and sow it in the world.
 - (c) The more of the Word of God we give away, the more of it will stick with us.

**4) WE MUST APPROPRIATE THE VALUES OF THE WORD OF GOD**

- a) The knowledge we have will become transformational.
 - i) It will be a source of victory.
 - (1) Psalm 119:45
 - ii) It will be a source of growth.
 - (1) Psalm 119:32
 - (2) If we do not learn to feed ourselves with the Word of God, we are not going to grow.
 - (3) 1 Peter 2:2
 - iii) It will be a source of joy.
 - (1) Psalm 119:54
 - (2) Psalm 119:111
 - (3) John 15:11
 - iv) It will be a source of power.
 - (1) Psalm 119:28
 - (2) Hebrews 4:12
 - v) It will be a source of guidance.
 - (1) Psalm 119:105

5) CONCLUSION

- a) The Word of God will give us all these things.
- b) If we want joy, power, victory, the ability to overcome, we can appropriate them after we assimilate them and then we will appreciate them.
- c) The Bible addresses one problem:
 - i) Sin
- d) The Bible has one villain:
 - i) The devil
- e) The Bible has one hero:
 - i) Jesus
- f) The Bible has one purpose:
 - i) The glory of God
- g) The Bible is a two-edged sword, if it does not cut to heal you, it will cut to slay you.
- h) The Bible is a savor of life unto life and death unto death.
 - i) John 3:16
 - j) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- k) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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Would you find Psalm 119? As you're finding it, let me tell you what a wise man said a long time ago, "These hath God married and no man shall part, dust on the Bible and drought in the heart." Now if you do not know, love, understand, practice, and obey the Word of God, I can tell you without stutter, stammer, or apology, you are not a victorious Christian. So we want to learn today how to study the Bible, how to make your Bible come alive, how to make it burst aflame in your hand. And what we're going to say today is going to be taken from this wonderful Psalm 119.

You know, knowledge is power in any realm, whether it be in the business realm, in athletics, in theology, knowledge is power. Now if you have power in good things, you'll do good; if you have knowledge in bad things, you are a wicked person, but a powerfully wicked person if you have knowledge. Now what we want to do today is to learn how to get the knowledge from the Word of God.

You know, what people need today is truth. Let me read to you a prayer from someone in Kenya. And here is the prayer, "Lord, from the cowardice that dares not face new truth, from the laziness that is contented with half-truth, from the arrogance which thinks it has all truth, good Lord, deliver me, Amen." Now I hope that you'll not have cowardice this morning and be afraid of truth, that you'll not have laziness and accept half-truth, or that you will not have arrogance and think that you need no truth. Friend, it is knowledge, it is truth that transforms.

There was a sign in a business that said, "We are not what we think we are; what we think, we are." Did you understand that? We're not what we think we are, but rather, what we think, we are. That is, you are what you think. "As a man thinketh, so is he." That's what the Bible says in Proverbs 23 verse 7. Now, if that is true, if knowledge is power, we need the knowledge of the Word of God to have spiritual power. We need to be molded, motivated, and managed by the Word of God. And yet for many, the Bible remains a closed book, a mysterious book and they really give lip service to the Bible, but they really do not understand it. Now there's no cheap way, there's no lazy way, there's no magical way to understand the Bible, but it is not impossible. As a matter of fact, it is joyful, it is thrilling, and so we want to talk to you today about how to understand the Word of God.

Now this Psalm, Psalm 119, is by far the longest Psalm in the Bible, and it is what we call an acrostic. Now an acrostic is something that starts with an arrangement of letters. This acrostic is an acrostic on the Hebrew Bible, and it is divided up into sections. There are 22 stanzas, and each stanza, you wouldn't know that by reading it in English, but each stanza starts with a letter in the Hebrew alphabet, and goes through the sections, 22 sections. And each section in these 22 sections starts with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet, or each verse in each of these 22 sections starts with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Now, I know that's a great blessing to you, but anyway, that's true. And, you would understand that there is sort of a logical arrangement here, and the writer of this hundred and nineteenth Psalm, is writing to give us some statements about the Word of God. The entire Psalm, many verses, well over a



hundred verses, each of these verses is dealing with the Word of God, to help us to know and understand the Word of God.

