



The Incredible
Journey

The Superpower of words

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THE SUPERPOWER OF WORDS

As human beings, we are driven by an innate need for connection. We seek out those with whom we can share our thoughts, hopes and dreams. We long to love, and to be loved. And one of the ways we as humans do this is through the power of words.

In our modern society, the words we use to communicate take many forms. To complement face-to-face verbal communication, we now have books, newspapers, magazines, radio and television. With the development of computer hardware and software have come texts, emails, posts and tweets. Then

there are websites, podcasts, e-books, audiobooks, YouTube videos...

The forms of communication listed above we would generally class as “desirable”. However, the quantity of often undesired information, in the form of unsolicited billboard, television, radio and movie advertisements, junk mail (both printed and electronic), cold calls, and promotional text messaging, has reached staggering proportions. During the 1970s, it was estimated that the average person was exposed to around 500 ads per day; by 2006, this had grown to approximately 5000 (Johnson, 2006).

These advertisements have a strong persuasive power, holding up before us various products and services in the most attractive light. Often, they present an idyllic, idealised lifestyle, and are very

effective in convincing us that if we only buy this gadget or that model, we will feel happy and fulfilled. An increasing number of “advertisements” (scams) deliberately give misinformation; they fail to deliver on promised products and in so doing rob their unwary victims of money. Even the real goods that we purchase can quickly lose their appeal, and leave us feeling emptier than before we bought them.

The mammoth, unprecedented quantity of information streaming in upon us from so many avenues has led to the recognition of a common problem: *information overload*. *Information overload* occurs when the amount of information available exceeds the processing capacity of a system. With words swirling all around us, we can easily feel overwhelmed and confused. We may lose focus and direction. We are unable to recognise the genuinely important, reliable

information on which sound judgements are always based. Words, which ought to connect and help us, can leave us feeling hollow and filled with despair. Is there any way out?

Those very feelings of hopelessness illustrate the power of words over our lives. If too many words, misleading words, inaccurate words, have such negative power—what might the power of good words be to uplift us, strengthen us, give us hope? Is it possible to find words that are true, words that are reliable, words that connect us with something or someone who can help us? I believe it is. I would like to suggest focusing on words that have stood the test of time, words that speak to the issues we face in society today.

God's word, the Bible, says, *The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of*

our God stands forever. (Isaiah 40:8). Many people have tried to destroy the Bible. It has been hated, hunted, and burned. Armies have raged against its prophecies. Individuals have tried to destroy its influence. Yet still the Bible remains. I have found that the Bible is trustworthy, though you may have heard otherwise. For a few moments, I invite you to lay aside your biases and consider with me the relevance of the Bible's words of comfort, direction, and hope; words that have been specially preserved to help us during the chaotic times in which we live.

FINDING A FOCUS

It may seem that information overload and inaccuracy are modern problems. As noted above, the raw data available today, and the myriad forms through which it is communicated, definitely are extraordinary in human history, as are the volume and variety of fraudulent claims. But although

these issues defy their extreme limits in the twenty-first century, the issues themselves are not actually new. About 3500 years ago, an ancient leader recognised that his people were struggling with these same dilemmas. The words that he spoke then are more relevant now than ever. Let's take a look at them.

The leader was Moses, the prophet chosen by God to free the Israelites from slavery (Exodus 3:7–10). Living in Egypt, the Israelites had heard many words against God. At the point we pick up the story, they were about to enter the land of Canaan; and Moses knew they would there be exposed to more negativity (Deuteronomy 1:1). Moses knew that these statements were untrue. At best, they placed a false colouring upon God's actions; at worst, they were openly defiant of His power, and even His very existence. Moses recognised the danger

inherent in such words because he knew their ultimate source.

