

ISSUE 2 2026

INSIGHTS

GUIDED BY
Grace



FROM THE BIBLE-TEACHING MINISTRY OF PASTOR CHARLES R. SWINDOLL

“ IF WE DO WHAT’S RIGHT,
HELP OTHERS, AND SEEK GOD
WITH PURITY AND SINCERITY,
NO ONE MAY NOTICE . . . BUT GOD WILL.”

- *The Real You: Becoming Authentic To The Core, Page 6*



PASTOR'S LETTER WHAT'S INSIDE

One of the qualities I admire most about my friend and mentor Chuck is his unwavering commitment to live an authentic life. That's why we chose Authenticity as the theme for our newsletter. In a world that often prefers illusion over reality, and even rewards performative behaviour, it's crucial to be authentic. When our attitudes, words, and behaviour consistently reflect Christ – both at home with our loved ones and at work – it is a clear indication that the Holy Spirit is empowering our lives.

In Chuck's article, "The Real You," he discusses the path to authentic living. With a few reminders from Jesus' words about hypocrisy in Matthew, he warns of the dangers of performance and people-pleasing... essential concepts for all of us today.

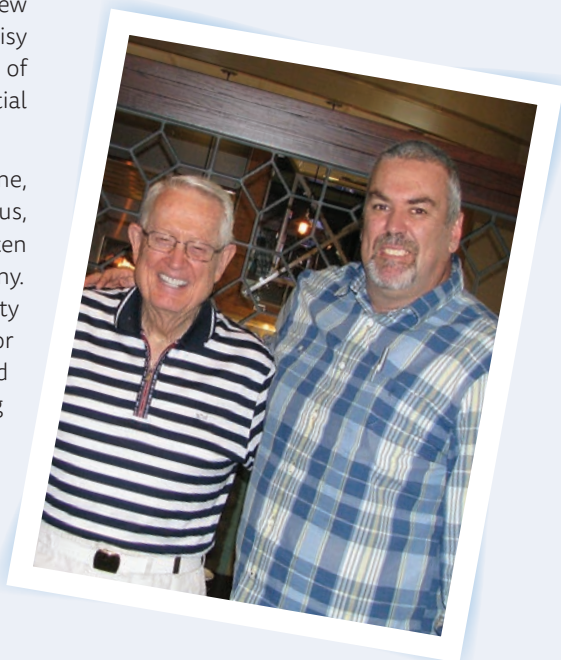
Although we desire to be truthful, genuine, and to thrive in the life God promises us, the journey toward authenticity is often challenging and seldom achieved by many. As Christians, we have a unique opportunity to model purity and genuine humility for our children, within our marriages, and throughout all our relationships, enabling others to see themselves as God sees them. Dave Carl, creator of Paws & Tales, points out three lies the world tells us to believe regarding who we are. If we're not careful, we begin to believe things about ourselves that just aren't true!

Chuck shares his own very personal journey toward living an authentic life in his upcoming memoir, *Awakened by Grace*, which will be released later in 2026. In this issue, you'll enjoy a glimpse into how his autobiography came about.

At Insight for Living, we are dedicated to communicating the truths of Scripture and the person of Jesus Christ in a clear, accurate, and practical manner. Our goal is to help everyone understand God's plan for their lives and their vital role as authentic Christians in a world that desperately needs it.

We are delighted to accompany you on your journey toward living an authentic life, embracing the freedom that God grants each one of us. We are grateful for you and available to help however we can.

NATHAN POTTS
REGIONAL PASTOR - INSIGHT FOR LIVING
AUSTRALIA



INSIGHTS

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Dear Friend,

As the seasons change, I'm reflecting on God's power and sufficiency. It's important to remember that the Almighty expends no energy that needs replenishing.

I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you.
— Job 42:2

Isn't that a comforting thought? All power resides in God's infinite being — not a drop diminished, not a moment of weariness. He created all things from nothing, enables each breath, and orchestrates every detail without ever needing assistance.

As we continue to pour into the lives of believers and seekers through Insight for Living, this profound truth reminds us that we are also called to rely on His sustaining strength. Our mission is fuelled by the very energy of our Creator, and we depend on Him fully to guide our efforts in sharing the promises in His Word.

This September, we invite you to join us in this divine endeavour. Your partnership is vital as we serve people searching for truth and in need of encouragement. Every gift, small or large, helps us proclaim the message of hope found only in Christ.

