

Taking God at His Word

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- [0 : 0 0] All right, well, we are beginning a study this Sunday that will extend hopefully for six to eight weeks on the doctrine of the Word of God.
- So what we're doing is we're doing a study on what the Bible says about the Bible. So I've got some resources. Primarily, this is a study on this book, Taking God at His Word, and the subtitle is Why the Bible is Knowable, Necessary, and Enough, and What That Means for You and Me.
- And this is by Kevin DeYoung. So this is the book that is our kind of primary guide for this study. And then we've got some other resources that we're using. The first is our very own Confession of Faith, the London Baptist 1689, second edition, and a newly released exposition of that confession.
- So it's kind of a good, lengthy book here. So I'll be referencing this. I'll be referencing the 1689 this morning. And then this is our primary resource.
- If you're interested, it will obviously be up here if you would like to see it when we're done. So Kevin DeYoung, he's a Presbyterian, but we can profit from a Presbyterian as well. Okay, well, it's a study on the doctrine of the Word of God.
- [1 : 1 9] Now, if you were to read a systematic theology book, there would be lots of different categories in that systematic theology. Now, they might be titled a little differently based on how creative the author wants to get with that book.
- But you would have doctrines like, or categories like, the doctrine of God, the doctrine of man, the doctrine of Christ and his work, the doctrine of the church.
- And you would definitely have the doctrine of the Word of God. And that would probably be the very first category in the book, the doctrine of the Word of God.
- Because it makes sense. Before studying what the Bible teaches about any other doctrine, we want to study what the Bible teaches about itself.
- What does the Bible say that it is? And so, we want to begin in the first chapter of this book to consider that very thing.
- [2 : 1 7] What does the Bible teach about itself? So, the first chapter of DeYoung's book is titled, Believing, Feeling, Doing. And that is kind of the framework for this chapter.
- Now, before we dive into believing, feeling, doing, we're actually going to start at the end of chapter one. At the very end of chapter one, DeYoung gives us a few points of clarification.
- He wants to make sure that we understand what kind of book he has written. He wants to say it's not a theology textbook. He wants to say that it's not a book where he's out to name names and say, this is heretical, this is wrong, this isn't true.
- And he says it's not intended to either be an apologetics book. But, it does raise some questions of an apologetic nature. And so, he, at the end of the chapter, addresses two questions in particular.

So, I thought it would be good for us to actually start there, address those two questions, and then dive in to the rest of the chapter. So, these are the two questions in particular that might come to our minds as we consider, what does the Bible teach us about the Bible?

[3 : 32] The first question is, how can we be sure that the books we have in our Bible are the books God intended for us to have in our Bible?

That's a question of canon. The question of what books are inspired, what books are given to us by God. That's the first question that he raises.

The second question that he raises is one of circular reasoning. You may have heard this before. Now, wait, how is it that you can say, the Bible is my authority, and you get that because the Bible has told you that?

How is it that we can look to the Bible to teach us about the Bible? So, those are two questions that we want to kind of briefly examine together. Now, ironically, I read the chapter a couple times this week, and nowhere does DeYoung actually answer his first question.

So, thanks a lot, Kevin DeYoung. So, I guess we will try to do that together based on our own understanding of canonicity. So, how did we get the 66 books that are in our Bibles?

[4 : 40] And how much confidence can we have that those are the books that God intended for us to have? Well, the Old Testament is not really debated.

Even secular scholars will admit. They will say, yeah, those are the books that the church throughout the ages, even into the time of Jesus Christ and before, has always been recognized as the books that God has given.

Now, of course, those secular scholars are not going to say that God inspired those writings, but they will say that they've been recognized by God's people as the writings that God has given.

So, the Old Testament, not really debated. You go back into the New Testament, the Gospel accounts, you read of how Christ viewed the Old Testament, and you can see very quickly that there was an understanding.

