

The Power of God's Word

RELATED RESOURCES

On Bible and The Power of God's Word

- Inductive Bible Study: Application
- Meditation - An Application of Inductive Bible Study
- Primer on Biblical Meditation
- Memorizing His Word
- Expository Notes on 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Timothy 3:17
- Expository Notes on 1 Peter 2:1; 1 Peter 2:2
- [Authority of God's Word - study on 2Timothy 3:16-17](#)
- [Ezra 7:10 - Exposition of the "Ezra 7:10 Principle"](#)
- [Job's "Secret" of perseverance?](#)
- [A Primer on the Lost Art of Biblical Meditation](#)
- [Watch the incredible youtube video The Indestructible Book - How We Got our English Bible - 3 hours, 37 minutes - It will make you weep!](#)
- [1 Peter 2:1-3 Hungering for God's Word - John MacArthur](#)
- [1 Peter 2:1-3 Desiring the Word - John MacArthur](#)
- [1 Peter 2:1-3 Longing for the Word - John MacArthur](#)
- [1 Peter 2:1-3 Cultivating a Hunger for God's Word - John MacArthur](#)
- [The Sufficiency of Scripture - John MacArthur](#)
- [The Sufficiency of Scripture - Part 1 - John MacArthur](#)
- [The Sufficiency of Scripture - Part 2 - John MacArthur](#)
- Life Hid and Not Hid by Alexander Maclaren
- [The Necessity of Scripture - William D. Barrick](#)
- [The Bible "A Lamp Unto My Feet" by Greg Herrick](#)
- [Rationality, Meaningfulness & Precision of Scripture - Robert L. Thomas](#)
- [The Authority of Scripture - excellent article by Richard L. Mayhue](#)
- [The Word-Filled Life - Developing the Mind of Christ by Hampton Keathley III](#)
- [Psalm 1 Delighting in the Law of God - John Piper](#)
- [Psalm 1 Meditate on the Word of the Lord Day and Night - John Piper](#)
- [Psalm 1 Delighting In The Word - Scott Grant](#)
- [Psalm 1:2 - Notes on this Passage - C H Spurgeon](#)
- [Psalm 1:1,2 Separated and Saturated - Warren Wiersbe](#)
- [The Authority & Power of the Word upon the Heart - J C Philpot](#)
- The Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures - A W Pink
- Profiting From the Word - A W Pink
- [Benefits Arising From the Word of God - Charles Simeon's Sermon on Micah 2:7](#)

What You Will Find on This Page

- Introduction and Instructions
- Blank chart for Class to fill out
- Chart filled out to aid discussion
- Explanatory and background notes for the leader
- References for discussion with introductory quote
- [Quotations related to Word of God](#)

THE POWER
and

SUFFICIENCY OF GOD'S WORD:

A Simple Inductive Study using Select Scriptures

Introduction and Instructions

GOAL: The objective of this study is to examine the Scripture and chart out the truth revealed about the benefits or promises of God's Word and what our responsibilities are in order to realize those promises. In this exercise the student should see the value of simply observing the text and interpreting the passage based on those observations. The ultimate goal is for each student to comprehend the power and sufficiency of God's Word, so that they leave the discussion like newborn babes who have a passion and desire for the pure life giving milk of God's Word. Pray much before, during and after the study, for our battle is not against flesh and blood but is spiritual and the enemy of our souls hates the Word of God.

This study could be easily tailored for a Sunday School class or small group session by handing out a chart like the one below (without the columns filled in of course!). Another handout could be the Scriptures you would like to discuss, which has the advantage of saving time (if time is at a premium) and assures that everyone is reading the same translation. Alternatively the students could observe the passages in their own Bible, which is always a good practice. The Scriptures used to fill out this chart are from the NAS translation, because it is one of the most literal (BIBLE VERSIONS How Literal is your translation?)

If you have access to an overhead projector, prepare a copy of the chart to fill in as the class observes each verse. Alternatively you could fill out the chart on a white board if available.

You probably have some favorite verses that are not included in this brief survey and you are encouraged to add or substitute as you desire. It would be best to select verses that are not controversial and in which it is easy to observe **Man's responsibility** and **God's promise or benefit**.

Note that the explanatory comments in parentheses are to be used by the leader as deemed appropriate to guide and amplify the discussion. It is a good practice to briefly establish the context of the individual verses to ensure accurate interpretation of the passages.

Copy and paste the handout [chart below](#) noting that the columns for "Our Responsibility" and "Our Reward" are to be filled in on an overhead transparency or a white board as your class offers their observations on each verse. You might want to substitute other Scriptures that speak of the sufficiency of the Word of God for all life and godliness and the rewards thereof (e.g., Psalm 19:7, 8, 9, 10, 11 "in keeping them there is great reward"). You will probably need to delete some of the Scriptures if your discussion time is limited. In a test run with a group of Indonesian Christian students, going through this chart interactively took about 90 minutes, but even then the last 4-5 verses had to be discussed hurriedly! Obviously the length of time depends on how long you spend explaining the background context and whether you illustrate or explain some of the Scriptures with ancillary material in the [Leader's Guide](#).

Read the Bible as if God were speaking to you. He is!

Give it a try! Read each Scripture and simply observe what your responsibility is in order for the benefit or promise of God to be realized or "activated". Keep it simple. It will still be profound and convicting because it is God's pure word. Let the Scriptures speak for themselves and guard against subjective comments such as "I feel this verse means...", etc. Direct the participants back to pure observation... what does the text say. It is only when we allow God's Spirit to speak directly to us through the Word that we are able to determine what He meant when He inspired the human authors to write the passage. At strategic points during the discussion you will have opportunity to insert application type questions or comments, some of which are suggested in the [Leader's Guide](#).

This study would be excellent "warm up" prior to another Bible study because it emphasizes the power and sufficiency of God's Word and it also makes the point that any Bible study that is going to have significant life transforming impact "stay very close" to the pure milk of God's Word. Bible studies that drift away from "thus saith the LORD" may "feel good" but only God's Word discerns the thoughts and intentions of our heart. Only God's Word provides everything the believer needs for true, fulfilling and abundant life.

Related Resource: [God's Word is a Word of...](#) (see Scriptural descriptions)

My Favorite Illustration of the Power of the Word of God - Spurgeon who experienced the **power** of God's Word, went on to become one of the greatest preachers of God's Word. The following Spurgeon anecdote beautifully illustrates the supernatural power of God's Word...

The renowned preacher **C H Spurgeon** once tested an auditorium in which he was to speak that evening. Stepping into the pulpit, he loudly proclaimed,

Behold the lamb of God

Who takes away the sin of the world.

(Jn 1:29+)

Satisfied with the acoustics, he left and went his way. Unknown to him, there were two men working in the rafters of that large auditorium, neither one a Christian. One of the men was pricked in his conscience by the verse Spurgeon quoted and became a believer later that day! **Such is the penetrating power of God's eternal word!** Little wonder that Paul is so insistent on the persistent "preaching of the Word" (2Ti 4:2-note)

I love **Charles Haddon Spurgeon's** words on the Word and his prayer each time he opened the Word...

How are we to handle this sword of **'It is written'** (referring to Mt 4:4)? First, with deepest reverence. Let every word that God has spoken be Law and Gospel to you. Never trifle with it; never try to evade its force or to change its meaning. God speaks to you in this book as much as if again He came to the top of Sinai and lifted up His voice in thunder. I like to open the Bible and to pray,

Lord God, let the words leap out of the page into my soul, Thyself making them vivid, quick, powerful, and fresh to my heart.

Our Lord Himself felt the power of the word. It was not so much the devil who felt the power of "It is written" as Christ Himself. "No," saith He, "I will not command stones to be made bread; I trust in God Who can without bread sustain Me. I will not cast Myself down from the temple; I will not tempt the Lord My God. I will not worship Satan, for God alone is God." The manhood of Christ felt an awe of the Word of God, and so it became a power to Him. To trifle with Scripture is to deprive yourself of its aid. Reverence it, I beseech you, and look up to God with devout gratitude for having given it to you. (From his sermon - [Infallibility—Where to Find It and How to Use It](#))

THE LIVING AND ACTIVE WORD OF GOD
Provides Everything Necessary for Life & Godliness

Hebrews 4:12,13, 2 Peter 1:3

SCRIPTURE	MAN'S PRACTICE OUR RESPONSIBILITY	GOD'S PROMISE OUR REWARD
2Ti 3:16, 17		
1Peter 2:1, 2		
Psalms 1:1-3		
Psalms 119:9, 10, 11		
Joshua 1:8		
Ezra 7:9-10		
Jeremiah 15:16		
Matthew 4:4		
Job 23:10, 11, 12		

My prayer for each of you is that you might *"grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."* (see note 2 Peter 3:18)

This quote that can be printed out and converted into a handout or a transparency to be utilized as an introduction to the discussion of the sufficiency of God's Word.

What is the Bible?

"THIS BOOK 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 are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable.

Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe and practice it to be holy.

It contains light to direct you, food to support you and comfort to cheer you.

It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword and the Christian's character.

Here paradise is restored, heaven opened and the gates of hell disclosed.

Christ is its grand object, our good is its design and the glory of God its end.

It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully.

It is given you in life and will be opened in the judgment and will be remembered forever.

It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labour, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents."

— Anonymous (found on the flyleaf of an old Bible)

Melvin Worthington gives us a wonderful lesson entitled "The Wonderful Word" based on 2 Timothy 3:14, 15, 16, 17...

Introduction:

The Bible is an amazing book, a living book. It provides information which can be found in no other book.

1. **The Nature of the Bible** (2Ti 3:16 {note}; Ps. 119:1, 2, 3, 4, 5ff; 1Pe 1:20, 21 {note}). The attributes which make the Bible a unique book include its author, authority, accuracy, adequacy, appeal, and agenda.

2. **The Need for the Bible** (1Pe 1:23, 24, 25-notes 1Pe1:23; 24; 25; Jas 1:18-note; John 5:24). The Bible addresses all the needs of the human being. It is essential for life, likeness, liberty, light, and labor.

3. **The Nourishment from the Bible** (see 1Pe 2:2-note). The Bible reveals and regulates the development God planned, the diet God provided, the disposition God prescribed, and the diadem God promised.

4. **The Neglect of the Bible** (1Cor 3:1, 2). Neglect of the Bible leads to dullness, drifting, disobedience, despising, denouncing, and departing from the Lord.

Conclusion:

Christians need to peruse, ponder, and pray over the Scriptures. This takes time, thought, toil, and tenacity. We need to pray—Father help me hear, heed, hold, honor, and herald the Word of God.

LEADER'S GUIDE

THE LIVING AND ACTIVE WORD OF GOD

Provides Everything Necessary for Life & Godliness

Heb 4:12-note, Heb 4:13-note, 2Pe 1:3-note

SCRIPTURE

**OUR
RESPONSIBILITY**

**GOD'S PROMISE
and/or BENEFIT**

<p>2Ti 3:16,17 Click note</p> <p>(Context= Paul's last words charging Timothy to Guard the Treasure of God's Word & Entrust it to faithful men who can teach others)</p> <p>Adequacy</p>	<p>Believe It</p> <p>(Do you believe that all Scripture has been inspired or breathed by God - from Genesis to Revelation?)</p> <p>(Do you believe that all Scripture is truly profitable for your life? Even the Old Testament?)</p>	<p>All Scripture is profitable for:</p> <p>Teaching (show us what's right)</p> <p>Reproof (shows us what's wrong)</p> <p>Correction (shows us how to get right)</p> <p>Training in Righteousness (shows and leads us to live right = according to God's standard, not men's standard of what's right)</p> <p>Adequate, equipped for every good work</p>
<p>1 Peter 2:1,2 Click note1; note 2</p> <p>(Context = 1Pe1:23, 24, 25 Peter readers have been "born again" by the "living and abiding word")</p> <p>Spiritual Growth</p>	<p>Putting aside all...</p> <p>Malice</p> <p>Guile</p> <p>Hypocrisy</p> <p>Envy</p> <p>Slander</p> <p>Approach the Word like a...</p> <p>newborn baby</p> <p>Long for (desire, delight) pure milk of God's Word (a command not a suggestion)</p> <p>(No desire? Are you a "newborn baby"? Are you born again? Have you "put aside"? Perhaps you need to confess your sin to God and repent) and believer upon the Lord Jesus Christ Romans 10:9,10)</p>	<p>Growth in salvation</p> <p>(Not grow to be smarter sinners but to be more like the Savior)</p>

<p>Psalm 1:1-3 Click notes 1:1; 1:2; 1:3 Real "happiness" and Prosperity</p>	<p>Do not...</p> <p>Walk in counsel of wicked</p> <p>Stand in path of sinners</p> <p>Sit in the seat of scoffers</p> <p>Delight in the Word (When something delights us, we become preoccupied with it and we tend to protect and guard it)</p> <p>Meditate in the Word day and night (Meditation is to our inner person what digestion is to our body - "chewing the cud". Make the Word a part of your life and you grow)</p>	<p>Blessed (fully satisfied independent of circumstances) Is like a tree planted by water</p> <p>Yields fruit in season</p> <p>Its leaf does not wither</p> <p>All he does prosper (Prosper = expresses idea of a successful venture, as contrasted with failure and the source of such success is God)</p>
<p>Psalm 119:9, 10, 11 Dealing with Sin</p>	<p>Treasure (memorize) the Word Keep (heed, obey) the Word Pray the Word (do not let me wander)</p>	<p>Keeps our way pure Equips us so that less likely to sin against God</p>
<p>Joshua 1:8 Moses has died Lord instructs Joshua Leadership Spiritual Warfare</p>	<p>Meditate on the Word day and night Do not let it depart from your mouth (it should be a constant component of your conversation - not necessarily quoting Bible verses but speaking according to the principles of the Word) Be careful to do (obey) it</p>	<p>Success Way prosperous</p>
<p>Ezra 7:9, 10 Click note Ezra 7:10 Leadership</p>	<p>Set your heart to study the Word Practice the Word Teach the Word</p>	<p>Good hand of God upon him</p>
<p>Jeremiah 15:16 Feeling downcast</p>	<p>Find the Word (Do you seek it?)</p> <p>"Eat" the Word (Do you just nibble at it? Is the word just "snack" food?)</p> <p>Digest, Assimilate and make the Word part of your very being.</p>	<p>Joy Delight in one's heart</p>

<p>Matthew 4:4</p> <p>Temptation</p>	<p>Eat the Word (Implied)</p> <p>Unless the Word becomes a vital part of our inner being, we can't receive nourishment and grow in the spiritual life.</p>	<p>Live (Real Spiritual Life)</p>
<p>Job 23:10, 11,12 See notes Job 23:10; 11; 12</p> <p>Trials</p> <p>(Context = Job 1 = blameless, upright, fearing God, turning away from evil" Loss of children and wealth. Responds with worship)</p>	<p>Hold fast to His path, keep His way</p> <p>Don't turn; depart from His command</p> <p>Treasure His words more than food!</p>	<p>Come forth from trials As "pure gold"</p>

**SUPPLEMENTAL
NOTES**

To Be Used As Needed by Leader to Amplify the Discussion
(See also [Quotations related to Word of God](#))

2 Timothy 3:16-17

(For more detailed exposition click here)

What is man's responsibility?

