



# Transformed by Experiencing Scripture

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*“Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path”*  
(Psalm 119:105).

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*“Like newborn babes, long for  
the pure milk of the word, so  
that by it you may grow”*  
(1 Peter 2:2).

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## I. INTRODUCTION: NOURISHED BY THE LIGHT OF THE WORD

Spirit-empowered disciples grow in maturity as they are nourished by the Word of God. Satan sought to tempt Christ in the desert, but Christ overcame Him by continuing to walk in the light of the Word of God (Matthew 4:1–11). His declarations speak to the power and necessity of being nourished by the Word: *“Man shall not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God”* (Matthew 4:4). As we live out the divine calling to express and extend God’s presence in a dark world, we must take full advantage of every opportunity to encounter God in His Word and to experience its nourishing benefits and blessings.



This teaching outline was developed in support of the resource, *Transforming Love*, for small groups. Check out this resource and many others today at: [greatcommandment.net/resources](http://greatcommandment.net/resources)



**W5. Meditating consistently on more and more of the Word hidden in the heart**

**Colossians 3:16 Moment:**  
*"Let the Word of Christ dwell deeply in you."*

**Pastor/Teacher:**  
Pause during this time and vulnerably share about how you could use more nourishment from God's Word.

- As we **HEAR** the Word taught preached, and shared, our faith will be strengthened.  
*"Faith comes from hearing the message"* (Romans 10:17).
- As we **READ** the Word, we will be blessed.  
*"Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy"* (Revelation 1:3).
- As we **STUDY** the Word, we will be approved by God as —  
*"a workman who . . . correctly handles the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15).
- As we **MEMORIZE** the Word, we will be less vulnerable to sin.  
*"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you"* (Psalm 119:11).
- As we **MEDITATE** upon the Word, our yielding to it will increase.  
*"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it"* (Joshua 1:8).  
Meditation upon the Word will also produce spiritual prosperity, health, and fruitfulness (Psalm 1:1–3).

### Engage Community

#### Pause and Reflect

How many of these five ways of being nourished by the Word of God have you taken advantage of this past week?

Sadly, too many of God's children remain babes, as week by week they come to hear God's Word preached or taught by others but rarely take advantage of other avenues of nourishment.

What other ways of "feeding upon" the Word might you desire to pursue at this time? How might you go about it?

*I could use more nourishment by \_\_\_\_\_ (hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, meditating) God's Word more. I could do this by \_\_\_\_\_.*

**For example:** *Memorizing—by memorizing four scriptures this month*

*Reading—by following a daily Bible reading plan in order to read my Bible every day*

*Studying—by joining a small group that studies the Bible or asking a mentor to study the Bible with me*

**Pause to share with one or two others and then pray together for being additionally nourished by the Word.**

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*“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness”*  
(2 Timothy 3:16).

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**One significant purpose of God’s Word is to teach us what we should believe.**

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## II. THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE FOR DOCTRINE AND BEHAVIOR

Paul’s words to Timothy reveal four important functions which Scripture performs in the life of the true disciple: it serves to teach, to rebuke, to correct, and to train. We will consider the first three of these functions as we examine Scripture’s revelation concerning right doctrine and right behavior.

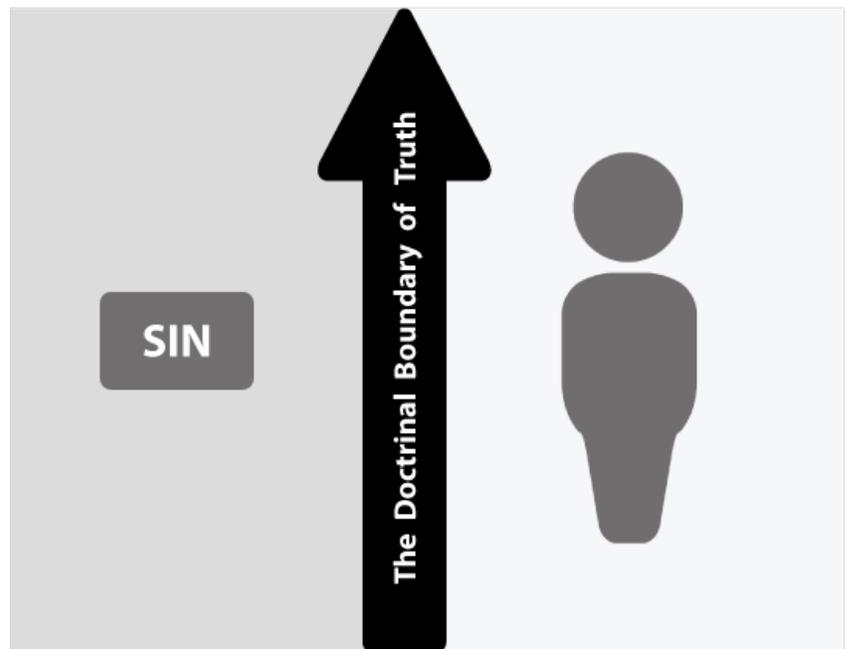
### A. Teaching Right Doctrine—The Rational Purpose of Scripture

