

The Power of the Word in the Believer's Life, Part 2

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 1380

First of all, we said that we should study the Bible because it is the source of truth. Jesus said in John 17:17, "Thy word is truth." A great statement. And we talked about the cynicism of Pilate who said, "What is truth?"

Secondly, we suggested to you that we should study the Bible because the Bible is not only the source of truth, but it's the source of happiness. It's the source of joy. In fact, we quoted from the words of Jesus that "if you hear My words and keep them, My joy will remain in you." The words of John, "These things I write unto you that your joy may be full." The words of the Proverbs, "Happy is the man who hears Me." The words of Luke 11:28, "Happy *are* they who hear the word of God, and obey it." That's the source of joy.

You study the Word. You hear what it says. You draw out its principles. You obey those principles because it's in your heart to obey them, and God pours out the blessing, and the joy. Do you want to know something? On the other hand, let me tell you this. You could crank out obedience in every legalistic manner you wanted, but if in your heart you didn't want to do it and you were fighting against it, He would never give you the joy. Because, you see, to do good deeds without a right heart doesn't count.

Let me show you what I mean. The Bible talks about fruit. It talks about different kinds of fruit. And it talks about the fruit of the Spirit, and that's attitude stuff. And before there's ever the fruit in your life, such as winning people to Christ, or studying the Word of God, or whatever else the Bible talks about as fruit: Praise, giving, all the good works, but before the fruit on the outside means anything it's got to come from the fruit of the Spirit on the inside.

Now listen to this. Action fruit, things you do, without attitude fruit, what you feel, that's pure legalism. That's a Phariseesism. You can crack out all the stuff you want on the outside. You can be a legalist to the teeth like the Pharisees, and you'll never know joy. On the other hand, if your heart is a heart of obedience, and a heart of attitude, you can fail on the outside and God will give you the joy, because He sees the gracious obedient spirit in your heart. That's what He is after.

So the promise is this. Study the Bible. Why? Number one, it's the source of truth. Number two, it's the source of rejoicing. You say, "Hey, MacArthur, I really appreciate what you're saying. I've got news for you. I study the Bible all the time and I've got lots of pain. I've got lots of problems." Well,

I've got a verse for you, fortunately. I don't want to leave you hanging with that thought.

God doesn't tell you just exactly when you're going to get the joy, right? You might have to wait a little while. So in John 16, and He's looking at the disciples and says to them, "I'm leaving," and they're all sitting there moping, you know, they put all their proverbial eggs into one basket. Everybody left his trade. They've all been following Jesus for three years, and then Jesus ups and says one day, "I'm gone now, guys. I'm going to leave you and I'm going to have to go away. That's the way it is." And they're all going, "Whoa, wait a minute here, man. We joined this baby thinking the kingdom was going to come. What's wrong? Something's happened." And they were very sorrowful and they were very sad. And Jesus said in John 16:20, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and you shall be sorrowful - " now listen " - but your sorrow will be turned into joy."

In other words, you've got to realize sometimes that there's going to be sorrow before there's ever going to be joy. In fact, do you want to hear something interesting? If you didn't know sorrow, you wouldn't understand joy when it came. That's right. If you didn't know pain, you wouldn't know pleasure.

You know, I was reading recently an interesting little article that was saying the difference between an itch and a tickle cannot be defined medically, and yet a tickle is something that makes you happy and an itch is something that irritates. A very fine line. Did you know that the difference between pleasure and pain is very fine line. For example, boy, you know, sometimes there's nothing more wonderful than a really hot shower, and you know, you get it really hot and you just stick one elbow and you just uh-uh, and you just sort of ease in it, and it's pain, and pain, and then all of a sudden, ah, it's pleasure. Thin line between pain and pleasure.

You know, I played football when I was in college, and all through college, you know, I faced that thin line of pain and pleasure. You know, you torture your body like some kind of maniac, and it's pain and it's pain, but all the time you're loving it with some kind of horrendous kind of pleasure. The thin line between pain and pleasure.

And I guess if we didn't know pain, we wouldn't know pleasure. If we didn't know pain, we wouldn't know the joy that pleasure can bring. And I think one of the reasons that God allows sorrow in our lives is so that we will understand joy when it comes. And so He says you're going to have sorrow for a little while. Be patient. Listen, if you obey the Word of God, He'll give you that joy, maybe not instantaneously when you want it, but always when you need it.