These are the books of the Old Testament. The New Testament was a little more debated for a time in the early church. So, here's the basic criteria that was used for several centuries to discover the canon.

[5 : 47] And I say that word discover very purposefully. The church did not determine the canon. The church did not determine these are the books that God inspired.

The church discovered them because God gave them to the church. It is not the church that says, this is inspired, this is not, this is. It is the church that says, God has shown us that this is what he has inspired.

So, the church discovered the canon. So, here's the criteria. Three questions. Was the book written by an apostle?

That is someone who was given direct, special revelation from God, either because they walked with Jesus, as many of the apostles did, or because Jesus spoke to them, as he did with Paul.

So, was this book written by an apostle? Or was it written by someone closely associated with an apostle? Take, for instance, the Gospel according to Mark.

[6 : 52] Mark did not walk with Jesus. Peter did. And Peter and Mark were very close to one another. And so, much of what Peter wrote was from eyewitness testimony of Peter.

So, was the book written by an apostle? Or someone closely associated with an apostle? Is the book widely recognized by local churches as inspired?

So, in the early church, it wasn't that the church was right away getting together and saying, now let's figure this out together. Which books are there that are clearly the ones that are inspired?

It was churches were using these books in their worship. Churches were referencing these books in their communities. And if you looked around, you could see this was a well-known book.

This was used in Alexandria. This was used in Ephesus. This was used throughout the region. And so, churches began to see, okay, these books, these are widely recognized. So, if a random church was using a book that wasn't used in other churches, it was pretty quickly kind of understood, okay, perhaps this is not actually intended to be a part of the canon.

[8 : 03] And then lastly, the third question for criteria's sake. Does the book in question teach what aligns with other books that are already recognized and understood to have been inspired?

So, if a book was teaching a doctrine that clearly went against what was already being taught in the church, then that book would have been put aside.

It would have slowly gone into disuse. They would have recognized, no, this is not what God has given us as inspired scripture. And so, using that basic criteria, over many centuries, we have the Bible as it is today.

And we can have confidence, based on all of those years of the early church, working diligently to discover the canon, that we do indeed hold the very books that God intended to have in our Bibles.

Now, you might not think that's a short answer, but that is a short answer compared to what scholars have done with that question. That's the short answer to the first apologetics question raised in this book.

[9 : 05] Here's the second. How can you reference the Bible to determine the authority of the Bible? Again, that is a question of circular reasoning.

We are assuming the very thing that we are trying to prove. So, we say that the Bible is God's Word because the Bible tells us that it's God's Word.

We say the Bible is God's Word because the Bible tells us that it's God's Word. Now, I will be the first to admit for many people that is not a satisfying answer, especially for someone who is not in Christ.

I once sat next to a drunk woman on an airplane and we talked about that very question. She asked me. I gave her an answer. She didn't like that answer very much. Now, perhaps the inebriated state of this woman contributed to that, but that was not a satisfying answer.

And we had a long conversation together, meandering in a lot of ways, about that very question. How can you say that the Bible is your final authority because the Bible tells you that it's your final authority?

[10 : 14] And so, this is something of the answer that de Young presents us, that I tried to, far less skillfully than de Young, articulate to this woman on the airplane. And here's the simple, straightforward answer.

The Holy Spirit must do a work in us. The Holy Spirit must open our eyes to see the Bible for what the Bible is.

The Holy Spirit must gift us with eyes to see this is indeed the Word of God. It's as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2.12.

Now, we have received, not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

So, God has given His people spiritual eyes to see. When we read this book, yes, this is God's very words to us.

[11 : 11] Now, Paul goes on to say that the natural man doesn't believe the Bible is the very Word of God. And he doesn't believe that the Bible is the very Word of God because his heart is hardened against it.

God must take that hard heart of stone and make it into a heart of flesh. That's spelled out for us in Ezekiel. The book of Ezekiel says, and I will give you a new heart, Ezekiel 36, 26 to 27.

