



MORE BIBLE. LESS LIES.

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All right, who's ready to get into a book of the Bible? Amen. Hey, we're in, uh, we're in First Thessalonians. It's a great book of the Bible. We're in chapter two, and before we jump in, let me give you two quick announcements and then I'll pray and then we'll get right in. Number one, I want to give you a gift. And so, uh, if you have not yet received it, there is a free study guide. Uh, if you scan the QR code, they'll put up, I'll send you a free digital copy of the study guide. In addition, um, we're gonna talk a lot about the Bible today and how we got it and why we trust it, and how we interpret it and why some people criticize it and those people are wrong. And so, uh, what I, uh, what I've got is a special chapter in the doctrine book, just on the doctrine of Revelation and how God reveals himself. I wanna send that to you as well as a free ebook. So if you're here live or you're online, you scan the QR code, we'll send those resources to you. I'm gonna cover as much as I can, but there'll be a lot more in those two resources.

Number two, um, how many of you're expecting a great sermon? Yeah. Okay. Okay. Here's, I need you to lower your expectations, okay? Because just before I got up, I got a photo of my daughter holding my newborn grandson. So yeah, go. I'm like, miss America a hot mess right now. Like I am. I'm very emotional. And so last night we had family dinner and we're around the dining room table, and I was holding my firstborn grandson, and he, he slept in my arms and he'd wake up, smile at me, and go back to sleep. And now, right before I get up to preach, my second grandson's born, I just got a photo. Mama and baby are doing great. So I am very distracted. I'm not gonna lie to you. And if they text and say, I can meet him, I'm just leaving. And so I just, the band just needs to know if Mark leaves, you guys gotta get up and play. So don't go outside for a cigarette break. You may be needed, okay? Stay close, okay? That's what the band always does. So let, let me pray. Um, obviously I need it. So Father, uh, thank you so much for this time to open your word, Lord, and what an incredible week. I mean, just God, I am overwhelmed at joy and Lord, as I have an opportunity to teach about joy, thank you that I'm in a moment where I'm just overwhelmed with joy and gratitude for your goodness to me and my family. Holy Spirit, as we open the scriptures, we invite you, uh, to be our teacher and to help us to love Jesus, and whose name we pray. Amen. Okay, before we jump in, let me tell you a story. So, uh, some years ago, I was a young pastor and there was this network of young pastors, and we'd travel around the country and we'd bring young pastors together just to network and encourage them. And at the time, there was, uh, a band that kind of became, uh, kind of went viral at the time. And, uh, and they were very popular, and they weren't like a Christian band, but a lot of their songs had scripture and Bible and verses. And so I was like, okay, that's curious. So one of the guys on our team thought it would be interesting to interview the front man, the lead singer songwriter, and, uh, said, Hey, you seem to have a lot of scripture in your songs. He's like, yeah, I have, I have a lot of scripture in my songs. I know a lot of the Bible. Oh, well, do you, do you love Jesus? He's like, no, not at all. I don't like Jesus at all. I'm like, okay, well, so do you, do you like the Bible? He's like, no, actually I don't. I'm paraphrasing. He's like, I hate the Bible. Well then why do you know it so well was a good question. And he said, basically, I had very religious parents, and every time I did something wrong to punish me, they made me memorize a verse. And I was a very naughty kid. So I know a lot of the Bible and I, it just broke my heart at the time, because he knew the Bible and he didn't know the Lord. He knew the Bible. He didn't love the Bible. He actually hated God and the scriptures, and this is what

can happen, is if you put the word of God in a religious, non-relational, controlling, fear-based, punitive environment, you're weaponizing the word of God, and it actually turns people away from God. It does exactly the opposite of what it was intended to do. And I'll call that a religious abuse of the Bible. And it tends to be just rather cheerless. And so what I wanna begin with is a big idea that we're gonna look at the remainder of our time together. And that is that life is really about joy bonds and fear bonds. And he's gonna use the word joy a few times just in our, uh, short series of scriptures we're gonna look at together. And motivation in life is usually through joy or fear. And we have joy bonds and fear bonds with people, places and things. So think of it this way, God, is that a joy bond? Yay. Or a fear bond? He probably hates me and is angry at me, uh, places. Church. Is that a joy bond? I want to get there. That's where God's people are to have good memories. Or is that a fear bond? I, I don't know. Those are judgmental and disappointing people. And I've got a lot of wounds in church hurt and things like the word of God. Is it a joy bond? God wants to speak to me, can't wait to hear what he's got to say today, or a fear bond. I'm probably not smart enough to understand it, and it probably will just make me feel worse. And so when you have a, a fear bond versus a joy bond, a a fear bond brings a it's burden. Giving a joy bond is burden lifting. Give you a little definition. A fear bond leads to anxiety. Uh, a joy bond leads to peace. A fear bond leads to hopelessness. A joy bond leads to hope. And, uh, if you have a fear bond, you want to be in control. And if you have a joy bond, you trust that the God who loves you is in control. And so what happens in life, we've gotta make a decision. And that is, am I going to be driven by joy bonds or fear bonds? And let me say this, not to pick on you, but to those of you parents who were religious, raising your kids, this is probably why they're rebellious. Religious parenting leads to rebellious children because you have a fear bond with God, church, Bible, and you instead of a joy bond. And so when we're talking about joy bonds in the Bible, it's two things. It's an internal experience that leads to an external expression, an internal experience. The Bible use words like gladness, cheerfulness, take pleasure in, be glad. And today's gonna say a couple of times, joy, it's in here. You feel it? And then it expresses itself out there. It uses these words in the Bible. Rejoice, shout for joy, cry out, celebrate, delight, praise, boast, exalt. Um, joy is something that you experience in here, and then you express out there and you can tell when somebody has joy. You can see it on their face. You're like, what? What's going on? You're so happy. What happened? You know, like, uh, how many of you, um, when you, uh, when you got your wedding photos, you were looking for that one where you're looking in each other's eyes, joy, bond, woo. If not uhoh. Um, you know, like last night, I could still remember I sit at the dining room table holding my grandson just like, uh, this is all joy to me, it's all joy. And so when we're talking about joy, we're talking about an experience in here that leads to an expression out there. This is why people will clap during worship and raise their hands and cheer and shout. And it's why people jump out of their seat and spill a hundred dollars beer at a football game because some guy crossed a chalk line with a dead pig. He's just so excited, right? And so what, what happens for the Christian is this, um, our joy is less contingent on what happens out there. And it's more contingent on who's ruling in here. And so joy can be in spite of circumstance. Um, and so what happens is, you and I, when we go through life, there's three things that I think really help us choose joy, live in joy. And if we're having a hard season return to joy,

