

Main Idea: Psalm 19:7-11 gives us three reasons why we should value God’s Word.

- I. We should be people of the Book because it is personal.
 - A. God speaks through His creation (1-6).
 - B. God speaks through His written word (7-11).
- II. We should be people of the Book because of its potential (7-9).
 - A. It revives the soul (7a).
 - B. It makes simple people wise (7b).
 - C. It gives joy to the heart (8a).
 - D. It gives clarity to the eyes (8b).
 - E. It stands the test of time (9a).
 - F. It is completely dependable (9b).
- III. We should be people of the Book because of its purpose (10-11).
 - A. By God’s design, it satisfies (10).
 - B. By God’s design, it warns (11a).
 - C. By God’s design, it rewards (11b).

Implications: In order to be people of the Book in 2012...

1. When you begin your day, get in it.
2. When you begin your week, get under it.
3. When you commute, listen to it.
4. When you make decisions, search it.
5. When you face temptation, quote it.
6. When you have opportunity, share it.

I want to begin the new year with a challenge. It’s for you as an individual and for us collectively as a church. The challenge is to *be people of the Book*.

Do we really grasp how valuable the Bible is? Why should a person read it daily, memorize it, listen to sermons from it, meditate on it, and share it with others? What makes this book so special?

Psalm 19 tells us. I’m not sure there’s a more compelling answer anywhere in the Bible than in Psalm 19. C. S. Lewis said this about Psalm 19, “I take this to be the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world.”² But our intent in coming to Psalm 19 isn’t merely to behold a fine piece of literature. We have a question to answer. Why should we treasure the Bible? Psalm 19:7-11 gives us three convincing reasons why we should be people of the Book.

I. We should be people of the Book because it is personal.

Before looking at verses 7-11, allow me to comment briefly on the entire psalm. Psalm 19, according to the heading, is a psalm *of David*, a psalm that was put in the music directors hands so that the rest of God’s people might learn it and sing it. In the psalm David praises God because God has revealed Himself by *speaking* to mankind. According to David, God speaks in two attention-grabbing ways: one, through His works in creation (verses 1-6), that is, through what theologians call His *general revelation*; and two, through His written word (verses 7-11), which is called His *special revelation*.³

Notice that first of all...

A. God speaks through His creation (1-6). “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth **speech**; night

^{**}Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ A similar message was preached at WBC on 9/16/07 as part of a 40 Day Challenge to listen to the NT.

² C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, p 56. [taken from P. Craigie, p. 183]

³ In other words, God has revealed Himself using two great books, the sky and the Scriptures, and David studied them both.

after night they display knowledge. There is no **speech** or **language** where their **voice** is not heard. Their **voice** goes out into all the earth, their **words** to the ends of the world. In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat.”

In Psalm 8 David said he learned about God from looking at the moon and the stars. Here it’s the sun. As a shepherd boy he watched the sun rise, move across the sky, and set in the distance time after time, and through that very activity he says that God was *speaking*.

About what? What message do the heavens and skies proclaim? According to verse 1 God uses creation to declare *His glory*. Verse 2 says it happens every day without fail, and verse 3 makes it clear that no matter where you live on planet earth, you see and hear this message. God exists and He is glorious!

David is expressing poetically what Paul later puts in theological terms in Romans 1:20.⁴ “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

Can man come to know God personally through creation? No. Through general revelation we learn that God exists and that He is powerful, but we need more if we are to know Him *personally*. And He has given us more...

B. God speaks through His written word (7-11). In verses 7-11 David praises God for His special revelation, His written word, and uses six different words to refer to God’s written self-disclosure: verse 7—“The *law* of the LORD...the *statutes* of the LORD;” verse 8—“the *precepts* of the LORD...the *commands* of the LORD;” verse 9—“the *fear* of the LORD...the *ordinances* of the LORD.” These six terms represent six different, yet related facets of God’s written revelation. And with each, the source is the same: *of the LORD, of the LORD, of the LORD...*

The Book we’re talking about came *from the LORD*. That’s why it’s so valuable. No wonder David cherished it, as should we. It’s God’s message to us. It came from a person, the Greatest Person in the universe, indeed the Creator of the universe.

