

## God's Word Is Alive!

Do you yet realize? When you approach Scripture with *openness* to learn, practice and change, you are holding *life*?

### ***God's Word is alive!***

#### *1. God's Word possesses life.*

For the word of God is **living and active** (Hebrews 4:12A, **emphasis**).

... the **living** and **enduring** word of God (1 Peter 1:23B, **emphasis**).

The Bible is alive in itself! This impacts how we learn, lead and live. This is God's own Word to us. His love letter points us back to Himself, the only source of eternal life. We only experience fullness of life by becoming familiar with God's Word as a good friend. How does Jesus help us to understand what really counts in life? What does the Community-God think about His Words?

"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63).

#### *2. God's Word births life.*

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God (1 Peter 1:23).

What is the difference between something that is perishable and imperishable? The Word of God not only has life in itself, but it also gives new life to others. This quality of life lasts forever. Notice the word-picture of a new birth. A person is created through responding to God's Word who never existed before...literally! The highest power that a living thing has is to reproduce itself...and that is exactly how the Spirit of God uses His Word.

[God] chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created (James 1:18).

#### *3. God's Word transforms life.*

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect ["behold" NASB] the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18).

### ***How are we changed?***

Very simply! As we gaze on the glory of Jesus Christ revealed in Scripture, the Spirit will change us into this likeness of Jesus Christ, one step after another. The Bible is the first place we go for direction and wisdom. Even after we become children of God through faith, God's Spirit still has a job ahead of Him...remaking us into the image of Jesus.

#### *Please listen carefully.*

As we take our eyes off ourselves and fix them unwaveringly on Jesus, the Spirit will transform us. God designed us so that we become what we behold. What are we inputting into our minds? What occupies our leisurely thoughts? How are we programming our thought patterns? What is our source? Ourselves? Our society? Our peers? Our problems? Or Jesus?

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God...you accepted it...[as] the word of God, which is **at work in you** who believe (1 Thessalonians 2:13, **emphasis**).

God never pushes the “reset” button on our minds when we are saved. The old mind with its habits of self-occupation, self-absorption, craving for sensation, lust for excitement, and appetites for counterfeit life...all this must be displaced and replaced with a passionate pursuit of what releases life. We make choices.

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:4b-5).

The Word of God purges dead things from our lives and shatters fortresses so that the Word can also work its transforming power into our lives. Then we can finally experience the freedom God desires. The Word of God possesses an inexhaustible depth and gives us the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:6). Of course, only in conjunction with our transforming responses to partner with God to think His thoughts and walk in His ways.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of you mind (Romans 12:2).

#### 4. *God's Word sustains life.*

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good (1 Peter 2:2).

I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread (Job 23:12).

Bread was the main staple in the Middle East. Life demands food and nourishment to sustain it. A young infant cannot live without milk and a workman cannot labor without daily nourishment. We are encouraged to taste how good the **Lord** is through the Word of God. Value it more than any earthly treasure. Unless we passionately desire God's Word, we will be spiritually emaciated and suffer from malnutrition. One key reason for so much spiritual weakness to abide in Christ and to resist in the church today lies right here. This includes hard work (2 Timothy 2:15), but also a delight and joy in our innermost being (Jeremiah 15:16).

#### 5. *God's Word develops life.*

... to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel (Ezra 7:10 NASB).

What do we do with God's Word? How do we respond? Just like a wall is built one brick upon the next, so we need to patiently study, practice and learn Scripture, one paragraph and one book upon the next. We have a lifetime to enjoy this adventure so enjoy the ride as we imitate Ezra. Ezra modeled full-orbed learning as he set his heart...

- To *study* God's Word.
- To *practice* God's Word.
- To *pass along* God's Word.

Like in a relay race, we never complete the race until we pass on the baton and it crosses the finish line. We never really learn truth until we pass it on. "*Each one teach one.*"

To whom will we pass on one thing that we learn this week?

Respond with 4 *H*'s.

- **H**andle it! – 2 Timothy 2:15
- **H**eed it! – Matthew 13:9
- **H**ide it! – Psalm 119:11
- **H**old it out! – Philippians 2:16

*“These are living words that are multiplied as they are passed on.”*

So, don't be an **echo**, but a **voice**.

*What's the difference?*

I hike up to a canyon and shout with a loud **voice**, freely choosing my words. An **echo** returns, a weakened version of my **voice**, a bit distorted, without life and fading out quickly. Many of us have learned to be a Christian **echo** and pass it on what they have heard from others without much discernment or making this part of their lives. We listen to a multitude of sermons, fly 100's of miles to a conference, read libraries of books.

Then in our Bible-centered group, someone asks: *“How did this passage impact you?”*

An **echo** sound like, *“Pastor XYZ says this means....?”* Or *“The footnote in my Bible says....”* Let's **first** give the Spirit of God space and leisurely time to communicate God's heart to our heart. As we mull it over, take steps to act on it, and then evaluate the results, truth moves from a hollow **echo** to a powerful **voice** in us.

**And** at the right time, you may want to look at the valuable Bible helps others provide and stand on their shoulders. I'm only advocated to **first** learn directly from Scripture and then in your natural learning culture. *Both/And*. Obedience-focused learning and wholehearted allegiance play leading roles, especially when a passage cuts across the grain of our self-life.

God is here and [His] speaking these truths is back of all other Bible truths; without them there could be no revelation at all” (A.W. Tozer, *“The Pursuit of God”*).

God's Word is actually alive with an inexhaustible life and vitality because it's God's Word illuminated and empowered by God's Spirit. First century disciples were transformed through Scripture just as His 21<sup>st</sup> century followers are. There is a spiritual explosiveness in the Bible that makes men and women new and can impact whole nations and societies. To know this Book of books is worth whatever time and effort it may demand.

*I've embraced God's Word as my authority.*

The Word of God reveals the God of the Word. His Love-Letter shows us the heart and mind of God. The counsel of Scripture is my plumb line, shaping my approach to life and ministry. Scripture is my **authority** over heritage, upbringing, opinions, dreams, visions, prophetic words, experience and all secondary authoritative sources. A *“naturally supernatural”* life aligns with God's original design and puts truth into action. It feels merely natural yet taps into His supernatural partnership.

*What is your relationship to God's Word, the place He has chosen to reveal His mind and heart?*

*How much time, effort and hard work are we putting in to deepen our relationship with the God of the Word through the Word of God?*

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).