number one, God, our father is over it. Whatever we're in, he's over it. Satan's not in ultimate control and things are not out of control. God is in control. Number two, Jesus already went through it. So whatever we're in, he's been through, we can follow his leadership, follow His example, and he's gonna help us. And then third, whatever we're in the Holy Spirit is in us to get us through it. He'll lead and guide and correct and instruct. And part of the fruit of the Spirit is joy. It's joy. Now I say all of that because what Paul is going to talk about is two things. Joy bonds with the Bible and joy bonds with the church, enjoying the word of God and enjoying the people of God. And so we're gonna jump right in. First Thessalonians chapter two, verse 13, and then we'll jump down to the end of the section 18 and 19. He says, we also thank God constantly for this, right? Just the joy starts to roll. Here's what I'm thankful for. Here's what I'm grateful for. That when you receive the word of God, the scriptures, which you heard from us, Paul's a Bible teacher and preacher, you accepted it. This is a fantastic line, not as the word of men. Philosophy, psychology, sociology, not speculation, but revelation not what people think about God, but who God tells people He is okay. Not as the word of men, but what it really is. The word of what God. This is the word of God. If you want a word from God, I always say, you gotta open the word of God. Uh, and here's, I just want you to know this. Um, some of you didn't have a dad, or some of you had a dad that was not engaged and involved, or he didn't have a lot of wise things to say. Some of you had a great dad. Some of you, your dad is even passed away and you just wish you could just get a little more time with him. God is a father. You are his child. He wants to hear from you. It's called prayer. And he wants to speak to you. It's called scripture. And I don't know about you, but if you've got a all knowing, all powerful, all loving father who is always available, you should talk to him. And you should listen to him 'cause he cares for you. And again, this isn't out of fear. He's gonna be angry at me. This is out of love. He's here to help me. What he says is he received it as it truly is the word of God, which is at work in you believers. And then he closes at the end for what is our hope or joy. There's our word or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus. It is coming. Is it not you, for you are our glory and joy. What he's talking about is when I showed up and taught the Bible, you received it as the word of God. And you had joy in the word of God. And part of joy includes the ability to enjoy. This is, and many of you are new. I mean, in fact, probably half of our church is new in the last few months. And so let me just say something that those that have been around for a while know. And that is that we are not motivated by what we have to do. We're motivated by what we get to do. That's right. Amen. Because he says it right here. He says, the Holy Spirit, uh, unleashes the word of God and it works in you. What this means is God gives you a new heart, new mind, new nature, new desires. So now it's like, I wanna learn the Bible. I wanna pray. I wanna repent on my sin. I wanna forgive other people. I want to follow the Holy Spirit's leading in my life. And some people who don't have a personal relationship with God, they're like, why do you do all of that? And the answer is, I get to. I get to, I want to. I like to. I, I, you know, same reason I eat ice cream. Uh, I enjoy it every time. Never been a time I didn't, uh, you know, there doesn't need to be a committee that holds me accountable for my ice cream. I don't need anyone to hold me accountable. I'm self-motivated. And so for us, we want you to enjoy God. Enjoy life with God, enjoy the people of God, enjoy worship, enjoy the word of God. And it should be motivated by joy. You get to not fear. You have to. Amen. Okay? So what

