



GOALS

- For students to learn powerful characteristics of God's Word.
- For students to learn the promises that come with loving and obeying the Word of God.
- For students to have the opportunity to examine the role God's Word currently plays in their individual lives and be challenged to want to know and obey it in greater ways.

MATERIALS: Group

- Variety of colored pencils
- Whiteboard and markers

MATERIALS: Each Student

- Student journal pages
- Scripture sheet, Psalm 119
- A Bible
- A pen

SESSION INTRO

Prayer

God says in Psalm 46, "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). Before beginning the session, ask the group to simply "be still" before the Lord...to listen for His quiet voice...and to focus their thoughts on Him. Ask for His leading as the group studies and shares.

Open

Open your session with a quick pop quiz about the Bible. Students can only be expected to know the first question. The rest are wild guesses. Ask students to write their answers on their journal pages. Reward the person who guesses closest to the correct answer.

How many books are in the Bible?

66 (OT: 39; NT: 27)

Wild guess: How many chapters are in the Bible?

1,189 (KJV)

Wild guess: How many verses are in the Bible?

31,102 (KJV)

Wild guess: Approximately how long would it take you to Tweet the Bible if you were to send a Tweet a day?

63.6 years, based on 3,253,301 characters with spaces in the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament.¹

After your trivia time, share the following in your own words:

The Word of God is a gift. Inside God's book are the keys to His promises. Have you ever tried to play a new game without first reading the instructions? It's nearly impossible. All the pieces, without instructions, create chaos. The same is true with life. Life is an intricate game, with many different working parts. They key to all these parts exists inside the Word of God. God doesn't intend for us to wander through life not knowing fully which way we are going. He has plans for us. These plans are hidden in His Word.

Transition into your study time with a story of how the Word of God has made a difference in your life, or share in general the importance of God's Word to you personally.

DIGGING IN

Have students take out their Scripture sheet for Psalm 119 and this week's journal page. Hand out two to three colored pencils or markers per person.

The students will be "scattering" to various parts of the room or building—a place where they can enjoy solitude to explore this passage. But before they scatter, invite the group to choose a symbol to use when marking synonyms for the Word of God, such as an open book or two stone tablets. You may need to make your students familiar with a few of the synonyms for the Bible, such as "statues," "law" and "precepts." They will also be marking pronouns like "it" and "them."

Then send the group off, asking them to mark all the words in the psalm that refer to God's Word. After they've read the passage and marked the words, they should make two lists on their journal page: *Descriptions of God's Word* and *Promises Related to God's Word*. (If you send students out of voice range be sure to send them with a time to be back.)

When most are finished with the exercise, call students back together. Assure them it's okay if they're not finished. Divide your whiteboard into two columns, labeling one column "Descriptions" and the other column "Promises." Work as a group to list on the board all the descriptions of God's Word found in Psalm 119. The list may look something like this:

Descriptions:

Keeps us from sinning (v. 11)

Is our counselor (v. 24)

Is more precious than money (v. 72)

Is righteous (v. 75)

All of it is trustworthy (v. 86)

It's eternal/it stands firm (v. 89)

It endures to this day (v. 91)

It makes me wiser than my enemies (v. 98)

It gives understanding/makes me hate the wrong path (v. 104)

It's a lamp/a light – shows me the way (v. 105)

It's wonderful (v. 129)

It gives understanding to the simple (v. 130)

It's been thoroughly tested (v. 140)

It's true (v. 142)

Now ask students the following questions:

How would you describe the relationship the writer of the psalm had with the Word of God?

Was the Word of God boring to Him? Did he feel like it was a chore to read his "Bible"? Why do you think He liked it so much?

Obviously the Bible didn't exist as we have it today. What is the psalmist likely referring to when writing of "the law" and "statutes" and "word"?

Explain that the Hebrew word for "law" is Torah, which is not only the 10 Commandments but the ordinances and statutes found in the first five books of the Old Testament. However it is most likely that the psalmist is referring to God's wisdom in general. You'll note that "law" is not translated with an uppercase "L" as it would if it was referring to the Law of Moses.

