

LESSON 4: God's Word: Our Foundation for Victory

KEY SCRIPTURE

"So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified." Acts 20:32

KEY TRUTH

"Great has been the blessing from consecutive, diligent, daily study of God's word. I look upon it as a lost day when I have not had a good time over the word of God."—George Muller, Bristol, England (christian evangelist and homed and cared for over 10,000 orphans in his life time)

WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT HIS WORD?

Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"

1 Kings 8:56 "There has not failed one word of all His good promise."

Psalms 89:34 "My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips."

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."

Romans 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The Bible does not just contain the word of God; it is the living word of God. The Bible is the collection of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments that are recognized and used by the Christian churches that follow Jesus Christ.

The titles and names of the Bible are:

- The Scripture — Mark 15:28; John 7:38; 2 Timothy 3:16
- The Scriptures — Luke 24:27, 32; John 5:39; Acts 17:11
- The Holy Scriptures — Romans 1:2; 2 Timothy 3:15
- The Promises — Romans 9:4; Romans 15:8
- The Oracles of God — Romans 3:2; Hebrews 5:12; 1 Peter 4:11
- The Living Oracles — Acts 7:38
- The Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms — Luke 24:25, 44
- The Law of the Lord — Psalm 1:2
- The Law and the Prophets — Matthew 5:17; Matthew 11:13; Acts 13:15
- The Book of the Lord — Isaiah 34:16
- The Word of God — Mark 7:13; Romans 10:17; Hebrews 4:12
- The Sword of the Spirit — Ephesians 6:17
- The Old and New Testament — Luke 22:20; 2 Corinthians 3:6–15; Hebrews 9:15
- The Word of Christ — Colossians 3:16

- The Word of Life — Philippians 2:16
- The Scripture of Truth — Daniel 10:21
- The Word of Truth — 2 Timothy 2:15
- The Gospel of Christ — Romans 1:16

The word *testament* means "a document disclosing the will of a person, a contract, an agreement, or a covenant between two contracting parties."

The Old Testament is largely a record of God's dealings with the Hebrew people. It is the revelation of His will to them and through them to the whole race, whereby He binds Himself to take into new and special relationship all who obey His will.

The New Testament is largely the fulfillment and enlargement of the Old Testament. It gives the record of the promises, agreements, or contracts between God and man, showing the privileges, blessings, and requirements of the gospel through Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world.

The Bible is God's inspired revelation of the origin and destiny of all things. It is the power of God unto eternal salvation and it is the source of present help for body, soul, and spirit (Romans 1:16; John 15:7).

The Bible is God's will and testament to men in all ages, revealing the plan of God for man here and now; and in the next life. It is the record of God's dealings with man—past, present, and future. It contains God's message of eternal salvation to all who believe in Christ and of eternal damnation to all who rebel against the gospel.

As a literary composition, the Bible is the most remarkable book ever written. It is a divine library of sixty-six books, some of considerable size, and others no larger than a tract. These books include various forms of literature: history, biography, poetry, proverbial sayings, hymns, letters, directions for worship,

laws, parables, riddles, allegories, prophecy, drama, and all other forms of human expression. They embrace all manner of literary styles. It cannot be excelled from any standpoint.

The Bible is the book that contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy; its precepts binding; its histories true, and its decisions immutable. We should read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy.

The Bible contains light to direct us, food to support us, and comfort to cheer us. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here Heaven is opened, and the gates of Hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject; our good its design, and the glory of God its end. The Bible should fill our memory, rule our hearts, and guide our feet in righteousness and true holiness.

We should read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully, meditatively, searchingly, and devotionally, and we should study it constantly, persevering, and industrially. We should read it through and through until it becomes part of our being and generates faith that will move mountains. It is given to us in this life, will be opened at the judgment, and will last forever.

