

## Lesson 3: The Word And Us

**Objective:** The point of the lesson is that students would understand that as Christ-followers, God's Word must be at the center of their lives, and that they would be challenged to discover (or re-discover) a joy for encountering God in His Word.

**Scripture Focus:** Matthew 7:24-27, James 1:22-25, Psalm 119:11, 14, 97, and 105

**Overview:** There are many narrative themes that run from the Old Testament to the New. One of the most prevalent of them is a longing for God's Word. We see this in Moses, the Israelites, David and in the Prophets, just to name a few. And we see this throughout the New Testament. God's people love God's Word. And the Bible is full of instances where we see this truth commanded and supported. Jesus urges us to order our loves around the Word. James encourages us to make it the driving force of our actions. And in the psalms we see what it looks like to truly have a love for God's ways. The goal of this lesson is to challenge your students to reframe the way they have thought about the Bible, helping them see that it reading it is anything but a chore, and is instead a chance to joyfully meet God in its pages.

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## Teacher Prep Video

The *elements Teacher Prep Videos* are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your "God's Word Teacher Prep Video," click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/gods-word-teacher-prep>

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## 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, while *The Main Point* gives you an overview of how the passages are 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

### Matthew

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his Gospel.
- **Time frame:** 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.

### James

- **Author:** James, who was Jesus' brother and the leader of the Jerusalem Church.
- **Time frame:** Most people believe the date was sometime in the mid-40s A.D.
- **Purpose:** James was seemingly writing to a Jewish audience. His message was pretty straightforward throughout the book: don't let your faith be one of words only, and live your faith powerfully. It's a message that James hammered home in direct, easy-to-grasp language. It's what makes James such a practical book for all believers.

### 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 where the author is not identified at all.
- **Time frame:** 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 is the longest psalm, and is probably the most "God's Word-centric." It is written as an acrostic using the Hebrews alphabet.

## The Main Point

There are only two main teaching points for this lesson. The first one is that God's Word should guide our daily lives, serving as a standard by which our every thought and action are measured. In short, we have to put God's Word to work in our lives! We have to *do it!* The Matthew and James passages support this thought really nicely. You'll be able to generate a lot of good learning here.

The second teaching point is that God's Word is to be something we love, something that brings us joy, something that's a very real part of our identities. That's where the selection of Psalm 119 verses comes in. Through these passages you'll pick back up on the thread you started with your students in Lesson 1.

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## 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:** To help your students check their knowledge of the Bible and determine if knowing about the Bible is the same as treasuring God's Word.
- **Set-Up:** You will need to cut 2 inch by 12-inch strips of construction paper of two contrasting colors, enough for each student to have one of each. Decide which color will be the AGREE color and which one will be the DISAGREE color.

FIRST, tell the students you are going to give them a chance to agree or disagree with some statements you are going to make about the Bible. Explain which color will be the AGREE side and which will be the DISAGREE side. Make sure each student has one strip of each color then read the following statements. After each statement tell them whether the proper response should have been to agree or disagree.

- 1) Adam was the first man on Earth. (AGREE)
- 2) God told Noah to build an ark. (AGREE)
- 3) Samson's lost his strength when his hair was cut. (AGREE)
- 4) David once killed a giant by the name of Gigantor. (DISAGREE, Goliath)
- 5) Jonah was swallowed by a great fish. (AGREE)
- 6) Jesus' mother was Ruth. (DISAGREE, Mary)
- 7) Peter was a fisherman before he followed Jesus. (AGREE)
- 8) Jesus was betrayed by a man named Judas. (AGREE)
- 9) The Apostle Paul was converted on the road to Damascus. (AGREE)
- 10) The last book of the Bible is the book of the Visions. (DISAGREE, Revelation)

NEXT, ask the students how they did and if anyone got all ten correct. Ask how many got nine correct then eight. Say that it is quite evident that the group knows a good bit about the Bible. Continue by asking the group the following questions:

- **Is it possible to know facts and trivia about the Bible without really following the teachings and loving the Word of God?**
- **What do you think it means to let God's Word be at the center of your life?**

FINALLY, point out to the students that it is important to know facts like the names of people and particular customs in the Bible but for some people, that is all the Bible is to them, just facts to learn and memorize. Tell them that if the Bible is going to be what God intended it to be in our lives then we are going have to get beyond the trivia and get into living out God's Word. Then say to the students:

- **We are at the end of a three-week study on God's Word, the Bible. Today we want to close our study with a look at how we need to let everything we do and say be guided by this wonderful book. God's Word is alive and it clearly shows us what we need to do to live out our lives as fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. We must make the Bible the center of our very being. And in today's lesson we are going to find out what that means and how to go about putting God's Word in its rightful place in our lives.**

## The Main Event

- **Goal:** To help your students understand that their lives as Christ-followers must revolve around pursuing God through engaging with His Word.
- **Set Up:** No set-up needed.

