

# Adventuring with God

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## Mining Hidden Treasure

I love the Bible. I love it not only for the truth it contains that **“shall stand for ever”** (Isaiah 40:8), but also because it reveals truth on an ongoing basis. We can read a passage or verse one time and receive something life-changing from it, then return days or years later and find even *more* truth. It’s not a dead book—it continues to speak to us through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as we open our hearts to its unfolding revelation.

The passages I read as a new Christian haven’t changed, but I have. As I read them now, with the experiences I’ve gained in the thirty years since my conversion, I can see even more in them. The new truths don’t contradict what I’ve already learned; they enhance, enlarge, and refine what God is seeking to communicate to me. What other book can boast such profound significance in our lives?

No wonder Paul exclaimed, **“O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!”** (Romans 11:33) The hidden treasures of God’s Word are uncovered by us in ever-increasing depth as we persevere in our walk with Him and seek to know more about His heart. If we honor God’s Word as Job did—**“I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread”** (23:12)—we will find the source of true life rather than mere existence.

During His temptation in the wilderness, Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 8:3: **“Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.”** Spoken in response to Satan’s temptation to turn stones into bread, Jesus was saying that daily bread for our bodies is

necessary and important, but the spiritual food found in God’s Word is even more important for our life.

As tough as his life was, the prophet Jeremiah found the words of the Lord a great help and consolation. **“When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty”** (Jeremiah 15:16). King David agreed. **“How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! I gain understanding from your precepts”** (Psalm 119:103-104).

As life rolls along, we often find ourselves approaching God’s Word in a somewhat lackadaisical way. “Ho-hum, devotion time again. What can I learn from this that I haven’t already run across? Haven’t I mined it about as deeply as is humanly possible? Couldn’t I be involved in something a little more *productive* in improving my life?”

At times, I’ve felt this way and have had to make myself persevere in Bible reading. I mean, how many times do we really *need* to read through the Bible? Sure, we can pick up some new tidbit of information each time we reread the books of history, and we are encouraged by being reminded of God’s promises to us. We can always use a little motivation to keep on living according to God’s principles, and often the experiences of biblical characters clearly demonstrate how God honors those who honor His Word. But it’s still easy to take it for granted if we’re not careful.

It's when life suddenly turns dark and threatening that we eagerly seek the wisdom of His Word. When things are good, we're content to coast along and trust in what we have already received to carry us through. But when overwhelming troubles come, we scramble, as David did, to find the source of peace and safety: **"When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. You have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe"** (Psalm 61:2-3). We need fresh manna, new insights—we need to hear from our Father and to be reassured that He will meet our needs and sustain us no matter what we may face.

Last year, when I was going through my cancer journey, I found that I came to this point of desperation many times. I needed to find the hidden treasures in His Word that would speak to my particular situation. Not too long after my chemotherapy treatments started, I found myself battling my spiritual foe and feeling increasingly overwhelmed. One night I was feeling so miserable that I wished for death—even though I knew I was overreacting to my true situation. I just couldn't seem to bring my thoughts or feelings into balance.

Even though I prayed earnestly for deliverance, I didn't experience it until I did something very uncharacteristic. It seemed odd at the time, but I believe I was prompted by the Holy Spirit to do it. I began to speak out into the darkness of my room one Scripture after another. They were from all over the Bible and followed no particular order. I had no idea I knew that many verses, since I had never set out to memorize Scripture. It was just an outflow of all that I had put into my mind over many years of walking with the Lord.

I guess I shouldn't have been surprised, because Jesus told His disciples that this would be one of the roles of the Holy Spirit: **"The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I have said to you"** (John 14:26).

As I spoke out the unchanging and powerful Word of God, the darkness I had been battling began to

lift and I began to be filled with hope. Satan's lies seemed silly by comparison with the truths of God's goodness, mercy, power, comfort, and love. Some of the verses I quoted that night were very familiar, yet I found that the Holy Spirit revealed fresh new insights from them that fed and encouraged me greatly.

One such passage was Psalm 23. We often learn this psalm in childhood and almost scorn its familiar words. But that night I saw things I had never noticed before as its truth was applied to my heart in a fresh way. I'd never taken much notice of the fact that the Shepherd in the psalm supplied His rich treasures of spiritual food right in front of David's enemies: **"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life."** Even though I was emotionally walking **"through the valley of the shadow of death"** I didn't have to be afraid, because He was there with me. The fears of the enemy were mere shadows... they couldn't stop my Shepherd from lavishing His love on me and bringing me to a place of peace and rest **"beside the still waters."** Truly, He restored my soul that night.

What if I had never read the Bible or known the truths it declares? What defense would I have had? I can tell you, its promises were sweet to my taste and more precious than any treasure the world might try to offer me. How glad I was for the hours I had spent reading it and seeking to understand it through study and prayer! Someone once said there are three stages we go through in reading the Bible—the cod liver oil stage, when we take it like medicine; the shredded wheat stage when it's nourishing but dry; and the peaches and cream stage when it is consumed with passion and pleasure.

It's interesting that David's longest psalm (Psalm 119) is about God's Word. David goes on and on about its incredible value for 176 verses! I hope to come to the place where I can value it like that and to be continually discovering the hidden treasures found within its pages. A.W. Tozer wrote in *That Incredible Christian*, "Whatever keeps me from the Bible is my enemy, however harmless it may appear

to be. Let the cares of life crowd out the Scriptures from my mind and I have suffered loss where I can least afford it.”

Do we believe that today? If so, we'll invite the Holy Spirit to illuminate this book above all books

to our hearts day by day and seek to obey all that it reveals to us. At the beginning of a new year is a great time to rededicate ourselves to pursuing with diligence and humility the wisdom found only in God's Word. How blessed we are to have it!

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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?

“Fear not, I am with thee; O be not dismayed,  
for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;  
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,  
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

“When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
the rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;  
For I will be with thee thy troubles to bless,  
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

“The soul that on Jesus still leans for repose,  
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake!”

“How Firm a Foundation,” attributed to Robert Keene, 1787