he talks about here is receiving, uh, the scriptures as the word of God. So what I'm gonna do in a lot of our time together, I just want to talk specifically about the Bible, the word of God. I wanna explain what it is, how we got it, why we trust it, and why you need to spend a lot of time in it. We all have a beginning with the Bible. Uh, some of you literally today is your beginning with the Bible. This is where you start. If you need a copy on the way out of church, grab one. If you're online, let us know. We'll point you to digital resources. We even had a guy recently, he began his relationship with the Bible. He walked in. We had baptisms a few weeks ago. First time he's ever in a church, he got saved and baptized. We handed him a Bible. He walked out an unbeliever, walked out wet with the Bible. He had a good day, okay? That's where he started. And so we all just gotta think, okay, where did I begin my journey with the Bible? For me, I grew up in a Catholic home and I didn't love the Bible and I didn't love church. And it wasn't 'cause anything bad happened. I just didn't care. And we did have a Bible at our house. It was like, it was on the coffee table, but it was basically a second coffee table. It was that big. It was one of those giant bibles with like hippie Jesus on the front, wearing the robe with pretty killer hair. And uh, and guess how many times I remember opening it in my whole life? Zero had enough dust on it. I could have wrote damned with my finger. I never even opened that book. So then I'm in high school, and some of you know my story. Really cute gal, uh, get to know her. She's pastor's daughter. And uh, she buys me this Bible, this Bible. And uh, I go off to college and I'm sitting in my dorm at a state university and I became a Christian reading this physical bible. The reason it's got a new cover on it, I wore the old one off. I read it so much, the cover fell off. And, uh, if you're a single guy, I always say this, if a girl buys you a Bible, buy a ring. That's a good girl, okay? Just, that's what I'm telling you. So I became a Christian reading the Bible, and I just fell in love with the Bible. I, every time I opened it, God met with me. It was joyful, changed my life. It was, uh, the most incredible experiences with God. Were just studying the scripture. So then I got into a really great church. Paul's gonna talk about the Bible in the church today. I found a church that taught the Bible pastor, humble, godly, smart, wise, helpful man of God, forever grateful. All of a sudden, I'll be honest, I really didn't care about college anymore. I kind of went to class and I passed, you know, accidentally. But I didn't really put a lot of effort in. What I got really excited about was I wanna learn the Bible. And at our church, we had classes on marriage. I'm like, I don't know what I'm doing, but I do like that girl and how to be a dad someday and how to read the Bible. And I was like, this is amazing. This, the Bible like is good for everything and I don't know anything. So I actually, true story, they passed a clipboard in church. This is, you know, long time ago. And we've wrote dinosaurs to church. But, um, they passed around a clipboard and they had all the classes and men's bible studies. I'm a new Christian, I didn't know you're supposed to sign up for one. I signed up for all of them. So my poor pastor, he is like, what are you doing here? I was like, I'm new. I, I didn't know, like, and everything is something I don't know, you know. So whatever class there is, I'm taking it and I'm studying the Bible and I love the Bible. I go get a master's degree in the Bible. The word of God has changed my life without the word of God. I would not still be married without the word of God. I would not have a healthy relationship with our children. And without the word of God, I'd probably be an angry, broken man. And I wouldn't get to enjoy my grandkids. The word of God changed my life. And I wanted to change your life

'cause I love you. So here's the word of God. It's actually a library for those of you who are new. It's 66 books. The Old Testament is uh, 39 books up until the coming of Jesus. And then the coming of Jesus and his death, burial, resurrection returned to heaven is in the 27 books of the New Testament. And they're written by about 40 authors over the course of about 1,500 years. In addition, it's a very multicultural book. Authors are from the continents of Africa, Asia, and Europe. And when you open the Bible, you're gonna see all kinds of different literature. You're going to see sermons and songs and poems and letters. Paul is writing here a letter. You're gonna see architecture, you're going to see legal briefs, you're going to see governmental decrees and family trees and personal diaries and lots of history. It's a very diverse book. In addition, when you open it up, you're gonna see chapters. Those were added in the 12 hundreds. And then you're gonna see verses those were added in the 15 hundreds. Here's why. Same reason you have a street and an address where you live, right? You have a street and an address that's like a chapter and a verse so that people can find you. And so they put the chapters in verses in the Bible to help us find things in the scriptures. And, uh, what you need to know about the Bible, it is the bestselling most widely translated, most beloved and impactful book in the history of the world. 'cause it's the book that God wrote. And it's the only perfect thing on the earth. And it is the most translated book in the history of the world. And even in places where nations and tribes and groups don't have a written language, Christians arrive, love, get to know the people, and then create a written language so that those people could have God's word in their native language. I'm telling you that Christians have done more for literacy, for interpretation and translation. And it was actually a Christian, uh, Gutenberg who invented the printing press so that we could even have published books in addition, um, who wrote the scriptures? Well, um, ultimately the Bible says that there are many human authors, and there's one divine author, the many human authors. As you read the Bible, many of the books will just tell you who wrote them. We looked at the beginning of one Thessalonians, it says Paul, and with me is Sylvanus. And Timothy Paul's the primary author, Sylvanus and Timothy are part of his leadership team. Other authors include David, Moses, Joshua, Solomon, Nehemiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Habakkuk, Paul, Peter, and Luke just tells us who the authors are. In addition, um, there's one line I really am excited to share with you. So after Jesus died and rose and returned to heaven, he installed Peter as the leader of the disciples to have the highest spiritual authority on earth after Jesus returned to heaven. So in all the names of the disciples listed, he's always listed first. So Peter would've been the most highly regarded spiritual leader on the earth. And he says something about Paul who wrote the letter to the Thessalonians, I can't wait to share it with you two Peter three, 15 and 16. Our beloved brother Paul, also wrote to you, according to the wisdom given him as he does in all his letters, he said, Paul's writing letters. You guys are reading them. He's like, lemme tell you about those letters. Paul writes, at least 13 of the New Testament books, letters, first Thessalonians that we're in is one of his letters. There's a debate as to who the author of Hebrews is. If it was Paul, he actually writes 14 of the 27 books of the New Testament. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, for those of you that are a little more veteran, how many of you have read Paul? And you're like, huh? What? Like, tongues predestination, head coverings, demons. You're like, huh, there are some, he swims in the deep end of the pool, right? He's, he's the kind of guy, he's not in the

