Why We Should Read the Bible in 2026

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. You can turn to Psalm 19 and this morning I want us to look at why we should read the Bible in 2026.

Here we are at the beginning of a brand new year and wanted to direct our attention specifically to verses 7 through 14.
And I'm going to group this into really three headings that will hopefully provide clarity on why we should read the Bible.
The beauty of books, as John Piper said once, is that you can read a book and maybe it's one chapter that arrests your attention.
It grabs hold of you. That becomes a lifelong companion. Maybe it's not even a chapter, maybe it is a paragraph.
[1:11] One paragraph that you read and you think, oh my goodness, this is earth-shaking. And maybe it's a sentence.

Or perhaps it could even be a word. One such book for me was Knowing Scripture by R.C. Sproul. Love that book. But specifically in the foreword by J.I. Packer, he says these words that I know I've shared before, but they truly impacted me.
Packer said, If I were the devil, I would do whatever possible to keep people out of the word of God. I would distract them. I would discourage them. I would lead them to doubt the word of God.
[2:14] And I would use all of that to press in on them, causing them to stray or to neglect the reading and studying of the word of God.

It's never left me. Thought about that quite often through the years. And perhaps if even you've experienced this yourself, where you've been challenged to spend more time in the word of God and to read the word of God.
And then opposition comes. And in fact, that would be a challenge I would issue to you at the beginning of 2026 to make a commitment to be in the word of God.
To have a plan for reading and studying and praying the word of God. Not devotionals. Devotionals are good. It can be helpful, but they're no substitute for the word of God.
But if you make the commitment to study the word of God, you watch and see what happens. I'm not a prophet nor the son of a prophet.
[3:28] Just years of experience that opposition will come. Distractions, discouragement, doubt. All press in, keeping us from time in the word of God.

Well, here in Psalm 19, I believe the psalmist lays out in the beginning of this incredible psalm, that which could be called general revelation.
It is God revealing himself through his creation. You see it, look with me, in verse 1. The heavens declare the glory of God.
And the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech. And night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech. Nor are there words whose voice is not heard.
Their voice goes out through all the earth. And their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun. Which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber.
[4:38] And like a strong man runs its course with joy. Its rising is from the end of the heavens. And its circuit to the end of them. And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

The heavens declare the glory of the Lord. His creation speaks of his great power. In his great majesty. And truly, when you refer to intelligent design, we see that there is a designer who has created all things.

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And all one has to do is approach the creation with humility. And understand that there is a God who has created all that we see.
All that we perceive. All that we experience. But then he moves on here. In fact, he references in the Hebrew, in verses 1 through 6, God's name as El in Hebrew for power.
It's tied in with creation. You think of God's power in his creation. But then he does something here where he pivots in verse 7.
[5:57] The law of the Lord. Perhaps in your Bible, if you're reading the ESV, it's in all caps. L-O-R-D. That is Yahweh.

The personal, relational, covenant name of God. The law of Yahweh is perfect. Reviving the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The rules of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. Just looking under our first heading here in verses 7 through 9, we see affirmations of the Word of God.
Affirmations of the Word of God. Or, as some like to refer to it in keeping the alliteration going, it could be dubbed the attributes of the Word of God.
[7:05] Affirmations or attributes of the Word. It's interesting as he walks through these verses that you see a description, and then it's followed by an effect.

And you see, really, six of these in the following verses, which I believe will lead us to part of our answer of why we should read the Bible in 2026.
Well, let's look at these six. Number one, you see the law of the Lord, or the law of Yahweh, this speaking to God's instruction.
It would be a comprehensive term as used in Psalm 1. I love what one man said. It's not only prescriptive and disciplinary, but it's also promissory in its character.
It carries with it the promises of God, the faithfulness of God. His law is His instruction. He has not left us on our own, groping about in the darkness, trying to figure out how to live in this world, in this life, for His glory in a way that pleases Him.
[8:23] He's given us His law. And what is it about this law that the psalmist says? It is perfect or blameless.

This law has perfect integrity. It's free from all corruption, perfectly filled with all good, perfectly fitted for the end in which it was designed.
The law is coherent and unblemished. It is truly perfect. Why do we read the Word of God?
Why do we read the Bible in 2026? Because the Bible is the Word of God, and the Bible is perfect, having perfect integrity.
It's free from all corruption. And then look at the effect that it has. The effect that it has is that it is converting of the soul, or reviving the soul.
[9:30] It carries with it the idea to be called to repentance, or to be called to conversion, to be called to salvation. The law of the Lord is perfect.