Why should we be people of the Book? First, because this Book is *personal*.

By the way, how much of the Bible did David possess? David lived around 1,000 B.C., some four hundred years after God gave the Pentateuch to Moses on Mount Sinai. Let that sink in. For David the “Bible” was probably only the first five books of our Bible, and maybe Joshua and Judges.⁵

To many folks today, the Pentateuch seems to be one of the *least* interesting sections of the Bible, yet David cherished it. Lane comments, “Evidently it was possible with only these few books to form a view of God complete enough to worship him and clear enough to find salvation.”⁶ Yes, David cherished and praised God for the limited portion of Scripture that he possessed, because it’s so *personal*. How much more should we who possess the entire canon!

This should effect how we read the Bible. It’s not like reading *USA Today*. It’s not just information we’re after. It’s the knowledge of a person. So whether you’re reading Leviticus or the prophet Haggai or the Gospel of John or 2 Timothy, a key question to ask

⁴ Observation by Eric Lane, p. 97.

⁵ Eric Lane suggests that Genesis through Deuteronomy were the only written Scriptures available to him, with the stories of Joshua and Judges circulating in oral form. Eric Lane, p. 98.

⁶ Eric Lane, pp. 98-99.

is always, “What is God teaching us in this passage about Himself?” He’s revealing Himself in this book. He wants us to know Him.

Which, by the way, is why we need to read the *whole book*. If you pick and choose, you end up with a limited (and potentially distorted) understanding of God. You say, “I don’t get much out of Deuteronomy. I like the Proverbs better.” Nothing wrong with reading Proverbs, for sure, but if you just keep reading your favorite verses, you’ll shortchange yourself, and worse, shortchange God.

You say, “But some parts are hard to understand.” True. That’s why I urge you to use a good study Bible, one with brief but helpful explanations, like the *NIV Study Bible*, or the *ESV Study Bible*. And when you read, don’t get distracted by what you don’t understand. Just keep asking yourself, “What does this passage reveal about God?”

So there’s the first reason. We should be people of the Book because it is *personal*.

II. We should be people of the Book because of its potential (7-9).

“The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous.”

The Bible is unlike any other book. It can accomplish things that no psychology textbook can touch and that’s because of its unique authorship. This Book didn’t originate with man. Although He used human instruments, God Himself is the author and produced a Book that is inerrant, infallible, and sufficient (see 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19-21).

So what can the Bible do that other books cannot do? David mentions and praises God for six accomplishments here. Here is the unique potential of The Book.

A. It revives the soul (7a). “The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul.” Yahweh’s law is *perfect*, says David. The Hebrew adjective *tamim* means “all sided,” and communicates the idea of *completeness*. In another context this word is used to refer to an animal with no known defect which is thus qualified to be offered to God as a sacrifice. Here it indicates that God’s revelation is whole, entire, unblemished, blameless, and complete.

And what does God’s complete Word do? It “revives the soul.” The Hebrew participle *shoob* means “to turn” or “return.” A related word appears in the familiar Psalm 23:3, “He *restores* my soul.”

There’s lots of talk about *revival* in the Bible Belt. “Our church has *revival* meetings every September. How about yours?” For starters, answer this. Did the early church have yearly “revival” meetings? Not that I’ve seen in the Scriptures. Did God’s people need and experience revival in Bible times? Absolutely. And what produced it? David says *the Book did*. The Book *revives* (puts life back into) the soul.

Do we really believe that? I’m not against having special meetings, but I am against the notion that we can manufacture revival by putting it on our schedule. We can’t produce revival. The question is, do we really believe that the ministry of the Word of God *can*, that it is sufficient to bring revival to the souls of men and women, and boys and girls in this community? You see, the Bible can do soul work. By contrast...

1. *Man-made solutions are superficial.* It’s sort of like rearranging furniture on the sinking Titanic. Quite frankly, that’s the best that man-crafted and man-centered theories and techniques can accomplish. But know this...

2. *God’s Word offers solutions to our deepest needs.* Far from being superficial, the Bible goes deep and gets to the core issues in the hearts of men and women. Hebrews

4:12 states, “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

Are you feeling dry spiritually? Then prioritize a steady intake of God’s Word this month. Do it daily in your own home, and weekly with God’s people. And then do it again next month, and the next. This Book can revive the soul. What’s more...

