

2. How the Bible is Trustworthy

Main Verse:

- **Psalm 19:7** - "The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple."

Opening Insight:

This message addresses a common skepticism: Can we really trust the Bible? Exploring Jesus' reverence for Scripture and His teaching methods reveals why the Bible is not just reliable but essential for wisdom and life transformation. Jesus upheld Scripture's authority, warning against diluting or "abolishing" its teachings.

I. Jesus' Perspective on Scripture

- **Matthew 5:17-18:**
 - Jesus explains that His teachings are not meant to replace Scripture but to fulfill it. He asserts that every detail is purposeful and enduring. His words emphasize that rather than "deconstructing" the Bible, He came to show its true purpose and depth.
 - **Quotes:**
 - "Not one letter will disappear... until all is accomplished," He says, underscoring the timeless nature of God's word.

II. Reading Approaches: Progressive vs. Conservative

1. Progressive Reading:

- **The Sadducees:** Jesus confronted the Sadducees for their selective reading of the Torah. They disregarded the supernatural and essential teachings, only accepting portions that aligned with their worldviews. Jesus rebuked them for undermining the fullness of God's truth.
- **Mark 12:** Jesus exposes their error: "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?"

2. Conservative Reading:

- **The Pharisees:** While the Pharisees upheld Scripture diligently, they often missed the essence, placing the law above love and mercy. In John 5:39, Jesus warns, "You study the Scriptures diligently... yet refuse to come to me for life," illustrating the importance of relationship over ritual.
- **Jesus' Balanced Approach:**
 - Jesus shows a third way—reading the Bible as both divine and transformative. He warns against the dangers of both extreme literalism and selective interpretation, encouraging readers to approach Scripture with humility and openness.

III. Scripture's Role in Spiritual Growth

- **2 Timothy 3:16-17:**
 - Paul emphasizes that all Scripture is "God-breathed," useful for teaching, correcting, and training in righteousness. These verses establish Scripture as an effective tool for spiritual and moral formation.
 - **Scripture's Practical Use:**
 - **Teaching:** Reveals the vision of life in Christ.
 - **Rebuking:** Shows where our lives are misaligned.
 - **Correcting:** Guides us back to wholeness.
 - **Training:** Cultivates virtues and wisdom, leading us toward spiritual maturity.

IV. Moving from Information to Transformation

- **Formational Reading:**
 - Robert Mulholland describes this shift as moving "from informational to formational reading." Rather than mastering Scripture for knowledge, we surrender to it, allowing God to shape our hearts and attitudes.
 - **Mullholand's Wisdom:** "The very thought of being conformed... confronts our deeply ingrained sense of being," calling us to surrender control and trust God's wisdom.