The Bible is:

- A **mirror** to reflect — James 1:23
- A **hammer** to convict — Jeremiah 23:29
- **Fire** to refine — Jeremiah 23:29
- **Seed** to multiply — 1 Peter 1:23
- A **laver** to cleanse — Ephesians 5:26; John 15:3
- A **lamp** to guide — Psalm 119:105

- **Food** to nourish — Psalm 34:8
- **Milk** for babes — 1 Peter 2:2
- **Bread** for the hungry — Matthew 4:4
- **Meat** for men — Hebrews 5:11–14
- **Honey** for dessert — Psalm 19:10
- **Rain** and **snow** to refresh — Isaiah 55:10
- A **sword** to cut — Hebrews 4:12
- A **bow** to revenge — Habakkuk 3:9
- **Gold** to enrich — Psalm 19:10
- **Power** to create life and faith — 1 Peter 1:23; Romans 10:17; Hebrews 4:12

GENERAL FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

1. The Bible was given to man through the audible voices of:

- God (Matthew 3:16-17; John 12:28; Deuteronomy 5:24)
- Angels (Acts 7:38; Hebrews 2:2)
- Prophets (Acts 3:21; 2 Peter 1:21)
- Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:1)
- The apostles (Acts 1:2; Ephesians 4:7-11)

It came through:

- Visions (Isaiah 6; Daniel 7-8; Ezekiel 1)
- Dreams (Daniel 2; Matthew 1:20; Matthew 2:12)

- Revelation (Galatians 1:15-16; Ephesians 3:3)
 - Inspiration (2 Timothy 3:15-17)
2. **The Old Testament** was written in Hebrew and Aramaic. **The New Testament** was written in Greek.
 3. **There are two main divisions of the Bible.** The Old Testament contains thirty-nine books, and the New Testament contains twenty-seven books. Each Testament is divided into five main divisions.

The Old Testament

- 5 books of Moses - Genesis through Deuteronomy (the Pentateuch)
- 12 historical books - Joshua through Esther
- 5 poetic books - Job through Song of Solomon
- 5 books of the major prophets- Isaiah through Daniel
- 12 books of the minor prophets- Hosea through Malachi

The New Testament

- 4 Gospels - Matthew through John
- 1 historical book - Acts
- 14 Pauline epistles - Romans through Hebrews
- 7 general epistles - James through Jude
- 1 prophetic book - Revelation

4. The unity of the Bible is wonderful.

More than forty different authors wrote the sixty-six books of the Bible during a period of more than 1,800 years. They all had one theme: the creation and

redemption of the human race by God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

These books of the Bible were written by men from all walks of life: kings, priests, judges, lawyers, princes, shepherds, soldiers, statesmen, musicians, inventors, singers, poets, preachers, prophets, fishermen, farmers, tentmakers, publicans, physicians, rich men, and poor men. They were written in various lands and on three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa. They were written in different ages and by many men, some who never saw each other or knew what the others wrote on the same subjects, yet when their writings became one book, there is not one contradiction among them.

5. A unique characteristic of the Bible is its prophecies.

There are many prophecies in the Bible about many different things. But the most important prophecies center around the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are approximately 300 definable prophecies about the coming Messiah. Jesus fulfilled thirty-three of these on the day He died.

Were all these prophecies and their fulfillment mere chance—or were they God's plan?

Peter Stoner, in his book *Science Speaks* (Moody Press, 1963), calculated the probability that any one person would just happen to fulfill these eight prophecies by chance. He found that the probability was one in ten to the seventeenth power. That's a one with seventeen zeros after it. This is a number so big that we can't even begin to understand it.

To illustrate, let's assume that a man who lives in Texas fills a Texas-size dump truck with silver dollars in the amount of ten to the seventeenth power. Then he dumps these silver dollars across the entire state of Texas, two feet deep. Somewhere out there in the middle of those silver dollars is one silver dollar with a little red dot on it. The man puts a blindfold on and attempts to find that one silver dollar with the little red dot on it. He gets only one chance.

That he would find the one silver dollar with the red dot staggers the mind, because such a likelihood is highly improbable.

Likewise, anyone would be foolish to believe that these eight prophecies could be given by human wisdom and fulfilled by one man through coincidence. And what about the hundreds of other prophecies given and fulfilled in the Bible?

