



God's Word



SALLY MICHAEL

“A proper knowledge of the Bible gives . . . hope . . . for you and your family.” —Aimee Byrd

God's Word



Making HIM Known

God's Battle

God's Names

God's Promise

God's Providence

God's Wisdom

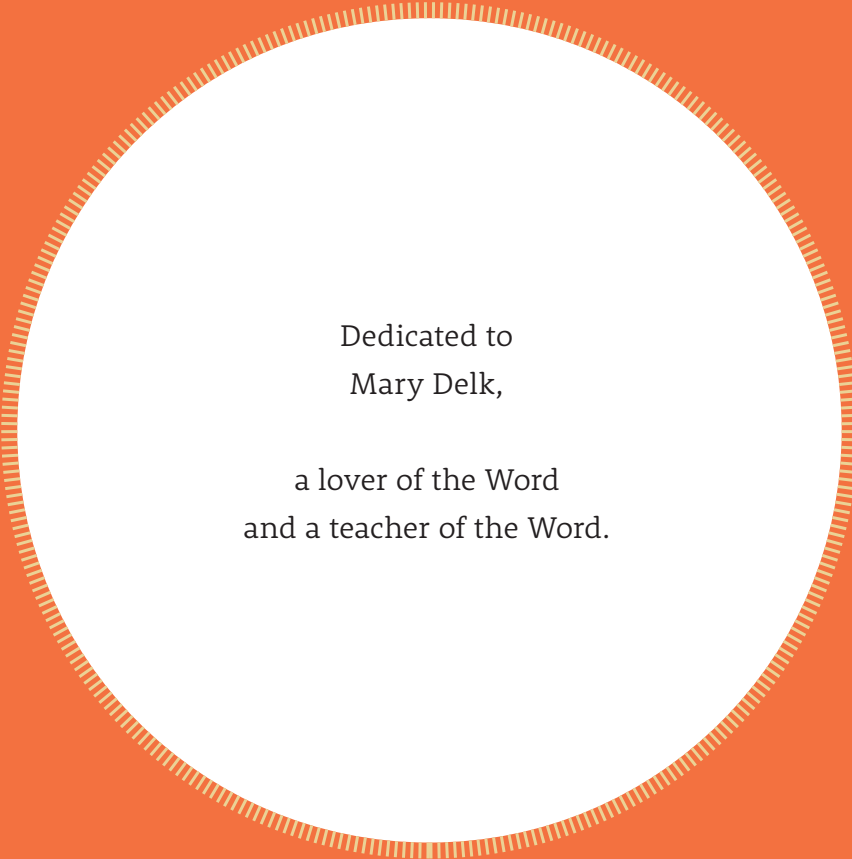
God's Word

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BY SALLY MICHAEL



P U B L I S H I N G
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Dedicated to
Mary Delk,

a lover of the Word
and a teacher of the Word.



Open my eyes, that I may behold
wondrous things out of your law.

—Psalm 119:18

For

“All flesh is like grass
and all its glory like the flower of grass.
The grass withers, and the flower falls,
but the word of the Lord remains forever.”

And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

—1 Peter 1:24–25

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Preface

*Forever, O LORD, your word is
firmly fixed in the heavens.
—Psalm 119:89*

The Bible is God's Word for all people and for all time. It is the revelation of His character and the unveiling of His plan of salvation for sinners. It is understandable, authoritative, powerful, and unchanging.

This is the precious Word of God, which gives us hope, guidance, and protection. It was written so that we might believe—that we might believe in the one true God, eternal, unchanging, all-powerful, merciful, and just; that we might believe in His Son, Jesus, who paid the penalty for sin and opened the way to reconciliation with a Holy God; and that we might believe in the Holy Spirit, who opens blind eyes to the truth and softens hard hearts to accept God's invitation of reconciliation.

Our glorious God has given us a written record of His character, His ways, His laws, and His mighty acts so that we and our children might know Him.

He established a testimony in Jacob
and appointed a law in Israel,
which he commanded our fathers
to teach to their children,
that the next generation might know them,
the children yet unborn,
and arise and tell them to their children,
so that they should set their hope in God
and not forget the works of God,
but keep his commandments. (Psalm 78:5–7)

God wants to be known and trusted. He wants to reconcile sinners to Himself, and He has made the truth about Himself plain in creation, through His Son, and in His Word. He has made His Word understandable . . . even to little children.