One significant purpose of God’s Word is to teach us what we should believe. The darkness of human philosophies and belief systems is pierced by the light of Scripture:

- The darkness of universalism claims there are many gods, all of which give equal access to eternal life. The light of Scripture declares, *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12).
- The darkness of humanism, which places man at the center of all things, is exposed as error by the light of Scripture’s first four words: *“In the beginning God . . .”* (Genesis 1:1).
- The darkness of materialism is exposed as a lie to disciples who walk in the light of Christ’s warning, *“What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?”* (Mark 8:36).

Faithful disciples long to receive right doctrine as they hear, read, study, memorize, and meditate on God’s Word.

### THE RATIONAL PURPOSE OF TRUTH



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*“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness”*  
(2 Timothy 3:16).

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A second valuable purpose of God’s Word is to reveal to us how we should live. Scripture has been given to rebuke (confront what is wrong) and correct (define what is right and equip us to do it).

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## B. Rebuking and Correcting—The Behavioral Purpose of Scripture

A second valuable purpose of God’s Word is to reveal to us how we should live. Scripture has been given to rebuke (confront what is wrong) and correct (define what is right and equip us to do it). The rebukes of Scripture help us to identify areas of darkness, while the corrections of Scripture point us toward the light.

- The darkness of man’s selfishness and immorality is rebuked by Scripture:

*“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God”*  
(Galatians 5:19–21).

Scripture then provides correction as it reveals God’s light:

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law”* (Galatians 5:22–23).

- The darkness of **harsh, critical words** is rebuked by Scripture:

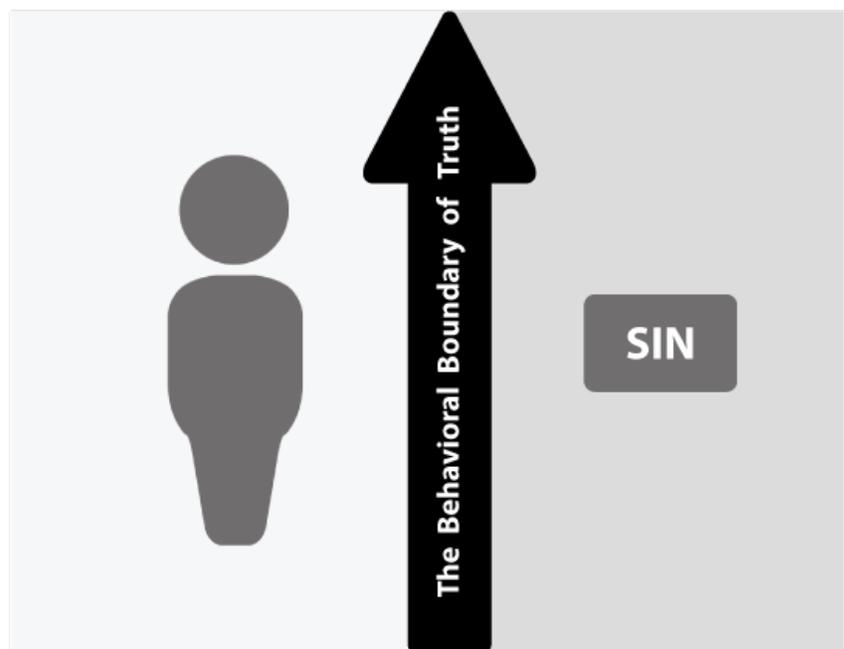
*“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth . . .”*

Correction is then provided as Scripture guides the disciple into God’s light:

*“but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear”*  
(Ephesians 4:29).