FIRST, remind your students what was covered in the first two lessons on God's Word. Tell them so far they have studied the following:

- **God's Word is seen in both commands from God, and personal messages to His people. Both of these were ways God communicated His nature and His ways to people.**
- **The Bible is God's Word and it is the best way for us to know both Him and His ways.**
- **Jesus is the Word of God and He came to earth to complete God's plan of redemption and salvation for mankind.**
- **As Christ-followers we are given the privilege of sharing this message with the world but we must be careful to do it in a way that is accurate and right.**

Explain that this week you will help them look at their personal application of the Bible and what place God's Word should really have in their lives. Tell them that this will be a very personal lesson and the focus will be on this question, "What does the Bible really mean to me?"

START by telling the students that the Bible is very clear on some things that every Believer must do with God's Word. Ask your students to open their Bibles to Matthew 7 and read or have a student read verses 24-27. Remind them that this is taken from one of Jesus most famous and important teachings, the Sermon on the Mount. It actually is at the very end of the discourse and the passage follows some very strong words Jesus used about people who were not real followers. (You may want to read verses 22-23 for a little context.)

Ask the following questions to begin the study:

- **Jesus said hearing and putting into practice His words was like a man who built his house on what?**
  - Answer: A rock
- **What do we call the thing a house or structure is built on?**
  - Answer: A foundation
- **What did Jesus say would happen to the house built on a solid foundation?**
  - Answer: It would not fall during a storm
- **What did Jesus say would happen to house that was built on a bad or sandy foundation?**
  - Answer: It would fall and crash during a storm
- **What does this have to do with the Bible?**
  - Answer: Jesus said to build our lives on the solid foundation of His teachings and to put those teachings into practice.

Say something like: **So since most of the New Testament is about Jesus and His teachings, then it would be okay to say that God wants us to make the His Word the foundation of our lives. This is really a basic step in living the life of a disciple.**

NEXT, have your students turn to the book of James read or have a student read chapter one and verses 22-25. Explain that James spends a great deal of his book talking about true faith. Begin to examine this passage by leading a discussion of the passage by asking the students the following questions:

- **In verse 22 James says that those who only listen to the Word and don't put it into practice are deceiving themselves. What do you think the word deceive means here?**
  - Answer: It means we cannot fully grasp the meaning of God's Word until we obey it, practice it, and live it.
  - *Use the illustration of a math teacher explaining how to do a problem but unless the student spends some time working the problem out they may never really learn what was being taught.*
- **Next James says that to hear the Word and not do it is like a man looking at his face in a mirror then going away and forgetting what he looks like.**
- **What do you think the mirror represents?**
  - Answer: The Word of God
- **What do you think that means?**
  - Answer: Obeying and living out God's Word each day leaves a longer impression of it in and on our lives. We are more likely to remember it if we put the Bible into practice each day.
- **James contrasts the hearers of the Word with the person who looks intently into the perfect law. Can you think what the word intently may mean here?**
  - The actual interpretation is to bend down so as to look at something closely. *Spend a few minutes talking about how we can take time to look more closely at God's Word.*
- **What do you think the perfect law is?**
  - Answer: It is the Gospel, the good news of Jesus that gives a person true spiritual freedom.
- **James says that a man will be blessed in all he does when what four things happen?**
  - Answer: He looks intently into the perfect law, continues to do this, does not forget what he has heard, and puts what he learns into motion.

