

## A Passion for God's Word

# 6

## The Purpose of God's Word

The Bible has been compiled by God for a specific purpose. Once that purpose is understood, it provides a sweeping context for every single chapter and verse in the Bible. What is the ultimate purpose of God's Word?

The Bible has been masterly crafted by the Holy Spirit to reveal God himself. Like a letter written from a loved one, the Bible is the communication of God's heart. In it he reveals his love, his concern, his counsel, his guidance, his plans and his purpose for your life.

### Read Jeremiah 29:11

Just prior to their exile in Babylon, God declares his great love for Israel. His words to them are the same to us also. God declares that "he knows" the plans he has made for us, but he doesn't leave it there. He actually reveals those plans to us so that we can know them too, and the place he reveals them is the Bible.

## A Manual for Life

### Read John 20:31

John explicitly states the purpose for which he wrote his account of the life of Jesus: "So that you may believe in him and in him might have life." This purpose holds true for the entire Word of God.

The Bible is your manual for life on three levels:

- Firstly, the Bible reveals Jesus, who is the key to life (read [John 5:39-40](#); [John 17:3](#)).
- Secondly, God's Word actually brings you to the "born again" experience of a new life in Christ ([1 Peter 1:23](#)). And the Bible continues to impart life to the one who hungers after God ([John 6:63](#)).
- Thirdly, the Bible contains the instructions that make your life work ([1 Thessalonians 4:1-2](#)).

Common sense wisdom tells you, “When you want to fix something, read the instructions first.” In the same way, God has enscribed within the Bible clear instructions so that we can live life the way God intended.

### Read 2 Peter 1:3-4

These two verses summarize the entire purpose of God’s Word. Note how the verse starts off: **“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness.”** This single phrase unlocks the heart of the Gospel. In Christ, we receive a package which includes salvation, righteousness and the power to live a life pleasing to God. The Bible’s whole message essentially expounds this one phrase.

Take note of how the secret to life and godliness is revealed: “Through our knowledge of him.” This is the fundamental purpose of the Bible – to reveal God. A personal discovery of “his own glory and goodness” is the foundation upon which your own “life and godliness” is built.

Next (in verse 4), Peter describes the mechanism by which God’s “divine power” is released to bring “life and godliness” – the “great and precious promises” of God’s Word. Notice also that it is through “his own glory and goodness” that God’s promises are revealed in God’s Word.

The promises of God in his Word can be numbered in the thousands. The Bible is saturated with promises made by God in his covenant with you. These promises include many of God’s covenantal blessings, such as forgiveness (**1 John 1:9**), salvation (**Romans 10:13**), healing (**1 Peter 2:24**), power (**2 Timothy 1:7**) and eternal life (**John 10:28**) – as well as some that we don’t normally consider “promises,” such as persecution (**Mark 10:29-30; 2 Timothy 3:12**) and the “shaking of everything that can be shaken” (**Hebrews 12:26-27**).

But whatever type of promise it may be, it will always have the same dual purpose:

- **“So that...you may participate in the divine nature”** – enabling you to be conformed to the nature of Christ himself (**Romans 8:29**).
- **“So that...[you] may escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires”** – enabling you *not* to be conformed to this world (**Romans 12:2**).

## The Lord and His Word

### Read Isaiah 55:10-11

This passage describes what happens when God speaks into adverse circumstances. You cannot separate God’s Word from God’s will. God’s Word is both an expression of his will and also a vehicle of his will. When God sends his Word into our lives, that Word will fulfill the purpose for which it was sent.

### Read Psalm 138:2

The Lord and his Word are inextricably linked. Both are exalted. Both are powerful. Both are eternal.

### Read 1 Peter 1:23-25

Thus, in summary, the reason God has given you these “great and precious promises” is to cause you to participate in his own divine nature (i.e. “his own glory and goodness”) and the escape the corruption of sin (i.e. that which causes you to “fall short” of God’s glory and goodness – **Romans 3:23**). Therein lies the incredible secret to life and godliness revealed in the Bible. Like two sides to one coin, these two imperatives – not just turning *from* sin, but also turning *to* God – resound in the message of the Bible.

Note that this passage in **2 Peter 1:3-4** shows the two principal functions that the Bible performs in this powerful work of transformation in your life:

- The Bible reveals **God’s nature** – the *foundation* upon which life and godliness is established.
- The Bible reveals **God’s promises** – the *means* by which life and godliness is established.

