

How to: Read, Study, Memorize, Meditate & Use the Word of God—For Transforming Your Life Each Day

Ephesians 6:17

Today look at one of my most favorite doctrines in the Bible.
I love the Bible because I love the Author, God Himself.
I love the theme of the Bible, because He is my Savior.
I love the power of the Bible because it has the words that lead to endless life.
I love the impact the Bible makes, because each time we eat of it our hearts rejoice.

God's Word is the Precise Tool of the Spirit

God's Word as the Sword of the Spirit is our final piece of spiritual armor.
That is what God calls it in the flow of Ephesians 6:10-17.

What an amazing doctrine the Bible teaches about the purpose, role, power, and impact the Scriptures can have on our lives.

This morning my greatest desire is to remind each of us, and help all of us understand how to read, study, memorize, meditate upon, and use God's Word for transforming our life each day. The best way to understand the Doctrine of the Scriptures is to see how God explains it.

God Illustrates the Transforming Power of His Word

Whenever we come to any doctrine in the Bible, we have an amazing tool available to aid in our understanding that doctrine.

God Himself designed the Bible to illustrate every doctrine He wants us to understand. Did you know that? Do you see the Bible as an amazing illustrated guide to God? Let me show you what I mean in 1 Corinthians 10.

1 Corinthians 10:1-6 (NKJV) Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, ² all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. ⁵ But with most of them God was not well pleased, for *their bodies* were scattered in the wilderness. ⁶ **Now these things became our examples**, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

Pray

NIV: **occurred as examples** to keep us

NAS: **happened as examples** for us

ESV: **took place as examples** for us

God says He chose what events He wanted chronicled, or recorded in the Old Testament.

God wanted those biographies to be examples for us as “**a model of behavior as an example to be imitated or to be avoided.**”¹

If we want to understand how to apply a particular doctrine, the first place to look is within the inspired pages of Scripture.

The Examples of God's Word in Bible Characters

The final piece of armor is for us to take up, and use Christ Jesus as the Word of God.

This may be the most useful, and certainly the most understandable piece.

The Word of God as vital to our lives is the clearest doctrine presented in God's Word.

So, when we look for examples of a model of behavior to be imitated or avoided, we have more than we can count.

So to help us see how to read, study, memorize, meditate upon, and use God's Word for transforming our life each day, here are some more well know people from the pages of Scripture.

First we will look at who they are, then what they faced, and finally how the Scriptures impacted them.

Joseph's: Distress-Filled Life

Joseph had a Stress-Filled Life (deserted by all)

Psalm 105:17-19 He sent a man before them—Joseph—who was sold as a slave. 18 They hurt his feet with fetters, He was laid in irons. 19 Until the time that his word came to pass, **the word of the Lord tested him.**

Spoiled by his dad;

Hated by his brothers;

Abused, enslaved, sold, and deported for the financial gain of family members;

Used, set up, unjustly accused, and imprisoned by his own employer;

Chained, tormented, and forgotten in jail;

Vindicated, elevated, and used by God.

Because his life passed the test of God's Word.

David's: Danger-Filled Life

David had a Rough Life (bloody man killed more)

¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 591). New York: United Bible Societies.

Psalm 16:11 **You will show me** the path of life; In Your presence *is* fullness of joy; At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

David started killing predators (bears and lions) at a young age;

David graduated to killing a giant while still a teen;

David went on to slay “his ten thousands” while in his twenties;

David was such a swordsman, a slinger, a spearman, and a deadly warrior – that God said he was too much a “man of blood” to build the Temple of God.

Yet he was the man after God’s own heart.

Paul’s: Affliction-Filled Life

Paul had a Dangerous Life (beaten more)

Romans 15:4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the **patience and comfort of the Scriptures** might have hope.

Paul was stoned, ship wrecked, and sleepless;

Paul was hunted, hounded, and heckled;

Paul was imprisoned, impoverished, and

Paul was bruised, beaten, and banished;

But he never stopped hoping in God’s Word.

Jeremiah’s: Tragedy-Filled Life

Jeremiah had a Tragic Life (weeping prophet wept more)

Jeremiah 15:16 **Your words were found, and I ate them**, And **Your word** was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.

Maybe one Biblical figure was the neediest.

He is known as the weeping prophet, partly for his compassion, and partly for his condition of sadness.

Jeremiah² must have had an incredible childhood. The Scriptures tell us God had chosen him before his birth to be a prophet. His family was notable in their service for the LORD. Life was exciting for the son of a high priest.

Jeremiah 1:1 The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiyah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, (NASB)

One of the great blessings of Jeremiah’s life was that his dad was the one who found the lost book of the Law. How Jeremiah’s love for the Word showed through in his life as God’s prophet. He was the “son of Hilkiyah” (Jer. 1:1) and as 2 Kings records:

2 Kings 22:8 “And Hilkiyah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.”

Jeremiah’s woes were unimaginable to our relatively peaceful lives.

² Sources used are: The Word of God; Baxter, *Explore the Book*; Scroggie, *The Unfolding Drama*; Christ in all the Scriptures; The Criswell Study Bible; Walk through the Bible; *The Compact Guide to The Bible*, Lehman Strauss, CHM, MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel*, p. 76-77, Sanders, *Spiritual Discipleship*, P. 129-136.

Jeremiah's Unimaginable Sorrows

He lived through the death throes of the final generation of the nation of Judah.

From an earthly perspective **Jeremiah's life was a failure.**

During his lifetime **he watched the decay of God's chosen people**, the horrible destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of the nation to Babylon.

He preached for 40 years and **saw no visible result** among those he served. Instead those countrymen he warned for God sought to kill him if he wouldn't stop preaching doom (Jer. 11:19-23). He had virtually no converts to show for a lifetime of ministry.

