

A Pearl Seeker

*The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one
pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.*

—Matthew 13:45–46



BY JENNIFER BLACKMON STEWART



LORD HELP ME

A Pearl Seeker

Becky
Blackmon

Publishing Designs, Inc.
Huntsville, Alabama

Publishing Designs, Inc.
P.O. Box 3241
Huntsville, Alabama 35810

© 2016 Becky Blackmon

Second Printing, February 2018

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission from Publishing Designs, Inc., except for the inclusion of quotations in a review.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)

Designer: Crosslin Creative
Images: dollarphotoclub.com, vectorstock.com
Editor: Peggy Coulter

Printed in the United States of America

Publisher's Cataloging in Publication Data

Blackmon, Becky, 1948—

A Pearl Seeker / Becky Blackmon.

(Lord Help Me)

1. Biblical Research—Christianity. 2. Accountability—biblical teaching. 3. Christian women—spirituality.

I. Title. II. Series.

ISBN 978-0-929540-95-5

248.8

Dedication

This book is dedicated most of all to my Father in heaven who is my Helper, my Rock, my Strength, and my Refuge. What would I do without You, my Father? Thank You, O God, for loving me.

To my precious Jeff, my forever friend.

To my children: Jennifer and Tim, Jeffrey and Angela. I love you, adore you, and cherish you.

To my precious grandchildren: Will, Nora, Max, Eva, and Lex. You simply make my world go around and around. I pray that you will be Pearl Seekers and live for the Lord all the days of your lives.

And in memory of Mom, Lea Fowler. You were the one who taught me to be a Pearl Seeker.





Becky and Jeff

Acknowledgments

Special Thanks

To my “soul sisters.” You know who you are.

To the prayer warriors in my life.

To Trent, my own personal computer technician.

Thank you for dropping everything and rescuing
this old woman.

To Michelle, the sweetest photographer I have ever
known.

Endorsements

Do you struggle with spiritual direction? Do you fall more times than you remember getting up? Becky Blackmon relates and compassionately enables us to become, “a woman for all seasons,” seeking and struggling daily to please and praise our Father. In *A Pearl Seeker*, Becky invites us to walk with her through life’s challenges. She relates to our falling, getting up, and falling again; yet getting up stronger each time as we grasp His outstretched hand.

—**Bremda Birckholtz**, Brandon, Florida



Becky Blackmon looks at the Bible with the fresh eyes of a Pearl Seeker, one who “digs deeply into the Word.” This study is full of hope and encouragement. It has touched me and enriched my life. It is a book of love.

—**Becky Bullough**, Hanford, California



After the emotional strength gained from *The Begging Place*, I wondered where Becky Blackmon would take us next. And she has done it again! *A Pearl Seeker* inspires us to dig deeper for the pearls of God’s Word and gives us women the incentive to search for jewels to help us grow more useful in His kingdom.

—**Betty Bender**, Columbia, Tennessee



As a tour guide Becky is extraordinary. She knows intimately where to take us, because she’s been there before. Her excitement is catching, as she urgently leads Pearl Seekers in search of God’s strength, “the good part,” and a spiritual mindset. *A Pearl Seeker* will enrich your heart and touch your soul.

—**Phyllis Green**, Oakhurst, California



A Pearl Seeker calls out to straying and negligent Christians, “Change your spiritual life from drab and dull to delight and devotion.” It inspires the reader to stretch for deeper understanding of the Bible.

—**Larry Acuff**, Lithia Springs, Georgia

Contents

Preface.	11
Pearl Drop: <i>I Want to Be a Pearl Seeker</i>	15
1 Seek the Lord and His Strength	17
Pearl Drop: <i>I Gotta Be Me!</i>	37
2 Seek the Lord's Pleasure	41
Pearl Drop: <i>The Kitchen Table</i>	57
3 Seek the Good Part	61
Pearl Drop: <i>Step Over the Line, Sister!</i>	72
4 Seek a Spiritual Mindset	75
Pearl Drop: <i>What Is More Important Than God?</i>	83
5 Seek Second Chances	89
Pearl Drop: <i>Know Before Whom You Stand!</i>	99
6 Seek to Be Just a Christian	103
Pearl Drop: <i>The Crying Man</i>	122
7 Seek What Is Most Important	125
Pearl Drop: <i>Father Knows Best</i>	139
8 Seek to Be Thankful	145
Pearl Drop: <i>The Master Weaver's Plan</i>	161
9 Seek the Hands of Time	163
Pearl Drop: <i>Women Need Women</i>	173
10 Seek to Be Ready	179
Pearl Drop: <i>Real Life</i>	189
11 Seek to Know God Is Real	195

Preface

Lord, Help Me!