shallow end with the water wings on. Like he's in the deep end of the pool. He's a deep thinker, profound intellect, and some of his things are quote unquote hard to understand. So if you've ever read the Bible, especially Paul, and you're like, that's hard to understand, Peter's like, I know how I feel Brother Peter's like I write books in the Bible and I'm still scratching my head at Paul. That guy's so smart. So, uh, there are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant, meaning they don't know what they're talking about, know they're very confident and unstable. They're not fully devoted to the Lord, twist to their own destruction as they do the other Scripture. Scripture. So what's Paul writing? Scripture. Scripture. Scripture means writing and bible means book. So the Holy Bible is the Holy Book. And so what he's saying is, uh, Paul is writing books of the Bible and uh, and you need to trust what Paul says. He's our beloved brother and he's got a lot of wisdom. But people are going to attack and malign. They're going to twist and contort what Paul is saying. You just need to know that the word of God has always been under assault, but it always points back to the truth that it is the word of God. And I love that Peter tells us, Paul's writing scripture and lemme ask you this, is Paul a perfect man? Not even close, not even close. He's a man who was murdering Christians before Jesus came down from heaven, literally knocked him off his high horse and saved him. Paul is not a perfect man, but Paul writes perfect scripture. Here's what's so encouraging. God does perfect work through imperfect people. That is so I don't know about you. That's encouraging, that's encouraging. So the Bible is evidence that God does perfect work through imperfect people, and that gives us a lot of hope. So there are many human authors. One is Paul and then there's one divine author. And the story of the Bible is that ultimately it is God who writes the scripture through human beings, not overriding their personality or their experience or their education, but working in and through them in a supernatural way. That's where the Bible is different than every other book that's ever been written. And it's the only perfect thing on the earth and it's our highest authority. But here's what it says, two Timothy three 16, all scripture. Lemme just point out the obvious how much all, okay, you're, if, if we're honest, you're gonna come to the Bible and be like, I don't like that. Right? And I don't know what that is, but all scripture is gout. Breathe, everybody. Read anybody who reads the Bible like, I've never disagreed with anything. Well then you didn't read it. Uh, because everybody who's honest, when you start reading the Bible, you're like, I don't agree with that, that, that, that's offensive to me. I I wish it wasn't like that. I can, can we make an alteration? No, all scripture is God. Breathe, all scripture is God. Breathe. So ultimately when you come to the Bible, you're like, well, I disagree. Well then you're wrong. You're wrong. Okay? Like, are you sure? Positive? Yeah, I've been doing this for 30 years. You're wrong. And so if you disagree, you can't change what God said. You need to change what you believe. Okay? And that's humility and wisdom. So all scripture, and I'll just be honest with you too, when I first started reading the Bible, there was a lot I disagreed with. I'll just be, I don't, I don't know, probably shouldn't say this. I, uh, but I will. And, uh, so like at the time I was dating Grace, she gave me the Bible. She's a pastor's daughter. Uh, we were sleeping together as not, I was not a Christian. Then I became a new Christian and I'm reading the Bible. And the Bible has this work called fornication. I shouldn't tell you this, I looked it up. First word study I ever did in the Bible. And it wasn't out of love, forgotten. I had self-seeking motives. And uh, I realized that I was fornicating. I called grace, I was like, Hey, we've been

fornicating. She was like, yeah, I know. I was like, well, I just found out. You know, I just found out. I was like, I, I don't, I don't like that. And I asked my pastor, he is like, you're wrong, you're wrong. You need a bible and a belt. Those are the first two things you need, son. So guess what? We stopped sleeping together. Not because I wanted to, but because God said to, okay, I was wrong. Okay? And uh, and, and when you're reading the Bible, it's gonna challenge you. It's gonna convict you. It's gonna point out what's wrong with you. And like Jacob wrestling, you know, with the angel of the Lord, like you're gonna get into some scrums with God. Lemme just say this, he's undefeated. He's undefeated, right? All scripture is breathed out by God. And that that's, that's God inspiring through the Holy Spirit, the writing of scriptures and profitable, it's good for you for teaching reproof correction, training, and righteousness that the man of God may be competent, uh, equipped for every good work. And so what it's saying is ultimately the author behind the authors is God, the Holy Spirit, who is the author of all of the books of the Bible. So you've got different books and different authors, but ultimately one spirit working perfectly behind the scenes for all of God's word. The Bible will say, thus, uh, says the Lord. Hundreds of times, 3,800 times just in the Old Testament, they'll say The word of the Lord came, or the word the Lord spoke or the Lord revealed. And all of these are statements that the person is delivering the mail, but they didn't write the mail. Like, this is God's message. I'm just God's messenger. But I didn't create the message in addition to things. I just want you to know when you read the Bible, number one, when you read and studied it, and that's what I want you to do. 'cause I love you. It's changed my life. I want to change your life. When you read and study the Bible, it's the only book that the author meets with you, right? When you meet and you pray, you say, holy Spirit, you wrote the scriptures, please meet with me and help me learn them. He's very happy to help you. He wrote the scriptures, if you're a Christian, he lives in you and he wants you to learn the word that he wrote for you. It becomes this powerful supernatural experience when the Holy Spirit shows up for your time in the scriptures. And the author will meet with you like, holy Spirit, I don't understand. He's like, well, pray and be humble and I'll help you understand that. Number two, the Bible is the only book that you'll ever read that as you're reading it, it starts reading you. Okay? And here's what it says in Hebrews four 12, the word of God is living and active, discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. If you're honest reading the Bible, all of a sudden you're trying to master and control it. And next thing you know, it turns and it's trying to have authority over you and judge you and convict you and look at your motives and reveal sin and show people you're bitter against and lies you've believed and strongholds you've given. You're like, oh my goodness, I've never read a book that that that interpreted me. 'cause God wants you to know two things. Who He is and who you are. And the scriptures is where he reveals that to you. It's a life-giving supernatural encounter with God. And we study the word of God. This leads to a question that many of you perhaps have. Why are there so many different Bible translations? And when it comes to Bible translations, there are certain people like, oh, that's just a bad translation. And this is what, for example, the Mormons say a lot, every time you open up the Bible and quote something that disagrees with them, they just say it's a bad interpretation. Anytime you're interpreting an ancient text, any, any kind of, it could be Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, epi amenities, Alexander the Great could be any work from antiquity. There are four different options for translating