Now I want to tell you three things, and there'll be some subsets under these three things, but I want to tell you three things, that if you will do these things, I can promise you, and I've prayed over this, I've thought over this, if you will do these three things, I can promise you that the Bible will burst aflame in your heart, in your mind, and in your life.

Number one: **you must appreciate the virtues of the Word of God.** Now if you don't appreciate the virtues of the Word of God, you're not going to have any desire to learn it or know it. Many people do not understand the great virtue in the Word of God. You must have an appreciation for the Word of God.

Why should you appreciate the Word of God? Number one: Because **it is a timeless book.** Put that in your notes, a timeless book. Look if you will now in verse 89, for example, in this Psalm. He says here in verse 89, "Forever, O Lord," listen to that, "Forever O Lord, Thy Word is settled in Heaven." That is, the Bible is not the book of the month, it is not the book of the year, it is the book of ages, it is an unchanging book. Look if you will in verse 152 in this same Psalm, "Concerning Thy testimonies I have known of old that Thou hast founded them," what, "forever." Forever! God says, "It is done! It's settled in Heaven! I have founded it forever!" Look if you will in verse 160, "Thy Word is true from the beginning." You see, folks, other books come and go. The Bible is here to stay; it is founded in Heaven.

Thousands of years have passed since the Bible was written, empires have risen and fallen and gone from the scene. Civilizations have changed and re-changed. Science is pushing back the frontiers of knowledge, and yet the Bible stands. There have been emperors who have decreed the extermination of the Bible. There are plenty of atheists who laugh at the Bible and have railed at it. There are agnostics who cynically sneer at the Bible. There are liberals who have moved Heaven and Earth to remove the miracles from the Bible. There are many materialists who just simply ignore the Bible. But the Bible stands. There are radicals and cultists who rave over it. One of the ways I know the Bible is the Word of God: it's stood up under so much shoddy preaching. The Bible is settled in Heaven.

A former pastor of this church, Dr. Robert G. Lee, a great man, said this, and I quote him now, speaking of the Bible, he says, "All of its enemies have not torn one hole in its holy vesture, nor stolen one flower from its wonderful garden, nor diluted one drop of honey from its abundant hive, nor broken one string on its thousand-stringed harp, nor drowned one sweet word in infidel ink." He's just simply saying what God says about His-self in Psalm 119 verse 89, "Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in Heaven." And just as an ancillary verse from the New Testament, put First Peter chapter 1 verse 25, "But the Word of the Lord endureth," anybody know the next word? "Forever." That's good. "The Word of the Lord endureth forever." The Bible is timeless, the Bible is ultimate, the Bible is indestructible. So we're talking of the virtues of the Word of God that you must appreciate. It's a timeless book.

Number two: **it is a truthful book.** Do you have that? It is a truthful book. Look if you will in Psalm 119 verse 142, "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness and Thy law is the truth." Look if you will in verse 151, "Thou art near, O Lord, and all Thy commandments are truth." Look if you will in verse 160, "Thy Word is true from the beginning." Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" Jesus said in John chapter 17 verse



17, speaking to the Father, “Thy Word is truth.” And in a world that has lost its appreciation for truth, you can say without stutter or stammer that the Bible is true.

Now we have some theological experts today who think they ought to re-examine the Bible. As far as I’m concerned, we ought to re-examine them. I’m serious. Now there’re all kinds of attacks on the Bible, the truth of the Bible today. There’s just a sheer frontal attack of liberalism, and the liberals who deny it. And then there’s an attack from the rear, which is perhaps more insidious. And they’re talking about their experiences all of the time. And they’re saying, “Well, I know what I feel or what I think,” and sometimes they’ll even argue with you and they’ll say, “I don’t care what the Bible says, let me tell you what I experienced.” Paul had to deal with some of those in Corinth. And Paul said to them, and put this verse down, First Corinthians 14 verses 37 and 38, “If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.”

