

The Bible—Your Lifeline to Jesus

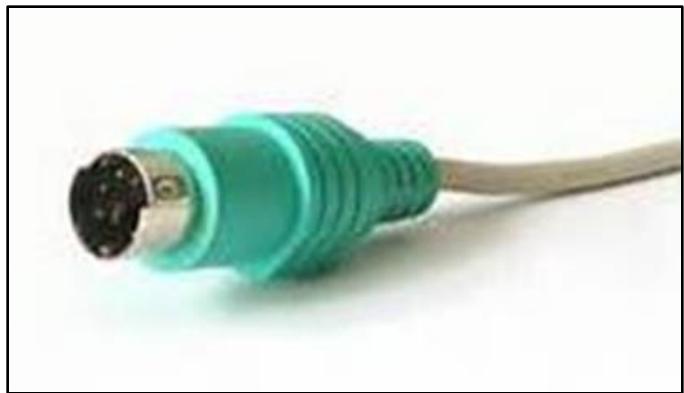
A New Life through Spiritual Birth

Think of the Bible as Jesus in written form. He is the Word—God’s eternal counsel—made flesh. The Bible is much more than a mere book. It is the living Word of God. Jesus spoke the words that brought all of creation into being. If His spoken Word can do that, think what His written Word can do for you, to bring you fully to life.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. John 1:1-4 ESV

Why You Need This Connector

The Bible isn’t an ordinary book. It is composed of 66 separate books written by 40 different authors over a period of 1500 years on three continents in three languages. Yet, it tells a consistent story about God’s ways with humanity and our ways with God. That’s amazing! Just as amazing is the manuscript trail: literally thousands of entire copies exist from very ancient times, all with near universal agreement of text. There is nothing else remotely close to this coming to us from antiquity. Truly, the Lord has “watched over His word” to preserve it as well as perform it. Yet, these amazing facts are only the beginning.



According to Peter the whole of scripture is “inspired by God” which means literally God-breathed. The Bible’s divine origins set it apart from any other book on the shelf. Jesus used words of scripture to silence the voice of temptation, He taught the Word and lived by the Word throughout His life and ministry; and in His greatest trial just before the cross He declared God’s Word to be truth, praying that we would be “sanctified” by God’s word, just as He had been. Being sanctified by the Word means God uses it to cleans us of spiritual darkness and lead us into the light.

That’s a pretty impressive case to make for reading and studying the Bible, but there is even more. Jesus Himself is declared to be [The Living Word](#) of God, the Word “made flesh.” The whole of scripture is about Him, according to His own teaching (this includes [Two True Testaments](#)). In some mysterious way the written Word (scripture) and the living Word (Jesus) are one. In fact the Bible itself is described as living and life-giving, just as Jesus described Himself as both truthful and the Truth.



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For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12 ESV

How It Works as a “Safety Net”

At the very least the Bible will give you a road map for things to avoid (sins) and for things to do ([The "Big Five" Connectors](#) for instance). Straying outside God's moral boundaries is certain to disconnect you from the One who drew the lines for us in the first place. Trespassing into sin always separates us from God—not from His love, but from our fellowship with Him, from His strong support, and from the confidence and clear conscience He desires to give us. Since that is not what the “new you” wants to do, you would be wise to get to know the lay of the land from God's perspective in order to stay on the right path. This is the first, most obvious, use of the Bible as a safety net.

The other, more powerful, use of scripture is for staying in communion and communication with God. Jesus is the true Source of everything that you need in order to live in peace, joy and God's right ways. The Bible, because it is the written Word, will work to help you stay in close touch with the living Word who is now your Savior and Lord. By His Spirit Jesus will teach you things through the scriptures that you need to know, and then help you believe and do them. He will also use the scriptures to speak to you for comfort, guidance, or correction—we need all three!

As you stay in the scriptures — reading, studying, mediating—the Bible will help keep you connected to Jesus, enjoying much closer fellowship than you ever could without His Word to bridge the gaps. In this way He can use scripture to help you stay “powered up” for doing the right thing and also speak through it to wake you up and steer you clear of wrong turns.

Problems to Avoid

The obvious problem to avoid is reading the scriptures too little less obvious is reading them too much. How can you get too much of a good thing? Spiritual knowledge which the Bible delivers in spades is not the same thing as [spiritual growth](#), which always proves itself out amidst the pressures of daily life. Just as children need both food and exercise in order to grow physically, so we ever-growing Christians need to feed on the word of God and then practice what we are learning, or our growth will be stunted.

The great thing in natural life is to keep up a steady and balanced approach to meals, eating from all the major food groups, while avoiding excessive snacking. Simply opening the Bible to any page or to only your favorite pages is “snacking” on scripture -- not a good strategy for a balanced diet! Find a way of reading the Bible that will take you through whole books and eventually take you through the whole of scripture. Pick a set time for your meal--most choose first thing in the morning. Then have a plan in mind. You could plan to read from cover to cover, for instance, but the “B4 Plan” is my personal favorite (short for 4 sections of Bible reading). The way this works is that you take four sticky tabs and put one in each of the four basic “food groups” of scripture:

1) Begin with a Bite-size Portion of Psalms or Proverbs

Go through these on a slow-paced loop. Psalms will teach you how to pray and praise, inspire you to love God and help you "jump start" your heart with devotion each morning. Proverbs will give you practical wisdom for the daily life. Begin at Psalm 1; when you reach the end of Proverbs 31, circle back around, using a sticky tab to keep track of your progress. This is your appetizer, meant to awaken your spiritual hunger to read more. So, a well-read, short portion of a Psalm or Proverbs chapter is preferable to cramming a lot in at one sitting.

2) Then, Read a Healthy Portion of One of the Gospels

These give us our vital images of Jesus. He is God's love in action. He is God's Word to us. He is our Example. Drink Him in. Begin with Matthew; when you get to the end of John, circle back around.

3) Next, Read a Portion from the Rest of the New Testament

These are letters directed to the churches--that includes us! We want to learn from those who knew Jesus the best. Start with any letter you have a hunger to read; read a paragraph or a whole chapter: when you finish that book, move on to another one.

4) Finally, Read a Portion from the Rest of the Old Testament

Clearly it will take more time to eventually finish all of the books that remain but let your interest--your spiritual hunger--guide you.

Remember to "say grace" before your spiritual meals: Ask God to open your heart and mind to His Word and to open His Word to your heart and mind. Seek to read from all four groups, but don't beat yourself up if you don't. The important thing is, on the one hand, to keep your spiritual hunger alive by not "force feeding" yourself according to someone else's schedule and, on the other, to keep chewing your way through a healthy, balanced diet of truth, skipping as few meals as possible.

Taste and see that the Lord is good! Psalm 34:8

Keep Growing!

Prayer We are promised that all who call on His Name will be saved. Prayer is calling on God for mercy, for help or for fellowship. He delights in listening—no request is too small. Learn to let your need drive you to Him every time: You cannot wear out the welcome mat and He has promised to always answer us. Prayer brings us through communication into communion.

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For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit-filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



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