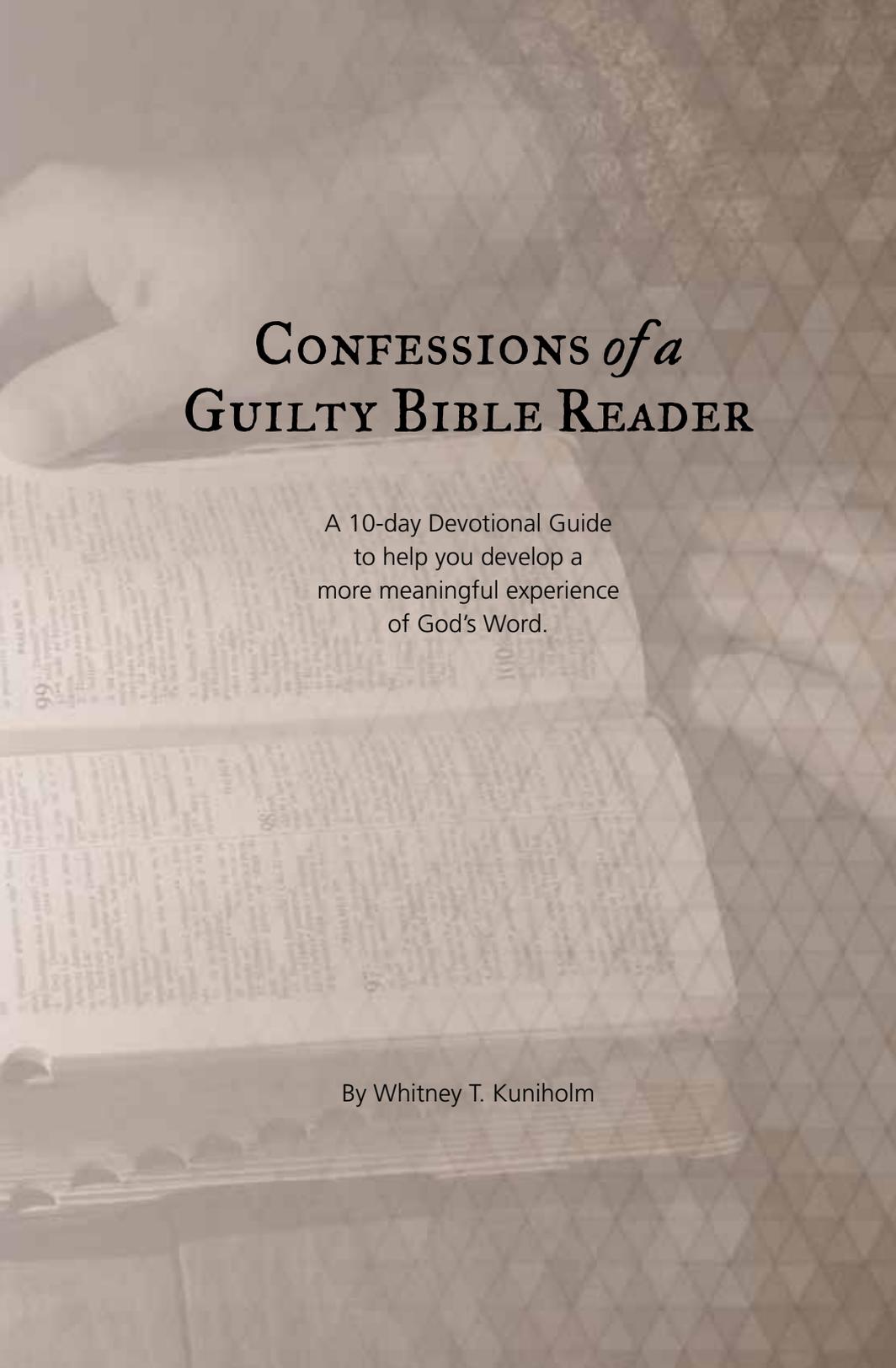
The image features a dark silhouette of a man's head and shoulders, centered against a light blue gradient background. The man's hair is short and dark. The text is overlaid on the silhouette, appearing as if it's on a screen or a sign in front of him.

CONFESSIONS *of a*  
GUILTY BIBLE READER

By Whitney T. Kuniholm

A 10-day Devotional Guide  
to help you develop a more  
meaningful experience of God's Word



A hand is shown holding an open Bible, with the pages slightly blurred. The Bible is resting on a surface with a diamond-shaped quilted pattern. The overall image has a soft, warm, and slightly faded aesthetic.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Whitney T. Kuniholm is the President of Scripture Union/USA. He has written several books including *The Essential Bible Guide* (WaterBrook), *The Essential Jesus* (IVP), and *John: An Eyewitness Account of the Son of God* (WaterBrook). He is a frequent contributor to Scripture Union's Bible guide *Encounter with God*, and has a blog entitled The Essential Bible Blog ([www.EssentialBibleBlog.com](http://www.EssentialBibleBlog.com)). He also speaks at churches and Christian conferences.

