

June 15, 2025

# GOD'S GLORY: PSALM 19:1-1

## Facilitator 2

### Introductory Activity 1 (ETB LG, 35)

**“Direct:** As adults arrive provide name tags. Direct them to introduce themselves to each other as if they have never met and want to get acquainted. Encourage each person to share something the other person might not know about them.

**Share:** In 1951 Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein composed a song for The King and I called “Getting to Know You.” The song begins with the words, “Getting to know you, getting to know all about you.” It ends with the words, “Because of all the bright and beautiful things I’m learning about you day by day.”

**Discuss:** Lead a brief discussion about how people get to know others. Talk about some of the interesting facts they learned as they shared with one another earlier.

**Highlight:** Direct a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 25 of the PSG aloud.

**Ask:** Of all the people you know, who do you know best? How did you get to know that person? (PSG, p. 25)

**Transition:** In today’s session we’ll look at how Psalm 19 offers a hymn of praise to God for His creation and His Word. Both the beauty of creation and the instruction of His Word can draw us into a closer relationship with Him. “

### Introductory Activity 2

**Ask:** Ask members to tell the group their first word or the first word of their child.

**Explain:** In our world, the ability to speak is important. Words allow us to express our ideas, emotions, fears, and inspirations. Words have great power. Consider the words “I love you” or “I hate you.” There is a reason we forbid young children from using the word hate. It is powerful.

**Transition:** Today, we are going to explore Psalm 19. We are going to learn that our God is a God who speaks. He speaks to us through two books: the book of creation and the book of Scripture. We are also going to learn that one set of “words” is more powerful than the other, but both were given to help us form a relationship with the Creator God, who is also God of the Covenant.

## 1. CREATION (PSALM 19:1-6)

**Read or have someone read** Psalm 19:1-6

**Discuss:** What are some ways people connect to or interact with creation?

#### Notes:

This Lesson was created using:

- *Explore the Bible Leader Guide* (ETB LG)
- *Explore the Bible Personal Study Guide* (ETB PSG)
- *Explore the Bible Commentary* (ETBC)
- *Preaching the Word: Psalms Vol 1* (Preaching Vol 1)
- *Preaching the Word: Psalms Vol 2* (Preaching Vol 2)
- *Exalting Jesus in Psalms 1-50* (Exalting 1-50)
- *Exalting Jesus in Psalms 101-150* (Exalting 101-150)
- *Exalting Jesus in Psalms 119* (Exalting 119)
- *Two Horizons OT Commentary: Psalms* (Two Horizons)

#### TEACHERS NOTE:

Where applicable, I am going to try and use the word “creation” instead of “nature” throughout this lesson. This is a low-key way of reminding group members that we are created and this world was created by the Lord.

**Explain:** Some people connect to creation by being in creation. They do this by walking in the woods, sitting in a fishing boat, or hunkering down in a deer stand. Others like to hike trails, some of which are short ones found in state or national parks. Others are long trails like the Appalachian Trail or the Pacific Crest Trail. Still others interact with creation through scientific study or environmental awareness. Finally, some look to the world and the universe for divine guidance. This guidance is supposedly found in the wisdom of the trees or the foreknowledge of the stars. There are many ways to interact with creation, but the psalmist points us to one important way. We can look to creation for knowledge. Let's see how we can do that.

**Identify:** Ask the group to look at the Psalm in their Bible (not the PSG). Ask them if they see anything interesting about the Psalm. (If you need to give them a hint, tell them it comes before verse 1.)

### Facilitator 1

**Explain:** This is the first Psalm in our study that has a superscription. Those are the few words that come before the first verse. We can deduce that these words were not written by the initial writer. Instead, they were added when all the psalms were collected into one book. In this case, we see that the psalm was meant to be sung. It was "for the choirmaster." Moreover, the word from which we get the word "psalm" means "'melody,' in particular a melody with instrumental music." (ETBC, 29) Next, we see that the psalm was written by King David. Scholars tell us that David wrote 73 of the psalms in the book. Understanding David as the author of this psalm can help us begin to understand these first few verses.

**Ask:** Ask the group if anyone has ever been to a "Dark Sky Park."

**Explain:** A Dark Sky Park is a national or state park that has attained that designation because they have installed electrical lighting that does not obscure the night sky. When we look up at the night sky from a city and even extended regions away from cities, the stars are obscured by lighting from the ground. Imagine young David out on a hill with his sheep in the ancient world before modern-day lighting. Our view of the sky includes the moon and some stars. He had a real, unfiltered view of the majesty of the Milky Way.

**Ask:** What does David call the sky in verse 1? ("the heavens" and "the expanse")

**Explain:** "The heavens" are the realm of the sun, moon, and stars. "The expanse" is the space "where the clouds float and the birds fly." (Exalting, 1-50, 137)

**Ask:** What does he say these two do? ("The heavens declare...and the expanse proclaims")

**Explain:** In other words, as verse two tells us, they speak! "The heavens and the expanses say something specific. They communicate knowledge. It is not

Some scholars will note the words "of David" could mean that I was written by David or intended for David. Traditionally readers have assumed that the psalm was written by David.

just generic knowledge, but knowledge of who God really is, a Creator of the universe.” (ETBC, 30) If we go back to verse 1 we see what they communicate. They tell us of the “glory of God “and “the works of his hands.”

