

**THE WONDROUS WORKS OF GOD'S WORD**  
**PSALM 19:1-11**

Christmas is over and two days of this year remain. That means we have moved from the Christmas season to the season of resolutions. In my files, I have the following articles to help you set some goals for this year:

- 7 Surprising Traditions to Celebrate the New Year
- 10 Questions to Consider as You Enter the New Year
- 16 Ways to Become a Better Man in the New Year
- 31 questions to ask for a more Christ-centered 2024
- 40 Resolutions to Consider Making in [2024]

I thought that reading all those lists might be a little overwhelming — and even discouraging. So let me simplify it for you (and for me). Over two Sundays, I want to consider with you the importance of spiritual disciplines — particularly Bible and prayer. We might think about other disciplines and priorities, but if we get these right, I have found that the others also tend to fall into place.

To help us think about these priorities from God's perspective, we will look at Psalm 19, seeing what the psalmist understands about the Bible and how he responds to it in prayer.

C. S. Lewis has said of this psalm, "I take this to be the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world." In the beauty of the words, there is also a great message; what we find is...

**GOD HAS TOLD US ABOUT HIMSELF IN THE WORLD AND IN THE WORD.**

**WORSHIP HIM FOR HIS CREATIVE POWER.**

**DELIGHT IN HIM FOR HIS AUTHORITATIVE WISDOM.**

Because of the revelation of God, the psalmist encourages **three responses** of the believer (both explicit and implied). We will consider the first two this week and the final one next time.

1. **WORSHIP God — He Has Revealed Himself in His CREATION (vv. 1-6)**
2. **DELIGHT in God — He Has Revealed Himself in His WORD (vv. 7-11)**
  - ✓ What the Word is and Does — a Description (vv. 7-9)
  - ✓ What the Word is Worth — a Desire (vv. 10-11)
3. **PETITION God — He is TRUSTWORTHY (vv. 12-14)**

GOD HAS TOLD US ABOUT HIMSELF IN THE WORLD AND IN THE WORD.

WORSHIP HIM FOR HIS CREATIVE POWER. AND DELIGHT IN HIM FOR HIS AUTHORITATIVE WISDOM.

## 1. WORSHIP God — He Has Revealed Himself in His CREATION (vv. 1-6)

- God is wholly unknowable to mankind (Rom. 11:33-36).
  - ✓ While we know a few things, there is a depth to God's **wisdom** and **knowledge** that is infinitely greater than our wisdom and knowledge. In fact, **His judgments** (His decisions and decrees) are **unsearchable** and unknowable to us; they are inscrutable and beyond our understanding (remember, there are **depths** to God that are unreachable to us and our minds).
  - ✓ And God's **ways** (actions) are **unfathomable**. The paths God takes are sometimes plain and revealed to us, but many times they are incomprehensible — we would never have thought of or even considered the possibility of His actions. We can only know as He reveals.
  - ✓ Paul is leading us in praise of God who does things beyond our comprehension, especially in salvation:
    - His judgments are a "great deep" (Ps. 36:6).
    - There are secret things that belong to God's mind alone (Dt. 29:29).
    - Only the Spirit of God knows the thoughts of God (1 Cor. 2:12).
- God is wholly unknowable to mankind — *until He reveals Himself to man* (though even then, we can only know what He has revealed to us).
  - ✓ While we cannot know God on our own, when He reveals Himself, we can know Him — which is the story of Christmas and the advent of God on the earth (Jn. 1:14, 18).
  - ✓ While we cannot know everything there is to know about God, we can know something of Him. In fact, *all people* can know something of God and His nature.
- How has God revealed Himself to us? Primarily in two ways: creation/conscience and Scripture.
  - ✓ God has revealed Himself in creation (Ps. 19:1-6) so that all men can know of Him (General Rev.).
  - ✓ God has revealed Himself in Scripture (Ps. 19:7-11), so all men can know of salvation (Special Rev.).
- Let me summarize God's general revelation (general = to all people) from these verses:
  - ✓ **Verse 1** — ***the heavens are telling the glory of God*** — God does not audibly speak through His revelation in creation, but His existence is made to all and *obvious* to all in that creation.
    - The expansiveness of creation is telling that He has made it "with His hands" (v. 1b).
    - ***Day to day*** and ***night to night*** (v. 2) means that there is a continual declaration of God's glory to every person everywhere in every generation and age. God is constantly revealing Himself.
    - God doesn't speak audibly in creation (v. 3), but the message is clear...
    - The ***line*** (the "text" or "judgments") of God's revelation is over ***all the earth*** (v. 4)...
    - The ***sun***, the "ruler" of the world, is an example of one of the manifestations of God's daily glory in the Heavens (vv. 5-6; Ps. 8:3) — Raye Jeanne called while I was working on this verse — "the clouds and sun are just beautiful..." The creation around us is shouting, "God has made this!"