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# INTRODUCTION

*Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light for my path.  
Psalm 119:105*

I became a regular Bible reader in college. Before that, most of my opportunities to read God's Word came in Sunday School, church or Christian camp. In addition, my parents did their best to maintain a pattern of "family devotions," a memory that still inspires me today. But when I went to college I realized I needed to decide for myself: *was the Bible going to be part of my life or not?*

At first, my Bible reading was somewhat haphazard; a men's college dorm isn't always the best setting for a quiet time. But it was a start. After I graduated and had my own place, I got into a morning routine. I'd wake up around 6:00 a.m., make a cup of coffee and spend about 30 minutes in Bible reading and prayer, using Scripture Union's *Encounter with God* publication. Since then my life has moved on to marriage, children, grandchildren, various jobs and different locations. But the basic discipline of beginning my day with Bible reading and prayer has remained constant. I have to say it has become the mainspring of my Christian life and the best way I know to meet God every day.

## My Bible Reading Struggle

But it hasn't always been easy. There have been times when my devotional life has gotten off track or stuck. I get distracted, tired, or choose to do other things. Sometimes I just don't want to read the Bible and I'm not sure why. So, in spite of all the wonderful benefits I've experienced from God's Word, maintaining a regular Bible reading habit has been an ongoing challenge. I wonder if you've ever felt the same way.

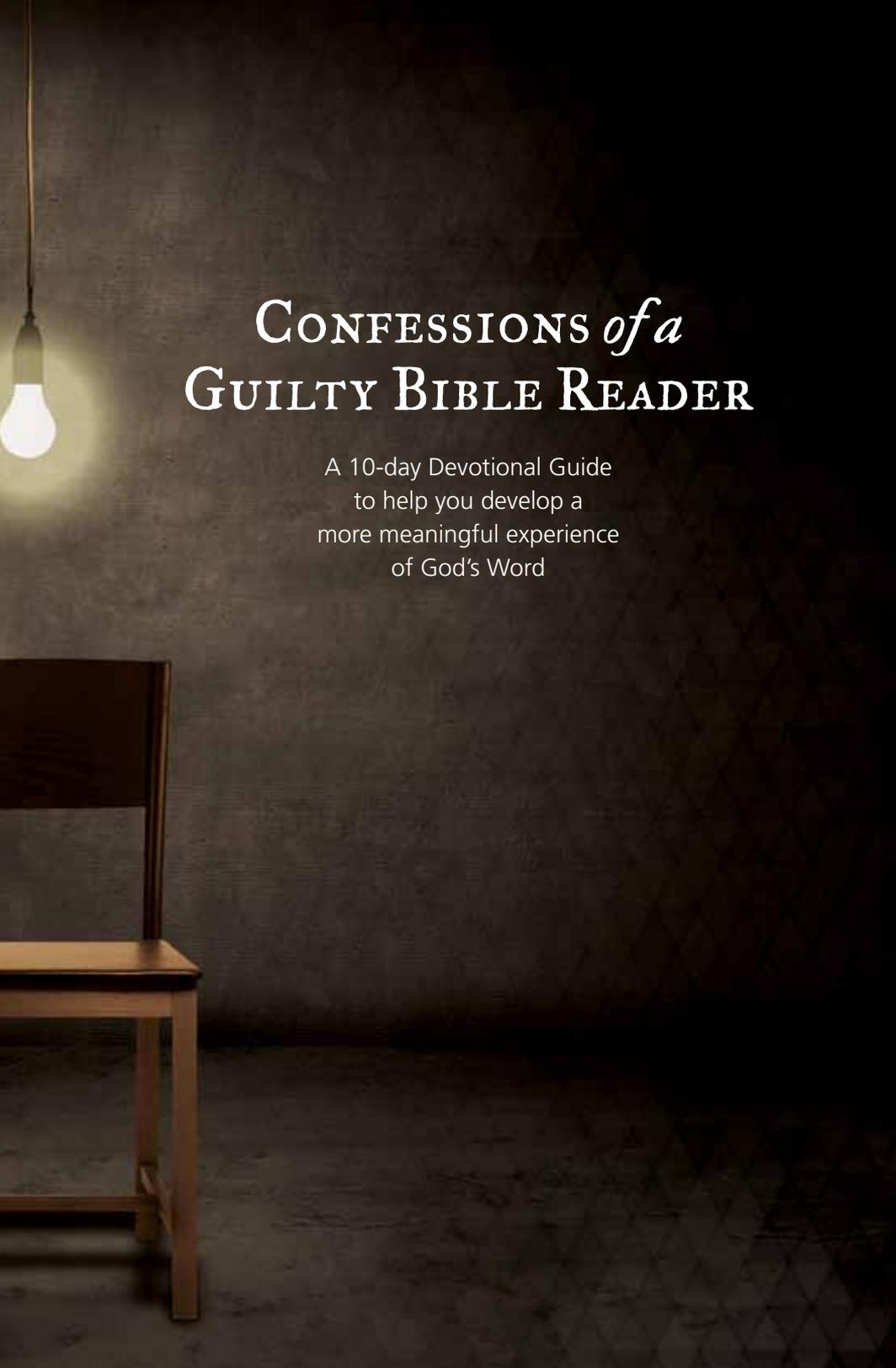
*Confessions of a Guilty Bible Reader* is my attempt to honestly share some of the struggles I've had with reading the Bible, as well as the lessons I've learned along the way. My hope is that, as you read my experiences, you'll pick up some ideas that will encourage you in your devotional life. Because ultimately my goal is to help you make the basic discipline of Bible reading and prayer the mainspring of your Christian life and a daily opportunity for you to meet God, too.