There is only one reasonable explanation. The apostle Peter gives us the answer:

2 Peter 1:21 "For no prophecy recorded in Scripture was ever thought up by the prophet himself. It was the Holy Spirit within these godly men who gave them true messages from God." (LB)

DISPENSATIONS OF THE BIBLE

The entire period of Scripture from the creation of Adam to the "new heaven and new earth" of Revelation 21:1 can be divided into several "ages" or "dispensations" of time. These periods are marked off in Scripture by some change in God's method of dealing with all men, with respect to man's sin and his responsibility. Strictly speaking, between eternity past and eternity future, there are three basic dispensations:

- 1. Man innocent**
- 2. Man with types and shadows looking forward to the cross**
- 3. Man looking back to Christ's finished work on the cross**

The cross is the center of God's plan and purpose, with man on either side of it looking to the Lamb of God as the only means of his salvation.

Romans 4:3

Acts 16:31

Acts 19:4

Revelation 6:9-14

Revelation 13:8

Included in these three dispensations are the different methods used by God in His dealings with man, such as:

- Man in innocence
- Man under conscience
- Man in authority (human government)
- Man under promise
- Man under law
- Man under grace
- Man in the tribulation period
- Man under the reign of Christ

Adam was the federal head of the human family.

Genesis 5:3

Romans 5:12

Psalm 51:5

All three dispensations are therefore represented in Adam:

1. Innocence

- Reign (Genesis 1:28) Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that [a]moves on the earth.”
- Human government (Genesis 2:15) Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.
- Law and grace (Genesis 2:16-17) And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; **17** but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

2. Before expulsion from Eden

- Conscience (Genesis 3:6-7) So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. **7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.
- Promise (Genesis 3:15) And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel.”

3. During and after expulsion from Eden

- Ground cursed for Adam's sake (Genesis 3:17)
- Clothed with "coats of skin" (Genesis 3:21)
- Entrance to Eden closed (Genesis 3:24)

The Holy Spirit has been active since the creation of the earth. Note His activity before and after the cross:

- In creation (Genesis 1:2)
- In man's creation ("let Us") (Genesis 1:26-27)
- In convicting of sin (Genesis 6:3; Acts 7:51; John 16:7-9)
- "In" and "within" the prophets to testify (Nehemiah 9:30; Isaiah 63:10-11)
- In instructing God's people (Nehemiah 9:20; John 16:13)
- Within and upon the New Testament Christian (Acts 1:8)

The gospel, God's good news of man's deliverance from sin, is the theme of the Bible in any dispensation. Notice the "gospel" and "Christ," especially before the cross:

- Coats of skin—blood covenant; Adam's deliverance (Genesis 3:21)
- The gospel preached (Galatians 3:8; John 8:56)

- Faith counted for righteousness (Romans 4:3)
- The reproach of Christ (Hebrews 11:26)
- Christ in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10:4, 9)
- The "Spirit of Christ" in the prophet (1 Peter 1:10-11)

Although man is still under conscience, human government, promise, law, and grace, he has lost his right to reign, except "in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6).

There is yet the "blessed hope" (the rapture) (Titus 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17), and the coming of Christ in glory (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10), when the believer shall rule and reign forever with Christ (Revelation 5:10; Revelation 20:6).

The consummation of the ages is when Satan is "loosed for a little season" to make final war against the saints of God. He and his army are defeated with fire from heaven being poured out upon them. Then follows the "great white throne" judgment, and the ushering in of a "new heaven and a new earth" (Revelation 21:21; 2 Peter 3:13-14).

The Bible is primarily a history of man's redemption, not a history of man. It opens with man under probation, disobedience, paradise lost, and salvation instituted with the promise of the "seed of the woman" (Genesis 3:15). The Bible closes with the promise of man redeemed, and paradise regained (Revelation 21-22).

THE LIVING WORD OF GOD

The Bible is the word of the living God, and is:

- Indestructible (Matthew 24:35)
- Incorruptible (1 Peter 1:23-25)
- Indispensable (Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4; Job 23:12)
- Infallible (Matthew 5:18)
- Inexhaustible (Psalm 92:5)

The subject of the Bible is God's redemption of man (Ephesians 1:3-14):

- Purposed and planned by the Father (1 John 4:9-10)
- Accomplished by the Son (Matthew 20:28; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4)
- Revealed by the Spirit (John 16:7-9, 13-14)

We could also say, "God thought it, Christ wrought it, the Holy Spirit brought it, the devil fought it, but I got it!"

The purpose of the Bible is:

- To provide a foundation for our faith (Romans 10:17)
- To make us wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3:15)
- For doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be "complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:17).

