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SERMON OUTLINE FOR PASTORS

THE VALUE OF THE BIBLE

Why Scripture Is Inspired, Trustworthy and Powerful

> The Bible is inspired, trustworthy and powerful, and breakthrough is built on the back of revelation, so nothing gives you more access to what God wants to do in your life than being engaged in the Bible.

MAIN TEXT
2 Timothy 3:14-17

FIRST PREACHED
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SERIES
We're Rooted in the Bible, Week 1 of 6

BY
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AT A GLANCE

THE MESSAGE

1. Being engaged in the Bible has a definable standard: reading at least four days a week, reading through the whole Bible at least every 18 months, and repeating the cycle
2. The Bible is valuable because it is inspired: God breathed, verbal plenary inspiration, every word from God, and therefore the final authority
3. The Bible is valuable because it is trustworthy: reliable in its manuscript transmission and demonstrable in the results it produces in people's lives
4. The Bible is valuable because it is powerful: it is a living sword, and the handle you grab it by is the sum of God's word, the whole counsel of God, not isolated verses
5. Breakthrough is built on the back of revelation, and nothing gives a person more control of their personal flow of revelation than being engaged in the Bible



WATCH IT PREACHED

youtu.be/eLUYVcqykec



READ THE ARTICLE

jasonmayfield.com/messages/the-value-of-the-bible

PREACHING NOTES

Before You Preach

This message opens a six-week series on the value "We're rooted in the Bible." It lays the foundation for the whole series, so it is more about why the Bible matters than how to read it. Say so at the end: there is no reading plan this week. The series builds toward that.

Start with the confession. It sets the tone for the next six weeks: no condemnation for anyone who is not reading the Bible yet, and no excuse to stay there. If your own story is different, find the honest version of it; the point is that a person can be saved, serve, and see God move, and still not be in the Word.

Three cautions. First, two statistics in this message (the Center for Bible Engagement finding and the Human Flourishing Index figure) should be checked against their sources before you preach them. Second, the "less than 2%" figure is an estimate drawn from the standard below, not a published study; present it that way. Third, the translation section names the New World Translation, the Book of Mormon and the Passion Translation as Bibles to avoid. Say it plainly and without mockery.

Introduction

> **2 TIMOTHY 3:14-17** ESV
>
> [14] But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. [16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Today we begin a six-week series called **We're Rooted in the Bible**. We have been working through the values of our church: we are building everything on Jesus, and we are relentlessly driven by the mission. Today we start a new one: we are rooted in the Bible.

A CONFESSION

- **1997:** born again in the fall.
- **2004:** in full-time ministry right out of high school, traveling with an evangelist and serving in a church.
- **2006:** credentialed with the Assemblies of God.
- Served in churches ranging from about 120 people to more than 3,000.

But I did not start reading the Bible until **April 14, 2011**. For nearly 14 years as a Christian, seven years in ministry and five years as a credential holder, I had no personal interaction with the Scripture of any substance. I carried a Bible around. I was with the Bible, but the Bible wasn't with me. We saw hundreds of people saved and saw the glory of God move, and I still was not in the Word.

Since then, I have read the Bible through a little over 30 times, and the last 14 years have been dramatically different from the first 14. The Scripture has changed my life.

I tell you this so condemnation has no foothold. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

If you are not currently a Bible reader: no condemnation, but also no excuse. If you want to go to the next level in your life, you not only have to know better, you have to do better.

Because I know the power of the Word, I want everyone in our church engaged with the Bible. It is something every one of us has access to.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE ENGAGED IN THE BIBLE

I want to define my terms, because "you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). Here is the standard:

- **Read the Bible at least four days a week.** Four beats three: cross four and you have won the week. The Center for Bible Engagement found that people who read the Bible one, two or three days a week showed virtually no difference in spiritual growth or quality of life from people who did not read it at all. At four days a week, the results took off, and going from four to seven days showed little further change.
- **Read through the whole Bible at least every 18 months.** That is roughly nine minutes a day. The verse of the day will not get you through. When the doctor says "stage four," the verse of the day doesn't cut it.
- **Repeat.** When you finish, start again.

By that standard, my estimate is that fewer than 2% of American Christians are engaged with the Bible. If that is not you yet, you are not alone.

This morning I want to talk to you about **the value of the Bible.**

1. The Bible Is Inspired

We began in 2 Timothy 3, where Paul says, "All Scripture is breathed out by God" (2 Timothy 3:16). Some Bibles say "given by inspiration." The Greek word is *theopneustos*: *theos*, God, and *pneō*, to breathe. It is God breathed.

That root shows up in the words for breath, wind and spirit. On the day of Pentecost "there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind" (Acts 2:2), and "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts

2:4). The Holy Spirit came on men, and they wrote the Scripture.

God is the author. Men were His quill. He used real people in real settings, which is why context matters. The Bible did not fall out of the sky on a scroll. But every word comes from God.

FOUR TIMES GOD BREATHES

- He breathes, and He gets man: "the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7).
- He breathes, and He initiates the church: Jesus "breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:22).
- He breathes, and He gives us a Bible (2 Timothy 3:16).
- He has yet to breathe the fourth time. When He does, Jesus returns: "the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth" (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

When God breathes, it is powerful. **You are one of the breaths. You belong to the second breath. And you can hold in your hand the third breath.**

VERBAL PLENARY INSPIRATION

As a church and as a person, I believe in verbal plenary inspiration: every word of Scripture is inspired by God. Not just the thoughts, not just the concepts, not just the big ideas you like. Every word.

And because the Scripture is from God, it has the final authority on everything. The Bible says it. I believe it. That settles it.

