

ECHOES[®]

ADULT STUDENT GUIDE (LARGE PRINT)

WINTER 2025-2026



ENDURING BELIEFS
OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

DAVID  COOK[®]

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GOD'S WORD

Tevari cleared his cash register and headed for the break room. He was doing good on time. He had worked a double shift—he had taken on another employee's shift when they called in sick that morning. As Tevari was leaving, his manager asked him to stay an additional hour at the department store.

"I can't. I'm sorry, ma'am," Tevari said. "I have to make it to Bible study tonight."

One of Tevari's coworkers had overheard him mention this Bible study before. Some of the coworkers had started calling him "preacher man."

He didn't mind, though. He knew that there might be a cost to following Christ. Tevari also knew of God's many blessings and benefits. How could Tevari explain how important and wonderful the Word of God had become to him? The Bible encourages and instructs; any message from God is "full of the Spirit and life," what Job calls more important than "daily bread" (John 6:63; Job 23:12).

And still, there was so much that Tevari didn't know about the Bible and this Christian walk that he had begun four years prior, but he wanted to learn more. He was grateful to have a pastor who rightly divided the Word of God. Bible study was a time to dig into Scripture and to ask questions. And Tevari had a lot!

Tevari smiled as he backed his Jeep out of the parking space. He had just enough time to get there.

1 What is something life-giving that you have learned from Scripture?

2 What is Scripture's reputation in the wider world? What do non-Christians think that Scripture is all about?

3 What questions do you still have for God regarding Scripture?

⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

⁸ The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

⁹ The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

¹¹ Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

¹² Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

¹³ Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul.

The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart.

The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

⁹ The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever.

The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous.

¹⁰ They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.

¹¹ By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

¹² But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

¹³ Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me.

Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression.

God's Revealed Wisdom

What does the word “law” mean to you? Maybe you think of bickering legislators, the complicated instructions for filing your taxes, or the last time you got a speeding ticket. You probably don’t think of “law” as something worthy of praise—something that makes you want to sing.

But “law” is what the second half of Psalm 19 is all about. The psalmist—David, or someone composing a psalm in honor of David—begins by describing the revelation of God’s glory that rings

out from creation (vv. 1–6, before the printed text). Then the subject switches: if the heavens can declare the glory of God, the law of God is also worthy of praise and something that demonstrates God’s supreme mastery of all knowledge.

“Law” in Hebrew means the same as “instruction.” Praising God’s law means praising His wise instruction. Parallelism between several nouns—“law . . . statutes . . . precepts . . . commands” (vv. 7–8)—alerts us that the writer is speaking in broad terms about various kinds of instruction that come from God. Several words closely resemble parts of Proverbs, like the contrast between wise and simple or the reference to “fear of the LORD” in verse 9 (in Prov. 1:1–7, this is the source of wisdom). God’s revelation and instruction is the root of all insight, all sound thinking.

Imagine asking a group, “What gives joy to your heart?” (see v. 8). Not many would say, “God’s instruction to me!” In the rest of Scripture, the word for “giving joy” is used to describe heightened experiences: hearing music, enjoying a glass of wine, or hearing a kind word (Pss. 45:8; 104:15; Prov. 12:25). That kind of exuberance is what God’s wise instruction is able to do. God’s message is like precious treasure, a sweet treat, or a timely correction (vv. 10–11).

A shift comes in Psalm 19:12, when the psalmist notices that God’s perfect insight exposes inner thoughts too. Like in Psalm 139, which declares to God, “You know me. . . . You are familiar with all my ways” (vv. 1–3), the writer ask for God’s guidance to reveal any error, to forgive wrongdoing, and to keep us from willful disobedience. In the glorious light of transcendent wisdom, a heart of humble submission is the only good response to God’s perfect knowledge. It penetrates to the soul and unmask humans as creatures in need of forgiveness.

1 What is the meaning of “law” in this Psalm?

2 What are other experiences that gladden your heart? How do these compare to receiving a word from God?

3 How does it feel to be in God’s presence, certain that He knows every thought and hidden motive?

¹⁴ But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; ¹⁵ And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

God's Reliable Word

With the second reading, we move ahead in time by perhaps a thousand years. The encouragement in 2 Timothy 3:14–15 is from the apostle Paul, sent to one of his most trusted partners in ministry. Paul met Timothy when he came to Lystra (Acts 16:1–5), and he was so impressed by this man that he took him along on his missionary travels. Timothy is a named coauthor to six of Paul's letters (see 2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; Philem. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1). He was personally involved in both sides of Paul's ministry: traveling to meet congregations and composing letters to send them.

But when Paul composes 2 Timothy, the time draws short. Paul describes suffering under what he calls "my chains" (2 Tim. 1:16). Paul sees well enough that he will soon give his life for the cause of Christ (2 Tim. 4:6). He could say in confidence, "I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7). In these final days, Paul's thoughts were with his ministry partners, especially with Timothy, called "my true son in the faith" (1 Tim. 1:2).

Paul points to several factors that give him confidence in Timothy's endurance. For one, he has a heritage of faith in his grandmother and mother, whom Paul calls by name, and through whom Timothy had received wisdom and guidance (2 Tim. 1:3). As a second factor, Paul cites Timothy's instinct to grant to God the ultimate authority, as if God were his commanding officer or the judge of a race, ready to reward the one who runs with endurance (2 Tim. 2:4–5).