There were some who had gotten off into charismatic hocus-pocus in Corinth, and they’d gone wild about tongues and prophecies and visions and ecstasies, and Paul tried to set them in order. And they were saying, “Oh, well, let me tell you, Brother Paul, what a spiritual man I am. And let me tell you, Brother Paul, I have a gift of prophecy.” Paul says, “If you think you’re a prophet, if you think you’re spiritual, then you will acknowledge what I say is the Word of God.” And then he says something almost humorous. He said, “But if any man will be ignorant, let him be ignorant,” just a shrug of his shoulders. Evidently he’d met some of these people that you and I meet around here today. They’re, listen, folks, there are people who want to bring the Bible under their experience.

I say, there is the frontal attack to the Bible by those who rail against it and deny it, there’s an attack from the rear by those who want to substitute their experience for the Word of God, and then there’s an attack from the flank, from the side. These are they who don’t necessarily deny the Bible, but they kind of want to replace it or they want to prop it up with psychology and with philosophy and these other things, as if the Bible itself is not good enough. But, friend, the Bible is true, and if you’re looking for truth, you can find it in the Bible. And why is this? Put this verse down, Second Timothy chapter 3 verse 16, and it says this, “All Scripture,” listen, “All Scripture,” all holy writing, “is given by inspiration of God.” That word inspiration is used only once in the Bible, but what a magnificent word it is: theopneustos, theopneustos. It means literally it is God-breathed. “Theo” meaning God, “pneustos” meaning the breath of God. If we were to pronounce it as it is written, we’d say pah-newstis, like a pneumatic, pneumonia, we don’t say pew-monia, we say pneumonia; but it actually has to do with the breath. We say a pneumatic tire; we don’t say a pew-matic tire. But what he’s saying, it is theopneustos. That is, it is the breath of God! What are you hearing right now? You’re hearing the breath of Adrian! I am speaking! And so my lungs have air. My diaphragm, my rib cage, is forcing the lungs to expel the air, the air is coming up out of my throat, over my larynx it is causing my vocal chords to vibrate, and my tongue and my teeth and my lips are making sounds. And what you are hearing right now is the breath of Adrian!

Now what the Bible says, all Scripture is the breath of God; it is God-breathed. Read where Jesus said in Matthew chapter 4 verse 4, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word,” now listen to this next phrase, “by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” He was talking about the Bible. And He says that every Word proceeds from the mouth of God. It is not simply that God breathed into the Scriptures; God breathed the Scriptures out. Yes, He used human penmen. Yes, there was Isaiah,



Jeremiah. Yes, there was Matthew and Paul. Yes, there was Mark, but these men were the penmen of God; these men were the voice of God as God is speaking. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved," the Bible says in Second Peter 1:21, "by the Holy Ghost." And therefore the Bible is true, because a God of truth could not speak error. Say Amen.

Listen, if you'll pick up just the Old Testament, you will find phrases like this, "The Word of the Lord," or "The Word of God," or "God spake," or "The Lord said." You will find that phrase used 3888 times. "God said," "The Word of the Lord came unto me," "Thus saith the Lord!" 3888 times. If the Bible is not the very Word of God, it's the biggest bundle of lies that have ever come to planet Earth. No, it is true, absolutely.

Listen, what am I saying? The Bible is a timeless book, the Bible is a truthful book, and **the Bible therefore should be a treasured book**. Look if you will in Psalm 119 verse 72 of this same thing. He says here, "The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." I wonder if that is true of you. I'm going to tell you the truth. And God knows; God is listening to me right now. That is absolutely true of me. If you were to heap this side of this platform, I mean heap it, with gold, silver, rubies, diamonds, bonds, stocks till it went from floor to ceiling and over here put the Word of God and said, "You can have one or the other; you cannot have both," I would not have to hesitate! I'd choose this; I would choose the Word of God. I wouldn't even have to think about it. It would be a given. Look if you will in Psalm 119 verse 103, "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth." Look if you will in verse 127, "Therefore, I love Thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold." It is to be a treasured book.