2. The Bible Is Trustworthy

> **2 PETER 1:17-20** ESV
>
> [17] For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," [18] we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. [19] And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, [20] knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.

Men were involved in writing Scripture, but that does not compromise its trustworthiness. I could give you three theological words:

- **Inerrant:** it is without error.
- **Infallible:** it does not fail. God will do what He said He would do.
- **Immutable:** it does not change. The Word was the Word yesterday, it is the Word today, and it will be the Word tomorrow.

Instead, here are two practical reasons you can trust it.

FIRST, IT IS RELIABLE

People say men have changed the Bible over the years. But we have roughly 25,000 manuscripts and early copies of the New Testament to compare, some as early as the second century. This is not a small sample. The copies agree at about 99.5%, and the small variance that exists does not change any major teaching. Most of it is spelling and copying slips. Scholars can compare the copies and see what the text says.

SECOND, WE SEE THE RESULTS

I could tell you what the Bible says it will produce, and I could tell you testimonies. But consider the research. In 2017, researchers at Harvard developed a measure of human flourishing. It looks at five areas:

- happiness and life satisfaction,
- mental and physical health,
- meaning and purpose,
- character and virtue,
- close social relationships.

The goal was not to study Bible reading. It was one of the activities measured. People who regularly read the Bible scored 19% higher on the index than those who do not. The Word works.

CHOOSING A TRANSLATION

If we are going to read the Bible, we want to read a good one. Most translations are good enough to get the job done, but you need to know a few things.

The Bible was not written in English. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the New Testament in Greek, with a little Aramaic sprinkled in to keep things spicy.

There are two translation philosophies:

- **Formal equivalence**, more word for word. A strictly word-for-word translation reads like gibberish, the way Spanish does when you translate it word for word, but these stay close to the words. The New American Standard Bible is probably the most literal. The English Standard Version is an incredible translation. The New King James Version updates the King James. The King James is a good translation, but if you are not a Bible reader yet, you have to translate it twice, through the English of 1611 and then into your own.
- **Middle of the road:** the New International Version and the Christian Standard Bible.
- **Dynamic equivalence**, thought for thought: the New Living Translation. It is a great translation, especially if reading is hard for you, but the further you go this direction, the less you can dig into a

single word.

Some to handle with care, and some to avoid:

- **The Message** is one man's paraphrase. It is insightful, but it is not inspired. Read it alongside a Bible, not instead of one.
- **The New World Translation** is the Jehovah's Witness Bible. It changes the text in ways that change the meaning. Do not use it. The Book of Mormon is not a Bible at all. Both are filled with lies.
- **The Passion Translation** lacks integrity of translation. Our major translations are made by large committees with a great deal of accountability. This one was made by one man who said the Holy Spirit gave him a new way to translate. Stay away from it.

3. The Bible Is Powerful

> **HEBREWS 4:12** ESV
>
> [12] 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.

The Bible is a sharp sword, and every sword needs a handle. Grab a sword by the blade and you get cut. Grab it by the handle and it protects you and keeps you in control of the battle.

Here is the handle:

> **PSALM 119:160** ESV
>
> [160] The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.

The sum is what you get when you add it all up. **The handle of the Bible is the cover.** Get a handle on the whole Word, and you have it all.

Some people are defeated and do not know why. They keep saying, "Well, the Bible says." But what else does it say? They quote 1 John 4:4: "The Bible says greater is he that is in me." Not when you willfully keep doing what you know is wrong. They quote Isaiah 54:17: "The Bible says no weapon formed against me." Not when you keep grabbing it by the blade.

The Bible is true in its context. It is true in its cultural context, but even more in the context of itself. The Bible interprets the Bible. Martin Luther put it this way: "Scripture is its own light. The best and surest interpreter of Scripture is Scripture itself."

People who act goofy with the Bible only have enough Bible to act goofy with. Get the sum of His Word, and the truth will set you free.

> **ACTS 20:27** ESV
>
> [27] for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

You can get a lot from a Sunday sermon, from the verse of the day, or from a calendar with Bible verses on it. But the power is in **the whole counsel of God.**

Conclusion: Breakthrough Is Built on the Back of Revelation

Last year in prayer, I received a word from the Lord: **breakthrough is built on the back of revelation.** Look through Scripture, and whenever God does something, there is usually a word attached to it: a prophetic word, a command, an act of obedience.

Nothing gives you more control over the flow of revelation in your life than being engaged in the Bible. It is the easiest way to open the fountain. I heard a preacher say that everything in this book is within the realm of possibility for those who will seek His face.

- King Josiah reformed Judah by revelation (2 Kings 22:8-13).
- Jesus was born by revelation, announced by an angel (Luke 1:26-33).
- Creation was brought about by revelation: "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Genesis 1:3).
- Elijah was saved by it (1 Kings 19:5-8).
- Jeremiah was affirmed by it (Jeremiah 1:5-9).
- Daniel prospered by it (Daniel 2:19-23).

Have the congregation say it with you: **breakthrough is built on the back of revelation.**

Normally this is where I would put up a QR code for a reading plan and tell you to start today. I am not going to do that. Over the next few weeks we will unpack things that will set you up for success going into the new year, so you can start 2026 with a relationship with Scripture you may not have now.

If you already read the Bible faithfully and feel you did not get much today, hang with me. This series will build over the next five weeks. Next week: the first of four levels of hearing from God.

The Bible is inspired. It is trustworthy. It is powerful. If you receive that this morning, give the Lord a praise.



ABOUT

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Pastor Jason Mayfield is the Senior Pastor of Citylight Church in Saraland, Alabama, an author, and the creator of POWER 27. He has given more than 20 years to the local church and helps pastors and ministry leaders lead BIG.

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