

AMPLIFY

GROWING A
FAITH THAT LASTS

AMPLIFY: GOD'S WORD
LESSON 8: THE WORD AT WORK

What we want students to learn: The point of the lesson is that your students would gain a fuller understanding of what we mean by God's Word.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To evaluate their own attitude toward the Bible and the role it plays in their lives.

Scripture Focus: Genesis 1:1-3, 12:1-4, Psalm 33:6, Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 1:16-20, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Isaiah 55:10-11

Overview: God's Word has always been at work, a powerful force through which God accomplishes great things. We see God's Word demonstrated in a few different ways in Scripture. We see the power of the spoken word of God. We see the intimacy of His commands to individuals. But as Christ-followers seeking to know God and His ways, the most practical way of thinking about God's Word is to consider the Scriptures. The Bible is the enduring, unchanging, and inspired Word of God. It is God's primary way of making Himself and His ways known to us. In the Bible, we experience the power of God's Word to speak through the centuries to draw us closer to God. In this lesson, your students will see examples of each of these aspects of God's Word, and will ultimately be challenged to consider their attitude toward the Bible and its role in their lives.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each **Amplify** lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your **God's Word** lesson 8 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 8, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The **Bible Background** is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **YM360** Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know **who** wrote the book, **when** it was written, and **why** it was written.
- **What's the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the **Bible Background** to help summarize the context.

THE DETAILS

Genesis

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- **Author:** While there's no specific author named within the text, Moses is the accepted author of Genesis.
- **Timeframe:** It's difficult to establish with any certainty a date for the writing of Genesis. The uncertainty depends on the date of the Exodus (which is also not known for sure), placing the date for the writing of Genesis sometime in the 1400s or the 1200s BC.
- **Purpose:** Genesis is a part of the Pentateuch, the group of five books (including Exodus, Numbers, and Leviticus) that are viewed as a unit. Genesis details the earliest history of our world, including creation and Adam and Eve's fall. It also focuses on the emergence of Israel, not only as God's people, but as the group, God would work through to bring redemption to the world.

Psalms

- **Author:** David is, of course, the most frequent author appearing in the Book of Psalms. But he is not the only author. Other authors include the Sons of Korah, Asaph, Solomon, and Moses. There are quite a few psalms, such as this one, where the author is not identified at all.
- **Timeframe:** Scholars think the psalms were produced over a period of time starting as early as the 15th or 13th century BC, to as late as post-exilic times.
- **Purpose:** This psalm calls people to praise God for His role as Creator of all things. It acknowledges that God has chosen a people, and praises God's sustaining presence in both the universe and for Israel.

Isaiah

- **Author:** Isaiah, son of Amoz wrote the book of Isaiah.
- **Timeframe:** The events of Isaiah occurred between 740 and 681 B.C., though some parts of the book would have been constructed at a later date.
- **Purpose:** The purpose of this book was to call the nation of Judah back to God, to warn of coming judgment, and to tell of God's ultimate salvation through the Messiah.

Matthew

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his Gospel.
- **Timeframe:** Most people hold to Matthew's Gospel being written in the late 50's or 60's AD, though there are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.
- **Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his Gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

Mark

- **Author:** The Gospel of Mark was written by its namesake. Mark, also known as John Mark, is believed to have received most of his information for his Gospel from Peter's firsthand accounts.
- **Timeframe:** Mark is thought to have written his Gospel in the mid 50's AD.
- **Purpose:** Mark was writing primarily for a non-Jewish audience. His Gospel explains Jewish customs to non-Jews in an effort to get them to see the big picture of Jesus' identity.

2 Timothy

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- **Author:** : Though in the last 200 years or so there have been efforts by some scholars to shed doubt on Paul's authorship of both 1 and 2 Timothy, their arguments aren't very compelling.
- **Timeframe:** Most scholars believe Paul wrote these letters to Timothy, his apprentice in ministry, between Paul's first and second imprisonment in Rome. By most accounts, this would place the writing of 2 Timothy sometime around 64–65 AD, though it could be as late as 67 AD.
- **Purpose:** In 2 Timothy, we see Paul passing along his final words to Timothy. It's pretty much a personal note from an old man awaiting his death to a young, son-like figure. It's personal. It's tender at times. It's encouraging. And it's practical.