God designed the Scriptures to:

1. Testify of Christ — John 5:39
2. Search the heart — Hebrews 4:12
3. Illuminate and enlighten us — Psalm 119:105, 130
4. Be heard and applied to our lives — James 1:22; Luke 11:28
5. Make one wise unto salvation — 2 Timothy 3:15
6. Produce faith — Romans 10:17; John 20:31
7. Quicken us — Psalm 119:50, 93; Hebrews 4:12
8. Regenerate us — James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; Psalm 119:9
9. Cleanse the heart and our ways — John 15:3; Psalm 119:9
10. Make wise the simple — Psalm 19:7
11. Promote spiritual growth — 1 Peter 2:2; Matthew 4:4; Hebrews 5:12-14
12. Build up our faith — Acts 20:32; Jude 20
13. Admonish us — Psalm 19:9-11; 1 Corinthians 10:11; 2 Timothy 3:16
14. Produce obedience in us — Deuteronomy 17:19-20
15. Keep us from destructive ways — Psalm 17:4

16. Minister life to us — Deuteronomy 8:3; Jeremiah 15:16
17. Sanctify (set apart) us — John 17:17; Ephesians 5:26
18. Work effectively in the believer — 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Colossians 3:16
19. Produce hope in us — Psalm 119:49; Romans 15:4
20. Comfort us — Psalm 119:82
21. Rejoice our heart — Psalm 19:8; Psalm 119:111
22. Study daily and meditate upon — Psalm 1:2; Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15
23. Keep us straight doctrinally — 2 Timothy 3:16
24. Keep the believer from sinning — Psalm 119:11; 1 John 2:1
25. Try everything by them — Isaiah 8:19-20; Acts 17:11
26. Win souls — Psalm 126:6; Luke 8:1-15
27. Bear fruit — John 15:3, 5, 7
28. Perfect the man of God — 2 Timothy 3:17; Colossians 3:16
29. Give us total victory over Satan — Matthew 4:1-10; Ephesians 6:11, 17
30. Accomplish its purpose — Isaiah 55:11
31. Give assurance of heaven — John 14:1-3

GOD'S WORD, OUR FIRM FOUNDATION

2 Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

What are we to understand by "inspiration" of the Scriptures?

We are to understand that God directed men, chosen by Himself, to put into writing the messages, laws, doctrines, historical facts, and revelations that He wished men to know. All Scripture is God-breathed—that is, God Himself, through the Holy Spirit, told holy men of old just what to write. The Bible, then, is the word of God, and does not simply contain inspiration here and there.

All Scripture is profitable for us—not just our favorite passages.

How do we know that the Bible is the word of God? Let us look at five key witnesses.

1. Fulfilled Prophecy

The acid test of the Bible is its ability to precisely predict the future. The word of God is packed with accurate prophecies:

- Dealing with the nation of Israel
- Dealing with the Gentile nations such as Egypt, Persia, Babylonia, and Greece
- Dealing with specific cities such as Tyre, Jericho, Nineveh, and Jerusalem
- Dealing with our Lord Jesus Christ. For example, on the day that He was crucified at Calvary, thirty-three Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in exact detail.

The prophetic accuracy of the Bible predictions, made centuries before they took place, reveals that it is the infallible and inspired word of God and not just a religious book.

2. Amazing Unity

The sixty-six books of the Bible (thirty-nine Old Testament and twenty-seven New Testament books) were written over a period of 1,800 years by forty different authors with different backgrounds and occupations:

- Moses was an Egyptian prince.
- Joshua was a soldier.
- Samuel was a priest.
- David was a shepherd boy who became king.
- Esther was a queen.
- Ruth was a housewife.
- Ezra was a scribe.
- Isaiah was a prophet.

- Daniel was a prime minister.
- Matthew was a tax collector.
- Luke was a physician.
- Paul was a brilliant scholar and tentmaker.
- Peter was a fisherman.

Despite the Bible being written over a period of more than sixteen centuries by forty different authors, most of whom never met each other, the theme of the Bible from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21 carries a continuous thread, which is the declaration of God's love for mankind and His plan for man's salvation.