And I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and, listen to this, cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

So, you could argue for the authenticity of the Word of God until you are blue in the face. But if that person that you're speaking to doesn't have the Holy Spirit in them, that person will never believe that the Bible is what it says it is.

They will never believe unless God removes their heart of stone and gives them a heart of flesh. Now, this is what our confession very helpfully summarizes in chapter 1, paragraph 5.

[12 : 36] Our confession says this, we recognize that our full persuasion and assurance of the Bible's infallible truth and divine authority is the outcome of the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

So, we cannot externally prove the Bible to be the Word of God. It is ultimately the Spirit's inner heart-transforming work. Listen to Martin Lloyd-Jones.

This is what he says about the work of the Holy Spirit in his book entitled Authority. He takes his own Word, he illumines it, and he takes our minds and enlightens them.

And we are thus made receptive to the Bible. So, how can you reference the Bible to state that the Bible is authoritative? The short answer, the Spirit gives us eyes to see that the Bible is exactly what it says it is.

Now, that being said, there is a place for evidences. There is a place for assurances. There's a place for seeing the reasonableness of our faith.

[13 : 56] I tried to share the reasonableness of our faith with that woman next to me on the plane. She wasn't being very reasonable with me, though. Now, there is a difference between a blind faith and a reasonable faith.

DeYoung, in his book, says, the claims of Orthodox Christianity have no reason to avoid hard evidence and nothing to fear from a detailed examination of the facts.

In other words, there are reasonable answers to questions raised about the Bible. Now, will any of those answers land without the work of the Spirit in our hearts?

Will they be persuasive without the Spirit's work? No, they will not. But if the Spirit is at work in us, these answers will only serve to encourage and to strengthen and to assure us of what we have come to be persuaded of.

In that book that's an exposition of the confession, John Ruther wrote the chapter on, the first chapter of the confession, and he says this, The Bible has many evidences that help us.

[15 : 11] These commend the Scripture to the support of our faith. They are also compelling, and the Spirit uses these because he is using his word to aid in persuading and assuring us that the Bible is the word of God.

So God does give us evidences that the Bible is what it claims to be. Listen to some that are straight out of our confession. very helpfully summarized.

The heavenliness of its contents. The heavenliness of the Bible's contents. In other words, it is a book from the King of Heaven written to and for the citizens of his heavenly kingdom.

So it is utterly unique in its eternal, not of this world, perspective. The heavenliness of its content. That's one evidence. This Bible, this book, is unique from God because of the heavenliness of its content.

The efficacy of its doctrine is another evidence. In other words, look at how it changes a person. This is where we testify, look at the work that God has done in my life as I have read his word.

[16 : 28] Look at how he has changed me. The efficacy of its doctrine. The majesty of its style. Only writers in the 1600s are going to be saying this.

The majesty of its style. It is beautifully written. It is not just a thrown together work. It is beautifully written.

The agreement between all of its parts from first to last. In other words, look at how perfectly the entire Bible fits together.

And that is a pretty marvelous thought when you consider how many authors were involved in the writing of this under the inspiration of God. How many authors were involved?

How many centuries were involved in bringing together all of this writing? And all you have to do to see the parts coming together so perfectly is read the very beginning and the very end of the Bible.

[17 : 26] We could do an entire study on Genesis 1-3 and then Revelation 21-22. And you see this book is one unified whole.

It is one story written by one author centered on one person, the Lord Jesus Christ and his redemptive work to take a people who once were in a perfect garden with their God and to bring them back, not to a garden, but to a garden city.

That is the story of Scripture just with the bookends of it. We see the parts brought together with the whole. Another evidence for the Bible being indeed from God.

The fact that throughout it gives all glory to God. In other words, what man would write a book that doesn't center around himself? It does not present us as the primary character.

It presents God and his glory. In fact, it paints us in a pretty poor light, doesn't it? It shows the goodness and the redemptive work of God, his saving kindness towards us.