## A Journey Together

As you'll see, I've structured this booklet as a devotional guide. For each day I've included a Scripture verse, a personal reflection and a prayer idea to help you apply the main point. Plus, I've added a supplemental Bible reading plan based on Psalm 119, a magnificent acrostic poem where the writer passionately shares his love for God's Word even as he experiences the ups and downs of life. I encourage you to prayerfully read and reflect on this psalm as you use this booklet.

For the next 10 days, or however long it takes you to go through this devotional guide, we'll be on a journey together, exploring some practical ways you can develop a more meaningful experience of God's Word. My prayer is that as you read what's happened to me, and as you pray and read the Bible for yourself, you'll be able to join the psalmist in saying, "Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long" (Psalm 119:97). May God richly bless you as you seek him in his Word and then go out to serve him in the world.



A dark, moody interior scene. A single lightbulb hangs from the ceiling on the left, casting a soft glow. In the foreground, the back and side of a simple wooden chair are visible. The background is a dark, textured wall.

# CONFESSIONS *of a* GUILTY BIBLE READER

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# CONFESSIONS *of a* GUILTY BIBLE READER

*Blessed are they who keep his statutes  
and seek him with all their heart.*

*Psalm 119:2*

Let me tell you a secret. I don't read my Bible every day. Maybe I should feel guilty, especially since I'm the president of Scripture Union, a ministry whose mission is to help people of all ages meet God daily in the Bible and prayer.

But in fact, my non-daily Bible reading habit is very deliberate. Here's my pattern. Every morning, Sunday through Friday, I start my day in God's Word and prayer. I sit in our living room on "my perch," a sofa that faces toward a big window looking out over the front lawn. That's where I have my quiet time with God.

But on Saturday morning I don't read my Bible. I go to my perch with a cup of coffee and I read the newspaper, every section, including all the Sunday advertising inserts, which always come a day early.

Why do I skip Bible reading on Saturday? Because I don't want to let it become just a legalistic habit motivated by guilt. OK, I'll admit it. Maybe my "day off" strategy is more legalistic. But I take a day off to remind myself that a meaningful quiet time is not about punching in every day at the devotional clock. It's about developing a relationship with God.

Do you ever feel guilty about missing a day or two of Bible reading? *"If I do my devotions every day, and never miss, then God will love me more."* If you've ever felt this way, I have two suggestions for you.

The first one I got from my father, who has been a faithful Bible reader for as long as I can remember. "If you ever fall behind in your Bible reading," he once told me, "don't try to catch up. Just start today and go forward." He's right. If we pressure ourselves to never fall behind, and make it up when we do, our Bible reading will eventually become an overwhelming burden. And that's exactly what the enemy wants us to feel. Don't worry about the past. Just start today and go forward.

The second suggestion is really part of Scripture Union's ethos. Think of your Bible reading and prayer as interaction with God, as a meeting, not just a habit. Of course, a regular quiet time requires some discipline. But the main motivation is not to keep up with anything, or earn anything, or prove anything. It's about spending quality time with the One who made you, knows you, and loves you. If you will begin consciously approaching your Bible reading and prayer as dialog with God, "the waiting Father," as theologian Helmut Thielicke described him, the issue will no longer be guilt, but love.

I'm not the world's greatest Bible reader, but I do love my quiet times with God. I love to receive guidance and assurance from his Word. And I love to tell God what I'm thinking and to praise him from my inmost being. I just love spending time in his presence. And I know he loves me, too. Even when I read the paper.

### *Prayer Idea:*

How would you describe your devotional life at this time? Ask God to give you a greater love for his Word, and for him, whenever you take time to read the Bible.

**Today's Bible Reading: Psalm 119:1-16**

# THE GOOD SEED

*Open my eyes that I may see  
wonderful things in your law.*

*Psalm 119:18*

I came on staff with Scripture Union over 30 years ago and I have to confess that I still haven't done the first thing I was asked to do.

I was hired as the Production Coordinator, which meant I organized the printing and mailing of several Bible reading publications. Because the staff was small, I also developed promotional material, wrote Bible studies, unloaded trucks, cleaned the storage garage and lots more. But I didn't care; it was my first full-time job. I had a desk. I had a phone. I had it made.

But when I arrived for my first day of work, everyone was so busy they didn't have time to train me. So the president at the time, Clifford L. Swanson, gave me my first assignment, "I want you to read the history of Scripture Union," and handed me *The Good Seed*, by J. C. Pollock. It looked like a reject from a used bookstore. "I just graduated from college," I thought, "I shouldn't have to read books anymore."

Discouraged, I sat down in my little office and opened the book. After a few chapters I realized I wasn't reading anymore. I was just staring at the words on the page. Finally, I propped my head on my arm and started daydreaming. When Cliff looked into my office, it appeared as if I was intensely reading. The truth is I was just staring out the window.

I have to admit there are days when my quiet time feels that way: as if I'm reading but not really engaging with God's Word. Does that ever happen to you? Over the years I've discovered that reading the Bible is not always exciting; I don't see spiritual fireworks every day.