- Be careful how you think and speak about this; the heavens and creation don't just speak about glory and wonder — they speak about the glory *of God*. It is not enough to merely see wondrous things in creation; **the wondrous revelation must lead us to worship in the Creator**.
- Not all people will worship Him, but because God has revealed Himself in His created world to all men, no person has an excuse about not knowing about God (**Rom. 1:18-20**).
- But God has not only revealed Himself generally in creation; He has also revealed Himself specifically in Scripture. And if the sun is the “ruler” of general rev., then Scripture is the “ruler” of special revelation.

## 2. **DELIGHT in God — He Has Revealed Himself in His WORD (vv. 7-11)**

- In the opening six verses, the psalmist refers to God by name only once, using a very common name for Him (**God, v. 1**). While a common name for God in the OT, it is also the general word for deity.
  - ✓ But in verses 7-9 the special name of God for Israel, **YHWH**, is used 6x (and once in v. 14).
  - ✓ The psalmist is moving from describing the existence of God that all men can know, to the personal God who has revealed Himself to His chosen people, Israel, in a very particular way. He is a transcendent and great God (vv. 1-6) and He is a personal and knowable God (vv. 7-12).
  - ✓ Each time Scripture is identified in these verses, it is YAHWEH'S — belonging to covenant God (some form of “Yahweh has spoken” appears almost 500x in the OT). We believe and obey is not because it's to our advantage, but because *our God* said it (**Gen. 12:4; Ps. 50:1; 2 Pt. 1:21** [cf. v. 19]).
  - ✓ “...everything in the biblical system goes back to God...” [Francis Schaeffer]

### • **What the Word is and Does — a Description (vv. 7-9)**

- ✓ In each of these six lines, the Word of God is given a name, described with an adjective and followed with a verb ascribing a benefit or praise. Let's notice them in that way —
- ✓ **law (v. 7)** = This can refer to the Mosaic Law, or to the totality of everything God has revealed about Himself and His standards. God has not omitted anything about Himself that He wanted to say! That is likely what he means here (e.g., Ps. 1). It's God's teaching and instruction about Himself/life.
  - **DESCRIP: perfect** = It is wholesome, innocent, and has integrity. It is flawless.
    - ... And it covers completely all aspects of life and is not superfluous — it will never lead you to do something that is “silly” or unimportant; whenever it speaks, it is essential.
    - ... As a perfect Word, it doesn't lack anything to be complete. It is a thorough guide to lead us through life. It is an unerring and complete guide.
    - ... “There is nothing there which would lead men into error or sin; there is nothing essential for man to know which may not be found there.” [Barnes]
    - ... God has given us all we need in Scripture. It is sufficient for everything in our lives.
  - **BENEFIT: It restores soul** = lit., “turns back life.” It refreshes and transforms.
    - ... Scripture makes someone the person God desires him to be (Is. 9:6; Ps. 119:24, 99).

- ... Many (rightly) have written in their Bibles, "This Book will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from this Book." It is a preventative and preservative.
- ... My generation was one of the first to use seat belts; we were scared into using them by videos in driver's ed. of people who didn't use them. They preserve life; now I can't conceive of not using a seat belt in my car.
- ... Whatever life the seat belt gives, the Bible gives infinitely more; yet the temptation is to discard it as unimportant or unessential.
- ... No matter what your situation, no matter what your spiritual condition, no matter what your social standing or nationality, no matter what your suffering or sorrow, the Law of God is wholly adequate to bring you into fellowship with God and then guide you wisely in life.
- ... The Bible is true, wholly true, wholly good and wholly sufficient in everything it teaches. And in its teaching it does not omit anything we need. It is everything. And it is good.

✓ **testimony** (v. 7b) = It is a witness to God's veracity (truthfulness) and it is God's affirmation of what is true (and that affirmation is rooted in His true nature). His testimony tells one what to do and what not to do (or what to avoid). The word has a note of warning — the commands of God are given as warning signs to His people ("Stop") and what will happen if it is not heeded (Jer. 44:23).

➤ DESCRIP: God's testimonies are **sure** ("Amen") — an unmovable, solid foundation.

- ... It is God's affirmation of what is true, right, and good.
- ... It is a reliable, trustworthy, and permanent foundation for building our lives.
- ... The authoritative Word of God is more sure than what we see with our eyes (2 Pt. 1:19)!
- ... We can't see what is coming in the future. We make plans, but we don't know. And often we are surprised and dismayed by what comes into our lives. Here is the only sure truth.

➤ BENEFIT: God's testimonies will **make wise the simple**.