The saints and the heroes have pillowed their head upon the Word of God as they walked through the chilly waters of the river of death. And the martyrs who died for the witness of Jesus Christ have held the Bible to their bosom as the creeping flames would come around their feet. Oh, the early church, they loved the Word of God, they never questioned it, they argued very little about it, they preached it, they proclaimed it, they pronounced it, they poured it forth like white hot lava! They loved it! They lived it! They practiced it! They trusted it! They obeyed it! They claimed it constantly.

Do you know why the Bible is treasured? You've known it for a long time. "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." That's it. "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." You will never have a victorious Christian life if you do not love this book. Now it is like treasure. Suppose there were buried treasure in your backyard. You'd go down to the hardware store and get a spade if you don't have one. Folks, I'm telling you, this is God's treasure book. It is a timeless book, it is a truthful book, it is a treasured book, so the first point is you must, you must appreciate the virtues of the Word of God. You must appreciate the virtues of the Word of God, because if you don't, you're not going to have any desire to understand it.

Now here's the second thing. Not only must you appreciate the virtues of the Word of God, **you must assimilate the vitality of the Word of God**. Because, I chose the word vitality on purpose because the word vitality means alive. Now listen, the Bible is a living book. Hebrews 4:12, put it in your margin, "The Word of God is quick and powerful." The word quick means alive. It is the word we get our word zoo from, zoology from; it is zoan. And energies is the word we get our word energy from. It is living, it is energetic. Jesus, in John chapter 6, was speaking to some unbelievers and He said to them and to His disciples, listen



to it in John chapter 6 verse 63, “The words that I speak unto you,” listen to this, “the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” See, the Bible is vital. The Bible pulsates with life. Now that’s the reason why I’m saying that not only must you appreciate it, you must assimilate it. You don’t just read the cookbook, you eat the meal. Now if you don’t assimilate it, no matter how much you appreciate it, what good is it going to do you?

Now how do you assimilate the Word of God? Get your pen. Write these first things down. Number one, write down **pray over it**. Did you write it down? Listen, folks, pray over it. Look if you will in verse 12 of this chapter now. Psalm 119 verse 12, “Blessed art Thou, O Lord,” here it is, “teach me Thy statutes.” Have you ever prayed that? “Lord God, be my teacher.” Pray over it, ask God to teach you. When you pray over it, what will happen? Number one, **your eyes will be opened**. Look if you will in Psalm 119 verse 18, “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.” God will open your eyes. There’re scales over your eyes until God takes the scales off so you can read this book. You may have 20/20 vision, but God has to open your eyes to, “Behold wondrous things in Thy law.” Do you remember, there in the 24th chapter of Luke, after His resurrection, Jesus is walking with those two disciples on the road to Emmaus? And the Bible says He began to talk to them about the Old Testament, the law and the prophets. And then here’s a great verse in Luke 24 and verse 45 it says, “Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.” Wouldn’t you like for God to do that for you?

Pray over it, and I’m telling you, when you pray over it, first of all, your eyes will be opened. And then number two, **your heart will be stirred**. Look in verse 36 of this same chapter, Psalm 119, “Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies and not to covetousness.” If you don’t have a desire for the Word of God, why don’t you say, “Oh God, please incline my heart, move my heart, open my eyes, stir my heart!”

And then, folks, when your eyes are opened, your heart is stirred, then your mind is going to be enlightened. Look if you will in verse 73 of this same Psalm, “Thy hands have made me and fashioned me. Give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments.” How often in sermon preparation have I put my pencil down, have I bowed my head and say, “Oh my God! Help me to understand this! God, give me understanding.” Now all of this is under the heading we must pray over it. When we pray, friend, our eyes are opened, our heart is moved, our mind is enlightened to understand the Word of God.