B. It makes simple people wise (7b). “The statutes [‘testimony’ in the KJV] of the LORD are trustworthy [Hebrew *‘aman*, ‘to be true, established, firm’], making wise the simple.”

David has a particular type of person in mind here, called ‘the simple.’ The root of this word means “to be open, spacious, wide.” A simple person is an immature person, one who is vulnerable to external enticements. It’s the person who is easily persuaded, even deceived. *Naïve* would fit. So would *gullible*. His problem?

1. *A simple person has an open door on his brain.* Every goes in and then everything goes out.⁷ To use computer terminology, the person who has no anti-virus protection. He takes in everything he hears. “A simple man believes anything (Prov. 14:15).” Consequently, “The simple inherit folly (Prov. 14:18).”

If you want to know why our country is in a moral free-fall, here it is. It’s not a lack of knowledge (we’ve got more educational opportunities than ever). The problem is we’ve forgotten how to close the doors on our brains. In fact, society actually urges us to be open-minded and promotes whole-scale tolerance and acceptance. We’re told to forget about absolute standards of right and wrong, and assured that everything is right if you think it’s right. And so drugs are rampant, sexually transmitted diseases are rampant, violent crime is rampant, the tragic consequences of living with a revolving door on the brain.

Can a person please God in times like these? Absolutely! David says that God’s Word “makes wise the simple.” In other words...

2. *God’s Word teaches a person to be discerning.* When you read the Bible, it puts filters in place, pop-up blockers: “That piece of information can enter. Hold it! Not that piece, you’re out of here!” And so on.

Reading the Bible doesn’t necessarily make you smart (although I can recall my grandmother talking about using the Bible as part of her one-room-school curriculum). It does make you *wise*. It gives you practical insight into how to raise a family, how to run your business, what to do if you’ve got an interpersonal problem, and more.

Parents, if you want to prepare your children to succeed in the real world, listen to David. Make sure you are giving them God’s Word. Teach them God’s Word at home. Take advantage of the many opportunities the church offers to help you (like this year’s CDT that begins tomorrow). It’s a proven fact. This Book prepares people for life in the real world. That’s not all...

C. It gives joy to the heart (8a). “The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart.” God’s precepts are *right*, not “right” as opposed to “wrong,” but right in the sense that they show us the *right path* to walk in life. The Bible reveals how to *live right*. It’s like an instruction manual for life.

And what happens when you follow the instructions? This Book, when followed, “gives joy to the heart.”

I talk with people all the time who are looking for joy. In many cases they’re shelling out a lot of money and time in their pursuit of joy, yet at the end of the day they’re like the hamster on a wheel. It’s a fact...

⁷ I heard John MacArthur share this insight 1/24/90 in a pastor’s seminar at Cedarville University.

1. *People are looking for joy in all the wrong places.* You'll never find lasting joy in the world because we didn't lose our joy there. The Bible indicates that mankind lost God's gift of joy back in the garden when Adam and Eve turned away from God and transgressed His Word. Yet there's hope!

2. *God's Word offers a certain guarantee.* "The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart." There's the guarantee. The Book gives joy to human hearts.

What exactly is joy? Joy isn't synonymous with happiness, although the concepts are certainly related. Joy is the settled confidence that all is well between you and God.⁸

You see, when you build your life on the Book you don't have to wonder where you stand with God. You can know that all is well between you and God because He says so, in the Book!

Let me clarify something. You don't make yourself right with God by obeying the Book. The same Book that shows us how to live makes it clear that we all fall short. There are hundreds of God-given commands in the Pentateuch, and David fell short. There are thousands of God-given commands in the entire Bible, and we fall short. The solution? God sent Someone into the world who *didn't fall short*. Indeed, this Someone, Jesus the Christ, kept the entire Law of God perfectly, and God offers the merit of this Person to you, if you will admit your sin and receive Him as your Savior. Indeed, this Person, after living a perfect life, chose to die as a substitute for sinners, to pay their penalty as law-breakers. Consequently, by means of this Person's atoning death, God offers forgiveness and new life to all who will place their trust in Him.