According to the psalm, what are the benefits or promises that come with knowing and loving the Word of God?

At this point list responses under "Promises" on your board as the students tell you the promises and benefits of knowing the Word. Your list may look something like this.

Promises:

We're blessed if we walk according to it (v. 1)

We're blessed if we keep His statutes (v. 2)

*If we meditate on it, we'll be wiser than our teachers
(v. 99)*

*If we obey it, we'll have more understanding than
our elders (v. 100)*

If we love it, we'll have great peace (v. 165)

If we love it, nothing will make us stumble (v. 165)

Just in case your students didn't pick up on this fact, be sure to ask them how they can become wiser than their enemies and have more insight and understanding than their elders and teachers (this means you!).

Share in your own words:

The best way to find out about God is through studying His Word. It is great to have teachers, pastors, parents and friends who share with us about what God is like, but to read and hear for ourselves takes it to an entirely new level.

Ask students to look back over the list on the board (and on their journal pages). Have them circle on their list the traits of God's Word that are the most meaningful or convicting to them. Allow a couple of minutes; then have them share what they marked and why.

After they've shared, ask your students to rate themselves on a scale from 1-5 (1 is bad; 5 is good) for the four questions below, which are also printed on their journal pages.

What does it look like to trust the Bible?

Would you label yourself as someone who trusts the Bible?

Would you describe yourself as someone who knows the Bible?

These next questions are simply to spark open-ended discussion:

What might be keeping you from knowing and trusting the Word?

What do people say about the Bible to try to undermine its authority?

Does this affect your trust of the Bible?

CROSS-CHECKING

Invite students to grab their Bibles and journal pages and move to a quiet place in the room. Ask them to look up the following verses (these are printed on their journal pages) and jot down thoughts about the role of God's Word in their lives as they read each passage.

Matthew 22:29

Colossians 3:16

Luke 6:47-49

1 Peter 1:23-25

Matthew 13:23

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Hebrews 4:12

After a few minutes, gather your students and process the following questions:

What passage stuck out the most to you?

Why do you think this passage grabbed your attention?

What do you think God might be saying through this passage?

TAKING IT INWARD

You might point out that two key themes show up in Psalm 119: knowing God's Word and obeying God's Word. Brainstorm as a group how you might personalize these two key themes.

Obeying God's Word – Certain phrases key you in on what we are to do with God's Word: *walk according to (v. 1), keep (v. 2), obey (v. 100, 129), follow (v. 106)*. Think of some activities that follow a command or instruction in the Bible, such as helping the hungry, the poor, or the sick.

Knowing God's Word – Work together to develop a plan that would motivate students to personally study the Word of God. Here are some suggestions to get the ideas flowing:

Continue in Psalms:

Since they've already gotten a jump start in the book of psalms maybe they will want to continue reading one psalm every morning.

Read the Red:

A "red-letter edition" of the Bible is a Bible with Jesus' words printed in red. Pick up one of these Bibles and simply read Jesus's words, which by themselves, would make up a small booklet.

Own a Chapter:

Become your family's authority on one of the Bible's heavier chapters like Romans 12, 1 John 4, Colossians 1, Ephesians 3 or even a one-chapter book like Jude or 2, 3 John.

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

Give students time to develop a plan of action. Share that we don't "accidentally" start reading the Word more. It takes conviction, discipline and action. Suggest they use the back of their journal pages to create a reading plan they can begin immediately. Consider questions such as:

When will I read?

What will I read?

Who will I read with?

As you can see in just the little time we spent in the Word, the value is exponential. Partnered with the power of the Holy Spirit God has given you the ability to walk confidently in this world. The secret is finding it and applying it.

Is it possible that the little amount of time you just spent together in the Word inspired you to want more personal time with your Bible?

Before you close your time together and end your last lesson in the *One on One with God* series, ask your students to share one thing they have learned these past six weeks that has helped them know God more intimately.

Source for Wild Guess answers: http://amazingbibletimeline.com/bible_questions/q10_bible_facts_statistics/ Last accessed July 9, 2015.