3. Historical Accuracy and Archaeological Evidence

Halley's Bible Handbook lists 112 examples of historical accuracy. *Unger's Bible Handbook* lists ninety-six examples of historical accuracy. These include evidence of:

- The Garden of Eden
- The Tower of Babel
- The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah
- The fall of Jericho
- Solomon's gold
- Solomon's stables
- Solomon's copper furnaces
- The tunnel of Hezekiah, and much more.

Both historical and archaeological discoveries have proven time and again the absolute reliability of the Bible and that it is indeed the word of God. Every time the archaeological spade is turned in the Middle East, more and more testimony is added to the absolute integrity of God's word.

4. Scientific Accuracy

The Bible is not a book of science, but it contains many absolute statements of science given in Scripture hundreds of years before scientists made these discoveries:

- The scientific fact that the earth is spherical (Isaiah 40:22). The earth was believed to be flat until the sea voyages of Columbus and Magellan in the fifteenth century.
- The scientific fact that the earth is suspended in space (Job 26:7). This was not discovered until the writings of Sir Isaac Newton in A.D. 1687.
- The fact that the stars are innumerable (Genesis 15:5).
- The fact that all living things are reproduced after their own kind (Genesis 1:21). In 1862, Louis Pasteur discovered the Law of Heredity.
- The facts of the human bloodstream (Leviticus 17:11).

5. Supernatural Influence

Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."

The Bible is the inspired word of God because multiplied millions can testify to its transforming power in their lives. Cancer victims have been cured, alcoholics set free, homosexuals delivered, broken families restored, and drug addicts transformed. Each of us who is born again has been "delivered...from the power of darkness and translated...into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:13).

REASONS WHY GOD'S WORD IS PROFITABLE

2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us that God's word is profitable. This refers to the entire word of God and not just our favorite chapters! The word is profitable for:

- Doctrine (sound teaching)
- Reproof and conviction of sin

- Correction and discipline
- Instruction and training (schooling in righteousness, living right)

The net result will be a fulfillment of 2 Timothy 3:17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

In order for the word of God to be profitable in our own lives, we must read, study, and meditate upon it. This will give us a solid foundation upon which to build our lives.

Faith comes by hearing the entire word of God. All Scripture is God-breathed from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21. Thus it is vital that we study the total word of God.

GOD'S FIRST AID KIT: PROMISES IN THE WORD

God's word is His Covenant bond to us and God's integrity stands behind every promise in His word.

Psalm 119:89 "Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven."

Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes."

When believed and acted upon, any promise of God is transformed into the power of God.

That is because every promise of God is indwelt by the power of God equal to produce what it promises, when it is believed and acted upon.

The Bible is "God's First Aid Kit." Here are some promises we can "take" from God's word:

- If sudden trouble comes, we can instantly apply Hebrews 12:5-11.
- If loneliness and fear attack us, a good stimulant can be found in Psalm 91.

- If we are suffering from loss of memory and cannot remember the goodness of God, we can take a good dose of Psalm 103.
- In times of failing strength and courage, we can try two or three applications of Philippians 4:12-13, 19.
- If we find a bitter taste in our mouth and cannot speak lovingly of others, 1 Corinthians 13 is a good pill to swallow.
- If the "thorn" in our flesh persists and complications seem to arise, we can rely on a tried remedy—God's grace, found in 2 Corinthians 12:7-9.

Men keep trying with their own prescriptions to cure man's inner needs, but failure awaits every case. But God's simple remedies, found only in the Bible, have never failed.

Psalm 34:8 "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!"

THE VALUE OF GOD'S WORD

Here are seven important reasons why the Bible is of supreme value to our lives:

1. If we don't read the Bible, we will walk in darkness.

Psalms 119:130 (NKJV) The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

Psalms 119:105 (NKJV) Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

2. If we don't read the Bible, we won't be straight and clear on doctrine and we will be open to deception.

2 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV) All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

1 Timothy 4:1-2 (NKJV) 1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

3. **If we don't read the Bible, we have no food and no nourishment for our spirit.** Spirit beings need spiritual food. Our spirit will stay, starved, uninformed, shriveled up, dry, and immature unless we feed our inward man, the word of God.

Matthew 4:4 (NKJV) But He answered and said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

Jeremiah 15:16 (NKJV) 16 Your words were found, and I ate them,

John 6:63 (NKJV) It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

4. **If we don't read the Bible, we won't have faith.**

Romans 10:17 "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Faith in any area comes only by getting the word inside us!