Open His Word with your child and read about our glorious God. See His mighty hand throughout the ages of history. Rejoice in His infinite faithfulness to His people and in His indescribable grace to sinful man. Stand amazed at His mighty works and His trustworthy character.

These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
(John 20:31)

Introduction

How to Use This Book

This book was written to give parents an opportunity to present solid truth to their children and to encourage real-life application of that truth.

Relational

Children receive more encouragement to learn when truth is presented by a trusted individual. Your positive, relational parent-child commitment will be a real benefit when you sit down together to read this book. Your time together over the Word should be positive, affirming, and loving.

Interactive

There is a greater impact when an individual *discovers* truth instead of just hearing it presented. Many questions have been incorporated into the text of this book to encourage your child to wonder and think critically. The process of discovery will be circumvented if you don't give your child adequate time to think and respond. After asking a question, wait for a response. If your child has difficulty, ask the question in a different way or give a few hints.

Questions and responses can be springboards for more questions and discovery as you interact with your child's mind and heart. The Holy Spirit is the real teacher, so depend on Him to give both you and your child thoughts and truths to explore together, and to bring the necessary understanding. Take the time to work through each story at a leisurely pace—giving time for interaction and further dialogue. The goal should be to get the material into the child, not just to get the child through the material.

Understandable

These stories have been written with attention given to explaining difficult or potentially new concepts. Some of these concepts may take time for your child to digest. Allow your child to ponder new truths. Read the story more than once, allowing the truth to be better understood and integrated into your child's theological framework. At times, have your child read parts of the lesson, giving an opportunity for visual learning.

Because vocabulary can be child-specific, define the particular words foreign to your child. Retell difficult sections in familiar wording, and ask questions to be sure your child understands the truth being taught.

Theological

More than just acquainting your child with an understanding of wisdom, this book is building a foundation of biblical theology for your child. As your child begins to correctly understand who God is and the wisdom of His ways, he or she won't just have a vague notion of God, but will be able to relate to the God of the Bible.

Because the Word of God has convicting and converting power, Bible texts are quoted word for word in some parts. Some of these verses may be beyond the child's understanding, so you may want to explain unfamiliar words or thoughts. Even though clear comprehension may be difficult, hearing the Word itself is a means that the Holy Spirit often uses to encourage faith in your child (Romans 10:17). Do not minimize the effectual influence of God's Word in the tender souls of children.

Since the Word of God is living and active, allow your child to read the actual Bible verses as much as possible. Also, encourage your child to memorize some of the verses so he or she can meditate on them at other times.

The gospel is presented numerous times throughout the book. Use this as an opportunity to share God’s work of grace in your life, and to converse with your child about his or her spiritual condition. Be careful not to confuse spiritual interest with converting faith, and take care to avoid giving premature assurances. Fan the flames of gospel-inspired conviction and tenderness toward the sacrificial love of Jesus without prematurely encouraging your child to pray “the sinner’s prayer.”¹

Application

Understanding the truth is essential, but understanding alone is insufficient. Truth must also be embraced in the heart and acted upon in daily life. Often, children cannot make the connection between a biblical truth and real-life application, so you, the parent, must help bridge the gap.

Consider the following quotation by Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones:

We must always put things in the right order, and it is Truth first. . . . The heart is always to be influenced through the understanding—the mind, then the heart, then the will. . . . But God forbid that anyone should think that it ends with the intellect. It starts there, but it goes on. It then moves the heart and finally the man yields his will. He obeys, not grudgingly or unwillingly, but with the whole heart. The Christian life is a glorious perfect life that takes up and captivates the entire personality.²

Spend a few days or even a week on each story. Reread the story, discuss the truths, and follow the suggestions in the Learning to Trust God section. Most

1. Some excellent resources for parents regarding the salvation of children can be found at www.children-desiring-god.org, including a booklet titled *Helping Children to Understand the Gospel* and two seminars from the 2007 Children Desiring God conference, *How Great a Salvation—“Leading Children to a Solid Faith”* and *“Presenting the Gospel to Children.”*

2. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1965), 61–62.

importantly, help your child to see that God is who He says He is, and help him or her to act in response to the truth. Point out God's involvement in daily life, thank Him for being true to His Word, and ask Him to grant you a love for His Word and a desire to follow it.