To believe that all (every word) of Scripture from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21 is inspired or breathed by God and to order our steps accordingly.

Reproof -

"Men do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts them."

In 2 Timothy 3:17 (note), "**adequate**" describes the man or woman of God who is able to meet all the demands of the work God has prepared for them beforehand in Christ Jesus that they should walk in them (see Ephesians 2:10-note). They are full ready, qualified, fully ready, perfectly fit. The following story illustrates what it means to be "**adequate, equipped**":

The disease often plagues armies, explorers, and crusaders, since these men's diets normally consisted of biscuits and salted meat that could easily be stored and kept unspoiled on a ship. A Scottish naval surgeon named James Lind discovered Vitamin C after a four year sea voyage which was lead by Admiral George Anson. During the voyage more than a thousand sailors lost their lives to scurvy, after which Lind began investigating the disease and came to the realization that the disease was most common among people who's diet had been extremely limited. To test his hypothesis (that the disease was caused by a limited diet), he decided to treat sickened sailors with different foods during a ten-week sea voyage. He found that a diet with citrus fruit provided the most dramatic cure for the disease. Lind published his findings as Treatise on the Scurvy in 1753, and as a result, in 1795 daily doses of lime juice were prescribed to all the sailors in the British navy and Scurvy quickly vanished. However, the British were the only people who accepted the idea that Scurvy was the result of a dietary deficiency, and Great Britain was the only place where there was a decline in the cases of Scurvy. In America, during the Civil war, many men on both sides of the war died from this disease due to the lack of a source of Vitamin C in their diet. THEY WERE NOT ADEQUATELY EQUIPPED

[Thanks for the Bible](#)

Thanks for Thy Word, O blessèd Redeemer!

Open our eyes its beauty to see;
Grant us Thy grace to study it wisely,
Close every heart to all but Thee.

Refrain

*Thanks for the Bible, off'ring so freely
Pardon and peace to all who believe;
Help us, O Lord, its counsel to follow,
Meekly by faith its truth receive.*

Thanks for Thy Word of precept and promise,
Lamp to our feet and light to our way,
Points us afar where pleasures immortal
Bloom in Thine own bright realm of day.

Refrain

Blessed are they who keep its commandments,
They shall abide for ever with Thee;
Close by the clear and beautiful river,
Sharing the fruits of life's fair tree.
-- Fanny Crosby

1 Peter 2:1-2
(See notes 1Pe2:1; 2:2)

Psalm 1:1-3
(See Commentary)

For this psalm "charted out" click here

Blessed You will take careful note that there is an obvious concentration of this Hebrew word blessed ([eshet](#)) in Psalms. [Click](#) and ponder the uses of "**blessed**" noting associations and asking God to search your heart. Blessed is a state of prosperity or happiness when superior bestows favor (i.e., God for Christians). The Hebrew is translated in the LXX in this verse (and often in other OT uses) with the Greek word **makarios** which means fully satisfied independent of one's circumstances (which therefore has to be a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit). One can be "makarios" - blessed - and in miserable circumstances. "Blessed are you," Jesus said, "when they insult you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven" (see Mt 5:11-note; Mt 5:12-note). So "blessed are you" does not mean untroubled are you" or "healthy are you" or "admired are you" or "prosperous are you." It means "between you and God all is well." You are deeply secure, profoundly content, happy in God - even if you are weeping over the pain of a struck body, a perplexed mind, or a heartbreaking relationship. Strengthened by His Spirit you can still in all things give thanks and rejoice always.

You will note that nowhere does Scripture tell us that God blesses programs or promotions. But it does teach that He blesses individuals. He blessed Abraham so he might be a blessing to others. And He blesses us so we might bless others.

Delight ([2656](#)) (see also notes on Psalm 1:2) Hebrew chephets = basic meaning = feel great favor towards something. The root idea is to **incline toward** something. In chephets, the object of one's delight solicits favor by its own intrinsic qualities (E.g., "O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day." Ps 119:97). The subject is easily attracted to it because it is desirable.

What you delight in is what will direct your life, so be careful what you enjoy.

The Bible: The more you read it, the more you love it; the more you love it, the more you read it.

Spurgeon in his Treasury of David writes...

1. Blessed. See how this Book of Psalms opens with a benediction, as did the famous Sermon of our Lord on the Mount! The word translated blessed is plural, and it is a controverted matter whether it is an adjective or a substantive. Hence we may learn the multiplicity of the blessings which will rest on those whom God has justified, and the perfection and greatness of the blessedness they will enjoy. We might read it, "Oh, the blessednesses!" and we may well regard it (as Ainsworth does) as a joyful acclamation of the gracious man's felicity. May the like benediction rest on us!

Here the gracious man is described both **negatively** (verse 1) and **positively** (verse 2). He is a man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. He takes wiser counsel, and walks in the commandments of the Lord his God. To him the ways of **piety** are **paths** of **peace** and **pleasantness**. His footsteps are ordered by the Word of God, and not by the cunning and wicked devices of carnal men. It is a rich sign of **inward grace** when the **outward walk** is changed, and when ungodliness is put far from our actions.

Note next, **he standeth not in the way of sinners** His company is of a choicer sort than it was. Although a sinner himself, he is now a **blood-washed sinner, quickened by the Holy Spirit, and renewed in heart**. Standing by the rich grace of God in the congregation of the righteous, he dares not herd with the multitude who do evil.

Again it is said, **nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful**. He finds no rest in the atheist's scoffings. Let others make a mock of sin, of eternity, of hell and heaven, and of the Eternal God; this man has learnt better philosophy than that of the infidel, and has too much sense of God's presence to endure to hear His name blasphemed. The seat of the scorner may be very lofty, but it is very near to the gate of hell; let us flee from it, for it will soon be empty, and destruction will swallow up the man who sits therein. Mark the gradation in the first verse:

He walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,

Nor standeth in the way of sinners,

Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

When people are living in sin they go from bad to worse At first they merely walk in the counsel of the careless and ungodly, who forget God—the evil is rather practical than habitual—but after that they become habituated to evil, and they stand in the way of open sinners who willfully violate God's commandments; and if let alone, they go one step further, and become themselves pestilent teachers and tempters of others, and thus they sit in the seat of the scornful. They have taken their degree in vice, and as true **Doctors of Damnation** they are installed, and are looked up to by others as **Masters in Belial**. But the blessed man, the man to whom all the blessings of God belong, can hold no communion with such characters as these. He keeps himself pure from these lepers; he puts away evil things from him as garments spotted by the flesh; he comes out from among the wicked, and goes outside the camp, bearing the reproach of Christ. O for grace to be thus separate from sinners.

2. And now mark his positive character. His delight is the the law of the Lord. He is not under the law as a curse and condemnation, but he is in it, and he **delights** to be in it as his rule of life; he **delights**, moreover, to meditate in it, to read it by day and think upon it by night. He takes a text and carries it with him all day long; and in the night-watches, when sleep forsakes his eyelids, he **muses** (click) upon the Word of God. In the day of his prosperity he sings psalms out of the Word of God, and in the night of his affliction he comforts himself with promises out of the same book. The law of the Lord is the daily bread of the true believer. And yet, in David's day, how small was the volume of inspiration, for they had scarcely anything save the first five books of Moses! How much more, then, should we prize the whole written Word which it is our privilege to have in all our houses! But, alas, what ill-treatment is given to this angel from heaven! We are not all Berean searchers of the Scriptures. How few among us can lay claim to the benediction of the text! Perhaps some of you can claim a sort of negative purity, because you do not walk in the way of the ungodly; but let me ask you—Is your delight in the law of God? Do you study God's Word? Do you make it the man of your right hand—your best companion and hourly guide? If not, this blessing does not belong to you.

3. And he shall be like a tree planted Not a wild tree, but one planted, chosen, considered as property, cultivated and secured from the last terrible uprooting (see Matthew 15:13).

By the rivers of water. Even if one river should fail, he has another. The rivers of pardon and the rivers of

grace, the rivers of the promise and the rivers of communion with Christ, are never-failing sources of supply.

That bringeth forth his fruit in his season. Not unseasonable graces, like untimely figs, which are never full-flavored. But the man who delights in God's Word, being taught by it, brings forth patience in the time of suffering, faith in the day of trial, and holy joy in the hour of prosperity. **Fruitfulness** is an essential quality of a gracious man, and that fruitfulness should be **seasonable**.

His leaf also shall not wither. His faintest word will be everlasting; his little deeds of love will be remembered. Not only will his fruit be preserved, but his **leaf** also. He will neither lose his beauty nor his fruitfulness, and **whatsoever he doeth shall prosper**. Blessed is the man who has such a promise as this. But we must not always estimate the fulfillment of a promise by our own eye-sight. How often, my brethren, if we judge by feeble sense, may we come to the mournful conclusion of Jacob, "All these things are against me!" For though we know our interest in the promise, yet are we so tried and troubled that sight sees the very reverse of what that promise foretells. **But to the eye of faith this word is sure, and by it we perceive that our works are prospered, even when everything seems to go against us.** It is **not outward prosperity** which the Christian most desires and values; it is **soul prosperity** which he longs for. We often, like Jehoshaphat, make ships go to Tarshish for gold, but they are broken at Ezion-geber; but even here there is a true prospering, for it is often **for the soul's health** that we should be **poor, bereaved, and persecuted. Our worst things are often our best things.** As there is a curse wrapped up in the wicked man's mercies, so there is a **blessing** concealed in the righteous man's **crosses, losses, and sorrows.** The **trials of the saint** are a divine husbandry, by which he grows and brings forth abundant fruit.

Meditation is to the soul (real "soul food") what digestion is to the body. It means assimilating the Word of God.

Warren Wiersbe comments that...

A tree has roots. The most important part of your life is your "root system." Don't be like the ungodly, who are like chaff (Ps 1:4). Chaff doesn't have roots. It is blown away by every wind that comes along. Your root system is important because it determines your nourishment. It also determines your stability and your strength when the storm comes and the wind starts to blow.

People can't see your root system, but God can. Praying and meditating on the Word of God will cause your roots to go down deep into His love.

God delights in blessing His children. But we must prepare ourselves for His blessings by first appropriating the resources He has given us. Delight in the Word of God and feed on it. But do more than occasionally read the Word; meditate on it constantly. Make it your source of spiritual nourishment, and God will bless you with strength and stability.

Two of the most popular words in the Christian vocabulary are bless and blessing. God wants to bless His people. He wants them to be recipients and channels of blessing. God blesses us to make us a blessing to others, but He has given us certain conditions for receiving blessings.

First, we must be **separated** from the world (Ps 1:1-note). The world is anything that separates us from God or causes us to disobey Him. Separation is not isolation but contact without contamination. Sin is usually a gradual process. Notice the gradual decline of the sinner in Ps 1:1. He is walking (Mark 14:54), standing (John 18:18) and then sitting (Luke 22:55). Becoming worldly is progressive; it happens by degrees. We make friends with the world; we become spotted by the world; we love the world, become confirmed to it and end up condemned with it. Lot is an example of someone who became worldly. He looked toward Sodom, pitched his tent toward Sodom, lived there, lost everything and ended in sin.

Second, we must be **saturated** with the Word (Ps 1:2-note). Whatever delights us directs us. We saturate ourselves with the Word by meditating on it. Meditation is to the spirit what digestion is to the body. When we meditate on the Word, we allow the Spirit of God within us to "digest" the Word of God for us. So not only do we delight in the Word, it becomes a source of spiritual nourishment for us.

Enjoy the blessings God has for you and allow Him to make you a blessing to others. (A third condition, being situated by the waters, is the topic of our next devotional.)

God desires to bless us, but we must meet His conditions for receiving blessings. **By staying separate from the world and keeping saturated in the Word,** ("This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to **keep oneself unstained by the world.**" [James 1:27](#)) we may expect God's blessings. Resolve to meditate on the Word of God and obey it. He will

make you a blessing to others.

"Like a tree": A tree is a blessing. It holds soil, provides shade and produces fruit. The godly are like trees, with root systems that go deep into the spiritual resources of God's grace (Ps 1:3-note). But sadly, many **professing Christians** are not like trees but are like artificial plants or cut flowers with no roots. They may be beautiful for a while, but soon they die. (Ed note: Cf Jesus' words that "those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. And the seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity." Luke 8:13,14, 15; Paul's warning about those who "profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed." Titus 1:16 (note), Jesus' stern warning "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'" see Mt 7:21-note; Mt 7:22-note; Mt 7:23-note)

A tree needs light, water and roots to live. We all have resources upon which we draw life. The question we need to ask ourselves is, **Where are our roots?** The person God can bless is planted by the rivers of water. We must be careful not to be like Christians who are dry and withered and depend upon their own resources. They are like tumbleweeds, blown about by any wind of doctrine.

To have the blessings of Ps 1:3, we need to meet the conditions of Ps 1:1, 2. That is, we must first be **separated** from the world and **saturated** with the Word to be **situated** by the waters. God desires to bless us, but we need to meet certain conditions to receive His blessings. **We bear fruit only when we have roots**, and we must draw upon spiritual resources to bring forth fruit in due season. To bear the fruit of the Spirit, we must allow the Spirit to work in us and through us.

In contrast to the believer, the **ungodly** are not like trees but are **like chaff**. They have **no roots**, produce **no fruit** and are **blown about**. The **ungodly reject the Word of God** and will **perish without hope** (Ps 1:6). As Christians we must not reject the ungodly but try to reach them. **God blesses us so that we might be a blessing to others**. His Spirit helps us bear fruit that can help win the lost.

Are you like a tree or like chaff?