THE MAIN POINT

You'll make three points in this lesson all related to how we understand God's Word. The first point is that we see God's Word come alive in the form of commands. These commands are active and demonstrate God's power. You'll look at Genesis 1 where God spoke Creation into being; Psalm 33 where we see the making of the heavens attributed to God's spoken word; and not to be left out, you'll see Jesus dramatically calming the storm with a verbal command in Matthew 8.

The comforting counter to Jesus' commands are the powerful, personal messages to His people. Scripture is ripe with these moments of God speaking to His people. We chose to highlight Genesis 12 and God breaking into the covenant relationship with Abram through a spoken message; also, we'll look at the power of Jesus' vocation busting message to the fisherman who would become His disciples: the "Follow me" of Mark 1.

But for our purposes, the most immediate understanding of God's Word is the inspired words of Scripture. This lesson will look at the 2 Timothy and the Isaiah 55 passages as a way of seeing that the Bible, God's Word, is God's best means of helping us know Him and His ways. You'll challenge your students to begin to address their attitude and approach toward Scripture, leading them to see the joy and intimacy that comes with meeting God in His Word.

LESSON PLAN

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** The idea is to get students thinking about "words" in general and how different mediums of words function, setting up the idea of looking at the different ways God's Word is seen working.
- **Set-Up:** Do a Google image search of the following objects: A highway billboard with an interesting/compelling bit of advertising on it, a warning sign or some other sign passing along rules or warnings, and a love note or otherwise personal note of some sort. Arrange to show these images to your group in some fashion.

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FIRST, explain to students that this is the first of three lessons on God's Word. Explain that you're going to be looking at a few different ways of looking at God's Word in this lesson. Say:

- **To get you thinking about the idea of communicating through words, we're going to engage in a little discussion. Quickly and without thinking too much about it, name some of the different ways you encounter words every day. Where do you see words?**
 - Answers will vary greatly. Allow students to just go with this for 30 seconds or so.

THEN, shift the focus. Say:

- **Words aren't just words, right? Words communicate emotions, information, humor, and so on. (Display the image of the roadside billboard.) What is the purpose of these words?**
 - Answer: To make you act. To make you purchase, or attend, or go to a certain website. They are about swaying you to do something.

NEXT, show the image of the warning sign or the rule sign. Ask:

- **What is the purpose of these words?**
 - Answer: To inform. To warn. It's purely information communication.

Explain that words can be used to convince, to convict, to hurt, to build up . . . words are powerful! Words topple governments and build empires, right? But then remind students that words are also the most personal way of communicating.

THEN, show the picture of the personal note. Ask:

- **Think about the words that accompany this type of personal letter. What are some of the purposes of those words?**
 - Answer: To communicate emotions, feelings, questions, etc. Words used on a personal level like this are what relationships are built on.

FINALLY, say something like:

- **Without are how we get to know the people we love the most. Words are how you have come to know your best friend, or girlfriend, or boyfriend, or mom or dad. Words are a lot of things, as we have looked at, but they are nothing if not the foundation of relationship. Today, we're going to look at a few different ways God's Word is put to work. And in the process hopefully, we'll wind up growing closer to God through His Word.**

Transition into the *Main Event* portion of your lesson.

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** The idea is that students would gain a fuller understanding of what we mean by God's Word.
- **Set Up:** You may choose to use a dry-erase board, but it's not essential.

FIRST, ask students what's the first thing that comes to mind when they hear the phrase "God's Word." To a person, they will say "The Bible." Encourage them that this is exactly what they should think of. And that you'll end the lesson there. But before you do, you want to look at a couple more pictures of how we might view God's Word.