Prayer

Ultimately, our efforts are effective only if the Holy Spirit breathes on our teaching and quickens it to the heart. Pray not only before going through the stories, but also in the succeeding days, that your child would see God's character expressed in His Word, learn to live by His wisdom, and respond to Him in faith.

The Bible Is a Message from God

Have you ever played hide and seek? Where is the best hiding place in your house? When you play hide and seek, you try to hide where no one can find you. You don't want others to know where you are.

Do you think God hides, too? No, He *shows* and *tells* us who He is.¹ God wants us to know Him! All around us are messages sent to us from God to let us know who He is.

The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)

The world tells us about God. It shows us how great He is. It tells us that He is a great Creator.

Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge. (Psalm 19:2)

Every day, the world tells us about God and shows us His greatness.

There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard. (Psalm 19:3)

God's world is a message about Himself to everyone. It doesn't matter what language a person speaks, because all kinds of people can understand what the world tells us about God.

1. Note that though God does reveal Himself to man, He also hides Himself from some people (e.g., those destined for destruction), and no man can ever fully comprehend the full character and nature of God (see Isaiah 45:15).

What are some ways the world tells us about God? What does God tell us about Himself through the sun and sky, birds and flowers, rivers and oceans, wind and rain?

Every day when the sun comes up, we can see that God is watching over and taking care of the world. When you see the sun in the morning, God is saying, “I’m still here. I am watching over my world.” When the sun comes up in the morning and goes down at night day after day, God is sending us a message that He never changes.



At night when you see a whole sky full of stars, God is saying, “I am big. I am great.” Pretty flowers are a message from God saying, “I made many beautiful things in this world. I am a good and glorious God.”

All kinds of bugs—flying, creeping, and hopping . . . green, yellow, and brown . . . beautiful butterflies and strange-looking beetles—are all God’s way of telling us that He is creative and never runs out of ideas. God is not boring, and He did not make a boring world!

When you see a big storm and hear loud thunder, God is saying, “I am

strong and powerful.” When the sun stays in the sky and doesn’t fall on us, God is showing us that He rules the world with wisdom. Every day God shows us who He is. He wants us to know Him. He is not hiding.

There is another way God speaks to us, *showing* and *telling* us who He is. It is a written message. It is God’s special book to us, the Bible. God wrote the Bible so we would know what He is like and what He has done.

Every story in the Bible tells us something about God. If you want to know who God is, open the Bible and read His special message to you. He will tell you what He is like, what you are like, and what He expects from you. He will tell you how you can know Him personally and what Jesus did for sinners. His word in the Bible is His message to you forever. Every page of the Bible will tell you something about the God who made the whole world and who wants you to know Him.

What has God told you about Himself in the Bible? What is He like?

All God’s mighty acts and all the words He has spoken about Himself in the Bible show us what He is like. When we read about God opening the Red Sea for Israel, He is telling us that He can do anything. Nothing is too hard for Him. God is giving us the message that He takes care of His people.

What message is God giving us in the story of the flood? When we open our Bibles and read about Noah and the ark, it is not a story about animals. It is God’s message to us about Himself. God is telling us that He is holy and good and that He hates sin. He sent floodwaters to destroy a world of sinners but saved Noah and his family.

When we read about Jesus healing blind Bartimaeus, God is showing us that He is kind and has power over sickness. In the story of Jesus calming the storm, God is telling us that He is stronger than anything else and is in control of all things.

The Bible is God’s message to us, showing and telling us who He is. God is not hiding. He wants us to know who He is and what He is like. God wants to tell us about Himself.

I am God, and there is no other;

I am God, and there is none like me. (Isaiah 46:9)



LEARNING TO TRUST GOD

- ✦ Read Acts 17:22–34. What is another way God makes Himself known to us? What does Paul say about God in these verses?
- ✦ Read Isaiah 46:9 again. What does this verse tell you about God?
- ✦ **Activity:** Explore the Bible as a family. Note that there are Old and New Testaments, and that the Bible is divided into books, chapters, and verses. Play a game to begin learning the names of the books of the Bible in order. Make cards with a book name on each card. Start with the first 5–10 cards and put them in order. Keep working on memorizing the order of the books of the Bible each week until you know them.