Your generosity allows Insight for Living Australia to continue this vital work. Together, God is using our resources to extend His eternal kingdom.

With gratitude and hope,

PASTOR CHARLES R. SWINDOLL

THE REAL YOU

BECOMING AUTHENTIC TO THE CORE

BY PASTOR CHARLES R. SWINDOLL

THE LORD HAS TOLD YOU WHAT IS GOOD, AND THIS IS WHAT HE
REQUIRES OF YOU: TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT, TO LOVE MERCY,
AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD.

– MICAH 6:8

Most can snuff out a religious phoney coming a mile away. Few odours smell worse! But the sweet fragrance of authenticity... there's nothing like it.

After I entered the Marine Corps, they sent me 8,000 miles from home to the island of Okinawa. When I got the orders, I thought God made a mistake. In hindsight, I realise He was shaping me for a lifetime of pure devotion to Him.

I met a man there named Bob Newkirk who represented the Navigators. He became my mentor.

One rainy evening, I travelled to his lodging where Norma, his wife, met me at the door. She said he'd gone down to his office for a while. I hopped on a local jitney, rode over, and walked through a few mud puddles until I came to his bamboo hut. Small cracks between the stalks let me to peek inside. A candle was lit and I could see Bob. More importantly, I could hear him. He was singing:

*Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.*

I STOOD STILL AND QUIET.
RAIN DRIPPED OFF MY NOSE.

THEN I HEARD:
*PRONE TO WANDER, LORD, I FEEL IT,
PRONE TO LEAVE THE GOD I LOVE.*

In that sacred moment, I saw Bob weeping as he connected with his Saviour. I had the privilege of witnessing his private time of worship, although he never knew I was outside his office. Seeing his genuine devotion to God transformed how I viewed him. There was depth I had missed. I saw a heart he had never displayed or showed off.

I'm confident his praise became a sweet aroma to God. That evening Bob showed me that he was no phoney. He was the kind of man I wanted to be. The same in private as he was in public. Authentic to the core – having nothing to hide before God and no reason to perform before others. It changed me forever.

What I saw in Bob is the very thing religious performance can't produce. Fake spirituality. Religious phoniness. Pharisaic showmanship. It just doesn't work. Why? It lacks authenticity. It'll leave you distant from God. You'll have no inner sense of peace.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

Phoniness puts people off. It stinks! Jesus smelled it in the hypocrisy of the religious show-offs of His day, and that's why He warned His followers to watch out.

WATCH OUT!

"Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. When you give to someone in need, don't do as the hypocrites do – blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! ...

When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. ...

And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and dishevelled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get." (Matthew 6:1-2, 5, 16)

Jesus commanded, "Watch out!" because the performance impulse is in every one of us. It's itching to express itself. There's force in Matthew's Greek wording. Jesus was saying, "Take pains," "Take heed," "Pay attention." He was telling us, "Mind your motive. Mind your heart." Putting on a show of piety is a temptation Christians must guard against with vigilance.

Doing good, donating, praying, and fasting are core areas in the Christian life where hypocrisy leaches in and spoils. Don't let it.

AUTHENTIC LIVING

Three times, Jesus refers to a reward. If we perform to be seen, what's the reward? A thumbs up, a round of applause, and a pat on the back. That's all we get. However, if we do

what's right, help others, and seek God with purity and sincerity, no one may notice... but God will. His reward will be deep, meaningful, and eternal.

As you travel this path toward authentic living, I want to offer a few warnings based on Jesus' words above.

First, when your devotion becomes a performance, you lapse into hypocrisy. If you notice that wayward motive arising in you, confess it to God. Let Him take it. Leave it behind. It'll do you no good.

Second, when your giving lacks secrecy, you miss the reward of deep satisfaction. There's an enormous sense of pleasure that God gives when you participate in the needs of others and know that God has used you as a blessing.

Third, when you're praying to impress others, you fail to tap into God's power. Genuine power is yours through prayer. But you forsake it when you mouth empty words directed toward human ears rather than heaven's throne.

The rewards of authenticity are well worth it! You know what, though? When you stay at it long enough, your life will do more than merely impress. It will inspire – just as Bob's life inspired me.