So, why should I study the Bible? What should motivate me to Bible study? Number one, the Bible is the source of truth. Number two, the Bible is the source of joy. And I'll tell you, no matter what happens in my life externally and circumstantially, when I study the Word of God there is exhilaration

and a joy that is untouched by any circumstance.

Third thing, a third motivating force, a third reason to study the Bible is that the Word is the source of victory. I don't know about all of you, but I like to win. I don't like to lose. I lose a lot, but I don't like it, you know. I like to win. I figure if you're going to do something, do it all the way. My dad used to say that to me from the time I was a little kid. "Listen Johnny," he'd say, "If you're going to do it, do it to the best of your ability, or it isn't worth doing." So I grew up with that, the striving for excellence.

I like to win. I don't like to be under it. I like to be on top of it. And I see that in my own Christian life. I don't like to give an occasion to the adversary. I don't like to give him an advantage over me, as it says in Corinthians. I don't like to see Satan victorious. I don't like to see the world master me. I don't like to see the flesh override the Spirit. I want to win. I have a desire to win. I remember my football coach used to give us the typical Knute Rockne lecture about "you can't be beat if you won't be beat," and I guess we ought to be like that as Christians.

There's no reason to give in to the enemy. And as you study the Bible, you find out that the Word of God becomes the source of victory. David said this - and you remember it as well as I do - "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not - " what? " - sin against thee." The Word, then, is the source of victory over sin. As the Word of God is taken in, it becomes the resource which the Holy Spirit uses to direct us. It gives handles to the Holy Spirit.

You have no way of preventing yourself from being led into sin unless the Word of God is there so that the Holy Spirit can kick it into your conscious mind. I'll tell you something simple. As a Christian you'll never function on what you don't know. It'll never happen. You'll never be able to operate on the principle you never knew. You'll never be able to apply the truth you haven't discovered. So, as you feed into your mind the Word of God, it becomes a handle by which the Spirit of God directs and guides.

Now let's see, for an example, the 4th chapter of Matthew, the classic illustration of facing Satan with the Word of God. And here we meet Jesus Christ, and it says in verse 1, "Then was Jesus led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested - " or tempted " - by the devil." As far as God was concerned, it was a test because He wouldn't fail. As far as Satan was concerned, it was a temptation because he hoped He would. The word can mean either one, *peirasmos* can mean a testing or a temptation. It's a neutral word. It could mean good or bad. From Satan's angle, he wanted it to be bad. From God's angle, He knew that it would be good.

So the Spirit led Him into the wilderness knowing He'd pass the test. Satan was there waiting for Him, hoping He'd fail. "And after He had fasted for forty days and forty nights, He was afterward hungry." Not surprising. But it's interesting to me that because Jesus was such a perfect human being without sin His body must have had powers beyond anything that we would ever experience. He must have

been so strong, and so virile, and so much of whatever humanness could be in its untapped potential, at least as we know it, that He was not hungry appreciably for all of those forty days until afterward, when He really knew the gnawing pangs of hunger.

Finally after forty days, “the tempter came to him and said - ” and then He gives Him three temptations, and you remember them. But in each case, Jesus answered with the Word of God. First, “he said, If thou be the Son of God, command these stones be made bread.” What he’s really saying to Him is, “Listen, You’re the Son of God. You are God in human flesh. You’re the Messiah. You deserve better than this. What are You doing out in the devastation? What are You doing out here in the boondocks, up from Jericho? What are You doing out here in this wretched wilderness inhabited by wild beasts and creeping things? What are You doing out here starving to death? You’re the Son of God. Grab some satisfaction. Make some bread, man. You deserve it.”

And he was really tempting Him to go against God’s plan to grab his own satisfaction. He was saying, “Do your own thing. Don’t depend on God. God hasn’t met your need yet. Here You’ve been forty days. You’re hungry. You’re worthy of more than this.” He was really tempting Him to distrust the care of God.

“He answered, and said, ‘It is written - ’ and He quoted Deuteronomy “ - Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” What He was saying is, “Look, God promised He’d care for Me. I’ll keep My trust in His promise. I’ll never use My own powers to violate the promise of God.” He countered the temptation with the Word of God.

