

# PERSPECTIVE

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF MOUNT VERNON BAPTIST CHURCH

A glowing lightbulb hangs from a black cord against a dark, textured background. The lightbulb is illuminated, casting a warm yellow glow. The text "IS THE BIBLE ENOUGH?" is centered over the lightbulb.

IS THE BIBLE  
ENOUGH?

FEB  
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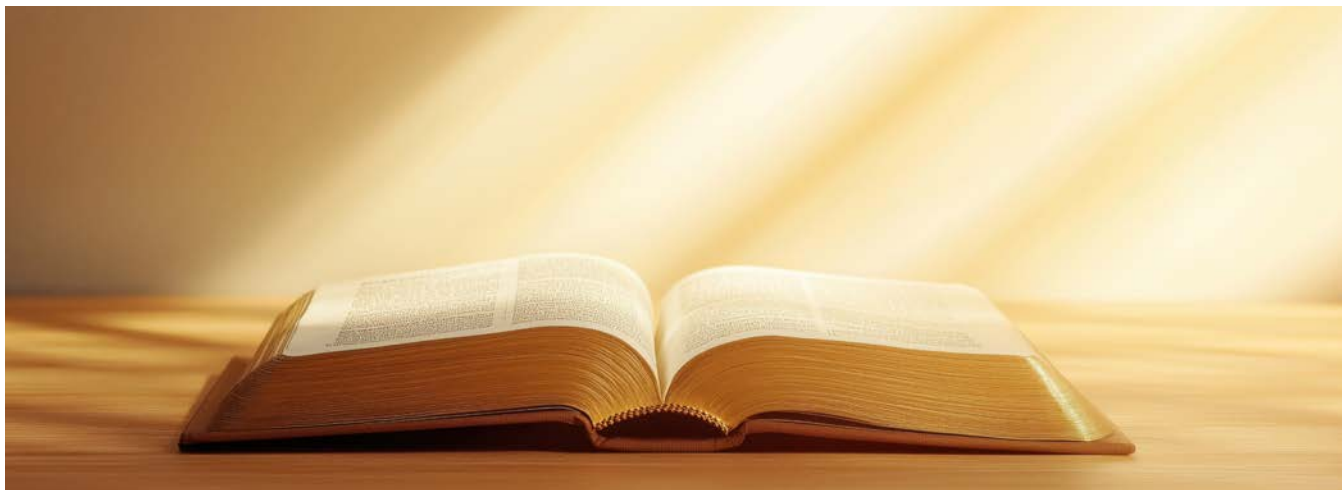
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February

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# IS THE BIBLE ENOUGH?



Have I done enough?

It's a question we often ask about many areas of our lives. Have I done enough studying to get the grade I want on this test? Have I done enough work on this project to please my boss? Have I done enough to prepare my child for adulthood? Have I done enough to communicate my love to my spouse?

Have I done enough?

It's not a bad question. But, if you think about it, it is a very *human* question. God never asks, "Have I done enough?" He is all-wise, all-knowing, and all-powerful. He declares the end from the beginning and always accomplishes his purposes (Isa. 46:10). God always does enough.

And yet, as finite, sinful creatures, we're prone to question whether he really has done enough. We do it in regard to salvation. It's why we are tempted to look to our own good works for assurance, rather than looking to Christ. We do it in regard to our circumstances. Isn't discontentment really just another way of saying, "God, you haven't given me enough"? And, we do it in regard to God's Word. It's why we turn to other resources first when seeking spiritual growth. It's why we so often run to the Bible last when wrestling with the realities of life in this fallen world.

It's not necessarily wrong to ask whether God has done enough, as long as our questioning serves to deepen our biblical convictions. At the end of the day, whether it comes to our salvation, our circumstances, or the gift of his Word, there's only one right answer to the question, "Has God done enough?" God always does enough.

As we continue on in this year of thinking about the Bible, I want to show you that this is true when it comes to God's Word. And in the process, I hope not only to deepen your convictions on the matter, but also to grow your love and appreciation for the Bible.

Let's consider two truths about God's Word that make this abundantly clear.

