

Main Idea: Reformation Sunday reminds us that we are people of the Book. And why is this? Psalm 19:7-11 gives us three reasons as to why we love the Book.

- I. We love 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 love 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 love 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).

Make It Personal: If you love the Book...

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.

Today is Reformation Sunday. What is Reformation Sunday? Stephen Nichols offers this helpful answer in an article taken from Ligonier Ministries:

A single event on a single day changed the world. It was October 31, 1517. Brother Martin, a monk and a scholar, had struggled for years with his church, the church in Rome. He had been greatly disturbed by an unprecedented indulgence sale. The story has all the makings of a Hollywood blockbuster. Let’s meet the cast.

First, there is the young bishop—too young by church laws—Albert of Mainz. Not only was he bishop over two bishoprics, he desired an additional archbishopric over Mainz. This, too, was against church laws. So Albert appealed to the pope in Rome, Leo X. From the De Medici family, Leo X greedily allowed his tastes to exceed his financial resources. Enter the artists and sculptors, Raphael and Michelangelo.

When Albert of Mainz appealed for a papal dispensation, Leo X was ready to deal. Albert, with the papal blessing, would sell indulgences for past, present, and future sins. All of this sickened the monk Martin Luther. Can we buy our way into heaven? Luther had to speak out.

But why October 31? November 1 held a special place in the church calendar as All Saints’ Day. On November 1, 1517, a massive exhibit of newly acquired relics would be on display at Wittenberg, Luther’s home city. Pilgrims would come from all over, genuflect before the relics, and take hundreds, if not thousands, of years off time in purgatory. Luther’s soul grew even more vexed. None of this seemed right.

Martin Luther, a scholar, took quill in hand, dipped it in his inkwell and penned his Ninety-Five Theses on October 31, 1517. These were intended to spark a debate, to stir some soul-searching among his fellow brothers in the church. The Ninety-Five

** 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 For earlier messages preached at WBC on this passage, see 9/16/07, and 1/8/12.

Theses sparked far more than a debate. The Ninety-Five Theses also revealed the church was far beyond rehabilitation. It needed a reformation. The church—and the world—would never be the same.

One of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses simply declares, "The Church's true treasure is the gospel of Jesus Christ." That alone is the meaning of Reformation Day. The church had lost sight of the gospel because it had long ago papered over the pages of God's Word with layer upon layer of tradition. Mere tradition often brings about systems of works, of earning your way back to God. It was true of the Pharisees, and it was true of medieval Roman Catholicism. Didn't Christ Himself say, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light"? Reformation Day celebrates the joyful beauty of the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ.

What is Reformation Day? It is the day the light of the gospel broke forth out of darkness. It was the day that began the Protestant Reformation. It was a day that led to Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, and many other Reformers helping the church find its way back to God's Word as the only supreme authority for faith and life and leading the church back to the glorious doctrines of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. It kindled the fires of missionary endeavors, it led to hymn writing and congregational singing, and it led to the centrality of the sermon and preaching for the people of God. It is the celebration of a theological, ecclesiastical, and cultural transformation.

So we celebrate Reformation Day. This day reminds us to be thankful for our past and to the monk turned Reformer. What's more, this day reminds us of our duty, our obligation, to keep the light of the gospel at the center of all we do.²

Scripture Reading: Psalm 19

Why is the pulpit the central piece of furniture in our church? Why did Martin Luther nail 95 theses on the door to the church at Wittenberg, Germany 504 years ago? The questions are connected, and the answer has to with an even more fundamental question that I want us to ask ourselves today.

Why do we love this Book? We do love this Book, but why? Why do we make the preaching of it central to our ministry as a church? Why do we encourage every person to read it daily, memorize it, listen to sermons from it, meditate on it, and share it with others? What makes this book so special?

I'm not sure there's a more compelling answer anywhere in the Bible than in Psalm 19. Regarding Psalm 19, C. S. Lewis said, "I take this to be the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world."³ Psalm 19:7-11 gives us three convincing reasons why we should be people of the Book.

I. We love the Book because it is personal.

According to the heading, Psalm 19 is a psalm *of David*, a psalm that was put in the choir director's 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*

² <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/what-is-reformation-day>

³ C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, p 56. [taken from P. Craigie, p. 183]

revelation; and two, through His written word (verses 7-11), which is called His *special revelation*.⁴

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 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 expresses poetically what Paul later expresses in theological terms in Romans 1:20. “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.”⁵

Can people 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 graciously 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*.

Keep in mind how much of the Book David possessed. He lived around 1,000 BC, some four hundred years after God gave the Pentateuch to Moses on Mount Sinai. So for David, the Book that he loved was only the first five books of our Bible, and maybe Joshua and Judges.⁶

To many 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

⁴ In other words, God has revealed Himself using two great books, the sky and the Scriptures, and David studied them both.

⁵ Observation by Eric Lane, p. 97.

⁶ 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.

find salvation.”⁷ Yes, David cherished and praised God for the limited portion of Scripture that he possessed, because it’s so *personal*. And we have the whole thing!

