

SESSION 4

value God's revelation

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

Psalms 19

BUILDUP THEME



INTERNALIZE GODLINESS

God reveals Himself through creation and His Word so we might know and respond to Him.

MEASURABLE RESPONSE

The students will consider the value of God's revelation and will seek to increase their appreciation for it.

MEMORY VERSE

"More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward" (Psalm 19:10, 11).

Scripture Interpretation

- ☐ Mainstream news media and scientists look at nature and conclude it is a grand accident with no purpose or creator. They present the earth as on the edge of ruin and in need of rescue. They are convinced it will become uninhabitable if the world's population doesn't act soon.
- ☐ Read Psalm 19:1–6. What did David see when he looked at nature? Can we see the same today?
- ☐ God reveals Himself to humanity through His creation. It still reveals God's greatness. God also reveals Himself through His Word (Ps. 19:7–14). As David observed God through creation, he stood in wonder. And as he observed God through His valuable Word, he humbly submitted to the Lord.
- ☐ Challenge your students to enjoy creation and see God's hand in it, even in its fallen condition. And encourage your students to value God's Word by studying it and responding to it.

Scripture Summary

David wrote about the revelation of God in creation. He declared that this limited revelation can be understood day and night in every language. David then spoke of the unlimited revelation of God through the Scriptures and highlighted the beneficial effects in believers' lives.

Session Starters

Option 1—Nature Headlines

Gather

- List of headlines about nature.

Steps

1. Have students use their phones to search the internet for headlines about nature, including climate change. Read the ones that you identified.
2. Students share their headlines. Discuss their findings.

ASK: How would you summarize the headlines? (Q1)

ASK: What are these headlines training people to do when they observe nature? (Q2) *They are training people to see nature as fragile and sick and as a testimony of man's failures.*

3. Transition to the Bible study.

David didn't see nature, including the stars, as a sign of weakness and fragility. Nor did he think about man when he observed nature. Instead, he responded with wonder about God, nature's creator. He wrote Psalm 19 about God's revelation of Himself in nature and in the Scriptures. As we study David's psalm, we will be reminded to appreciate God's revelation through His creation and respond to His revelation through His Word.

Option 2—Comprehending Enormity

Gather

- People in Perspective poster.

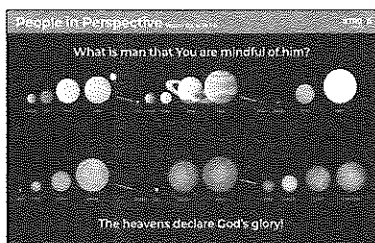
Steps

1. Show the People in Perspective poster. If you didn't use the poster in the previous lesson, explain that the final element in each grouping is reduced and placed at the beginning of the next grouping. Otherwise, the earth would be too small to see next to the final star in the series.

ASK: What do you think David would say about God if he understood the enormity of some of the stars God created?

ASK: What descriptions about God come to mind as you try to comprehend the enormity of the biggest stars in the universe?

2. Transition to the Bible study.



David, even without the technology to measure the size of distant stars, understood that the heavens reveal God's glory. He wrote about that fact in Psalm 19 and followed it up with his impressions of God's revelation in the Scriptures. As we study David's psalm, we will be reminded to appreciate God's revelation through His creation and respond to His revelation through His Word.

Bible Study

Gather

- Resources 68-R5 through 68-R7.

I. The Revelation of God in Nature (Ps. 19:1–6)

A. The extent of the message (19:1–4a)

In the first six verses of Psalm 19 David wrote that he was caught up with the revelation of God in the natural world.

READ: Psalm 19:1, 2.

The heavens reveal the glory of God. We see His "handiwork" in His created objects. All during the day and night the heavenly bodies "speak" about God. Day after day they "bubble forth" (utter). As a bubbling stream that continues to flow, so the heavens "bubble forth" the knowledge of God. The heavenly bodies are continually speaking about God without saying a word!

READ: Psalm 19:3, 4a.

Anthropologists calculate that there are about six thousand languages and dialects in the world. God speaks His revelation in all those languages. God reaches all people, and His message is equally intelligible to all. Whether a person speaks English, Spanish, or a dialect in a remote part of Africa, that person "hears" the revelation of God. Even a person who is blind or deaf can learn about God from nature by using his or her other senses.

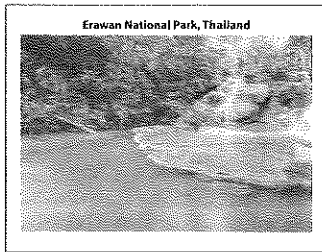
DISPLAY: Resources 68-R5 through 68-R7.