For thousands of years, both Jewish people and Christians have recognised Moses as the author of the Bible books of Genesis and Job. Accepting this to be true, we have evidence that Moses was aware of a bigger picture than just earthly events, rulers, and people. Moses knew that these words showed, on a small scale, a great cosmic conflict; a war between the forces of good, and the forces of evil; a war between God, the Creator and Sustainer of all; and the highest being of all God's originally perfect creation. Lucifer, "son of the morning", gifted by God with intelligence, glory, and power above all the other angels, had come gradually to the conclusion that he was so magnificent and brilliant as to be deserving of the same worship as God Himself (Ezekiel 28:12–17; Isaiah 14:12–14). Lucifer spread malicious

rumours about God through the heavenly courts, and finally persuaded one-third of the vast angelic host to join him in rebellion against the Maker of them all (John 8:44; Revelation 12:7,8). This is how Lucifer, the light-bearer, became Satan, “the adversary” or enemy of God and all good.

When Satan and his followers were cast out of heaven, they continued the same warfare upon earth. Through the same deceptions against God’s character and law that he had used in heaven, Satan led Adam and Eve, the parents of our race, to distrust and disobey God (Genesis 3:1–6). Yet God, in infinite love and mercy, made available to every human being a way of escape from the pain, misery, and death that sin had brought. He did this in promising to sacrifice Himself, in the person of Jesus Christ, for guilty human beings (John 3:16). The earliest promise of this is Genesis 3:15, which told how

Christ, the “seed” of the woman, would crush the “serpent”, Satan. By working to save humans, despite their rejection of Him, God would demonstrate not only to people, but to all the angels before whom Satan had slandered His character, that He is love (1 John 4:8,16). God knew this was the only way to eradicate evil completely; utterly; and forever (Nahum 1:9).

Moses understood that the key issue at stake in this contest was God’s reputation. He knew that it was the acceptance of Satan’s cunning and subtle lies about God that lay at the foundation of the revolting, cruel, and senseless practices of the nations with whom the Israelites were about to come directly in contact. Moses knew that the problem was one of information overload, and even misinformation. Moses knew that he would die very soon, and would no longer be able to guide and help the Israelites. Now, as

they were camped upon the very borders of the Promised Land, the Israelites had come to a pivotal point in their experience. What could Moses say to ensure they would understand the point at issue? What words could he use to encourage them to make the right decisions?

Let's pause here to consider the parallels between the situation in Moses' day, and our own. The above points illustrate that the issues we face today are not dissimilar to those confronted by the ancient Israelites. In actuality, God's reputation is in still greater jeopardy now than it was thousands of years ago. Many people living in the twenty-first century wonder whether the Exodus from Egypt actually took place; and often reason that, if it did, the events surrounding it can be explained without recognition of any supernatural forces. How could the amazing miracles in the Bible actually be true? Isn't

the Bible just a myth? Did Moses even write Genesis? And if the Bible isn't true, why bother to spend time thinking about what it says?! The logical conclusion to draw from such a view is that God's word, and thus God Himself, cannot be trusted.

This is a vital issue to consider carefully, because scientific research now points overwhelmingly to the essential role of trust in sustainable systems (Stankey, 2009). It is widely recognised that trust in society is rapidly eroding; and further, that the same loss of trust is undermining social stability. So it is imperative that we find solid ground, something, or Someone, upon whom we can depend with absolute confidence.

There is actually a lot of evidence to show that the Bible is well worth studying. For instance, archaeological evidence consistently demonstrates that Bible history is accurate and reliable (see, for instance,

Ashton & Down, 2006). There is also much scientific evidence to show that the practices of life outlined in the Bible, such as prayer and a positive attitude, are important for social connectedness, health, and success in life (Simão, T. P., Caldeira, S., & de Carvalho, 2016; Allen, 2018). These things give us confidence that the Bible is not just a myth or a primitive attempt to explain the origins and history of our world. These points of evidence show that the Bible is indeed trustworthy.