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THEN, if you have a dry-erase board, you may want to write this first teaching point on the board. Explain that the first picture of God's Word you're going to look at is the picture of God's Word in the form of His commands. Say:

- **All throughout Scripture, we see God's Word being brought forth in the form of spoken commands. These commands are active and demonstrate God's power. Let's look at a few examples of these commands.**

Choose three volunteers to help you read aloud. Instruct the first volunteer to prepare to read Genesis 1:1-3, the second to read Psalm 33:6, and the third to read Matthew 8:23-27. Allow them a few moments to find their spots. Then, provide some brief context for Genesis using the Bible Background. When you've finished, have the first volunteer read his or her verse aloud. Then, ask:

- **What is the command we see here?**
 - o Answer: (v. 3) And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.
- **What does this say about the power of God's Word?**
 - o Answer: Um . . . it says quite a LOT!!! It says that by speaking, God brings into being a creation of the highest magnitude possible. Now that's power!

NEXT, provide some context for Psalms using the Bible Background. When you've finished, have the next volunteer read his or her verse aloud. Then, ask:

- **Where do we see God's commands addressed here?**
 - o Answer: The entire verse speaks to the power of His command.
- **What kind of imagery does this verse evoke in your mind? How does it make you feel?**
 - o Answer: It's amazing. It's almost like something you'd see in a Lord of the Rings Movie, or something. God's voice makes the heavens. His very breath created the stars. That's amazing.

THEN, provide the context for Matthew using the Bible Background. When you've finished, have the last volunteer read his or her verse aloud. Then, ask:

- **Where do we see Jesus' commands at work?**
 - o Answer: Jesus shut down a storm with His voice.
- **What would you have given to be in that boat watching that happen?**
 - o Answer: A lot.

Explain that you're going to move on to look at two more pictures of God's Word. But before you do, ask students to think of any more instances where God gave a command, or spoke aloud, and action followed. (Some examples might include Jesus casting out demons with His voice; when Jesus spoke to the Roman guard in Gethsemane, Scripture says His voice was so powerful in that moment that the guards were knocked to the ground; when Jesus spoke to Lazarus to come out of the tomb; etc.) Say:

- **God's Word is remarkably, amazingly powerful. His commands bring life and death. They create and destroy. But they aren't the primary way we're going to view God's Word in our study today.**

NEXT, explain that there is yet another way to view God's Word, almost the flip side to the action-oriented, powerful commands of God. Say:

- **This second picture we'll see of God's Word is where it takes the form of a personal message to His children.**

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Instruct students to turn to Genesis 12:1-4. Read or have a student read the passage. Then, ask:

- **What is so significant about this story?**
 - Answer: It was God initiating the covenant with Abram. Through Abram God would call the Jews as His chosen people.
- **Describe God's Word as its depicted here. How do we see God using words?**
 - Answer: It's not very distinctive. It's just kind of God talking to Abram. Which is kind of the point.

Explain that it's kind of crazy when we see God speaking so candidly and personally to His followers. But even in these small moments, the message is life-changing. It was for Abram, and it was for the disciples.

Instruct your students turn to Mark 1:16-20. Read or have a student read the passage. Then, ask:

- **How is God's Word in this passage similar to the one in Abram's account?**
 - Answer: Again, it's a very plain, very personal message.
- **But what was the result? What did God's Word accomplish?**
 - Answer: It accomplished just what it intended to. The disciples left their nets and became followers of Jesus.

Say:

- **We could list dozens and dozens of more stories of God speaking personally and powerfully to His people. Samuel, Moses, Jacob, David, and so on. God still speaks to us like this today. But I want to move us to the primary picture of God's Word that we'll leave with today.**

THEN, explain to students that their initial response is the response you want to focus your last few minutes on. The primary picture of God's Word is that of Scripture. The Bible is God's complete message to us. Explain that there's nothing else to add. God gave us all He wanted us to have. As such, we have to see it as God's main way of making Himself and His ways known to us and to the world. And it is His way. We see this in 2 Timothy.