It revives the soul. 2 Timothy 3.17. Another reminder that we get of the purpose of the Word of God. This perfect Word shows us our desperate need of Him and for Him to save us. It causes us to return to Yahweh.
So, we read the Word of God because the Word of God is perfect, and its effect is that it revives the soul. But then, number two, you see the testimony.
The testimony of Yahweh, or the testimony of the Lord, is a witness to the faithfulness of Yahweh, the faithfulness of our God.
[10:31] And that which is declared by David here, the testimony of the Lord, is sure. It's incontestably and inviolably sure.

We may rely upon it. We can be confident. It will never deceive us. It is a solid foundation.
If we were to look back in Psalm 18, we see the reference to the Lord is our rock. He can be trusted. He is firm, secure, sure.
And look at the effect. Making wise the simple. Scripture often refers to us as being those who are simple, or as the wisdom literature points out, those who don't know Christ as Savior and Lord are referred to as fools.
Referencing not just a lack of intellectual sense, but referencing a lack of moral accountability, a lack of living for the glory of God.

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[11:46] And hear the testimony that is sure will lead, making wise the simple, will lead the simple toward wisdom.

Again, 2 Timothy 3.15, the Scriptures were given, making us wise unto salvation, leading us to Christ, pointing us to Christ.
Testimony, the faithfulness of our Lord is sure, and it makes us wise unto salvation. But then he moves on, number three, into the precepts, precepts of Yahweh, that which has been given by an authority.
One man put it, it's given as a governor would give and put forth laws in the land.
It's appointed by the giver of the precept. So the precepts are charged with authority. We could say capital A, authority.
[12:56] God is the one who has established his word, and his word is authoritative. And the precepts of the Lord are what? Right.

You see it right there in verse 8. The precepts of the Lord are right. Means they are straight rather than crooked.
They are enacted by his authority and binding on all, agreeing with all the eternal rules and principles of good and evil as established by God.
And the effect of this, that which is right, that which is straight, that which is not crooked, is that it leads to a rejoicing the heart.
Rejoicing the heart. It carries with it the idea that one would be brought to the state of joy. And as Warren Wearsby coined so many years ago, another word I've never forgotten, that we're reminded that happiness differs from joy because happiness depends on happenings or circumstances around us, whereas joy depends on Jesus.
[14:19] Regardless of the circumstances, regardless of our happenings, there can be deep and abiding joy because of Jesus and because of knowing Him.

And so the precepts, that which is charged with authority, are right, they're straight, not crooked, and they lead to a true joy of the heart.
But then fourthly, we see the commandment of Yahweh, the commandment, just as we would translate that in the English, it's rules given by God.
He has established rule and order. He is a God of order and a God of rules, not to be a cosmic killjoy, but because it's for our good.
It's to keep us from danger. It's to keep us from destruction. It's to keep us from death. His rules have been established, and they are, look at the effect here, or look what he compares to, the commandment is pure, like the radiance of the sun.
[15:31] It is without darkness. It is clear. It is without dross or defilement. It is pure. And the effect that it leads to is it enlightens the eyes.

It brings sight to our eyes. It causes us to go from blindness to dark, from blindness and darkness into the light and being able to see.
All of this wrapped up in just the affirmation of the Word of God. Why should we read the Word of God? Well, here you have it just listed out over and over again.
The law of the Lord is perfect, and then it revives the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure. It makes wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.
But we find two more in verse 9. The fear of the Lord. It's interesting here that he transitions somewhat in that he doesn't reference the law or commandment or precepts or testimonies, but he simply draws out an effect of the Word of God, and that is the fear of the Lord, which Proverbs reminds us of, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
[16:59] And there were people who had no fear of God before their eyes, and so they sinned before him. They rebelled against him, Romans chapter 1 reminds us of. But the fear of the Lord is clean, that which is not defiled, not dirty, and it endures forever.

The fear of the Lord and the effect that comes from it is that it is cleansing, and then that it endures forever. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of the Lord stands forever.
So you have fear of the Lord being clean, but then number six, the rules of the Lord are true. The rules of the Lord, or the decrees of Yahweh, are true, grounded upon that which is most sacred and unquestionable.

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It's grounded upon truth. We would say objective truth, and it's righteous altogether. So why do we read the Word of God?
For all of these reasons, all of the affirmations, and the effects that it has upon us. That as we read the Word of God, as we study the Word of God, as we meditate on the Word of God, we're reminded that the Word of God is living and active, and it is accomplishing that which God intended for it to accomplish.
[18:35] So it will bring about desired effects, like what we read here in verses 7 through 9.

