Introduction

Preface

We have a gift: the Bible. From cover to cover, it is a treasury of wisdom and truth. For the Christian, this gift includes the confidence—granted by the Holy Spirit—that these words are the very "breath of God.[1]" However, we often overlook a simple reality: the New Testament was originally penned in Greek, and the Old Testament in Hebrew[2]. It's easy to forget this and assume that our favorite leather-bound version, complete with its coffee stains and underlined verses, is not the original manuscript—as if this is exactly how it tumbled out of heaven.

But the modern age has made available another gift available to us: the modern tools to study the Bible in its native tongue. Why bother? Because studying the original languages fosters a more intimate connection with our Creator. It moves us from merely reading a scholar's translation to wrestling with the Word itself. With the internet at our fingertips, we no longer have to rely solely on the "middleman." This isn't a slight against the brilliant scholars behind the various modern versions; rather, it's an invitation. We are each called to understand God's heart, and the wealth of linguistic tools available today makes that journey more accessible than ever before.

Despite the mountain of great devotionals available today, I couldn't find one that quite scratched the itch for a deeper, original-language study. No matter which English version you prefer, a translation is—by definition—one step removed from the source. Since I couldn't find a book that met that desire, I felt a nudge from God to write it.

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[1] 2 Timothy 3:16

[2] While the vast majority of the Bible is Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament), portions of Daniel and Ezra, along with a few phrases in the Gospels, were written in Aramaic—the "street language" of the region at the time.

This book is a bit of a "devotional blend"—think of it as a cross between a warm morning devotional and a gritty, sleeves-rolled-up Bible study. It has two distinct gears: first, we'll walk through the book of James one verse at a time, rather than skipping through topical "highlights." Second, we'll lean into the original Greek of the New Testament to see what nuances might be hiding in plain sight. My hope is that this verse-by-verse journey helps both you and I develop a more intimate relationship with the Author behind the words.

So, I invite you to join me on this walk alongside James. I'm confident that as we tackle some of his more "uncomfortable" passages, God will reveal truths that we've previously just skimmed over. There is a richness in the original Greek that many of us have either forgotten or never knew existed—a kind of high-definition view of the text that can change how we see everything.

As we dive deeper into His Word, my prayer is that you develop a newfound desire to know God that moves beyond the page. May the God of peace, whose wisdom famously surpasses our understanding, bring you closer to Himself on this journey.