I have an ongoing conversation with the Lord. I pray all the time, and I pray everywhere. Sometimes I feel like I am a living, walking, breathing scripture—I Thessalonians 5:17—which simply says three words: “Pray without ceasing.”

And that is what I do. I pray in the car; I pray as I cook; I talk to the Lord in the middle of the night; I communicate with the Lord continually; He is my constant 24/7 companion. He goes with me wherever I go and is involved in every aspect of my life. He walks with me through the good, the bad, and the ugly! He sees it all and knows it all.

There are occasions when I fling myself at His feet in moments of sheer desperation, realizing what Hebrews 4:16 truly means: “Let us therefore draw near with confidence [boldly] to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.”

My life is imperfect to the point that I feel every day is my time of need! I need grace, I need help, and I need God. Girls, I simply need God’s help—all day long!



A WOMAN LIKE ME

There is a woman from the New Testament that reminds me of me. Let’s look at her.

And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed.” But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, “Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us.” But He answered and said, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, “Lord, help me!” And He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” But she said, “Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed



on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once (Matthew 15:22–28).

What an outstanding account! Can't you just see this Gentile woman following Jesus and His apostles, shouting and pleading with them for help? She is no quiet woman. (I'm not either, so I can really understand this scene!) The apostles are probably embarrassed by her and even tell Jesus to send her away. She is not their kind.

But the Master Teacher, as usual, sees the lessons that must be taught in the most obvious and obscure places with the most obvious and obscure people. He knows what His apostles are thinking, what the woman is thinking, and what He will say and do. The Master always knows the Master plan.

Most impressive is the fact that the Canaanite woman is not afraid to approach Jesus and His inner circle of men. Neither is she fearful of pleading her case in the presence of the Almighty Judge. All she knows is that her daughter is suffering from an excruciating demon possession, and Jesus is the only one who can help her. He is her only hope.

● THREE LITTLE WORDS

Desperate times call for desperate measures, and she lives in desperation every second of every day! She calls out to Jesus, "Have mercy on me, Lord—Son of David!" She knows who Jesus is even if the Jews and His apostles don't. Jesus tells her that He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. His words don't faze her—she only presses harder. She flings herself at His feet, bows before Him, and worships Him. And then she says these three little words: "Lord, help me."

"It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." This is quite bold of Jesus to say. The Jews themselves called the Gentiles dogs.

Once again this doesn't stop her. She is on a life-and-death mission. Her reply shows her great persistent faith in who Jesus really is—the



Master. “Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

The word she uses for dogs is the same Greek word that Christ uses. The word means little dogs or puppies. Here she is, a woman of little importance but possessing a great faith. She is also very astute and quick-witted, as she refers to herself as a little dog—using His words. She may be small and just a woman—and a Gentile at that—but she is determined to get Jesus’ attention and help. Why? Because Jesus is the only one who can help her. She is at the very end of her rope. She has nowhere else to turn. She is a woman and a mother—and she loves her child with every ounce of her being. There is not a mother on this planet who doesn’t understand this kind of determination or this kind of love.

Jesus commends her: “O woman, your faith is great; be it done for you as you wish.” The daughter was healed immediately because of her mother’s tremendous faith.

● ONLY GOD

Tell me, what is it like to have a child wrapped in the arms of a demon? What is it like to look into the eyes of evil every second of every day? What was this woman’s life like, and more than that, what was her daughter’s life like? How does one live like that? You and I don’t even begin to have a clue, my sister.

How absolutely agonizing demon possession was! In Mark 9:17–27 God gives us the account of a man whose son was demon possessed. The demon often threw the boy into the fire or water to destroy him. This father was desperate, and he said to Jesus, “But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us!” Who are the *us* the father was referring to? Surely it was the man and his family. They all must have suffered with this child. What a never-ending nightmare! We cannot even imagine their agony. It is certainly true that the events that affect us personally affect the entire family. If the Canaanite woman had a family, they certainly were experiencing a horrible existence. How could they possibly live a normal life?



What was it again that the Canaanite woman cried to the Savior?
“Lord, help me!”

Why is this woman’s story in the Bible? Why is such a small encounter in Jesus’ life so hugely important to you and me? Because we understand her. We can totally identify with her. Sometimes I am so overwhelmed by my life and its problems that all I can do is fall on my knees like she did, worship my God like she did, and say over and over, “Lord, help me!” like she did.

There certainly have been heart-rending occasions with my own children when I needed His help! Don’t you also identify with this woman? She is a woman for all seasons, all ages, all times. She loves her broken child and needs Jesus’ help. She is you and she is me.

This Gentile woman of long ago realized that only God could help her. Only God could cure her daughter. Only God could change everything. Only God.

Have you ever been that desperate? You know what I am saying. Oh, girls, we seek the Lord because we need His help! We seek the face of God because He is the only one who can heal and repair our lives. He has all the answers and the right prescriptions!