Another example also comes to mind. Frank Loesch. His authenticity was deep. Nothing flashy or loud. Christian author and beloved pastor Bruce Larson shared this account of him:

When I was a small boy, I attended church every Sunday at a big Gothic Presbyterian bastion in Chicago. The preaching was powerful and the music was great. But for me, the most awesome moment in the morning service was the offertory, when twelve solemn, frock-coated ushers marched in lock-step

down the main aisle to receive the brass plates for collecting the offering. These men, so serious about their business of serving the Lord in this magnificent house of worship, were the business and professional leaders of Chicago.

One of the twelve ushers was a man named Frank Loesch.

He was not a very imposing-looking man, but in Chicago he was a living legend, for he was the man who had stood up to Al Capone. In the prohibition years, Capone's rule was absolute. The local and state police, even the Federal Bureau of Investigation, were afraid to oppose him. But single-handedly, Frank Loesch, as a Christian layman and without any government support, organized the Chicago Crime Commission, a group of citizens who were determined to take Mr. Capone to court and put him away. During the months that the Crime Commission met, Frank Loesch's life was in constant danger. There were threats on the lives of his family and friends. But he never wavered. Ultimately he won the case against Capone and was the instrument for removing this blight from the city of Chicago. Frank Loesch had risked his life to live out his faith.

Each Sunday at this point of the service, my father, a Chicago businessman himself, never failed to poke me and silently point to Frank Loesch with pride. Sometimes I'd catch a tear in my father's eye. For my dad and for all of us this was and is what authentic living is all about.¹

Bruce Larson never forgot Frank Loesch, just as I never forgot Bob Newkirk. The sweet aroma of authenticity lingers for a lifetime.

*Father, we want to be real.
Where we have been phony,
forgive us. If there is anywhere
in our lives where we are doing
things to be seen, break that habit
in us, starting now. By Your grace,
make us real – authentic to the core
– in spite of what anyone else may
say or do or think about us.
In the name of the most authentic
One who ever lived, our Lord Jesus,
we pray. Amen.*

¹ Bruce Larson, *There's a Lot More to Health Than Not Being Sick* (Waco, TX: Word Books: 1984), 74.

This article was adapted by Insight for Living staff from the original transcript of Charles R. Swindoll's sermons, "Beware! Religious Performance Now Showing" Copyright © 2015, and "Making Your Testimony Slam-Dunk Convincing", Copyright © 2006 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide.

A NEW BOOK BY PASTOR CHUCK SWINDOLL

BY BILL BUTTERWORTH

You are in for a wonderful treat this Spring. Why?

Chuck's forthcoming memoir titled, *Awakened by Grace: The Life Story of Chuck Swindoll*, will be released. I've already read it and I love it. How did I get the opportunity to see it in advance of others? Read on.

Years ago, Insight for Living hosted one of its amazing Holy Land tours. Chuck and Cynthia invited my wife Kathi and I to come along so I could serve as the emcee of the event. Having served in that role for several IFL tours, I considered the invitation for 2.4 seconds and immediately agreed. I knew it was going to be a great trip filled with special memories.

I wasn't disappointed. Seeing the land of Israel and walking in Jesus' footsteps is an experience unlike any other. Along with the mind-boggling sightseeing and the camaraderie of friends, new and old, a seed was planted on that trip that many would discount, but I knew the person behind the promise. I knew he was a man of his word.

It was toward the tour's end. Guests and much of the staff were housed in the lovely Dan Jerusalem Hotel.

It turned out that the Swindolls and the Butterworths were both staying on the same hotel floor, which is how Chuck and I ended

up by the bank of elevators, waiting to go down to the lobby. We engaged in our usual banter, which always included something I might say that would make him laugh. Like so many of you, I love to hear Chuck's laugh. It's music to my soul.

But I had another topic I wanted to raise, and this one was an important one for me.

COME AND LISTEN,
ALL YOU WHO FEAR GOD,
AND I WILL TELL YOU
WHAT HE DID FOR ME.
Psalm 66:16

Waiting for the elevator seemed to provide the right opportunity, so I took a big breath and spoke. "Chuck, I think you ought to consider writing your memoir."