- ... Foolishness in the Bible generally refers to those who are rebellious and sinful.
- ... Here wisdom is granted for **the simple** — those who just don't know what to do in life because they haven't been trained yet what to do. They don't have skill for living.
- ... The testimonies (truth) of God will make the unknowing know how to live.
- ... Years ago I worked in a home improvement store; when I left after about a year, one of our most difficult customers said to me, "I can't believe how much you learned in a year...you didn't know *anything* when you started..."
- ... That's what the Bible does for the immature; it takes an unknowing follower of God and turns him into a respected leader (but if they don't heed Scripture, they remain naïve).
- ... Do you keep falling into the same traps? Are you not making progress spiritually? Could it be that you are spiritually simple and you haven't learned the wisdom of God's truth?
- ... (N.B. — this has nothing to do with IQ — PhDs will be simple if they reject God's truth.)

- ✓ **precepts** (v. 8) = God's divine (written) guidance, i.e., principles. It is what God has decreed and what He has sovereignly revealed in His will (Dt. 29:29). It implies responsibility for God's people.
  - DESCRIP: God's precepts are **right**. Scripture has "right-ness" on its side. It's the proper thing to do. What God commands is clear, direct, and right. We don't do it because there is a benefit to it, but because it is right to do it.
  - BENEFIT: **rejoicing heart** = The result of doing the right thing is that there will be a settled, inner joy (heart) that is present regardless of the circumstances. Even when we suffer for doing what is right, or "lose" the passing pleasures of sin, there will be joy (119:14, 111, 162).
    - ... Have you notice how unsatisfied so much of the world is? One reason people don't have joy is that they don't obey God. They chase joy through self-satisfaction rather than by obeying God. In pursuing "joy" they become rebels against God and they lose opportunity for joy.
    - ... God will judge the rebellious and bless the obedient; He did to Israel and will to us (Dt. 5:9-10).
- ✓ **commandment** (v. 8b) is not just the OT law, but all of God's "divine mandates." It is anything that God commands or prohibits. In His commands, God is not attempting to persuade or convince His people of the rightness of what He has said; He is exercising His right to give orders. "Of Him, as of no one else, it is that what He says *goes*." [J. I. Packer]
  - DESCRIP: We naturally (fleshly) resist authority and commands, but God's commands are **pure**. They are clean and moral — both in intent and instruction, they are absolutely pure.
    - ... To say they are pure also means they are not puzzling, confusing or deceptive. They are lucid and clear. What the Bible commands contrasts with the confusion of the world.
    - ... Mark Twain captured this when he said, "It's not what I don't understand about the Bible that bothers me; it's what I do understand." It's pure and clear.
  - BENEFIT: God's commands **enlighten the eyes** = i.e., provides clear guidance.
    - ... The Bible is frequently spoken of in terms of providing light in darkness (Ps. 119:105, 130).
    - ... The Word of God is light, and it gives light (Prov. 6:23; Eph. 1:18).
    - ... Have you ever flown on an evening flight and taken off or landed in the dark? If you are like me and not trained as a pilot, you see all the lights on the ground and it is just a confusing pattern of lights that look like they have been strategically placed, but akin to a Christmas tree — for beauty and not function. But to a trained pilot, they give guidance, direction, and instruction that lead him (and his passengers) to safety. That's what the Bible does.
- ✓ **Fear of the Lord** (v. 9). Of all the names of God's Word, this word is not typically used of Scripture (this is the only time it is used in the OT to refer to Scripture). The psalmist means that there is an appropriate fear and reverence of YHWH's Word. The more we understand His Word, the more we will fear and reverence Him with a submissive spirit (e.g., 2:11; Dt. 4:10).

- DESCRIP: The fear of the Lord is **clean**; the psalmist is contrasting the Bible with man's sin and defilement. Scripture's truth is undefiled, proven by fact God made it eternal (Ps. 12:6-7).
  - ... There is nothing imperfect or impure or filthy in God's Word. There are no mixed motives or a secondary, inappropriate message.
  - ... God is pure and can only speak what is pure, clean, wholesome, and healthy.
  - ... Even a fitness trainer will talk about indulging dietary indiscretions; they make allowances for planned failures and acceptable diversions. Not the Lord's Word. It is always clean and will always direct you to truth with no double meanings and hidden indiscretions.
- BENEFIT: The fear of the Lord **endures forever**; it is eternal. The fear of God and His Word will continue into eternity and for all eternity.
  - ... God is unchanging and Scripture is unchanging. The counsel of the Lord stands forever (33:11); "Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven" (119:89); "Your testimonies are righteous forever; Give me understanding that I may live" (119:144); "Of old I have known from Your testimonies That You have founded them forever" (119:152).
  - ... The fear of God will never cease. So the implication seems to be, "if you will fear it then (in eternity), it would be wise to fear it now also." Cf. 119:112.
  - ... So many things that were unwrapped four days ago will be in the garbage can before next Christmas (some may already be; certainly our meal leftovers are). Nothing will endure. The Word of God and the fear it produces will eternally endure.
- ✓ **judgments** (v. 9b) ("ordinances") are God's demands. It points to Scripture as the divine verdict on affairs of men — and is fully just! It is God's standard of evaluation for mankind.
  - DESCRIP: God's judgments are **true** = i.e., stable, firm, immovable, unchanging — and *relevant*.
  - BENEFIT: ALL Scripture is **righteous** and leads us to righteous living. We have no more need for other guides — we need only follow the guide God has given us.
    - ... It could be that this is the summation of all the statements about the Word of God.
    - ... It is right, it commands what is right, and it leads us to do what is right. We need nothing else.
- ✓ **SUMMARY:** David presupposes that God has written Scripture and since He is covenant God, it is worth following with the heart. Scripture is given for us to know as much of God as He has revealed and to be transformed from the inside out on basis of that knowledge.