Reviving the soul, making wise the simple, rejoicing the heart, enlightening the eyes, cleansing us, and then reminding us of truth and that which is righteous altogether.
So you have the affirmation of the Word of God. But number two, let's look at verses 10 and 11, at the approach to the Word of God.
The approach to the Word of God. He mentions here in verse 10, more to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.
Moreover, by them is your servant warned. In keeping them, there is great reward. So the approach to the Word of God coming out of the affirmations is we are to desire the Word of God even more than gold.
[19:58] And obviously, gold carries with it tremendous value and worth. That which is incredibly valuable, incredibly costly, we are to desire the Word of God even more than gold, even much fine gold, leading us to an approach that should be all-consuming, should be an all-consuming passion.

It should be an all-consuming priority. If you desire gold, if you desire treasure, if you desire riches, you are to have this much more for the Word of God because it is of far more value than even much fine gold.
So our approach to the Word of God is to be one that is driven by an all-consuming passion and an all-consuming priority that we will be in the Word of God.
But not only that, he mentions here not only the value that we see, but he mentions the sweetness. And the sweetness is found in that it's sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. This carries with it the idea of that which is sweet to the taste, or as one man says, he addresses the taste buds of our hearts. That which is sweet, that which brings pleasure, that which satisfies.
[21:48] Our approach to the Word of God is not only one of priority, but it's one of to draw sweetness, to draw nectar, to draw from the Word of God that which he alone can satisfy us with.

But then number three, our approach is one of warning. Verse 11, Moreover, by them is your servant warned.
In keeping them there is great reward. It's interesting here when we think about one of the benefits of the Word of God that even in the book of Romans, Paul mentions that these things were written to you in the past for your instruction and for your faith, for you to be built up in the faith and to warn you and to direct you and to guide you.
See, the Word of God is also that which carries with it warnings and then also promises great reward. See it right there in verse 11.
So our approach to it is that we would understand I can learn from the Word of God as a warning into my life but then also there will be great reward from spending time in the Word of God.
[23:11] So our approach to the Word of God is seen in these three ways. That it's to be more desired than that of much fine gold.

That we are to desire it because it's sweeter than the drippings of the honeycomb and in them we will find great warning and reward. But then number three, closing out this psalm, we see the application of the Word of God in verses 12 to 14.
The application of the Word of God. You see it here. Verse 12, Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression.
And then this great prayer. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight.
[24:26] O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. The application of the Word of God, we see it here from looking at the Lord, looking at the psalmist saying, who can discern his errors?

Declare me innocent from hidden faults. The application of the Word of God is, Lord, would you keep me from hidden faults, that which I don't see, blind areas, perhaps areas that others around us see, but we don't see it.

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Our hearts are desperately wicked. Who can know it? It's deceiving even of ourselves. And the psalmist here says, declare me innocent from hidden faults.
Perhaps we aren't even aware of these things in our lives, and yet the Word of God is penetrating. It is like a massive floodlight that is shining upon that which we're inspecting.
It says, declare me innocent from hidden faults, but then he moves on, keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins, that which would be deliberate, that which carries with it the idea of being filled with pride.
[25:49] It's what Scripture in the Old Testament would call high-handed sins, that we know what God has said and we're going to do the opposite of it and we're going to rebel against Him anyways.

The application of the Word of God is David declares here, Lord, keep me from hidden faults and keep me from presumptuous sins.
Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression. You see, as we are spending time in the Word of God and we're asking the Lord to apply it directly to our lives, He will reveal hidden sin, hidden faults will be revealed.
It could be through your time reading in the Word. It could be through others in small group Bible study or Sunday school class or even sitting under the authoritative Word as it is preached.
But He will reveal that which may be hidden from our sight. But not only that, He keeps us when we understand that to commit a presumptuous sin is an egregious act before a holy God.
[27:08] And David says, keep back your servant also and let them not have dominion over me. But then verse 14, David concludes this psalm in prayer.

And if you know your Bible, perhaps you're reminded of what Jesus said in Luke chapter 6, verse 45.
So the good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good. And the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil.
for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. Here David says, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight.
Oh Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Church, could I submit to you that this would be a phenomenal verse to not only memorize but to pray each and every day as you open the word of God.
[28:34] That you would pray, Lord, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight because you, O Lord, are my rock and my redeemer.