We all need help. There is no perfect life, no perfect parent, no perfect child, no perfect family, and no perfect church. We all have challenges, problems, and heartaches.

I tell my sisters frequently that I don’t know how God has time for them and their troubles. He has His hands full just solving all my problems and making Becky behave! But God is God, and He can do the impossible. Matthew 19:26 tells us so. Thank God for God!

Dad used to say, “With God even the impossible is possible!”

As we begin this series, may we ask for God’s help for each step we take.

Write your personal goal for this study below.
Help me, Lord,



Pearl Drop

I Want to Be a Pearl Seeker



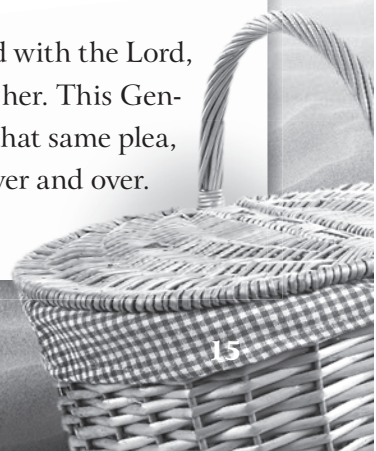
I have been on a quest all my life. Have you? Don't we all want to know who God is and why we are here on earth? We search to find the right answers and the true meaning of life and where we fit in the whole scheme of things.

Life is tough, and it surely is unfair. The world is unkind, unforgiving, and unloving—the very opposite of our God. That is why we need God. He is holy and righteous, the epitome of love. We need help just to live and to live rightly. Christians need the Lord all the time. He is a God for all ages and times—a God for all the storms, all the joys, all the roller coaster rides, and all the ordinary events of our lives.

And God, being God, always provides. What a mighty God He is! Let's look at two scriptures that describe our Creator. I call the first reference the Superman Scripture. The second is from the Hebrews writer:

1. Deuteronomy 33:26–27: *There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rides the heavens to your help, and through the skies in His majesty. The eternal God is a dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.*
2. Hebrews 13:5–6: *For He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?"*

When the Gentile woman of Matthew 15 pleaded with the Lord, "Help me!" that's all she could say. And Jesus helped her. This Gentile woman right here and now, called Becky, makes that same plea, "Lord, help me," and He comes to my aid over and over and over. His promise rings true: He has never forsaken me.



God always keeps His promises. He has never lied to you or to me. I know about the Begging Place. The Lord meets me there, helps me there, answers my prayer, comforts me, and leads the way.

This book is literally my plea: “Lord, help me!” I will always seek His help because my daily prayer is to be the daughter He wants me to be, the child He had in mind before I ever came to be. I am a Pearl Seeker.

This is a quest of a lifetime. God freely and plainly reveals all the answers to our questions in His most precious book, the Bible. Will we read it, search and study it, and delve into its deepest depths? It is up to you, and it is up to me.

Come and go with me, my sister. Let’s ask, seek, and knock. Let’s be Pearl Seekers.



Seek

The Lord and His Strength

Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face continually (Psalm 105:4).

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it (Matthew 13:45–46).

Are you a Pearl Seeker? Does the thought of buried treasure intrigue you? Do you like to ask a lot of questions? If you are nodding your head, then you and I are in the same boat!

Most of us like to learn; some of us even love to learn. Those three words, *back to school*, were never my favorites; however, I do believe that attending school offers structure, higher learning, discipline, and the opportunity to sit at the feet of some unique teachers, all of which are good for children and adults alike, with few exceptions.

In every school setting, from the primary school level all the way to the college level, I remember teacher after teacher always urging us: “Never be afraid of asking questions; that is the way to learn.” Learning to ask why, when, how, and where has opened so many fascinating and challenging doors of study for me. And I still ask these questions constantly.

Stimulating the brain to learn, inquire, and attain knowledge is an important task for all

Read pages 11–14, and make sure to write your personal goal for this study.

humans. It helps us live longer. We all really do like the challenges learning offers.

ANSWERS FOR INQUIRING MINDS

God, the Creator of the universe and all things, has designed the human brain to seek, to question, to inquire, and to learn how this world came into existence and how life was began. Our minds even ask, “Who is in charge?” We want to know! We observe the world, its life-forms, its ecosystems, and the universe so exquisitely set into motion. Then we ask those questions again: how, why, when, where, and who?

God answers with these simple words: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). How simple and yet how profound. “In the beginning God . . .” Let us look at three study Bibles and hear from a few experts on Genesis 1:1.