- What the Word is Worth — a Desire (vv. 10-11)

- ✓ Because of everything that Scripture is (vv. 7-9), it is **desirable** (pleasurable). Notice the contrastive:
  - **More than gold...fine gold** — it's more worthwhile than any quantity of gold, even the finest refined gold that has no impurities. There is no limit to the value of God's Word (and obeying).

- ***Sweeter also than honey...honeycomb*** — it's not only valuable, but it is pleasurable. If you come to my house and investigate my cabinets you might find a bottle, or two or 12 of honey. It will be in various flavors and textures (liquid and creamed). Raye Jeanne has a bee hive — for fun and flowers (pollination); I'm waiting for the honey. Why? Because it tastes good!  
 ... The Bible is better. It lasts longer, and it is more satisfying.  
 ... O taste and see that the Lord is good (34:8). Cf. **Jer. 15:16**.

- ✓ The Bible is also valuable because it provides **warning** to the one (***Thy servant***) who really meditates; he is able to discern good from evil (Heb. 5:14) — which has been our problem since Eden!
  - The instruction is not just that he sees the warning, but that he **heeds** and follows the warning.
  - The Bible serves as a watchman on our souls, warning us of dangers ahead (Ezk. 33:7).
  - "The individual who really knows (and applies!) his Bible is kept from numerous sins simply because he believes God's warning signals." [Swindoll] One's life is not ruined.
  - What is the benefit? ***There is great reward*** — not only do we avoid the avoidable tragedies, but there is reward and benefit in obedience. What is the reward? He doesn't say.  
 ... Given all the other benefits he has listed, he is likely pointing to benefits in the way we live our lives on earth now — follow God's Word and you will experience real joy ("will not be disappointed," Rom. 10:11; won't be disappointed by missing sin's passing pleasures, Heb. 11:25).  
 ... But you can't read that without also thinking about final reward. Even when we obey, there will be hardships. But there will be a day when all that will be behind us and we will hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant" and receive the crown that has been laid up (2 Tim. 4:8).
- As you head into the new year, are you convinced of the value of the Word of God? Are you willing to prioritize and feed your soul and act in obedience on this Word?

**CONCLUSION:** In his book, *The Sufficiency of Christ*, John MacArthur tells of a friend of his that has a collection of old Bibles, including a 16<sup>th</sup> century Bible from England — one of the earliest English Bibles:

The top third of this Bible is covered with the blood of its original owner. My friend let me hold it in my hands, and tears came to my eyes as I leafed through it. How did blood get on the pages of that Bible? When Bloody Mary ruled England, she terrorized Protestants, murdering as many as she could. Her soldiers would spill the person's blood, then take his Bible and dip it deep into the blood. A few of those Bibles have been preserved and are known as Martyrs' Bibles. Scientists have tested the paper and confirmed that the dark stains on every page of my friend's Bible are human blood.

I examined that Bible carefully, page by page. I could see where it was well worn from being studied. There are water stains, as if from tears, and places where a thumb had frayed favorite pages. This was someone's most valuable possession, and his or her blood is there to prove it. [MacArthur, 88-9.]

Do we love the revelation of God's Word and follow it with that kind of obedient love? Are our Bibles marked with that kind of commitment? Do we labor over the Word to understand it and be transformed by it? MacArthur concludes:

There is no substitute for submission to Scripture. Your spiritual health depends on placing the utmost value on the Word of God and obeying it with an eager heart. If you think you can find answers to your spiritual problems through human counsel or worldly wisdom, you are forfeiting the most valuable and only reliable source of answers to the human dilemma. Don't relinquish the sweet, satisfying riches of God's Word for the bitter gall of this world's folly. [MacArthur, p. 90.]

**BENEDICTION:** Psalm 119:57-60