We cannot believe God and we cannot exercise faith beyond our actual knowledge of God's word.

Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

If we have no knowledge of the Holy Spirit, divine healing, prosperity, victory over fear, the armor of God, then how can we believe God in that area? We cannot have faith for anything beyond our knowledge of God's word on that subject. If we don't know what God said, then how can we act in faith?

5. If we don't read the Bible, we will not grow spiritually. There can be no spiritual growth.

1 Peter 2:1-2 "Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby."

Without God's word, you will be a spiritual dwarf and have no development.

6. If we don't read the Bible, we will be weak, impotent, and spiritually anemic.

1 John 2:14 "I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one."

7. If we don't read the Bible, we will backslide.

Psalm 37:31 "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide."

Hebrews 10:38-39 "Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

- No Bible means no light.
- No Bible means we open ourselves to false doctrine.
- No Bible means no food for our spirit.
- No Bible means no faith.
- No Bible means no growth, no spiritual development.
- No Bible means no strength, spiritually weak.
- No Bible means we will backslide.

Psalm 1:3 "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper."

The word prosper in this verse means:

- To be spiritually strong and full of God's anointing
- To be financially well off, to be abundantly supplied with money and material goods
- To be healthy, strong, and physically sound in body
- To be mentally alert and emotionally stable
- To be successful in business and experience financial favor

Joshua 1:8 "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

Only when we have the right relationship with the written word of God in our life can we expect to walk in prosperity and success. There are three basic things to live by in Joshua 1:8:

1. Keep the Bible, the word of God, the Covenant in our mouths, and keep speaking the word.
2. Keep meditating the Scriptures.
3. Keep on doing (practicing, obeying, acting on) the word in our lives.

Every Christian ought to have their own Bible and read it every day, write in it, and mark it. One of the biggest dangers in the Christian life is that we become lukewarm and lazy towards our Bibles. We pick them up only to read a few Scriptures now and then, usually when we are half asleep.

When we relegate the reading of God's word to a position of low priority and little importance in our life, we are on dangerous ground.

Mark 4:23-24 "If any man has ears to hear, let him be listening, and perceive and comprehend. And He said to them, Be careful what you are hearing. The measure [of thought and study] you give [to the truth you hear] will be the measure [of virtue and knowledge] that comes back to you, and more [besides] will be given to you who hear." (AMP)

Proverbs 4:20-22 "My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings, do not let them depart from your eyes; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh."

Some people put their business, their job, their spouse, the TV, newspaper, secular magazines, sports, or the garden before God's word. They get so busy that they forget about the Bible. That is very dangerous!

Are you busy watching Channel 23?

CHANNEL 23 PSALM

**The TV is my shepherd,
My spiritual growth shall want.**

**It makes me sit down and do nothing for the cause of Christ,
Because it requires all my spare time.**

**It keeps me from doing my duty as a Christian,
Because it presents so many good programs that I must see.**

**It restores my knowledge of the things of the world.
It keeps me from studying God's word.**

**It leads me into paths of failure to attend the worship services,
and serving the Lord in the Kingdom of God.**

**Even though I live to be one-hundred,
I will keep on viewing my TV as long as it will work.**

**For my TV is my close companion.
Its sound and picture they comfort me.**

**It presents entertainment before me,
And it keeps me from doing important things with my family.**

**It fills my head with ideas,
Which differ from those set forth in the word of God.**

**Surely no good thing will come of my life,
Because my TV offers me no time to do the will of God,**

And I will dwell in spiritual poverty forever!

WHAT GOD'S WORD WILL DO FOR THE BELIEVER

We have already seen that the Bible is not Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, or black marks on white paper. It is the inspired word of God. If that is so, then what are the results that God intends His word to produce in us? What results can we expect and experience from God's word?

2 Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

1. When God's word goes forth it always succeeds in accomplishing God's will and purpose. It will not fail. It will not return empty or ineffective.

Isaiah 55:11 "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."

Isaiah 55:11 is God's written guarantee that His word will do exactly what it is sent out to do. We can absolutely rely on the word of God because it is backed up with God's written guarantee.

2. The creative power of God and the Spirit and life of God are in His word.

Psalm 33:6 “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.”