So, now we’re talking now about how to assimilate it. Number one, you pray over it. Number two: you ponder it, P-O-N-D-E-R, **you ponder it**. Look if you will in verse 15 of this same Psalm, “I will meditate in Thy precepts.” Do you see that? Look if you will in verse 147 of this same Psalm, “I prevented the dawning of the morning and cried and I hoped in Thy Word.” That is, I got up early in the morning and I trusted it, in Your Word, that is, I had a quiet time. Look if you will in verse 148, “Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in Thy Word.” You see, it takes time. If you have to rise an hour early, do it. If you have to stay up an hour late, do it, that you might just ponder the Word of God.

And when you sit there and after you’ve prayed over it and you ponder it, do it with a pen in your hand. Take a pen. You know, if I smoked cigars, I’d be awful. I like something to chew on or something. I’m glad I don’t smoke cigars, Joyce is doubly glad. I don’t smoke anything. But I’ll take one of these pens and I’ll just eat it to death. I chew on it and I just destroy them, or a pencil, and I just chew on pencils. That’s a bad



habit, but I do it. But I'll tell you one thing, folks, I read the Bible with a pen in my hand or a pencil in my hand. Do you? You see, if you don't, you know what it tells me? You're not expecting to receive anything. If you're expecting to receive something, you're going to get ready to write it down. You say, "Well, I'll remember it." I hope you do, but the weakest ink is better than the best memory. You simply get a pad when you open the Bible and you pray, then you ponder it, and you get ready for God to speak to you.

And when you read the Bible, use your sanctified common sense! Don't just jump into the middle of a chapter, the middle of a book somewhere, no plan, no rhyme, no reason. And you see, the Bible is like any other book, it has all kinds of forms of speech. You see poetry as poetry. You see prophecy as prophecy. You see precept as precept. You see promise as promise. See proverb as proverb. For example, if you try to turn the proverbs into promises, you'll lose your religion. The proverbs are not promises, they're proverbs. What is a proverb? A proverb is a general principle, generally applied, brings a general result. For example, in the book of Proverbs there are ways to be healthy, wealthy, and wise, but you can do all those things and get hit by a truck. You're not very wealthy any more, you left it all. You're certainly not very healthy, and you weren't too wise or you'd looked both ways. Now, what I'm trying to say is this: a proverb is good, but don't try to turn the proverbs into promises. Look at the Bible and look at these. Is this a precept? Is this a prophecy? Is this poetry? Is this prose? Is this proverb? Is this promise? Hey, folks, did you know that God gave you a mind? Now God doesn't zap you with knowledge. You have the mind of Christ, use your mind as you study the Bible, you ponder the Bible.

Sometimes people ask, "Well, is the Bible to be interpreted literally or figuratively? Have you ever heard that? You want to know the answer? Yes. It is to be interpreted figuratively and literally all at the same time. For example, the Bible is full of symbols. In the book of the Revelation, the devil is symbolized; the devil is symbolized as a dragon, a huge dragon. He has a tail so long that he sweeps a third of the stars from Heaven. Have you just read about the new world that the Hubbell telescope has discovered? Billions of light years out there! Now you tell me if there's a dragon with a tail long enough to sweep down all the stars of Heaven some billions of light years away. That's pretty big dragon. Now he's talking about the devil. The stars are the fallen angels that fell out, that's symbolism, it's full of symbolism. The Bible is full of symbolism. But you find out what the symbol stands for and you literally believe it. Don't say, "Oh, that's just symbolism, there is no devil." No, no, that's symbolism: there is a devil, you see.

The yellow arches, that's McDonald's, right? You're driving down, "Hey!" Listen, my little Andrew can't read, but he knows that's McDonald's. He knows that's McDonald's because that is a symbol! Now if you see those yellow arches, would you say, "Oh, well, that's just a symbol. There is no McDonald's restaurant, no such thing as hamburgers." No, you wouldn't say that. That's just a symbol. You find out what the symbol stands for, and then you literally apply it. So, what I'm trying to say is, when you get the Word of God, you pray over it, then you ponder it, you begin to ask God to teach you.