From the above points, we see that the Bible offers valuable historical insights and good principles to follow. But to stop here is to fall far short of realising the true value of the Bible. The Bible is more than just an interesting and informative artefact. It offers more than merely a system of principles to live by; more than just a feeling of peace in this present turmoil. The Bible offers hope

for a life beyond the grave. It does this by bringing us in touch with the Source of life: not just an essence or a vague, undefined presence, but a personal God who loves us, and who in His love for us has revealed to us the principles that bring true meaning and purpose to life.

It was the gift of eternal life, and what the people needed to do to demonstrate their acceptance of it, that Moses emphasised. He said,

“Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. For it is not a futile thing for you, because it is your life, and by this word you shall prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess.”
(Deuteronomy 32:46–47).

When Moses said “life” here, he was not speaking just of life in this world, because every person that heard his words eventually died. While it is true that obedience to God brings blessings even in this world, the key point Moses wanted to make was that choosing God’s way would one day ensure *eternal* life.

Today, there is a lot of concern over the future of our planet. Almost everyone agrees that our current way of living has already compromised the health, and even the very life, of future generations. Many people are searching desperately to uncover the secret to sustainable living. Once again, the words of Moses show that humanity’s current concern is nothing new. The concept of sustainability, eternal sustainability, was what Moses stressed to the Israelites. And Moses pointed out that the way in which human beings could live sustainably was

by putting into practice the principles of God's law. This is shown by the words, *Set your hearts on... all the words of this law... it is your life, and by this word you shall prolong your days*. Moses declared that God's law is the secret of sustainability.

Perhaps you may be thinking, all right, I see that Moses emphasised God's law to the nation of Israel. But that was thousands of years ago. What relevance does that have today? Wasn't the law only for the Jews? Didn't the law end when Jesus died on the cross?

These arguments and questions are common today. Let's consider what the Bible says about God's law: the rationale behind it; and the time period over which it extends. From this, we will also see to whom the law applies.

THE REASON FOR GOD'S LAW

First, let's consider the reason for God's law. In Moses' words, we see that he emphasised not only God's *commands*, but His *motives*, the *reason* for His instructions. Moses pointed the people not only to God's law, but to who God is as a personal being: one who is full of love and compassion; one who gives every possible blessing to His creatures, and longs for each individual to recognise and return that affection.

God is the embodiment of love (1 John 4:8,16); and it was this quality that Moses emphasised to the Israelites (Deuteronomy 7:8; 33:3). It was in the light of God's love, that Moses emphasised obedience to God's law. The very concept of "law" can seem arbitrary and restrictive. In Australia, this attitude is particularly common, having been passed down from the days of early European settlement. But on the other hand, equitable

laws play an important role in protecting the citizens of a country. To a large degree, the laws of a nation define its identity. Many people leave one country for another because of unjust laws. To dispense with all law is to introduce confusion, anarchy and ruin.

When we know God's character of love, we see His law in a new light. We see that in His law, God has given us boundaries for our protection. When we think carefully, we see that each of the ten commandments tells us how to care for something essential to life, relationships, and happiness:

- 1. You shall have no other gods before me.** This tells us *who* to worship.
- 2. You shall not make for yourself an idol.** This tells us *how* to worship.
- 3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.** This tells us to respect God's name.

4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. This tells us the *time* to worship.

5. Honour your father and your mother. This tells us to respect family members.

6. You shall not murder. This tells us to protect life.

7. You shall not commit adultery. This tells us to protect purity.

8. You shall not steal. This tells us to protect property.

9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour. This tells us to protect integrity.

10. You shall not covet. This tells us to protect contentment.

In John 10:10, Jesus said, *The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*

God has given us His law, because He knows that keeping it is the only way to abundant life. As intelligent beings, God asks us to choose to obey Him, as a way of demonstrating trust, or faith, in Him. By keeping God's law, we show that we believe that He is loving and wise, that He knows what is best for us and would never ask us to do something that would be bad for us in the long-term.

