

# How God Speaks to Us through the Bible

***Every word of God is flawless; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Proverbs 30:5***

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**by Marilyn Adamson**

I am amazed at the guidance God gives us. In the Bible, God has spoken to us about: sexual purity, not worrying, how to relate to other people, how to approach money, reasons to pray, the importance of faith, how to be free from addictions and sin that enslaves us, and on and on. I am so grateful for all He has told us. By learning from God's wisdom and insight, we can live free from many problems that others experience simply because they don't know His Word. It is through the Bible that we learn who God is, what He values, how to trust Him.



I have found a wonderful way to listen to God through the Bible, which I would like to share with you.

I get out my Bible and a sheet of lined paper (or a blank lined journal). At the top of my page I will write down two or three sentences describing what is on my mind. I might have a question about God, or about how He views something, or a question about the Christian life. Or maybe there is a situation in my life that is bothering me and I could really use God's insight on it. On my paper, I will write a couple of sentences to summarize the current situation or what led to my question.

Then I ask God a question about it, and I write that down question on my paper also.

So what I have written might look like this:

*"God, I feel overwhelmed with all the work I have to do. I have this, this and this to do; and I'm not sure I can get it all done. I'm feeling angry about it also. Is there anything from your perspective that you would like me to know right now?"*

And then I open the very back of the Bible where usually there is a listing of words in an index, in what is often called a "concordance." Does your Bible have one? This index will list words like: "work," "anger," "worry," "God's power," etc. Under each word you will see a list of Scripture verses that contain that word. The word "angry" for example might show a listing of: Mark 3:5; Mark 11:14-16; Romans 2:8; Matthew 23; etc.

[Side note: Sometimes, instead of looking in the back of my Bible, I might search online for words/topics at [Biblegateway](http://Biblegateway.com). I just type the word "angry" (for example) in the "Word Search" box and it will give me a list of verses. If I want to, I can restrict my search to New Testament, Gospels, etc.]

Whether I have searched for the verses online or in the back of my Bible, here is what I do next. I look up the verses in the Bible and read each. If a verse seems to relate to my question, I write it down, word for word, on my paper. (Yes, I do this by hand because it helps me to notice what the verse is saying.) I'm not writing any comments about the verse. I'm just writing the verse out. And I'll continue copying verses, maybe 5 verses, maybe 20 verses. After a while I may see a pattern, an overall message through those verses (I don't mean mystically, I mean a knowledgeable summary of what those verses are saying). I had asked God to teach me, and now I'm observing what He is saying about this topic.

As an example, if I were angry at someone and had looked up a lot of verses on anger or forgiveness or peace, I would likely find an overall, consistent message from God. That message might be that since Jesus paid for my sin and He doesn't hold it against me, I too need to forgive this person, just like He's forgiven me.

Sometimes God will cause one verse to really hit, where He really speaks to me in that verse. When I come across verses that are particularly interesting I will often "cross-reference" those. What I mean by that is, I will find other verses that might talk about the same idea. In many study Bibles you'll find a listing of verses down the middle of the page, or at the bottom of the page. These verses are like footnotes or references related to the verses on that page. So when one verse really stands out to me, I'll look up those other related verses and write those out also.

I might only spend 10-15 minutes on this, or sometimes I've found the time so enriching, I might spend an hour and a half on it!

Now this part is important. I am asking God to teach me. I am asking Him to help me understand His perspective on something, because I want to follow Him. However, as I do this, I am NOT looking for verses that I will put into practice on my own for God. This is not a job description that I'm going to take and implement FOR God. I am mostly focusing on letting God speak to me in whatever way He wants, to fulfill whatever purposes He has. I am asking Him to set His agenda, not my own. When I know He wants me to follow something specific in His Word, then I ask Him to work in my life and give me the strength and desire to do His will. When I read a command such as, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love," I think, "Good idea. God, I ask you to work in my life to make me humble, gentle and patient with others. You know it's not my nature to be that way with all people. Teach me how." In other words, I continue to trust Him, continue to rely on Him, asking God to do in my life what He has just spoken to me about.

If you don't have a study Bible with a "concordance" in the back and "cross references" on each page, you might find one very valuable, so you can approach God's Word in this way. Any Christian bookstore could help you pick one out that isn't too expensive, or you could find one at [Bibles.com](http://Bibles.com).

This is a very simple way to ask God to teach you through His Word. In summary, it is going to God with an open heart, asking Him to speak to you about a particular topic or question. You are sharing your honest thoughts and feelings with God. And then you are asking God to speak to you from His perspective. Sometimes I'll ask, "God, what is it you would like me to know about you, as it relates to this situation? How would you like me to trust you? What would you like to say to me?" And then you give God time, as you write out His Word, as you look for His overall message to you. When He teaches you, then thank Him and ask Him to build that in your life.