from the original language into your language. And just so you know, the Bible was originally written largely the Old Testament is in Hebrew, new Testament is Greek, and a few parts are in Aramic. So linguistic scholars are working from the ancient manuscripts to the modern languages. There are word for word translations. And this is where you need to get it exactly right. How many of you are lawyers, your accountants? Um, you do tax preparation, you do building codes, okay? You people are into the details, right? Some of you are artists and you're like, I finger paint, I don't know. But for those of you, for those of you who are in those highly meticulous trades, you're like, no, no, no, we need to do the accounting, right? We need to do the engineering, right? We need to do the legal right. And you can't just sort of feel your way through it. It has to be very specific. That's where word for word can be most helpful, particularly when you're dealing with history or legal documents or measurements or, or financial amounts. Word for word translations would include the, uh, English standard version, which I'm preaching out of the King James version, the New King James version, and something called the New American Standard version, or the New American standard Bible. Number two is thought for thought. There are some things when you go to translate them, if you just go hard, wooden, literal, you kinda lose the beauty and the poetry of it. So for example, in the Bible, there are entire sections that are poetic. Uh, there are whole books of the Bible that are poetry, like the Song of Solomon. How many of you have tried to put poetry into Google translator? And it didn't come out exactly like it should have because it gets all the words right? But it doesn't get the heart and the poetry, and it doesn't get the rhyme and the rhythm and the feel and the cadence. 'cause it's not just the letter of the law, it's the spirit of the law. And so then thought for thought would be like the new international version, which I became a Christian reading, uh, the New Living Translation, which is fantastic and I love it in the Old Testament, it's a new favorite. And the contemporary English version. And then there are paraphrases and paraphrases don't necessarily pretend to be pure translations. Some of 'em won't even have the verses. And they're adding words not to change it, but to try to give context and meaning and hue and color. Uh, and this would be, for example, helpful when you get into the songs in the Bible, there's, there's lots of songs. And if you just hand, you know, a, a really great singer songwriter to an accountant and let him translate, probably not gonna get the full impact of what was intended through the song. And so that's where things like paraphrases come in. That would be the message, the Living Bible, the amplified Bible, and the voice. And then the fourth is a corruption. And this is not trying to translate the Bible. This is trying to change the Bible. There's a translation called The New World Translation. The Jehovah's Witness cult uses it and they have systematically gone through the Bible and removed everything that refers to Jesus as God, except they missed a few too. So when they knock on my door, that's where we start at my house. But it's, it's their intent to change Jesus. It's their intent to change Jesus. Now what happens is, uh, some people are like, well, we don't have good translation, or it's been wrongly interpreted. Actually that's not true. And I've got it in the ebook that I'm giving you. But if you look at all the manuscript evidence, we have far more manuscripts of the Bible than any other ancient, uh, piece of literature far closer to the original with far more consistency. That means the Bible is the most actually trustworthy ancient book in the history of the world. And when it comes to it, the way it would work, particularly in the Old Testament, let's say for

example, I was a scribe or a senior scribe, and then you were a scribe, I would get up with a copy of the Old Testament and I would read it, and then you would hear it, and then you would write it down. This is before the printing press. You were trained to be a scribe. This is like being a court stenographer. You went to school for this and this is your career. Is it possible, if you were all writing down that maybe someone could do misspelling of a word? Maybe some of us, you know, I mean, we believe in Jesus, but not punctuation. We may get the punctuation wrong. That's me. Um, how many of us, we, we heard the word, but we wrote it down 'cause we misheard the word, right? There is a possibility that an error could be made, but then to correct it, there would be a series of editors that would go through all of our manuscripts. And if they found one error, what would they do to that scroll? Burn it. Okay, so you have amazing consistency and occasionally you might have per chance of human error, but 97 to 99% of the scriptures can be reconstructed from the ancient manuscripts. There is no debated section of belief or doctrine. The only debates are certain points of spelling or punctuation. But let's say, you know, let's say there's a thousand of us here and um, you know, you find two that spell a word one way, and 998 that spell out the other way, you can come to the conclusion they probably got it wrong. And it's nothing of sub severity, seriousness or note. And lemme just say this as well, um, there was a study that was done. I, I won't share it, I'll just mention I've shared it previously. It's called the Power of four. And here's what they have found. If you are in God's word and God's word is in you one, two, or three days a week, there is negligible impact in your life for change. As soon as you get to four or more days a week, massive change in people's addiction, mental health, depression, and life. Massive. Because as soon as most of your weak has God's word, your you're weak gets better because the Holy Spirit is gonna keep speaking to you and feeding your soul and leading you and guiding you and comforting you, and instructing you and motivating you. And what I would tell you is this, uh, get God's word into not just four days of your week, but every day of your week. And, and it's always a good idea to start your day with the Bible. 'cause the rest is probably gonna be a disaster. So just get your head right, get your heart right, and get your relationship with God, right? And I'll be honest with you guys, I, uh, I got saved reading the Bible at age 19 in college. I've been a pastor for 30 years. I've been a Christian, I guess now coming up on 34 years. I don't think there's been one day in my whole life that I haven't been in the scriptures. And people ask, how do you do that? Honestly, I like it. I'm like, if God wants to talk to me, I would like to hear from him. If there's a father that wants to show up in my day, Hey Dad, you're welcome. You're welcome. All the time in my life, we want you to be, I just so desperately. Here's, here's why. Here's why I've been doing this for 30 years. I want you to believe the Bible and I want you to enjoy it. And to have a lifetime of joy bonds, meeting with a loving living God and him changing your heart and your soul and your mind, and your life and your legacy, and your marriage and your parenting and your job and everything else you've got. I wanted to all be transformed by the word of God. That's just my end zone. So then, um, how about this one? Um, what does Jesus say about the scriptures? Because every once in a while you get people like, well, you know, I love Jesus, but I'm not sure about the Bible. Well, we'll fix that. Um, here's what Jesus says about the scriptures. Matthew five 17 and 18. Do not think I have come to abolish the law and the prophets. That's how the, uh, old Testament would describe itself, the law. And then the prophets