1. *The NKJV Nelson Study Bible*: “‘In the beginning’ is a thesis statement which can be paraphrased: Here is the story of God’s creation of the heavens and the earth.”
2. *The NIV Study Bible*: “In both its Hebrew and Greek forms, the title of Genesis appropriately describes its contents, since it is primarily a book of beginnings.”
3. *The Daily Bible in Chronological Order*: “Is it possible to imagine a time when no material things existed? Take away the brilliance of the sun by day, and the beauty of the moon and stars by night. What would life be like without them? Take away the clouds and sky and rivers and oceans. Imagine the earth without humans, animals, fish, birds, grass, trees, or plants. What would it be like if the earth were completely bare? Indeed, what would it be like if there were no earth, no universe—nothing? Has the universe existed forever? Surely it must have had a beginning. How did it happen? What made it happen? For what purpose did it happen? Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? Since recorded history began, men



and women of every generation, culture, and place have searched for answers to those questions.”

Now observe a few words about creation from the website of James Burton Coffman, a Christian commentary writer, and Frank Chesser, gospel preacher and writer:

There is absolutely nothing either unreasonable or hard to understand about this. That there was indeed a beginning of our universe and the world we live in is absolutely certain. No matter how far back into the mists of prehistoric time men may postulate the point of origin for our universe, it is precisely there that they must confront God, the omnipotent, eternal, all-pervading, omniscient First Cause, known to Christians as the God of the Bible. This says nothing at all of when the beginning occurred, but declares emphatically that there was indeed a beginning, a fact which no reputable science on earth has ever denied. The source of that beginning was in the will and the power of the Eternal God. It was not merely a beginning of life, or of material things, but a beginning of all things (Coffman, *Genesis*).

“In the beginning God . . .” (Genesis 1:1). What an affirmation! The feeble, finite mind of man reels and staggers under the load of this single thought. It is unfathomable in its content, immeasurable in its magnitude, and incomparable in its inclusion . . . “In the beginning God . . .” (Genesis 1:1). The Bible does not argue for the existence of God; it simply announces it. The first four words of divine inspiration mark the commencement of time and an introduction to the greatest Being in all that is (Chesser 9–10).

● DIRECTION FOR A SEEKER

Man begins to read Genesis 1, and the journey begins. The questions begin and one’s faith is born. The story of the creation of all things is the beginning of the greatest story ever told. It starts with Genesis 1:1, and it ends with Revelation 22:21.

Where do we go to seek the face of God? Where will we find answers about what He is like and how He exists? Where do we begin? Do we go to the library and see what men have written about the Creator? Do we become the woman on the street, questioning the passersby, gathering



their personal opinions on religion and then deciding which faith we like best? No, there is only one place where God tells us about Himself and His plan for all mankind. The Bible! The Bible is God's book on God. A preacher once said, "The Bible is our window through which we see God."

In His marvelous Book of Books, God has issued a challenge to all mankind: "Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face continually" (Psalm 105:4).

Only the Bible can speak to the mind of man. The Bible is the mind of God in verbal form. It discloses the way God thinks. It addresses man's intellect, the thinking, reasoning, contemplative aspect of man's nature. God designed the mind of man (Chesser 7).

GOD IS NOT HIDING!

God reveals Himself through the written word. He makes a promise to the Pearl Seeker when He says:

"For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans for welfare and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found by you," declares the Lord . . . (Jeremiah 29:11-14).

We can find God! He does not hide from us. God is completely accessible! But notice that this passage contains a condition on our part. God says that we will find Him when we search for Him with all our hearts. It is either all or nothing at all with God! Someone once said, "A half-hearted Christian cannot serve a wholehearted Savior!"

God has exquisitely arranged His brilliant Word with infinite treasures, ready to be revealed to students of all ages and types. From the genius to the simple minded, and from a senior citizen to a young child, there is something for everyone to learn from the Good Book. There is a treasure to be cherished on every page for every heart.



Augustine, a fourth-century philosopher and theologian, once described the Bible this way: “The Holy Scriptures are our letters from home.” How often have we considered the Word to be a letter from our Father in heaven? A personal message from the Creator to the created? Would that view of it make us want to read it more? Wouldn’t we treasure it to a greater extent? Girls, I want to seek Him. I want to find Him. I need Him more and more each day to guide my life.

A BOOK TO CHERISH

Do you cherish your Bible? Do you take care of it? I cannot tell you the number of Bibles that flew off our car’s roof as we drove away from the worship service, because a certain son of ours had a habit of placing them there while he got into the car.

Have you heard the old, old story of the lady who invited the preacher for supper? To impress him, she told her little girl, “Go and get the Good Book that Mama dearly loves.” The little girl returned with the Sears and Roebuck catalog!

Did you hear about the Christian painter who specialized in house interiors? He complimented the lady of the house regarding her ornate Bible, gracing her coffee table in the living room. “Ma’am, I see that you have the most important book in the world on your coffee table.”