ASK: What could a person anywhere in the world know about God from nature? (Q3)

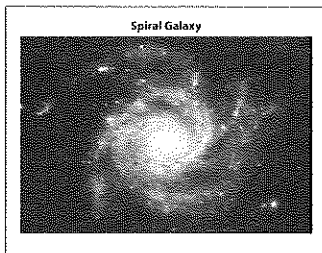
READ: Romans 1:19, 20. **ASK:** What parts of creation do you think best reveal God's power? (Q4)

B. The example of the sun (19:4b–6)

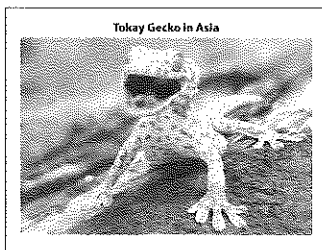
David concluded the section on the revelation of God in nature with a focus of the sun, the major body in the heavens from our perspective.



68-R5



68-R6



68-R7

READ: Psalm 19:4b–6.

In the heavens God has established a place for the sun. Each day the sun comes up and goes down—from one end of the heavens to the other end.

David used two images to describe the circuit of the sun each day. In the first part of verse 5 he likened the sun to a bridegroom leaving his chamber on the day of his wedding, eager to meet his bride. In the latter part of the verse, he compared the sun to a champion runner who is eager to start his race. It's as if the sun is eager to start each day so it can declare again the glory of the Creator.

David concluded this section by commenting again on the extent of God's revelation. Just as no place escapes the heat of the sun, so no part of the world escapes the knowledge of God through the sun and the other heavenly bodies.

ASK: How often do you think about God when you see the sun shining? (Q5)

ASK: What does the predictability of the sun tell you about God? (Q6) *God is dependable; God cares for His creation; God is wise in placing the earth at just the right distance from the sun.*

II. The Revelation of God in Scripture (Ps. 19:7–14)

A. The benefits of God's Word (19:7–9)

As David mused on the revelation of God in the heavens, he thought of the greater and clearer revelation of God in the Scriptures and the beneficial effects of the Scriptures for believers.

David used six names for the Scriptures. Each name has a slightly different nuance from the other names.

READ: Psalm 19:7–9.

The "law" is more than a reference to the Mosaic law. It refers to all Scriptural truth. "Testimony" is God's witness or presentation of the truth. "Statutes," sometimes called "precepts," and "commandment" both indicate the responsibilities or decrees God gives to His people. "Fear of the LORD" reveals that people learn to fear (respect) God through His Word. "Judgments" is a designation for God's judicial rulings. These six names capture the comprehensive nature of God's Word.

David also gave descriptions of God's Word. "Perfect" means God's Word is flawless and complete. Nothing is missing from God's Word, and no part of God's Word is unnecessary.

"Sure" refers to the Scripture's reliability and trustworthiness. We can use God's Word with confidence.

"Right" describes the Bible as a straight path. It shows us how to live right and to please God. Proverbs 8:8 describes God's words as not being crooked. All paths that wander from God's path are a twisted version of the original, and they all lead to destruction. God's path is straight, and the Bible tells us all about it.

"Pure" means "without alloy or error." God's Word is like a gold bar that is absolutely free of any impurities or other metals. Nothing needs to be removed from God's Word.

"Clean" means "without spot." Nothing has corrupted or stained God's Word. And "true," the final description, means "utterly dependable."

ASK: Review the descriptions of God's Word from Psalm 19:7–9. What observations can you make about the Scriptures when you combine the names of the Scriptures with their descriptions? (Q7)

David also included the benefits of God's Word. The benefits should motivate us to be in God's Word.

David began by writing that the Bible is life-giving. It strengthens and converts (revives) the soul with its promises and truth.

ASK: When have you been "revived" by God's Word? (Q8)

"Making wise the simple" means God's Word gives wisdom to the humble at heart. The proud want nothing to do with God's Word. They want to live according to their own ways (Prov. 12:15). They set themselves up as their own authority.

"Rejoicing the heart" refers to the encouraging effects of Scripture. Through God's Word we can be encouraged no matter what circumstances we are facing.

The phrase "enlightening the eyes" conveys the idea of getting guidance from the Scriptures. Reading and studying God's Word "shines the light" on what is an otherwise dark path (119:105, 130, 133).

God's Word is "enduring forever." The Bible will not change and will not lose its value (119:89). These truths give us confidence in God and His Word.

"Righteous altogether" means God's Word leads to a righteous life.

ASK: Which of the benefits of Scripture have you recently experienced? (Q9)

ASK: Which one of the benefits of God's Word means the most to you? (Q10)

B. The value of God's Word (19:10, 11)

READ: Psalm 19:10.

Using imagery again, David taught the value of Scripture by comparing it to gold, the most valuable commodity in ancient Israel, and to honey, the sweetest food in ancient days. And he specifically identified “fine gold” (the purest and most valuable) and honey from the honeycomb (the sweetest kind). The Scriptures are more valuable and desirable than anything else.