“Then the devil takes Him into the holy city - ” Jerusalem “ - elevates Him up to the pinnacle of the temple - ” probably that protruding strut that stuck out of the temple over the valley of Hinnom, which would be as much as 300 feet straight drop. Set Him up there and He said, “Why don’t you dive off? Just dive off? Cast Yourself down. After all - ” and the devil says, “You want to quote Scripture? I’ll quote it, too. He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear Thee up, lest that any time Thou dash Thy foot against the stone.”

“You want to trust God? You’re going to hang on to God You’re not going to make bread? You’re going to believe God? Well, why don’t You really believe God and take a swan dive off here and see if He fulfills His Word?” Sounds good. Satan’s clever. “You want to tell me how much You trust God’s Word? Here’s a good way to prove it. Dive off. Let Him catch You.”

“Jesus said, ‘It is written again, Thou shalt not put the Lord thy God to the test.’ ” “You trust God,” said Jesus, “You don’t presume on God. You believe Him to care for you in the trip. You don’t lay on the freeway. See? There’s a difference.

Satan then shows Him from a high mountain the kingdoms of the world. He says, "Look. I'll give you all that stuff if you fall down and worship me." "Jesus said unto him, 'Get out of here, Satan.'" "One was bad enough, two was intolerable, three is absolutely enough, leave. "For it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord God, and Him only shalt thou serve. And then the devil left him, and the angels came and ministered," and God fulfilled all His promises.

The point is this: Jesus answered the temptation of Satan three times, and every time He quoted directly out of the Old Testament. Listen, as a Christian, it is the capturing of biblical truth in your conscious mind that gives you the capacity to defeat Satan. You can't do it on your own. Jesus literally triumphed over the devil through the Word of God. It is the source of victory. You can't reason, you can't just try to hassle Satan. You know, it's incredible, people would imagine that they can argue Satan out of his temptation on their own logic. It can't be done.

Another interesting illustration is Luke 4:33. "In the synagogue there was a man, who had a spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice." He was a demon-possessed guy in the synagogue, which must have been rather disruptive for the services there. We've had a few in our church from time to time, so I guess I know the feeling. And he kept "saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with thee, *thou* Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us?" The guy's full of these demons and they're all hollering. "I know Thee who Thou art; the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst, he came out of him and hurt him not. And they were all amazed, and spoke among themselves, saying, What a word *is* this! for with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out."

You know what Jesus did? Right there, He established His authority, and His power over Satan with His Word. With one word, He could vanquish the demons. With one word He said, "Be gone, Satan." With one word, He chased the legion of demons out of a maniac of Gedara. And they said of Him, never a man spake like this man. He speaks as a man of authority, not like the scribes and the Pharisees. Listen, the Word of Jesus Christ is absolutely authoritative. Now when you know the Word of God, you'll know victory.

Let me show you one other illustration. In Ephesians 6:17, in Paul's discussion of the armor of the Christian, we find that it wraps up with this great piece of armor, verse 17. "Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." This is a tremendous text. Now he says as the final piece of armor is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Now, when you think of a sword or a Roman soldier, you think of some 5-foot thing that he flailed around. That is not what this is. That is the Greek word *rhomphaia*. This word here, the Greek word for sword, is *machaira*. And *machaira* was a Greek word referring to a short, small dagger.

The sword of the Spirit is not a great, huge, broad sword that you just flail around hoping you'll whack off the head of a demon sooner or later. It is not something used indiscriminately and wildly. It is not buying a great, big, fat hard cover New American Standard and beating demons in the head with it. It isn't that at all. The sword of the Spirit is a *machaira*. It is a dagger. It is short. It is incisive. It must hit a vulnerable spot or it doesn't do any damage. The sword of the Spirit, then, is not something general, but specific.

Now notice further, the word "word" here is not the word *logos*. The normal Greek word *logos* would be used of a general word. The Bible is the *logos*, Christ is the *logos*, a general word is the *logos*. When the Bible wants to speak of a specific it uses the word *rhema* or *rhmata*.

Now watch, this means a specific statement. Now are you ready for this? The sword of the Spirit is the specific statement of the Word of God that meets the specific point of temptation. You see? People say, "Well, I have the sword of the Spirit. I own a Bible." Listen, you could own a Bible warehouse and not have the sword of the Spirit.