We need God's resources to bear fruit. But where we place our roots is paramount. Only as we grow them deeply into the spiritual resources of God's grace (Ed note: His Word, cf "And now I commend you to God and to the **word of His grace**, which is able to **build you up** and to give you the **inheritance** among all those who are sanctified." [Acts 20:32](#)) will we produce fruit. Make the Bible your spiritual resource. Delight in it and feed your soul with its truth. God can use you to help win the lost. (Wiersbe, W: [Prayer Praise and Promises: A Daily Walk Through the Psalms](#)) (Bolding added)

Psalm 119:9-11

How in the world a person keep clean in this unholy world? The psalmist answers that it is "By taking heed according to God's word" a truth which doesn't apply only to young men but to every man, woman and child. The world is spiritually "dirty" and the pollution will not get better but worse so as we walk around in this world we need to make sure we walk in the Word of God by daily **reading** and **hiding** the Word (in our heart - our "command center" so to speak) so that we can be **heeding** the word.

G. Campbell Morgan noted that this verse...

It tells us about the **best book**--'Thy Word'--in the **best place**--'my heart'--for the **best purpose**--'that I might not sin' against God.

When was the last time you memorized a passage of Scripture? God's Word has a cleansing effect. You **must** (no excuses please) get into the Word so that it can **get into you** and can then become effective in your life, as the Spirit uses it to renew our minds and transform our thinking so that we are enabled more and more to discern the will of God at every turn of the road of our life. The Word obeyed is the best preventative for the "dirt" of this world which is passing away as are it's lusts.

What does it mean to **"treasure"** something? ([Click](#) definition of the Hebrew word)

I know of no other single practice in the Christian life more rewarding, practically speaking, than memorizing Scripture... No other single exercise pays greater spiritual dividends! Your prayer life will be strengthened. Your witnessing will be sharper and much more effective. Your attitudes and outlook will begin to change. Your mind will become alert and observant. Your confidence and assurance will be enhanced. Your faith will be solidified. (Charles Swindoll)

I am convinced that one of the greatest things we can do is to memorize Scripture. (Billy Graham)

One of the most important Christian disciplines is Scripture memory. If I had it my way, every student would know 500 verses word perfect with the references before leaving Dallas (Dallas Theological Seminary) (Howard Hendricks)

God's Word more clearly unveils God's will for your life than any other modality and as **Alexander Maclaren** puts it...

When God's will is deeply planted within, it will work quickening change on the heavy dough of our sluggish natures. It is when we bring the springs of our actions — namely, our motives, which are our true selves — into touch with His uttered will, that our deeds become conformed to it. Look after the motives, and the deeds will look after themselves. 'I have hid Thy word within my heart.' (Click to read Maclaren's entire message)

Warren Wiersbe notes that...

You must also rejoice in God's Word, delight in it and meditate on it. Meditation is to your inner person what digestion is to your body. When you truly delight in the Word, you will have a desire to meditate on it and make it a part of your life. In Psalm 119, the writer connects "delight" and "meditation" (Psalm 119:15,16, 23,24, 47, 48, 77,78) Cultivate an appetite for the Word of God. ([Wiersbe, W: With the Word: Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Handbook. Nelson or Logos](#))

A powerful **illustration** of someone "**treasuring**" the Word of God:

The first requirement for keeping that TREASURE is to recognize that it is a TREASURE. A beautiful and touching story is told of a young French girl who had been born blind. After she learned to read by touch, a friend gave her a Braille copy of Mark's gospel. She read it so much that her fingers became calloused and insensitive. In an effort to regain her feeling, she cut the skin from the ends of her fingers. Tragically, however, her callouses were replaced by permanent and even more insensitive scars. She sobbingly gave the book a goodbye kiss, saying,

"FAREWELL, FAREWELL, SWEET WORD OF MY HEAVENLY FATHER."

In doing so, she discovered that her lips were even more sensitive than her fingers had been, and she spent the rest of her life reading her great treasure with her lips. Would that every Christian had such an appetite for the Word of God!

The **Preacher's Commentary** addressing the question "How can a young man cleanse his way?" writes...

The question is classic because it is the great issue of the Bible. How can a sinner stand in the presence of a holy God? The cleansing of our way implies that we have fallen. How can we be washed and restored? The reference to youth reminds us of the Book of Proverbs (see Proverbs 1:4,8, 10, 15, etc.). The answer to the question is as follows: "By taking heed according to Your word." This taking heed includes two things. First, the Word of God cleanses us as it separates us from this world and all of its uncleanness. Thus Jesus tells His disciples, "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you" (John 15:3). But, second, the Word of God also cleanses us as it directs us in the paths of righteousness. It not only separates us from the world; it also separates us to God. The Word works to bring us into the will of God.

Next, the psalmist confesses: "With my whole heart I have sought You" (v10; see v2). Because of his singleness of purpose, his "whole heart," he can then continue, "Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments." God not only reveals His will to us; He keeps us in that will. We must note again that the psalmist is not a legalist. He has no illusions that He can do God's will in his own strength. He is entirely dependent upon the God who calls him to keep him. This divine keeping is a matter of the heart. Thus he continues in verse 11, "Your word I have hidden ['laid up'] in my heart, / That I might not sin against You." As the Word is memorized and internalized, it becomes directive for our lives. No wonder Jesus tells us that if we "abide" ("continue, remain") in His Word, then we are His disciples (John 8:31). His Word will determine our walk.

As a new Christian I was encouraged to memorize Scripture. Introduced to the Topical Memory System of the

Navigators, I amassed several score of verses on salvation, prayer, the Christian life, etc. Often during my high school lunch hour I would slip away to a quiet place for review. This investment was for a lifetime. Again and again in preaching and counseling, these verses have come back to me. How grateful I am that as a young believer I was introduced to hiding God's Word in my heart. ([Briscoe, D. S., & Ogilvie, L. J. The Preacher's Commentary Series. Thomas Nelson](#) or [Logos](#))

C H Spurgeon ([Treasury of David](#)) comments...

"How will he become and remain practically holy? He is but a young man, full of hot passions, and poor in knowledge and experience; how will he get right, and keep right? Never was there a more important question for any man; alas, his way is already unclean by actual sin which he has already committed, and he himself has within his nature a tendency towards that which defiles.

Here, then, is the difficulty, first of beginning aright, next of being always able to know and choose the right, and of continuing in the fight till perfection is ultimately reached.

Let him not think that he knows the road to easy victory, nor dream that he can keep himself by his own wisdom; he will do well to follow the psalmist, and become an earnest inquirer asking how he may cleanse his way.

Let him become a practical disciple of the holy God, who alone can teach him how to overcome the world, (2 Peter 1:4{note}, 1John 5:4,5, Gal 6:14) the flesh, and the devil, that trinity of defilers by whom many a hopeful life has been spoiled. He is young and unaccustomed to the road; let him not be ashamed often to inquire his way of him who is so ready and so able to instruct him in it.

Our way is a subject which concerns us deeply, but it is not to be answered by unaided reason, nor, when answered, can the directions be carried out by unsupported human power. By taking heed thereto according to thy word. Young man, the Bible must be your chart, and you must exercise great watchfulness that your way may be according to its directions. You must take heed to your daily life as well as study your Bible, and you must study your Bible that you may take heed to your daily life. To obey the Lord and walk uprightly will need all our heart and soul and mind.

Yet the word is absolutely necessary, for otherwise care will darken into morbid anxiety, and conscientiousness may become superstition. It is not enough to desire to be right; for ignorance may make us think that we are doing God service when we are provoking him, and the fact of our ignorance will not reverse the character of our action, however much it may mitigate its criminality.

Let each person, young or old, who desires to be holy have a holy watchfulness in his heart, and keep the Holy Bible before his open eye. There he will find every turn of the road marked down, every slough and miry place pointed out, with the way to go through unsoiled; and there, too, he will find light for his darkness, comfort for his weariness, and company for his loneliness, so that by its help he will reach the benediction of the first verse of the psalm, which suggested the psalmist's inquiry, and awakened his desires.

Note how the first section of eight verses has for its first verse, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way," and the second section runs parallel to it, with the question, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" The blessedness which is set before us in a conditional promise should be practically sought for in the way appointed. The Lord says, "For this will I be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." (See also Spurgeon's comments on [Verse 10](#) and [Verse 11](#))

John Calvin comments that...

Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? In this place he repeats, in different words, the same truth which he formerly advanced, That, however much men may pique themselves upon their own works, there is nothing pure in their life until they have made a complete surrender of themselves to the word of the Lord. The more effectually to excite them to this, he produces, in an especial manner, the example of children or youths. In mentioning these, he by no means gives an unbridled license to those who have arrived at mature years, or who are aged, as if they were competent to regulate their own life, and as if their own prudence served as a law to them; but because youth puts men where two ways meet, and renders it imperative for them to select the course of life which they mean to follow, he declares that, when a person sets about the regulation of his life, no advice will prove of any advantage, unless he adopts the law of God as his rule and guide. In this way the prophet stimulates men to an early and seasonable regulation of their manners, and not to delay doing so any longer, agreeably to the words of Solomon, "Remember thy Creator in thy youth, ere the days of trouble

come, and the years which shall be grief unto thee," Ecclesiastes 12:1. They who defer from time to time become hardened in their vicious practices, and arrive at mature years, when it is too late to attempt a reformation. There is another reason, arising from the fact, of the carnal propensities being very powerful in youth, requiring a double restraint; and the more they are inclined to excess, the greater is the necessity for curbing their licentiousness. The prophet, therefore, not without reason, exhorts them particularly to attend to the observance of the law.

With my whole heart. Conscious of the integrity of his heart, the prophet still implores the help of God, that he might not stumble by reason of his infirmity. He makes no boast of self-preparation, as if he had spontaneously begun to inquire after God, but in praising the grace which he had experienced, he at the same time aspires after steadfastness to persevere in walking in his ways.

[William Cowper](#) comments on [Ps 119:11](#):

There is great difference between Christians and worldlings. The worldling hath his treasures in jewels without him; the Christian hath them within. Neither indeed is there any receptacle wherein to receive and keep the word of consolation but the heart only. If thou have it in thy mouth only, it shall be taken from thee; if thou have it in thy book only, Thou shalt miss it when thou hast most to do with it; but if thou lay it up in thy heart, as Mary did the words of the angel, no enemy shall ever be able to take it from thee, and thou shalt find it's comfortable treasure in time of thy need. Among many excellent virtues of the word of God, this is one: that if we keep it in our heart, it keeps us from sin, which is against God and against ourselves. We may mark it by experience, that the word is first stolen either out of the mind of man, and the remembrance of it is away; or at least out of the affection of man; so that the reverence of it is gone, before a man can be drawn to the committing of a sin. So long as Eve kept by faith the word of the Lord, she resisted Satan; but from the time she doubted of that, which God made most certain by his word, at once she was snared. --

Joshua 1:8
(See commentary)

Establish the context from the preceding passages:

Josh 1:1 Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying,

2 "Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel.

3 "Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses.

4 "From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun, will be your territory.

5 "No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.

6 "Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

7 "Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.

8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Observe: Who is speaking to Joshua? Why? When? What has transpired? What is Jehovah's command? What is the land like into which Joshua is to lead the people? What is Joshua's mindset to be (note what is repeated three times!). If you have time you can do a simple observation with the class asking these type of questions.

God Himself is addressing Joshua because Israel's leader Moses has died and the mantle of leadership is being passed to this new leader. Joshua is to lead Israel into the "promised land" filled with adversaries and pagan idolatry. Temptation and Warfare will occur. So what does God tell Joshua he must do? Does He tell him to make sure the soldiers have their weapons and are in good shape? No. God tells Joshua to make sure that the "Sword of the Word of God" is to be his focus and will provide all that he needs in order to assure success.

"Book of the law":

A reference to Scripture, specifically Genesis through Deuteronomy (Pentateuch from penta = five), written by Moses. **Deuteronomy 31** talks about Moses' completing the book and of his committing it to the care of the priests:

"Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, "Take this **book of the law** and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may remain there as a witness against you." ([Deuteronomy 31:25-26](#))

but it wasn't enough that the priests carried it around and protected it. No, Joshua had to take the time to read it every single day, to make it a part of his inner person by meditating on it. ([My Precious Bible](#))

"Shall not depart from your mouth"

Joshua literally fulfilled Jehovah's instructions to not let the Word depart from his mouth. With one half of Israel before Mount Gerizim and the other half before Mount Ebal Joshua...

afterward... read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the **book of the law**. There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel with the women and the little ones and the strangers who were living among them. ([Joshua 8:34-35](#))

Joshua remained faithful to this critical instruction even unto his dying day. Knowing that he would soon fall asleep (die) he instructs the people of Israel...

"Be very firm, then, to keep and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, so that you may not turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, in order that you may not associate with these nations, these which remain among you, or mention the name of their gods, or make anyone swear by them, or serve them, or bow down to them. But you are to cling to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day." ([Joshua 23:6-8](#))

The last mention of the phrase the "**book of the law**" is in [Joshua 24](#) just before Joshua dies:

26 And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God; and he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the LORD.

27 And Joshua said to all the people, "Behold, this stone shall be for a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us; thus it shall be for a witness against you, lest you deny your God."

28 Then Joshua dismissed the people, each to his inheritance.

29 And it came about after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being one hundred and ten years old.

"**shall not depart from your mouth**" means that **this book of the law** it should be the constant topic of your conversation. Why? "Because you shall meditate on it day and night." Now whatever you're thinking about all day and thinking about all night will show up in your conversation. So he's saying you ought to be dominated by the Word of God. It is the dominant thing in your life. Meditatively it becomes the dominating thing in your life conversationally. Then it's into action that he speaks so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. You meditate on it, you talk about it and pretty soon you begin to live it out. Then you will make your way prosperous, then you will have success. But you need to do according to all that is written in it. There are many Christians who can't do according to all that is written in it because they don't understand it. And that's why it's incumbent upon us to study the Scripture so that we can understand it so that we can do it so that we can be blessed and prosperous and have good success.

"But you shall meditate on it day and night"

It's one thing to say to a leader, "Be strong and courageous." It's quite something else to enable him or her to do it. Joshua's strength and courage will come from meditating on the word of God, from believing the promises in it, from living in obedience to its

precepts. Moses gave this same counsel to the entire nation back in Dt 11 almost word-for-word. But now God is applying it specifically to Joshua.

God feeds the birds, but He doesn't throw the food into their nests. In a similar way, the Bible is like a table, laden with nourishing food we need every day: promises, instruction, wisdom, comfort, and encouragement. Like any good host, God invites us to "Come and get it!" But we often fail to do this. We depend on everything but Him and wonder why our faith is feeble. But if like our feathered friends we'll come and feast daily, expectantly, and actively, our divine Host will provide for all our needs. Depend on it!

In regard to this "book of the law" **A W Tozer** said...