From the above study, we see that God has given us His law out of love, to protect us from things that would harm us, and finally cause our ruin. The relevance of these points even in our world today suggests that God's law is not limited to a certain time or people. Let's consider this in more detail.

THE TIME FRAME OF GOD'S LAW

The Bible teaches clearly that God spoke His law to the Israelites on Mount Sinai, and then wrote it with His finger on two tablets of stone, which were placed inside a piece of specially-designed furniture called the ark of the covenant (Exodus 31:18; 25:21). But God's law did not originate at Mount Sinai. Even before the Israelites reached Mount Sinai, God's law was in existence, because God said of those Israelites who went out to gather the miraculously provided manna on the Sabbath, *How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?* (Exodus 16:28).

A study of the Bible's teaching on the law shows that it did not begin when God wrote it on Mount Sinai, but that His law is eternal. *Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. The entirety of Your word is truth,*

and every one of Your righteous judgements endures forever. The works of His hands are verity and justice; all His precepts are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness (Psalms 119:89, 160; 111:7–9).

The law is actually a copy of God's character. God is love; and His law is love (Matthew 22:36–40; Romans 13:10). God is righteous, holy, just and good; such is the nature of His law (Deuteronomy 32:4; 1 Peter 1:16; Psalm 145:17; 119:68, 172; Romans 7:12). Since God's law is a transcript of His character, and God is eternal (Psalm 90:2), it is logical that His law is also eternal. The above verses state plainly the eternal nature of God's law.

We noted above that God's law is love. One of the most well-known and beautiful passages in all the Bible is 1 Corinthians 13, which is a description of true love.

Verse 5 of this chapter says, *Love does not seek its own*. The love of God is *self-sacrificing* love. God is continually giving to everything He has made (James 1:17). And everything He made was designed to share that love by giving. Let's consider this briefly.

Psalm 19:1 tells us, *The heavens declare the glory of God*. God's glory is His character; what He is really like (Exodus 33:18,19; 34:5–7). What Psalm 19:1 means, is that everything in nature was designed to show God's character of self-sacrificing love. Does nature do that? Yes! The sun gives light and warmth. Plants take that light-energy and convert it to flowers and food for animals and people. Flowing streams give water to plants, animals, and humans. The ocean takes water from the streams, but it does this to return the water in rain that falls to refresh the dry, thirsty

land. Nature shows the essence of God's law: that is, to live is to give. Nature reflects the character of its Creator. Psalm 119:90,91 says, *You established the earth, and it abides. They continue this day according to Your ordinances, for all are Your servants.* This means that God applied His law to the Earth when He created it. This shows that we can trace God's law right back to the beginning.

The Ten Commandments take up this same principle of self-sacrificing love, and apply it to people. Jesus said that the law is based on two great aspects of love: love to God (commandments 1–4) and love to people (commandments 5–10); Matthew 22:36–40. That is an overview of the Ten Commandments. Love does not replace the Ten Commandments; it *summarises* them.

If we look carefully, we can see specific principles of the Ten Commandments in the story of creation. The easiest to see are those that relate to the Sabbath and the family. For instance, Genesis 1:26–28 and 2:18–27 tells us about God’s creation of Adam and Eve, the first family. We see here that marriage is between one man and one woman, which is covered in the seventh commandment. We see that God’s plan was for parents to have children, and to teach their children to care for everything He had made. That is in the fifth commandment. In Genesis 2:2,3, we find the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment. James 2:10 says that all God’s commandments are connected to one another. That shows that God’s law was in place in the Garden of Eden, before there was any sin or evil in the world. That shows that God’s law is part of His perfect creation.