[18 : 34] And then finally, the revelation, the full revelation it gives of the only way of salvation. And so this is the book where we read that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.

So these together, the confession says, these together with many other incomparably high qualities and perfect full perfections supply abundant evidence that it is the word of God.

So those are the evidences. And those are good evidences. But those evidences are not enough. The Spirit must bear witness by and with the word in our hearts.

Think about your own life. did you believe the Bible to be what it says it is because someone was so incredibly persuasive in giving you evidences and proofs of it, perhaps sitting on a plane next to you.

Is that how you came to believe the Bible is what it is? No. How did you come to believe the Bible is what it is? You read it and the Spirit worked in your heart.

[19 : 43] You heard it preached and the Spirit worked in your heart and you came to see with eyes that he gave you. Indeed it is all that it says that it is.

I appreciate what DeYoung says. Listen to how he summarizes this. There is no better way to understand and to come to embrace a biblical doctrine of scripture than to open the cage and let scripture out.

Just like a roaring lion. Let the word out. Let it do its work. It will do its work itself. The Bible speaks for itself. One more quote that I want to share from Wayne Grudem.

He says this, It is helpful for us to learn that the Bible is historically accurate, that it is internally consistent, that it contains prophecies that have been fulfilled hundreds of years later, that it has influenced the course of human history more than any other book, that it has continued changing the lives of millions of individuals throughout its history, that through it people come to find salvation, that it has a majestic beauty and a profound depth of teaching unmatched by any other book, and that it claims hundreds of times over to be God's very words.

All of these arguments and others are useful to us and remove obstacles that might otherwise come in the way of our believing scripture. scripture. But all of these arguments taken individually or together cannot finally be convincing.

[21 : 22] The spirit convinces us. So that is how the chapter concludes. That's the end of chapter one. We need to go back to the beginning with what time remains.

Time is going quicker than I thought it would. So back to the beginning of taking God at his word, chapter one. DeYoung begins the book and this chapter with a poem and it's a love poem.

Now it's not a poem that he wrote, it's not a poem that a high schooler wrote, it's not a poem that any of us have written, it's a poem given to us in the Bible.

It's Psalm 119. So you can turn over there to Psalm 119. This is the longest chapter in the longest book of the Bible, depending on how you measure the length of chapters.

If you just crack open your Bible, you have a pretty high chance of actually opening to Psalm 119. That is the most likely place that you would be to open in your Bible. Now this particular psalm is an acrostic, meaning that it has eight verses in each stanza, and each of those verses begins with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet in each of those eight verse stanzas.

[22 : 48] So if you look in your Bible, you'll see there that it actually has a title at the beginning of each of those eight verses. That is a Hebrew letter like Aleph. That's the equivalent-ish to our letter A.

So if you thought that this was a long psalm, be thankful it was written in Hebrew and not in English, because Hebrew has four less letters in their alphabet, so you've got 32 less letters than if this psalm had been written in English.

So what is Psalm 119 about? What is the love that is being shown here toward? It's God and His Word. It is a poem filled with warm affection for God's Word using vivid imagery and language.

Let's just read a snippet of it together. Listen to verses 129 through 136. 129 through 136. This is one whole stanza.

Your testimonies are wonderful, therefore my soul keeps them. The unfolding of your words gives light. It imparts understanding to the simple.

[24 : 00] I open my mouth and pant because I long for your commandments. Turn to me and be gracious to me as is your way with those who love your name. Keep steady my steps according to your promise and let no iniquity get dominion over me.

Redeem me from man's oppression that I may keep your precepts. Make your face shine upon your servant and teach me your statutes. My eyes shed streams of tears because people do not keep your law.

Those are some strong heartfelt words penned by the psalmist. So what's our response to the psalm? How do we respond as we read this psalm?

Dion gives us three general categories that most people would fall into and this is how he titles them. Yeah right, ho hum, and yes, yes, yes.

So here's the first response. Yeah, right. This is the response of the skeptic. This is the person who says the Bible is just a book.