Having the sword of the Spirit is not owning a Bible but knowing the specific principle in the Bible that applies at the specific point of temptation. And the only way you'll know victory in the Christian life is to know the principle of the Word of God to make that application at the specific point where Satan attacks, where the flesh attacks, where the world attacks. As you fill up yourself with the Word of God, it becomes the source of victory. Now you see, you can't even approach the Christian life without Bible study. It's the source of truth. It's the source of joy. It's the source of victory.

Let me give you a fourth one. The Word of God is also the source of growth. Everybody wants to grow. You know, if you've ever seen - we have in our church a wonderful ministry to the mentally retarded people. Some of them, believe it or not, are 30 years of age and they have a mind of a baby and they're still in diapers. You know, that's a sad thing. Bless those dear people. We love them, and God loves them, and I believe they have a special part in His kingdom. But it's such a sad thing to see somebody who didn't grow.

You know something that's almost just as sad? To see Christians that don't grow: Retarded, stunted, stultified, never grow. And the reason they don't grow is because they don't get into the Word. They may go to church and sit there, you know, and they take a thimble to church and it gets filled up, and they spill it on the steps leaving. Nothing ever happens. That's sad.

Peter says this, and this is a great text. First Peter 2:2. "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may - " what? " - grow by it." In other words, the Word is the source of growth. You know, and everybody wants to grow. You know, I'll tell you, when I was younger as a Christian, I remember when I was in seminary. In college, you know, you just kind of, I was just involved in all kinds of stuff, and goofing around, I didn't grow much at all. I got to seminary, man, and I got a taste

of the Word of God, and I just wanted so much of the Word that I could hardly stand it. I wanted to grow, and grow, and grow. And I got this tremendous desire to grow, and I realized there was only one way it was going to happen and that was if I got into the study of the Word of God.

And so during my seminary days, I determined to really systematically begin to study the Word of God, and that's when I began to grow. My growth - and I'll tell you, frankly - my growth is directly proportionate to the amount of time and effort I spend in the study of the Word of God. When I have a time period when I may not study the Word of God, I flatten out, and when I begin to study, I accelerate. I guess maybe the worst times in my life in terms of growth are my vacation times, when I just kind of flake out and don't do much and I kind of flatten out. That's good, though, because I get to meditate a little bit, but the growth pattern isn't nearly what it is when I'm really into the Word.

Interestingly enough, verse 1 kind of lays the ground work. It says that first of all we have to "lay aside all malice - " that's the Greek word *kakia*, which means general evil. You've got to "set aside sin, guile - "Guile means "deceit." It's the Greek word for "fish hook" " - hypocrisy, envy, and evil speaking."

In other words, you set aside all the evil things, confess your sin, get your life straightened out, get your act cleaned up, then you hit the Word with a tremendous desire, and then you begin to grow. That's what the Word can do In your life, make you grow. You know, the more you grow, the more exciting it becomes. The Word is a source of life, you mature, you're enriched, you grow stronger, and as you grow stronger you're able to defeat Satan. As you grow stronger, you know more about God and His character. You're enriched in every possible way.

In John 6:63, Jesus said this. "The words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit and, *they* are life." Jeremiah said, "Thy words were found and I did eat them." Feeding on the Word of God. And again in James 1:18 it says, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth."

The Word is a life giver. The Word is a life sustainer. The Word is a life builder. It is tremendous nourishment. I think It's 1 Timothy 4 that adds to our understanding of this, in verse 6 he says, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ - " listen to this great line " - nourished up in the words of faith." The Word nourishes us. It feeds us. It builds us. It causes us to grow.

The end of 2 Peter, after he's given the tremendous statements about the collapse of the universe and he's talked about the elements melting with fervent heat and all those other things, and how it's all going to come down in a crash, he says, "What should we do? We should grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ." To grow, to grow, and we grow as we feed on the Word of God.

God wants us mature. He wants us built up. He wants us strong. And, in fact, you know, if you examine 1 John 2, you'll find the pattern of growth right there, one of the most important scriptures in

all the Bible. Listen to what it says. "I write unto you, fathers, because you have known Him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because you have known the Father."

Now you see three categories: fathers, young men, and little children. And you'll notice three differences. I write unto you, little children, you've known the father. I write unto you, young men, you've overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, fathers, you know Him who was from the beginning. Now do you know what those three things are? Those are categories of spiritual growth. Those are not literally little children, young men, and fathers. It wouldn't do any good to write the verse to little children. They couldn't read it, anyway. It's talking about levels of spiritual growth.