But that doesn't mean it isn't valuable. I'm thankful for the exciting times when I gain new insights or sense clear direction from the Lord. But I'm also thankful for the unexciting times, when I'm reading the Bible purely out of habit. Why? Because I've discovered that the key to spiritual growth is to faithfully plant the seed of God's Word in my heart, regardless of how I feel (Matthew 13:23). In fact, God has used passages from "boring quiet times" to speak to me many weeks or months later in a time of crisis or decision. Without the discipline of regular Bible reading, I would miss that blessing.

I didn't realize it at the time, but the first thing I learned at Scripture Union was the great value of the unspectacular habit of daily Bible reading and prayer. In fact, someday I just might dig up that old book Cliff gave me and finally finish it off. Someday.

### *Prayer Idea:*

Make a "devotional plan" for yourself; write down when, where and how often you'd like to take time for Bible reading and prayer. Now ask for God's help to start and stick to it.

**Today's Bible Reading: Psalm 119:17-32**

# CROSS TRAINING

*Teach me, O LORD, to follow your decrees;  
then I will keep them to the end.*

*Psalm 119:33*

I've never been a big fan of reading through the Bible in a year. I know that puts me in danger of becoming a spiritual weakling. The strongest Christians are Bible marathoners—they read all the way through, every year. Whoo-aah!

But to me, forcing down large gulps of Scripture every day seems like a good way to get spiritual indigestion. I just can't absorb, much less apply, so much of God's Word. That's why I prefer the Scripture Union method; focusing on a 10-20 verse passage each day, then taking time to pray, read, meditate and pray about it.

Even so, I've explored several through-the-Bible methods over the years. Like many people, I've tried the "snow plow method;" you start in Genesis at the beginning of the year and plow all the way to Revelation by the end. The problem is most people never get past February, which I call "Bible Bail-out Month;" that's when you hit Leviticus and give up. I've also tried the "multi-track method," which is the approach used in *The One Year Bible*. Each day you read some Old Testament, some New Testament, plus Psalms and Proverbs. That makes it a lot easier to finish. But my favorite through-the-Bible method is *The Essential 100* (E100®), the Scripture Union plan that guides you through 50 Old Testament and 50 New Testament passages, carefully selected to help you get a good overview of the Bible without getting bogged down.

But all this experimentation has led me to a surprising conclusion: reading through the Bible, regardless of the method, is a very rewarding experience. Of course, I still favor the slow and steady Scripture Union method, but now I think it's also important to read through the Bible every few years for at least three reasons:

- ***It helps us see the big picture.*** Even though the Bible contains many kinds of writing, it all combines to tell one main story; that God created the world, but humans rebelled, so God initiated a plan of salvation that culminated in Jesus Christ. That's the big story that makes sense of the Bible and all of life.
- ***It helps us know God better.*** I keep a journal and if I were to let you read it, you'd see what makes me tick. The same is true with God's Word. Theologians refer to the Bible as God's self-revelation. If you want to know God, read his Book.
- ***It helps us see important themes.*** On one of my through-the-Bible jaunts, I noticed God really wants his people to listen to him. "If my people would but listen to me..." (Psalm 81:13). I saw that theme again and again. Now I'm working on what it means to listen to God in my everyday life. Occasionally reading through the Bible helps us see themes we miss when studying it closely.

I've discovered that using a variety of Bible reading methods has given me a new balance in my quiet time. I'm neither a weakling, nor a marathoner. Instead, I've become a "cross trainer" and I'm spiritually stronger for it. I invite you to give it a try.

### *Prayer Idea:*

Which is your bigger devotional need right now: to read through the Bible in a year, or to read and reflect on shorter passages each day? Ask God to give you peace about which method he wants you to use, and then give it a try.

Today's Bible Reading: Psalm 119:33-48

# FRUGAL FANNY FAITH

*I will hasten and not delay  
to obey your commands.  
Psalm 119:60*

One of the most important aspects of the Christian life is faith, “being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1). That’s a wonderful verse, but for me, truly understanding what it means has been a lifelong journey. Let me give you an example.

On June 4, 1977, I married a girl named Carol Capra, and over the first decade of our marriage I gave her all kinds of anniversary gifts— chocolate and dinner out, flowers and dinner out, jewelry and dinner out. One year I even wrote a poem. But when our 10th anniversary rolled around I wanted to do something really special, so I decided to buy her a dress.

My plan was to visit Frugal Fanny’s, a women’s clothing store near our house. “No problema,” I thought, “they have plenty of choices, so I should be able to find one she likes.” I had no idea how complicated it was. To make matters worse, I wasn’t sure of Carol’s size. “My pant size is 36,” I reasoned, “so her dress size should be around 28 or 30, right?” After scouring the racks for “her size” I gave up and decided to select a dress by sight.

Here’s what I did. I wandered the aisles until I saw a style I liked, then held up each dress until I found one that looked like a fit. It was a blue sundress with little flowers. I bought it, wrapped it and gave it to Carol on the big day. I didn’t realize it then, but my gift set off a miraculous chain of events. First, Carol thought the dress was pretty. Second, she tried it on and it fit perfectly. I’m serious! Finally, she liked the dress and wore it often. This year we’ll celebrate our 35th anniversary but I have to say *I’ll never try a stunt like that again!* There’s no way I could ever duplicate it.

