

## **Why God's Word Matters**

Series: Sustainable Faith: The Word

Psalm 119 NIV (0929)

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CHARLES COLSON *The Bible—banned, burned, beloved. More widely read, more frequently attacked than any other book in history. Generations of intellectuals have attempted to discredit it; dictators of every age have outlawed it and executed those who read it. Yet soldiers carry it into battle believing it more powerful than their weapons. Fragments of it smuggled into solitary prison cells have transformed ruthless killers into gentle saints.*

A. W. TOZER *A loving Personality dominates the Bible, walking among the trees of the garden and breathing fragrance over every scene. Always a living Person is present, speaking, pleading, loving, working, and manifesting himself whenever and wherever his people have the receptivity necessary to receive the manifestation. ... The sacred page is not meant to be the end, but only the means toward the end, which is knowing God himself.*

JOHN R. W. STOTT *A man who loves his wife will love her letters and her photographs because they speak to him of her. So if we love the Lord Jesus, we shall love the Bible because it speaks to us of him.*

### **I. Countering the relentless pull of the culture**

#### **a. There is always a battle for what matters most**

Romans 12:2 PME *Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold*

Romans 12:2 TM *Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.*

Romans 12:2 Amp *...fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs*

#### **b. The limitations of our vision**

2 Corinthians 4:4 NIV <sup>4</sup>*The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

2 Peter 1:5-9 TM *faith ... good character, spiritual understanding, alert discipline, passionate patience, reverent wonder, warm friendliness, and generous love, ... Without these qualities you can't see what's right before you, oblivious that your old sinful life has been wiped off the books.*

#### **c. The tendency to lean**

Romans 1:28 NIV <sup>28</sup>*Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind...*

#### **d. Where Jesus is**

Ephesians 1:9-10 NLT <sup>9</sup>*God's secret plan has now been revealed to us; it is a plan centered on Christ, designed long ago according to his good pleasure. <sup>10</sup>And this is his plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth.*

## II. Lessons from those who have gone before us (Psalm 119)

### a. The stove really is hot!

A. W. TOZER *The Holy Scriptures tell us what we could never learn any other way: they tell us what we are, who we are, how we got here, why we are here and what we are required to do while we remain here.*

### b. Staying clean

<sup>9</sup>How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.

<sup>11</sup>I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

<sup>37</sup>Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word.

<sup>102</sup>I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me.

### c. Staying strong

<sup>16</sup>I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

<sup>25</sup>I am laid low in the dust; preserve my life according to your word.

<sup>28</sup>My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word.

<sup>49</sup>Remember your word to your servant, for you have given me hope.

<sup>101</sup>I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey your word.

### d. Staying free

<sup>67</sup>Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.

<sup>133</sup>Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me.

### e. Staying safe

<sup>89</sup>Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.

<sup>105</sup>Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

<sup>114</sup>You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.

<sup>169</sup>May my cry come before you, O LORD; give me understanding according to your word.

POPE JOHN PAUL II Every Christian must refer always and everywhere to the Scriptures for all his choices, becoming like a child before it, seeking in it the most effective remedy against all his various weaknesses, and not daring to take a step without being illuminated by the divine rays of those words.

### f. Staying satisfied

<sup>74</sup>May those who fear you rejoice when they see me, for I have put my hope in your word.

<sup>103</sup>How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

<sup>104</sup>I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path.

<sup>172</sup>May my tongue sing of your word, for all your commands are righteous.