

Welcomes God's Word as our Authority

Since the Bible is **God's** Word, then it has the same **authority** as God does, when it's rightfully understood. The Bible isn't a mixed bag of human ideas gathered over the centuries from which we pick and choose.

Our attitude and view of the Bible greatly impact our ability to understand it. In fact, our **attitude** towards Scripture is one of the four powerful motivation for adult learners, and *joy* is a hallmark (1 Thessalonians 1:6b). Rapidly read Psalm 119, simply to see the attitude the writer has for Scripture. Rejoice in, delight in the wonderful things, set heart on, set my heart free, heart faints with longing for, joyfully sing about, more precious than..., sweeter than honey, love, , joy to the heart.

Knowing the Bible as the Word of **God** releases our highest good. It's crucial that we approach Scripture as the Word of **God**, The Bible is not a mixed bag of human ideas gathered over the centuries from which we pick and choose. If the Bible is God's Word, then it has the same **authority** as God does, when it's rightfully understood. And our attitude and view of the Bible greatly impact our ability to understand it.

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 (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

1. God's Word is inspired by God. The word translated "*inspired*" in some of the older Bible translations literally means, "*breathed out by God.*" The Bible the product of His creative Spirit. The New Testament (NT) writers approach Scripture as the human form of God's own witness, possessing His **authority**. Certainly, we feel the uniqueness of the human writer alive and fully engaged and energetically visible within the texts of Paul or Jeremiah or Hosea or John. Still Jesus Himself says that every detail of God's Word can be counted on, even down to the smallest letter and the tiniest stroke of the pen, since this is God's Word with His authority, more up-to-date than our preferred source of news.

Yes, the Bible is a collection of historical accounts that happened 1,000's of years ago. These stories are also divine and timeless. So, we ourselves are in the narrative, if we make the effort to really see. The Bible stories are our own story. **You are in it.** To read Scripture as a mere spectator looking on is to miss the main purpose of its inclusion. Scripture is **our** story.

"[God] spoke a Book and lives in His spoken words, constantly speaking His words and causing the power of them to persist across the years"
(A.W. Tozer, "*The Pursuit of God*").

2. God's Word is authoritative, so we know...

- What's right – "*for teaching*"
- What's **not** right – "*for...rebuking*"
- How to get right – "*for...correcting*"
- How to stay right – "*for...training in righteousness*"

3. God's Word is effective to develop...

- ...**maturity**, who we are, character ("*so that the man of God*"). The man (or woman) of God becomes complete, mature in character, in fit condition, by hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, and responding to the Word of God. God's people in Scripture, like Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Elijah, David, Esther, Mary, Paul, and Timothy, and in

church history, were men and women who were devoted to knowing and doing God's Word.

- ...**ministry**, what we do ("*may be thoroughly equipped for every good work*"). God's Word also outfits us to partner with Jesus in His ongoing adventure. Scripture, properly studied and understood, deepens in us responses of serving the highest and best in others. The study of the Bible is not intended to merely accumulate information, but to change lives and impact ministry. Now we partner with the Trinity to serve others as God's "*thoroughly equipped*" people.

"I think a new world will arise out of the religious mists when we approach our Bible with the idea that it is not only a book which was once spoken, but a book which is now speaking. [God is] speaking is in the continuous present" (Tozer, "*The Pursuit of God*").

Learn to embrace God's Word as **our authority**. Then each of us will be in the ideal setting to form that indispensable habit of inwardly gazing on God until we are transformed into the likeness of Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18).

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" (Jesus in 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. Through responding to God's Word, God creates a person who never existed before...literally! The highest power that a living thing has is to reproduce itself. That's 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).

4. God's Word sustains life 1 Peter 2:2).

5. *God's Word develops life* (Ezra 7:10).

Click here to an expanded PDF on what's above, *God's Word Is Alive!*

How do you view the Word of God?

One of the powerful inner motivations for learning is our attitude toward Scripture. And the Spirit of God gives us insight into His Word.

How valuable do we see the Bible? And do our life-responses match this?

If I were given land with a gold producing mine on it, I would first begin to explore the possibilities that exist. Just as God has chosen to hide gold in the rock so we must dig it out, we also need to dig out the treasure in His Word.

“God does not hide truth **from** us, but He hides it **for** us
that the discovery is more precious” (A. Nonomous).

Read the verses below and identify the word-picture. *What does this natural metaphor convey? How does this relate to God's Word?* Amplify with your own responses **before** going on to read my suggestions. Enjoy the adventure. And be blown away as you are resourced by God's amazing Word, revealed through these powerful word-pictures below. Savor them. Personalize each one. Maybe even doodle a picture in the margin to make it memorable to stretch our visual learning.

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

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth
(Psalm 119:103).

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, cp also Luke 8:11).

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God
(Ephesians 6:17).

1. **Food** for satisfying my hunger.