Now we all start out as little children. We all start out and we know the Father. That's spiritual "Da-Da." You don't know much when you're a new Christian, but you know Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so. God is my Father and it's great and so forth. Spiritual "goo-goo," see? But you don't want to stay there. That's really sad.

You go to the second level, young men. What is the characteristic of a young man, "he has overcome the wicked one," past tense. Who is the wicked one? Satan. You say, "You mean to tell me that I could reach the place in my life where I actually overcome Satan?" Absolutely right. You mean I can say, "I have overcome the wicked one?" That's right. How? Verse 14. "I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known Him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one."

Now listen to this. To overcome the wicked one, Satan, you'd have to be strong. There's only one way to be strong and that's to have the Word abiding in you. Now listen. Do you know what a spiritual young man is? A spiritual young man is somebody who really knows the Word, somebody who really knows the Word. Here's why I say that.

Satan, according to 2 Corinthians 11, comes disguised as an angel of light. I believe Satan, according to the Bible, spends 99.9% of his time in false religious systems. I think the bars, and the prostitution problems, and the crime, and the lust, and the world, and the materialism, and all the rest of that crud, I think all that stuff is pretty well taken care of by the flesh. You read Galatians chapter 5. The works of the flesh are these. And they list them all. I don't think Satan is running around poking you in the ribs about some little sin. I think Satan is developing world-wide systems of evil. Satan is appearing as an angel of light. His ministers are angels of light. He works in false religions. And a spiritual young man, listen, is somebody who overcomes Satan in the sense that he knows enough about the Word of God that he is not enticed by false religions. He, rather, is angered by it.

For example, the characteristic of a spiritual child is, according to Ephesians 4:14, he is “tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine.” Spiritual babies have trouble with false doctrine. Spiritual young men are people who know their Bible. They know their doctrine so that false doctrine from Satan doesn't appeal to them at all.

But there's a third level. he says, “I write unto you fathers because you've known Him *who was* from the beginning.” Now listen to this. Do you know who the father is? That's the person who's gone beyond the page. He doesn't just know doctrine, he knows the God behind the doctrine, see? Now in these three steps, you have the progress of spiritual growth. We start out as babies, and as we feed on the Word we become strong. We never overcome the flesh, but we can overcome the world. Our faith does that, 1 John 5 says. We can overcome Satan's efforts of false religion. Doctrine does that. We'll never overcome the flesh. That will always be a problem. But we can have the joy of overcoming Satan's false systems of religion.

I've never seen it happen. I can tell you every time when a guy or a gal gets to the place of being a spiritual young man, they invariably get to the place where false religion makes them angry and they want to go out and fight the cults. And then as they mature past that, they're not so concerned with fighting the cults. They begin to get a taste of who God is. They begin to plumb the depths of the mind of the eternal God, and they begin to stretch toward being a spiritual father and walking in the presence of the Holy One. That's where we ought to go in our growth.

Listen, you cheat yourself if you stay a baby. You cheat yourself if you stay a spiritual young man and all you know is doctrine. You've got to get to the place where you've begun walk in the very presence of the God of the universe, where you really begin to touch the person Himself. That's the ultimate end of growth. So, when you study the Word it becomes the source of growth. Just like it is the source of truth, the source of joy, and the source of victory.

Let me give you just two more. I believe, also, that the Word of God is to be studied because it is the source of power. You know it is the Word of God that infuses us with power and there's nothing worse than feeling like an impotent Christian. You know you read Acts 1:8. “You shall receive power.” And some guy gets u and says that word “power” is *dunamis*. You shall be dynamite, you know, and you hear him say, “Man, you ought to be exploding all over the world.” And you say to yourself, “Exploding? I don't even fizzle. I think I'm a dud. Nothing. I don't have the power.”

Somebody says to you, “You ought to go out there and win people to Jesus Christ.” And you say, “You're kidding. Not me. You know, I'm like Moses. I have a - I can't talk.” Now, you see, we really fight around with our impotence. We don't know what the power is. Listen. The Word of God infuses you with power.