But here's the question I still ponder: why did I think I could pick a dress by sight? I believe the answer gives insight into the nature of both faith and Bible reading. Of course I was a little naive, and a lot lucky. But I was also willing to try, willing to take action. I've learned that's the key for unlocking a true understanding of God's Word.

Perhaps like me you're a regular Bible reader; it's how we grow as Christians. And yet if we aren't careful, people like us can reduce faith to a verse we quote, or a biblical principle we explain. But the times in my life when I've most clearly understood the nature of faith, or any other biblical truth, is when I've done something for God, even when I haven't completely known what I was doing or where it would lead.

I'm not recommending we attempt foolhardy or dangerous things. But I am saying if we really want to understand the Bible, we'll have to do more than just take a daily dose of Scripture. We'll have to live it; that's the most effective Bible study method of all. Come to think of it, maybe I'll go back to Frugal Fanny's and pick out another dress for Carol. Or maybe not.

### *Prayer Idea:*

Has God been "nudging" you to do something based on a certain Bible verse or theme? Ask God to help you live out that part of his Word this week.

**Today's Bible Reading: Psalm 119:49-64**

# HOW DOES GOD SPEAK?

*It was good for me to be afflicted  
so that I might learn your decrees.*

*Psalm 119:71*

I suspect you'll agree with this: In the Bible God speaks to us, and in prayer we speak to him. Amen? But have you ever wondered exactly how God speaks through the Bible? Recently I got an answer in a way I wasn't expecting.

Several years ago I was diagnosed with skin cancer, a malignant melanoma deep in the tissue of my left forearm. The doctor removed a wide section of skin and ever since I've had to go for regular check-ups and slather myself with sun screen. It's a greasy hassle for a sun-loving golfer like me.

The good news is that for 20 years I had no recurrence. Then I noticed a suspicious spot on my forehead. The doctor took a divot of skin for the biopsy and said, "I'm not going to lie to you; it doesn't look good." Thanks a lot. For the next week I waited for the results and tried to suppress my anxiety.

During that time my Bible reading took me to Matthew's Gospel, where Jesus healed a man with a skin condition. I was encouraged when Jesus said, "I am willing," in response to the man's request for help (Matthew 8:3). So I claimed that promise for myself in prayer. At the end of the week, the doctor called me with the results of the biopsy, "No cancer. You're clean." What joy and relief! I took time to thank God.

But wait a minute; did God really speak to me through that Bible passage? After all, I'm not sure if he healed me as I waited, or if I never had a recurrence and didn't need healing at all. Either way, I believe the answer is yes, for two reasons. First, it was more than coincidence that my regular Bible reading pattern took me to a passage about a man with a skin condition. One of the miracles

of daily Bible reading is that God often uses the habit to bring us to a passage that perfectly speaks to what we are going through.

But second, although I may not have needed healing, I did need reassurance. As I meditated on those words from Matthew and made them the basis of my prayers, the black and white text on the page became a divine message to me, *“Yes, Whitney, I am willing to take care of you, too.”* Studying enables us to understand the message of the Bible; that’s important. But prayerfully meditating on the words of Scripture as we struggle with the challenges of life enables us to hear the voice of God; that changes our lives.

I now have a scar on my forehead. My wife says, “Well, it makes you look more distinguished.” Hmm. But every time I look into the mirror I’m reminded of how God speaks through his Word. I just wish I didn’t have to get a divot out of my head to learn that lesson. But then, I think it was worth it.

### *Prayer Idea:*

Think about some of the struggles you’ve faced in the past. What did God “say” to you in each? Now think about the struggles you are facing today. Ask God to help you understand what he is saying to you through these experiences.

**Today’s Bible Reading: Psalm 119:65-80**

# ANGER MANAGEMENT

*I will never forget your precepts,  
for by them you have preserved my life.*

*Psalm 119:93*

A few years ago a national research firm called the The Barna Group studied the devotional habits of those who use Scripture Union's Bible Guides. Among many findings one fact stood out: we read the Bible for an average of 3½ hours per week. That's way higher than the national average, even for church-goers.

I was encouraged that Scripture Union is having such a significant impact. I was also tempted to a slight sense of spiritual pride; by my calculation, I often exceed 3½ hours in my own weekly Bible reading. Not bad, huh? But the study left me with one unanswered question: what difference does all this Bible reading make; what's the best way to measure that? Unfortunately I got my answer one afternoon while mowing the grass.

I was following my usual pattern—front yard first, then the back yard—when all of a sudden I felt something on my leg. OUCH! A bee stung me on the calf. Usually bee stings don't bother me very much, but this one hurt, and for about a week my calf was itchy and sore. The next week I was mowing in the same spot. OUCH! Another bee stung me. On the third week I was watching for them, but...OUCH! Somehow another bee snuck up and stung me. But this time I noticed the little pest dive-bombed into a hole. "Aha! The nest is underground."

I immediately stopped the lawnmower, drove straight to the hardware store and purchased the largest can of pesticide I could find. I marched back into the yard and sprayed the entire can down the hole. As the bees tried to escape, I cut them down with the poison spray muttering, "So how you like that, huh?" When the spray can was empty, I dug up the nest and smashed it three

times with a shovel as hard as I could. Finally, I took the remains of the nest and heaved it over the back fence.