[25 : 09] Perhaps a well-written book, but it is just a book, and it's an outdated book at that. It certainly doesn't come from God, and so we have no great need for it, perhaps outside of literature classes, and so this warm, affectionate response of the psalmist, it's over the top.

It is misplaced. So the person with this response doesn't relate to the strong conviction of the writer of Psalm 119.

The second response, ho hum. This is the response of the apathetic person. You may say that you believe the Bible is the word of God, but you live with little zeal for what it says.

Now, you may not say it, but you may be thinking that it's dry, it's boring, it doesn't hold my attention like so many other things that I could spend my time with.

And so the person with this response doesn't relate to the warm affection of the writer of Psalm 119. So the third response, that's obviously the response that DeYoung says the Christian is shooting for, is yes, yes, yes.

[26 : 25] This is the response that we should desire. We resonate with the Psalm in every way. In our head, in our heart, full of conviction, full of warm affection for what the word says.

We know it to be true, and we live as though it's true as well. And so we say with joyful hearts along with the psalmist in verse 162, I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil.

I rejoice with your word like one who finds great spoil. Makes me think of what we talked about with all the youth at the last youth gathering, of the parable of the man who found the hidden treasure.

The man is walking in a field and he finds this hidden treasure. What does he do? He goes and he sells everything after burying the treasure. He goes and he sells everything he has so he can go and buy that field and then have that treasure.

And Jesus was teaching that's what the kingdom of God is like. That's the value that we should ascribe to the kingdom of God. And that's how the psalmist speaks of God's word. I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil.

[27 : 41] And so this is the purpose of DeYoung's book. The purpose of DeYoung's book is that we might have this kind of response to Psalm 119 as the spirit is at work in our hearts.

So DeYoung says, the purpose of his book, to get us to fully, sincerely, and consistently embrace this third response. And he says, this is only the work of course that God does by his spirit.

And so all that is in Psalm 119 is to be an expression of all that is in our heads and in our hearts. DeYoung says, Psalm 119, that's the goal.

That's the goal. So how do we get to this place of having this response? How do we get to a place of saying, yes, yes, yes, to all that is in God's word?

by having a thoroughly biblical understanding of the Bible. By having a thoroughly biblical understanding of the Bible.

[28 : 45] By having sound doctrine about what the Bible teaches about itself. If we believe the Bible makes mistakes, if we believe that the Bible can't be understood, if we believe that the Bible is not inspired by God, if we believe the Bible is not relevant to our lives, if we believe that the Bible isn't the final authority for our lives, if we believe anything less than what the Bible teaches about itself, then we will fail to say, yes, yes, yes, like the psalmist.

But as DeYoung says, when we embrace everything the Bible says about itself, then and only then will we believe what we should believe about the word of God, feel what we should feel, and do with the word of God what we ought to do.

So based on that quote, we now have the breakdown of the chapter, believing, feeling, doing. What do we believe about the Bible?

What do we feel about the Bible? And what do we do with the Bible? That's the breakdown that we want to see here. So the first one will answer the first question.

What should I believe about the word of God? DeYoung gives us three answers. And all three answers are demonstrated for us in Psalm 119.

[30 : 13] Here's the first one. God's word says what is true. God's word says what is true. I think we all would agree that we can't trust everything we hear, everything we read today.

But we can trust everything in the word of God. Listen to the psalmist, verse 43. And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for my hope is in your rules.

Listen to verse 89. Forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. Or verse 96. I have seen a limit to all perfection, but your commandment is exceedingly broad.

Meaning, there is no limit to what actually is truly the perfection of God's word. There's nothing corrupt about it. Or how about verse 160. The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.

the psalmist was very much anticipating the words of Jesus in John 17, 17. In his prayer, he says, sanctify them in the truth.

[31 : 34] Your word is truth. Really important there to recognize. Jesus didn't say your word is true. He could have said it, and that is true, but he said your word is truth.