After sin, God's law did not change. We can see God's law in the Biblical account of Earth's history from the Fall of Adam and Eve all the way to Mount Sinai, a period of approximately 2500 years. For instance, the story of Cain and Abel shows that murder is a sin (Genesis 4:1–15). The apostle John points out that Cain's murder of Abel was inspired by hatred, and was directly opposed to the principle of love (1 John 3:11,12). This shows that love was the basis of God's law right from the beginning, and that we must keep the specific commandments to truly show love. Even kings who did not worship God recognised that it would be wrong to take another man's wife (Genesis 12:10–20). Jacob told his family to get rid of their idols (Genesis 35:1–4). These examples show that God's law was in place long before the Ten Commandments were given to Moses at Mount Sinai.

Despite God's matchless promise to save people, almost everyone rejected God and His law (Genesis 6:11). Because of Abraham's faithfulness, God chose His whole family to be His special people (Genesis 12:1–3; 22:18). God promised to bless Abraham's family, so that they in turn could be a blessing to others. Once again, we see here the law of self-sacrificing love. God's plan was for Abraham's family to keep His law, as a way of showing everyone in the world how wonderful things would be if they would only choose His way. God knew that as people from other nations saw how happy Abraham's family was, many people would want to become a part of it! And that was exactly His plan! Any person who wanted to, could become one of His people (Isaiah 56:6,7) God entrusted Israel with His words, especially the words of the Ten Commandments, so that they could share these with others

(Romans 9:4–5; 3:1,2). As we noted above, each of the Ten Commandments protects values that are essential to our well-being as people. This shows that God’s law was not just for the Jewish people, but is applicable to all people in every era of Earth’s history.

Sadly, however, the Israelites kept on forgetting God’s law (Psalm 106:13; Nehemiah 9:26). That is the reason why God finally wrote it down, in stone, with His own finger. When God wrote the Ten Commandments, He explained the principles that had existed from the very beginning, in the most basic language possible, so that absolutely everybody would know exactly what He wanted them to do.

Although the nation of Israel, as a whole, did not keep God’s law, there were individuals like Joseph and Daniel who did obey it. Their lives give us a glimpse of God’s plan for the

whole nation. But the One who showed us the height, the depth, the length and breadth of God's law was Jesus Christ.

Jesus actually is the second person of the Godhead, as eternal, holy and powerful as the Father (Philippians 2:5–8). But Jesus left all His glory, power and riches in heaven to come down to Earth. His life on Earth is the epitome of self-sacrificing love. Jesus clothed, or covered, His deity with a human body, and came to live amongst us, so that He could experience our hardships, and know by experience how to help us overcome every sin (Hebrews 10:5; 2:10–18; 4:14–16). Looking at Jesus' life on Earth, we see that He kept God's law. Jesus was obedient to His parents (Luke 2:51). While on the cross, He took the time to provide for His earthly mother Mary (John 19:26,27). Jesus kept the Sabbath holy (Luke 4:16). Jesus brought life and health to those who were imprisoned

by disease and even death (Acts 10:38). Jesus fearlessly rebuked covetousness and fraudulent practices (Mark 11:17; Matthew 23:14). He could stand before His bitterest enemies, who in their insane jealousy were seeking an accusation against Him to put Him to death, and ask, “*Which of you convicts Me of sin?*” with no word uttered in reply (John 8:46). At His trial, the only fault which could be found in Him was that He spoke the truth: that He is the divine Son of God (Luke 23:2). On the cross, Jesus suffered the ultimate penalty of sin: separation from His Father (Matthew 27:46). His death proves that God’s law cannot be changed in the slightest.

Many people wonder about the law after the cross. Does God’s law still apply today? The Bible does not teach that God’s law was done away at the cross. Jesus said, *Do not think that I came to destroy the Law*

or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill (Matthew 5:17). The word ‘fulfill’ here does not mean bring to an end; it means *fill full!* Jesus came to show the full meaning of the law; that it applies to not just outward actions, but also our words and even thoughts (Matthew 5:21–32; 12:37). An Old Testament prophecy about Jesus as the Messiah says, *The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake; He will exalt the law and make it honorable* (Isaiah 42:21). When Satan lied about God, he also discredited God’s law before all the heavenly beings. This prophecy in Isaiah tells us that one of the main purposes in Jesus’ coming to Earth, was to show just how essential and honourable God’s law is.