“Oh, yes, I do!” she replied. “It contains all the names, births, marriages, and deaths of my ancestors written down on its special pages. Why, what in the world would we do without that?”

Talk about clueless! That lady had no idea about God, His Word, and His message to all mankind. Her Bible was precious because of its pages with family events and dates written on them. She hadn’t even read God’s message on the other pages!

It remains a truism: The Lord knows how important the Bible is to each of us, whether we cherish His Word or not.



IF AND ALL

Whose responsibility is it to seek God? It is ours and ours alone. He certainly will not force us to find Him. A paraphrase of Proverbs 3:6 is “Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take.”

What a comforting passage! Why? Because we don’t even know where to walk or how to get there without guidance. But our God will demonstrate the right way *if* we seek His will in *all* things. “A man’s way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). Again, “There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (Proverbs 14:12).

So what do I do? How do I find my way? How in the world am I going to know how to live right and please God? How am I going to know the truth? As Brother Marshall Keeble often said, “Get in the Book!” and “The Bible is right!”

And that is the bottom line to living here on this earth. We have to open the Bible and read what God has set before us. We must open our ears, eyes, and heart to the Lord and see what He has to say. Remember, He is our Creator with all the answers!

Underline the benefits of the attributes of the Lord from the passage below.

Make me know Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; for You I wait all the day . . . The secret of the Lord is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know His covenant. My eyes are continually toward the Lord, for He will pluck my feet out of the net.

—Psalm 25:4–5, 14–15

I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you (Psalm 32:8).

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I have sworn and I will confirm it, that I will keep Your righteous ordinances (Psalm 119:105–106).

Oh, my sisters, God’s lamp still shines and guides the seekers to a magnificent life with Him, and that is just the beginning. I want to seek Him and let Him show me the way! I need Him to instruct me, teach me, and guide me all the way

home because I do not always know what is best for me. I don't know where my footsteps should go, but He does. The Father always knows best. Will we confirm and vow to keep His commandments, as David did?

QUEST FOR TRUTH ALONE

Is there such a concept as truth? In his blog, Jeff Jenkins said this about the Word:

Dr. Luke told Theophilus that he had investigated carefully everything about the life of Jesus. He further told this man whose name means "one who loves God" that he was writing it down so that he could know the exact truth about the things he had been taught. Wow! What about us? Have we carefully investigated the life and teachings of Jesus? One other thought. Regardless of what many say, it is crucial that we know the Truth. It is crucial that we be exact in our knowledge of the Truth. And it is crucial that we compare everything we are taught, everything we hear, and everything we read with the Truth found in God's Word. From Luke's opening statement about the life of our Savior, it surely appears that the Holy Spirit believes that Truth matters!

When involved in a study of the Word of God, we are on a quest for the Truth and the Truth alone. We must stop and ask the questions popping up in our heads as we read the Bible. We must look at concordances along with Hebrew and Greek dictionaries, get out maps, and follow the places God has woven into His story.

In my mind I hear Elsie Huffard's voice encouraging women repeatedly: "Make the Bible come alive!" She was a marvelous teacher and mentor to me and to so many other women who embraced Bible study. I often tell women: "We must put on our Greek glasses, Roman togas, and Jewish sandals when we study the Bible, so that we will understand what was happening when Jesus walked on this earth."

We must challenge our brains and minds to dig deeply into God's holy Word because it simply is fascinating. There is nothing like it! Well, of course there is nothing like the Bible. It is from God. No other



book can make that claim. The Word of God is ground zero. This is where we begin.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

The word *inspired* carries an image. It means “God breathed”—from the lips of God. The Greek word for this inspiration by God is *theopneustos*. Can’t you picture God leaning down from heaven and breathing His words into the minds of men?

Furthermore, let’s note another lesson from this passage in 2 Timothy. Scripture helps us teach, warn, correct, and train ourselves and others to do rightly, so that we can be equipped and ready for every good work that we are called upon to do. It sets our course.

I heard preacher Richard Harp say: “The scriptures are profitable for teaching—what is right! For reproof—what is wrong! For correction—how to get right! For training in righteousness—how to stay right!”

Does 2 Timothy 3:16–17 say that the Bible is inspired so we can be a dynamo in the business world or so we can climb the ladder of success and make lots of money? Is the Bible breathed from the lips of God so

we can have the best of everything and live life the way we choose to live it? Is the Bible inspired so we can be a jet setter, a superstar, or a sports hero? No, no, and no!

Sometimes we forget verse 17, and it is the zinger in this passage: The Bible is inspired so the man or woman of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. God has given us His wonderful Book so we will live for God, obey God, and do righteous works. We must carry on the work that Jesus left for us to do while there still is time. “We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work” (John 9:4).