"Read it much, read it often, brood over it, think over it, meditate over it—meditate on the Word of God day and night. When you are awake at night, think of a helpful verse. When you get up in the morning, no matter how you feel, think of a verse and make the Word of God the important element in your day. The Holy Ghost wrote the Word, and if you make much of the Word, He will make much of you. It is through the Word that He reveals Himself. Between those covers is a living Book. God wrote it and it is still vital and effective and alive. God is in this Book, the Holy Ghost is in this Book, and if you want to find Him, go into this Book."

For more in depth discussion click **Primer On Biblical Meditation** or also [here](#).

"So that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it" Knowledge of God's law is not enough; one must also "be careful to do" what it commands. Thus the law of God is to control all thought and action. "Everything written in it" must be observed, because obedience to certain parts only is no obedience at all. When you study the Bible "hit or miss," you MISS more than you HIT.

"For then you will make your way prosperous" generally expresses the idea of a successful venture, as contrasted with failure. The source of such success is God: "... as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper" (2Chr 26:5). The root means to accomplish satisfactorily what is intended. In our lives as Christians, success and prosperity are not to be measured by the physical, material standards of the world. The issue for us is spiritual blessing; spiritual prosperity. We can choose to set out on our own to become materially successful. In the words of our text, that would be turning to the right hand or to the left. But the reality is that we can achieve the goal and live to regret it. There are some famous words by George MacDonald, the Scottish novelist and Christian apologist: "In whatever a man does without God, he must fail miserably or succeed more miserably." It is possible to know physical and material success and yet be an absolute failure spiritually. Meditating on the Scriptures will help us evaluate our motives in decision-making with regard to success and prosperity. We will learn to ask ourselves the right questions out of the word of God.

Am I totally committed to the will of God in this action, this choice, this endeavor? Am I relying completely on the Spirit of God to empower me, or am I trusting my own resources? Am I serving the glory of God ultimately? If I can answer those questions with a yes, then my ministry, my activity, my relationships will be successful in God's eyes, no matter what people think and no matter what the physical, material outcome is.

This passage is calling us to think "Biblically", reading and soaking in and reflecting on the word of God, so that we live "Biblically" in all we say and do.

"And then you will have success" The Hebrew word means to be prudent and so to act with insight, which can mean "be successful" by metonymy. The Septuagint (LXX) translates it with Greek word "sunesis" (click) meaning understanding, the idea being able to put together the pieces and make sense out of a set of facts presented to one's mind. It's the idea of putting "2" and "2" together so to speak ~ the ability to assess any situation and decide what practical course of action is necessary. And in the context of this verse this "ability" is integrally related to the constant intake & assimilation of the pure milk of God's Word. The result? Success in the way that God defines "success".

Hudson Taylor, founder of China Inland Mission (Overseas Missionary Fellowship) made a similar statement

"God's work done in God's way will not lack God's supply."

Not only are God's presence and power essential for success in His work, but we must also work according to God's revealed will. It is easy to fall into the trap of substituting human wisdom and understanding for obedience to God's Word.

Ezra 7:9-10
(see Commentary)

For - Don't miss this conjunction which introduces an explanation. The natural question is "What does it explain?" which necessitates observing the previous passages where we see that "the good hand of the LORD was upon him". Why? Because to put

it bluntly, Ezra was a "man of the book", a man like Apollos who was mighty in the Scriptures (Acts 18:24). This is a great model for any preacher who desires to be used mightily by the Lord because he has the Lord's hand upon him.

God's sovereign hand of blessing was on Ezra (Ezra 7:6, 9, 28; 8:18, 22, 31) because he was so completely immersed in His Word (7:10).

"Had set his heart" (not his head but his heart!) More literally "Set his heart firmly" which gives the idea that Ezra was inwardly determined. His determination was directed toward: studying, obeying, and teaching God's Law to others—an inviolable order for a successful ministry! You cannot teach with power until you yourself have practiced what you studied. His heart was prepared by confession of sin (cp notes 1 Peter 2:1; 2:2; 2:3) It is impossible to study the Scriptures profitably with an impure mind.

Ezra "set his heart" to study God's Word. The phrase "set his heart" conveys the idea of being firmly committed to a particular course of action with unwavering steadfastness. The verb signifies being "established, prepared, fixed" in a determined pursuit. For example the same root is used to portray God's intentional acts when He established the heavens (Pr 3:19; 8:27). Thus the expression carries the idea of a determined purpose and unwavering resolution to act in a prescribed way to bring something to pass.

His mind "was zeroed in on the primary intention of studying God's Word."

"Heart" refers not to his intellect per se only for in Hebrew "heart" speaks of that which rules one's very being --the seat of affections, emotions, desires. The "heart," in which Ezra purposed to study the Scriptures connotes "the totality of man's inner or immaterial nature"

The Hebrew word for "heart" represents the center or middle of something, often referring to the physical heart, the blood-pumping organ which supplies life for the entire body. However, of the approximately 850 times it occurs in the Old Testament, its most common meaning is spiritual, signifying a person's inner or immaterial being—his or her mind, emotions, and will. Thus the heart denotes the intellect, by which one thinks, analyzes, compares, and understands a matter (1Kings 3:12; 2Kings 5:26; 2Chr 9:23; Pr 11:12; 16:23); the emotions, or the deepest innermost feelings of a person (Pr 17:22, 25:20); and the volition, the seat of the will where choices are made (Nu 16:28; Judges 9:3; 2Chr 12:14). When Ezra set "his heart" to study the Word he poured the whole spectrum of his inner life into doing so. In other words, the study of Scripture absolutely consumed his life.

John Bunyan, seventeenth-century English preacher and author, was also consumed with the study of God's Word. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who read Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress every year, once remarked, "He had studied our Authorized Version ... till his whole being was saturated with Scripture; and through his writings ... he ... [makes] us feel and say 'Why, this man is living Bible! Prick him anywhere; and you will find that his blood is Biline, the very essence of the Bible flows from him. He cannot speak without quoting a text, for his soul is full of the Word of God.' "

Study ([darash 1875](#) KJV = "seek") Hebrew verb carries meanings of seeking with care, inquiring, pursuing, searching, which gives a good picture of how Ezra approached the law of the LORD. The Septuagint (LXX) uses "**zeteo**" (see Matthew 6:33-note) which conveys the idea of attempting to learn something by careful investigation or searching (cf Proverbs 2:1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

For example this word was used when Moses "searched carefully" to find out what happened to the sin offering (Lev 10:16) or when David "inquired" to find out who Bathsheba was (2Sa 11:3). Ezra studied the Word by carefully searching it, investigating its truths, probing its parts, surveying its whole, striving to understand its meaning, being concerned to grasp its message, leaving no stone unturned. He was not content to skim the surface and gain a superficial knowledge of the text.

Martin Luther said,

When I was young, I read the Bible over and over and over again, and was so perfectly acquainted with it, that I could, in an instant, have pointed to any verse that might have been mentioned.

He also wrote, "For a number of years I have now annually read through the Bible twice. If the Bible were a large, mighty tree and all its words were little branches, I have tapped at all the branches, eager to know what was there and what it had to offer."

Martin Luther is reported to have said concerning his own study of the Scriptures:

"I study my Bible as I gather apples. First, I shake the whole tree that the ripest might fall. Then I shake each limb, and when I have shaken each limb, I shake each branch and every twig. Then I look under every leaf. I shake the Bible as a whole, like shaking the whole tree. Then I shake every limb—study book after book. Then I shake every branch, giving attention to the chapters when they do not break the sense. Then I shake every twig, or a careful study of the paragraphs and sentences and words and their meanings."

John Piper writes,

At the heart of every pastor's work is bookwork. Call it reading, meditation, reflection, cogitation, study, exegesis, or whatever you will—a large and central part of our work is to wrestle God's meaning from a book, and then to proclaim it in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Practice it... A good leader is one who... **Knows** the way, **Goes** the way, and **Shows** the way. Knowing without doing is arrogance not obedience. The Hebrew word for "practice" carries the idea of expending energy in the pursuit of something.

A good pattern for ministry -- learn it, live it, and let it out

Ezra mastered the Word, and the Word mastered him. His careful study led to a holy life. His personal integrity became the platform from which he carried out his public teaching ministry. What he learned in the Scriptures, he lived. Thus after he studied the Word and before he preached it, he was careful to obey it.

Ezra obeyed the Word with the same "heart" devotion with which he studied it. A class of scribes arose in Jesus' day who sought to follow the Law, but not from the heart. With full heads but empty hearts, these scribes attempted to teach the Word, which prompted Jesus to say,

This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me" (Mt 15:8).

Ezra, however, was a scribe who wholeheartedly kept the Word, not with mere external ritual or empty routine, but with a deep internal desire.

Moody said,

God did not give us the Scriptures to increase our knowledge but to change our lives

Tozer wrote

Theological truth is useless until it is obeyed. The purpose behind all doctrine is to secure moral action.

Thomas Adams wrote that

True obedience has no lead at its heels.

Teach conveys the idea of training as well as educating. Biblical teaching seeks to guide people to follow the will of God, not by offering mere human opinions or suggestions but by bringing "the authoritative declaration of the Word of God."

Stott suggests, it is

to open the inspired text with such faithfulness and sensitivity that God's voice is heard and His people obey Him.

Many preachers bear more resemblance to entertainers than expositors, stand-up comics rather than knee-shaking servants. God-fearing, Scripture-reverencing men remain the need of the hour in pulpits today.

John Knox, the great Scottish Reformer said

I have never once feared the devil, but I tremble every time I enter the pulpit.

Where are such men who, like Knox, tremble when they open the Word of God?

"Statutes and ordinances" The scribes in the early years at the time of Ezra and before were so devoted to not putting an error in the Scriptures that they would copy the Scriptures with such fastidiousness it's just beyond belief. Some scribes, you'll find this hard to believe, would write one letter, take a bath, change their clothes, get a new pen, write another letter, take a bath, change their clothes, get a pen, write another letter. They didn't get a lot done but what they got done was correct. There was this tremendous fastidiousness to this completion of the inerrant text and its preservation.

This comprehensive threefold designation—the Law of the Lord, statutes, and ordinances—indicates that he studied all facets of God's Word. Tradition says he was the founder of the Great Synagogue where the Old Testament canon was first recognized

Every person is important to God and God's work; but, as Dr. Lee Roberson has often said,

Everything rises and falls with leadership.

McConville has written

The model teacher in Ezra is a doer. And the doer can be no mere demonstrator. He must be what he would have his disciples be.

Every preacher should follow Ezra's example and be committed to the study of the Scriptures in a way that is consuming, careful, and comprehensive. Pastors must guard against the seemingly endless, mounting pressures placed on them to sacrifice their study of the Word on the altar of their growing list of "priorities."

The day the preacher stops studying God's Word, whether he realizes it or not, is the day he begins losing spiritual passion and vitality in his preaching.

A shrinking study time may result in shrinking power in the pulpit.

Billy Graham was asked,

If you had to live your life over again, what would you do differently?

He answered

"One of my great regrets is that I have not studied enough, I wish I had studied more and preached less. People have pressured me into speaking to groups when I should have been studying and preparing. Donald Grey Barnhouse said that if he knew the Lord was coming in three years, he would spend two of them studying and one preaching."

The church needs more men like John Wesley, the powerful eighteenth-century preacher who cried out,

O give me that Book! At any price, give me the book of God.

Jeremiah 15:16 **(See commentary)**

Whenever Jeremiah began to relish God's Word, it had become his delight and a joy to his soul in contrast to the majority of people who despised it in [Jeremiah 8:9](#)

"The wise men are put to shame, They are dismayed and caught; Behold, they have **rejected** (despised, spurned, disdained, scorned, loathed) the word of the LORD, and what kind of wisdom do they have?"

J Vernon McGee writes that Jeremiah...

He found his consolation in it. He ate it and he digested it and it became a part of him. Oh, how we need to get into the Word of God today. We don't need just a little surface learning of a few rules, or just a little guideline of a few steps to take. We need to digest it so that it becomes part of our being. It will bring joy and rejoicing to the heart just as it did for Jeremiah. Only the Word of God can do this.

I received a letter from a man who heard our broadcast when I was in Galatians. He heard one word: Father. That arrested his attention. May I say to you that God is still using His Word today. Oh, how important the Word of God is!

Jeremiah is in real difficulty. Remember that his hometown rejected him and got rid of him. His own family rejected him. His life is actually in danger. ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

Warren Wiersbe notes that Jeremiah...

The prophet experienced the loneliness of leadership and the anguish of ministry, but God encouraged him as he fed on the Word. God may not take away the pain in your heart, but He can balance it with His joy. ([Wiersbe, W: With the Word: Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Handbook. Nelson](#))

Not hungry for God's Word? Then make the words of the godly hymn writer Isaac Watts your prayer...

Then let me love my Bible more
And take a fresh delight
By day to read these wonders o'er
And meditate by night.

Matthew 4:4

The parallel passage in [Luke 4:1-3](#) gives the **context** for the Matthew 4 passage...

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days; and when they had ended, He became hungry. 3 And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

Man shall not live on bread alone...

"Most of us are familiar with the Pony Express and its oft-romanticized contribution to the history of the Old West. But for all its glamour, the Pony Express was a business enterprise-and was run like one. To ferry mail across the open expanse of the western territories, the express route ran 1,900 miles from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento, California. The trip was made in about 10 days, using 40 men who each raced about 50 miles, riding a total of 500 fine horses in the process. To conserve weight, riders wore light clothing, rode on extremely small saddles, and carried no weapons. Their mail pouches were also compact and lightweight. Letters cost \$5 per ounce for postage. Yet for all these efficiencies in terms of weight, one thing was not sacrificed: every rider carried a full-size Bible, presented to him when he joined the Pony Express. By contrast, how often are we found without the Word of God at our side, in our day of comfort and convenience?"

Every word...

To get a properly balanced diet, we must feed on the **whole Bible**. Certain chapters and verses in the Bible are like pie and cake to our souls, and the temptation is to read them often and to try to live by them alone, neglecting the rest of the Scripture. Jesus said, **"every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God"**. Every Christian should read and ponder & meditate **IN** (Ps 1:2) the Bible, chapter after chapter, book after book, until finished and then go back and start over again. Only in this way can we get the benefit of **"every word"** that God has spoken. Let us not skip the "dry" chapters for in them will be found many of the brightest gems of spiritual truths. Let us read the OT as much as the NT for it is the foundation upon which the NT is built. Is there not a tendency in most sound, conservative, Bible believing churches to emphasize the NT sometimes to the virtual exclusion of the OT. This will lead to spiritual "tunnel vision" and the sheep will not be fully nourished as God intended them to be on a complete healthy diet that partakes of both Old and New Testaments.