Listen. From my own life I can tell you, the more I know about the Word of God the less I fear about any situation, because I know what the resource is for that situation. The Word of God becomes a source of power. In fact, it's a source of power every way you look at it. In the book of Hebrews it says in 4:12, "The word of God *is* quick, and powerful - " quick and powerful " - sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit ... and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

This is a powerful book. Let me tell you, you pick this thing up and read it and it will cut you up. It's powerful stuff. It's a powerful book. The apostle Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes." And, you know, sometimes you go off with some guy and you start opening up the gospel and you can see the power of the gospel of God just crumble every bit of philosophy that guy spent 20 years building up.

In Ephesians 4:23 it says, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind." In Romans 12 it says that we can be transformed by the renewing of our mind. In 2 Corinthians 3:18 it says that we can literally be transformed by the Holy Spirit into the very glory of Jesus Christ.

As you focus on the Word of God it has a power in your life that's incredible. As you meditate on it, it empowers you. You know, it's kind of like the computer deal, you know the old computer thing, GIGO, garbage in, garbage out. Whatever you pump in to your computer is just what's going to come regurgitating out in your life. And as you feed in the Word of God, as you pump in the Word of God, it is going to come right back out when your buttons get pushed. It's the source of energy, the source of power.

In fact, in Ephesians there's a, 3rd chapter, just tremendously rich, the first three chapters of Ephesians, the apostle Paul is saying, "Now, I want you to learn this, and learn this, and learn this." And it's just nothing but theology, theology, theology, right through verse 13. More theology, theology, theology. Great truths, incredible truths, We've been blessed with all spiritual blessings from the heavenlies. We've been forgiven. We've been redeemed. We've been accepted in the beloved. We've been given wisdom and prudence. We've been given the information of the knowledge of the ages to know the eternal plan of God. We've been granted the Holy Spirit. We've been sealed with the Spirit. We have the guarantee of the Spirit. All these incredible things are ours, and he goes on and on and on.

We've been made on new man. We are the habitation of the Spirit. We are the household of God. We are the family of God. The middle wall has been broken down between Jew and Gentile, and we've come together in one body, the body of Jesus Christ. We have the unsearchable riches of Christ that are ours. To us has been dispensed the mysteries of God. Incredible riches are ours. And he goes on and on, and on. And he prays in chapter 1, "I pray God, that you will understand, that the eyes of your understanding would be opened, that you would understand and comprehend these incredible truths."

And after having said all that, if you'll just take a grip on these truths, if you'll just learn these truths, he says this in 3:20. Listen to it. "Now to him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all you can ask or think, according to the power that works in us." See? Man, the resources. Did you ever think about the fact that you can do everything you can think? Did you ever think about the fact that you can do above everything you can think? Did you ever think about the fact that you can do exceeding abundantly above all you can ask or think? That's a lot of power, isn't it? No sense flopping around on one cylinder, frankly, with those kind of resources. As you feed in the Word of God it has a powerful effect. It makes your life an energy source in confrontation with anybody, anytime.

So we're to study the Word of God because it is the source of truth, the source of happiness, the source of victory, the source of growth, the source of power, and one more. We are to study the Bible because it is the source of guidance, guidance. You know, whenever I want to know what God wants me to do, I go to the Word. People say, "Oh, I'm searching for the will of God." You hear them say that all the time. I wrote a book about that called *Found: God's Will*, just to let people know it wasn't lost.

Everybody wants to find – where is God's will? They think God is the universal Easter bunny who stashes it in the bushes and sits in heaven and says, "You're getting warmer." That isn't true. God's will is easy to find. It's right in His book. If you study the Bible, you'll find over and over again the phrase, "this is the will of God, this is the will of God, this is the will of God." And you can know the will of God by studying the Word of God.

What does Psalm 119:105 say? It says simply that the "word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Pretty simple. The Word is a guide. As I open the Word of God, it guides me. It's amazing how God speaks to me through His Word. If I have a decision to make, I find the place in the Bible maybe where somebody in the Old Testament or New Testament grappled with a similar decision. I try to see how God led there. Or I go to a text in the Bible that gives me a direct answer.

God guides us out of His book. He directs us out of His book. You know, there's a subjective element to this, too. As a Christian, we have the Holy Spirit. First John 2:20 says that the Spirit dwells within us. First John 2:27 says we have an anointing from God. We don't need human wisdom. The Holy Spirit will teach us.

