

Why does the Bible Matter?

The Bible matters to me because it is God's love letter, life's handbook, and Jesus' story.



TRANSFORMATION
for Adult LifeGroups

Psalms 119 (selected verses); 2 Timothy 3:16-17

APRIL 4, 2018/APRIL 8, 2018

TODAY'S TEXT

Text: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT), *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. 17 God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.*

Psalms 119:89-93 (NLT), Your eternal word, O Lord, stands firm in heaven. 90 Your faithfulness extends to every generation, as enduring as the earth you created. 91 Your regulations remain true to this day, for everything serves your plans. 92 If your instructions hadn't sustained me with joy, I would have died in my misery. 93 I will never forget your commandments, for by them you give me life.

FIRST THOUGHTS

It's difficult to determine sales numbers for books given that many are published around the world or may have been in circulation for a long time (as reflected by #1 on this list first published in 1612). Take a look at this list of all time bestsellers:

1. Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes—500 million copies
2. Xinhua Zidian (Chinese language dictionary)—400 million copies
3. A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens—200 million copies
4. The Lord of the Rings by J. R. R. Tolkien—150 million copies
5. The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupery—140 million copies
6. Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone by J. K. Rowling—120 million copies
7. And Then there were None by Agatha Christie—100 million copies
8. Dream of the Red Chamber by Cao Xueqin—100 million copies
9. The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe by C. S. Lewis— 85 million copies
10. The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown—80 million copies

° Which of these have you read? Any surprises on the list?

° Where do you think the Bible would be on this list?

This month instead of studying the content of the Bible, we're going to see what the Bible says about itself. We're going to ask questions like "Why does the Bible matter?" and "Can I trust it?" The answers to these questions lay the foundation for the role the Bible plays in our lives, our church, and our groups.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Next week we'll talk some about where the Bible came from. As a brief intro this week, consider this:

The Bible was written over a 1500 year span. Its human authors came from over 20 occupations (from shepherds to kings, from prophets to fisherman), lived in 10 countries, and wrote in 3 languages (Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic). Although mostly male authors, it is one of only books from ancient times that contains material written by women (Mary's song, Miriam's poetry, sections of Proverbs, etc.). It includes nearly every type of literature from history to poetry, from prophecy to romance. And yet, despite all this diversity, it is unified in its message of God's plan of redemption through his son Jesus Christ for all people.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

The Bible has had a tremendous impact on our world. It is the most-published, most-quoted, most influential book of all time. It has shaped religion, politics, law, morality, art, culture, literature, work—every field of humanity has been impacted by it.

"Of the many influences that have shaped the United States into a distinctive nation and people, none may be said to be more fundamental and enduring than the Bible." President Ronald Reagan

"The existence of the Bible, as a book for the people, is the greatest benefit which the human race has ever experienced. Every attempt to belittle it is a crime against humanity." Immanuel Kant (German philosopher and author)

But let's bring this down to a personal level. Yes, the Bible has influenced society, but has it influenced me? Why does the Bible matter to me?

The Bible is God's Love Letter

"God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins" 1 John 4:9-10 (NLT)

- Have you ever received a love letter? How did it make you feel?
- What are some ways God has expressed his love to us through the Bible?

The Bible matters because it is the record of how God feels about us and what He thinks about us. It is His love letter to us.

“As I read the Bible, I find love to be the supreme and dominant attribute of God. The promises of God’s love and forgiveness are as real, as sure as positive as human words can make them.” Billy Graham

The Bible is Life’s Handbook

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT)

> Read Psalm 119:52, 89-93, 105, 165

- What are the benefits of God’s word for our lives from these verses?
- How has the Bible helped you in life?

The Bible matters because it reveals God’s plan for our lives. It is the most trusted handbook for life.

“The Bible is God’s chart for you to steer by, to keep you from the bottom of the sea, and to show you where the harbor is, and how to reach it without running on rocks and bars.” Henry Ward Beecher (Pastor, abolitionist and brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe)

The Bible is Jesus’ Story

“He [Jesus] said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.” Luke 24:25-27 (NIV)

> Read John 5:39-40

- What do these verses from Luke and John reveal about the purpose of the Bible?
- How does this affect the way you read the Bible?

The Bible matters because it tells us the story of Jesus, our savior.

“I believe the bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good of the Savior of the world is communicated to us through the Book.” President Abraham Lincoln

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

Does the Bible matter to you? Most of us would say of course. But the proof is in the role the Bible plays in our daily lives. Do we turn to the Bible for wisdom? For comfort? For peace? For deepening our relationship with Jesus?

- How will you get more Bible into your life this week? Check all that apply

<input type="checkbox"/> Read it	<input type="checkbox"/> Think about it	<input type="checkbox"/> Share it
<input type="checkbox"/> Listen to it	<input type="checkbox"/> Memorize it	
<input type="checkbox"/> Study it	<input type="checkbox"/> Apply it	

“We do not have to be biblical scholars to read this Book. You, right where you are, do not have to wait for someone to take you by the hand to open the pages of Scripture. You can open your Bible just as you are.” Open Your Bible by She Reads Truth

UPCOMING LESSONS

- Spend some time reading the Bible! Try reading a whole chapter to keep it in context.
- Next week we will talk about the trustworthiness of the Scripture. Listen this week for objections as to why the Bible is true.
- Think about your own experience of the Bible—do you trust it? Why?

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

8th - 1 Samuel 3-5; Psalm 77; 2 Corinthians 8 | **9th** - 1 Samuel 6-7; Psalm 72; 2 Corinthians 9 | **10th** - 1 Samuel 8-10; 2 Corinthians 10 | **11th** - 1 Samuel 11-12; 1 Chronicles 1; 2 Corinthians 11 | **12th** - 1 Samuel 13; 1 Chronicles 2-3; 2 Corinthians 12 | **13th** - 1 Samuel 14; 1 Chronicles 4; 2 Corinthians 13 | **14th** - 1 Samuel 15-16; 1 Chronicles 5; Matthew 1