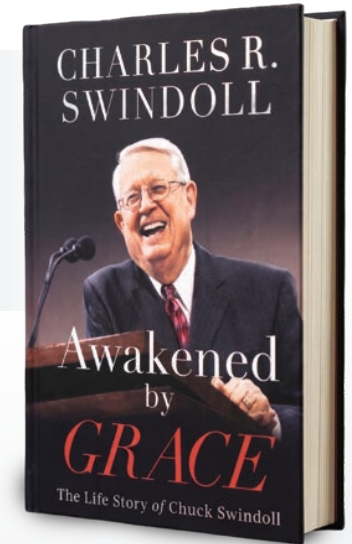
He looked at me and smiled, "People don't want to read about my life."

"Oh, yes they do," I interrupted.

"Well, I don't know about that..." I took another deep breath. "Okay. If you ever decide to do it, I'd be honoured to help you with it in any way that I could." After a pause he said, "If I ever decide to write it, I will certainly have you help me with it." I've known Chuck for more than fifty years, and among the myriad character qualities he possesses, he is a man of integrity and authenticity. Here are a couple of ways he demonstrated those traits to me.

First, *he's a man of his word*. Almost two years ago he began to work on his memoir. As he promised, he invited me to assist him by using my skills in ghost writing and collaborating.

In that Jerusalem hotel years before, neither one of us realized how this working relationship would develop. As time went on, Chuck's eyesight began to fade, so by the time we sat down to create a first draft, Chuck would verbally walk me through



stories of his life as I furiously took notes. I'd visit him in his home for hours, and I so enjoyed watching him lean back in his office chair, feet atop his desk, eyes closed, hands folded as he revisited the many and varied venues of his life.

Second, I saw *his authenticity in the actual creation of the memoir*. There were no attempts on his part to cover up portions of his life. He could have woven a good story just using the happy parts. Instead, the book includes a variety of struggles he faced. A challenging childhood, the unsettled feeling in his first job, questioning God's will when he was sent to Okinawa as a young Marine, several struggles in his pastorates, and the demands of growing older are all handled with honesty, grace, and dignity.

Awakened by Grace: The Life Story of Chuck Swindoll is a truthful and loving look at a man of authenticity. Be on the lookout. We'll let you know when it's released this Spring. You're going to love it!



Bill Butterworth with Pastor Chuck Swindoll

EXCLUSIVE OFFER

PASTOR CHUCK'S MEMOIR
— AVAILABLE EARLY FROM
INSIGHT FOR LIVING

Sign up to be notified when
*Awakened by Grace: The Life
Story of Chuck Swindoll* is in
stock. As a friend of Insight
for Living, you can secure
your copy before it hits stores.

VISIT:

ifl.org.au/memoir

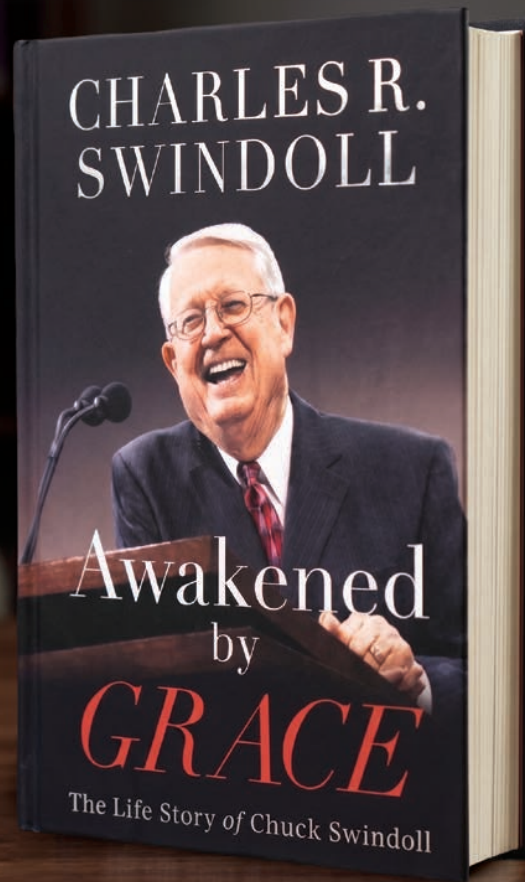


OR CALL:
1300 467 444

The Story Behind the Voice

Chuck Swindoll grew up feeling unwanted, stuttering through adolescence, and wondering if he'd ever find his place in the world. He had no idea God was just getting started. In *Awakened by Grace*, Chuck opens his heart for the first time— from a small-town Texas childhood shadowed by World War II, to the Marine Corps, to building a worldwide ministry that has touched millions. Filled with hard-won wisdom, raw honesty, and deep encouragement, this is a story you'll want to place in the hands of everyone you love.