There was a guilty silence in the back yard when I finished. “Mr. More-Than-3½-Hours” just blew his stack and destroyed an entire civilization of bees. How many times had I read in Galatians that “the acts of the sinful nature” include “fits of rage”? I tried to rationalize, “Maybe it doesn’t apply if you’re just mad at bees?” But it didn’t seem to help.

Since that day, I haven’t been stung again. But I have been more conscious that the most important devotional outcome is not how much time I spend reading the Bible each week. Rather, it’s how well I live out the Bible’s message each day. That’s what I’m trying to work on now. Just don’t bother me when I’m mowing the grass.

*Prayer Idea:*

Is there a verse or theme in the Bible that you find especially difficult to obey? Ask God to help you take some practical steps this week to “pray it in, and live it out.”

Today’s Bible Reading: Psalm 119:81-96

# AMAZING GRACE

*Your statutes are my heritage forever;  
they are the joy of my heart.*

*Psalm 119:III*

When I was young, my brother Jason and I liked to sing *Amazing Grace* in church. Even though we both knew the words by heart, we still used the hymnals, and the reason has been a secret all these years.

Being still in church was a weekly challenge for me and my siblings. So it was standard procedure in the worship service for our parents to sit between us; allowing young boys to sit next to each other for a whole hour was asking for trouble. That is, unless we sang *Amazing Grace*. Then we were transformed into pious little choir boys holding our hymnals at arm's length, eyes closed, noses up.

"A...maaa...zing grace...how sweeeet...the sound..." Perhaps my parents thought their years of patient discipline were finally having a good effect. Little did they know what we were planning. "That saaaved...a...wretch...like....HIM!" On that word, underneath our hymnals, we'd point our fingers at each other like daggers.

To this day, I can't sing *Amazing Grace* without thinking of my brother and smiling. And yet at the same time, it reminds me of a more serious question, "Why is it easier for me to point out the sins of others than to deal with my own?"

That's exactly what Jesus had in mind when he asked, "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3). Those words seem an especially appropriate reminder for committed daily Bible readers like you and me.

We love God's Word, so we read it faithfully and do our best to apply it in our lives. That's a good thing. The problem comes when we allow our high regard for the Bible to harden into a judgmental attitude toward those around us.

By God's grace I've avoided most of the "high profile sins." And yet, I must admit I have remained aloof from people who aren't as committed to God's Word as me, looked down on those who don't believe the Bible is true, and scoffed at the unbiblical ideas of non-believers. But if I really want to "help people meet God every day," perhaps I need to work harder at loving my neighbor and welcoming sinners.

I still love to sing *Amazing Grace* today. It reminds me of the blessings of a Christian heritage and my daily challenge to live the truth in love. "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like...me."

### *Prayer Idea:*

Spend some time honestly confessing your sins to God. Then ask God to give you a greater love for him and for all the people in your life.

**Today's Bible Reading: Psalm 119:97-112**

# HAVE YOU BEEN BORED AGAIN?

*I am your servant; give me discernment  
that I may understand your statutes.*

*Psalm 119:125*

Which of the following statements best describes your quiet time? “I get up at four o’clock every morning eager to read the Bible for at least three intense hours.” If that doesn’t quite capture your experience, perhaps the following comes closer. “I do my best to read the Bible, when I have time. But honestly, I find it kind of boring.”

The practice of daily Bible reading and prayer can be an exciting part of each day. And yet, even good things become routine. How can we keep our times in God’s Word from becoming dry, or even boring? Let me be quick to say, God’s Word is not boring. The Bible is an incredible gift from God. The problem is we are human and sometimes have trouble doing the things that are best for us (Romans 7:21-23). Perhaps you’ve faced this tension in your daily walk with God. If so, here are some ideas from my own experience that may enhance your times of reading the Bible.

- **Add a spiritual classic.** After I’ve spent time reflecting on God’s Word, I often read a few pages from a Christian book that has stood the test of time. If you’d like to try this, I’d recommend, *Devotional Classics*, edited by Richard Foster and James Bryan Smith (Harper Collins). It contains excerpts from the writings of devotional masters throughout the ages in an accessible format and will give you a sense of being surrounded by “a great cloud of witnesses” as you explore God’s Word today.

- ***Be a creative reader.*** In addition to my morning quiet time, I sometimes devote lunch break on Wednesdays to listening to God. I leave the office, buy a cup of coffee and drive to a quiet spot. Then I read aloud from a CEV New Testament, which I keep in the glove compartment. Hearing God's Word in this fresh way during my work-week has been especially meaningful. Sometimes I'm encouraged. Other times I sense a need to change my actions. Often I gain wisdom for a problem that has me stuck. But almost always I sense that God has said something to me personally.
- ***Read less, pray more.*** I doubt this happens to you, but sometimes I can't sleep. I used to go downstairs and read the Bible until my head reached the "rope-a-dope" stage, but in the morning I couldn't remember what I read. Now I view sleepless nights as an invitation from God to pray. I go downstairs, read just a Psalm or two, and use those verses to guide my prayers. These middle of the night "prayer meetings" have led to some wonderful times of fellowship with God.