God has revealed his nature and his promises in the Bible for a very important reason – by yourself, you have have no ability to comprehend God’s nature or discern his requirements for your life. It takes an act of divine revelation to make God known to you. To understand why this is the case, we need to first take a look at what the Bible reveals about the condition of man’s heart and mind.

## The Futility of Godless Thinking

### Read Romans 1:18-21

From the moment of man’s fall, the human mind has been distanced from God and clouded by what the Bible calls “futile thinking.”

### Read Psalm 94:11

### Read Ephesians 4:17

The word “futile” in the original Greek has the meaning of becoming “void of result” or “useless.” It is this handicap of mental “futility” that requires that God reveal himself supernaturally. No matter how long we may study or how cleverly we may philosophize, we will never reach a true understanding of God through our own mental resources.

The Bible describes man’s heart as “deceitful above all things” (Jeremiah 17:9). This means that outside the scope of God’s revelation, your heart will trick you and deceive you into thinking that all is OK, when it is not. In its most depraved state, man’s heart will turn truth upside down, calling darkness light and light darkness (**Isaiah 5:20**). The Bible tells us, without pulling any punches, that man’s mind, unaided by God’s Spirit, is incapable of understanding or even comprehending God.

### Read 1 Corinthians 2:14

So what does this mean practically. It means that if you are to know God, you are in need of a revelation *of God by God*. Only God can reveal himself to you. And the way that he has chosen to do this is through his Word.

Now it's important to understand that God's Word is not the only place where God reveals himself. God often and effectively reveals himself through:

- Nature (**Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:19-20**)
- Experiences (**Job 42:5**)

Yet both these revelations of God are incomplete. Nature does reveal God's "invisible qualities" – just enough so that "men are without excuse" – but it is a distorted lens. Because creation is presently under the curse of man's sin (**Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 8:19-22**), the message we get through the natural world is mixed and sometimes contradictory. It is true that the majestic peaks of a mighty mountain range reveal something of God's splendor and majesty, but what of a devastating earthquake? How many people have railed against God because of a so-called "act of God" – a natural disaster that has brought grief and ruin to themselves, their family or their friends?

Likewise, while it is true that when we come close to God, we begin to experience his glory and goodness, our experiences themselves cannot be the sole lens through which we view God. Experiences are subjective, and a poor measure of God's nature. How should we react when something bad occurs? What happens when a loved one dies suddenly, or a time of great personal distress is endured? Experiences, if unsupported by scriptural truth, can also be a distorted lens.

This leaves but one way for us to obtain a clear, undistorted image of what God is really like. If you are to see a clear image of God, he *must* reveal himself to you. And the only undistorted lens through which we can view God with clarity is his Word.

## The Seven-Fold Purpose of God's Word

The Word of God (energized by the Holy Spirit) has a seven-fold purpose in your life:

### ***Enlightening***

**Read Psalm 119:105**  
**Read Psalm 119:130**

Under the illumination of God's Word, we see ourselves in the light of God's holiness. The Bible sheds light on behavior and actions that displease the Lord and lights up the path that God has designated for you to walk.

### ***Convicting***

**Read John 16:7-11**

The Holy Spirit's mission is to "convict" the world. When spiritually "convicted," a person suddenly realizes that sin has been committed and that they are guilty before God. Through the Word of God, the Holy Spirit will convict your heart regarding three things:

- **Sin** – *"because men do not believe in me."* The rejection of God's plan of salvation in Jesus Christ is the prime sin and the most serious one, for it exposes a person to the judgment of God. The eternal destiny of a human life hinges upon the receiving in faith of the Lord Jesus Christ (read **1 John 5:11-13**). The Holy Spirit's mission is to expose any pattern of thought or behavior that is an affront to God.
- **Righteousness** – *"because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer."* Jesus is the standard of righteousness against which our lives are measured and the Holy Spirit has been sent to convict us of the stark reality of this fact. Compared to the righteousness of Christ, our own acts of righteousness are like "filthy rags" (read **Isaiah 64:6**).
- **Judgment**– *"because the prince of this world now stands condemned."* Note that the judgment of which the Holy Spirit convicts is the judgment of Satan. The judgment that took place at the cross (read **Colossians 2:15**) is the pivotal theme of the Holy Spirit's work of conviction and is the core thread of the entire Word of God.