**Christians are made
to do good works,
according to this
marvelous passage.**

*For we are His work-
manship, created in
Christ Jesus for good
works, which God
prepared beforehand
so that we would
walk in them.*

—Ephesians 2:10



Let your mind dwell on the fact that we are God's workmanship, His handiwork. Think of the talents the Lord gave you, and then start listing all you can do for Him! Keep in mind the old sign: *God Doesn't Make Any Junk!*

JESUS WORKED

Look at the example Jesus left for us: "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

We seem to forget what a hard worker Christ was. He was focused on the mission set before Him. He knew saving us was worth it all; He faced that huge task every day! There were people to be healed, souls to be taught, and defenses to be made to the daily traps set by the hypocrites. There were cities to be visited, territories to be covered, and the incessant demands of the throngs, not to mention the constant teaching, teaching, teaching.

Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demons, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them (Matthew 4:23–24).

Many followed Him, and He healed them all (Matthew 12:15).

Jesus must have often been exhausted. And yet He never gave up and said, *I think that is enough! I need a vacation!* He simply went about doing good. Jesus had much work to do, and so do we. I have always thought how wonderful it would be if the world could say the very same thing about all Christians—we go about doing good.

Some say, "I'm a Christian." Others never say it, but you just know they are.

● GOD WANTS A BIG FAMILY

God has given us His Word for many reasons. God wants us to know Him and His Son and the Holy Spirit.

- He has given us sixty-six books of history, prophecy, poetry, the gospel accounts, and epistles to teach us about who He is, who we are, and what He wants from us.
- The Bible tells us the story of Jesus, the Son of God, His saving gospel, and His death, burial, and resurrection—from the Old Testament to the New Testament.
- The Scriptures bring us comfort. They teach us of God’s unfailing love and His desire for a relationship with us.
- The Bible teaches us about the unfathomable grace of God and His gift, the church.

Our Father inspired men to write His words for us so we can correct our wrongs and be saved. God has work for us to do while we are here, and the Word equips us in every way to accomplish those tasks. And let us never forget that the Word reveals the nature of God, His holiness and righteousness, and instructs the reader how to become God’s child and look like Him. Most important, God has given us His Word to proclaim to a lost world. Mom used to say, “God wants a big family.”

● IT’S FOR ME!

Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, told the church in Rome: “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

What was written in earlier times for the Roman church and all churches in the first century? The Old Testament. What did the accounts and stories of the old covenant do for the church then and the church now? They encouraged the church then and now, and the accounts give



us all hope. What kind of hope? The hope of God's continual love, forgiveness, and salvation for every man. Let's not neglect whatever was written in earlier times! Those Scriptures encourage us to persevere and to have hope in the Lord.

It is also interesting to note that the Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—has made known to us God's will in the Scripture, the Holy Bible.

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2 Peter 1:20–21).

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world (Hebrews 1:1–2).

Here is one of the very first scriptures I learned as a child, in two versions:

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15 KJV).

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15 NASB).

For years I didn't see the key word *workman* here: a man or woman who works. It takes a lot of *work* to focus on God's Word. It takes a lot of *work* to do the will of God. It takes a lot of *work* and time to dig, research, and examine God's written Word. A friend of mine once said, "No matter how talented you are, it still takes work!" But think about this, girls. It takes a *decision* to work! I truly believe that laziness and selfishness keep the average Christian from achieving the potential God has in mind for her.



LIFE OR DEATH

In his marvelous book, *Muscle and a Shovel*, Michael Shank describes his arduous search for the truth:

It took months of diligent digging. Tenacious and consistent digging into the Bible. Choosing to invest time into God's Word rather than to spend time doing the normal things that I did. It took muscle and a shovel.

Muscle and a shovel to dig down beyond the mud and the sand and the gravel of a lifetime of erroneous religious teachings. I had to dig down beyond the denominational creeds, the religious confusion, the unbiblical practices, and all of the doctrines that opposed the New Testament's plain and simple Truth (318).

You see, Michael is a Pearl Seeker. He had to make the decision to dig for the truth on his own and all by himself. When he dug deeply into that wonderful treasure chest called the Bible, he discovered that the truth was there all along. Michael had never plunged himself into the depths of God's Word. He had allowed his mind to be covered with all kinds of religious error. Oh, how careful we must be with the Word of God, handling it and discerning it correctly! If the admonition from God is to handle the Word *accurately*, then we definitely can assume that it can be handled *inaccurately*. It is a matter of life and death—spiritual life and spiritual death—heaven and hell.

I remember an occasion when my elderly parents received a letter from a dear widow. She and her husband and my parents had spent many vacations together, and our families were often joined through the years. We all had done mission work, and as you can imagine, the topic of most conversations was centered on God. That widow made this interesting statement in her letter: "I just wish I could tell the teachers and preachers—where I live now and attend church—to tell me *what* the Bible says. Please don't tell me what you *think* it says."

