



God's Glory

God teaches us about Himself through His creation and His word.

PSALM 19:1-11

There are a number of ways we can get to know people. They include paying attention to what they say about themselves, what they've done, and what they communicate about their plans for the future. In the Bible, God has revealed Himself to us in these ways. One might think the first thing the Bible communicates about God is that He is the Creator. However, the fact we have Genesis 1:1 and the rest of the Bible reveals more than that. It reveals that God wants us to know Him through both His creation and His Word.

- Of all the people you know, who do you know best?
How did you get to know that person?


UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

PSALM 19

Psalm 19 has three sections. First, David contemplated how God proclaims His glory in all of creation. David recognized that, unlike the gods of the nations who are silent because they do not exist, the Lord is a God who makes Himself known in and through His creation (vv. 1-6). Second, David considered how God proclaims His glory in His Word. David realized that just as physical life is dependent on the life-giving benefits of the sun, God’s Word is vital to having a healthy, vibrant walk with Him (vv. 7-11). Everyone can witness the glory of God through creation, but to intimately experience God’s glory in one’s life in a deeper way one must come to know Him through His Word.

David recognized that God’s revelation of Himself through creation and His Word necessitates a proper response, and he demonstrated what that proper response is. David concluded the psalm asking God to cleanse him of sin and to keep him from sinning so that he would live his life in faithful obedience to God (vv. 12-14). David’s concern was not only for the willful sin he was aware of in his life, but he also was troubled by the unknown sin in his life. Our sin nature has such a grip on us that we often sin unintentionally and unawarely. The law of Moses recognizes this truth and provides the sin offering as a means of atonement for unintentional sins and the sins one unawarely commits (Lev. 4:1-5:13). David realized he needed God to show him mercy.

What’s more, he asked God to keep him from committing willful sins. David’s desire was to live his life completely devoted to the Lord. He wanted the Lord, not sin, to rule his life. He looked to the Lord to help him be a godly man (v. 13). His prayer expressed his desire that everything he said, did, and thought might be acceptable to God. Therefore, he offered himself as a living sacrifice to his Lord, his rock, his Redeemer (v. 14).

 **As you read Psalm 19, consider what creation reveals about God. Highlight all the ways God’s Word is described.**

EXPLORE THE TEXT

CREATION (PS. 19:1-6)

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands. ² Day after day they pour out speech; night after night they communicate knowledge. ³ There is no speech; there are no words; their voice is not heard. ⁴ Their message has gone out to the whole earth, and their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun. ⁵ It is like a bridegroom coming from his home; it rejoices like an athlete running a course. ⁶ It rises from one end of the heavens and circles to their other end; nothing is hidden from its heat.

VERSE 1

Genesis 1:1 states that “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” On the second day of creation, He created the heavens (Gen. 1:6-8). On the fourth day of creation, God created the sun, moon, and stars (1:14-19). In Psalm 19, David expressed his awe as he observed how the heavens declare God’s glory. At times, all of creation is called upon to give witness to God in the Scriptures (Deut. 4:26; 30:19; Isa. 1:2). The apostle Paul wrote that God’s “invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what he has made” (Rom. 1:20). As others did in the Scriptures (Ps. 50:6; 89:5-8; 97:6), here David focused on how the heavens themselves declare the **glory of God** and **the work of his hands**. First, this means the heavens offer praise to God. Second, we discover they offer instruction about who God is.

Verse 1 uses synonymous parallelism with three words in the second line matching the three words in the first. The word pairs are (1) **heavens** and **expanse**; (2) **declare** and **proclaims**; and (3) **the glory of God** and **the work of his hands**. The *heavens* and *expanse* both refer to the skies and everything in space beyond. The grammatical forms of the words *declare* and *proclaims* in Hebrew indicate that the heavens and expanse are continually declaring and proclaiming these truths about God. By recognizing that the first two pairs in this verse are synonyms, it follows that the last pair, “the glory of God” and “the work of his hands” are also synonyms.

What God created is a demonstration of His glory. The word “glory” literally means heaviness or weightiness. David was saying that God’s creation of the heavens gives weight to who God is. He is transcendent, above the highest reaches of space and beyond that. He is of ultimate importance; there is none like him.

KEY DOCTRINE: *God*

God is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. (See Genesis 1:1; Romans 1:20.)

VERSES 2-4a

Again, David emphasized the ongoing witness of the heavens to God’s glory. Without words, the heavens continually ***pour out*** or literally “irrepressibly gush” or “bubble up” speech with an uninterrupted declaration of God’s glory. Some people peer into the heavens hoping their study of astrology will somehow help them divine what the stars have to communicate about themselves. Still others only look to the skies and beyond for scientific knowledge about the universe itself. What David recognized when he looked to the heavens was that they reveal truths of eternal significance about God. The heavens communicate knowledge of God’s glory, omnipotence, wisdom, infiniteness, and grandeur for everyone to see. On the first day of creation, God created light. Then, He divided the light from the darkness and called the light day and the darkness night (Gen. 1:3-5). Everything we are able to behold in the heavens ***day after day*** and ***night after night*** declare a never-ending testimony of God’s glory.