is how they would depict the categories of the Old Testament. I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, still hasn't happened. Not a iota, not a dot will pass away from the law until it all is accomplished. Here's what Jesus is. He's a Bible teacher. They called him a rabbi Bible teacher. They come to Jesus. They're like, what do you think about the Bible? He is like, all of it's true. And all of it will be fulfilled by me. Everything I'm missing, nothing. I will cross. Every t I will dot every I. I'm here to fulfill all that is commanded and prescribed in the Word of God. In addition, um, Jesus talks about authors in the Bible. He talks about Moses, Isaiah, David, Daniel. Uh, again, this is in your study guide. And Jesus believes all of the Bible, including the parts that some people struggle to believe. He says that God really did create the heavens and the earth. That Noah really did build a boat. That Jonah really went into a fish. Um, and even said as Jonah went into the fish for three days and three nights. So I will be in the grave three days and three nights. In addition, uh, he said that Adam and Eve were real historical figures in the first man and the first woman in the first marriage. In addition, Jesus appealed to the scriptures. On dozens of occasions. He would say, quote, it is written, they would argue with him. He'd say it is written. He'd quote the Bible. Satan would show up and attack him. He'd say it is written. And he would quote the Bible. And Jesus appealed to the Bible. Um, on the cross, he says, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? That's Psalm 22, 1, he's quoting scripture. And then Jesus with his dying breath, says, father, into your hands, I commit my spirit. That's Psalm 31, 5. And so what Jesus says here, I've come to fulfill the scripture that leads to the next point. And perhaps this will be my most helpful. If Jesus came to fulfill the scripture, how do you interpret the Bible? Okay, there's, we could do a couple of years of sermons on this and I'd be up for it. But let me just summarize it as simply as I can. You come to the Bible, people are like, well, that's just your interpretation. The question is, what's the Holy Spirit's interpretation? You think this and you think this and you think that? What does he think? He's ultimately the one that wrote it. So we gotta ask, okay, what does God say throughout the totality of his word? And how do we come to a right understanding of what God has said? Two things. How do you interpret the Bible? Let me just start. So for those of you who are veterans, first line of the Bible is in the beginning, God, God. So let me say this, um, the Bible is for you, but it's not primarily about you. See, we live in a day. It's like, what's your personality? Well, that's great. What's more important is what are God's attributes? 'cause ultimately, too many of us know far more about ourselves than our God. And so ultimately, in the beginning, God, so you know what that means? You start everything with God. God, okay, God. Who are you? What do you say? Right? What do you do? Let me start with God. So the, the Bible is for you, but it's about God. And you'll make a grave error if you read the Bible and you're like, I'm the center. It's all about me. No, actually it's not in the beginning, not you, right? Not you. Once you know who God is, then you can figure out who you are. So this is the sequence. You don't know who you are until you know who God is. Um, number two, here's what Jesus said. So I love this in John chapter five, verse 38 through 39. Um, this is one of my, I just think this is one of the funniest parts of the Bible. I I think the Bible's funny. Um, religious people don't, and they're funny too. But this part of the Bible is funny 'cause Jesus is a rabbi and teacher and the religious guys show up to correct him. Jesus is teaching like, oh, you got that wrong. That's not the 10th of the Greek verb. That's

not what the, like, they're, that's, um, God comes to earth and a couple of guys, you know, they're in their second year at G C U working on Christian studies. We're like, we got this. We're gonna fix him. You know, so lemme just say this. If Jesus were walking around the, on the earth teaching today, there'd be a group of religious people writing blogs, correcting him and attacking him on Twitter, this would be right. They are, how do I know I've met their grandsons? Uh, I I deal with these guys all the time. So here's, here's what Jesus said. He says, uh, you do not have his word abiding in you. Now, this is a, this is a magnificently offensive statement. So people are like, you offended me. Like, oh, you haven't met Jesus. Yeah, you're not, you've not. He's he's varsity offending. He just is. 'cause these are religious guys that even to qualify, they would've need to have memorized the first five books of the Old Testament in Hebrew. Some of you're like, uh, where's the Old Testament? So it's, uh, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, numbers and Deuteronomy in the Hebrew. You had to memorize it just to get into the school. Do these guys think they know the Bible? Totally. Like what are you talking about? Like we, we all graduated top of our class. We've memorized whole books of the Bible, right? We have won Hebrew jeopardy every year. We're undefeated, right? Jesus said, you do not have his word abiding in you for you do not believe in the one whom he as sent you search the scriptures. That's not the problem because you think that in them you have eternal life. And it is they that bear witness about me. Lemme say this. Here's what Jesus is saying is you don't know the Bible unless you love me. Because the Bible isn't for religion, it's for relationship. And religious people are like, how do I win arguments? Jesus is like, I'm more interested in winning people. See, religious people know the Bible, but they don't have the Holy Spirit and they don't love Jesus. It just becomes a, a weapon to control, to abuse, to bludgeon eyes. And Jesus says, you, you guys are arguing with me. You should be listening to me. I'm telling you I love you and you hate me. You miss the whole point of everything that's ever been written. Here's the key. Connect everyone and everything in the Bible to Jesus. Just get to Jesus and you'll solve most of the problems with interpretation. In addition, what Jesus is saying is something that a pastor friend of mine says a lot. And that is before the Bible is binoculars for you to examine them. It's a mirror for you to examine you. They come to Jesus like, we disagree. We think you got this wrong. We think you made a mistake. We're not sure about your ex of Jesus. And the commentary you, you quote is not one that we think very good about. And your footnotes are not impressive to us. And he's like, you're wicked and going to hell. Yeah, we didn't see that. We didn't see that. Okay? Because ultimately, if all you're using this for is to judge other people, you're not using it first to judge yourself. Where's my sin? Where's my failure? Where's the lies that I believe? Where are the things in my life that need to change? That's where, um, it just, the Holy Spirit reminds me of that line to the Corinthians. Love builds up knowledge. Hofs up. I know so much Bible, I'm smarter than you. Like who caress. That's pride. Satan got cast out of heaven for that. You get cuts in the line to hell for being arrogant, right? Love. That's what matters. Do you know God's love? Do you love God? Do you love people in addition? Um, if you know the Bible but you don't have the Holy Spirit and love Jesus, you'll end up like Satan. Okay? Some of you have got church hurt and I just feel like I'm supposed to speak to this. And some of you have fear bonds with church and Bible teaching because you've been under religious, non-relational cheerless, legalistic control, fear-based Bible