In other words, your word is the standard for truth. Everything that is true must ultimately first recognize that God's word is the standard for truth.

That's how we recognize what is true, is by looking to God's word. Secondly, God's word demands what is right. So God says what is best.

What he commands is righteous. It's noble. God never commands what is morally wrong. And so when we fail to see God's word is right, we balk at it.

We wiggle our way out of obeying it. We may submit ourselves to it, but it's begrudgingly. And so when I drag my feet to obey, that is evidence that I think my way is better.

[32 : 43] I would rule differently if I were in God's shoes. God's word is right. That's a failure on our part to believe that God's word is always right.

So do I agree with God? Do I agree that his way is right? Or is it only right when I agree with it? Or when I like it?

Or when it works for me? So we should recognize like the psalmist does, we should recognize that his word is right. Listen to verse 62 of Psalm 119. At midnight I rise to praise you.

First of all, he's getting up at midnight. We have to recognize that. Okay? He is doing something that I never want to do, getting up at midnight. He's getting up, so he's got to have a pretty good reason to do that, right?

What is he doing at midnight? I rise up to praise you. Why is he praising God? Because of your righteous rules. That's why he gets up to praise God.

[33 : 47] Because of your righteous rules. So we want to see and embrace all of God's word as perfectly right. Thirdly, this is the third thing we should believe about God's word.

God's word provides what is good. So God's word says what is true, God's word demands what is right, and God's word provides what is good.

Listen to the very first verse, two verses of Psalm 119. Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole hearts.

So what are those verses teaching us? Your greatest joy and delight and satisfaction will be found by looking to God's word and obeying it.

You will be blessed. blessed. You could translate that happy is the person. Happy, delighted, blessed. It's the way to true happiness.

[34 : 54] It's also the way to avoid being put to shame. The opposite of that. Look at verse 6. Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.

How else is God's word good? It's the way of safety. It's the way of receiving good counsel. It gives us strength and hope. It provides wisdom.

It shows us the way that we should go. Famous verse from Psalm 119. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. So God's word provides what is good for us.

The fullest, richest life is lived in obedience to God's word. So we should believe this about his word. What should we feel about the word of God?

First, we delight in it. God's laws, his commandments, his testimonies, they are the delight of the psalmist in Psalm 119.

[36 : 01] Now that's a bit counterintuitive to most of us. When's the last time that you considered law to be exciting and exhilarating, to make your heart race as you write a love poem?

Is it like a law book that is your bedtime reading? Is it the BMV's driver's manual that just really gets you excited? I remember when I was working at Grace College, I had to get a chauffeur's license to be able to transport more students in a large van.

And I thought, I'll be fine. I've been driving for many years. I'm going to go in and take that test. I went in to take that test and it was asking the most detailed specific questions you can imagine about the weight on axles and all kinds of stuff that I had no clue about.

So what did I have to do after I failed the exam? I had to go and I had to read the driver's manual particular to a chauffeur's license. It was the driest, most boring reading I have ever done.

So we think about law and perhaps that's where our minds go. That's not where the psalmist's mind goes because God's laws, God's instructions are obviously far better and more life-giving than the BMW's driver's manual.

[37 : 20] The BMW's driver's manual was not life-giving at all. Perhaps life-preserving in some respects if I know how to drive, but not life-giving. So the psalmist says in verse 14, in the way of your testimonies, I delight as much as in all riches.

I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes. I will not forget your word.

So God's word is indeed bedtime reading for the psalmist. And it's bedtime reading that the psalmist can't put down. And he loves God's word so much that he's angry when others don't.

When others don't love his word, it pricks his heart. Listen to verse 53. Hot indignation seizes me because of the wicked who forsake your law.

This shows just how much the psalmist loves God's word. Now we do this with things like music and movies. You watch a movie and you think it's just such a fantastic movie that you want to share it with your spouse or with your kids or with your friends.