John 6:63 “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”

3. The Bible is not a dead book, but a living, powerful, penetrating book that reaches into and affects every area of the human personality—the mind, the soul, the spirit, and the physical body.

Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

God’s word is alive, active, energetic, and penetrating.

These are the results we can receive personally from God’s word, but receiving these results depend on how we respond to His word.

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD?

Here are six ways that we must correctly respond to God’s word:

1. We must receive it as God’s word to us, not man’s word.

We are not to hear, listen to, and receive God’s word as if it were of human origin, with a human message. We should not treat the Bible as if it were a mere human book. It is God’s word not man’s word.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.”

2. We must believe the message of the Bible.

Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”

We must receive it as God’s word and believe it. We must accept it in faith. We must believe the message of the Bible.

3. We must approach God’s word with a pure heart.

We must come to God’s word with a clean heart, laying aside all rebellion and sin.

James 1:21 “Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”

4. We must remain teachable and humble.

Mark 4:23-24 “If any man has ears to hear, let him be listening, and perceive and comprehend. And He said to them, Be careful what you are hearing. The measure [of thought and study] you give [to the truth you hear] will be the measure [of virtue and knowledge] that comes back to you, and more [besides] will be given to you who hear. For to him who has will more be given, and from him who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away (by force).” (AMP)

We must receive God’s word with humility and a teachable spirit. We must stay teachable to what God is actually saying to us. Meekness is being teachable, laying aside preconceived ideas. The opposite of meekness is rebellion—refusing to receive instruction and refusing to change and make adjustments in our lives.

5. We must fear the Lord and reverently respect God and His word.

Psalms 25:8-9, 12, 14 “Good and upright is the Lord; therefore He teaches sinners in the way. The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He

teaches His way... Who is the man that fears the Lord? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses... The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.”

6. We must be willing and obedient to put God’s word into practice in our lives.

James 1:22 “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

There are important character requirements for receiving the maximum from God’s word. God selects His students; if we want to be one of His students, we must be prepared to meet His standards.

Will we decide right now to approach God’s word and adopt the attitude necessary to respond? Let us pray right now and ask the Holy Spirit for revelation knowledge and to make the word of God real and personal to us.

WHAT GOD’S WORD WILL PRODUCE IN US

There are many beneficial effects of God’s living word manifested in our lives.

1. God’s word produces faith in our hearts (Romans 10:17).

One example of this is the Virgin Mary conceiving the seed of God’s word, a rhema in her heart to bring about the miracle of the virgin birth (Luke 1:38).

2. God’s word imparts salvation and the new birth in our spirits.

1 Peter 1:23

James 1:18

The seed is the divine, incorruptible, eternal word of God, and that is the kind of life that the seed of God’s word produces in our hearts: divine, incorruptible (pure, holy, free from the curse), and eternal.

3. God's word is spiritual food for our spirits that causes us to grow up spiritually. It will sustain and strengthen us (1 Peter 2:1-2).

God's word provides a total diet:

- The milk of the word (1 Peter 2:2)
- The bread (cereals) of God's word (Matthew 4:4)
- The solid food (meat) of God's word (Hebrews 5:12-14)

We must not retain in our lives the things that would contaminate and sour the milk of God's word. We should be progressing spiritually and our diet should be changing from milk to solid food.

4. God's word produces healing and health for our physical bodies.

Psalm 107:20 “He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.”

God's word is life-giving medicine to every part of our body (Proverbs 4:20-22). This is God's medicine bottle with four specific directions for taking the medicine:

- Give our undivided attention to what God's word says.
- Incline our ears to the sayings of God (this indicates an attitude of meekness, teachability, and humility).
- Keep our spiritual sight focused on the promises of God (Luke 11:34).

Smith Wigglesworth: “*The trouble with many Christians is that they have a spiritual squint: With one eye they are looking at the promises of the Lord and with the other eye they are looking at their problem.*”

- Keep God's word in the central place of our entire life.

What is in our heart controls the entire course of our lives and all that we experience (Proverbs 4:23).

5. God's word gives us mental illumination—light and understanding (Psalm 119:130).

God's word works in our minds the same way light works in the natural. The entrance of God's word into our minds dispels any darkness in our minds. It will renew our minds, change our thinking, and change our attitudes.