Are you starving yourself spiritually? Do even know what the symptoms of such a malady would look like? Then you need to read the following devotional from [Our Daily Bread](#) (bolding added):

Many of us live in countries where food is abundant and people are well-fed. That's why we may not be familiar with the symptoms of starvation. At the outset, victims have an insatiable craving for nourishment. As time passes, however, the body weakens, the mind is dulled, and the desire for something to eat wanes. **In fact, starving people actually reach a point when they don't even want food that is placed before them.** Spiritual starvation follows much the same course. If we have been feeding daily on God's Word, it's natural to feel "hungry" when we skip our quiet time. But if we continue to neglect it, we may lose all desire to study the Scriptures. In fact, we may be starving ourselves. How much time do you spend reading the Bible and meditating on its truths? Do you miss the Word when you neglect it? Thomas Guthrie wrote, "If you find yourself loving any pleasure better than your prayers, any book better than the Bible, any persons better than Christ, or any indulgence better than the hope of heaven--take alarm." If you've lost your taste for the "bread of life," confess your negligence and ask God to revive your appetite for His Word. Avoid spiritual starvation! --R W De Haan ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Break Thou the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
As Thou didst break the loaves beside the sea.
Beyond the sacred page I seek Thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for Thee, O Living Word. --Lathbury

A well-read Bible is a sign of a well-fed soul.

Job 23:10-12
(see commentary)

"Hidden" (Hebrew [tsaphan 6845](#)) means to hide or to keep secret and is used of concealing something of great value, e.g., baby

Moses (Ex 2:2), the Israelite spies (by Rahab in Joshua 2:4). Figuratively as in Psalm 119:11 and here by Job [tsaphan](#) refers of keeping something hidden in a person's heart.

My "amplified" paraphrase of the Septuagint (LXX) based additional insight on the Greek words is...

Neither (double negative in the Greek "ou" = absolute negation & "me" relative no ~ so Job is saying in essence "**absolutely** no way") do I neglect, overlook or transgress from His precepts, but I have hidden (Active voice = personal choice to do this... sounds like he has memorized God's Word!) His uttered or spoken words in my bosom, because the bosom is the place of honor and close fellowship.

"I have not departed from the command of His lips" This the very thing that Joshua was instructed not to do Joshua 1:8, although at the moment Job declared this fact, he was far from experiencing success and making his way prosperous (at least from mankind's perspective) as promised to those who do not let the word depart from their lips. Clearly as we read his story, Job is a man who is suffering more than any of us will ever understand, and yet in the face of such affliction has affirms that he "**shall come forth as gold**". How did he know he would come forth as gold, a question which emphasizes the importance of examining the context to accurately answer this question. Job instead of being like "gold" was more like a man whose soul cleaved to the dust. And yet as Job 23:12 states, he knew God's Word and even more importantly he had experienced intimacy with God through His Word. He trusted His Father's refining hand. How else could he have said ""He knows the way I take. When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold" and not have been a hypocrite?

A New Testament way of saying one has not departed from the command is to abide in the Word ("Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;" John 8:31), to let the Word of Christ richly dwell within ("**Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you**, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with **thankfulness** in your hearts to God." see Colossians 3:16-note)

It is interesting and surprising that the NRSV & RSV don't have the last phrase "**more than my necessary food**" (I have not researched why this is... it is simply an observation)... RSV reads "I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured in my bosom the words of his mouth. " KJV, NKJV, NIV, ASV, TLB all have this phrase... could be a difference in the original Hebrew manuscript?

Job was not perfect but He had a perfect God Who was behind the scenes keeping His hand on the "thermostat" of affliction and suffering so that his choice servant would be refined rather than burned. Some people go into the furnace of affliction, and it burns them, whereas others go in, and the experience purifies them. What makes the difference? Their attitude toward the Word of God, the God of the Word and His will for their life. If we are continually, daily taking in the "bread" every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God and humbling ourselves in submission to His will which is good and acceptable and perfect, the furnace experience, painful as it may be at the moment, will refine us and make us better. (see 1Pe 1:6-note; 1Pe 1:7-note) But if we resist God's will and fail to feed on His truth, the furnace experience will only burn us and make us bitter (See Ruth 1:20 note) for a time when Naomi had her focus more on her problems -- which in fairness were many & were severe -- than on her Deliverer).

[Lord, Be Thy Word My Rule](#)

In it may I rejoice;
Thy glory be my aim;
Thy holy will my choice.
Thy promises my hope;
Thy providence my guard;
Thine arm my strong support;
Thyself my great Reward.
--C. Wordsworth

Would you cook a meal for yourself even if you didn't feel like cooking? You probably would reasoning something like this -- "Yes, food is necessary, and I know I need to eat or I will become anemic, weak and tired." How do we answer the same question when it comes to spiritual food, the Living Word of God? Did you skip your time in His Word today or maybe even all week long? If your answer is, "Yes, I was too tired, too busy, too down, etc, etc... to study God's Word," then consider Job, remembering the exhortation of the writer of Hebrews to fellow Hebrews who in the face of their great conflict of suffering exhorted ...

"we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.
(see notes Hebrews 6:11; 12)

James adding that...

You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful. ([James 5:11](#))

You may be saying "Well, at least I read [Our Daily Bread](#) (one of the best devotionals available in my opinion) every morning before I go to work." If so you might be intrigued by the caveat written by Our Daily Bread's founder Dr. M R DeHaan...

"Hold everything! Wait a minute! Have you read the Scripture for today? It's only eight short verses, and it will take you only 45 seconds. No, don't lay this booklet down and mumble to me, "I'm in a hurry and you're delaying me." I see you're eating breakfast this morning even though you're late. You take time to feed your body, but you were going to starve your soul. Take 45 seconds and read Psalm 119:33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40. If you don't read the rest of this devotional, that's okay--as long as you read the Bible. **These articles in Our Daily Bread are not designed to be a substitute for the Bible; they are meant to stimulate your desire to read more of the Bible.** If reading this booklet has caused you to neglect the Word of God, please throw this booklet in the wastebasket!" Job said, "I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). Jesus taught, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4). Yes, you may have had a rough day yesterday and you're way behind. But why should you be surprised that it was such a bad day if you started it without God's Word? Don't make the same mistake today. Take time to read." (DeHaan, M. R. -- founder of the ministry) (Bolding added) ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

DO YOU TREMBLE AT GOD'S WORD?

Isa 66:1,2 Thus says the LORD "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest? For My hand made all these things. Thus all these things came into being," declares the Lord. "But to this one I will look. To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.

Spurgeon comments: God will dwell with those that tremble at His word. Now the man that is in a right state for God to dwell in, trembles at God's word because he believes it to be all true.

If thou doubt God's word, between God and thee there is a disagreement, a rupture, a quarrel; and God never will dwell in thy soul.

The trembler believes it to be all true, and therefore he trembles.

As he reads the law, he says, "Thy holy law condemns me." He trembles at the threatenings of that law, for he feels he deserves them to be fulfilled on him. And when the gospel comes, and he receives it and rejoices in it he trembles at it, — trembles at the love that looked upon him from all eternity, — trembles that he should have nailed the Savior to the cross, — trembles lest, after all, he should not be washed in the precious blood, and he trembles after he is washed, lest he should not walk as blood-washed spirits should.

These things are so high and sublime, that he trembles beneath the burden of the glory that he should receive.

He trembles at the promise. "O Lord," saith he, "let that sweet promise be mine," and he trembles lest he should miss it, — trembles at a precept lest he should misunderstand it, or not carry it out in a proper spirit. He is not like some, who say of certain precepts, "These are non-essential." "No," says the man of God, "I tremble at what you call a non-essential precept."

If there be an ordinance, ordained of God in scripture, and others slight it and say it is trivial, the man of God, says, "No, to me it is not trivial or unimportant. Anything that is in the word of God and has the stamp of his approval, I tremble at."

Some one once said to an old Puritan, "Some have made such rents in their conscience, that you might make a little nick in yours. There is no reason why you should be so precise;" but the other replied, "I serve a precise God."

The God of Israel is a jealous God, and His people know it. Moses was not permitted to enter Canaan, for such a sin that you can hardly tell what it was, — it seemed such a little one; yet was he shut out from the land of promise for it; for God is more particular with those that are near to Him than with others.

He is jealous with those that are at Court; and He that leans his head on His bosom must expect the great Savior to be stricter with him than with any of those that are without.

Oh, beloved, we must tremble at God's word.

We know we shall enter heaven if we are believers in Jesus, but we tremble lest by any means we should mar our evidence of being inheritors of that goodly land.

We know the love of God will never cast us away; we know the eternal love will never reject those it has chosen; but we tremble lest we should abuse that grace.

The more gracious the doctrines we hear and believe, the more we tremble, lest we should sin against such a gracious God. We go through the world trembling and rejoicing.

Now, if that is our condition, God saith He will dwell with us. Oh, there are some of you dear hearts here that could not lay hold on this text anywhere, except on this particular point. You can say, "Oh, sir, I do tremble under God's word. How often under a sermon you make me quiver from head to foot; and, when I am reading the Bible alone, I am melted into tears with it."

Dear brother, I am glad of that, I am glad of that; for a holy trembling is a sign of life. If you can quiver before the eternal majesty of God's voice, you are not altogether like the stocks and stones, — not altogether dead in trespasses and sins. See then (for I will say no more upon it) what a blessed thing it is to be of this character, that God will dwell with us. (Read Spurgeon's full message on this passage - [Living Temples for the Living God](#))

><>><><>

If you would find God, He dwelleth on every hilltop and in every valley; God is everywhere in creation; but if you want a special display of Him, if you would know what is the secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High, the inner chamber of divinity, you must go where you find the church of true believers, for it is here he makes His continual residence known—in **the hearts of the humble and contrite, who tremble at His word** Every church is to our Lord a more sublime thing than a constellation in the heavens; as He is precious to His saints, so are they precious to Him. (Daily Help)

><>><><>

To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and **trembleth at My word.**" Stoop if you would climb to heaven. Do we not say of Jesus, "He descended that He might ascend?" So must you. You must grow downwards, that you may grow upwards; for the sweetest fellowship with heaven is to be had by humble souls, and by them alone. God will deny no blessing to a thoroughly humbled spirit. Humility makes us ready to be blessed by the God of all grace, and fits us to deal efficiently with our fellow-men. Whether it be prayer or praise, whether it be work or suffering, the genuine salt of humility cannot be used in excess. (Daily Help)

><>><><>

Many despise warning, and perish. **Happy is he who trembles at the word of the Lord.** Josiah did so, and he was spared the sight of the evil which the Lord determined to send upon Judah because of her great sins. Have you this tenderness? Do you practice this self-humiliation? Then you also shall be spared in the evil day. God sets a mark upon the men that sigh and cry because of the sin of the times. The destroying angel is commanded to keep his sword in its sheath till the elect of God are sheltered: these are best known by their godly fear, and their **trembling at the Word of the Lord.** (Faith's Checkbook)

><>><><>

2 Kings 22:11 (Josiah was a "trembler") And it came about when the king heard the words of the book of the law, that he tore his clothes.

He was of a tender spirit, and trembled at the word of the Lord, when he saw the evils sin had brought upon the nation. (Spurgeon - The Interpreter)

><>><><>

1 John 2:14 ... I have written to you, young men because you are strong and the word of God abides present tense = continually) in you and you have overcome the evil one

The Word in the Heart

"The Word of God abideth in you." I labour under the opinion that there never was a time in which the people of God had greater need to understand this passage than now. We have entered upon that part of the pilgrim path which is described by Bunyan as the Enchanted Ground: the Church and the world appear to be alike bewitched with folly. Half the people of God hardly know their head from their heels at this time. They are gaping after wonders, running after a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, and waiting for yet more astounding inventions. Everything seems to be in a whirligig; a tornado has set in, and the storm is everywhere. Christians used to believe in Christ as their Leader, and the Bible as their rule; but some of them are pleased with lords and rules such as He never knew! Believe me, there will soon come new Messiahs. Men are already pretending to work miracles, we shall soon have false Christs; and "Lo! here," and "Lo! there," will be heard on all sides. Anchors are up, winds are out, and the whole fleet is getting into confusion. Men in whose sanity and stability I once believed, are being carried away with one fancy or another, and I am driven to cry, "What next? and what next?" We are only at the beginning of an era of mingled unbelief and fanaticism. Now we shall know who are God's elect and who are not; for there are spirits abroad at this hour that would, if it were possible, deceive even the very elect; and those who are not deceived are, nevertheless, sorely put to it. Here is the patience of the saints; let him look to himself who is not rooted and grounded in Christ, for the hurricane is coming. The signs of the times indicate a carnival of delusions; men have ceased to be guided by the Word, and claim to be themselves prophets. Now we shall see what we shall see. Blessed is the sheep that knows his Shepherd, and will not listen to the voice of strangers. But here is the way to be kept steadfast—"The Word of God abideth in you."

"The Word of God"—that is to say, we are to believe in the doctrines of God's Word, and these will make us strong. What vigour they infuse! Get the Word well into you, and you will overcome the wicked one. When the devil tempted Luther, the Reformer's grand grip of justification by faith made him readily victorious. Keep you a fast hold of the doctrines of grace, and Satan will soon give over attacking you, for they are like plate-armour, through which no dart can ever force its way.

The promises of God's Word, too, what power they give! To get a hold of a "shall" and "will" in the time of trouble is a heavenly safeguard. "My God will hear me." "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee." These are Divine holdfasts. Oh, how strong a man is for overcoming the wicked one when he has such a promise to hand! Do not trust yourself out of a morning in the street till you have laid a promise under your tongue. I see people put respirators on in foggy weather; they do not make them look very lovely, but I daresay they are useful. I recommend the best respirator for the pestilential atmosphere of this present evil world when I bid you fit a promise to your lips. Did not the Lord rout the tempter in the wilderness with that promise, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall man live"? Get the promises of God to lodge within you, and you will be strong.

Then mind the precepts, for a precept is often a sharp weapon against Satan. Remember how the Lord Jesus Christ struck Satan a killing blow by quoting a precept—"It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." If the precept had not been handy, wherewith would the adversary have been rebuked? Nor is a threatening at all a weak weapon. The most terrible threatenings of God's Word against sin are the best helps for Christians when they are tempted to sin:—How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? How should I escape if I turned away from Him who speaketh from heaven? Tell Satan the threatenings, and make him tremble. Every word of God is life to holiness and death to sin. Use the Word as your sword and shield: there is none like it.