teaching. And ultimately, if somebody knows the Bible, but they don't have the Holy Spirit and they don't love Jesus, they will use and abuse the Bible just like Satan did. Okay? Go back to the fall. Adam and Eve. God said something. Satan showed up. He misquoted, weaponized the word of God. Jesus shows up. Satan shows up. Satan misquotes weaponizes abuses the word of God. And Jesus keeps quoting the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy. The point is this, I'll just say this. Um, I know this is a strong statement. The most dangerous people know the Bible don't have the Holy Spirit and don't love Jesus. Those are the most dangerous people. That's why Satan keeps quoting the word of God. It says the Holy Spirit brings to mind and in, in, in Hebrews and Ephesians that the word of God is living inactive. It's like a sword for battle. And Satan is like, I'll take that sword and, and I will use it to destroy God's people rather than to love God's people. I, I will use it to break God's people rather than to heal God's people. So the key is just always connect the Bible to Jesus. I'll give you some examples as we near what should be the conclusion, but probably won't be the conclusion. Um, so as you read the Old Testament, a lot of people are like, well, I love the New Testament, not the Old Testament. 'cause the New Testament tells me about Jesus. Jesus tells us that the whole Bible tells us about him when he says you diligently study the scriptures. He's talking about the Old Testament. The New Testament hadn't even been written yet. So in the Old Testament, Jesus walked with Abraham. He came down and he wrestled with Jacob. He spoke to Moses at the burning bush. He stood with Daniel's friends in the fiery furnace. And he also, uh, revealed himself to the prophet Isaiah. There's also types in the Bible when you see priests, remember Jesus is our great high priest. When you see prophets, Jesus is the word of God. When you see kings, Jesus is the king of kings. When you see shepherds know that Jesus is our good shepherd and our chief shepherd. When you see judges know that Jesus is going to judge everyone in the end when you see sacrifices, remember that Jesus Christ is our Passover lamb who was slain for our sin. When you see rabbis teaching, remember that Jesus is our rabbi and teacher. When you see the temple, it's the meeting point between heaven and earth and know that Jesus is the greater temple. God became a man. And the connecting point between heaven and earth is the body of Jesus Christ. In addition, when you see Jacob's ladder coming down from heaven, it is foreshadowing prefiguring, the coming of Jesus, Emmanuel God with us coming down to visit us from heaven. In addition, when you see the first Adam, remember that Paul also calls Jesus the last Adam, the first Adam sinned in a garden. And the last Adam bled for sin in a garden. The first Adam sinned a tree, the last Adam atoned for sin on a tree. The first Adam was naked and unashamed and the last Adam was nearly naked and bore our shame. The first Adam brought us thorns and the last Adam wore a crown of thorns. Friends, everything points to Jesus. It's all about Jesus. If you just find Jesus, you'll find everything else. In addition, Jesus is the greater Abel. Abel had a jealous brother, Cain who murdered him even though he was an innocent worshiper. Jesus is the greater Abel. His brothers killed him, uh, threw him in a hole and just, and just saw him delivered to life. In addition, just like Abraham left his father's house. So Jesus left his father's house to come and save us. Just like Isaac carried wood on his back to lay his life down as a sacrifice for his father Abraham. So Jesus carried the wood of the cross on his back to lay down his life and to be a sacrifice so that the Father could save us. Just like uh, Joseph was betrayed by his brothers and thrown in a hole, Jesus was betrayed by his brothers