I've given you this before, but I want to give you six questions. You ask these six questions. Now get your pencil and write these six questions down. My wife says, "You always go too fast when you say these." Number one: is there a promise to claim? You're looking at a passage: is there a promise to claim? Number two: is there a lesson to learn? Number three: is there a blessing to enjoy? Number four: is there a command to obey? Number five: is there a sin to avoid? Number six: is there a new thought to carry with me?



Are you preparing a Sunday school lesson? Get any passage of Scripture, any passage, and just look at it, and just ask those questions, and you've got your lesson. I promise you. Just six simple questions as you look at the Word of God. You've prayed over it and you've said, "Oh God, open my eyes." You've said, "Dear God, move my heart." You've said, "Dear God, give me understanding," and then you look at the Word of God, and you ponder it, and you think about it, and you've got a pen, and you write these things down. You read it through, you think it clear, you write it down, you pray it in, you live it out, and you pass it on, and it's yours. It's yours. You say, "I can't remember all that." Okay, get the tape because we've got to move on.

Number one, you pray over it. Number two, you ponder it. Number three: **you preserve it**. Look if you will here in verse 11. We're back in our Psalm again. Look if you will in Psalm 119 verse 11, "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against Thee." Look if you will in verse 16, "I will delight myself in Thy statutes; I will not forget Thy Word." That means that you preserve it, you hide it down in your heart. You can remember far more than you think you can remember.

Now folks, I'm going to tell you something. Don't tell me you can't remember. You could not function if you couldn't remember things. How many of you drove to church this morning? Let me see your hand. How many of you came with somebody who drove but you didn't drive? Let me see your hand. All right, that's most of us. Now suppose the person driving that automobile could not remember which was the accelerator and which was the brake. We'd have a small crowd here this morning. I mean, memory, we function by memory. And memory comes with concentration, memory comes with motivation, memory comes with use. Your mind is a marvel, and you can remember far more than you think you can remember as you preserve the Word of God.

When women go off, they want to buy pretty boxes. My wife has this love affair with little boxes, pretty little boxes. And sometimes people bring from overseas boxes and sometimes they, oh, they're intricately carved and they may have jewels and so forth on the outside of them. You've seen these little boxes that they sit around. And you see a beautiful box like that and you say, "What a marvelous little box." And then you look inside. You know what's inside? Rubber bands, gem clips, toothpicks, an old breath mint inside that beautiful box. Your mind is like that box! And you got all this junk in it! What a marvel God gave you when God gave you a mind; and so you can't meditate on the Word of God unless it's there.

Or your mind is like a garden. Have you ever noticed how much easier it is to grow weeds than flowers and vegetables? Well when Adam fell, his mind became a garden of weeds, and in order for your mind to preserve the Word of God, you have got to cultivate your mind. You have to weed your garden.

Now next; and I don't have time for that because we must rush on. Not only must you preserve it, you must, here's the fourth thing, **you must practice it**. Look if you will in the first five verses of Psalm 119, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep His testimonies and that seek Him with a whole heart. They also do no iniquity, they walk in His ways. Thou hast commanded us to keep Thy precepts diligently. Oh, that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes." It's not enough to recite the promises without obeying the commandments.

Simple secret: do you want to learn more of the Word of God? Do you? Then obey the part you know. That is so simple. The Bible says in Luke 8 verse 18, "To him that hath shall be given." The rich get richer.



The more you obey, the more you learn it. Well, keep the Word of God. You say, “Well, there’re a lot of the Bible I don’t understand.” Do you know what Mark Twain is reported to have said? He’s reported to have said, “It’s not that part of the Bible that I don’t understand that gives me so much trouble, it’s the part I do understand.” Okay, now listen, there may be mysteries and things you don’t understand about the third toe on the left foot of some beast in Revelation, but I tell you, you can understand when the Bible says, “Love one another,” can’t you? You can understand when the Bible gives you clear and plain commandments. And if you will begin to keep these, the Word of God, it will become real to you.