Now notice that John not only mentions "the Word of God," but the Word of God "in you." The inspired Word must be received into a willing mind. How? The Book which lies there is to be pleaded here, in the inmost heart, by the work of the Holy Ghost upon the mind. All of this letter has to be translated into spirit and life. "The Word of God abideth in you"—that is, first to know it,—next to remember it and treasure it up in your heart. Following upon this, we must understand it, and learn the analogy of faith by comparing spiritual things with spiritual till we have learned the system of Divine truth, and are able to set it forth and plead for it. It is, next, to have the Word in your affections, to love it so that it is as honey or the droppings of the honeycomb to you. When this is the case, you must and shall overcome the wicked one. A man instructed in the Scriptures is like an armed knight, who when he goes among the throng inflicts many a wound, but suffers none, for he is locked up in steel.

Yes, but that is not all; it is not the Word of God in you alone, it is "the Word of God abideth in you." It is always

there, it cannot be removed from you. If a man gets the Bible right into him, he is all right then, because he is full, and there is no room for evil. When you have filled a measure full of wheat, you have effectually shut the chaff out. Men go after novel and false doctrines because they do not really know the truth; for if the truth had gotten into them and filled them, they would not have room for these day-dreams. A man who truly knows the doctrines of grace is never removed from them: I have heard our opponents rave at what they call obstinacy. Once get the truth really into you, it will enter into the texture of your being, and nothing will get it out of you. It will also be your strength, by setting you watching against every evil thing. You will be on your guard if the Word abide in you, for it is written, "When thou goest it will keep thee." The Word of God will be to you a bulwark and a high tower (Ed: cp Pr 30:5, 6, 18:10, Ps 20:1), a castle of defence against the foe. Oh, see to it that the Word of God is in you, in your very soul, permeating your thoughts, and so operating upon your outward life, that all may know you to be a true Bible-Christian, for they perceive it in your words and deeds.

This is the sort of army that we need in the Church of God—men who are strong by feeding on God's Word. Aspire to it, and when you have reached it, then aspire unto the third degree, that you may become fathers in Israel? Up to this measure, at any rate, let us endeavour to advance, and advance at once. (From Spurgeon - A Good Start)

><>><>><>

Beloved, I notice that God imparts His messages to those who have a complete subordination to Him. I will tell you what has often crossed my mind when I have talked with certain brethren, or have read their lucubrations; I have wondered which was the Master, and which was the servant,—the man or God. I have been sorry for the errors of these brethren, but I have been far more distressed by the spirit shown in those errors. It is evident that they have renounced that holy reverence for Scripture which is indicated by such an expression as this, **"that trembleth at My Word."**

They rather trifle than tremble. The Word is not their teacher, but they are its critics. With many, the Word of the Lord is no longer enthroned in the place of honour, but it is treated as a football, to be kicked about as they please; and the apostles, especially, are treated as if Paul, and James, and John, were Jack, Tom, and Harry, with whom modern wise men are on terms of something more than equality. They pass the Books of Scripture under their rod, and judge the Spirit of God Himself. The Lord cannot work by a creature that is in revolt against Him. We must manifest the spirit of reverence, or we shall not be as little children, nor enter the Kingdom of Heaven...

I have mentioned simplicity of character, singleness of eye, and subordination of mind; and next to these, I notice, also, that, if God will speak to us, there must be a deep seriousness of heart. Let me remind you again of that text which I mentioned a minute ago: "To this man will I look, even to him that trembleth at My Word." When George Fox was called a Quaker, because he trembled at the Name of God, the title was an honour to him. The man was so God-possessed that he quaked, as well he might. Habakkuk describes the same feeling as having been his own, and this is no unusual experience with the true child of God. In fact, God never comes to us without causing us to tremble. The old Romish legend is that the tree that bore the Saviour was the aspen, whose leaves continually quiver; and he that bears Christ within him, and feels the weight of the Divine glory, must be filled with awe. Our brother Williams just now said that he feared and trembled for all the goodness that God had made to pass before him—this is my feeling, and yours also. We are so weak, and these Divine inspirations are so weighty, that we are subdued into awe, and there is no room for levity. (An All-Round Ministry: Addresses to Ministers and Students)

MISCELLANEOUS RESOURCES ON THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD

[The Power of the Word of God](#) - Article by Henry Morris (annual fee - gives access to over 20 theological journals - exceptional resource for in depth study)

- [The Authority & Power of the Word upon the Heart \(chapter 1\)](#) - J C Philpot
- [The Authority & Power of the Word upon the Heart \(chapter 2\)](#) - J C Philpot
- [The Authority & Power of the Word upon the Heart \(chapter 3\)](#) - J C Philpot

A Few Hymns which Exalt the Word of God

- [Thy Word Is a Lamp](#) by Fanny Crosby
- [Thy Word Have I Hid in My Heart](#) by Ernest O. Sellers
- [Thy Word Sheds Light upon My Path](#) by Theodore E. Perkins
- [Oh, Revive Us by Thy Word](#) by Daniel W. Whittle
- [I Love the Volumes of Thy Word](#) by Isaac Watts
- [Thy Word Is Like a Garden, Lord](#) by Edwin Hodder
- [Lord, Thy Word Abideth](#) by Henry W. Baker
- [Thy Word, O God, Declareth](#) by Johann Walther
- [Thy Word, O Lord, Like Gentle Dews](#) by Carl B. Garve
- [Thy Word, O Lord](#) by Albert Midlane
- [O How I Love Thy Holy Law](#) by Isaac Watts
- [How Precious, Lord, Thy Sacred Word](#) by Isaac Watts
- [How I Love Thy Law, O Lord](#) by William B. Bradbury
- [Whether the Word Be Preached or Read](#) by Charles Wesley

John Phillips tells this story about the **power of God's Word**...

J. B. Phillips confesses in the introduction to his Letters to Young Churches that when he first began to translate the New Testament he did not believe in the plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. But in the process of translating it he received so many shocks from the New Testament that he changed his mind. The material he was handling had power. He said that translating it was like trying to rewire a house without pulling the main switch. God's Word is powerful. (from [Exploring Psalms Volume One](#))

Devotional from **Our Daily Bread**...

The first morning I heard the mockingbird practicing his bagful of imitations outside my window, I was thrilled by the beauty of his songs. Gradually, however, I began to take this early morning songster for granted. One day as I awoke, it dawned on me that I no longer appreciated my regular visitor. It wasn't the mockingbird's fault. He was still there. His beautiful song hadn't changed, but I was no longer listening for it.

As believers in Christ, we may have a similar experience hearing God speak to us in His Word. When we are first saved, the Scriptures, with their soul-stirring instruction and vital spiritual food, are deeply satisfying. As time goes on, however, we routinely read those same portions over and over in a manner that no longer speaks to us. Our spiritual senses grow dull and lethargic, and God's exhilarating Word becomes commonplace to us. But then, what joy we feel when a passage reveals an exciting truth, and once again we "hear" the Lord!

Are you reading the Scriptures out of a tired sense of duty? Or do you still possess the fresh expectancy you had when you first believed? Today, when you read God's Word, listen closely for His voice. --R W De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I scanned the Scriptures thoughtlessly--
My haste had closed my ear;
Then prayerfully I read once more--
This time my heart could hear. --Gustafson

Without a heart for God, we cannot hear his word.

><>><><>

Matthew Henry on Genesis 1 and the **"Power of the Word of God"**...

That the light was made by the word of God's power. He said, Let there be light; he willed and appointed it, and it was done immediately: there was light, such a copy as exactly answered the original idea in the Eternal Mind. O the power of the word of God! He spoke, and it was done, done really, effectually, and for perpetuity, not in show only, and to serve a present turn, for he commanded, and it stood fast: with him it was dictum, factum—a word, and a world. The world of God (that is, his will and the good pleasure of it) is quick and powerful. Christ is the Word, the essential eternal Word, and by him the light was produced, for in him was light, and he is the true light, the light of the world, John 1:9; 9:5.. The divine light which shines in sanctified

souls is wrought by the power of God, the power of his word and of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, opening the understanding, scattering the mists of ignorance and mistake, and giving the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ, as at first, God commanded the light to shine out of darkness, 2Cor. 4/6. Darkness would have been perpetually upon the face of fallen man if the Son of God had not come, and given us an understanding, 1Jn 5.20.

HANDOUT OF REFERENCES FOR DISCUSSION

INSTRUCTIONS: References to be handed out to the discussants. Copy and paste these references to your word processor and print out. Obviously you can delete or add verses as you deem appropriate. As discussed above, if you have any degree class interaction, you will probably not be able to discuss all of these passages. You might consider discussing this material over two or three sessions. Note that the passages from Hebrews and Second Peter help explain the title of the page, and emphasize the power and sufficiency of God's Word. These verses should be read out loud and a few observations made to begin to draw the class into the discussion.

There are also quotes by Abraham Lincoln (positive) and a fascinating anecdotal story about Voltaire, a vicious enemy of the Word.

You might amplify the comments on Voltaire which this some thoughts on the following excerpt from the fascinating book ["Last Words of Saints and Sinners"](#), in which Herbert Lockyer writes...

VOLTAIRE, the noted French infidel and one of the most fertile and talented writers of his time, used his pen to retard and demolish Christianity. Of Christ, Voltaire said:

"Curse the wretch!"

He once boasted,

"In twenty years Christianity will be no more. My single hand shall destroy the edifice it took twelve apostles to rear."

Shortly ,after his death the very house in which he printed his foul literature became the depot of the Geneva Bible Society!

The nurse who attended Voltaire said:

"For all the wealth in Europe I would not see another infidel die."

The physician, Trochim, waiting up with Voltaire at his death said that he cried out most desperately:

"I am abandoned by God and man! I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months' life. Then I shall go to hell; and you will go with me. O Christ! O Jesus Christ!"

THE LIVING AND ACTIVE WORD OF GOD

Provides Everything Necessary for Life & Godliness

Hebrews 4:12, 13, 2 Peter 1:3

Hebrews 4:12-13 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to (give an account).

2 Peter 1:3 (The) divine power (of Jesus our Lord) has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

Abraham Lincoln addressed a group of African-Americans who had given him a special presentation Bible in 1864:

"In regard to this Great Book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good the Savior gave to the world was communicated through this book. But for it we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man's welfare, here and hereafter, are to be found portrayed in it."

Voltaire, the French philosopher and avowed atheist (1778) boasted that within 100 hundred years of his lifetime, Christianity would

be swept from earth but only 50 years after his death, his own printing press and house were being used by the Geneva Bible Society to produce Bibles! God does have a sense of humor!

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

1 Peter 2:1 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2 like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you

Context: 1 Peter 1:23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God. 24 For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, 25 BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ABIDES FOREVER." And this is the word which was preached to you.

Isaiah 42:8-9 "I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images. "Behold, the former things have come to pass. Now I declare new things. Before they spring forth I proclaim them to you."

Psalms 1:1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! **2** But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. **3** And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

Psalms 119:9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word. **10** With all my heart I have sought Thee; Do not let me wander from Thy commandments. **11** Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee.

Joshua 1:8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Ezra 7:9 For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because the good hand of his God was upon him. **10** For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Jeremiah 15:16 Thy words were found and I ate them, and Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

Job 23:10-12 "But He knows the way I take. When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. **11** My foot has held fast to His path. I have kept His way and not turned aside. **12** I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.

Context: Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil. **20** Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD." 22 Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

Matthew 4:4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'"

QUOTES RELATED TO THE WORD OF GOD

SEE THE MORE COMPLETE COLLECTION - [The Word of God - Quotations and Illustrations](#)

Warning: Inductive Bible study can be habit-forming. Putting the principles into practice can cause loss of anxiety, decreased appetite for lying, cheating, stealing, hating and "symptoms" of growing sensations of love, peace, joy, compassion.

Pictures of What the Word of God does

- (1) **Sword** - Ep 6:17, He 4:12
- (2) **Critic, Judge** - He 4:12

- (3) **Lamp, light** - Isa 5:20, Isa 50:10, 11, Ps 36:9, Ps 119:105, 130, Pr 6:23
- (4) **Mirror** - 2Cor 3:18, Jas 1:22, 23, 24, 25
- (5) **Rain, Snow, Water** - Isa 55:10,11, Jer 17:5, 6, 7, 8, Ep 5:26
- (6) **Food, Bread** - Job 23:12, Jer 15:16, Ezek 2:8, 3:1, 2, 3
- (7) **Gold and Silver** - Ps 19:10, Ps 119:127, Pr 8:10, 11, 8:19
- (8) **Fire** - Jer 23:29, 20:9
- (9) **Hammer** - Jer 23:29, 2Co 10:3,4,5, Acts 20:32
- (10) **Seed** - Mk 4:14, Mk 4:26, 27, 28, Col 1:5, 6,7
- (11) **Honey, Honeycomb** - Ps 19:10, Ps 119:103, Ps 81:16, Pr 24:13, Ezek 3:1, 2, 3
- (For detailed discussion of these pictures see [The Word-Filled Life - Developing the Mind of Christ by Hampton Keathley III](#))

Leave not off reading the Bible till you find your hearts warmed. Let it not only inform you but inflame you. -- Thomas Watson

Inductive Bible study is meant not merely to inform but to transform. (see Romans 12:2-note)

Men do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts them. - E. Paul Hovey

The old covenant is revealed in the New, and the New Covenant is veiled in the Old. - Augustine

The new is in the old contained, and the Old is in the New explained. - Graham Scroggie

The family Bible is more often used to adorn coffee tables or press flowers than it is to feed souls and discipline lives. - Charles Colson

The Old Testament altar points to the New Testament cross.

The Bible is meant to be bread for daily use, not cake for special occasions. (Deut 8:3, Mt 4:4)

The Bible is the best "TV guide". (Ps 101:3) [Spurgeon on Ps 101:3](#)

When you open your Bible, ask the Author to open your heart. (Ps 119:18, Luke 24:45 [Eph 1:17-note](#); [Eph 1:18-note](#))

If a Christian is careless in Bible reading, he will care less about Christian living.

To understand the Word of God, rely on the Spirit of God.

You can't enjoy the harmony of Scripture if you play just one note of truth. (Acts 20:27)

To hear God speak, read the Bible carefully and study it prayerfully.

