

How to Study the Bible – Week 7 – The Individual Word Factor – Bible Study Helps

Title: Every Word Matters

Sermon Summary: This sermon, part of an ongoing series titled "How to Study the Bible," focuses on the critical importance of every individual word in Scripture. God did not merely inspire the general ideas of the Bible but chose each specific word with divine intention and purpose. Drawing from both Old and New Testament passages, the sermon establishes that the words of God are pure, preserved, and powerful, and that faithful Bible study requires careful attention to exact wording rather than general concepts. The sermon also addresses the cultural and ecclesiastical pressure on Christians to move away from declaring "the Bible says," connects the departure of young people from the church to a weakened confidence in Scripture, and contends that the solution is a return to treating the Bible as the complete, perfect, and authoritative Word of God. A significant portion of the sermon defends the King James Bible as the preserved English Word of God and critiques modern translations for departing from word-for-word accuracy, demonstrating how even a single word can determine correct or incorrect doctrine.

Key Points:

- God chose every individual word in the Bible for a specific purpose, and faithful Bible study must attend to those words rather than only the general message of a passage
- Jesus Christ affirmed the importance of the smallest details of Scripture, including the smallest Hebrew letter (jot) and the smallest distinguishing stroke (tittle), indicating that nothing in the Word of God is insignificant
- The departure of young people from the church is connected to early doubts about Scripture, and the solution is teaching the Bible as the complete and authoritative Word of God rather than softening its claims
- The King James Bible translators used a word-for-word method of translation with a holy reverence for preserving the exact words of God, including the use of italics to indicate supplied words where necessary to translate the exact words to English
- Modern Bible translations, using dynamic equivalency rather than word-for-word translation, have altered, removed, and changed words in ways that obscure or contradict key doctrines
- God promises in Psalm 12 verses 6 and 7 to preserve His words to every generation, and this promise must be received by faith
- Key words and phrases repeated throughout Scripture, such as "that day," "without a cause," "innocent blood," and "the third day," function as interpretive keys that connect passages and reveal deeper doctrinal truth
- The names Jesus and Joshua are the same name, and the King James Bible's use of "Jesus" in Hebrews 4 and Acts 7 intentionally connects Joshua's role as the one who led Israel into the promised land with Christ's role as the one who leads believers into rest

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- The word "churches" in Acts 19 verse 37, rather than "temples," is an intentional divine connection between pagan temples and religious institutions that carry the name of a church while functioning as places of false pagan temple worship
- A single changed word, as demonstrated in the Jehovah's Witness rendering of John 1 verse 1, can change an entire doctrine from truth to heresy
- The word "afterward" in Joel 2 verse 28 establishes that the events described belong to the future day of the Lord, not to the church age, refuting claims that the sign gifts described there are for believers today

Scripture Reference:

- Psalm 119 verse 130
- 2 Timothy 2 verse 15
- Deuteronomy 6 verses 1 through 9
- Deuteronomy 8 verses 1 through 3
- Proverbs 30 verse 5
- Psalm 19 verses 7 through 11
- Psalm 33 verses 1 through 9
- Psalm 138 verses 1 through 2
- Psalm 12 verses 6 through 7
- Matthew 4 verses 1 through 10
- Matthew 5 verses 18 and 22
- John 1 verse 1
- John 20 verses 30 through 31
- John 21 verse 25
- Acts 7 verse 45
- Acts 17 verses 10 through 12
- Acts 19 verses 27 and 35 through 37
- Hebrews 4 verse 8
- Joel 2 verses 28 through 31
- Isaiah 59 verse 21

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- Romans 3 verse 2
- Romans 4 verse 21
- 1 Thessalonians 2 verse 13
- Luke 9 verse 26
- Titus 1 verse 2
- Hebrews 6 verse 18

Stories:

- The temptation of Jesus Christ in the wilderness, in which Jesus responded to each temptation from the devil by quoting exact words from the Old Testament, specifically from Deuteronomy, demonstrating the sufficiency and authority of the written Word of God
- The account of the Berean Jews in Acts 17, who received the preached word with readiness and then searched the Scriptures daily to verify that what was taught aligned with the written Word, held up as a model for how believers should approach Scripture
- The account of Stephen's sermon in Acts 7, in which the name Jesus is used in reference to Joshua leading the people into the promised land, illustrating how the King James Bible intentionally connects Joshua as a type of Christ
- The riot at Ephesus in Acts 19, in which the temple of Diana is referred to as "churches" in the King James Bible, connecting pagan temple worship with false religious institutions bearing the Christian name
- The sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22, referenced as a type of the death and resurrection of Christ, with the third day mentioned as a key phrase pointing to resurrection
- The account of Abraham's faith in Romans 4, used to illustrate what it means to be fully persuaded of God's promises, applied to the believer's confidence in God's promise to preserve His words
- The repeated use of the phrase "without a cause" in the Psalms as David described unjust treatment, connecting to Jesus Christ who was put to death without cause, and the removal of that phrase from Matthew 5 verse 22 in modern versions, which the sermon argues results in an implicit accusation against Christ

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Discipleship Questions

Deuteronomy 6 commanded the Israelites to speak God's words when sitting, walking, lying down, and rising up -- in what practical ways can believers today build a similar rhythm of immersing themselves and their families in Scripture throughout daily life?

The sermon argues that the answer to young people leaving the church is to give them real answers from God's Word rather than entertaining them or softening biblical truth -- do you agree, and what does that look like in your own relationships with the next generation?

Psalms 138 verse 2 declares that God has magnified His Word above His name, which the sermon interprets as meaning we cannot know God apart from His Word -- how does this truth shape the priority you give to reading and studying Scripture in your personal life?

Jesus responded to every temptation from the devil by quoting the exact written words of Scripture, saying 'it is written' -- what does this reveal about the relationship between memorizing Scripture and overcoming temptation, and how seriously do you take that discipline?

The sermon emphasizes that the Jewish scribes treated the words of God with such reverence that they would discard copies if errors were found during the audit process -- how does that level of care for Scripture compare to how the average Christian treats the Bible today, and what should change?

The individual word factor teaches that a single word like 'afterward' in Joel 2 verse 28 can completely reframe the interpretation of a passage -- can you think of a time when paying close attention to a specific word in Scripture changed your understanding of what it meant?

The sermon draws a direct connection between churches and leaders discouraging the phrase 'the Bible says' and the growing trend of young people doubting and abandoning Scripture -- what responsibility do pastors, parents, and teachers bear in either contributing to or reversing that trend?

God's promise in Psalm 12 verses 6 and 7 to preserve His words forever is described as a matter of faith, much like Abraham being fully persuaded that God could perform what He promised -- what does it look like practically to be 'fully persuaded' that the Bible you hold is the preserved Word of God?

The sermon uses examples like the name Jesus appearing where we might expect Joshua, and the word 'churches' appearing where we might expect 'temples,' to argue that these are intentional choices by God rather than errors -- how does believing that every word is intentional change the way you approach difficult or confusing passages?

First Thessalonians 2 verse 13 commends believers for receiving the preached Word not as the word of men but as the Word of God -- in your own experience of hearing Scripture taught or preached, how do you guard your heart against filtering it through human opinion rather than receiving it as the authoritative voice of God?

Small Group Guide

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Before You Meet

Encourage group members to read Psalm 119:130, Deuteronomy 6:1-9, and Proverbs 30:5 before gathering. Ask them to come prepared to share one word or phrase from Scripture that has been meaningful to them and why.