Why get this book from Insight for Living? Because, here, your purchase is an act of stewardship. Every dollar stays within the ministry to fuel the creation of resources that deepen people's walk with God. You aren't just purchasing a book—you are helping us share the gift of God's Word with a world that needs His hope.



CONNECT



MEETING YOU WHERE YOU ARE

AUTHENTICITY AT INSIGHT FOR LIVING

BY MICHAEL BERGERON

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, OPERATIONS AND HUMAN RESOURCES - IFL USA



Many years ago on a hot Saturday morning, an Insight for Living staff member lay critically ill in the hospital. The family stood stunned, devastated by a prognosis that shook everyone who knew her. A colleague and I drove to the hospital to show support as best we could. It was then that Chuck and Cynthia Swindoll stepped into the room.

Having worked at the ministry for years, I was used to seeing the leadership and

administrative side of Chuck and Cynthia — but this was different.

As Chuck walked in, he and the ill woman's husband looked into each other's eyes and shared a long, embracing handshake. While Cynthia circled and took the husband's other arm, Chuck hugged the man for minutes as they tried to make sense of it all.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF



TOP LEFT: Pastor Chuck and Cynthia Swindoll with Australian Pastor Nathan and Julie Potts, TOP RIGHT: IFL Australia's Board members fellowshipping together with staff and spouses, BOTTOM: Pastor Chuck's mentorship with new pastors.

TOP LEFT: IFL Australian staff Heather, Susan and James visit IFL U.S.A, RIGHT: Pastor Chuck enjoying an all-staff gathering, BOTTOM LEFT: Cynthia Swindoll and Charissa Swindoll Gaither.

Standing there, I was amazed by the love, tenderness, and care they brought into that room that morning. This was another side of Chuck and Cynthia — the pastoral side — that comforts people in their deepest need. In a word, their ministry was *authentic*. It was unscripted, unhurried, and entirely real.

No programs, crowds, or fanfare. Just a quiet presence that spoke volumes to everyone in that small hospital room.

AUTHENTICITY MODELED

As we seek to minister God's truth around the world, Chuck and Cynthia's authenticity remains a profound model for our staff at Insight for Living.

Chuck is a shepherd, first and foremost, and his character is reflected in our core mission:

Insight for Living is committed to excellence in communicating the truths of Scripture and the person of Jesus Christ in an accurate, clear, and practical manner, so that people will come to understand God's plan for their lives and their

significant role as authentic Christians in a needy, hostile, and desperate world.

Each staff member understands that our listeners and readers are not merely "projects" or "units" to be processed in a quest to grow our ministry footprint. We minister to individuals, one person at a time.

In an increasingly technology-driven world, that conviction matters more than ever. Our priority remains: ministering biblical truth that meets each person in his or her deepest need and gives that individual hope to press forward through life's challenges.

AUTHENTICITY IN ACTION

Authenticity, for our staff, requires us to be consistent, Christ-centred, personal, and professional. Our goal is to enable Spirit-led ministry to people right where they are — muck, mire, and all.

Time and again, Chuck and Cynthia have modeled this authenticity in both good times and difficult ones. Their consistency

has shaped a workplace culture where truth, integrity, sincerity, right motives, accountability, and a deep trust in Scripture are not merely ideals but expectations. Without these markers of authenticity, one is simply not a cultural fit for Insight for Living. We take great care to identify authenticity in potential staff members and reinforce it through onboarding, staff meetings, chapels, and the rhythms of daily work.

When you engage with Insight for Living, our desire is that you experience this authenticity in a way that speaks directly to your individual needs.

One of our core values, "Honour Toward Others," carries within it the conviction that each listener represents a God-given opportunity for ministry and service. Serving you is not merely an obligation; it is our privilege and an honour to walk alongside you in your spiritual journey. Our staff desires that you sense how much God deeply values you, grow in trust of His plan for your life, and press further into spiritual maturity as you come to know the God of the Scriptures.

AUTHENTICITY CARRIED FORWARD

The legacy of authenticity that Chuck and Cynthia have faithfully built is not fading. It is carrying forward.