Backsliders begin with dusty Bibles and end with filthy garments. Spurgeon

We cannot bear fruit without the water of God's Word. (Luke 8:15)

The highest goal of learning is to know God. (John 17:3)

After captivating an audience at Yale University, the late novelist Ayn Rand was asked by a reporter, "Whats wrong with the modern world?" Without a moment's hesitation she replied, "Never before has the world been so desperately asking for answers to crucial questions, and never before has the world been so frantically committed to the idea that no answers are possible. To paraphrase the Bible, the modern attitude is, '*Father, forgive us, for we know not what we are doing—and please don't tell us*'" That's very perceptive for an acknowledged agnostic. Many of us want a **word from God**, but we don't want the **Word of God**. We know enough **to own a Bible** but not enough for **the Bible to own us**. We pay the Bible **lip service**, but we fail to give it '**life service**.'" In a world where the only absolute is that there are no absolutes, there is little room left for the authoritative Word of God as revealed in the Bible.

When we look into the mirror of God's Word, we see ourselves more clearly. (James 1:23, 24, 25 - see notes [James 1:23; 24; 25](#))

A text taken out of **context** becomes a pretext.

Let God's Word fill your mind, rule your heart, and guide your tongue. (see [Colossians 3:16-note](#), [Eph 5:18-note](#); [Eph 5:19-note](#); [Eph 5:20-note](#))

The Bible: The more you read it, the more you love it; the more you love it, the more you read it.

The best protection against Satan's lies is to know God's truth. (see Ephesians 6:14-note)

Like a compass, the Bible always points you in the right direction. (Deut 28:13,14, Joshua 1:7, 8, 9)

Those who only sample the Bible never acquire a taste for it. (Jer 15:16, Job 23:12, Ps 19:10)

While other books inform, and some few reform, this one book transforms. -- A. T. Pierson

Other books were given for our information—the Bible was given for our transformation.

If you're too busy to read the Bible, you're too busy.

As **A W Tozer** put it...

Whatever keeps me from my Bible is my enemy, however harmless it may appear to me.

God feeds the birds, but He doesn't throw the food into their nests.

We lose the joy of living in the present when we worry about the future. And we lose the joy of living for the future when we focus on the present.

Opening your Bible can be a real eye-opener.

A well-read Bible is a sign of a well-fed soul.

The Bible breaks hard hearts and heals broken hearts.

A Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't.

Sin will keep you from the Bible or the Bible will keep you from sin.

It's better to live one verse of the Bible than to recite an entire chapter.

The Bible: read it through, work it out, pass it on!

The jewel of the Word should not hang in our ears, but be locked up in a believing heart. -- William Jenkyn

The Word is both a glass to show us the spots of our soul and a laver to wash them away. -- Puritan Thomas Watson

One proof of the inspiration of the Bible is that it has withstood so much poor preaching. - A. T. Robertson

It is impossible to practice godliness without a constant, consistent and balanced intake of the Word of God in our lives. -- Jerry Bridges

The Bible is none other than the voice of him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High. -- John William Burgon

Apply yourself to the Scriptures and the Scriptures to yourself.

The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold on me. - Martin Luther

Reading the Bible without meditating on it is like eating without chewing. (Ps 119:15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 97, 99, 148)

God speaks through His Word--take time to listen.

The value of the Bible is not knowing it, but obeying it.

When you have read the Bible, you will know it is the Word of God, because you will have found it the key to your own heart, your own happiness and your own duty. -- Woodrow Wilson

It is not the Word hidden in the head but in the heart that keeps us from sin. - Vance Havner

A Bible in hand is worth two on the shelf.

A **Red** Letter Bible is fine, but one that is **Read** is far better!

When the Bible becomes a part of you, you'll be less likely to come apart.

The Bible is simple enough for a child to read and too deep for a scholar to master.

A Bible that has frayed edges usually has an owner that doesn't.

The best thing to do with the Bible is to know it in the head, stow it in the heart, sow it in the world, and show it in the life.

Devout meditation on the Word is more important to soul-health even than prayer. It is more needful for you to hear God's words than that God should hear yours, though the one will always lead to the other. -- F. B. Meyer

The Christian is bred by the Word and he must be fed by it. --William Gurnall

The best way for Christians to grow is to eat the Bread of Life.

The Word of God is the candle without which faith cannot see to do its work.

The true Christian church is the work of the Word communicated by every available means. -- Martin Luther

The Bible is like a compass—it always points the believer in the right direction.

The Bible is like the ocean. You can wade in it, feed from it, live on it--or drown in it. But those who take the time to learn its truths and practice them will be changed forever.

With God's Word as your map and His Spirit as your compass, you're sure to stay on course.

When you study the Bible "hit or miss," you MISS more than you HIT.

When the Word of God dwells in you, the love of Christ shines through you.

Beware! Error often rides to its deadly work on the back of truth! --Spurgeon (2Cor 11:13, 14, 15)

Spiritual growth requires the meat of God's Word. (see Hebrews 5:14-note, 1 Peter 2:2-note)

Be diligent in your study of the Word of God. Then, instead of falling into error, you will stand firmly on the truth.

Study the Bible to be wise; believe it to be safe; practise it to be holy.

The Word of the Lord is a light to guide you, a counsellor to counsel you, a comforter to comfort you, a staff to support you, a sword to defend you, and a physician to cure you. The Word is a mine to enrich you, a robe to clothe you, and a crown to crown you. - Thomas Brooks

Your life will run smoother if you go by "The Book."

If we want our life to run well, even through stormy situations and rough circumstances, we must take the time to study the "Owner's Manual."

Many people store the Bible on the shelf instead of in their heart.

Some people make the Bible say what they want to hear

To be a healthy Christian, don't treat the Bible as snack food.

A well-read Bible is the companion of a well-fed believer.

I never saw a useful Christian who was not a student of the Bible. - D. L. Moody

We must approach God's Word as if our lives depended on it--because they do.

If your life depended on knowing the Bible, how long would you last?

We must align ourselves with the Bible, never the Bible with ourselves.

The branches of growing trees not only reach higher, but their roots grow deeper. It's impossible for a strong tree to have high branches without having deep roots. It would become top-heavy and topple over in the wind." The same is true with Christians. It's impossible for us to grow in the Lord without entwining our roots around His Word and deepening our life in His commands." - Joni Eareckson Tada

The roots of stability come from being grounded in God's Word.

Bible study demands pondering deeply on a short passage, like a cow chewing her cud. It is better to read a little and ponder a lot than to read a lot and ponder a little.

Unless God's Word illumine the way, the whole life of men is wrapped in darkness and mist, so that they cannot but miserably stray. - John Calvin

Hold fast to the Bible as the sheet-anchor of our liberties; write its precepts on your hearts and practise them in your lives. To the influence of this book we are indebted for the progress made in true civilization, and to this we must look for our guide in the future. Ulysses S. Grant

There's no better book with which to defend the Bible than the Bible itself. -**D. L. Moody**

The study of God's Word brings peace to the heart. In it, we find a light for every darkness, life in death, the promise of our Lord's return, and the assurance of everlasting glory. - **D. L. Moody**

The Bible is like a telescope. If a man looks through his telescope, then he sees worlds beyond: but if he looks at his telescope, then he does not see anything but that. The Bible is a thing to be looked through, to see that which is beyond; but most people only look at it; and so they see only the dead letter." **Phillips Brooks**

The Bible was not written to satisfy your curiosity, but to make you conform to Christ's image. Not to make you a smarter sinner, but to make you like the Savior. Not to fill your head with a collection of biblical facts, but to transform your life." --**Howard Hendricks in Living by the Book**

Living by the Book by Dr Howard Hendricks - [click here for all 19 sessions](#) of about 20-25 minute each - this was a powerful tool God's Spirit used in my life about 30 years ago but it was not free at that time. There is also another set of videos in which [Dr Hendrick's gives shorter sessions](#) - 15 sessions, each about 6 minutes. Could you invest an hour and a half in something that might change the way you read the Bible for the rest of your life? That question is of course rhetorical. And don't say you're too old to learn now! Many Christians read the Bible, but they have never been taught **HOW** to read the Bible. Dr Hendricks will give you some basic pointers in the overview sessions and this may motivate you to view his 19 full sessions (and even better to use them to teach your Bible Study group or Sunday School class **HOW TO READ THE BOOK**, because most of them have never been taught!) Either way, your investment in time will yield precious fruit for eternity! Here is the same material in book form - borrow [Living by the Book](#) or pdf of revised edition .

It has been said that the Bible is so deep that theologians cannot touch the bottom, yet so shallow that babes cannot drown.

J. I. Packer once said that...

If I were the devil, one of my first aims would be to stop folk from digging into the Bible.

In the midst of that period of intellectual history called The Enlightenment, a philosophy known as deism was sweeping Europe. In the midst of this development, the famous skeptic, Voltaire, proclaimed that within 25 years, the Bible would be forgotten and Christianity would be a thing of the past. However, 40 years after Voltaire's death in 1778, the Bible and other Christian literature were being printed in what had once been Voltaire's own house!

My rule for Christian living is this: anything that dims my vision of Christ, or takes away my taste for Bible study, or cramps my prayer life, or makes Christian work difficult is wrong for me, and I must, as a Christian, turn away from it. - **Dr. Wilbur Chapman**

The Bible is God's chart for you to steer by, to keep you from the bottom of the sea, and to show you where the harbor is, and how to reach it without running on rocks or bars. - **Henry Ward Beecher**

Sow a thought, and you reap an act;

Sow an act, and you reap a habit;

Sow a habit, and you reap a character;

Sow a character, and you reap a destiny. - **Samuel Smiles**

Leave not off reading the Bible till you find your hearts warmed... Let it not only inform you, but inflame you. -**Thomas Watson**

Never let good books take the place of the Bible. Drink from the Well, not from the streams that flow from the Well . --**Amy Carmichael**

Gipsy Smith told of a man who said he had received no inspiration from the Bible although he had "gone through it several times."

"Let it go through you once," replied Smith, "then you will tell a different story!"

C H Spurgeon in his sermon on Hosea 2:23 exults in the authority and efficacy of God's holy Word...

To my mind, it is very instructive to notice how Paul quotes from the Prophets. The revelation of the mind of God in the Old Testament helps us to understand the gospel revealed in the New Testament. **There is no authority that is so powerful over the minds of Christian men as that of the Word of God.** Has God made known any truth in his Word? Then, it is invested with divine authority. Paul, being himself inspired by the Holy Spirit, and therefore able to write fresh revelations of the mind of God, here brings the authority of God's Word in the olden times to back up and support what he says: "As he saith also in Osee (Hosea)."

Beloved friend, if you are seeking salvation, or if you want comfort, never rest satisfied with the mere word of man. Be not content unless you got the truth from the mouth of God. Say in your spirit, "I will not be comforted, unless God himself shall comfort me. I want chapter and verse for that which I receive as gospel." Our Lord's reply to Satan was, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." **Give me, then, but a word out of God's mouth, and I can live upon it; but all the words out of man's mouth, apart from divine inspiration, must be as unsatisfying food as if men tried to live on stones.**

Notice, again, how Paul teaches that the very essence of the authority of the Scriptures lies in this, that God speaks through his revealed Word:

"As **HE** saith also in Osee (Hosea)."

It is God speaking in the Bible whom we ought to hear. The mere letter of the Word alone will kill; but when we hear God's voice speaking in it, then it has power which it could not possess otherwise. **It is a blessed thing to put your ear down to the promises of Scripture, till you hear God speaking through them to your soul. It is truly profitable to read a gospel commandment, and to listen to its voice until God himself speaks it with power to your heart.** I pray you, do not regard anything that is preached here unless it agrees with what is written there in the Bible. If it is only my word, throw it away; but if it is God's truth that I declare to you, if God Himself speaks it through my lips, you will disregard it at your peril.

I will make only one other observation by way of introduction. Is it not wonderful how God's Word is preserved century after century? There were seven or eight hundred years between Hosea and Paul; and it is remarkable that the promise to the Gentiles should lie asleep all that time, and yet should be just as full of life and power when Paul was quoting it after all those centuries. **God's Word is like the wheat in the hand of the mummy, of which you have often heard. It had lain there for thousands of years; but men took it out of the hand, and sowed it, and there sprang up the bearded wheat which has now become so common in our land. So you take a divine promise, spoken hundreds or thousands of years ago, and lo, it is fulfilled to you!** It becomes as true to you as if God had spoken it for the first time this very day, and you were the person to whom it was addressed.

O blessed Word of God, how we ought to prize thee! We cannot tell yet all that lies hidden between these covers; but there is a treasury of grace concealed here, which we ought to seek until we find it. (See full message on Hosea 2:23 God's People, or Not God's People) (Bolding added for emphasis) (Copyright [AGES Software](#). Used by permission. All rights reserved. See [AGES Software](#) for their full selection of highly recommended resources)

><>><>><>

THE TALKING BOOK

Spurgeon commenting on Proverbs 6:22:

THE WORD IS LIVING. How else could it be said: "It shall talk with thee"? A dead book cannot talk, nor can a dumb book speak. It is clearly a living book, then, and a speaking book: "The word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." How many of us have found this to be most certainly true! A large proportion of human books are long ago dead, and even shrivelled like Egyptian mummies; the mere course of years has rendered them worthless, their teaching is disproved, and they have no life for us. Entomb them in your public libraries if you will, but, henceforth, they will stir no man's pulse and warm no man's heart. But this thrice blessed book of God, though it has been extant among us these many hundreds of years, is immortal in its life, unwithering in its strength: the dew of its youth is still upon it; its speech still drops as the rain fresh from heaven; its truths are overflowing founts of ever fresh consolation. Never book spake like this book; its voice, like the voice of God, is powerful and full of majesty.

THE WORD OF GOD IS LIVING

... Whence comes it that the word of God is living? Is it not, first, because it is pure truth? Error is death, truth is life...

... The word of God is living, because it is the utterance of an immutable, self-existing God. God doth not speak to-day what He meant not yesterday, neither will He to-morrow blot out what He records to-day. When I read a promise spoken three thousand years ago, it is as fresh as though it fell from the eternal lips to-day. There are, indeed, no dates to the Divine promises; they are not of private interpretation, nor to be monopolized by any generation. I say again, as fresh to-day the eternal word drops from the Almighty's lips as when He uttered it to Moses, or to Elias, or spake it by the tongue of Esaias (Isaiah) or Jeremiah. The word is always sure, steadfast, and full of power. It is never out of date. Scripture bubbles up evermore with good matters, it is an eternal Geyser, a spiritual Niagara of grace, for ever falling, flashing, and flowing on; it is never stagnant, never brackish or defiled, but always clear, crystal, fresh, and refreshing; so, therefore, ever living...

... The word lives, again, because it enshrines the living heart of Christ. The heart of Christ is the most living of all existences...