But there's more! The moment a sinner believes in this perfect Person, God credits the merit of this perfect Person to his or her account (see Heb. 10:14). By means of that merit, the now justified sinner has the ability to do what he or she could *not* do previously, and that is to *live by the Book*.

Friends, it's all about knowing Christ! Prior to knowing Christ this Book judges us and condemns us, continually reminding us that we've fallen short. But after trusting in Christ, this Book gives joy to our hearts, Christ-centered, Christ-exalting, Christ-honoring joy that comes because His Book is now being lived out in our lives by His power.

But there's more!

D. It gives clarity to the eyes (8b). "The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes." The word 'radiant' ['pure' in the KJV] speaks of that which is *clean* (Prov. 14:4 "Where no oxen are, the crib is *clean*"). God's Word is absolutely free from any moral fault. Psalm 12:6 puts it this way, "The words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times."

When someone says, "I'm not satisfied with my life. I'm going to *clean up* my act," what the person means is that he intends to make some changes to make life better. And what source does David say can facilitate this effort to *clean up our lives*? This Book can.

What specifically can the radiant commands of God's Book do? They "give light to the eyes," says David. Our eyes are what we use to look at life. God's Word enables us to look at life and see what it's all about.

We might say the Bible is like a pair of eyeglasses. I've got near-sightedness in both eyes. Without my glasses, life is fuzzy, but with them I can see clearly.

The Bible helps us see life rightly, from God's perspective. That means...

1. *When making decisions, look to the Book.* This Book talks about what kind of person to marry, how to raise children, what to do with our money, and more. In fact,

⁸ Observation by John MacArthur, 1/25/90 at Cedarville College.

God has given us *everything* we need for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). And when you're making decisions remember this very important principle...

2. *God's will never violates God's Word.* "I'm going to marry Andy," says Alison. "He's not a believer yet, but I know God wants us together." If Alison is a believer and Andy isn't, then *I know God doesn't want them together.* How do I know? Because He said so. Where? In the Book (1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor 6:14). God's will never violates God's Word. Positively stated, God's Word gives clarity to our eyes.

E. It stands the test of time (9a). "The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever." The 'fear of the Lord' refers to the response God's Word will produce in our lives. We might say...

1. *The Bible is a manual on fearing God.* That is, the Bible shows us how to reverence God, how to take Him seriously in day to day living. At the shop, on the ball court, in the lunch room, in your living room watching television. The Bible shows us how to put God at the center of life.

Here's an example. Here's a great passage to write on a 3x5 card and put right above your television screen. Psalm 101:2-3 says, "I will be careful to lead a blameless life—when will you come to me? I will walk in my house with blameless heart. I will set before my eyes no vile thing."

If you followed that resolve, "I will set before my eyes no vile thing," would it eliminate any movies or shows you've watched recently? You see, the Bible makes *fearing God* come alive. We can't see Him, but His Word helps us look at life in ways that please Him. And know this about the Book...

2. *It will never go out of print.* "Enduring forever," says David. The term 'enduring' literally means, "standing." This Book has stood and will stand the test of time. As far as potential goes, David tells us one more thing about God's Word.

F. It is completely dependable (9b). "The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous." The term 'ordinance' refers to a decision made in a legal court, a *judgment* [as the KJV renders the word]. God's decisions as revealed in His Word are two things.

First, they are *sure*. The root idea is 'firmness, certainty, and support.' For instance, when a helpless infant is held in the strong arms of a loving parent, it feels *firmness, certainty, and support*. Simply put, God's Word is *reliable*. You can trust it and build your life on it. Here's why...

David says, it is *altogether righteous*. If you came to church this morning thinking, "I just don't know what's *right* any more. Life is so crazy!" then look to the Book. It's always *right*. Here's why...

1. *It came from a righteous God.* God always does what's right. God always *says* what's right. So what this Book says, from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22, is *right*. Yet there's another reason His Word is altogether righteous...

2. *It makes people righteous.* How? By pointing us to the Righteous One, Jesus Christ, and then through Him showing us how to live rightly.