And that happens is this. When you study the Bible, the Holy Spirit in you takes the Word of God and makes a personal application that will give you guidance. It's an incredible combination to have the truth and the resident truth teacher, and in combination they guide the believer.

What have we said, then? Great things. The benefits of studying the Bible? It is the source of truth, happiness, victory, growth, power and guidance. Now let me say this, and we'll close for this time.

What should be your response? When you say, "Boy, I ought to act on that. If this is really true, if the Bible is going to do all these things, then what should I do?" Let me just give you some quick ones. Are you ready? Now watch.

Number one, believe it. Believe it. And by that I mean if it says it, believe it deep down. Jesus said to Peter one time, "Will you also go away?" And he said, "Lord, where am I going to go? You've got the words of eternal life. You couldn't get rid of me if You wanted to. I found the source. I'm sticking here." If it's true, then hang in there. Believe it.

Secondly, honor it. If this is the Word of God, then honor it. In Job 23:12, you have that magnificent statement of Job where he says, "I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." Listen, if this is the Word of God and it will do everything we just said, believe it and honor it. In fact, in Psalm 138:2 the psalmist said, "God has magnified His word - " get this one " - above all His name." Isn't that incredible? God honors the Word.

You know, in Ephesus they worshiped the goddess Diana or Artemis. Man, I'm telling you, we think of the goddess Diana, you know, as some svelte, beautiful thing. The goddess Diana was a horrible, ugly, black beast that was one of the most gross looking things you ever saw. But they worshiped that stupid looking thing constantly. You know why? Because there was a superstition that said it fell out of heaven, and if it fell out of heaven it was worthy of honor.

Let me tell you something about the Bible. It fell out of heaven. That statue didn't. This really did. It's worthy of honor. So believe it and honor it.

Thirdly, I would suggest to you to love it. If this is all true, you better love it. The psalmist cried out and said, "Oh how I love Thy law." Oh, how I love Thy law. Psalm 119, he said that. And I love the 19th psalm, he said, the law is sweeter to me than honey from the honeycomb and more to be desired than gold yea, than much fine gold. Read psalm 19:7-10, one of the most beautiful portions. If this is what it says, then believe it, and honor it, and love it.

And let me give you a fourth thing. Just to remind you what we said earlier, obey it. If it's really true, obey it, respond to it, say "yes" to it when it speaks, continue in it. Follow the admonition of 1 John 2:5. "Whosoever keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." If it's really what it claims, then believe it, and honor it, and love it, and obey it at any price.

In fact, in Romans 6:16 it says, "To whom you yield yourselves as servants, you obey." If you yield yourselves as servants to God, you obey God. Just part of the bargain. Obey it.

Fifth - I like this one - fight for it. If it's really true, fight for it. In fact, in Jude 3 it says, "Earnestly contend for the faith - " and "the faith" there means "the body of revealed truth." Agonize for it.

Engage yourself in a battle to defend the Word of God. If it's really true, if it really can do the things we said, believe it, honor it, love it, obey it, and fight for it.

Let me give you another one. Preach it. Second Timothy 4:2, Paul simply said this, "Timothy, preach - " what? " - the word." If it's really true, preach it.

Lastly, believe it, honor it, love it, obey it, fight for it, preach it. Are you ready for this one? Study it. In fact, to Timothy he said in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." And the word "rightly dividing" means cutting it straight. Cut straight, man. Study it so you can straight out interpret it properly. Cut it straight.

And Paul was using the language of a tentmaker. And a tentmaker made a tent out of a lot of different animal skins, and he took every one of those animal skins and he cut each piece properly so he could put the whole together. If you don't cut every piece right, the whole thing doesn't fit together. And what he is saying is you can't have theology without exegesis. You can't have a total theology of Christianity unless you have the verses rightly interpreted. Cut it straight and that takes study.

Spurgeon said, "Every Christian should study the Bible till his blood is bibline." Do you know what they said about Apollos? They commended Apollos in the New Testament, said he was mighty in the Scriptures. So my prayer for you to start with, then, is that you study the Word of God, that you proclaim it, that you fight for it, that you obey it, that you love it, that you honor it, that you believe it.

Now, in our next two studies we're going to discuss how to study the Bible. Let's share in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank You that we can approach Your book with such anticipation, knowing what it will do in our lives and through we can glorify You, in Jesus name, Amen.

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