

# CHRISTIAN HEADS, HEARTS, AND HANDS

ARTICLES TO FORM US AS FOLLOWERS OF “THE WAY”

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## Yawning at Majesty: How to Fight Boredom with the Bible

by Jon Bloom

Let’s say you were given this assignment: construct a book that will remain relevant for millennia and radically influence the greatest civilizations in the history of the world. How would you do it? Would you think that compiling the book’s contents over 1,500 years, employing at least 40 different authors, incorporating numerous and very different genres, and originally composing it in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) is a good strategy? I doubt it. It’s good God doesn’t consult us on things like this.

The Bible is the most amazing book in the world. And when we’re tempted to feel bored with it, we may need to step back and remember how marvelous and unique and powerful this piece of literature is. The Bible is simply unequalled in its influence, audacious in its claims, and unrivaled in its power to transform hardened sinners into humble saints.

### *Unequaled*

Just think about what God was aiming to accomplish in the Bible. He purposed to convey the truth of redemption (the gospel) in ways that would be understood and believed by people in thousands of diverse cultures, speaking thousands of different languages, over thousands of years. Have you ever thought how incredible it is that the message of the Bible can be believed, and the gospel can be lived out, in the most primitive and most sophisticated cultures on earth – in every age?

Not only that, but God determined to make the most important parts of the Bible comprehensible to small children and uneducated adults, and yet be able to withstand the most rigorous pounding of academic literary criticism. The Bible has taken, and continues to take, more critical cannon fire than any other book in history, and the ship just won’t sink. The Bible would not likely be chosen by the literati who give out the Nobel Prize for literature, though it certainly contains remarkable works of art. Nevertheless, it has and continues to shape the course of world history like no other book ever has. As a historical phenomenon, it is simply unequalled.

### *Audacious*

And the Bible is unashamedly audacious in its claims. That’s why it either inspires devotion or hatred in its readers. Because as J.C. Ryle says,

If the Bible is not the word of God and inspired, the whole of Christendom for 1,800 [now 2,000] years has been under an immense delusion; half the human race has been cheated and deceived, and churches are monuments of folly. If the Bible is the word of God and inspired, all who refuse to believe it are in fearful danger; they are living on the brink of eternal misery. (*Old Paths*, 11)

The Bible claims it is “breathed out by God” (2 Timothy 3:16), “perfect” (Psalm 19:7), and “living and active,” able to discern “the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). And at the climax of the written word is the recorded life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, who the written word calls the Word incarnate (John 1:1). And the incarnate Word claimed audaciously that he was the same word that issued from Moses’s burning bush (Exodus 3:14; John 8:58), and declared unequivocally that he was “the way, and the truth, and the life” and that no one comes to God except through him (John 14:6).

Take the written word at its word, and take Jesus at his word, and a reader must either bow to Jesus as Creator of all and Savior of those who repent, or reject him as the most dangerous megalomaniac of all time. Either Bible-believers are deluded fools, or Bible-unbelievers are in terrible peril. There is no real middle ground. The only people who are lukewarm about the Bible are those who don't take its claims seriously.

### *Unrivaled*

But in the lives of those who do take it seriously, who embrace its claims and its Savior, we see the greatest evidence of the power of this book. As John Piper writes,

The peculiar glory of God in Scripture is reflected in his people: they are transformed from self-centered, self-exalting people to God-centered, Christ-exalting servants, who live for the good of others. In this, they are like Christ, the perfect embodiment of the peculiar glory of love through lowliness. This change extends the self-authenticating evidence of the glory of God through the word into the character and the good works of God's people. Thus the people who are most transformed *by* the word become evidences of the reality of the God *of* the word. (*A Peculiar Glory*, 260).

The Bible is often accused of inciting all manner of violent historical horrors. It is an ignorant, foolish, and at times willfully misleading interpretation of the violence recorded in Scripture and the violence recorded in extrabiblical history. Since the dawn of time, human beings have been manipulating every form and level of power and every religion to slake their evil, self-glorifying desires for money, sex, and more power. The real story is not that the Bible has been abused in such ways — in fact, the Bible teaches us not to be at all surprised when this happens.

The real story of the Bible is its unrivaled power to transform murderous, covetous, sexually immoral, pathologically selfish people into humble, self-sacrificing, servant-hearted lovers of God and other people. There is a reason Christians, more than any other group of people throughout history, have been on the forefront of aiding the poor, tending the sick, educating the masses, and standing against injustice: the Bible's teaching.

You really want to change the world? History would teach you to take the Bible seriously and obey what Jesus says in Matthew 22:37-39. Yes, there are glaring, tragic, shameful historical failures. But examine closely the larger (usually greed-driven) cultural failures (like the African slave trade and the repeated betrayals of the Native American peoples), and who are most likely to be the few, courageous people advocating for the rights and needs of the oppressed at the times when it's most costly and dangerous to do so? The fashionably and liberally religious? The atheists? No, serious Bible-believing, Bible-obeying Christians — because of the Bible's unparalleled power to move believers toward others' real, desperate need, even at the risk of their own lives.

### *Anything but Boring*

The Bible is the world's most amazing book. You can love it and believe it, or you can hate it and despise it. But you cannot deny its unequaled global influence, its audacious claims, and its unrivaled power to beautifully transform lives. The Bible has achieved what no other book has been able to do. And you can hold one in your own hands!

Are we bored with it? Oh, boredom! That plague of our finite, fallen, self-oriented flesh that so easily loses appreciation for the most precious treasures simply when they become familiar! Forgive us, Father, and hasten the day when we lose our amazing capacity for boredom and gain an amazing capacity for sustained amazement! If the Bible has grown boring to you, *fight it!* Remember what makes it marvelous and marvel again. Look at it again, and *take time* to look. If it bores you, *that's* when you really need to keep looking. Look until the peculiar glory begins to shine again, until you don't want to stop looking. For those who see this glory just never get to the bottom of it.