

WHAT... DOES YOUR
HEART BEAT
FOR?

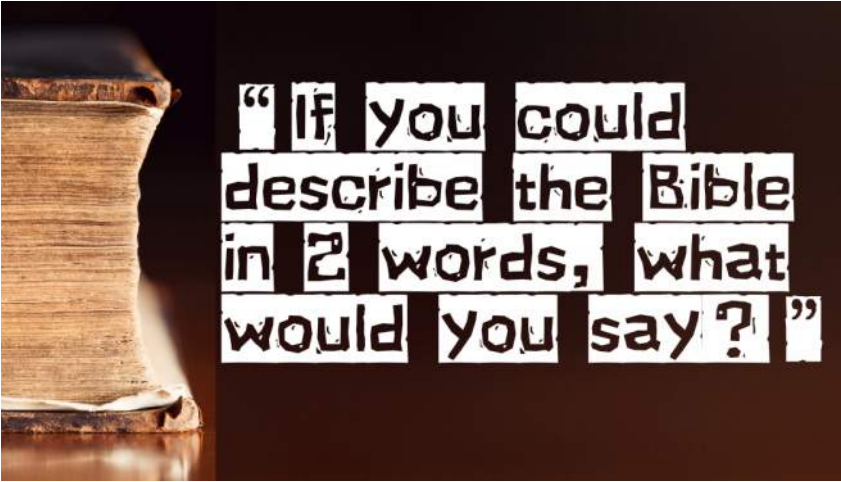


eBook
Series
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Introduction

The Bible contains 791,328 words, 31,101 verses, and 1,189 chapters. Yet, you could sum up the way of life it teaches in two words: **Just Trust**. Those are my 2 words.



Since 2023 I've been asking people this question and have had a lot of diverse, thoughtful, sometimes-funny-sometimes-not, but always intriguing combinations of words about the Bible. In my reading I run across some other two-word descriptions and I add those to the collection as well. My sincere hope is that as you read this small ebook series you'll be inspired to pick up the Bible and read it for yourself. Like a good friend of mine said ... the Bible is a **Must Read!**

1

What?



What? Think about it. Not why, but **WHAT** does your heart beat for?

It's kind of like asking what makes you tick? What makes you ... you? In jus2words it's ... **that compass**.

That compass is many different things to many different people in our diverse world. Whatever that compass is to us it helps us to answer **The Question** ... is GOD love?

Regardless of our religion, that compass exists. It isn't inspired by humanity. **It is the inspiration of GOD**. And what is the most inspiring thing about GOD?

Love.

Maybe the love of GOD is the principle thing that holds everything together? Scientists have yet to figure out what dark matter is that makes up 95% of our Universe. Maybe it's love? Lao-Tzu called it the Tao. Buddha called it the

Way. Greeks called it Logos. John, one of Jesus' disciples, called it the Word.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:1

But then he went a little further in his description as he wrote.

“He was with God in the beginning:“ John 1:2

I know we're getting into the mystery of GOD here, but instead of going too deep I'll suffice it to say ... Comprehending the Incomprehensible is not what we do. We must reserve those answers for later. After life.

All we have to go on FOR NOW are some CLUES and a few HINTS to know what kind of story we're in. For me, it's **that compass** that points me in the right direction. I may not get it right but I feel like it's not so much about the destination as much as I initially thought. I'm learning that it's more about the journey. I figure I'll leave the incomprehensible things to GOD and keep it simple. That's what the idea of jus2words is all about. Taking all of the words of this life and living by jus2words ... **just trust.**



Now, I began to describe what **that compass** is and then dove head first into the deep end. What exactly am I trying to describe? What do I mean by the inspiration of GOD?

I don't know for sure.

But at least I've got
a CLUE ... Love.

Love is the greatest.
Faith works by love.

It's got to be.

Love is the Word
that GOD gave to us in
Jesus Christ.



Think about it ... *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* John 1:1

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

Maybe Love is GOD's Word and the rest are ours?

2

WOW!



Now, it's likely that some folks probably think that such an admission of doubt as **"I don't know for sure"** is not a good place to be spiritually. But I disagree.

One of my favorite stories that illustrates my take on this is found in the Bible in Daniel 3:8. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego refused to bow to an image and were ordered by the King to be thrown into a furnace alive. They were given one last chance and this was their reply:

*"Your threat means nothing to us. If you throw us in the fire, **the God we serve can rescue us** from your roaring furnace and anything else you might cook up, O king. **But even if he doesn't, it wouldn't make a bit of difference**, O king. We still wouldn't serve your gods or worship the gold statue you set up." Daniel 3:16-18*

They didn't know for sure if GOD would rescue them. As far as they knew, life could be over in a few short moments. At this time in Judaism's history what happened

in the after life was ambiguous. Some things are just that way ...

like Stonehenge.

I think the Bible is like Stonehenge with a cross in the middle. I'm sure that doesn't sound like a positive way to describe it, but that's exactly why I love it!



Perhaps Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego felt the same way? Except that they wouldn't be able to picture the cross. They may have had an idea that GOD wasn't as scary as all of the stories that were famously recounted. Like Habakkuk's prayer in chapter 3 of his own book, where he basically said he'd wait patiently for the wrath of GOD to come upon his enemies. Maybe, **that compass** convinced them that GOD is love? Instead of calling down fire from heaven or the earth opening up to swallow the king and his men alive ... Instead of the GOD of War coming to the rescue. They just completely trusted that whatever

happened to them next couldn't separate them from the love of GOD.

Now why would I say that?

There are only two things would inspire them as they stood before the fiery furnace.

1- They were more afraid of what GOD would do to them if they bowed than they were afraid of being thrown into the fire.