Charissa Swindoll Gaither, Insight for Living's president, has lived in this legacy since childhood, first encountering authentic ministry, not from a distance but from a folding table in her parents' garage — the first Insight for Living office — where she would address letters to the ministry's constituents. She experienced the same ministry of presence that would one day speak volumes in a hospital room. Having grown up watching Chuck and Cynthia model genuine, presence-driven care for people year after year, Charissa embodies that same shepherd's heart and mind-set in her leadership today.

Charissa and the entire IFL staff remain wholly committed to meeting each person right where he or she is — with the same integrity, care, and Christ-centred authenticity that has always defined Insight for Living.

STUDYING GOD'S WORD TOGETHER

BY PASTOR NATHAN POTTS

*One of the hallmarks of Pastor Chuck Swindoll's preaching is the clarity by which he explains the bible. In his book, **Searching the Scriptures**, Chuck outlines the methodology for uncovering the truths of God's word.*

One of the chapters within this book focuses on pursuing the treasures of Scripture. As I was thinking through the biblical methodology outlined by Chuck I wanted to pass on a practical example that could be followed as you spend time reflecting on the 30-day Bible-reading plan.

OBSERVATION

All good bible study method starts with observation. Let's consider part of Psalm 19. The broader context of Psalm 19 is that it is a Psalm of David and that all of creation declares God's glory. "The first section (vv. 1-6) deals with the world God has created. It describes in vivid fashion the fact that His creative work displays His power and His glory.

The second section (vv. 7-13) deals with the truth that God has communicated. It describes some of the benefits derived from the Scriptures as well as the discernment it can bring one's personal life. The song concludes with a prayer (v. 14)."¹

Let's discover the treasures of Scripture as we consider the central verses of this Psalm.

PSALM 19:7-11 (ESV)

⁷ The **law of the LORD** is perfect,
reviving the soul;

the **testimony of the LORD** is sure,
making wise the simple;

⁸ the **precepts of the LORD** are right,
rejoicing the heart;

the **commandment of the LORD**
is pure, enlightening the eyes;

⁹ the **fear of the LORD** is clean,
enduring forever;

the **rules of the LORD** are true,
and **righteous** altogether.

¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey and
drippings of the honeycomb.

¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant **warned**;
in keeping them there is great **reward**.

Whenever we observe the text, we look for repeated phrases. The phrase "**of the LORD**" is dominant in this text. LORD is the covenant name for God – Yahweh.

The **things that belong** to the LORD are his law, testimonies, precepts, commandments and rules. These titles all describe in some way God's word. Other English translations of this Psalm use descriptions such as decrees, statutes, judgements and instructions. The fear of the LORD is described as clean, or pure. The NLT says, "Reverence for the Lord is pure, lasting forever".