## GOD'S WORD IS SUFFICIENT

When we say that the Word of God is sufficient, what we are saying is this: *Scripture contains all that we need for life and godliness.* A more thorough way to say it is: "Scripture contains all the words from God that we need in order to know him truly, trust him fully, obey him perfectly, and enjoy him abundantly."

When we say God's Word is sufficient, we aren't saying that it contains everything that we could possibly *want* to know. What we are saying is that it contains everything that God, in his wisdom, has determined that we *need* to know. It doesn't tell



us everything. But what it does tell us is enough for us to know God truly, trust him fully, obey him perfectly, and enjoy him abundantly.<sup>1</sup>

The passage of Scripture that teaches this truth most clearly is 2 Timothy 3:14–17:

*<sup>14</sup>But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it <sup>15</sup>and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup>All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

In verse 15, Paul tells Timothy that the Scriptures “are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” That means they contain everything a person needs to know and understand in order to be saved.

The Scriptures tell us who God is—the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, the holy and righteous judge of the universe, and the merciful, loving savior of his people. They tell us who we are—men and women made in the image of God who have rebelled against him and deserve his judgment and wrath for our sin. They tell us who Jesus is—Israel’s promised Messiah, the Son of God, sent from heaven, born of a virgin. They tell us that he lived a perfect life and died in the place of sinners like you and me, taking the wrath of God upon himself. They tell us he rose from the dead three days later, so that all who turn from their sins and trust in him can have eternal life. And they call us to repent and believe in that wonderful good news. The Scriptures tell us everything we need to know in order to be saved. They are able to make us wise for salvation. They’re sufficient for life—eternal life.

The Scriptures are also sufficient for godliness. In verses 16–17, Paul says that all Scripture is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” That’s an amazing statement! Notice the end product when the Scriptures are faithfully taught and used for reproof, correction, and training. They provide

God’s people with everything that they need to do every good work that God calls them to do. Not some good works. Not most good works. But every good work. From working to worshiping, parenting to praying, giving to gathering, resting to rejoicing, and everything in between, the Scriptures equip us to be the godly people God intends us to be.

The Scriptures contain everything we need for life and for godliness. God’s word is sufficient. This is such a wonderful truth because it means that God hasn’t left us in the dark. He’s told us exactly who he is, how we are to relate to him, and how he wants us to live. How incredibly kind of God to tell us all that!

One of the things I selfishly loved the most about being a dad of little boys was getting to relive my childhood as I played with them. I especially loved building Lego creations with them. When Nate was 5 or 6, someone from church gave us a huge bag of Legos. Inside the bag were several instruction manuals for building different things. We worked through the manuals, building a racecar and several other vehicles.

But when we got through all the manuals, there were still a bunch of pieces left over. They looked like they were for a big semi-truck of some sort. So, we scoured the manuals, and on the back of one of them, we found a picture of what appeared to be the truck. In my pride, I thought, “I can build this thing from the picture.” But boy was I wrong! I couldn’t even figure out how to get the sides of the truck to stick together, let alone build the rest of it. It was incredibly frustrating, a complete exercise in futility. And, the reason it was so frustrating was that we didn’t have sufficient instructions.

Instructions are a gift! It’s true for Legos, and it’s especially true for building the kind of life that glorifies God. Can you imagine what it would be like if God’s Word simply told us he was holy and that we were sinners who deserved judgment, but didn’t tell us anything about how we could be saved from that judgment? Or if it told us everything we needed to know to be saved, but gave us no instruction on how to live lives that glorified God? It’d be like someone giving you a massive bag of Legos and a picture of the Statue of Liberty and telling you to build it. There’d be no hope. But praise God, he hasn’t just given us *part* of what we need to know for life and godliness. In his Word, he’s given us *everything* we need to know in order to live lives that glorify him. What an incredibly kind God!

I could easily stop here and say, “God has given us enough in his Word.” But that’s not all he’s given us.

## **GOD’S WORD IS POWERFUL**

God’s Word doesn’t just contain everything we need for life and godliness. It actually has the power to give us life and make us godly. This is the second truth I want us to consider.