I have inherited Your testimonies forever, for they are the joy of my heart. I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes forever, even to the end.

—Psalm 119:111–112



HEARTBEAT OF THE EXEGETE

An exegete is one who works at understanding the Scripture, one who “draws out” its meaning. When we work at the Scriptures—when we study hard and take the Word apart verse by verse, word by word—then we realize that the Bible really is vibrantly alive and absolutely, unequivocally thrilling! Do we make the Bible come alive, or do we discover that the Bible is alive? There is nothing like discovering a hidden treasure in Scripture.

Perhaps you are assigned the story of David and Goliath to teach from the Bible, and perhaps you have read this passage a thousand times. Suddenly you observe a word or idea or thought you had never noticed. You sit up in amazement and study the passage again. You work at strengthening your understanding of the passage. Your heart soars, and before you know it, you have climbed up to the next rung on your ladder of spiritual maturity. I call this the heartbeat of the exegete. It doesn’t end there, you know, for you cannot wait to share your new discovery with others. This is all in God’s plan for you. He knew it all along.

I like to think of the Bible as being a huge treasure chest, open and brimming over with shiny, splendid jewels. This treasure chest is bottomless, having no end to it. God describes His Word this way:

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

God is not dead and neither is His Word! It is alive and well and so sharp that it changes our lives. Brother Marshall Keeble so often said about this passage: “It cuts a-comin’ and a-goin’.” It cuts the Bible class teacher and the Bible class student alike. The teacher and the student are both learners. One can never understand every concept the Bible holds, because God is the author and He is infinite.

How amazing His Word is! The Bible slices and stabs us as we study God’s admonitions, commandments, and rules for righteous living and



raising faithful families. How moved we are as we read again and again the creation account, along with the stirring stories of heroes such as Noah, Moses, Joseph, Rahab, Esther, and Stephen!

We gasp as we read the accounts of Dinah, Jephthah, Gideon, Ananias and Sapphira, Apollos, and the Ethiopian eunuch. We grieve over an idolatrous and faithless Israel who continually played the harlot, turned her back on a forgiving God, and defiantly said to Him, “I reject You!” We stand at the old rugged cross and see our sweet Savior covered in His blood and our sins, paying a debt He did not owe. Then we look inward at our own lives, and our hearts are deeply wounded when we realize our own mammoth shortcomings and God’s relatively small expectations of us.

● HE’S STILL WORKING ON ME

However, God’s Book reveals that God is not through with us yet. The God of the Bible is a God of love and forgiveness from the very first verse until the very last verse. From Genesis to Revelation we find hope, peace, and salvation all wrapped up in our wonderful Savior’s forgiving love. And that is only the beginning.

I picture myself taking this two-edged sword and being able to plunge it into that magnificent treasure chest and go deeper and deeper. There is so much to be grasped that, with each stab and twist of this marvelous sword, I make several discoveries: God is in charge of all things; there are lessons to be learned; there are commandments to be obeyed; but most of all, there is Yahweh—our Jehovah God who must and will be heard.

If you are using this book as a part of a study group or a Bible class, here are some additional thoughts:

- Pray before and after your class time.
- Read every Scripture in every chapter.
- There is power in the Word of God.



● *Dunamis* (dynamite) is the Greek word for power.

● The Word is dynamite.

The Bible has the power to blow up our preconceived notions, to change our lives completely and at the same time restore our souls. Listen to how David describes the Word:

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward (Psalm 19:7–11).

● STOP, LOOK, AND LISTEN!

You women who are studying together are traveling companions, taking a spiritual journey together. How blessed you are to have one another! Don't rush this book. Take rest stops along the way to pause, reflect, and discuss. Stop and pray and love one another. The Lord has much to tell us, teach us, and reveal to us. He knows those who seek His face and those who do not. What blessings you will receive as you open His Book and find the hidden gems! "He who gives attention to the word will find good, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord" (Proverbs 16:20).

Let's reflect on Coffman's comments on this passage: "These clauses are parallel. The man that heeds the Word of God is exactly the same man that trusts in Jehovah. A man can do neither without doing both."

Oh, girls, the lesson is so simple and plain. When we stop, heed, and pay attention to the Word of God, then we find what is good. When we learn about God, we learn to trust Him and that makes us the happiest people on earth! Oh, that everyone would learn that!

Our world is in constant pursuit of happiness. The word *blessed* in the Bible is said to also mean happy. Listen to what David, the shepherd king



—Deuteronomy 5:33

Find at least three other scriptures with the phrase “that it may be well with you.” What are the implications?