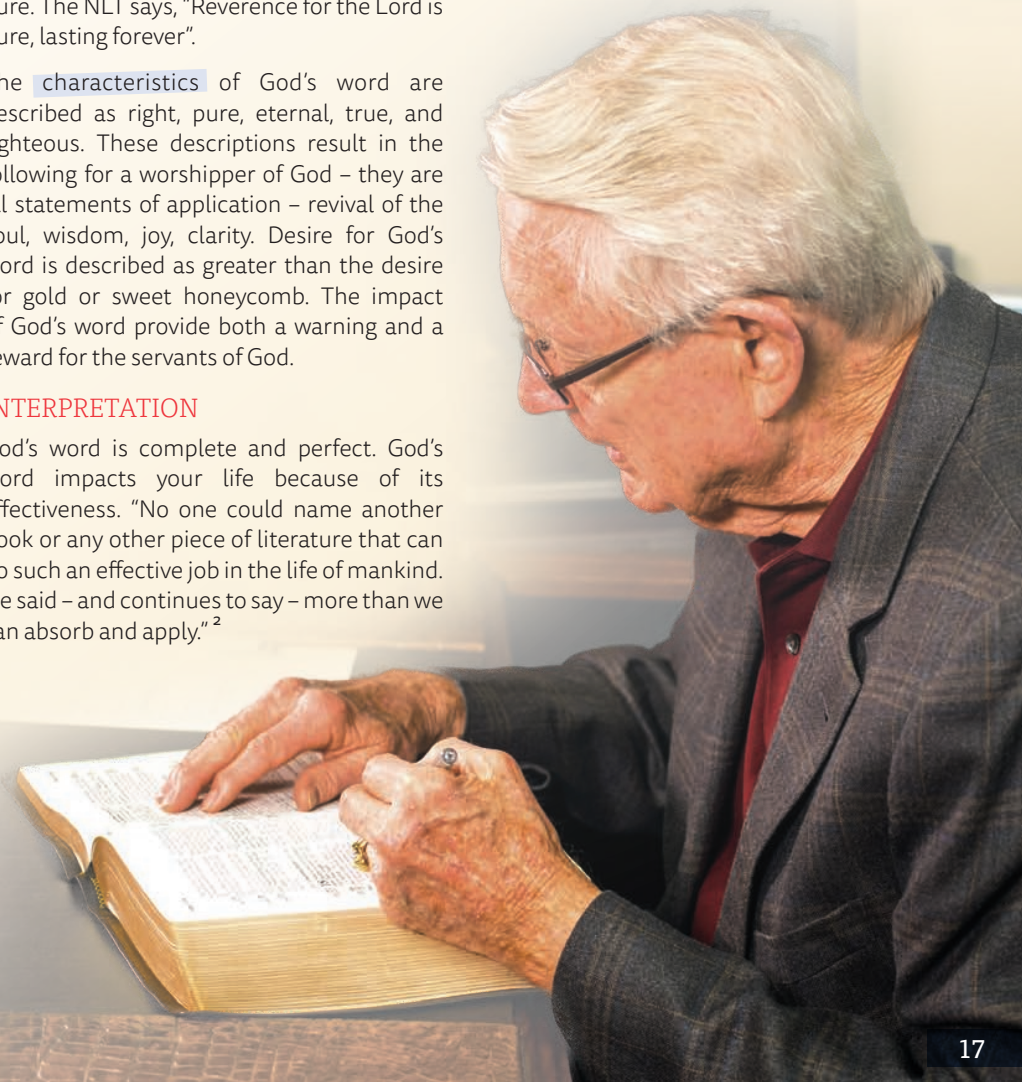
The **characteristics** of God's word are described as right, pure, eternal, true, and righteous. These descriptions result in the following for a worshipper of God – they are all statements of application – revival of the soul, wisdom, joy, clarity. Desire for God's word is described as greater than the desire for gold or sweet honeycomb. The impact of God's word provide both a warning and a reward for the servants of God.

INTERPRETATION

God's word is complete and perfect. God's word impacts your life because of its effectiveness. "No one could name another book or any other piece of literature that can do such an effective job in the life of mankind. He said – and continues to say – more than we can absorb and apply."²

Our desire for His word should mirror our desire for the most delectable and precious things. Fine gold is pure, just as God's word is pure. Honeycomb is provided by the work of the bee, it provides instant energy and it has a flavour like no other. "Through the efforts of another, we have His Word. It goes to work immediately upon entering our spiritual system. And no other piece of literature can even compare with its uniqueness."³

CONTINUED OVERLEAF



CORRELATION

In the New Testament God's word is described as being "breathed" out by God and is profitable for teaching, correction, reproof and training in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16-17) It is also described as being sharper than a two-edged sword that is living and active, and it alone discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12-13) These themes all add impact into what David communicates in Psalm 19.

APPLICATION

Because God's word is so wonderful, true and perfect. Because God's word is it is so accessible. Because God's word revives the soul, brings about joy, is true and right, let us place upmost importance in reading and delighting in the words of God. When this is a reality great reward is assured and certain pitfalls are given to be avoided.

PRAYER

Lord, increase my desire and thirst for your word. Increase my discipline to read your word more often. Lord I want to read your word to be wise, I want to believe your word to be safe and practice your word to become holy.

SPEND TIME WITH JESUS THROUGH THE PSALMS

A 30-DAY BIBLE READING PLAN TO STAY CLOSE WITH JESUS

LORD, YOU ARE MY PROTECTOR

You are my shield.	PSALM 3:1-6
You keep me safe.	PSALM 4:6-8
You are my rock.	PSALM 18:1-3
You are my fortress.	PSALM 31:1-5
You are my help.	PSALM 33:20-22
You are my refuge.	PSALM 46:1-3
You rescue me.	PSALM 91:14-16
You watch over me.	PSALM 121:3-8
You hold me and lead me.	PSALM 139:7-12
You are my tower of safety.	PSALM 144:1-2