### ***It Has the Power to Give Us Life***

The Word of God is life-giving. Literally. Consider Genesis 1, where God creates life simply by speaking. Or John 11, where Jesus, God in the flesh, speaks and Lazarus comes out of the tomb. That’s the spoken word of God, God himself speaking. But what about the written Word of God? Does Scripture have the same power?

Two passages in the New Testament show us the life-giving power of the Scriptures. The first is James 1:16–18:

*<sup>16</sup>Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.*

*<sup>17</sup>Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. <sup>18</sup>Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

The passage begins with James reminding his readers that every good and perfect gift comes from God. And, what is the first gift he points them to in what follows? The greatest gift that they have received—the gift of new life in Christ. That’s what he’s talking about when he says that God brought them forth that they might be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. But notice how these Christians were given new life. They brought forth by the word of truth. God gave them life through the powerful working of his Word. That Word was the life-giving good news of the gospel found in the Scriptures.

Peter makes a similar point in 1 Peter 1:23–25, when he reminds the Christians he’s writing to that they “have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God . . . And this word is the good news that was preached to you.” The gospel, the good news contained in the Scriptures and proclaimed by faithful Christians, was the means by which these

Christians were born again. God’s Word gave them life.

God’s word is life-giving. It creates life, restores life, and gives new life. It is also the means by which God nourishes us and sustains our lives as believers. This is why preachers, teachers, and disciplers consistently encourage you to read your Bible. Our words and the words of others may be helpful, but only God’s Word alone is life-giving. Only God’s word has the power to give life to sinners who are dead in their trespasses and sins. Only God’s word has the power to change us, and that brings us to a second thing that the Word of God does.

### ***It Has the Power to Make Us Godly***

The word of God convicts and sanctifies. It makes us godly. God’s Word continues to give life to believers as it convicts them of sin and sanctifies them. The author of Hebrews is speaking to believers in Hebrews 4:12 when he says to them, “The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” What he says here is that the Word of God brings conviction. It powerfully and precisely works like a surgeon’s scalpel to expose our sinful thoughts and the sinful intentions and motivations of our hearts.

But it does more than that. The Word of God actually has the power to change the intentions and motivations of our hearts. In John 17, Jesus prays for his disciples (and for us). He prays that the Father would preserve them. He prays that the Father would fill them with joy. He prays that the Father would protect them from the evil one. And then in verse 17, he prays: “Sanctify (or make them holy) them in the truth.” And, what is the truth he wants the Father to sanctify them in? He says, “Your word is truth.” Jesus is saying that the Word of God is the means God uses to sanctify his people.

The Word of God is powerful. And it’s not just the Scriptures that testify to their own life-giving, convicting, and sanctifying power. Every single Christian is proof that the Word of God is powerful. Each one of us has been born again through hearing or reading the Word of God. Every single one of us can testify to the ways the Word of God has convicted us of sin. We can all recount ways we’ve been sanctified and grown in godliness through

hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on the Word of God.

In light of that, I want to encourage you to do something: Find some time this week to sit, reflect, and write down some of the ways you've seen the power of God's Word at work in your life. Write down some of the particular passages he's used to change you. Praise him for the work he's done. I think you'll be encouraged, and I trust you'll be motivated to keep digging into the Word. But don't just keep that list to yourself. Find someone to share it with. Maybe another believer. Maybe a non-Christian friend. If you are a Christian, your life is a testimony to the fact that the Word of God is powerful.

### **GOD'S WORD IS ENOUGH**

So, is the Bible enough? The answer is an emphatic, "Yes!" God's word is sufficient. It contains everything we need for life and godliness. It's also powerful. It actually has the power to give us life and make us godly. When we consider these two truths together, we can't help but agree with the words of the old hymn:

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!  
What more can he say than to you He hath said,  
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?*

What more can he say than to you he hath said? According to the Bible, there is no more. Our gracious God has said enough in his sufficient, powerful Word. And for that we praise and glorify his name!