The Bible Was Written by God

Look at the front of this book. What is the name of the book? It is *God's Word*. What is the other name on the book? This is the name of the author, or the person who wrote the book.

Now look at a Bible. Is there an author's name on the front? Who wrote the Bible? What name would you put on the front of the Bible? Would it be Moses, who wrote the first five books of the Bible? Or Joshua, Daniel, Jeremiah, Matthew, or John? Would it be Paul, who wrote so many of the letters in the New Testament? Or would you put God's name on it?

The Bible is God's book. He wrote it so we could know Him. But we know that many men wrote the words of the Bible. So who is the real author? Maybe an example will help you to answer the question.

How would you put a screw into a piece of wood? What would you use? You would use a tool called a screwdriver. You would direct the screwdriver, putting it where it needs to be, turning it the right way, and stopping when the screw is tight. The screwdriver would not put in the screw by itself. Your hand would turn the screwdriver—it would direct and guide it.

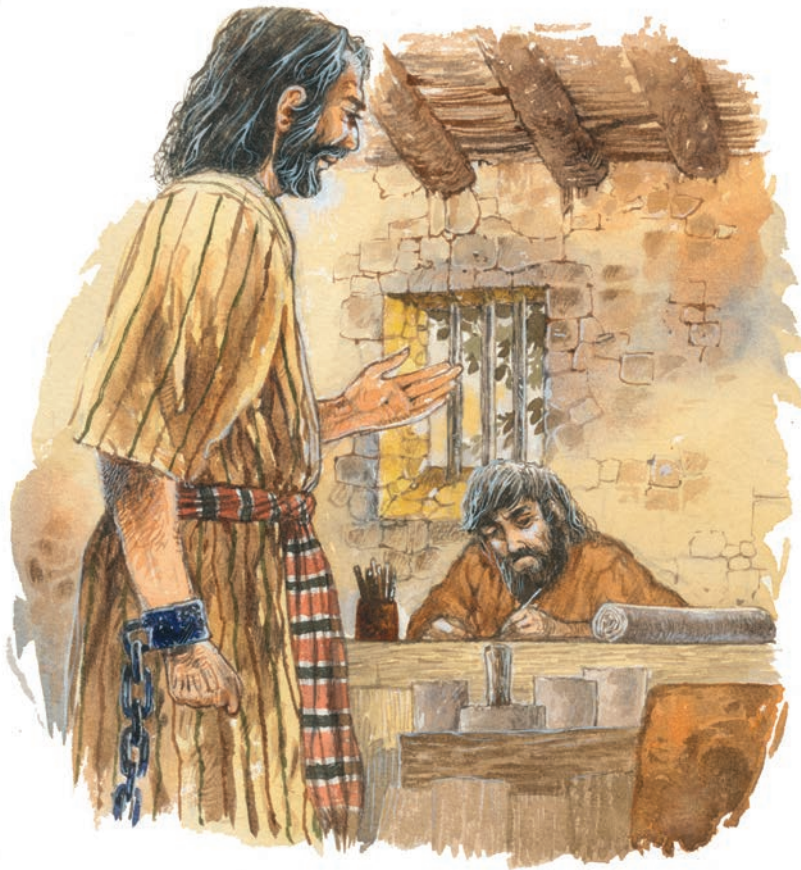
This is similar to how the Bible was written. God was the author. But He used men to do the writing. They were like tools in God's hands. God directed them so they would write His Word. God is the real author, but He used men to write exactly what He wanted to be written.

God used more than forty different men to write the Bible, and it took them many years. Some of these men wrote more than a thousand years before Jesus was born, and others wrote after the birth of Jesus. God used all different kinds of men. He used Moses, a shepherd and leader of Israel; Joshua, an army general; David and Solomon, kings of Israel; Nehemiah, a servant; Luke, a doctor; and Paul, a teacher of religion. He used these men in different ways.