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

How often do you eat food each week? If we don't eat, our body goes into crisis mode. When we eat, our body metabolizes nutrition into a form that our bodies can use to renew itself. Similarly, in the spiritual realm, we intake spiritual nutrition as fuel and metabolize by responding to form experience over time to renew our minds (Romans 12:2).

The aim is for us to see life differently, from a God's-eye view. Studies show that this renewing actually changes the neurological structure in our brain. Over time it's then modified by our experience, re-internalized in a different fashion, and given more fuel to further consolidate this truth.

Listening to a sermon on Sunday once a week is good. One pre-digested snack per week, however, will make a person anemic and weak. If we will ever mature to become all that God has for us, we must fetch our own knife and fork. Begin to feed ourselves spiritually with the same intensity that we eat physically instead of being satisfied to only be spoon-fed pre-digested food by others. No matter how tasty! Eat a meal from Scripture at least daily for spiritual health.

2. **Honey** for delighting my taste.

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth
(Psalm 119:103).

As we personally experience the love of the Lord, we know how sweet He is. Honey in those days was sweet, thick, and was not gobbled quickly. Their type of honey slid down slowly so they could savor it. Honey is designed to linger, like with Scripture.

We discover the care of the relational Trinity for us (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) most clearly through His Word, His Love-letter to us. Jeremiah says that the Word is a delight and joy to his heart (Jeremiah 15:16). Jesus quoted or alluded to Scripture hundreds of times. The Word of God is sweet to the Spirit-enlightened person because the Spirit co-authored the Bible. Read Palm 119, like Jesus must have. Be captivated by the emotional love the psalmist had for God's Word.

3. *Seed for bearing ripe fruit.*

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, cp also Luke 8:11).

As we input the Word, we are planting spiritual seed deep within. Seed has life in itself. Seed reaches out beyond itself into its environment for what it needs to flourish, thrive and blossom. Seed takes time to mature and bear fruit in its season, so keep patiently sowing into and tilling the garden of your heart. "*Feed & Weed.*" *Feed* our lives through the Word of God in order to grow and *weed* whatever resists God's truth.

4. *Sword for protecting from the enemy.*

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17).

Satan is the father of lies. We are at his whim when we don't know Reality through this Word. A well-known adage goes like this: "*If you don't know what you stand for, you'll fall for anything.*" God's Word is living and powerful, judging the thoughts and intents of our hearts (Hebrews 4:12-13). Particularly take note of where God's Word cuts across the fiber of the self-absorbed and flesh-driven desires of our lives. God longs for us to give Him wholehearted allegiance. Develop a fire in our heart to know God through His Word so we deepen relationship.

For max growth as followers of Jesus, we must grow to the point where we are inwardly motivated to invest regular (for me, daily) time alone with God in His Word. When my fire is lit from within, then I more to give away, and also garner more from others.

*For additional pictures of the benefits of God's word, see the PDF **God's Word Is Like...***

Take some time to meditate on the verse below since God's Word brings a perspective on life that is correct. **Meditation** in Scripture simply means to think on the verse more deeply and check how it could impact your life.

[You] welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 1:6b).

The 3-week-old Thessalonian believers welcomed God's Word, even embracing His life-giving effectiveness in suffering because of the joy given by the Spirit 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 21st 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.

Here is a "tipping point" for change for followers of Jesus. When we notice something in Scripture that does **not** align with our present views and responses, how do we respond?

- *Do we seek to find an alternate meaning to clear and crucial texts that cut across our choices to control our own lives, fitting Scripture into our existing lives without changing?*
- *Do we partner with the Spirit to change our lives to align with God's Word?*

The Bible is not malleable. There are absolutes...and also numerous "Both/And" nuances. Observe the difference. **Authentic tolerance** has strong values and beliefs, absolutes in some areas. Learn to discern. God has spoken. And we are simply attempting to understand what Jesus says so we can *do* it, not vote on whether it fits into our current lives. Look at Jesus. He practices an **authentic tolerance**, yet without the anything-goes of the current counterfeit tolerance. As followers of Jesus, He is our Model.

*Personally, I've embraced God's Word as my **authority** and God has transformed my life (and is still transforming me!)*

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).

Next Steps. Personalize it your needs.

- Spend time in the PDF's scattered on this page to give more depth to our love and appreciation for God's Word: **2 Timothy 3:16-17, God's Word Is Alive, God's Word Is Like..., Meditation, Authentic Tolerance.**
- Go on to the second of the seven essentials to develop for natural learning, **Relies on the Spirit to Partner in Insight.**
- Put what you are learning into practice by launching a SmallGroup to cultivate such a culture of natural learning. **Philippians, Joy Overflowing, Word & Spirit**, interlaces the study of this joyful book of Philippians with a natural learning culture interwoven. Allow this to act as your *Companion* or your guide. It's available for a low introductory price at Amazon.com.
- If your love and appreciation for God's Word as our authority still wanes a bit, rapidly read **Psalms 119**. Read **only** for two ideas. (1) The attitudes the Psalmist has for God's Word. (2) For the benefits from Scripture (described with ten different synonyms).