There are many ways to add variety to Bible reading and prayer. But whatever you do, don't forget the most important thing is not the method, it's the Person you are meeting.

### *Prayer Idea:*

Think of some new and creative ways you'd like to read the Bible and pray this week. Then, ask God to give you a renewed sense of his presence as you explore these new approaches.

**Today's Bible Reading: Psalm 119:113-128**

# UFOs AND THE BIBLE

*The unfolding of your words gives light;  
it gives understanding to the simple.*

*Psalm 119:130*

Have you ever seen a flying saucer? Oh, I know we don't call them that anymore; now they're UFOs, unidentified flying objects. But when I was in the 10th grade I actually saw a UFO, and the strangest thing about the experience was that it taught me something important about the Bible. Here's what happened.

One night I was standing in front of our house with my friend, Joe Hancock. As we talked in the darkness, I noticed something odd in the distant sky. It was headed in our direction and seemed like a large, whirling light. And it made a noise I couldn't identify. The closer this weird phenomenon got, the more nervous Joe and I became. "I've never seen a real UFO" Joe confessed. "Maybe we should stop a car or something." Stop a car? We never did anything like that!

So we just froze like zombies until the UFO was directly above us. That's when we figured out what it was. The UFO was an old-fashioned biplane rigged up with a loud beeper and a lighted message scrolling across the bottom wing that read: EAT AT BUCK'S CRAB HOUSE. No, it wasn't an alien space ship, but to Joe and me that advertising gimmick had truly been an unidentified flying object.

But what did that experience teach me about the Bible? Well, today there are many who think anyone who believes the Bible is a little crazy, just like you thought I was nuts at the beginning of this reflection (admit it, you did!). We run into this "Bible skepticism" everywhere—in casual conversation, on the internet, and it's all over the media. For people like you and me who love God's Word, this not-so-subtle form of discrimination is very frustrating.

How ironic that our contemporary culture prides itself on tolerating anything except Bible-believing Christians.

But how should we respond? What I learned from my close encounter in the 10th grade was that I didn't really understand what the "UFO" was until I read the scrolling message for myself. The same is true with the Bible. The best way to change the hearts and minds of skeptics today is not to get mad or offended. Instead, the best approach is to overlook the world's double standard and humbly encourage modern seekers to read God's Word for themselves. That's how they'll understand what it really is.

So, I don't mind if people think I'm crazy for believing the Bible. I just hope my words and actions will encourage a few more Bible skeptics to "pick it up and read it," as the child's voice famously instructed St. Augustine centuries ago. Because the truth is, the Bible is its own best advocate; God can use it to change lives in ways that all my arguing never will.

### *Prayer Idea:*

Think of a "Bible skeptic" you know, someone who has trouble believing the Bible is true. Pray for that person, that their heart would become open to God's Word. And pray that your words and actions would encourage them to "pick it up and read it."

**Today's Bible Reading: Psalm 119:129-152**

# LAUGHING WITH GOD

*I rejoice in your promise  
like one who finds great spoil.*

*Psalm 119:162*

Scripture Union is all about helping people meet God every day in the Bible and prayer. But how do we really know when that happens, especially when we can't actually see God? A few years ago I got an insight into that question while playing golf.

My wife Carol and I had just dropped off our youngest daughter for her freshman year in college. As new empty-nesters we planned to stop for a few days on the way home to mark this significant life transition. We also agreed to use one day for separate activities; Carol would go bird-watching, while I played golf.

I reserved a tee time at the nearby Maumee Bay Golf Course in northern Ohio. It had rained all morning, with more rain predicted for the afternoon, so when I got to the course it was empty; I was the only one there. I decided not to use a cart and as I walked between shots I looked into the sky and prayed aloud. It became a wonderful time of thanking God for his goodness to me, Carol and our family over the years.

Then I came to the 15th hole, a 195-yard par three with a sand trap and pond on the left. I took out my 5-wood and aimed away from the trouble. But I pulled the shot and the ball landed on the front fringe, rolled in a big arch towards the back of the green and then...disappeared into the cup. After 45 years of playing golf, my first hole in one!

As I walked onto the green, it suddenly hit me that the only one who saw what just happened was God. So when I took the ball out of the cup, I looked into the sky again, started to chuckle and honestly sensed the presence of God. I felt as though God

and I were laughing together; the whole experience was a gift from him.

But did I actually meet God on the golf course? I know the answer is yes; I was there. The problem comes when I try too hard to prove it. As the Apostle Paul said, “there’s nothing to be gained” by pressing the issue with others. That only leads to boasting (2 Corinthians 12:1-10).

What I’ve learned over the years is that because God is the creator of heaven and earth, he is everywhere, and he sometimes surprises us with opportunities to experience his presence. But as wonderful as these surprises can be, I’ve discovered that the most accessible way to meet God is through regular Bible reading and prayer; when we approach it not just as a discipline, but as a dialog with “the God who is there,” as Francis Schaeffer once wrote. And the more we train ourselves to look for him, the more we’ll experience the joy of meeting him in his Word and in the world.

As Brother Lawrence said in his classic little book, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, “There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful, than that of a continual conversation with God. Those only can comprehend it who practice and experience it.” And that’s true, whether you ever get a hole in one or not.