The apostles also emphasised that we need to keep God’s law; not as a means of salvation, but in response to God’s grace. For instance, Paul wrote, *Do we then make void the*

law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law (Romans 3:31). It is faith in God, and faith alone, that actually enables us to do what we cannot do by our own efforts; that is, to keep God's law. Peter constantly stressed the need to live a pure and holy life of obedience to God (see, for instance, 1 Peter 1:2,14–16,22; 2:11). And John, who dwelt so fully upon love, wrote, Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:3,4). These are just a few of many texts from the New Testament that show that God's law is still binding after the cross. Jesus said, If you love Me, keep My commandments (John 14:15). If we truly love God, we will show that by keeping His commandments.

RECEIVING THE WORDS OF LIFE

In this booklet, we have seen that the difficulties we face today were also experienced by the historical characters of the Bible. We have discovered that the Bible is reliable and trustworthy; and most of all, that it connects us with God, the Source of all life and blessing. We have found that God gave His law to the ancient Jewish nation as a sacred trust for all people; that the law is eternal in nature; vast in scope; and expresses the character and will of God. The life of Christ is the supreme example of what it truly means to keep God's law.

Perhaps, as you have read this booklet, you have seen, as never before, the sacred, unchanging nature of God's law. This may be the first time you have heard many of these things. You may feel that you do not

yet know enough about God's law to keep it properly. You may realise that, knowingly or unknowingly, you have broken God's law, and feel sorrow in your heart because of that.

Today, God invites every individual from every nation to accept His offer of eternal life (Revelation 22:17). He invites you to accept His mercy and forgiveness for the wrongs you have done (1 John 1:9). He offers you a fresh start; a new life of peace and love and hope. He invites you to show in your life the power, beauty and wonderful love that is explained in His law of Ten Commandments (1 Peter 2:9).

If you feel a longing in your heart to show your love for God by obeying His law, I encourage you to reach out to Jesus in prayer this very moment. He is waiting—

yes, longing—for you to come to Him and ask for forgiveness, peace and joy (Revelation 3:20). He has many words He wants to share with you, words that are recorded in the Bible. Go to Him in prayer, right now, and ask for forgiveness. Ask for peace, joy and hope. Then read the promises below. Remember, they are words from the voice of God, words that He is speaking directly to you. May you find comfort, peace and hope in these superwords of the Bible.

Words of comfort

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;
For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me*
(Psalm 23:4).

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes (Revelation 21:4).

The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit (Psalm 34:18).

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds (Psalm 147:3).

Words of encouragement

The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, A refuge in times of trouble (Psalm 9:9).

But those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing (Psalm 34:10).

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You (Isaiah 26:3,4).

Words of assurance

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith (Hebrews 10:22).

For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day (II Timothy 1:12).

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life (I John 5:13).

Words of support

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls (Matthew 11:28,29).

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1).

And the LORD, he is the one who goes before you (Deuteronomy 31:8).

Words of love

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:34,35).

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up (1 Corinthians 13:4).

I have loved you with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3).

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NOTES

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As human beings, we seek out those with whom we can share our thoughts, hopes, and dreams. We long to love, and to be loved. And one of the ways we as humans do this is through the power of words. But too often, the words which ought to connect and help us, instead leave us feeling hollow and filled with despair. Is there any way out? In this booklet, I invite you to consider God's superwords of comfort, encouragement, assurance, support, and love.



Pastor Gary Kent is Speaker for The Incredible Journey ministry. He has produced and presented numerous documentaries on subjects including the Bible, Bible prophecy, world events and natural health. His passion is to share the good news of Jesus' imminent return.

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