ASK: How does God's Word become so desirable and sweet to us? (Q11) *By knowing the benefits of God's Word; by experiencing the benefits of God's Word; by getting to know God through His Word.*

READ: Psalm 19:11.

David added that God's servant is “warned” by God's Word. God clearly warned the Israelites. If they disobeyed Him, they would experience His righteous anger (Deut. 6:10–16).

God isn't being mean when He gives us warnings in His Word. His warnings are valuable to us because they help us understand the seriousness of sin and motivate us to obey God.

READ: Colossians 1:28, 29. **ASK:** What motivated Paul to warn believers? (Q12) *His desire to present them perfect in Christ.*

Second, obedience to God's Word brings the promise of blessing and reward. Often God's clear warnings to the Children of Israel were accompanied by promises of blessings for their obedience (Deut. 6:17–25). The principle of blessings for obedience carries over from the Old Testament into the New Testament. As part of God's church, we can't claim the promises God made to Israel, but God still blesses the obedient. Ultimately our blessings for obedience will come in eternity (2 Cor. 5:10).

READ: 2 Corinthians 5:9, 10. **ASK:** What could be more desirable than hearing Christ say, “You did a great job as My servant. Great is your reward”? (Q13)

C. The response to God's Word (19:12–14)

1. Confess and forsake exposed sin (19:12, 13)

The benefits and values of God's Word demand a response from us. We can't just agree that God's Word is beneficial and valuable. We have to live it out. David's first response was to use God's Word to overcome sin.

READ: Psalm 19:12.

David asked, “Who can understand his errors?” Obviously, no one can. Our spiritual lives are complex. We don't even always know when

we are sinning. Secret or hidden “faults” are sins we commit without realizing they are sins.

David knew God’s Word would have a cleansing effect on him because it defines sin. David wanted God to use His Word to teach him what sin is and expose its presence in his life.

ASK: To what might we compare the Bible’s exposure of the sin in our lives? (Q14) *A cancer screening, an x-ray, or shining a flashlight into the dark night.*

READ: Psalm 19:13.

David understood there were times he committed sins willfully. He wanted God to use His Word to break the sin habits that had a hold on him. Hiding God’s Word in our hearts is essential to overcoming our sin (119:9–11). David concluded that God’s ministry through the Scriptures would render him blameless and would help him to avoid much (“great”) sin.

2. Obey God’s revealed commands (19:14)

READ: Psalm 19:14.

David’s second response to God’s Word was to live pleasing to God. David wanted both his words and his thoughts to be acceptable to God. He desired to replace old sinful habits with new words and thoughts that pleased the Lord. That David wanted his thoughts to be pleasing to God communicates his seriousness. God would renew David’s words and thoughts as David spent time reading, studying, and meditating on God’s Word.

In closing, David used a word for the Lord that means “rock” or “refuge.” The Lord gave him strength and protection. David also called the Lord his “Redeemer.”

ASK: Why are those names important to anyone who tries to live out Psalm 19? (Q15) *Without God’s enabling and redeeming grace, we are unable to speak and think acceptably before God.*

Session Application

Steps

1. Students write headlines about God’s glory being revealed through creation. Have them write the headlines on a whiteboard, if available. Review the headlines as a class.

ASK: How do you think your headlines would be received by the mainstream media? (Q16)

ASK: What can you do to focus on God's glory as you observe nature every day? (Q17)

2. Discuss the value of God's Word.

ASK: How might a person show that he or she highly values God's Word? (Q18)

ASK: Does your answer describe your life? (Q19)

ASK: What might keep us from valuing God's Word? (Q20)
Highly valuing earthly things; turning to other sources for direction and instruction on life.

3. Praise God for His revelation through His creation and through His Word as you close this session.

SESSION 5

follow the Shepherd

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

Psalm 23

BUILDUP THEME



INTERNALIZE GODLINESS

God gives us security and contentment as we follow after Him.

MEASURABLE RESPONSE

The students will be determined to follow the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever" (Psalm 23:6).

Teacher Preparation

- ☐ Read Psalm 23. What does this psalm mean to you? When have you turned to it for encouragement and comfort? With whom have you shared it?
- ☐ Why are sheep an accurate comparison to people? How have you acted like a sheep?
- ☐ Use Psalm 23 both to encourage and challenge your students. The Shepherd's care is wonderful, but we have to commit to following Him. Sheep follow their shepherd and not the other way around. Jesus is our guide and master, not our servant.

Session Summary

Using the analogies of a shepherd and a host, David recounted the Lord's provisions for him in any difficult or dangerous situation. He concluded by exulting in the continual blessings of God upon his life.