Faithful disciples long to receive from Scripture both reproof and correction for right living as they hear, read, study, memorize, and meditate on the Word.

### THE BEHAVIORAL PURPOSE OF TRUTH





**W3. Yielding to the Scripture's protective cautions and transforming power to bring life change in me**

**Colossians 3:16 Moment:**  
*"Let the Word of Christ dwell deeply in you."*

**Pastor/Teacher:**  
Pause during this time and vulnerably share about which of these verses the Lord has highlighted to you. Then pray aloud following the example provided.

**Experience Scripture**

*"I am overwhelmed continually with a desire for your laws"*  
(Psalm 119:20).

Read together the psalmist's declarations and requests in Psalm 119:11–20 (NLT). Reflect on each scripture, listening for the Holy Spirit's prompting. Listen for a specific declaration that you would like to become true for you.

- *"I have hidden your word in my heart"* (v. 11).
- *"I have recited aloud all the laws you have given us"* (v. 13).
- *"I have rejoiced in your decrees as much as in riches"* (v. 14).
- *"I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways"* (v. 15).
- *"I will delight in your principles and not forget your word"* (v. 16).
- *"I need the guidance of your commands"* (v. 19).
- *"I am overwhelmed continually with a desire for your laws"* (v. 20).

Allow the Lord to impress your heart to become like the psalmist in one of these declarations:

*Lord, I sense that You might want me to experience more of the truth of verse \_\_\_\_; I want to become someone who \_\_\_\_.*

**(For example:** *Lord, I sense that You might want me to experience more of the truth of verse 11; I want to become someone who has hidden Your Word in my heart by memorizing it.*)

**Take a moment to share your response with your partner or small group, requesting prayer for yourself that God would make it so.**

Then pray, expressing the same requests as the psalmist:  
*"Teach me your principles"* (v. 12); *"Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your law"* (v. 18).

## C. Training in Righteousness—The Relational Purpose of Scripture

### *The Light of Scripture for Loving Relationships*

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Jesus said that Scripture (“the law and the prophets”) hangs or depends upon two commandments:

#### **LOVE GOD, AND LOVE OTHERS**

(Matthew 22:35–40).

Scripture has a relational purpose: to lead us into maturity through deepened love relationships with the God who breathed it and with those He loves.

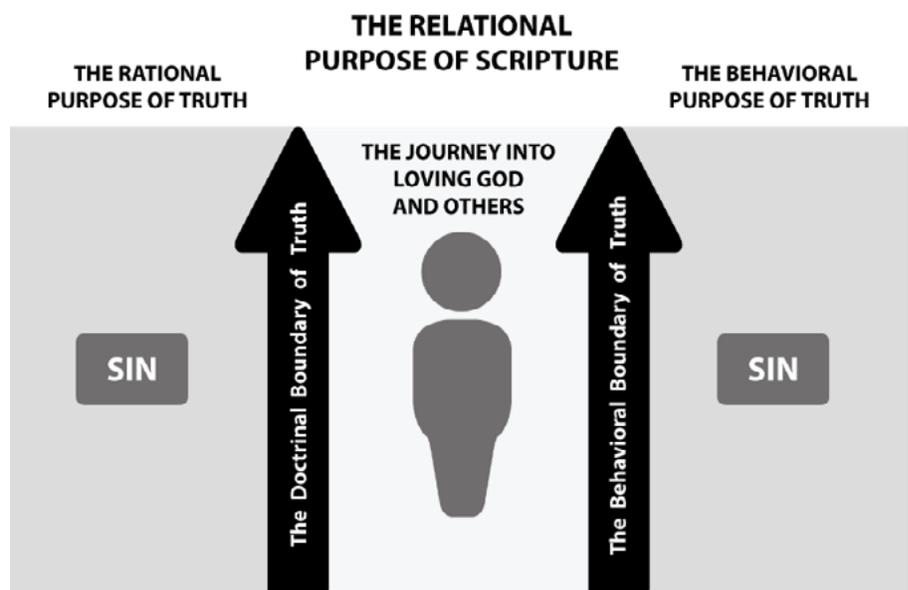
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The third important purpose of God’s Word is its *relational purpose*. In many ways, this is the most significant source of nourishment that the Word offers the believer, yet it is also the one that is most often missing from our scriptural “diet.”