## Facilitator 2

**Discuss:** What can we learn about the glory of God or the works of God from creation?

**Explain:** Psalm 19 presents us with one form of what is called “general revelation.” Millard Erickson defines general revelation as “God’s communication of himself to all persons at all times in and in all places.”<sup>1</sup> He does this through creation, history, and humans. In Psalm 19, David is focused on the revelation of God in creation. God’s glory is revealed in the glorious nature of His creations. Jeff Anderson makes that point that “It is hard to imagine that all beautiful expressions of our wonderful world are simply there to ensure the vitality of each species.” (ETBC, 28) The glory of the natural world is simply a reflection of the glory of God. Contrary to those who ascribe divinity to the stars, moon, sun, or creation in general, the creation does not “contain” God’s glory. Instead, they proclaim it. “The glory of God is defined as the ‘weighty importance and shining majesty that accompany God’s presence ’” (ETBC, 30) The awe we feel when gazing upon a icy blue lake in the valley of the North Cascade Mountains or the lichen-filled rain forest of the Olympic peninsula is miniscule in comparison to the awe we should feel toward the great Creator.

## Facilitator 1

**Ask:** What does verse 3-6 tell us about the form and extent of the creation message?

**Explain:** First, we see in verse 3 that creation speaks without words. Second, we see that creation speaks to every human being regardless of location. These are two important aspects of creation’s revelation. But lets take a moment to consider the universality of the message. In verses 4-6, David narrows the scope of his vision from the broad idea of creation to a specific body in creation: the sun. The words in the second half of verse 4 paint a picture of the rising sun. David says the night is like a tent for the sun. At sundown, the heavenly body goes into the tent, and in the morning, it emerges. He goes on in verses 5-6 to paint a picture of how everyone is aware of the sun. Just as the bridegroom and the athlete draw the attention of those in the crowd, the sun draws the attention of all of humanity, and all of humanity hears its declaration of God’s glory. The extent of the creation proclamation is universal. That brings us to the limitation of the proclamation.

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<sup>1</sup> Millard Erickson, *Introduction to Christian Doctrine*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 42)  
J. Cardinell, 2025

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David tells us that nature proclaims God's glory and works without words. Communication without words is incomplete. You might be able to read your spouse's body language and know they are ready to leave a situation, but you will not know the full extent of their feelings until you get in car and they use words to explain what they were feeling. Similarly, creation's ability to communicate about the Lord is limited. However, what it communicates is enough to condemn mankind. Paul speaks of this in Romans 1:20.

**Have someone ready** Romans 1:20

### Facilitator 2

**Summarize Transition:** The reality is that creation can reveal the glorious Creator. It is designed to set us on a path to discover Him. Moreover, the general revelation of history and mankind reveals that there is something lacking in man. General revelation reveals Creator God and sinful man. It, however, does not offer a solution to the problem of sinful man's broken relationship with that God. Imagine a river. A river has two banks. If you remove one back, you end up with a swamp. (cf. ETBC, 28) Anyone treading through the swamp will be in a quagmire. That is the man with only creation as revelation. Similarly, you need two banks to guide mankind. You need two books to illuminate mankind. One book is the book of creation, the other is the book of Scripture. Let's look now at how the book of Scripture can move mankind forward in its relationship with the Lord.

## 2. GOD'S WORD (PSALM 19:7-11)

**Read (or have someone read)** Psalm 19:7-11

**Explain:** In these verses, David makes two distinct shifts. First, he moves from the general revelation of creation to the specific revelation of scripture. Second, he moves from talking about God to the LORD. We should discuss that quickly. In verses 1-6, the author uses the general word *EI* for God. In verses 7-11, he uses God's covenant name, Yahweh. This is denoted in our Bibles by the word Lord written in upper case: LORD. "By shifting to the name Yahweh, David is saying that while the heavens teach us there is a glorious Creator, the Scriptures introduce us to God as Redeemer." (Preaching, 207)

**Identify:** Let's begin by identifying the words David uses to describe God's Word. (Ask the group to call them out. You might write them on the board.)

### Facilitator 1

**Explain:** David uses seven words to describe the Word of God: perfect, trustworthy, right, pure, radiant, reliable, and desirable. The qualities of the Scripture led to what Jeff Anderson calls four glorious outcomes from knowing God's Word: renewal, wisdom, straight talk, and enlightenment

#### Notes:

Romans 1:20  
For his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what he has made. As a result, people are without excuse

"Alec Motyer writes that God's instruction is 'perfectly complete, completely perfect.'" (Exalting, 1-50, 140)

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(cf. ETBC, 33-34)—(You might write these on the board because you are going to ask a question about them latter and by then group members might have forgotten the main points.)

**The Word of God Brings Renewal:** God's Word is perfect, meaning that God's word is complete. David says this perfection leads to renewal. The word used for renewal is the same word used for repentance. God's Word helps renew our souls by addressing our sin problem. Moreover, it helps renew our lives by transforming our minds. Romans 12:2 speaks of such renewal.