This should affect 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, the most important question to ask is always, “What is God teaching us in this passage about Himself?”

He wants us to know Him. He’s revealing Himself in this book.

This, by the way, is why we need to read the *whole book*. If we pick and choose, we end up with a limited (and likely 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 others whom you teach) of the fullest picture of Himself that God intends to give us through this Book.

You say, “But some parts are hard to understand.” True. That’s why we study this book together. The Lord has given different gifts to His body, including teaching gifts. On a practical note, 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*. Take advantage of the gifts God has given His church in the study of His Word. And don’t get distracted by what you don’t understand. Just keep asking yourself as you read, “What does this passage reveal about God?”

This is the first reason we should be people of the Book, because it is *personal*.

II. We love the Book because of its potential (7-9).

Listen to the NIV, “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 other book can accomplish. Why? It’s because 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).

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.” The Hebrew adjective for “perfect” (*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.”

I find it interesting how people think about *revival* in the Bible Belt. For many, revival is essentially a series of church meetings in the fall and spring. Did the early church put revival meetings on their calendar? Not that I’ve seen in the Scriptures. Did people need revival in Bible times? At times. Did they experience it? Yes. But what produced it? David says *the Book did*. The Book *revives* (puts life back into) the soul.

⁷ Eric Lane, pp. 98-99.

Friends, *we* can't produce revival, but the Book can. Do we really believe that the ministry of the Word of God is sufficient to bring revival to the barren souls of men and women, and boys and girls in our community? The Book revives the soul.

By contrast...

1. *Man-made solutions are superficial.* There are many self-help books out there. What kind of help do they offer? Compared to God's Word, it's like rearranging the deck furniture on a sinking Titanic. They address behavior, at best, but not the heart.

2. *God's Word offers solutions to our deepest needs.* The Bible goes deep and speaks to the core issues in the hearts of men and women. Hebrews 4:12 explains, "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 a spiritual lethargy today? Then prioritize a steady intake of God's Word this coming 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.

B. It makes simple people wise (7b). "The statutes ['testimony' in the ESV & KJV] of the LORD are trustworthy ['sure' in the ESV; 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.* Everything goes in and then everything goes out.⁸ To use a computer analogy, 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)."

Right here is why our country is in a moral free-fall. It's not a lack of knowledge (we have more educational opportunities than ever). The problem is we've forgotten how to close the doors on our brains.

Think about it. We live in a society that actually urges us to be open-minded, to tolerate and accept *everything*. Except one thing. We're told we must reject any absolute standard of right and wrong, that everything is right if you think it's right. And the daily headlines we read are the testimony of what this kind of thinking is producing.

Is there a remedy? Yes. David says that God's Word "makes wise the simple."

2. *God's Word teaches a person to be discerning.* When you read the Bible, it puts filters in place, pop-up blockers, that say, "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 my grandmother used to talk 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 the upcoming Counseling and Discipleship Training course that begins in January). The evidence is clear. This Book makes simple people wise.

⁸ I heard John MacArthur share this insight 1/24/90 in a pastor's seminar at Cedarville University.

C. It gives joy to the heart (8a). “The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart (ESV “rejoicing 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.” All around us are people 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 sort of like the hamster on a spinning wheel. The problem?

1. *People are looking for joy in all the wrong places.* We’ll never find lasting joy in the world. Why not? 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 His Word. But here is where the grace of God enters.

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.⁹

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 with God because He says so in the Book!

Let me clarify something. We don’t make ourselves 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.

And it’s a good thing, a necessary thing, to admit that we have fallen short. Why? Because there’s a solution for those who have fallen short. The solution? God sent Someone into the world who *didn’t fall short*.

Indeed, this Someone is Jesus the Christ, and He kept the entire Law of God perfectly. Now God offers the merit of this Person’s perfect obedience to you, if you will admit your transgression and receive Him as your Savior. Indeed, this Person, after living a perfect life, chose to die as a substitute for sinners like you and me. He paid our penalty as law-breakers, then overcame our foe of death, and now, on the basis of His Son’s atoning work, God offers forgiveness and eternal life to all who will trust in Him.

And yet, there’s more! The moment a sinner believes in this perfect Person, God credits the merit of His perfect Son to the sinner’s account (see Heb. 10:14). That means 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*.

Oh my friend, this is why we talk so much about knowing Christ! Prior to knowing Christ, this Book judges us and condemns us, continually reminding us that we’ve fallen short. But once we come to know Christ, this Book gives us joy, Christ-centered, Christ-exalting joy that comes because He causes His Book to come alive in our lives.

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 ESV & 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 life. I’m going to *clean up* my act,” the person means 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.

⁹ Observation by John MacArthur in a sermon I heard on 1/25/90 at Cedarville College.

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.

I've got near-sightedness in both eyes. Without my glasses, life is fuzzy, but with them I can see clearly. We might say the Bible is like a pair of eyeglasses. The Bible helps us see life rightly, from God's perspective. That means...

