

2. Life- breathes into Adam, tree of life
3. Power- rule, reign, subdue
4. Knowledge- by trusting
5. Creation- rule it, fill it, enjoy it - "He gives us richly all things freely to enjoy" I Tim 6:17

- C. Synergy- God and man working together, with God doing the heavy lifting!
- Mk 16²⁰ Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.
 - Rom 8:13 "by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body"
 - Col 1:29 I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works within me.

THE POINT- The Bible is a book, a holy book. Read it like one. Look at the title, blurbs, table of contents and the beginning and end. It is not meant to be read all at once, but slowly, meditatively, and repeatedly. Spend extra time in the beginning and end. All to understand it, read it, believe it, obey it and share it!

3 STEPS TO TAKING IT HOME

1. TRAIN YOUR BRAIN- repeat for a week- God is good. God is in control. God loves me. God loves everybody.
2. GET ON THE TEAM- Use God's synergy- Are you and God a team? Your home? Church? Work? Community? Pray- Lord, help us pull in the same direction!
3. GET THE BIG PICTURE- Read ahead and behind- the first 3 chapters of Genesis, and the last 3 of Revelation. What do you see/ Parallels? Contrasts?

❖ **WHAT'S GOD SAYING TO YOU?** – write it down, pray it back, DO IT, and share it with others!
 "Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word! Thank You for how You begin Your great book- with beauty, bounty, balance and rhythm. You are good. You are in control. You love me. You love everybody! I especially hear you saying..."

THE BIBLE: BACK TO THE BEGINNING, Gen 1, 7/30/23

GETTING OUR FEET WET- What do Americans believe about the Bible? Barna, 2021

- 54% believe America would be worse off without the Bible
- 54% believe the Bible contains keys to a meaningful life
- 71% believe it is God's Word without error
- 16% (1 in 6) read the Bible every week or more (up from 12%, 1 in 8, in 2020)
- So don't be afraid to share it- it's God's Word!!! Pi²!!

SO HOW DO YOU READ A BOOK BEST? EVEN GOD'S BOOK?

- I. THE TITLE – Bible = God's Word, written, holy
- II. THE BLURBS – F.L.O.W.S.- faith, love, obey, worship, share
- III. THE TABLE OF CONTENTS
 - A. 2 parts- Old & New Testament
 1. All point to Jesus
 2. Testament = covenant, a legal, loyal partnership
 - B. 66 books- 39 in the OT, 27 in the NT
 1. Seven subsections
 - OT- Law, History, Poetry, Prophecy
 - NT- History, Letters, Prophecy
 2. Four Genres

Story- 43%	Poetry- 33%	Teaching- 24%	Prophecy- 27%
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- So, what do the Title, Blurbs and Table of Contents tell us so far?
 - **Bible-** God speaks to us
 - **Testament-** God wants to partner with us
 - **7 Subsections-** God wants us to know our history, our future and how to live now!
 - **4 Genres-** God speaks to the whole person- emotion, imagination, intellect and will; spirit, soul and body
 - **Big Picture-**
 - ✓ God instructs us personally, relationally, societally; for everyday life and eternal life!
 - ✓ The whole Bible, from the whole God, for the whole person, for the whole world! Pi²!
- To read a book well, we get the big picture first- through the title, blurbs, table of contents and #4.... We read the beginning & end! Genesis 1-3, Revelation 21-22

DIVING INTO SCRIPTURE- Gen 1-2:3- pay attention to what you see and feel as you read of our great beginning! So, what do you see and feel about....

GOD	CREATION	YOU AND ME	GOD AND US
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I. GOD

A. Powerful- I Chron 29¹⁰ David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, "Praise be to you, LORD, the God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting.

¹¹Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours.

Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.

¹²Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things.

In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.

7 "BEAUTIES" OF GOD
Powerful
Big
Good
Smart
Loving
Personal
Enjoyable

B. Big - II Chron 2⁶ But who is able to build a temple for him, since the heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain him? Who then am I to build a temple for him, except as a place to burn sacrifices before him?

C. Good- Psalm 34:5-8 "Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. 6 This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. 7 The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. 8 Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him."

Psalm 119:68 "You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees."

D. Smart- Ps 145

⁴He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name.

⁵Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.

E. Loving- Romans 5:8 - "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Zephaniah 3:17 - "The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."

F. Personal- giving us His presence, peace and purpose

Rev 21³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

G. Enjoyable-Ps 16¹¹ You make known to me the path of life;

you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand

II. CREATION

A. Beautiful - God saw that it was good- 7x

Rev 21 ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

Eccl 3 ¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart;

B. Bountiful- God blessed, be fruitful, multiply, fill – "sow bountifully, reap bountifully" II Cor 9:6

C. Balanced- distinctiveness, unity & synergy

1. Distinctiveness- God separates light from dark, water from water, land from sea, animals from man, male and female

2. Unity- all the distinct parts work together, lesson of the biosphere, earth and moon

- Moon's magnetic field protects earth from full sun's radiation, tides, stability, calmer climate

3. Synergy- workhorses- 1 vs 2, 8k→24k→32 k. 3x to 4x more!

Eccl 4 ⁹ Two can accomplish more than twice as much as one.... ¹⁰ If one falls, the other pulls him up; but if a man falls when he is alone, he's in trouble. (TLB)

III. YOU AND ME

A. Image of God- valuable

B. Put in the garden- place

C. To work it- purpose

IV. GOD AND US

A. Partnership- "covenant"- a loyal, legal partnership- Hosea 6:7 "Like Adam they have broken the covenant"

B. God shares His...

1. Image