

The Word of God

The **WORD OF GOD** is the most incredible life-line we have to the Lord. He has revealed to us more than we could ever ask or imagine through His Word. Through the **WORD OF GOD** we discover who God is and how He operates in this world. Through the **WORD OF GOD** we discover how He operates in our hearts. And through the **WORD OF GOD** we discover the spiritual truths that guide us and give us wisdom for success in life.

It is our supreme privilege not only to learn about God through His Word, but to become closer with Him... to have a personal relationship with Him... to be guided and led and comforted and convicted by Him. Indeed God is our helper that we look to for guidance and leadership... and friendship. But how do we do that? How do we seek after and know the **WORD OF GOD**?

What is God's chief expression of His Word right now?

In the era in which we now live (which may be called the "church age") the Holy Bible is God's *"living and active Word"* (Hebrews 4:12-13) for all people. God's Word is *"sharper than any double-edged sword"* and *"penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."*

We are taught by Paul the Apostle in 2 Timothy 3:16, *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

Jesus, of course, also clearly taught in John 10:35 that Scripture is the Word of God and *"cannot be broken."*

In terms of salvation, Paul reminds us it is the Holy Scriptures *"which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ"* in 2 Timothy 3:15.

The Apostle Peter taught us that prophecies in Scripture were not developed by men, but rather were given by God when the human authors were *"carried along by the Holy Spirit"* as they wrote. While this principle is taught in reference to the Old Testament, we believe, by implication, that the same principle holds true in the New Testament.

The Holy Bible is indeed the **WORD OF GOD!** The Old Testament containing 39 books and the New Testament containing 27 books represent God's chief expression of His Word to us in the Church Age.

How does God "speak to us" through the Holy Bible?

It is clear from the passages listed above (esp. Hebrews 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:15-16) that the Scriptures teach us and train us spiritually. But because a person starts out spiritually "dead", he does not automatically understand the things written in the Bible. Surely, the things written there are easy enough to understand, but because of the hardness of a person's heart, they tend to find a million reasons not to understand or believe what they read in the Bible. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:4... *"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so they cannot see the*

light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.” Because they follow the god of this age (Satan) they cannot understand the words of the one true God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

But, when a person has invited God into his life through faith in Jesus Christ, then the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within him and he can understand the words of the Bible... which had always been simple anyway! We learn in 1 Corinthians 2:11-12, *“...no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.”* So as we read the Bible, the Holy Spirit helps us understand it. It suddenly makes sense to us! Not because we got smarter or the words got easier... but because the Spirit softens our hearts and makes us ready and willing to receive them. It's more of a **heart** issue than a **mind** issue. Altogether, it is a **spiritual** issue! Our spirits (little 's') are now able to connect with His Spirit (capital 'S').

Theologians call this process “illumination.” The Holy Spirit illuminates the Scriptures as we read them. It's like He's shining a bright light on the pages as we read, so that we can understand it more clearly. And when it makes sense, it's easy to see how it applies to our lives personally. We are convicted by it... we are encouraged by it... we are guided by it... we are taught by it. And the real reason IT is understandable is because GOD is making it so. Therefore, as I read the Bible, I often thank God for what I'm learning... because it's much more than just ME figuring it out... **it's God helping me figure it out!**

Paul alludes to the process of illumination when he writes to the Colossian church... *“For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding”* (Col. 1:9).

What are some other expressions of God's Word?

This question should not lead us into heresy if we understand it correctly. But in order to clarify, we must understand that God has spoken His Word to us in other forms which are not as available to us now during the Church Age.

God's spoken Word in Creation... We learn in Genesis chapter one that God actually “spoke” creation into existence by His Word. He spoke and it happened! There is true power in the Word of God!

God's spoken Word to Old and New Testament saints... we think of God speaking to Moses in the burning bush, or to Isaiah in a vision, or to Paul on the road to Damascus. Certainly these are clear expressions of God's Word.

God's Word spoken through Angelic messengers... Sometimes God used messengers to get his message through. In the Old Testament, God spoke through angels to talk with Abraham, Jacob, Balaam, Gideon and many others. In the New Testament, God spoke through angels to Joseph, Mary, the shepherds, Philip, Peter and others.

God's Word verbally proclaimed by the Apostles... Before the New Testament was available to read, the Apostles of Jesus proclaimed the word of God verbally. It was a special time. People

did not have the opportunity to read about Jesus in the New Testament. The only way they could hear was through the preaching of the Apostles. Hence, they *“spoke the word of God boldly”* (Acts 4:31) and *“proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues”* (Acts 13:5). Now, in the Church Age, we can do the same thing using the Bible... boldly proclaim the word of God. *And when our words in proclamation line up with the Word of God contained in the Bible, then that message will lay firmly on the hearts of men and bring conviction.*

Jesus as the ultimate Word of God... Of course, nothing compares to the way in which Jesus, Himself, reveals God... because He is the very Word of God in human flesh. Jesus is the full expression of God. Everything about Jesus absolutely speaks the authoritative character and message of God... His words, His actions, His thoughts, His responses, His plans, His conversations... etc., etc.!! Everything! Jesus is the full Word of God in total! *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”* (John 1:1).

So, Why should I read the Bible on a regular basis?

Reading the Bible is the primary way to receive God's Word for us now in the Church Age. God could send an angel if He wanted to. He could speak to us verbally if He wanted to. But what we learn in the New Testament is that God is currently using the ***Holy Scriptures*** as His primary conduit of speaking His Word to us. So if we don't read it, we are cutting off the primary conduit!

The importance of the Word of God is revealed through the many different images that depict its value:

+It is a **HAMMER** capable of breaking the hard heart (Jeremiah 23:29).

+It is a **MIRROR** reflecting one's true condition (James 1:23-25).

+It is a **seed** which springs up into life (Luke 8:11).

+It is **food**: Milk for babies (1 Cor. 3:1-2) and Meat for the mature (1 Cor. 3:2).

+It is **GOLD** and **SILVER** (Psalm 119:72).

+It is sweet, sweet **honey** (Psalm 19:10).

+It is a **SWORD** which discerns the intentions of the heart (Heb. 4:12).

+It is a **fire** which ignites the believer to speak (Jer. 20:9).

Indeed, there is nothing else more crucial in this life for a Christian than to read, learn and hear the Word of God through the Holy Bible... and then obey it!