[illegible]

of Israel, had to say about being happy: “How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart (Psalm 119:1-2).

In other words, happy are those who walk in the law of God, who obey His commandments, and who seek Him completely. Isn't this the true definition of a Pearl Seeker?

CHEATING WON'T WORK WITH GOD

I have the very first Bible my parents gave me the year I was baptized. Mom always inscribed a message when she gave the gift of a book, and my Bible was no different. She simply wrote this in my Bible: "This Book will keep you from sin, and sin will keep you from this Book."

In her book *Precious Are God's Plans*, Mom wrote:

When I was a child, we occasionally had books in school that included the answers to questions asked or problems to be solved. These answers were in the back of the book.

God gives us a detailed answer book. He entreats us, begs us, to look to Him for a happy and abundant life. He wants us to have wisdom, to know how to direct our daily lives, to have a good marriage, faithful children, a loving husband, peace of mind, and finally how to get home to Him.

Often we want a quick answer with little study. We even want to copy another's paper. We want to pass the test and have all the blessings with as little involvement as possible. And that's impossible. We want to look in the back of the book. We gain a little head knowledge but not a lot of heart knowledge. As I heard someone say, "We want to live like the rich man and die like Lazarus."

We have our answer book in our hands. What can be done to make us love it, study it, and meditate upon it? Who can persuade us to take the gift of His word into our hearts? (Fowler 119).

● GOD IS LOOKING FOR ME

Remember, my sisters and friends, it is completely up to us whether or not we read our Bibles. God never forces anyone. The Bible can become our very best friend, alive and taken with us everywhere, or it can become a dust collector on our coffee table—just another book—never used and rotting away. This is our decision to make. No one can make it for us. God knows everything; He knows us. "The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God" (Psalm 14:2).

It is also up to us to learn, grow, change, and be saved. Trust me on this one thought: Satan will work overtime to do everything he possibly can to keep you out of God's marvelous Word! He wants to keep you and me as illiterate, uneducated, and stupid as possible. Someone has said that the devil's most powerful tool is man's ignorance of God's Word! Don't let Satan win! Be strong. The Lord will help you. He is bigger than Satan! "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Is there ever a time when we stop seeking the Lord and His will for us? Is there a time when we know enough? No! We can never know everything there is to know. Look at Paul's admonition to the church at Colossae: "If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1).

Keep seeking, keep asking questions, keep on learning.



GOD'S BLESSINGS ON THE SEEKER

Here is one more precious passage on seeking the Lord—a passage with a promise from God. “The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him” (Lamentations 3:25). Oh, yes, the Lord is good to the seeker—the Pearl Seeker. There are blessings just waiting for us!

The voice of a young boy named Samuel echoes across the pages of the Bible. God called him by name, and unafraid, he answered his Master’s call: “Speak, for Your servant is listening” (1 Samuel 3:10). When we read and study God’s Word, we hear God calling our name, too. Will we, too, answer the Master, “Speak, for Your servant is listening”?

It is so true, my precious sisters, that we make the decision of how spiritual we will be. We make the choice to seek God—He never forces us. We make the choice to cherish the Pearl or throw it away.



Prayer: Lord, help me to be a Pearl Seeker. Help me to seek You
and Your strength. Help me to seek Your face continually.



Song: Ancient Words

Holy words long preserved
For our walk in this world;
They resound with God’s own heart,
Oh, let the ancient words impart.

Chorus:
Ancient words ever true
Changing me and changing you;
We have come with open hearts,
Oh, let the ancient words impart.

Words of Life, words of Hope
Give us strength, help us cope
In this world, where e'er we roam,
Ancient words will guide us home.

Holy words of our Faith,
Handed down to this age,
Came to us through sacrifice,
Oh heed the faithful words of Christ.

Holy words long preserved
For our walk in this world;
They resound with God's own heart
Oh let the ancient words impart

—Ronnie C. Freeman, Jr /
Tony W. Wood, Lyrics

.....Digging for Pearls.....

1. What are some ideas to make Bible study clearer and more meaningful?
2. Read Psalm 119 and discuss the passages that describe the Word of God and its power.
3. If we are happy when we delight in the Bible, read the Bible, and meditate on its powerful words, what will be the result in our lives? (Refer to the following page.)



② Write Psalm 1:1–3 below to find obvious results.

② How does this passage define real happiness?

② Those who walk in the law of God, obey His commandments, seek Him completely, delight in His law, and meditate on it constantly . . . How is this the true definition of a Pearl Seeker?

4. Choose four words that describe God at work in the following verse:
“Is not My word like fire?” declares the Lord, “and like a hammer which shatters a rock?” (Jeremiah 23:29).

Weak	Dynamite	Outdated	Power
Ineffective	Fire	Hammer	Volatile