— Dustin Butts

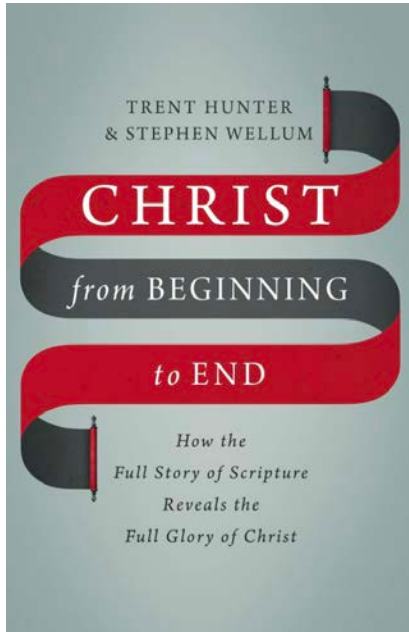
### **Resources**

<sup>1</sup>Matt Smethurst, "What the Bible Says About the Bible," <https://exploregod.com/articles/what-the-bible-says-about-the-bible>.



# CHRIST FROM BEGINNING TO END

Written by Trent Hunter and Stephen Wellum | Recommended by Chris Arbery



Have you, or has someone you know, ever struggled to understand how all 66 books of the Bible fit together? How the Old Testament relates to the New Testament? What a bunch of ancient Hebrew laws have to do with today's Christian church? This refreshingly accessible book deftly highlights the unifying throughline of this epic compilation written over the course of many centuries: God's promise to save his people from sin and death, graciously fulfilled through his one and only son, Jesus Christ.

The authors assert at the outset and demonstrate throughout the book that the Bible is a unified story about Jesus. Therefore "we must know the story if we want to know Christ" and defend the gospel (p. 20). Part 1 of the book sets out a three-part analytical framework for interpreting the various parts of this unified story: first, by "looking down" at the page to see its "close context"; second, by "looking back" at earlier parts of the story to understand its "continuing context"; and third, by "looking ahead" to the completed story to discern its "canonical context" (pp. 42-43). Part 2 applies this framework to the unified story itself, from Creation to Fall to Redemption to Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, The Prophets, Jesus, The Church, and New Creation, elucidating how each piece fits perfectly into the glorious narrative puzzle as a whole. Along the way, the

authors explore key themes such as sin, judgment, suffering, sacrifice, hope, grace, and restoration.

I found the book to be thoroughly insightful and engaging, with numerous, clear explanations that helped me gain a deeper understanding of how the entire Bible is truly and ultimately about Christ. Reading it has not only helped clarify for me some parts of the Bible that in the past seemed a little mystifying, but also helped unlock for me a profound curiosity and even delight in studying Scripture. No doubt that's mainly the Holy Spirit at work in me, but I found my enthusiasm growing as more and more dots were connected while reading this book.

This book is well-suited for any reader with an interest in learning about or growing in the Christian faith grounded fully in Scripture. The writing is clear and concise. The tone is warm and approachable. And the subject matter is eminently relevant for anyone who wonders where we come from, where we're going, what's our biggest problem, and what's the solution. Of course, there's no substitute for reading the Scripture itself, but if you're watching a game, invariably it's helpful to have the benefit of play-by-play and color commentary. Maybe a flawed analogy, but for me, when it comes to engaging with Scripture, this book has been a game-changer.

## BOOK EXCERPTS

**The Holy Spirit designed the old covenant to teach God's people about what they really needed and to point beyond itself to something greater: a solution to sin and access to God.**

– "Moses" p. 142

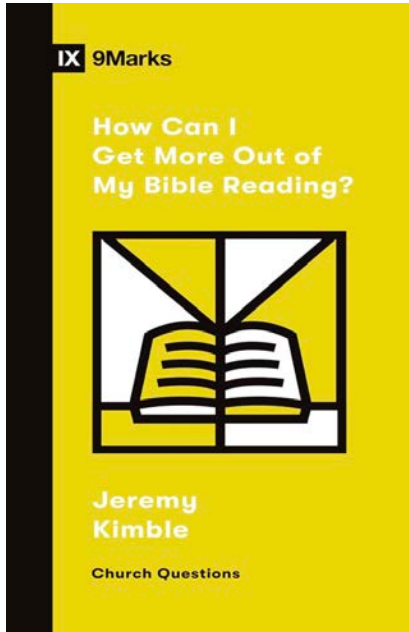
**[T]here is a reason God didn't just give us one page with the words 'Jesus wins!' He wants to encourage us with the truth of Jesus' victory through the means of apocalyptic literature to enflame our hearts, fire our imaginations, and create in us a longing for Christ's return.**

