

longer applicable in the same way because we have a new covenant that Jesus instituted.

The second thought is that many things in the Bible are descriptive and not prescriptive. Descriptive is about detailing something that happened. It's not necessarily about what we are supposed to do. An example is Solomon and his hundreds of wives. This is descriptive of what happened in the Bible, not a prescription for multiple marriages. In fact, we see the apostle Paul teaching in 1 Corinthians to be faithful to your spouse in marriage or be celibate in singleness. This type of teaching in the New Testament is prescriptive. There is a difference, and people make the mistake of making a descriptive story in the Bible prescriptive for all.

7) Why is it important to understand the difference in the old covenant and the new covenant?

8) Can you think of a descriptive story in the Bible that people have used as prescriptive (you must do this)?

9) Why is this concept of the difference between descriptive and prescriptive important in determining the will of God?

The last thought is concerning the type of literature in the Bible and reading it in context. The Bible is full of so many types of literature. It has historical, law, poetry, wisdom literature, epistles, and apocryphal. We read these books differently, but they still reveal God's heart to us. For example, the Psalms are Hebrew poetry and full of symbolism, and we have to interpret the symbolism in context of the time, place and culture.

Read Psalm 23. Talk about the symbolism and what it means.

10) If the Lord is my shepherd, are we sheep? What other symbolic language is there, and what does it mean?

CHAIR TIME TOOLS

Read Psalm 119 and think and pray about the following questions.

- 1) Substitute the word Bible for law. What is God saying to you about His word?
- 2) According to this passage, how vital is the Word?
- 3) Is there anything you need to do differently because of this reading?

When God Speaks

The Written Word

Pastor Craig Sweeney | October 8, 2023

Exodus 3:1–14 NLT

“I am” is an invitation to “come out” and KNOW God. (Get CLARITY for my questions.)

- Who is He?
- What is important to Him?
- What is His heart for me and others?
- What kind of relationship are we in?
- What are we going to be doing together?

Thread: When God speaks, clarity breaks through!

Exodus 18 - Having been delivered, these people stand before God's presence knowing almost nothing about Him. What's NEXT?

It's presupposed they are asking:

- What does He want from us?
- How is my life about to change?

God begins to define their new reality if they will accept the invitation.

“You have seen what I did to the Egyptians. You know how I carried you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself. Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to me. And you will be my kingdom of priests, my holy nation. This is the message you must give to the people of Israel.” Exodus 19:4 – 6 NLT

God is starting to bring clarity to the questions.

Then what?

- God gives them the written Word starting with the Ten Commandments.

Why?

- To define their reality; NOT everyone else's, just theirs.

Many generations later Israel lost clarity in their disillusionment and their lack of KNOWING.

Nehemiah 8:1 – 12 NLT

They needed the voice of the written Word of God to KNOW God for themselves.

Is it any wonder that the Apostle John would describe Jesus in his gospel in this way:

John 1:1 – 5 NLT

Jesus is literally the LIVING WORDS of God.

John 15:9 – 10 NLT

2 Timothy 3:16 - 4:5 NLT

Why should I care?

As God comes near to you, the real questions are:

- What is He saying?
- What questions am I asking?

Challenge:

-How much authority will you give the written Word of God for the many questions about your life, and when will you stop and listen daily?

-How will you learn to live into your new reality—to be in this world, but not of it; living as an invitation to other people?

Next Week:

When God speaks, He is present.

For practical, cross-cultural Bible studies related to sermon topics, visit DougBrittonBooks.com/resources.

Life Group Homework

When God Speaks

Fall 2023 | Week 4

Message Date 10/8/2023

MY STORY



- 1) If you could write a book that was guaranteed to be a best seller, what would you write?
- 2) Would you rather live where it only snows or the temperature never falls below 100 degrees? Why?

QUICK REVIEW



- 3) What caught your attention from Sunday's message?

DIGGING DEEPER / TAKING IT HOME



Below are some passages that the Bible has to say about itself. This is by no means exhaustive, but it's a good start.

Please look up and read the following passages:

Joshua 1:8 (NLT)
Psalm 119:105(NLT)
2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT)
Romans 15:4 (NLT)
2 Peter 1:16-21 (NLT)

- 4) What do these passages say about the Bible?
- 5) Why does the Bible need to be our starting place with regard to discerning God's voice in our lives?
- 6) What do these verses teach us about how we should respond to the Bible? Do you do that, and what can you do differently if you need to?

In discerning God's will through the Word, it's helpful to understand the difference between two things. First is the reminder that we live under grace and not law. While the law can give us ethics and behaviors in which to live by, we are no longer bound by them in the same way. So, laws found in the Old Testament are not the same as the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments teach us God's heart about how to treat Him and others, while cleanliness laws about food are no