As long as we are open to the Holy Spirit and to his Word, we will experience this ongoing conviction process. This is a sign of spiritual health, for the Holy Spirit never leaves us in a place of conviction, but leads us into his answer for our lives. The Bible's amazing answer to sin, righteousness and judgment is the other side of conviction.

### Read Hebrews 4:12

The Amplified Bible renders this passage as follows:

"...penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life [soul] and the immortal spirit, and of joints and marrow [that is, of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart."

### ***Washing***

#### Read Ephesians 5:25-27

The Word of God has a washing action (read **John 15:3**). Through his Word, the Holy Spirit renews your mind, conforming it to his way of thinking. As you expose yourself to the Word of God on a daily basis, the Holy Spirit will cleanse your mind of the filth of this world's thinking, which the Bible calls "depraved" (read **Romans 1:28**) and "hostile to God" (read **Romans 8:7**).

**Read Romans 12:2**

You cannot be conformed to Christ while still being conformed to this world. The two objectives are totally opposed to one another. Therefore a major function of God's Word is to realign our thinking to God's thinking. This new Bible-based kind of thinking involves:

- The Right View of God (**Isaiah 40:18,21-28; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16**)
- The Right View of Yourself (**Romans 12:3; Philippians 2:3**)
- The Right View of the World (**Isaiah 40:15-17; 1 Corinthians 1:20-31**)

The Bible is God's tool for "renewing your mind." God so wants to renew your thought processes that his way of thinking becomes your way of thinking.

***Encouraging*****Read Romans 15:4-5**

Note again that this passage attributes to Scripture what is also attributed to God – encouragement. Paul writes to the Colossian Christians with the express purpose that they might be "encouraged in heart" (read **Colossians 2:2**). This is a major purpose of God's Word – not simply to make us feel good about ourselves, but to encourage us to continue to persevere in our faith.

***Instructing*****Read 2 Timothy 3:16**

Notice that Paul writes to Timothy and declares that "all Scripture" (not just some of it) is "useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." As the Navigators have so succinctly explained it:

- **Teaching** shows you the right path.
- **Rebuking** shows you where you've wandered from the path.
- **Correcting** shows you the way back onto the path.
- **Training** shows you how to walk on the path.

**Read Psalm 119:133**

Remember, it is not only the New Testament that has been designed by God for "teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." In fact, the Scriptures that Paul is referring to when writing to Timothy is the Old Testament. The whole of Israel's history has been chronicled in the Old Testament, not just as a lead up to the coming of Jesus, but also as exemplary instruction and strong "warnings" for you.

**Read Hebrews 3:15-19; 4:1-11.**  
**Read 1 Corinthians 10:6-12**

## ***Defending***

### **Read Luke 4:1-12**

As you have noted before, when Jesus was tempted by Satan, he did not debate with him or even entertain any discussion. He solely relied on the authority of the Word of God.

### **Read Ephesians 6:17**

God's Word is described as a sword (read also **Hebrews 4:12**). When Satan attacks, you can wield the full authority of God's Word against him. But you can only wield what has become written on your heart.

### **Read Isaiah 49:2**

## ***Perfecting***

### **Read Colossians 1:24-29**

Paul's declared goal, toward which he labored so vigorously, was to "present everyone perfect in Christ." This is the exact same goal of God's Word. As Paul said, he had been commissioned by God "to present to you the word of God in its fullness." That commission was largely fulfilled through his letters, which make up the bulk of the New Testament.

### **Read Ephesians 4:12-13**

Paul's purpose was God's purpose – not just that we may be conformed to the image of God's Son as *individuals*, but that *together*, as the corporate Body of Christ, we may reach "the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

### **Read 2 Corinthians 3:18**

It is in the pages of God's Word that we meet with the Lord on terms so intimate that the Bible describes it like "looking in a mirror" (see **James 1:23-25**).

The Amplified Version of the Bible translates **2 Corinthians 3:18** this way:

"And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transformed into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [who is] the Spirit."

God's Word acts like a mirror reflecting God's glory. By revelation of the Holy Spirit we see, in the Word, dimension after dimension of his glory. This cannot but impact us! We are changed by what we see – from glory to glory.