LORD, YOU HEAR MY CRY

When I am discouraged.	PSALM 13:1-6
When I am lonely.	PSALM 25:16-18
When I am troubled.	PSALM 28:1-5
When I pray for mercy.	PSALM 28:6-7
When my heart is breaking.	PSALM 42:3-8
When I am oppressed.	PSALM 43:1-4
When I have sinned.	PSALM 51:1-15
When I am afraid.	PSALM 56:1-4
When I need strength.	PSALM 73:23-26
When I am lost.	PSALM 119:169-176

LORD, I PRAISE YOU

For everlasting joy in heaven.	PSALM 16:7-11
For satisfying all my needs.	PSALM 23:1-6
For putting a song in my heart.	PSALM 40:1-3
For giving me rest.	PSALM 62:1-8
For loving me.	PSALM 63:1-8
For making me feel secure.	PSALM 91:14-16
For blessing me.	PSALM 103:1-5
For being a faithful Father.	PSALM 103:11-18
For redeeming me.	PSALM 107:1-9
For giving me life.	PSALM 139:13-16

¹ Charles R. Swindoll, Living the Psalms, Encouragement for the Daily Grind. (Brentwood, TN: Worthy Publishing, 2012), 60.

² Ibid., 65.

³ Ibid., 66.

WHO YOU REALLY ARE

SEEING YOUR CHILDREN THE WAY GOD SEES THEM

BY DAVE CARL

You would think we all know who we are and we can just rush ahead with life. Well, it's a bit trickier than that.



In the *Paws & Tales* episode, "Grow Your Gifts," Gooz has an amazing gift she doesn't realize and can't even begin to enjoy. Miss Harbor helps her to see that God has plans for her and her gift if she will just accept it.

Who would refuse to acknowledge a delightful gift they already have? Most of us!

A big part of being authentic is realizing who we are AND the gift God has already given us. When Gooz begins to be grateful for her gift, she can finally enjoy it. Then she can work to get even better at it, which multiplies her gratitude.

Becoming authentic and thriving can be a challenging journey. Learning how God has made us and gifted us is not easy, but it is an amazing ride. Just ask Gooz!

We are born built to do the things God has in mind for us to do. However, as the old chorus goes, "This world is not my home, I'm just a-passing through." This world is not kind, and we grow up thinking things about ourselves that are not true. There are three lies the world tells us to believe about ourselves:

1. I am worthless.
2. I am unlovable.
3. I am helpless.

NOT TRUE!!!

We can instill in our kids, our marriages, and our relationships what we all deeply need—to see ourselves authentically the way God sees us. We cannot really do this well by ourselves. We need help, and a good way is to make it a game.

Family Activity — The Blessing Game

After dinner, when you are all together but before dessert, tell the person on your right something true about him or her that you see and appreciate. For example,

- "I just love the way you think differently, out of the box and in full colour."*
- "I love the way you start something and just stay at it until it's done. So good."*
- "I watch how you treat your friends so sweetly and how you are always doing something for others. I love your kind heart."*

These statements need to be true of the person RIGHT NOW. Do not say something you wish he or she was but isn't yet. That would be disastrous. What you say must be true about the person at this moment.

Say your words sweetly and gently. This is the very definition of giving a blessing. If done humbly and with love, your kids will remember this blessing for the rest of their lives.

We often think of authenticity as stopping ourselves from pretending. It is that... but it is also acknowledging and enjoying who we really are. However, we need to KNOW who we really are first. You can help your children find out by telling them the true and delightful things you see in them. Let's play the Blessing Game. It is the one game everyone can win!



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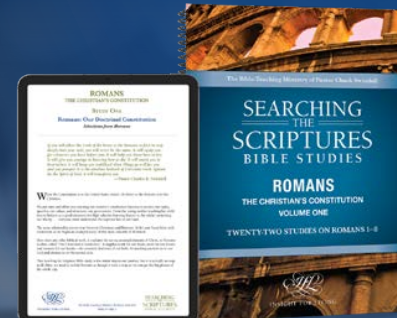
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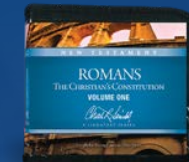
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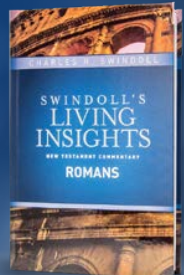


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