Now let that sink in. The Book you are holding revives the soul, makes the simple wise, gives joy to the heart, gives clarity to the eyes, stands the test of time, and is completely dependable. That's what I call *potential!* And a book that can do *that* is a book we ought to treasure!

Yet another word of caution is in order. We *treasure* the Book but we don't *worship* the Book. If we're truly people of the Book, then we'll worship the *Author* of the Book.

The tragic reality is that it's possible to study the Book, to memorize the Book, even to teach the Book, and not know the Author of the Book. Do you remember what Jesus told the religious leaders? Listen to these sobering words in John 5:39-40, "You

diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”

My aim this morning is to convince you of the value of being people of the Book in 2012. I’ve laid before you two reasons in support. One because it is *personal*—the author of this book is the greatest Person in the universe, God Himself. Two, because of its *potential*—this book revives souls, makes simple minded people wise, and so on. Here’s a third reason.

III. We should be people of the Book because of its purpose (10-11).

“They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.”

Why did God give the world this Book? David tells us right here. By God’s design this book accomplishes three things.

A. By God’s design, it satisfies (10). Just how satisfying are the words in this Book? David says, “They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.” How specifically is the Bible better than gold? David mentions two ways in verse 11...

B. By God’s design, it warns (11a). “By them is your servant *warned*.” I’m not smart enough to navigate through the minefield of this world. I need warning signs, and I have them in the Book. Thirdly...

C. By God’s design, it rewards (11b). “In keeping them there is *great reward*.” How great is the reward? *More precious than gold*, says David, *much pure gold*.

You can do a lot with gold. You can buy a house, cars, furniture, vacations, yes, if you’ve got gold, it’s all yours.

But gold can’t turn your house into a God-honoring, joy-filled home. And gold can’t calm an anxious heart, or fix a broken marriage. And gold can’t warn you of dangers to your soul. And it certainly can’t reward you with eternal life. But the Book can.

Why cherish this Book? Because of its *purpose*. The Bible can help a young person stay pure (Psalm 119:9, 11). The Bible offers true success (Josh. 1:8). The Bible can deliver you from an enslaving habit (Ps. 119:133). The Bible can help you grow to be the person God wants you to be (1 Pet. 2:2). The Bible can sanctify you (John 17:17), protect you (Ps. 119:25), guide you (Ps. 119:105), and equip you for a life of God-honoring service (2 Tim. 3:17).

I hope by now you’re convinced. We ought to treasure the Bible because it’s *personal*, because of its *potential*, and because of its God-given *purpose*. The question now is *how*? How do you show you cherish the Bible? Do you put in under covered glass, like you would a rare coin, or under lock and key, as you would a precious gem? No, you *wear it out*.

It was a long time ago, but when my daughters were toddlers they both had a slew of stuffed animals. But they each had one particular stuffed animal that was in a class by itself. For one it was “Bob Bear” and for the other it was “Pepper Dog.” And how did the girls show that they treasured those special friends? By taking them with them wherever they went, and absolutely *wearing them out*.

What’s the evidence that you truly love the Bible? It’s not complicated. *You wear it out*. It’s true. If you value the Bible, then you read it, study it, think about it, memorize it, listen to sermons from it at church, on the radio, online, and so on. You don’t merely dabble in the Bible. You devour it! You can’t get enough of it. It’s not the ink on the pages that you love. It’s the Person in the Book, the Person who gave the Book, the

Person who speaks through the Book that you treasure. You show you love the Book *by wearing it out*.

It's been well said, "A Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to a person who's not falling apart."

My friend, let's be honest with ourselves. You don't believe the Bible is a treasure if you don't desire it more than gold and honey.

You may say, "I don't have time to read my Bible today." Answer this. Do you have time to go to work, and do you have time to eat? If you have time to go earn some gold and eat some honey, then you have *time*. The question is, which do you desire *more*, gold and honey, or that which is more precious than gold and sweeter than honey?

Let's get practical now. Let's talk action.

Implications: In order to be people of the Book in 2012...

You and I need to do six things.