In verse 3, David declared that without ***speech, words***, or audible ***voice***, the heavens’ declaration of the glory of God persists. This is paradoxical in light of verse 2, which states they pour out speech. The point is that they are speaking but not by using words that can be heard with one’s ears. With great clarity and eloquence, the heavens continuously speak volumes without making a sound. Not only can we read about God’s glory in His Word or hear about His glory through the teaching of His Word, but we can also witness the declaration and manifestation of God’s glory in silence as we gaze up to the heavens.

In verse 4, David recognized the extent of the heavens' declaration of the glory of God. The Hebrew text literally expresses that it is like a message consisting of a line of words. So the message of the heavens has gone out across the entire earth. Every person who has looked up to the heavens has received this message. In other words, the heavens' declaration of the glory of God has reached everyone everywhere in the world. David's assertion here is similar to his proclamation in Psalm 8:1, "LORD, our Lord, how magnificent is your name throughout the earth! You have covered the heavens with your majesty."

VERSES 4b-6

At the conclusion of verse 4, the focus moves from general statements regarding the heavens to a poetic personification of the sun, the most dominant and impressive entity in the heavens. The sun makes it possible for life to exist on earth. It provides light and heat. It drives ocean currents and clouds, the weather, the seasons, and the climate. Plant life could not exist without it, and it provides multiple benefits to the human body. The sun is great, yet God is greater. God has suspended the sun in the heavens, and the night is like a tent God has pitched for the sun from which it emerges each day.

Here, David continued using two poetic personifications of the sun to point out how the sun itself, the greatest of all entities in the heavens, declares God's glory. First, David likened the sun to a bridegroom clothed in splendid array who eagerly steps forth out of his home and sets out for his new bride's house to claim her as his wife. It is a picture of radiance and vitality.

Second, David compared the sun to an athlete running a course. Witnessing an athlete in perfect physical condition with spectacular grace and unflinching determination run a race is an amazing sight to behold. Likewise, the sun rises every morning in the east, runs its course throughout the day, and then sets in the west. Every day the sun runs its circuit above the entire earth with spectacular grace and unflinching determination. There is no place on earth that never sees its light. Witnessing the sun run its course in the heavens not only reflects the glory of its Creator by its splendor, but it also reflects His glory through its faithfulness. Furthermore, it bears witness to God's power and wisdom to create the sun and earth in perfect relationship to one another as the sun continually sustains life on earth.

- What misconceptions about God might people draw if they only depend on what they see in creation—apart from His written Word?
-
-

BIBLE SKILL: *Use other Scripture to help understand a Bible passage.*

Compare Psalm 19 to Romans 1:18-32. How are they similar, and how are they different? What can humanity know about God from nature? How has humanity generally responded to the truths about God revealed in nature? How does and will God respond to humanity's idolatry and suppression of the truth?

GOD'S WORD (PS. 19:7-11)

⁷ The instruction of the LORD is perfect, renewing one's life; the testimony of the LORD is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise.

⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right, making the heart glad; the command of the LORD is radiant, making the eyes light up. ⁹ The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the LORD are reliable and altogether righteous. ¹⁰ They are more desirable than gold—than an abundance of pure gold; and sweeter than honey dripping from a honeycomb. ¹¹ In addition, your servant is warned by them, and in keeping them there is an abundant reward.

VERSES 7-9

The sun not only reveals the power and beauty of God but also the wisdom and goodness of God to provide for all of physical life on earth. Likewise, God has provided for our spiritual lives by the revelation of His Word. Once again, employing the beauty of Hebrew parallelism, David expounded the blessing and centrality of God's Word to all of life.

Without God’s Word, we could not survive. Creation reveals the glory of God. God’s Word not only reveals the glory of God but also the way to God. The Lord’s instruction is **perfect**. This means it is without defect. The **instruction** of God restores vitality to the spiritually infirmed and the way to life to the spiritually dead (v. 7a). The **testimony of the LORD**, meaning all that God has communicated in His Word, is trustworthy.


God’s **•precepts**, that is His expectations of us, are entirely right. They are not meant to be a burden but a source of joy for those who obey them. We will rejoice as we run our intended course just as the sun does when it runs its course (v. 5). What’s more, the **command of the LORD**, the entirety of His revealed Word, is **radiant**. It opens one’s eyes, providing light and clarity to stay on the right path in life (Ps. 119:105,130).

The **fear of the LORD** references our response to God’s Word. It involves reverence and humility. The **•ordinances** are God’s judgments on matters. We can always trust that God’s judgments are morally right because He alone is altogether righteous (Ps. 33:5).

Nothing compares to the value of God’s Word.

VERSES 10-11

People in ancient Israel greatly desired **gold** and **honey**. However, David exclaimed nothing compares to the value of God’s Word. The wise will desire it more than anything else. Its rich impact on one’s life is beyond measure. True satisfaction and delight in the life of the believer come from the sweetness of knowing God’s Word and faithfully obeying it. Moreover, God’s Word both warns of the dangers that would ruin one’s life and promises **abundant reward**, that is deep satisfaction in life, to the one who lives according to its ways.

 Highlight in verses 7-11 the various terms used to describe God’s Word. What do these terms suggest to you about the purpose of the Bible?

APPLY THE TEXT

- + Believers can learn about God’s glory by examining His creation.
- + Believers can learn about God’s glory by studying His Word.

☐ Discuss with your Bible study group what benefits you receive by studying God’s Word together.

☐ What is something you have learned about God in His Word this week?
How can that knowledge be put into action?

☐ Memorize Psalm 19:14.

Prayer Needs