THEN, read again James 1:25. Say:

- **Another to put what James is saying in this verse is to take the Bible and READ IT, STUDY IT, MEMORIZE IT, AND LIVE IT. So far we have learned that God's Word is to be the foundation of our lives by which every thought and action is measured. This becomes a reality when we pour into the Scriptures and obey the words we read, but what about our attitude towards God's Word?**

ASK your students to think about the idea of an attitude toward God's Word then read or have a student read Psalm 119: 11, 17, 97, and 105. Remind them that Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible and it is called an acrostic Psalm because it contains 22 stanzas, each one starting with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Explain that while this is a beautiful Psalm poetically, its true beauty lies in its content. Say:

- **We will look at three attitudes towards God's Word that are mentioned in Psalm 119. The first attitude is found in verse 11 and that is TREASURING the Word.**
  - The act of hiding something was only done with objects that were highly valued.
- **In verses 14 and 97 we find the next attitude which is REJOICING in the Word.**
  - The idea here is that the Word was the psalmist chief source of happiness and that is reflected in his love for the Word and his desire to spend all day just meditating on it.
- **The last attitude we find in verse 105 and that is to trust the Word as our GUIDE.**
  - Give some context here by reminding your students that in the Old Testament times the nights were very dark because there were no city lights or electricity. People used lamps to see the path they were walking on and to guide their steps.
  - Take some time to guide the students in seeing the beauty of this verse, to let God's Word be their daily guide to path through life.

FINALLY, prepare the students to move to the final section of the lesson by bringing home the idea that God's Word must be placed at the center of our lives. This comes by:

- Making God's Word the foundation of our lives.
- Reading God's Word, Studying God's Word, Memorizing God's Word, and Living God's Word.
- Having the right attitude towards God's Word which includes treasuring it, rejoicing in it, and letting it guide our lives.

Close by saying something like:

- **God's Word is awesome and powerful. For thousands of years people have been changed by it and it never grows old. Today the Bible is overlooked by society, even many Christians. We look at it as a great historical book, or something we have to have to take to youth camp, but do we really place it at the center of our lives? We have seen that God certainly intends for us to treasure and live His Word, but how do we discover or rediscover that joy we should have when we approach the Scriptures. That will be our focus as we close out this lesson.**

Transition to The Last Word application activity to wrap things up.

## The Last Word

- **Goal:** To help students explore the many different ways they can share the Word of God with people in today's world.
- **Set-Up:** You can use a dry-erase board or a piece of newsprint or poster board for this activity.

- **Goal:** To help students discover or rediscover the joy of reading and living God’s Word daily.
- **Set-Up:** You can use a dry-erase board or a piece of newsprint or poster board for this activity.

FIRST, write on the marker board or paper you have put up the words CHANGE OF \_\_\_\_\_. Tell the students there are several words that could be placed in the blank to complete this phrase, but you have one particular word in mind. Ask them to start guessing what word you are thinking about and write all of their responses on the board. (Possible answers include ADDRESS, MIND, DIRECTION, PLANS, and SEASONS but the one you are looking for is CHANGE OF HEART).

NEXT, ask your students what it means to have a change of heart. After several responses tell them that it could mean many things like a change of mind, a change of feelings, or even a change in direction. Explain that it is strange for one phrase to have so many meanings. Use this to transition to talk about the way the word heart is used in the Bible.

THEN, tell them that in Bible times the heart was viewed as the center of a person’s life physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. In fact, the Bible speaks to all of these facets of the heart but we want to focus on the spiritual side because if we want to change something about ourselves spiritually we are going to need a CHANGE OF HEART. Read the following two passages to the students:

- “As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul’s heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day.” -- 1 Samuel 10:9
- “But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.” -- Luke 8:15

NEXT, help challenge your students to find the joy that should come from reading and discovering God’s Word. Point out that the Scriptures you read mentioned two things that can cause a change of heart. The first is, like Saul, God can literally change our hearts. So the first thing to do would be to pray for God to give you a change of heart when it comes to reading His Word. Second, Jesus tells us in Luke that a good heart produces great spiritual results. The “good heart” is the result of someone who continues to hear the Word of God, stays faithful to it, and keeps a good hold on it. Tell them that this means joy comes from just staying faithful in reading God’s Word.

FINALLY, wrap up the lesson by praying for God’s Word to be at the center of their lives. Pray that they will discover the true joy of reading and treasuring each word in God’s Word.

- Remember to make the five element devotions on *God’s Word* to your students. If you’re printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. Other possibilities include texting a link to your web page where the devotions are posted or putting them on your page or the student group page on Facebook. It would also help to send out a text during the week to remind students to check out the devotions or send out a Tweet.

## 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](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com).