Ephesians 5:8-11

Philippians 1:9-11

The true light of God's word will give us mental illumination and light on how to:

- Be born again
- Be healed
- Be victorious in Christ
- Be a true disciple of Jesus
- Have a successful marriage
- Wage spiritual warfare

6. God's word gives us continuing victory over sin and Satan.

Psalm 119:9-11 “How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!”

The Bible will keep us from sin or else sin will keep us from the Bible.

Psalm 17:4 “Concerning the works of men, by the word of Your lips, I have kept away from the paths of the destroyer.”

The word of God gives us victory over Satan the destroyer!

Matthew 4:1-11

Luke 4:1-13

God's word was the method of victory and the weapon that Jesus successfully used to overcome the devil.

Ephesians 6:17 “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

God's word spoken out of our mouth in faith directed at the devil becomes the rhema sword of the Spirit!

Revelation 12:11 “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”

This verse lists three things that can overcome Satan:

- The blood
- God's word
- The believer's testimony

James 4:7 “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

Uncommitted believers have no power over the devil because he is not afraid of them. We are submitted to God when we are committed to God and His word.

1 John 2:14 “I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.”

7. God's word produces cleansing and sanctification in our lives.

Ephesians 5:25-27

John 15:3

John 17:17

Sanctification means being separated to God from sin; it means being made holy in Christ.

1 Peter 1:15-16

2 Peter 1:3-4

Through the precious promises of God's word, we escape the corruption and sinful pollution of the world. How does God's word cleanse us and sanctify us? It purifies our minds, cleanses our thoughts, washes away any dirty speech, and washes out of us any evil desires.

God's word purifies our motives until our desire for living is God's desires and purposes. God's word changes our outward behavior—our speech, our habits, lifestyle, thinking, attitudes, and conduct—until we are conformed to the image of Jesus.

8. God's word is our spiritual mirror revealing our true spiritual condition and inward character (James 1:22-25).

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 “Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Remember that while we are reading our Bible, our Bible is also reading us. God's word, our spiritual mirror, reveals our inward spiritual nature and condition. Just as a look in the natural mirror in the morning necessitates specific adjustments and changes in our physical appearance, when we look

into our spiritual mirror and see that our inward condition is not what it should be, we must make changes and adjustments

MAKING SPIRITUAL ADJUSTMENTS

1. We receive the revelation of God's word that shows us our condition. We admit our need to make changes.
2. We believe and accept the promises of God to make the necessary changes. This involves repentance (2 Corinthians 3:18).
3. By faith we take hold of God's provision and see ourselves the way God sees us.

Isaiah 61:10

2 Corinthians 5:17

Ephesians 2:10

HOW TO STUDY GOD'S WORD

1. We should begin our studies by praying that God will grant us revelation knowledge and understanding by the Spirit of His word. Pray Ephesians 1:17-19.
2. The Bible is its own expository. Passages can be understood by reading the surrounding text. Other Scriptures pertaining to that passage, as in cross-references, usually reveal the full meaning also.
3. Consider the theme and subject content of the book in which the passage we are studying is found.
4. Discover when the book was written and the manners and customs of that day.

5. Meditate upon the word.
6. Reference books that will aid in studying the Bible are Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Whole Bible (the edition that includes a Greek and Hebrew dictionary which give definitions that coincide with the original text); a good cross-reference Bible such as the Thompson Chain-Reference Bible, The Open Bible, or Dake's Annotated Reference Bible; The Amplified Bible; and a Bible dictionary such as Smith's, Zondervan, or Unger's.

John 15:7-8 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

Scripture study is valid only if we put into action what God shows us. Throughout the entire process of Scripture study, we should pray again and again, "God, show me Your truth, and show me how to live it and give it to others." This means cultivating an attitude of listening to God and an openness to doing what He says.

Because life application is vital we ought to keep in mind questions like these as we apply Scripture to our lives:

- Is there a warning for me here?
- Is there a promise I can claim?
- Is there an example for me to follow?
- Are there commands I must obey?
- Is there a sin I must avoid or confess?
- Is there some encouragement I can take to heart?
- Is there some new lesson about God I can thank Him for?
- What truth is the Holy Spirit revealing to me that I can share with others?

- How can I use my study of God's word today to change my present circumstances and solve a problem I'm faced with?