In order to understand this relational purpose, we must consider the fourth function of Scripture that Paul mentions to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16—that of training us in righteousness or more literally “parenting” us. Derived from the Greek word for “children” (*padeia*), the word “training” (*paideian*) suggests being raised into spiritual maturity by Scripture in a manner similar to being raised by a loving family into physical and emotional maturity.

Scripture has given us the boundaries of right doctrine and right behavior, much like parents give boundaries to their children. But do such boundaries and guidelines—the rules, the “thou shalt nots”—actually raise or mature us? Absolutely not! What brings us to maturity are the loving relationships that exist within the boundaries. A family can have abundant and appropriate rules, restrictions, and guidelines, but if it lacks love-filled relationships, maturity is hindered. So also it is with our approach to Scripture. Scripture is God-breathed, living, active, and intended to be experienced in loving relationship with the One who wrote it!

Jesus said that Scripture (“the law and the prophets”) hangs or depends upon two commandments: Love God, and love others (Matthew 22:35–40). Scripture has a relational purpose: to lead us into maturity through deepened love relationships with the God who breathed it and with those He loves. As the Holy Spirit brings revelation concerning this relational purpose, Scripture will seem to “come alive,” spurring us to love others, to realize that we are loved, and above all, to love the One who has given the Word to us.



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*"On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:40).*

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**W2. Being a "living epistle" in reverence and awe as His Word becomes real in my life, vocation, and calling**

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**Knowing that we live in a world of tribulation (John 16:33 KJV), vulnerable to Satan's attacks and the inevitable pain of life in a fallen world, our heavenly Father will at times bring Scripture alive as a fresh testimony of His love toward us.**

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**W10. Implicit, unwavering trust that His Word will never fail**

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**Colossians 3:16 Moment:**  
*"Let the Word of Christ dwell deeply in you."*

**Pastor/Teacher:**  
Pause during this time and vulnerably share about which of these verses the Lord has highlighted to you. Then pray aloud following the example provided.

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### III. EXPLORING THE RELATIONAL PURPOSE OF TRUTH

#### A. Teaching Right Doctrine—The Rational Purpose of Scripture

##### Engage Community

Consider how Scripture has "come alive" in your own life as the Spirit has guided you to better express God's love to others. Recall a time when a specific Bible passage helped you to better live out His love toward someone else. Perhaps, for example:

- As a husband, you were guided by the Holy Spirit to 1 Peter 3:7, which called you to *"live with your [wife] in an understanding way."*
- As a wife, you were challenged by 1 Peter 3:4 to express a more *"gentle and quiet spirit."*
- As a parent, you were reminded by the Holy Spirit of the admonition of Ephesians 6:4: *"Do not provoke your children to anger."*
- As a Christian, you were prompted by the Holy Spirit to reflect on Ephesians 4:29: *"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth,"* thus changing the way you converse with those in your workplace, community, or church.

**Complete the following sentence and share it with someone next to you.**

I recall when (scripture passage) seemed to come alive in a fresh way as I was challenged to share His love with \_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_ .

#### B. Scripture Coming Alive with Love toward You

We live in a world of tribulation (John 16:33 KJV), vulnerable to Satan's attacks and the inevitable pain of life in a fallen world. Knowing this, our heavenly Father will at times bring Scripture alive as a fresh testimony of His love toward us.

##### Experience Scripture

Consider now a time when the Spirit seemed to bring Scripture alive in order to demonstrate God's love for you in a fresh way. Perhaps, for example:

- During a time of discouragement, the Holy Spirit made alive God's promise *"that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion"* (Philippians 1:6).
- During a time of loneliness, Jesus gently reminded you, *"Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"* (Matthew 28:20).
- During a time of rejection, you were nourished by the thought that, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* (Romans 8:31).

*"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope"* (Romans 15:4).

I recall experiencing a time of \_\_\_\_ during which the Holy Spirit made Scripture "come alive," bringing me encouragement through the truth of \_\_\_\_ .

Share your response with you partner or small group, giving thanks to God that, through His Spirit, He kept the promise of Romans 15:4.