Have someone read Romans 12:2 (see Notes Box)

**God's Word Brings Wisdom:** David says God's Word is trustworthy or sure (ESV). The law (*torah*) is not just a law or the laws of man. They are the "Lord's *torah*" (cf. ETBC, 33). The sure word of God brings wisdom about situations with which a person has no experience. "Something that is trustworthy has been verified or confirmed. It has been established to be true, and a person can have confidence in it." (ETBC, 34) If we think back to last week's lesson in which we discussed the means by which a young man stays morally pure, we might be able to understand this passage. Just as a young man needs guidance in morality, the young man needs guidance in the ways of life. The book of Proverbs is a fine example of this. In chapter 1, verse 4, Solomon writes concerning the purpose of the book.

Have someone read Proverbs 1:4 (See Notes Box)

**God's Word Provides Straight-Talk:** David says the Word is right. The idea here is that it is smooth or straight. It is morally right. It is also unambiguous. The followers of ancient pagan religions always had to discern what was right and wrong for their false Gods. Today, people try to determine what is right and wrong based on moral relativism or the guidance of horoscopes. The Word of God is straight to the point.

**The Word of God Brings Enlightenment:** David says the Word is radiant. "The Hebrew word for radiant can mean pure or bright." Just as the sun mentioned in verses 4-5 brings light to the world. The Word of God brings enlightenment to His people. "C. S. Lewis noted how easily the psalmist passes from the sun to the law, which 'hardly seems to him something else because it is so like the all-piercing, all-detecting sunshine.'" (Two Horizons, 68)

### Facilitator 2

**Discuss:** How have you experienced or been encouraged by the Word that brings renewal, wisdom, straight talk, and enlightenment? (In other words, how has the word renewed you/brought you wisdom/provided clear guidance/enlightened you?)

**Explain:** In verse 9, David helps us see one result of these glorious outcomes. The Book of Scripture will produce a righteous fear of God. The

#### Notes:

Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Proverbs 1:4

for teaching shrewdness to the inexperienced, knowledge and discretion to a young man—

"Fear of God that the Bible produces in us." (Exalting, 1-50, 141)

"The fear of the Lord is not dread or terror, but a wide-eyed awareness that God always watches and evaluates our every thought, action, or motive." (ETBC, 35)

"Our instinct is to domesticate God and make him manageable. But the Bible teaches us that God is a genuinely frightening God. (Preaching, 209)

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righteous fear and awe of the Lord are the result of a commitment to God's Word. The revelation presented in creation might produce awe of the glorious Creator God, but the revelation of God in Scripture produces a righteous fear of the holy and righteous Savior. A fear of this kind is a fear resulting from salvation. When we really understand who we are and who the Lord is, we will find salvation. That salvation will cause us to desire to follow the Lord correctly and pursue Christlikeness. This kind of fear endures forever because the one who fears in this way will endure forever with the Lord.

**Reread** verses 10-11

### Facilitator 1

**Explain:** David concludes this portion of the psalm with some observational praise of God's Word. First, he says that it is more desirable than gold. The wealth of this world cannot compare to the worth of God's Word. The worth of God's Word is inherently valuable. However, the Word of God becomes more personally valuable over time. In the past 20 years, the price of gold has increased by over 600%. Instability, unpredictability, and unpleasant situations in the world cause the price of gold to increase over time. A personal realization that life can be unstable, unpredictable, and unpleasant causes a person to value the Word of God more and more.

David also says the Word is sweet. Just as an ice cream cone on a hot day is sweet. The Word of God is satisfying during the trials and troubles of life. The Word is valuable, and the Word is satisfying. David also says the Word provides a warning. "The Hebrew term for warned means to enlighten with caution." (ETBC, 36) The Word does not just enlighten; it enlightens with a yellow or red light. The Word says, Don't go there. Don't make that decision. "Like a perfect spiritual watchdog, it barks furiously at the sight of evil and wickedness." (Exalting, 1-50, 142)

**Summarize and Transition:** The Lord speaks through creation to reveal his glory and man's need. The Lord speaks through Scripture to reveal his will for man. A faithful reading of God's Word will produce many glorious outcomes and provide mighty protection.

### Facilitator 2

#### CONCLUDE (ADAPTED FROM PAGE 32 OF ETB LG)

In his hymn "The Heavens Declare Thy Glory, Lord," Isaac Watts penned

The heavens declare Thy glory, Lord,  
In every star Thy wisdom shines;  
But when our eyes behold Thy word  
We read Thy name in fairer lines.

In Psalm 19, David reveals the same. We should attempt to live a life bound by two banks and guided by two books—creation and Scripture

**Reflect (Adapted from page 40 of ETB LG):** Direct each person to rate themselves on the following statements with one being seldom and five being often:

- I praise God for His beautiful creation.
- I spend time reading and studying God's Word on a regular basis.
- I apply what I learn from God's Word in my life.
- I regularly memorize God's Word.

Encourage group members to work on those areas in which they ranked themselves lowest.