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Psalm 119

"The Blessings and Benefits of the Bible - Part 1"

Pastor Gary Hamrick

This psalm is about God's Word, the Bible. Psalm 119 happens to be the longest psalm in the book of psalms (176 verses), and the longest chapter in the Bible. Not that we should judge the importance of a chapter in the Bible based on how many verses it contains, but there is something to be said for the longest chapter in the Bible being about the Bible! Perhaps we should pay attention to what God emphasizes concerning Scripture and learn about the many blessings and benefits of applying God's Word to our lives. In today's introduction to Psalm 119, Pastor Gary shares about the importance of the Bible, and how it is inspired, inerrant, and infallible. In a time when many churches, Christian colleges, universities, and seminaries, no longer hold to the authority of God's Word, let us capture a love for the Bible and hold it in high regard as the foundation for faith and practice.

Historical Background

1. There are 22 sections in this psalm, and each section corresponds to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
 - a. Each section has eight verses and each verse is written in alphabetic acrostic form, meaning that every verse of that section begins with the same letter.
 - b. The reason the psalm was written this way was to aid in memorization, and to help in the development of a deep appreciation for Scripture.
2. Psalm 119 includes eight different terms or synonyms to refer to Scripture, and only four verses - out of 176 - don't include one of these terms or synonyms:
 - a. Law(s) - 45
 - b. Statues - 23
 - c. Ways - 3

- d. Precepts - 21
 - e. Decrees - 22
 - f. Commands - 22
 - g. Word(s) - 30
 - h. Promise(s) - 13
3. When we read God's Word and apply it to our lives, we will receive the inherent blessings and benefits!

The Reliability And Relevance Of The Bible

4. There are any number of questions people ask about the Bible, including: How can we trust that this book is true? How was it compiled? Did men write it or did God write it? Does it contain errors?
5. **Isaiah 40:6-8** - *"All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever."*
6. The Bible is **the** handbook for life, and its truth applies to all aspects of life.
7. The Bible instructs us, encourages us, admonishes us, prepares us, equips us, and guides us.
8. The Bible is a love letter from God, which tells us about his love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness.
9. Pastor Gary said: "Let me tell you why we need to particularly understand the importance and significance of the Bible. [It's] because we are living in a time right now when - sad to say - many... denominations, Christian universities, colleges, and seminaries, and Christians in general, no longer hold to the authority of the Word of God. It is tragic but it is true."
- a. Pastor Gary shared several important pieces of research data which prove his point.¹
 - i. Only 34% of mainline Protestants and 26% of Catholics believe the Bible is totally accurate.
 - ii. America's Research Group interviewed 312 administrators and professors from 200 different colleges, and found that 98% believe in the inspiration of the Bible.²

¹ <https://www.barna.com/research/barna-studies-the-research-offers-a-year-in-review-perspective/>

² <https://answersingenesis.org/college/many-christian-colleges-receive-a-failing-grade/>

1. In the same survey, the belief in the inspiration of the Bible did not translate to the inerrancy of the Bible, because only 60% of the 312 believed the Genesis creation account of six 24-hour days.
 2. Only 58% of those interviewed believe the Flood was worldwide.
 3. And it's beyond incredible that 31% of the religion departments at these institutions teach evolution as fact.
- b. [2 Timothy 4:1-4](#) *"... I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage - with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths."*

The Bible Is Inspired

10. A good working definition of the inspiration of the Bible: God's revelation expressed through men who were vessels of his thoughts and intentions.
11. [2 Timothy 3:16](#) - *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness..."*
12. [2 Peter 1:21](#) - *"For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."*
13. Pastor Gary said: "Inspiration means that God so-directed the human writers of Scripture [using] their personalities, their cultural experiences, [and] their literary styles [in such a way that] his complete revelation for mankind was recorded."

The Bible Is Inerrant

14. A good working definition of the inerrancy of the Bible: Totally true; without contradiction or error in the original manuscripts.
15. The Bible is a remarkable book to say the least, especially when considering these facts:

- a. The Bible has 66 books (39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament).
 - b. The Bible was written by approximately 40 human authors.
 - c. The Bible was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic.
 - d. The Bible was written on three different continents: Asia, Africa, and Europe.
 - e. The Bible was written over approximately 1,600 years.
16. The remarkable thing about the Bible, when considering the aforementioned facts, is that it is thoroughly consistent, without contradiction, and centers on one central theme: God loves mankind and he has a redemptive plan through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
17. **Matthew 5:18** - *"I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."*
- a. The *"smallest letter,"* and *"the least stroke of a pen,"* refers to the Hebrew alphabet, and these marks, whether they are there or not, can change the entire meaning of a word!

The Bible Is Infallible

18. A good working definition of the infallibility of the Bible: Accurate, reliable, and trustworthy for all matters of faith and practice.
19. Pastor Gary said: "You can trust and rely on the truth of the Bible for your life. There is nothing about it that will ever lead you astray. Nothing about it will ever deceive you... God's promises are true and his Word will never pass away."
20. **Matthew 24:35** - *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."*
21. How were the 66 books of the Bible determined?
- a. There hasn't been much dispute about the 39 books of the Old Testament (Genesis to Malachi), because Jews understood that the ancient prophets were legitimate and God-sent.
 - b. Concerning the New Testament, early church fathers met to consider the writings that would be included: The Council of Hippo (393AD - City in North Africa) and the Council of Carthage (397AD - City in North Africa).
 - i. There were four criteria used when considering each letter/epistle: authorship, authority, accuracy, and acceptance.

- ii. Authorship: Was the author a known and recognized prophet or apostle? Was the author someone who was substantiated by the spiritual community? If not, was he endorsed by a prophet or apostle, like Luke, whom Paul endorsed.
 - iii. Authority: Did the writing come with authority in it? Did the author speak on behalf of God?
 - iv. Accuracy: Did the writing contain accurate doctrine and orthodox teaching? Did the writing contain accurate details concerning people, events, and locations?
 - v. Acceptance: Was the writing widely accepted by the Church at large? Was it circulated and read? Did the early Church fathers quote from the writing?
- c. There are 14 additional books (known as The Apocrypha) in the Catholic Bible that aren't included in the King James Bible and succeeding translations, because the council determined that although they might have been historical, they weren't reliable, and therefore, they did not pass the four criteria.
- i. The Council of Trent determined that these writings were to be included in the Catholic Bible.
 - ii. Jesus did not quote from these writings, nor did the prophets and apostles.
 - iii. These writings have many inaccuracies, especially related to geographical locations.

The Blessings And Benefits Of Reading The Bible

22. [Psalm 119:105](#) - *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."*
23. [Jeremiah 15:16](#) - *"When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight..."*
24. [Jeremiah 23:29](#) - *" 'Is not my word like fire,' declares the LORD, 'and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?' "*
25. [1 Peter 2:2](#) - *"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk [God's Word], so that by it you may grow up in your salvation."*

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).