1. *When you begin your day, get in it.* Get a Bible reading schedule, and every day, before you move into the demands of life, *get in the Book*. If this is new to you, start small. Seven minutes—start with a minute of prayer, asking God for wisdom, read five minutes, then close with a minute of prayer, thanking Him for the Book and asking for help in applying it. Do it before anything else, before you turn on the tv, before you eat breakfast, before you check Facebook. When you begin your day, take the Book and *get in it*.

2. *When you begin your week, get under it.* Sunday is the first day of the week, and every Sunday there are Sunday School lessons and sermons prepared to nourish your soul. But in order to benefit from that nourishment, you need to make a choice. You need to *get under it*. If you knew we were passing out \$100 bills every Sunday for those who came to SS and to the morning and evening worship services—that's \$300 every Sunday that's yours just for showing up—would you come? Well, every Sunday you have the opportunity to receive something that is more precious than gold. So when you begin your day, *get in it*. And when you begin your week, *get under it*.

3. *When you commute, listen to it.* Most of us spend a lot of time in our cars, traveling to and from work or school or the store or picking up kids. Why not use that time to listen to God's Word, to the reading of it, to the preaching of it, to the singing of it?

We're talking about how to be *people of the Book* in 2012. Get in it each day. Get under it each week. Listen to it when you commute. Next...

4. *When you make decisions, search it.* All of us will make decisions this year. Some of you will decide where to go to college, or who to marry, or whether to take another job, or whether to buy a house. Here's my challenge. When you make decisions this year, search the Book first. God Almighty will help you choose that which pleases Him if you'll open up His Word.

5. *When you face temptation, quote it.* That's what Jesus did when tempted. He quoted the Book (see Matt 4:4, 7, 10). This Book unleashes the power of God! But of course, you can't quote what you don't know. We need to memorize the Book. You say, "I can't memorize it." Sure you can, but not without repetition. You need to go over it and over it and over it, day after day. And the best way I know is to *sing it*. Connect it to music. Write your own Scripture songs, or sing those written by others.

I hesitate to share this because I don't want to draw attention to myself, but I do so to encourage you. About ten years ago I started doing something in my Bible reading time that's really helped me. When I read a verse or passage that particularly challenges me, I write it on a piece of paper, and take my guitar, and write a little song to memorize it.

The songs aren't for entertainment, but memory aids. I don't know how many there are. I've never counted them, but this process has helped me hide dozens and dozens of verses, probably more than a hundred, in my heart. And those verses are some of the weapons that help me stand when I face temptation.

Here's one that helps me start the day—Psalm 59:16-17 (“But I will sing of your strength; in the morning I will sing of your love...”). Here's another that helps me when I'm feeling anxious—Psalm 94:18-18 (“When I said, ‘My foot is slipping,’ your love, O LORD, supported me...”). Here's one that helps me reflect on the cross—Hebrews 10:14 (“Because by one sacrifice, he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy”). Here's one that helps me keep my priorities straight—Galatians 6:14 (“May I never boast except in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”).

A few years ago we recorded twelve Scripture songs and put them on a CD to help us as a church memorize God's Word. If you'd like one, they're available on the table.

One more challenge. In order to be people of the Book in 2012...

6. *When you have opportunity, share it.* Don't keep the gold to yourself. Share the wealth! Let's share God's Word with each other, during our fellowship times, when we're debriefing after worship services, over lunch, etc. And let's share it with people at work and school. It's another way to be *people of the Book* in 2012.

I don't know who wrote the following poem, but I heard Don Jennings quote it years ago in college chapel. It's the testimony of my life, and I'd like to close by singing it for you...

*Though the cover is worn, and the pages are
torn, and though places bear traces of tears,
yet more precious than gold is this Book worn
and old, that can shatter and scatter my fears.*

*This old Book is my guide, it's a friend by my
side, it will lighten and brighten my way; and
each promise I find soothes and gladdens the
mind, as I read it and heed it each day.*

*When I prayerfully look, in the precious old Book,
Many pleasures and treasures I see;
Many tokens of love, from the Father above,
Who is nearest and dearest to me.*

*To this Book I will cling, of its worth I will sing,
though great losses and crosses be mine; for I
cannot despair, though surrounded by care,
while possessing this blessing divine.⁹*

⁹ Author unknown