### *Prayer Idea:*

Sometime today, take a walk or spend a few minutes at the window. As you do, look into the sky and pray aloud. Tell God how much you love him. Then ask God to help you experience more of him as you read his Word, pray and seek him in your everyday life.

**Today’s Bible Reading: Psalm 119:153-176**

# ABOUT SCRIPTURE UNION USA

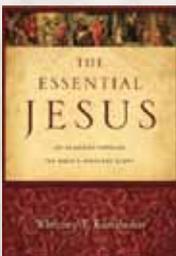
Scripture Union is an interdenominational Christian ministry with a twofold mission that can be summarized as follows:

- *Helping people of all ages meet God in the Bible and prayer*
  - *Reaching at-risk children with God's Word*
- 



Scripture Union publishes daily Bible reading guides for individuals and groups: *Encounter with God*® and *Discovery*®.

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Scripture Union has also developed two Bible reading programs for churches and small groups, *The Essential 100 Challenge* and *The Essential Jesus Challenge*. In addition, Scripture Union is partnering with the American Bible Society for the promotion of Bible engagement in the United States.



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Scripture Union also conducts Bible-based programs for at-risk children including *SuperKids*® summer missions, and *PrimeTime*® after school programs. Scripture Union has formed a partnership with The Salvation Army for the implementation of these children's outreach programs in the United States.

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Scripture Union is a Charter Member of the *Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability* and has national ministries in 130 countries around the world.

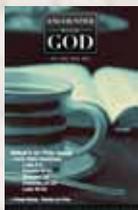
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We welcome your interest, prayers and support. Thanks!

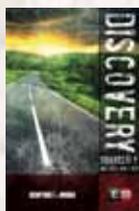
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# MORE BIBLE READING HELP

Scripture Union has publications and programs to help people of all ages meet God every day in the Bible and prayer. To order, simply call, write...or go online. Thanks!



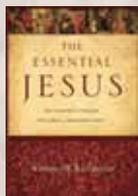
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***Discovery***, A Guide for Finding Practical Help from the Bible. Takes you through representative portions of every Bible book in a four year cycle. Includes prayer ideas, life-related commentary and practical applications. Quarterly. For those who want to begin and maintain the Bible reading habit. Suggested Membership Contribution: \$25 per year.



***The Essential 100 Challenge***, A Church-wide Bible Reading Program. This program enables a church or group to get the big picture of the Bible without getting bogged down. "E100 provides an excellent overview of God's big picture." –Christianity Today. For more information: [www.E100Challenge.com](http://www.E100Challenge.com).



***The Essential Jesus Challenge***, A Church-wide Bible Reading Program. This program follows the story of Jesus through 25 Old and 75 New Testament passages. For more information, visit [www.EssentialJesusChallenge.com](http://www.EssentialJesusChallenge.com).

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At Scripture Union, we want to help you meet God every day in the Bible and prayer. That's why we invite you to become a Scripture Union Member for a suggested membership contribution of only \$25 per year. Each quarter you'll receive your choice of *Encounter with God* or *Discovery* (see descriptions on page 30), the best in-depth daily Bible reading guides in America today, plus all the other benefits of SU Membership:

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*"I am totally, completely and forever a  
Scripture Union man."*

*—Billy Graham*

*"Scripture Union taught me the discipline  
of daily Bible reading."*

*—John Stott*

*"I wouldn't be the person I am today with-  
out...Scripture Union."*

*—N. T. Wright*

*"Scripture Union made me realize the  
importance of the word of God."*

*—Luis Palau*

*"I heartily endorse this ministry"*

*—Bill Briscoe*

**SCRIPTURE  UNION**



CHAPTER 4

The first part of the chapter discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes the need for consistency and the use of standardized accounting methods. The text also covers the various types of accounts used in a business, including assets, liabilities, and equity accounts. It explains how these accounts are used to track the financial performance of the company over time.

The second part of the chapter focuses on the process of closing the books at the end of each accounting period. It describes the steps involved in adjusting the accounts and preparing the financial statements. The text highlights the importance of ensuring that all transactions are properly recorded and that the books are balanced before closing.

The final part of the chapter discusses the role of the accounting department in providing financial information to management. It explains how the accounting department uses the data from the books to analyze the company's performance and to identify areas for improvement. The text also covers the importance of maintaining accurate records for tax purposes and for legal compliance.

# CONFESSIONS *of a* GUILTY BIBLE READER

*A 10-day Devotional Guide to help you  
develop a more meaningful experience of God's Word*

In this collection of story-filled devotional essays, Scripture Union President Whitney T. Kuniholm honestly shares his struggles and breakthroughs as a lifelong Bible reader. "My goal," says Mr. Kuniholm, "is to help you make the basic discipline of Bible reading and prayer the mainspring of your Christian life, and a daily opportunity for you to meet God." The booklet also includes a 10-day Bible reading guide through Psalm 119, and offers lots of practical help for anyone needing a little encouragement in the devotional life.

## Other titles in the Scripture Union Resources series:

- *The Bible Reading Start-Up Guide* by Whitney T. Kuniholm
- *Daily Prayer Guide* by Clifford L. Swanson
- *The Case for the Bible* by T.M. Moore
- *Refreshing Faith* by Whitney T. Kuniholm

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