and thrown in a hole just like Moses liberated God's people from slavery. So too Jesus Christ delivers us from the rule of Satan, who is our Pharaoh and a life of sin and oppression into freedom and joy just as Job was innocent and suffered. So Jesus was innocent and suffered. And just as David was a boy who was a shepherd, that became a king. So Jesus is God, become a boy that grew up to be our good shepherd and the king of kings. And lastly, as Jonah was in the belly of the whale or fish, three days and three nights. So Jesus said he would be in the tomb before he proceeded forward. Friends, I'm telling you, this is the most exciting thing. Amen. I know you're on your phone a lot. Put it down. Unless you're opening the Bible app, so much of what we get is lies and not truth. It causes fear and not joy. At leads to confusion and not peace. I'm just telling you, as the world gets darker, I just want you to go deeper. More time in God's presence, more time in God's Word. In addition, there are prophecies in the Bible as you read, you'll see that it was promised that God would become a man, that he would be born of a virgin, that he would be born in the small town of Bethlehem, that he would come before the temples destroyed in 70 Ad, that he would live without sin. That he would perform miracles, that he would be crucified through the hands and the feet. That he would be buried with the rich in his death. That he would raise from death, that he would ascend to heaven and that he would take departed saints with him into the kingdom of God. All of that's in the chapter I've given you. But all of that is in the chapters of God's Word. And just two things in closing and then we'll show up at the last point. I always tell this to our people, but so many of you online and in person are new. Number one, the Bible doesn't just tell us what happened, but what always happens because the Bible is not old. It's eternal because it's timeless. It's always timely. Number two, what we want to do then is not just look at the word but look through the word into the world. Okay? What's going on in our culture? What's going on in our government? What's going on with our children? What's, what's going on? What's going on? Well, ultimately we look through the word of God and you're like, oh Satan and demons are real and there is deception. And government is usually against God. And, and, and these things that we're experiencing have been happening because there's been a spiritual battle from Genesis three to the present. And it will continue until Jesus returns. And now I don't just look at the word, I look through the word and now I understand what's going on in the world. And now I know how to live in this world. So this is perhaps my final point. Um, um, what happens when the word of God is proclaimed? Jesus is the hero and the Holy Spirit shows up. You get a church, you get a church. So here's what he says. Uh, first Thessalonians two 14 through 20. He talks about joy bonds with the Bible and joy bonds with the church. That's what we want for you. Your marriage, your family joy. And if somebody asks, why do you go to the church? Joy. Amen. God loves me. They love me. I love God. I love them. We're all a work in progress. But it's a fun place to be. And we believe in Jesus and good times. And we're gonna throw parties until we get to heaven. And we're practicing. That's what we're doing, okay for you brothers, family language became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews. And there it's not talking about racial or ethnic, it's talking about religious leaders that weaponize and abuse the word of God. Paul's Jewish. Jesus is Jewish. Most of the converts are Jewish. He planted this church Acts 17, preaching at a synagogue who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets and drove us out and displeased

God and oppose all mankind by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved. So as always, to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them. At last God will deal with your enemies 'cause they're his enemies. But since we were torn away from you brothers for a short time, he's out of town because of death threats in person, not in heart. We endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face-to-face joy bonds. I just, it's not in my notes, but here's, lemme just tell you what I'm seeing, uh, face-to-face. That's the Bible's language for friendship. When we come together, we come together to face. And Paul says this to the Corinthians, he says that one day we will see Jesus face to face. When Jesus comes back, you're gonna look 'em in the eye. You're gonna be like, it's all true. Yes it is. Welcome home. I love you. I paid everything so that we could be together forever. And all I have for you is joy. That never ends. And so that friends, that's what we're living for, just to be face to face with Jesus because we wanted to come to you. I Paul again and again, but Satan hindered us. Satan's always gonna be trying to get in the way of you being with God's people and with God for what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before Lord Jesus is coming is not you. You are our glory and joy. Joy, yes, joy. So what happens is the church comes into existence the same way that creation does. 10 times in Genesis one it says, God said, and then everything happened. The way a church comes into existence, the word of God is preached. The Holy Spirit shows up and people meet Jesus Christ. Okay? Before we had a, a band, a sound system, a decent facility, uh, before we had any sort of kid's ministry, we started with one thing. We opened the word of God and we taught the word of God. And everything else that has come into existence in this beautiful, joyful, wonderful church, family is the result of the power of God's word, bringing anything and everything into existence through nothing. By the powerful sheer force of the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen. And that's why we're here. We're here because the word of God is true. We are here because the spirit of God is unleashed when the word of God is preached. So what I'm gonna do now, I'm gonna invite the band up and what we're gonna do, we're gonna sing and worship. You wanna do that? We're God's people. That's what we like to do. That's what we like to do. And as the band is coming up, uh, in closing, let me just read over you some things that the Holy Spirit says through Paul over the church family in Thessalonika. And I want you to receive it as the children of God because it is a timeless word. It is time for you to receive your identity and how God feels about you and how he regards you. You are members of God's family, quote unquote, the church. You are not the world, you're the church. You are recipients of grace. He says, and peace. There's grace for you. There should be peace in you. You are adopted into God's family. And you are loved. You are loved by God. You're loved by God. And then he throws in a bonus round, he says, he has chosen you. He has chosen you. Some of you have had a lot of rejection not from God. Some of you have had people betray you not God. Some of you have had people abandon you, not God. He has chosen you and he has adopted you. In addition, he says, you are quote very dear, let me just prophesy that over you. You're very dear. You're very dear people. You're a beautiful church like this church. In addition, he says, you have quote, receive the word of God. And you have, I've been yelling at you for seven years, at least an hour a week, and you brought friends. You receive the word of God. Amen. You're the Bible people. In addition, he says, you have suffered, you've all paid a price for your love for Jesus. But he says that you're our glory and our joy. You need to know

that glory means you are a priority, and joy means that we enjoy you. The last two he's taken you out of, um, he's put you rather in the light so that you are not in darkness. Guys, you're not in the darkness anymore. You're in the light. And lastly, he says, you are, quote, not destined for wrath, but to obtain salvation. Amen. Jesus is coming back. You are gonna see him face to face. You're gonna have joy that never ends. So let's practice right now. Please stand.