– "New Creation" p. 247



# GOD AT WORK

Written by Jeremy Kimble | Recommended by Trent Roberts



In *How Can I Get More Out of My Bible Reading?*, Jeremy Kimble answers that question, but not in the way you might expect! Sure, he ends the book by laying out a concise overview of the COMA method for studying the Bible, But before doing that, Kimble establishes several foundational pillars aimed at helping Christians develop long-term, fruitful Bible reading habits. He encourages readers to start from a place of desire rather than duty—to see this spiritual discipline as a means to learning about the love and character of God. He also urges the reader to start by joining a church. This piece of advice is expounded on throughout the book.

I found this starting point to be helpful. His reasoning centers around the preaching, teaching, and discipleship found in the church. By joining a church, one learns how to read their Bible by seeing how others do it—the preacher through their preaching, the teacher through their teaching, and members by how they apply God's Word to their lives. All of these means should be recognized by each of us. Any time we are in a setting where the Bible is opened, we are being trained to better study the Word for ourselves. With the many services we have here at MVBC, there is no shortage of opportunities to grow in this way.

Many of you have probably benefited from an in-depth study on how to study the Bible for yourself. If that is you, this book will be a quick refresher course. However, if you view Bible reading as merely an exercise for your own spiritual growth, this book has much to offer you! It will challenge you to learn to read your Bible for the sake of others. As you read it, I'd challenge you to consider what insights you might use guide a less experienced reader to greater depths of understanding. For those who teach, if you ever find your prep to be burdensome, this book will help you view it as a means to equip struggling readers to feed themselves from God's Word. *How Can I Get More Out of My Bible Reading?* is also a great resource to give to a friend who needs help connecting their own spiritual life to those of other believers gathered in a local church.

## BOOK EXCERPTS

**We read the Bible to know the living God whom we love, and we do so with joy because there's no greater joy than knowing him.**

– p. 14

**We read Scripture to serve one another with the word – our family, our friends, our small group. We read Scripture for the good of others as much as we read for the good of ourselves.**

– p. 32

## BIBLE READING PLAN

# FEBRUARY

# TAKE UP & READ

These Scripture readings have been selected to help you prepare for the Sunday morning message.  
Take Up & Read!

**February 1**     **Revelation 2:1-29**

February 2     Revelation 3:1-22

February 3     Hebrews 3

February 4     Matthew 24

February 5     John 7

February 6     Isaiah 22:15-25

February 7     John 8

**February 8**     **Revelation 3:1-22**

February 9     Revelation 4:1-11

February 10     Ezekiel 1

February 11     John 9

February 12     John 10

February 13     Isaiah 6:1-7

February 14     Isaiah 6:8-13

**February 15**     **Revelation 4:1-11**

February 16     2 Kings 4

February 17     2 Kings 3

February 18     2 Kings 5

February 19     1 John 3

February 20     Mark 6:30-44

February 21     1 John 4

**February 22**     **2 Kings 4**

February 23     Revelation 5:1-14

February 24     Daniel 7

February 25     John 11

February 26     John 12

February 27     Isaiah 53:1-9

February 28     Isaiah 53:9-12

\*Sermons in Bold

# NEW MEMBERS



JEREMY  
BARTON



JOHNNY  
DISANZA



ANDREW GAUSE



MARIAH GAUSE



GRANT  
SUMNERS



OLIVIA THAYER

"We must grasp once again, the idea of church membership as being the membership of the body of Christ and as the biggest honour which can come a man's way in this world."

MARTYN LLOYD-JONES



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