How does a small child write a letter to his grandparents? Often he tells his mother or father what he wants to say. The parent writes the words. Was it the child's letter or the parent's letter? The parent wrote the words, but the words were the child's words.

This is one of the ways God used to write the Bible. He told some of the men what to say, and they wrote the very words of God. This is what God did with Jeremiah, a prophet who tells us,

Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me,
“Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.” (Jeremiah 1:9)



Over and over Jeremiah said, “The Word of the LORD came to me.” God spoke to Jeremiah and told him what to say to Israel and what to write in the Bible. Jeremiah wrote the words, but the words were God’s words. God was the author, and Jeremiah was His writer.

Other times, men wrote the words of the Bible with their own style and from their own experience but, even so, God guided every word of their writing. Sometimes these men wrote about things that they saw or things that Jesus told them.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life. (1 John 1:1)

John wrote about what he had seen of Jesus so we might know Jesus, that Jesus is the Son of God, and that He died on the cross for sinners. This was the message from God that He directed John to write about in the Bible.

Some of the Bible writers wrote about things they could not have known about. Daniel wrote about things that happened after he died! John wrote about the end of the world. Surely he could not know about things that have not happened yet! He hadn’t seen these things. No person could tell him about the end of the world.

How could these men have written about these things that hadn’t happened? They wrote about things that only God could know. God knows everything. He knows what happened a long time ago, what is happening right now, and what has not happened yet.

God showed these men what to write by giving them visions or dreams. John saw a vision of the end of the world and of heaven. Maybe it was something like a movie in John’s head. Only the all-powerful and all-knowing God could show John these things.

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having

the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. (Revelation 21:10–11)

John saw great troubles on earth, Jesus returning from heaven to judge and make war, and a new heaven and new earth. Then John wrote everything he had seen in the book of Revelation. The Holy Spirit gave John exactly the right words to use.

God used all these men, over all these years, in different ways just so we could have the Bible, His Word to us. He is the great Writer of the Bible, who wants us to know Him. He wants us to know that He is the Creator of the world, the Holy One of Israel, the Shield and Protector of His people, the Judge who will judge all men, and the great Savior of those who come to Him. Do you want to know this God? He has written a book so that you can. No man could write such a book. It contains the words of God, His special message to us.

For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21)

LEARNING TO TRUST GOD

- ✦ Read Jeremiah 9:23–24. What do these verses say about what is most important? What do they say about God? Do you want to know this God?
- ✦ Read Revelation 22:6–9. What do these verses say about the Bible? What do they tell you to do? What do they say about God?
- ✦ **Activity:** Look at the Bible's table of contents. Who were some of the human writers of the Bible? Write a story together with your family, with each person independently writing a paragraph. Then read all the paragraphs. Does the story make sense? How could the Bible make sense with so many different writers living at different times writing different parts?

We all make sure our children know the *stories* from the Bible.

But can they understand their meaning and know the Storyteller behind them?

Sally Michael shows us that even young children can understand the Bible's message of sin and redemption, because God wrote it to everyone, young and old. In *God's Word* she provides a captivating, child-friendly resource for parents to approach the Bible with their children and to involve them in reading it for themselves.

Her exploration of the Word addresses how it came to us, what it tells us about its Author, what it tells us about ourselves, and why it is the most special book ever written. After children learn about the Bible and how to read it, she takes them a step further and teaches them to be doers of what they read.

Give your children a firm, early foundation on the truth—introduce them to God's Word!



“Many adults do not have a good understanding of the doctrine of the Word of God. Sally Michael has written an easy-to-read devotional book that will help parents teach their children about the properties of Scripture. God's Word shouldn't be intimidating. A proper knowledge of the Bible gives us hope, helps us to identify false teaching, increases our gratitude and trust in God, and results in his Word becoming more precious to us. Don't you want that for you and your family? What are you waiting for?”

—**Aimee Byrd**, Author of *Housewife Theologian*, Blogger, Contributor to *Mortification of Spin* Podcast

SALLY MICHAEL is the cofounder and publishing consultant of Children Desiring God, and she developed their widely used Sunday school curriculum for young people. She is also an author and a speaker, and she served as Minister for Children at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, for sixteen years.

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