

# HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE BIBLE

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## STUDY TWO: RECOGNIZE THE RELEVANCE OF THE BIBLE

### A. THE BIBLE IS RELEVANT FOR MY LIFE BECAUSE GOD IS WHO HE IS

The Bible is God's Word. Because it is God's Word it possesses the same characteristics as God himself. Our words contain and express the reality of our natures. God's word contains and expresses his nature. We will look now at who God is, and we will see that his very nature gives a relevance to his Word that transcends all human barriers and divisions, and speaks to every one of us at every particular point in our journey.

#### A.1 God is eternal

This means that he exists outside the boundaries of time. He is not limited by time, nor is he limited to a specific time. To him all time is present at all times. To him the 'past' and the 'future' exist as a forever or eternal now. He simply 'is'. And he is the one God for all times.

**Task 1: Look up, discuss and write out these references:**

Exodus 3:14

Psalm 90:2

John 8:58

Revelation 1:8

*For further study:* Read Genesis 21:33; Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalm 93:2; Isaiah 9:6; 40:28; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 9:14; Revelation 1:17-18.

Because God is eternal, outside of time, unbound by time, his Word is also eternal. Although it was recorded in specific time periods of our human history within time and space, its message transcends the barriers and divisions of the time in which it is set. It has eternal relevance because it is a timeless message. It communicates the mind, the will, the purpose, the character of God to all men in all times. It is never irrelevant.

Thus the Bible affirms:

- 'Your word, O LORD, is eternal;
- it stands firm in the heavens.' [Psalm 119:89]
- 'All your words are true;
- all your righteous laws are eternal.' [Psalm 119:160]
- 'The grass withers and the flowers fall,
- but the word of our God stands forever.' [Isaiah 40:8]
- 'For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God' [1 Peter 1:23]

No matter what era we live in God's Word is relevant.

#### A.2 God is omnipresent [that is, present everywhere]

Just as God is not bound or limited by time, so he is not bound or limited by physical space. He is present everywhere at the same time. He is the one God for all places. [This is *not* to infer that the 'gods' of a certain geographical area are all this one God disguised under different names. Rather it is to say that in all places it is this God alone who is to be honoured as God.] Even where he is not known he is present; even where substitute gods are honoured, that honour and those gods are not valid, for the God of the Bible claims to be the one and only true God. One God for the whole earth, present in every place on the earth and beyond the earth.

**Task 2: Read these passages and make a list of what they teach about the *omnipresence* of God.**

Genesis 28:15-16

Joshua 1:5

Psalm 139:7-10

Matthew 28:20b

Hebrews 13:5b

The God of the Bible is not a local God, limited in power, authority and operation to a local area. He is the God of all the earth. This omnipresence of God gives worldwide relevance to his word and worldwide authority to his word. His Word is the one Word for all people: the one truth for all people. Thus when Jesus came he claimed to be 'the light *of the world*' [John 8:12; 12:46] and 'the truth' without which *no one* can come to God [John 14:6]. Jesus knew nothing of one truth that is relevant for one people and another truth that is relevant for another people. He certainly knew nothing of the current relativistic mindset which individualizes and personalizes truth.

Both the Old and New Testaments issue the mandate that the message of this One God for all men is to be taken to all men:

**Task 3: What do these references teach about the worldwide relevance of the Word of God:**

Psalm 48:10

Psalm 65:5

Isaiah 24:14-16

Isaiah 42:3-6

Isaiah 42:10-12

Isaiah 45:20-24

Isaiah 52:10

Jeremiah 16:19-21

Matthew 28:19-20

Acts 13:47

Revelation 5:9

Revelation 14:6

### **A.3 God is omniscient, that is God knows everything**

The Bible describes God as one who hears, listens, watches, sees, observes and knows. Because God knows everything his Word speaks with relevance to every aspect of human life. There is nothing in me, in my life, in my situation, in my past, in my future, that God does not know and understand, and to which his Word has nothing to say. Obviously, his Word does not contain all knowledge, but it is spoken by him who knows everything ... therefore what it says is valid, accurate and comprehensive.

**Task 4: Read Psalm 139 and Jeremiah 1:4. Discuss what they teach about God's knowledge. List what you discover in the box following. If this is how much God knows us, what should our attitude to his Word be?**

### **A.4 God is omnipotent, that it God is all-powerful.**

His power is greater than any other power; it is so great that there is no other power it can be compared to. There is no power that can threaten him. His Word pulsates with his power, and is characterized by his power.

**Task 5: Consider these Scriptures, discuss their impact on your attitude to the Bible.**

Exodus 15:1-18

Job 38:1-18

Psalms 115:3

Isaiah 40:12-31

Ephesians 6:17b

Hebrews 4:12,13

### **A.5 God is the only God.**

**As we have already seen in Study One, if there is only one true God, there can be only one true Word of God.** If the One who claims to be the only true God also claims to have spoken, then his Word is the only valid source of true truth, that is absolute and ultimate, non-relative, non-changing. If there is only one God in authority over all, then only *his* Word has relevance to all. There is no other Word from some other absolute source, because there is no other absolute source.

#### **Task 6: Check out these Scriptures:**

Isaiah 43:10-13

Isaiah 44:6,8

Isaiah 45:5,6

### **A.6 God is our Creator.**

Because he is our Creator he knows what we were created for and how we are to live to our maximum potential. His Word could be called 'The Creator's Manual for Optimum Human Existence.' It is in our best interests to listen to what our Creator says.

### **A. 7 God is the Judge of all the earth [Genesis 18:25; Hebrews 12:23].**

He decides what is right and wrong. He decides the penalties. Because of this we are answerable to him. Yet he has not left us in the dark about his requirements and standards for he has recorded them in his Word. We ignore his Word to our own peril.

**Thus because God is who he is his Word has extreme and urgent relevance to every person of every age and every place.** No one is excluded from the necessity to submit to it in every aspect of our lives. Our attitude to the Bible says a lot about what we really believe about God.

## **B. THE BIBLE IS RELEVANT TO MY LIFE BECAUSE IT APPLIES COMPREHENSIVELY TO EVERY ASPECT OF MY LIFE**

In the task below as you work through 2 Timothy 3:15-17 you will discover that the Bible is relevant to every aspect and action of our lives – to the spiritual aspect, for it can reunite us to God through Jesus Christ; for our belief system, for it tells us what to believe and what not to believe; for our moment by moment thoughts, words, attitudes and actions, for it tells us what is wrong and what is right; and for our purpose, for it equips us thoroughly for every good work for which God created us [see Genesis 1:27; Ephesians 2:10].

#### **Task 7: Discuss the meaning of the phrases from 2 Timothy below, and their relevance for every human being.**

**B.1 The Bible relates to the spiritual aspect of life** [3:15: 'the holy Scriptures ... are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ'.]

**B.2 The Bible teaches us what to believe** [3:16 'All Scripture ... is useful for teaching']

**B.3 The Bible teaches us what *not* to believe** [3:16 'All Scripture ... is useful for ... rebuking']

**B.4 The Bible teaches us how *not* to behave** [3:16: 'All Scripture ... is useful for ... correcting']

**B.5 The Bible teaches us how *to* behave** [3:16: 'All Scripture ... is useful for ... training in righteousness']

**B.6 The Bible 'thoroughly equips' the Christian 'for every good work.'** [3:17]