Above all, Paul reminds Timothy of the roots of his faithful study. Even "from infancy" he has been familiar with Scripture (2 Tim. 3:15).

No doubt this was from the influence of his family members, who fulfilled the call of Deuteronomy 6:6–7, making the study and discussion of God’s message a part of daily life.

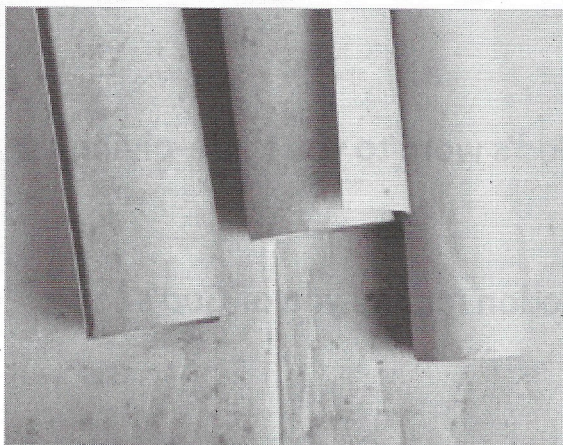
When Paul refers to the “Holy Scriptures,” he has in mind the portion of the Bible that Christians call the Old Testament. Paul studied his Scriptures and was known for demonstrating the truth of the good news of Jesus from texts like Habakkuk 2:4, “The just shall live by faith” (KJV, also quoted in Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11). Paul says the Scriptures are able to “make you wise for salvation,” which means they have their source in God—who wants all people to come to salvation through faith in Jesus (1 Tim. 2:3–4).

Paul knew that he might not have the chance to encourage Timothy again, unless Timothy was able to come to him quickly (2 Tim. 4:9). In perhaps his final message to the younger man, he upholds the value of studying Scripture. He knew that God’s Word is reliable and would continue to mold Timothy into a mature leader.

1 What advantages does Timothy have in his walk with God and his growth as a leader?

2 What role do parents and caregivers play in passing on a legacy of faith?

3 What parts of the *Old Testament* help you to understand God’s salvation through Christ Jesus?



When Paul asks Timothy to come and to bring his “scrolls, especially the parchments” (2 Tim. 4:13), he probably has in mind to compose more letters, drawing from Scripture and from his own collections of notes.

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Time Well Spent

When I get overwhelmed with my task list, I have a trick. I add something simple that I've already done to my checklist, and then I get the pleasure of checking it off. *Ta-da*. One mountain climbed, fifteen more to go. I'll also weed out tasks that don't have a looming deadline.

I struggle to know whether tasks that I enjoy should stay on a list at all. On the one hand, scheduling time is one way to make sure that I do something; but on the other hand, I then face the temptation to set these tasks aside. I have to consciously make time for those things that are life-giving.

At least two things fall into this nebulous category: exercise and the study of Scripture. Both are so good for my soul. Training my body gives me energy, keeps the grumpiness away, and makes me feel alive. Somewhere in the middle of a workout, I think to myself, *Oh, right, I love this*. Reading the Bible and spending time with God triggers many of the same thoughts. Time spent in God's Word leaves me refreshed, at peace with God's work in and through me. I say to myself, *Why did I ever avoid this?* Spending time with my Savior reminds me that I am alive and that He has saved me into this reality.

It is those habits we most need that we find ourselves squeezing out of our lives, as we fill time with more and more. We have a God who loves us, who doesn't want us to persist in a stress-induced haze of frenzied activity. We don't need to fear that Scripture is "just one more thing to do," or something that leaves us short of time. Sometimes, what I can do is pray, *Lord, remind me of the goodness of Your instruction to me, and help me walk the path*.

1 How can studying Scripture or meditating on God's Word feel like an obstacle?

2 How can you be reminded that God's word to you is life-giving?

3 How does following God's instruction remind you of God's goodness?

A Season to Spend Time in God's Word

The month of December can feel like a whirlwind, pulling us from one obligation to another, with hardly a chance to catch a breath. You are invited to begin or recommit to time with God as your "calm within the storm." The Daily Bible Readings are a great place to start.

Father, I believe Your Word is life to me. I commit to the reading of Scripture in the weeks ahead, and let's meet at this time and place:

Key Text

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

—2 Timothy 3:16–17 KJV

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

—2 Timothy 3:16–17 NIV

Quiet Hour® and Cross Daily Bible Readings

Week of December 8 through December 13

- Mon.** Isaiah 49:13–17—The Father's Motherly Compassion.
- Tue.** John 4:20–24—The Father Seeks Authentic Worshipers.
- Wed.** Isaiah 40:27–31—The Father Strengthens the Powerless.
- Thu.** Isaiah 64:1–8—The Father Exacts Discipline.
- Fri.** Psalm 103:1–5, 10–14—The Father Blesses and Forgives.
- Sat.** James 1:13–18—The Father Gives Perfect Gifts.

Next Week: Matthew 6:24–34

We will talk about the radical reliance that we can place in our heavenly Father. What are some times when you are seeking satisfaction or security?