He had **no one to find joy and comfort with** as his own family and friends were involved in plots against his (12:60).

He never had the joy of a godly home because **God never allowed him to marry**, and thus he suffered incredibly agonizing loneliness (16:20).

He lived **under a constant threat of death** as there were plots to kill him in secret so no one would find him (18:20-23).

He **lived with physical pain** while he was beaten severely and then bound in wooden stocks (20:1-2).

He **lived with emotional pain** as his friends spied on him deceitfully and for revenge (20:10).

He was **consumed with sorrow and shame** and even cursed the day he was born (20:14-18).

His life **ended with no relief** as he was falsely accused of being a traitor to his own country (37:13-14). Jeremiah was arrested, beaten, thrown into a dungeon, and starved many days (37:15-21). If an Ethiopian Gentile had not interceded on his behalf he would have died there. In the end, tradition tells us he was exiled to Egypt, where he was stoned to death by his own people.

Now look again at Jeremiah 15.16.

What kept Jeremiah going through the pits? The Word of God!

Jeremiah 15:16 Your **words were found**, and **I ate them**, And **Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart**; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.

So Many Amazing Examples to Follow

Read the Word of God like Jeremiah & Ezra (Jer. 15:16; Psalm 119)

Study the Word of God like Daniel (chapter 1,6,9)

Memorize the Word of God like Hannah & Mary

Meditate upon the Word of God like Joshua & Jeremiah (Josh. 1:8; Lamentations)

Use the Word of God like Jesus (Mt. 4 & Cross), David (Ps. 71), Paul (God who comforts, comforted me), Ezra.

Perhaps the longest treatment on the power of reading the Word of God comes to us in

Psalm 119

Please turn onward to one last chapter of God's Word, Psalm 119.

Who Wrote Psalm 119?

And who wrote this? We're not sure.

Many different men are considered possibilities: David, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, Malachi, or Daniel because there is no mention of the temple.

But in Jewish history, there is the clear candidate, as there is one who stands out above the others in his life and work, and that is Ezra.

To the Jews only Moses eclipses Ezra in their Jewish history. Why?

Ezra's life actually has touched every Jew and every Christian for the past 2500 years.

How? Ezra launched the Jewish Synagogues, and wrote the reading schedule Jews follow to this day.

Ezra launched the Scribes of the New Testament era, and personally copied all the Scriptures into the Hebrew form that we have today.

The order, structure, and book layout of entire Old Testament is the product of his careful work!

The result? Psalm 119 is Ezra's testimony and also probably the content of his teaching and preaching to the 50,000+ exiles that came home to seek the Lord in Jerusalem!

Ezra's Worldly Congregation

Ezra faced a worldly congregation, soaked in all the worldly ways of Babylon and Persia. What was his plan to bring about lasting change in those he served? He started with his own life. He learned to point his heart frequently toward doing God's Will.

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in God's Word.

God is mentioned 176 times in these 176 verses.

God's Word is mentioned in 173 of these verses.

Prayer requests are given 70 times.

Suffering is mentioned 66 times.

Ezra refers to himself 325 times.

We can actually examine the heart of Ezra through his teaching, by the words of this his testimony to the result of feeding his soul with God's Word.

Ezra's Personal Resolves for Godly Living

First Ezra shares in Psalm 119 a list of his personal resolves to obey God.

Psalm 119:1-8 (NKJV) **℞ Aleph**

Blessed *are* the undefiled in **the way**, (the path God wants us to follow)

Who walk in the **law of the Lord!** (the teachings of Divine teacher)

² Blessed *are* those who keep His **testimonies**, (God's witness about truth)

Who seek Him with the whole heart!

³ They also do no iniquity; They walk in **His ways**. (the path God wants us to follow)

⁴You have commanded *us*
To keep Your **precepts** diligently. (God's directions for our lives)
⁵Oh, that my ways were directed
To keep Your **statutes!** (God's plans for our lives)
⁶Then I would not be ashamed,
When I look into all Your **commandments.** (God's absolutes for life)
⁷I will praise You with uprightness of heart,
When I learn Your righteous **judgments.** (God's decisions, written in stone)
⁸I will keep Your **statutes;** (God's plans for our lives)
Oh, do not forsake me utterly!

Ezra Using the Word to Transform His Life

He chooses to turn his life toward God.

Psalm 119:59 I thought about my ways, and turned my feet **to Your testimonies.**

Like a person who hears something, or sees something that stops them, and they turn to go in that direction. Ezra examines his life, looks at the Word and goes the way of the Lord.

He chooses to hate evil in any form, and to avoid those ways.

Psalm 119:101 **I have restrained** my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word.

What do you restrain yourself from?

He chooses to lean God's Way by obedience.

Psalm 119:112 **I have inclined** my heart to perform Your statutes Forever, to the very end.

What do you lean towards?

He chooses to set his hopes in the Lord.

Psalm 119:114 You are my hiding place and my shield; **I hope in Your word.**

Just like Paul asked the Roman believers to do in Romans 15:13

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

What do you have your hopes set upon?

He chooses to cultivate spiritual appetites.

Psalm 119:131 **I opened my mouth** and panted, For **I longed for** Your commandments.

What do you pant for?

He chooses to cultivate spiritual disciplines.

Psalm 119:147 **I rise** before the dawning of the morning, And cry for help; **I hope** in Your word.

He chooses to live a life of praise.

Psalm 119:164 Seven times a day I praise You, Because of Your righteous judgments.

Are You Inviting God's Word to Transform Your Life?

God gives us biographies to be “**a model of behavior as an example to be imitated or to be avoided.**”

God uses Ezra and Psalm 119 to illustrate for us, how to read, study, memorize, meditate upon, and use God's Word for transforming our life each day.

The choice is yours.