That which we are reading, that which we are studying, that which we are meditating on is to reside, to dwell, to take up residence deep within our hearts.
And when that happens, when our heart is transformed, when our heart is changed, when our heart is full of the word of God, then our words are acceptable before him.
It was said of one Puritan, if you prick him, he bleeds Bible.
Oh, that that would be said of us. That in 2026, what would be said of you as an individual, what would be said of us as the body of Christ, is that we are people who are in the word of God.
[29:57] And the word of God flows out of us. And we not only live the word of God, but we speak the word of God as well.

As the psalmist said in Psalm 119, open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things from thy law. Another great prayer each and every time you sit down and read the word of God.
Now, the application of the word of God, and Joey touched on it in his prayer, is not that we would become better students of the Bible.
It's not the application. We want to become better students, but that's not the goal. Not that we can get more knowledgeable just for knowledge sake.
Not that we can feel good about ourselves, that we can check a little box. the purpose is to know God, to know Yahweh.
[31:10] And even better, that Yahweh would know you. And how do you know the Lord?

How do you know Yahweh? Yahweh? Well, it comes by grace, through faith, in Jesus Christ. What we read in John chapter 6, where else can we go?
Lord, you're the one who has the words of life. He is the word made flesh, and the word dwelt among us. And so, we encounter the word of God that leads us to knowing the God of the word that comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

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And so, folks, hear me when I say this this morning. If you don't know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, don't just start reading the Bible just because you heard it in a sermon and of all the good effects that come from reading the word of God and knowing the word of God.
You come to Jesus. You come to Jesus by grace through faith in Him to save you from your sin so that then when you read the word of God, the word of God is truly that which is living and active and not only in an objective sense but in a deep and personal way because you know the God of the word through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.
[32:55] I love what one commentator mentioned when looking at Psalm 19. He said in Psalm 19 we can see the Son, capital S-O-N.

we see the Son of God in all of His radiance, in all of His glory. We see it in that He was the one who was there in the very beginning when all things were created.
created. You see it through the creation. You see it through the way He moved on this earth with His rule and His authority over creation because creation is just His creation.
But then you see it in special or specific revelation in the word of God. Look with me again in verse 7.
And as I read through this I want you to think about the Son of God, Jesus. How He possesses all of these attributes, all of these affirmations can be made about Him.
[34:21] The law of the Lord is perfect. Jesus is perfect. He revives the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure.

Jesus is sure. He makes wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right. Jesus is right. He brings joy that flows from the heart.
The commandment of the Lord is pure. Jesus is pure and He is the one who enlightens the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.
The rules of the Lord are true and righteous all together. So, Jesus is clean and pure and righteous all together. and then we could continue.
Our approach is to be that we would desire more than gold, even fine gold and sweeter than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.
[35:31] So, we find that in Jesus. Verse 11, by them your servant is warned. We see Jesus warning over and over again and in keeping them, there is great reward.

And then who can discern his errors declaring me innocent from hidden, declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me.
Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression. That's what Jesus brings. He takes you that which is impure and makes you pure. That which is full of blame!
and makes you blameless makes you innocent of great transgression because of his imputed righteousness. And then we pray let the words of our mouths and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in your sight oh Lord my rock and my redeemer.
God and so why should we read the word of God in 2026 and my contention would be if the Lord tarries in 2027 2028 2029 daily in the word of God because the word of God leads us to the son of God leads us to Jesus who has the words of life and in all of these affirmations and attributes that we've looked at and in our approach to the word of God and our desire and our all consuming passion it will ultimately lead to being a doer of the word and not merely a hearer only by applying the word of God to our lives old preacher one time held up a
[37:44] Bible it was ripped tattered written in torn pages highlighted binding was loose and he held it up and he said if your Bible looks like this more than likely your life does not look like this see as we're in the word of God as we study the word of God and as we pray the word of God and as we meditate on the word of God doesn't mean that life is free from problems or suffering or pain but in them God is doing a work within our hearts transforming us changing us reviving us doing a work in shaping us and molding us into the image of the

Lord Jesus Christ so may it be said of us that we are not only people of the book but we are people in the book in 20 26 let's pray together our father we do pause and once again ask you to apply your word directly to our lives we don't want to just be students of your word or observers or have a casual acquaintance with your word but we want to be people who are profoundly changed by your word because in your word we encounter the living word the Lord Jesus Christ and so our prayer is that this year we would understand all of the affirmations of the word of

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God leading us to an approach to the word that would be an all consuming passion carrying with it making it a priority and then that we would be ready to be doers applying your word directly to our lives this we ask this we pray in Jesus name and all God's people said amen amen

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