Key Takeaways

- 1. Every word in the Bible is intentional.** God did not give us a book of general ideas or approximate truths. He gave us specific words, chosen by the Holy Spirit, to communicate His truth exactly as He intended. As Proverbs 30:5 states, every word of God is pure.
 - 2. Jesus Christ modeled the importance of individual words.** When tempted by the devil, Jesus quoted the Old Testament word for word. In Matthew 5:18, He declared that not even the smallest letter or stroke of a letter would pass away until all was fulfilled. This is the standard He set for how seriously we should take the words of Scripture.
 - 3. God has promised to preserve His words.** Psalm 12:6-7 contains a direct promise from God to preserve His words for every generation. This is not a minor theological point. It shapes how we choose, trust, and study the Bible we hold in our hands.
 - 4. The version of the Bible we use matters.** Because every word is important, translation method matters. A translation that prioritizes general concepts over precise words will inevitably lose details and exact words that God intended for us to have, and in some cases, will change or remove doctrinal truth entirely.
 - 5. Believing the words of God by faith changes how we study.** Like Abraham, who was fully persuaded that God was able to do what He promised, we are called to trust His promise to preserve His words and receive Scripture not as the word of men but as the Word of God, and to study it accordingly.
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Discussion Questions

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Opening Question Think of a time when a single word in a conversation, a contract, or a document made a significant difference. What happened, and what did it teach you about the importance of precise language?

Digging Deeper

1. The sermon described a trend in which church leaders and conferences have discouraged Christians from saying "the Bible says." Why do you think this trend exists, and what are its dangers? How does this connect to the broader pattern of young people leaving the church?
2. Read Deuteronomy 8:3 together. Jesus quoted this verse directly when being tempted by the devil in Matthew 4. What does it tell us about Jesus that He responded to temptation with the exact words of Scripture? What does it tell us about how we should approach Scripture in our own moments of temptation or doubt?
3. The sermon pointed out that in Matthew 5:22, modern Bible translations remove the phrase "without a cause." Why is that phrase so significant? What is lost doctrinally when it is removed? Can you think of other examples where a single word or phrase carries major theological weight?
4. Read Psalm 138:2 together from the King James Bible. The sermon explained that God says that He has magnified His Word above His name. What does that mean to you personally? How does understanding that truth change the way you think about picking up your Bible each day?
5. The sermon used the example of Acts 7:45 and Hebrews 4:8, where the King James Bible uses the name "Jesus" in reference to Joshua. Rather than being an error, this word choice connects Joshua as a type and picture of Jesus Christ. How does this example illustrate the danger of assuming the King James Bible needs to be corrected rather than trusted and studied?
6. In Joel 2:28, the word "afterward" establishes that the events described follow the beginning of the day of the Lord, placing them in the tribulation period and beyond rather than the church age. How does one word settle an entire doctrinal debate? What does this teach us about how carefully we should read the text before drawing conclusions?
7. The sermon said, "The Bible does not just contain the words of God. The Bible is the Word of God." What is the difference between those two statements? Why does it matter which one we believe?

Personal Reflection

8. Honestly evaluate your current approach to Bible study. Do you tend to focus on the general message of a passage, or do you pay close attention to individual words and phrases? What would it look like practically to become more attentive to the specific words God chose?
9. Romans 4:21 describes Abraham as "fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was able also to perform." The sermon applied this kind of faith to our confidence in the preserved words of God. Are you fully persuaded? If not, what questions or doubts are holding you back, and how might you pursue answers?

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10. The sermon referenced 1 Thessalonians 2:13, where Paul thanked God that the believers received the preached Word not as the word of men but as the Word of God. When you sit under preaching or open your Bible personally, are you receiving it that way? What gets in the way, and what would help?
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Practical Applications

This Week, Choose One:

- **Memorize a key verse on the Word of God.** Start with Psalm 12:6-7 or Proverbs 30:5. Memorizing Scripture about Scripture builds your confidence in what God has given you and equips you to defend it.
 - **Study one word carefully.** Choose a passage you are already familiar with and look closely at one word or phrase you have never paid much attention to. Use a concordance to find other places that same word appears. Write down what you discover and bring it to share with the group next week.
 - **Evaluate what you are reading.** If you regularly use a modern Bible translation, take one passage and compare it side by side with the King James Bible. Look for differences in specific words or phrases. Ask yourself what is gained or lost in each rendering.
 - **Have a conversation.** Think of a family member, friend, or fellow believer who has been influenced by the idea that the Bible cannot be fully trusted or defended. Pray for an opportunity to share what you have learned from this study, and go into that conversation prepared with at least one or two specific scriptures.
 - **Read Psalm 119 this week.** As you read, mark every phrase that refers to the words, statutes, commandments, or law of God. Pay attention to the emotional language the psalmist uses. Let it shape your own affection for the Word.
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Closing Thought for the Group Leader

The goal of this discussion is not simply to inform group members about Bible translation issues. It is to cultivate a deep love for and confidence in the specific words God has given us. Press toward that goal in your conversation. If the discussion becomes primarily academic, redirect it toward the personal question: do we actually believe every word of this book, and does that belief show in how we live and study?

Close your time together in prayer, thanking God for the gift of His preserved Word and asking Him to give each member of the group a growing hunger for it.

5-Day Bible Reading and Devotional Guide

Every Word Matters: A Journey Through the Power of God's Word

Day 1: The Entrance of Light Reading: Psalm 119:105-130

Devotional: God's words are not merely ink on a page. They are light entering darkness. The psalmist understood that every word God spoke carried weight, direction, and life. When you open Scripture, you are not reading the thoughts of men refined over centuries. You are receiving the very words of the living God, chosen with precision and preserved with purpose. Ask yourself today whether you approach the Bible as a helpful suggestion or as the authoritative voice of your Creator. Receive it as truth. Let it illuminate your path, one word at a time.

Day 2: Man Shall Not Live by Bread Alone Reading: Deuteronomy 8:1-3; Matthew 4:1-11

Devotional: When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, our Lord did not reason with the enemy or debate philosophy. He quoted the written Word of God with precision and confidence. He said it is written, and that settled the matter. This is the pattern for every believer. The words of God hidden in your heart are not decorative. They are weapons. They are sustenance. Just as physical hunger reminds you that your body needs bread, spiritual hunger should drive you back to Scripture daily. Feed on it. Memorize it. Trust that every word proceeding from God's mouth is exactly what you need.

Day 3: More Desired Than Gold Reading: Psalm 19:7-11; Proverbs 30:5

Devotional: The law of the Lord is described as perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, and true. These are not casual descriptions. They are declarations about the character of God's Word as it reflects the character of God Himself. Proverbs 30:5 states that every single word of God is pure. Not most words. Not the important ones. Every word. When you sit with Scripture and slow down enough to ask why God chose a particular word or phrase, you begin to discover layers of meaning that reward patient, believing study. Treasure these words more than silver. They are worth far more than any earthly wealth.

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Day 4: Till Heaven and Earth Pass Reading: Matthew 5:17-18; Psalm 138:1-2

Devotional: Jesus declared that not the smallest letter (jot) or the smallest stroke (tittle) of a letter would pass from the law until all was fulfilled. This is a staggering claim. It means the precision of God's Word extends to details so small that most readers pass over them without a second thought. Yet God considers them worth preserving. Psalm 138:2 declares that God has magnified His Word above His name. Since the name of God represents everything He is, this tells us that without His Word, we could not know Him at all. Approach Scripture today with reverence for every detail it contains.

Day 5: Fully Persuaded Reading: Romans 4:18-21; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Isaiah 59:21

Devotional: Abraham's faith was counted as righteousness because he was fully persuaded that what God had promised, God was able to perform. This is the posture every believer must take toward the Word of God. God has promised to preserve His words to every generation. He cannot lie. His covenant in Isaiah 59:21 declares that His words will not depart from the mouths of His people or their descendants forever. Receive the Bible not as the word of men but as what it truly is, the Word of God, which works effectually in those who believe. Be fully persuaded. Trust every word.