OR

2- They were more assured of the love of GOD than anything else.

It's amazing to me that they would have even thought there was more than fear to inspire them. Finding out that GOD is love from the accounts they had to that point in history would've made it hard to find. Really, all they had to go on were some CLUES and a few HINTS. The cross is barely even in the Old Testament. Most of what they would've heard by then would've made them afraid of GOD's speech, like Habakkuk wrote.

*“O LORD, I have heard Your speech and was afraid;
O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years!
In the midst of the years make it known;
In wrath remember mercy.” Habakkuk 3:2*

In the book of Proverbs it is written that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of GOD. We often hear that this idea of fear is reverential awe. To me, it has more to do with being afraid of GOD than it does reverence.

“Don’t be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” Matthew 10:28

I think the fear of GOD is being more afraid of what GOD might do to you than what else you might suffer if you don’t obey.

What if the beginning of wisdom is the love of GOD instead of fear? Perhaps there was a fork in the road in the beginning and humanity could freely choose which way to go. It seems to me like that they chose to be inspired by fear.



Think about it. What were Adam’s first words that were recorded for us?

“I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid”

Genesis 3:10

I think an honest reading of the Hebrew Scriptures, what Christianity calls the Old Testament, yields a kind of scary profile of the character of GOD. At least to some extent.

That's why so many have struggled over the years to reconcile Yahweh with Jesus. To me, ancient people believed that the GOD's were angry with them. Sacrifice and ritual were common themes of all early religions. You'd think that the one true religion would be different though, wouldn't you?



So, there Adam stood in the garden (the fork in the road), afraid of GOD. This makes me think about how most map apps work on our mobile phones. As soon as we take a wrong turn it says, “Return to the route” over and over until we course correct. To me, that's the way the Bible has ended up being written. There's a tension that exists on its pages. That tension is the struggle of humanity to believe that GOD is love.

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” 1 John 4:18

Verses like this one in the New Testament are like the “*Return to the route*” kind. I am not going to go through an exhaustive listing of all the verses that are like this. Eventually I’d end up with two kinds of verses throughout the Bible. Ultimately the point would be to show the tension between the fear of GOD and the love of GOD. Folks would normally say you have to consider the context of the whole counsel of GOD. To use proper hermeneutic principles to interpret each individual verse in order to put it in its context, like a puzzle piece, where it FITS.



BUT ... you have to start with right picture, the one on the front of the puzzle box.

I think the BIG PICTURE on the front of the box **could've** been different from the one we're working on today. Why? We were afraid and have never turned back.

The cross brings us back to GOD. Back to the fork in the road!

GOD is love. In its purest meaning it's ALMOST too good to be true. But it's still true. Isn't that how we feel about the gospel of Jesus Christ? The way we talk about The Message is downright scandalous. Isn't it?

We tell people to come to GOD just as they are because of the love of GOD that is in Christ. You don't have to DO anything. Only believe. GOD's forgiveness is a gift. That is what the cross is all about. It's all on GOD, not us. And it's



the love of GOD that changes everything. We ought to wake up every day and be so in awe of the love of GOD that we say ...

“WOW!”

That's the kind of assurance I like to think that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego had.

The worst thing imaginable happened to them and they didn't care about the outcome.

They didn't know for sure why this was happening to them. They didn't know for sure what was next. BUT they knew that GOD would love them through it all. They didn't care about the outcome because of the love of GOD.

How do I know that? Here's a HINT ... GOD was still with them when they were thrown into the fire!



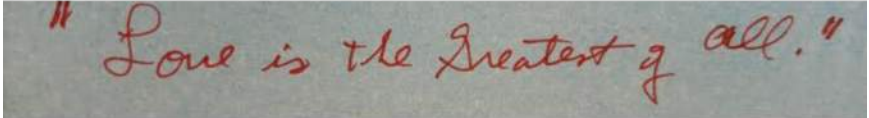
“Look!” he answered, “I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” Daniel 3:25

No matter what we face in life, the love of GOD is greater still. We are never alone. GOD is with us.

“Love ... bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.” 1 Corinthians 13:7-8

I’ve always said that life is messy and we just need to be there for each other through it all. My Mom lived her life this way. The only verse she ever quoted to me from the Bible was *“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” 1 Corinthians 13:13*

She would say it this way ...



“ Love is the Greatest of all. ”

It’s got to be what inspires us most. It’s got to be **that compass**. It’s got to be **WHAT** our hearts beat for!

“But GOD demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8

3

Right as Rain



Just because I have studied the Bible for decades and have something to say about it ... doesn't mean I'm right.

We're all in the same boat.
We all hope we're right.

Does that mean that there's no right way to believe?

Of course not. Someone has to be right. Truth is not relative. But none of us KNOWS that what we believe is right or not. If anyone did the case would've been closed long ago. Truth is elusive. It exists, but it seems content to remain in the shadows.

*“Now we see things imperfectly, like **puzzling reflections** in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.”* 1 Corinthians 13:12

Am I persuaded that what I believe to be true is the right thing to believe? I hope it is. I hope I'm right. The way I see things in this life are more like **puzzling reflections** than black and white truth. But I'm content to say that ...

I don't know for sure.

But like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego it won't make a bit of difference to me if I'm wrong ... I'm still not going to worship other GOD's or bow to another faith. I spent the time to find out for myself and I am satisfied. It's like the tuning of a guitar. My heart has found its beat and to me its sound is right as rain. The love of GOD is what my heart beats for.

All puzzling reflections aside, the crucified GOD in Jesus Christ is the single greatest demonstration of love from any religion, by any GOD in the REAL WORLD ... ever.

THAT ... I know for sure.