1. *When making decisions, look to the Book.* In this Book, God talks to us about what kind of person to marry, how to raise children, what to do with our money, and more. In fact, 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 Bob," says Mary. "He's not a believer yet, but I know God wants us together." If Mary is a believer and Bob isn't, then *I know God doesn't want* them to marry. 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 [ESV 'clean'], 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 field, in the lunch room, in your living room watching television. The Bible shows us how to put God at the center of life.

For example, here's a great passage to put on your computer 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 we followed that resolve, "I will set before my eyes no vile thing," would it affect the sites we visited online? Indeed. 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...

2. *It will never go out of print.* "Enduring forever," says David. 'Enduring' literally means, "standing." This Book has stood and will stand the test of time.

As far as potential goes, David mentions one more accomplishment.

F. It is completely dependable (9b). "The rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether (ESV)." In the NIV, "The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous." The term 'rule/ordinance' refers to a decision made in a legal court, a *judgment* [KJV]. 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 is always *right*, and 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*.

2. *It makes people righteous.* How? Not by merely saying, "You better do right!", but by pointing us to the Righteous One, Jesus Christ, who shows us how to live rightly and gives us the power to do it.

Now, let all this 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!

At this point, we need to make a careful distinction. We *treasure* the Book, but we don't *worship* the Book. We worship the *Author* of the Book, and therefore treasure what He has given us.

The reality is, 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 in John 5:39-40? Sobering words indeed. "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 objective this Reformation Sunday morning is to answer the question, "Why do we love the Book?" We've seen two reasons so far. 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.

III. We love 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. Three purposes.

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." Gold. Honey. What do they have in common? We desire them. Why? They do something for us. They bring satisfaction.

But the Bible is better than gold. How so? 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 God graciously gives them to me in the Book.

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 joy-filled, God-honoring home. And gold can't calm your anxious heart, or fix your broken relationships. Friends, gold can't warn us of dangers to our soul, and it certainly can't reward us with eternal life. But the Book can.

Why love this Book? Because of its *purpose*. The Book can help a young person stay pure (Psalm 119:9, 11). The Book offers a man true success (Josh. 1:8). The Book delivers a woman from an enslaving habit (Ps. 119:133). The Book can help you grow to become the person God wants you to be (1 Pet. 2:2). The Book 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 Book because it's *personal*, because of its *potential*, and because of its God-given *purpose*.

But that raises an important question. *How?* How do we show that we love the Book? Do we put it under covered glass, like we would a rare coin, or under lock and key, as we would a precious gem? No, we *wear it out*.

Many years ago, 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 Julie, it was "Bob Bear" and for Katie, it was "Pepper Dog." How did our girls show that

they treasured those special friends? By taking them with them wherever they went, and absolutely *wearing them out*.

Friends, there's the evidence that you truly love the Book. It's not complicated. *You wear it out*. If we value the Book, we read it, study it, think about it, memorize it, listen to sermons from it at church, online, and so on. We don't treat the Book like a trophy. We devour it! We can't get enough of it. It's not the ink on the pages that we love. It's the Person in the Book, the Person who gave us the Book, the Person who speaks to us through the Book that we treasure. We show we love the Book *by wearing it out*.

Brothers and sisters, let's be honest. We're not treasuring the Book as we ought if we aren't desiring it more than gold and honey.

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

Make It Personal: If you love the Book...

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, *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 service and to community groups—that's \$300 every Sunday that's yours just for showing up—would you come? Well, every Lord's Day we have the opportunity to receive something much 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, the preaching of it, the singing of it?

4. *When you make decisions, search it.* All of us are making decisions, all the time. Some of you right now are deciding where to go to college, and who to marry, and whether to take another job, and whether to buy a house. Here's my challenge. When you are making decisions, search the Book first. The God who saved you 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, we can't quote what we don't know. We need to memorize the Book. And the best way I know is to *sing it*. Connect it to music.

6. *When you have opportunity, share it.* Let's not keep the gold to ourselves. Let's 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.

I don't know who wrote the following poem, but I heard Don Jennings quote it years ago in college chapel. May this be the testimony of our lives.

*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.¹⁰*

Closing Song: #273 “Holy Bible, Book Divine” (all four verses)

Community Group Discussion:

1. This morning’s message was a special Reformation Sunday message entitled, “*Why We Love the Book.*” What is Reformation Sunday? What happened on this day in 1517? Why is it important for us to know and remember what happened on that day? What does it have to do with us today?
2. In this morning’s message we looked at Psalm 19:7-11. Take time now to read again this wonderful passage. According to the psalmist, there are many reasons as to why we ought to love the Word of God. What are some of the reasons he mentions? Pick one that is particularly meaningful to you, and share it with the group.
3. According to verses 7-9, what is true of the Bible that is true of no other book? According to verses 10-11, what can the Bible do that no other book can do?
4. Do you have a favorite verse or passage in the Bible? If so, what is it, and why is it special? Have several people share their answers with the group.
5. When we love someone or something, it shows. At the end of this morning’s message, we considered six ways we can show that we love the Book. Take time to review these ways, then discuss other ways, and then pray for grace to appropriate these ways this week.

¹⁰ Author unknown