[38 : 31] And so you have them watch the movie with you. And then they're kind of ho-hum about it. They're like, yeah, it was fine. Or perhaps they're even critical of it. And what's your response? Oh, what?

How could you not think it was amazing? That was the best movie ever. Did you hear the way, did you see how it all came together at the end? And they're kind of like, no, I might have fallen asleep for a little bit of it. It just didn't really capture my attention.

We get riled up by that. How much more should we care about God's word than music or movies? Are we stirred up?

Is our heart affected when those who are apart from God say, I don't really care about that? Does that get us? No. No. Love his word.

DeYoung says, To be sure, the Bible can feel dull at times, but taken as a whole, it is the greatest story ever told, and those who know it best are usually those who delight in it most.

[39 : 35] That's a call for us to read our Bibles. The more we read it, the more we delight in it. Do you know anyone who regrets spending more time in the Bible?

I wish I had read my Bible less last week. So we delight in it. The second way that we should feel about the Bible is that we desire it.

So that makes sense. If we delight in the Bible, we should also desire the Bible. We long for it when we don't have access to it. We want more of it when we do have access to it.

But do you desire something that may prove to make your life unpleasant? Do you desire something that might actually hurt? Usually not, but listen to the psalmist in verse 67.

Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I keep your word. You are good and do good. Teach me your statutes.

[40 : 39] The insolent smear me with lies, but with my whole heart I keep your precepts. Their heart is unfeeling like fat, but I delight in your law. It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.

So de Young summarizes those verses. The psalmist so desired the word of God that he considered suffering to be a blessing in his life if it helped him become more obedient to God's commands.

That's a real desire for the word. I want your word. Even if it hurts, even if you discipline me by it, I know it's for my good and I want it. I desire it.

And then thirdly, we depend on it. Verse 31, I cling to your testimonies, O Lord. Let me not be put to shame. What do your kids or your grandkids or your nieces and nephews, what would they consider to be a harsh punishment, a punishment that they can't bear?

You know how it is sometimes, a punishment is doled out and a child responds like, okay, I'll take that, that's fine. What's a punishment that they're like, no, this crushes my spirit?

[41 : 54] If you told your child or grandchild, if you look back on your own life as a child and you were told, your punishment is you can't read the Bible, how would you answer as a child?

I know when I was a kid I would have been like, okay, that sounds great, I would prefer not to anyhow. In Amos' day, there was a famine of the word of God that God brought as punishment and that is the greatest, most severe punishment imaginable, the silence of God.

Do we depend on the word so much so that we would consider that to be the greatest punishment imaginable? What did Jesus say when he was tempted by Satan? Man does not live on bread alone, but by every word, not just some words, every word that comes from the mouth of God?

Do we depend on God's word that if we didn't have it like our daily bread, we would say, this is worse than any punishment I could imagine? Thanks be to God that he does not give us a famine of his word, we have it with us today.

So that's how we ought to feel about God's word. And then very briefly, what should we do with it? Here are just some examples that you can find scattered throughout the psalm.

[43 : 12] We sing the word, we speak the word, we study the word, we store up the word, we obey the word, we praise God for the word, and we pray that God would act according to his word.

So this is the aim of Kevin DeYoung's book, that we might share the same zeal for God's word as the writer of Psalm 119, that we would believe, feel, and do just as the psalmist believes, feels, and does.

Now DeYoung says this, now don't panic if you seem to fall short in believing, feeling, and doing. Remember, Psalm 119 is a love poem, not a checklist.

The reason for starting this book with Psalm 119 is that this is where we want to end. This is the spiritual reaction the spirit should produce in us when we fully grasp all that the Bible teaches about itself.

And so, Lord willing, over the next couple of months in Sunday school together, we're going to study what the Bible teaches about itself so that we might even more fully say with the psalmist, your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart.

[44 : 34] I incline my heart to perform your statutes forever to the end. We're dismissed. We're dismissed.