Have students look at two more passages. The first is 2 Timothy 3. Have students turn here while you give the context from the Bible Background. Have a student read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. When he or she has finished, say:

- **What does verse 16 say again?**
 - Answer: All Scripture is God-breathed.
- **What does this mean exactly? Why is it important?**
 - Answer: The Greek phrase for "God-breathed" can also be translated "God-inspired." Scripture is inspired by God.
- **OK, so, seriously, what does that mean? Did God pick up a pen and write the Bible then direct mail it to His people? How did we get God's Word?**
 - Answer: God inspired, or lead men to record what He wanted them to record. Under the power of the Spirit, people wrote down the history of God and His ways. This is important for a million different reasons. But mostly because it speaks to the authority of God's Word. We can trust it. It is God inspired. All of it.

NEXT, use this point to transition into your final passage of Scripture. Instruct students to go to Isaiah 55. As they are finding it, provide some context using the Bible Background. Then, read Isaiah 55:10-11. Ask students:

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- **How is God's Word pictured here? What's the metaphor?**
 - Answer: It's compared to rain and snow.
- **OK, let's unpack this. How do rain and snow work? And what do they produce?**
 - Answer: Rain and snow are kind of constant, aren't they? And the purpose they serve is making the earth bloom. Making the crops fruitful. Making the world green and full of life.
- **And how does this relate to God's Word? It actually spells it out right there in the passage.**
 - Answer: Just like rain and snow provide both seed (for continued planting), and crops (fruit), God's Word accomplishes His desires and purposes.
- **Here's a tricky last question: It's never a great idea to try and boil down something as complex as God into one point or one truth. However, in this case, it's kind of instructive in helping us think of Scripture. So, if you had to nail it down, what would you say God wants to accomplish with His Word?**
 - Answer: While we could answer this a lot of ways, Scripture is clear that God's chief goal for His Word is to make Himself known to His people. It's a record of Himself and His ways.

FINALLY, as you transition into the Last Word, instruct students to keep one thing in mind. Say:

- **God's Word is powerful. It creates stuff. It brings stuff down. In Isaiah 55 it says it will never return empty; it will always produce fruit. In Zechariah, God is speaking to the prophet, and He said that His Word had overtaken the stubborn prophets and priests. The picture of God's Word in Scripture doesn't hold up to God's Word as a neglected Bible sitting under your bed gathering dust. The picture of God's Word in Scripture doesn't hold up to God's Word as just a Bible app next to some stupid Zombie video game on your phone. God's Word is power. It's life. It will overtake you, in a good way. But we have to put ourselves in the right place when it comes to how we see the Word. That's how we'll close this lesson. Let's do it.**

Transition to the *Last Word* to wrap up your lesson.

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** The idea is to challenge students to evaluate their own attitude toward the Bible and the role it plays in their lives.
- **Set-Up:** Dry-erase board if you have one.

FIRST, ask students to be completely honest with you. Ask how many people have read their Bible, on their own, outside of church two or three times in the last few weeks. Now, keep going. Ask who reads their Bible a couple of times a week, on their own, outside of church. Finally, ask if anyone read his or her Bible more than five times a week the last few weeks. There's no way to predict your students' responses, but based on experience, you won't have a ton of hands go up.

THEN, use this as a healthy starting point for a good conversation on why students don't read their Bible. Build a list of reasons they shy away from having good habits when it comes to God's Word and write them on the board. When you begin to run out of ideas to put on the board, ask students if any of their hesitancy is due to their attitude or their perspective.

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Ask:

- **Does reading your Bible feel more like a chore than it does hanging out with God?**
 - Help them talk through this. Try and get to the heart of why this is true.

FINALLY, explain to them that their devotions this week are pretty hard hitting. They will really help them think about their attitude and baggage they bring to engaging with God's Word. Challenge students to really take the time to do their devotions and to think about what they're being asked to consider.

Make sure there are no questions, then close in prayer.

- **Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.**
- **Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Instagram, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.**

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.