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Deep-rooted love for God develops in the disciple's heart as the wonder of His grace and the privilege of serving Him are made real again and again through encountering Him in Scripture.

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The Father warns us with His "thou shalt nots" for our own good. He loves us and does not want to see us harmed.

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When we meditate, we are developing mental, emotional, and spiritual images of scriptural truth and hiding them away in our hearts. These images are then available for the Holy Spirit to rekindle as He leads us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

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### C. Scripture Coming Alive with Love toward the One Who Wrote It

The Bible is a book of doctrine and teaching, but it is more. It is a book of promises and divine plans, but it is more. It is God's revelation of Himself: His identity, His heart, His hope.

Deep-rooted love for God develops in the disciple's heart as the wonder of His grace and the privilege of serving Him are made real again and again through encountering Him in Scripture. His Spirit reveals to us the One who wrote the Word, empowering us to respond with yielding love.

For example, you might encounter God through His Word as you study the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and consider the question, "Why did God give us these instructions?" Of course, the Ten Commandments provide us with doctrine concerning holiness and exhortations for righteous living, but how do they encourage a loving relationship with God? What is their relational purpose?

In response to this question, the Spirit might lead you to Deuteronomy 10:13: *"Observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good."* Joy fills your spirit as you realize that the Father warns us with His "thou shalt nots" for our own good. He loves us and does not want to see us harmed. Your heart is warmed by this reassuring encounter. God's Word has come alive through your study of the Ten Commandments, and you have been touched by God's love. True to the Great Commandment, you are drawn to love Him with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength.

Perhaps you are preparing a lesson on Christ's sufferings and are drawn to His Gethsemane prayer, *"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me"* (Matthew 26:38). You sense the pain that Christ feels, and your spirit is filled with empathy for this One acquainted with sorrow and grief.

You read on, reaching the point in the narrative where Jesus returns to find the disciples sleeping. Your eyes fill with tears as you read His next words: *"Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour"* (v. 40)? The question seems filled with disappointment and sorrow. Your heart burns with compassion—you experience fellowship with Christ by sharing in His sufferings (Philippians 3:10). His Word is alive!

Maturing disciples walk in the light of God's Word, protected by the boundaries of right doctrine and right living and nourished by fresh encounters with Him. Thus, at the end of each day, we might reflect not on "What did I get done today?" but rather, "How have I been nourished by Scripture today? What scriptures have I experienced?"

**W1. Frequently being led by the Spirit into deeper love for the One who wrote the Word**



**Encounter Jesus**

One means of experiencing Scripture in a transforming way is through the discipline of meditation. When we meditate, we are developing mental, emotional, and spiritual images of scriptural truth and hiding them away in our hearts. These images are then available for the Holy Spirit to rekindle as He leads us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

**Take a moment to experience the following meditation:**

*“Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us” (Romans 8:33–34).*

Picture yourself walking into a courtroom—an intimidating place for most of us. As you enter—alone, uncertain of why you are even there—your anxiety is real. As you move further into the room, you begin to notice the faces of those who have accused you. Perhaps they are acquaintances who have criticized or judged you. Maybe they are people from your past who rejected, neglected, or abused you. Perhaps they are those whose love and acceptance was always contingent on your performance. Your anxiety turns to fear, your self-doubt to self-condemnation. You are alone with your accusers.

Now imagine that into the courtroom walks Jesus Christ. He does not take a place behind the courtroom bench as a judge (though He has every right to), but instead walks right up beside you. He puts His arm around you and gently bows with you to your knees.

Kneeling beside you is the only One who has the right to bring any charge against you. As you listen to His soft words, you realize that He is not accusing you—He is interceding for you! He is praying for the burdens of your heart, requesting provision, speaking blessing over your relationships, and most importantly, asking that you might experience freedom from condemnation.

During a moment of stillness, you hear Him ask, “Where are your accusers?” You lift your eyes and realize that the courtroom is empty. Those who had criticized and judged you, rejected and neglected you, are all gone. Your anxiety has turned to joy; your fear has become peace. Then you hear Jesus say, “Neither do I condemn you” (John 8:11).

No wonder Paul writes, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free” (Romans 8:1–2).

**The only One who has the right to judge you is praying for you! Meditate quietly on this wondrous truth. Then offer a prayer of thanksgiving, praise, and worship with your partner or small group.**