Next, **you must proclaim it**. This is the fifth of these things you do if you are going to assimilate it. Look if you will in Psalm 119 verse 13, “With my lips have I declared all the judgments of Thy mouth.” “With my lips.” Look in verse 27, “Make me to understand the way of Thy precepts. So shall I talk of Thy wondrous works.” Look if you will in verse 46, “I will speak of Thy testimony also before kings and will not be ashamed.” Look if you will in verse 172 of this same Psalm here, “My tongue shall speak of Thy Word, for all Thy commandments are righteous.” You see, give it away. Let the Word of God be in your mouth, constantly in your mouth. Stow it in your heart, show it in your life, sow it in the world. The more of the Word of God you give away, the more of it will stick to you.

Now here I’ve got to move to the final thing. Look, what we said is this: you must appreciate the virtues of the Word of God. Number two, you must assimilate the vitality of the Word of God. And number three; it is then that you can **appropriate the values of the Word of God**. That is, this knowledge that you have is going to become transformational. I’m just going to give you the outline; I can’t fill in the points. And you just write them down. Number one: **it’ll be a source of victory**, Psalm 119 verse 45, “Just as Jesus overcame Satan in the wilderness with the Word, you will overcome.”

It will be a source of growth, Psalm 119 verse 32. People say, “Oh, Pastor, I’m just so weak in my physical life. I can just hardly get out of bed. I just don’t want to go to work, I’m just so weak.” I say, “Well, what’s the matter with you? You been to doctor?” “No.” “You got a disease?” “I don’t think so.” “Well, Good Lord, man, what are you eating?” “Well, I have this restaurant I go to on Sunday sometime if it’s not raining and I get a meal there; that’s all I eat.” “You mean that’s all you eat? You just go, this restaurant on Sunday and you get a meal there if it’s not raining, that’s all you eat?” “Yeah, I’m just so weak.” Friend, listen, all this is, is just to whet your appetite. If you don’t learn how to feed yourself the Word of God, you’re not going to grow. The Bible says in First Peter 2:2 that, “As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby.”

It’s a source of growth; **it’s a source of joy**. Psalm 119 verses 54 and 111. I don’t have time to talk about that, but, “These things have I spoken unto you, that your joy might be full.”

It’s a source of power. “The Word of God is quick and powerful.” It’s a source of guidance. Well, let’s give you one for power; verse 28.

It’s a source of guidance, verse 105, “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path.”

The Word of God, the Word of God, it will give you all of these things. You want joy, you want power, you want victory, you want to be able to overcome; you want these wonderful things? You can appropriate



them, but you can only appropriate them after you assimilate them, and you can only assimilate them if you appreciate them. And I'm promising you that if you'll do that, it will be transformational in your life.

Now could we just sum up the Bible right now? For those of you who are not Christians, or maybe you've never been saved, can I just give you the Bible in shorthand? The Bible addresses one problem, and that problem is sin. The Bible has one villain, and that villain is the devil. The Bible has one hero, and His name is Jesus. The Bible has one purpose, and that is the glory of God.

Do you know Jesus? Do you know Him? You see, this book is a two-edged sword. If it doesn't cut to heal you, it will cut to slay you. It's a savor of life unto life or death unto death. And God wants me to tell you something today that's going to come right out of this book. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever," that means you, "that whosoever," that means anybody, "believes in Him," puts their faith, their trust in Him, "they will not perish," they will not die and go to Hell, they will not! "But they'll have everlasting life." That's what we sang about. We sang about Heaven. A few more days and we're passing on. Do you know Jesus?

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. If you're not certain that you're saved, would you like to be saved, would you? Would you like to know that you really do have life? Jesus said, "I've come that you might have life." Could I lead you in a prayer? We'll call this prayer the sinner's prayer. And you can pray and accept Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. You can do it right now. Would you pray this prayer? "Dear God, I know that You love me. Thank You for loving me. And I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. Jesus, I do trust You. I believe You're the Son of God. I believe you paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead. And now I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Come into my life. Take control of my life and begin today to make me the person You want me to be. And Jesus, give me the courage to make it public. Help me never to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen."



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