... Over and above all this, the Holy Spirit has a peculiar connection with the word of God... (Read the entire [Sermon on Proverbs 6:22 - The Talking Book](#))

Some more on power and Word... note that in a number of these passages the power of the Word is made evident by the effect it produces (eg, creation, restraint from sin, healing, etc).

><>><>><>

Some more on the **power of the Word of God**...

The Word of God is...

Active Isa 55:11 The Hebrew for "word" can also mean "action" or "deed". This indicates that God's word is active.

Brings about creation Ps 33:6, Heb 11:3 See also 2Pe 3:5

Maintains the created order Heb 1:3 See also Ps 147:18

Gives life Dt 8:3, 32:47 See also Isa 55:2-3; Mt 4:4 Lk 4:4

Restrains from sin Ps 17:4; 119:11

Heals and rescues Ps 107:20

The power to save James 1:21 See also 2Ti 3:15; 1Pe 1:23

It brings about the growth of the kingdom of God Mt 13:23 pp Mk 4:20 pp Lk 8:15

It builds up the saints Acts 20:32

Matthew 22:29 -The "Scriptures" and "the power of God" are placed in apposition.

><>><>><>

More Illustrations related to the Word of God...

John Kass, a columnist for the Chicago Tribune, recently wrote about a waiter named Bouch who works at a tavern in Chicago. Bouch decided to write to the king of his homeland, Morocco. The king, Mohammed VI, is immensely popular because he often interacts with his subjects in public. He has freed political prisoners, and he helps the poor and disabled. When Bouch wrote to him from Chicago, King Mohammed VI, true to nature, wrote back.

"Look at the letters," said Bouch. "These are letters from the king. if I meet him, I'll be so happy."

John Kass, the columnist, muses, "How many guys hauling beer and burgers in a Chicago tavern have a correspondence going with a royal monarch?" The columnist talked to Morocco's deputy counsel general in Chicago and was told that it isn't unusual for the king to write personal letters to his subjects abroad. "It happens a lot," the official said. "He loves his subjects."

You think King Mohammed VI loves his subjects? You ought to meet Jesus, the King of kings, and read his precious letters to you.

><>><>><>

Sometimes the airplane pilot can see nothing and must fly by instrument. The Christian must often do the same and that instrument is the Word of God. It guarantees a safe landing! - Vance Havner

><>><>><>

In a day of tranquilizers we are likely to make an aspirin pill of religion. The Word of God is not a lullaby to put us to sleep but a reveille to wake us up. - Vance Havner

><>><>><>

When a plane takes off, it needs a control tower. The control tower can see what the pilots cannot. The pilots have a limited vantage point. They can't see underneath or above them. The pilots, even with all of their instruments, cannot see all the weather conditions that will affect their flight plan. The folks in the control tower can provide the pilots information they wouldn't have because of their limited vantage point. The Word of God is the control tower for the Christian. Where we have only a limited vantage point, God's Word can communicate to us what is going on in the spiritual realm that we can't see. - Tony Evans

><>><>><>

People listen to traffic reports before heading to work so they can find out about conditions they can't see. These traffic reports are normally provided by a person flying around in a helicopter who has a large vantage point. The proof that people listen to traffic reports and believe them is evident by their decisions on which route to take. People don't just listen to the traffic report for their listening pleasure. They listen to get information on situations they can't see themselves. As Christians, we need eyes that we don't have. God has a greater vantage point and provides that information to us in His Word. - Tony Evans

><>><>><>

If you drive into the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport from the south side, you'll see a big, round thing up there. That big, round thing is the Doppler radar. It was built because pilots were not able to see wind shears. In the past, these sudden bursts of wind had been forceful enough to slow down an approaching plane, press it to the ground, and cause an accident. The Doppler radar detects wind shears so that planes, pilots, and passengers can be protected from disaster, from things they can't see. God has given you a radar to help you because there are things you can't see. The Word of God is a radar that will save us from disaster if we would only believe it to be true and act accordingly. - Tony Evans

><>><>><>

First Peter 2:2 tells us to "long for the pure milk of the Word." Pure means undiluted. A lot of us want the Word but we mix it up with other information. At most county or state fairs, you can find candied apples—apples dipped in sugar. Now, apples by themselves are a great, healthy fruit. Once you dip them in sugar, however, you've just killed the benefit of the apple although it tastes good. A candied apple is sweet but its nutritional value is diluted because something with no value has been added to it. Many of us will read the Word, hear the Word, and then talk to people about the Word but then dip it in human viewpoint.

Separated and Saturated Dr. Warren Wiersbe

Read Psalm 1:1,2

Two of the most popular words in the Christian vocabulary are bless and blessing. God wants to bless His people. He wants them to be recipients and channels of blessing. God blesses us to make us a blessing to others, but He has given us certain conditions for receiving blessings.

First, we must be separated from the world (v. 1). The world is anything that separates us from God or causes us to disobey Him. Separation is not isolation but contact without contamination. Sin is usually a gradual process. Notice the gradual decline of the

sinner in verse 1. He is walking (Mark 14:54), standing (John 18:18) and then sitting (Luke 22:55). Becoming worldly is progressive; it happens by degrees. We make friends with the world; we become spotted by the world; we love the world, become confirmed to it and end up condemned with it. Lot is an example of someone who became worldly. He looked toward Sodom, pitched his tent toward Sodom, lived there, lost everything and ended in sin.

Second, we must be saturated with the Word (v. 2). Whatever delights us directs us. We saturate ourselves with the Word by meditating on it. Meditation is to the spirit what digestion is to the body. When we meditate on the Word, we allow the Spirit of God within us to "digest" the Word of God for us. So not only do we delight in the Word, it becomes a source of spiritual nourishment for us.

Enjoy the blessings God has for you and allow Him to make you a blessing to others. (A third condition, being situated by the waters, is the topic of our next devotional.)

God desires to bless us, but we must meet His conditions for receiving blessings. By staying separate from the world and keeping saturated in the Word, we may expect God's blessings. Resolve to meditate on the Word of God and obey it. He will make you a blessing to others. (from [Prayer, praise & promises : a daily walk through the Psalms](#) - borrow)

Psalm 1

C H Spurgeon

TITLE. This Psalm may be regarded as THE PREFACE PSALM, having in it a notification of the contents of the entire Book. It is the psalmists's desire to teach us the way to blessedness, and to warn us of the sure destruction of sinners. This, then, is the matter of the first Psalm, which may be looked upon, in some respects, as the text upon which the whole of the Psalms make up a divine sermon.

DIVISION. This Psalm consists of two parts: in the first (from verse 1 to the end of the 3rd) David sets out wherein the felicity and blessedness of a godly man consisteth, what his exercises are, and what blessings he shall receive from the Lord. In the second part (from verse 4 to the end) he contrasts the state and character of the ungodly, reveals the future, and describes, in telling language, his ultimate doom.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. "BLESSED"—see how this Book of Psalms opens with a benediction, even as did the famous Sermon of our Lord upon the Mount! The word translated "blessed" is a very expressive one. The original word is plural, and it is a controverted matter whether it is an adjective or a substantive. Hence we may learn the multiplicity of the blessings which shall rest upon the man whom God hath justified, and the perfection and greatness of the blessedness he shall enjoy. We might read it, "Oh, the blessednesses!" and we may well regard it (as Ainsworth does) as a joyful acclamation of the gracious man's felicity. May the like benediction rest on us!

Here the gracious man is described both negatively (verse 1) and positively (verse 2). He is a man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. He takes wiser counsel, and walks in the commandments of the Lord his God. To him the ways of piety are paths of peace and pleasantness. His footsteps are ordered by the Word of God, and not by the cunning and wicked devices of carnal men. It is a rich sign of inward grace when the outward walk is changed, and when ungodliness is put far from our actions. Note next, he standeth not in the way of sinners. His company is of a choicer sort than it was. Although a sinner himself, he is now a blood-washed sinner, quickened by the Holy Spirit, and renewed in heart. Standing by the rich grace of God in the congregation of the righteous, he dares not herd with the multitude that do evil. Again it is said, "nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." He finds no rest in the atheist's scoffings. Let others make a mock of sin, of eternity, of hell and heaven, and of the Eternal God; this man has learned better philosophy than that of the infidel, and has too much sense of God's presence to endure to hear His name blasphemed. The seat of the scorner may be very lofty, but it is very near to the gate of hell; let us flee from it, for it shall soon be empty, and destruction shall swallow up the man who sits therein. Mark the gradation in the first verse:

He walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor SITTETH in the SEAT of SCORNFUL.

When men are living in sin they go from bad to worse. At first they merely walk in the counsel of the careless and ungodly, who forget God—the evil is rather practical than habitual—but after that, they become habituated to evil, and they stand in the way of open sinners who wilfully violate God's commandments; and if let alone, they go one step further, and become themselves pestilent teachers and tempters of others, and thus they sit in the seat of the scornful. They have taken their degree in vice, and as true Doctors of Damnation they are installed, and are looked up to by others as Masters in Belial. But the blessed man, the man to whom

all the blessings of God belong, can hold no communion with such characters as these. He keeps himself pure from these lepers; he puts away evil things from him as garments spotted by the flesh; he comes out from among the wicked, and goes without the camp, bearing the reproach of Christ. O for grace to be thus separate from sinners.

And now mark his positive character. "His delight is in the law of the Lord." He is not under the law as a curse and condemnation, but he is in it, and he delights to be in it as his rule of life; he delights, moreover, to meditate in it, to read it by day, and think upon it by night. He takes a text and carries it with him all day long; and in the night-watches, when sleep forsakes his eyelids, he museth upon the Word of God. In the day of his prosperity he sings psalms out of the Word of God, and in the night of his affliction he comforts himself with promises out of the same book. "The law of the Lord" is the daily bread of the true believer. And yet, in David's day, how small was the volume of inspiration, for they had scarcely anything save the first five books of Moses! How much more, then, should we prize the whole written Word which it is our privilege to have in all our houses! But, alas, what ill-treatment is given to this angel from heaven! We are not all Berean searchers of the Scriptures. How few among us can lay claim to the benediction of the text! Perhaps some of you can claim a sort of negative purity, because you do not walk in the way of the ungodly; but let me ask you—Is your delight in the law of God? Do you study God's Word? Do you make it the man of your right hand—your best companion and hourly guide? If not, this blessing belongeth not to you.

Verse 3. "And he shall be like a tree planted"—not a wild tree, but "a tree planted," chosen, considered as property, cultivated and secured from the last terrible uprooting, for "every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up:" Matthew 15:13. "By the rivers of water;" so that even if one river should fail, he hath another. The rivers of pardon and the rivers of grace, the rivers of the promise and the rivers of communion with Christ, are never-failing sources of supply. He is "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season;" not unseasonable graces, like untimely figs, which are never full-flavored. But the man who delights in God's Word, being taught by it, bringeth forth patience in the time of suffering, faith in the day of trial, and holy joy in the hour of prosperity. Fruitfulness is an essential quality of a gracious man, and that fruitfulness should be seasonable. "His leaf also shall not wither;" his faintest word shall be everlasting; his little deeds of love shall be had in remembrance. Not simply shall his fruit be preserved, but his leaf also. He shall neither lose his beauty nor his fruitfulness. "And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Blessed is the man who hath such a promise as this. But we must not always estimate the fulfillment of a promise by our own eye-sight. How often, my brethren, if we judge by feeble sense, may we come to the mournful conclusion of Jacob, "All these things are against me!" For though we know our interest in the promise, yet we are so tried and troubled, that sight sees the very reverse of what that promise foretells. But to the eye of faith this word is sure, and by it we perceive that our works are prospered, even when everything seems to go against us. It is not outward prosperity which the Christian most desires and values; it is soul prosperity which he longs for. We often, like Jehoshaphat, make ships to go to Tarshish for gold, but they are broken at Ezion-geber; but even here there is a true prospering, for it is often for the soul's health that we would be poor, bereaved, and persecuted. Our worst things are often our best things. As there is a curse wrapped up in the wicked man's mercies, so there is a blessing concealed in the righteous man's crosses, losses, and sorrows. The trials of the saint are a divine husbandry, by which he grows and brings forth abundant fruit.

Verse 4. We have now come to the second head of the Psalm. In this verse the contrast of the ill estate of the wicked is employed to heighten the coloring of that fair and pleasant picture which precedes it. The more forcible translation of the Vulgate and of the Septuagint version is— "Not so the ungodly, not so." And we are hereby to understand that whatever good thing is said of the righteous is not true in the case of the ungodly. Oh! how terrible is it to have a double negative put upon the promises! and yet this is just the condition of the ungodly. Mark the use of the term "ungodly," for, as we have seen in the opening of the Psalm, these are the beginners in evil, and are the least offensive of sinners. Oh! if such is the sad state of those who quietly continue in their morality, and neglect their God, what must be the condition of open sinners and shameless infidels? The first sentence is a negative description of the ungodly, and the second is the positive picture. Here is their character — "they are like chaff," intrinsically worthless, dead, unserviceable, without substance, and easily carried away. Here, also, mark their doom, — "the wind driveth away;" death shall hurry them with its terrible blast into the fire in which they shall be utterly consumed.

Verse 5. They shall stand there to be judged, but not to be acquitted. Fear shall lay hold upon them there; they shall not stand their ground; they shall flee away; they shall not stand in their own defence; for they shall blush and be covered with eternal contempt. Well may the saints long for heaven, for no evil men shall dwell there, "nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." All our congregations upon earth are mixed. Every Church hath one devil in it. The tares grow in the same furrows as the wheat. There is no floor which is as yet thoroughly purged from chaff. Sinners mix with saints, as dross mingles with gold. God's precious diamonds still lie in the same field with pebbles. Righteous Lots are this side heaven continually vexed by the men of Sodom. Let us rejoice then, that in "the general assembly and church of the firstborn" above, there shall by no means be admitted a single unrenewed soul. Sinners cannot live in heaven. They would be out of their element. Sooner could a fish live upon a tree than the wicked in Paradise. Heaven would be an intolerable hell to an impenitent man, even if he could be allowed to enter; but such a privilege shall never be granted to the man who perseveres in his iniquities. May God grant that we may have a name and a place in his courts above!

Verse 6. Or, as the Hebrew hath it yet more fully, "The Lord is knowing the way of the righteous." He is constantly looking on their way, and though it may be often in mist and darkness, yet the Lord knoweth it. If it be in the clouds and tempest of affliction, he understandeth it. He numbereth the hairs of our head; he will not suffer any evil to befall us. "He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23:10.) "But the way of the ungodly shall perish." Not only shall they perish themselves, but their way shall perish too. The righteous carves his name upon the rock, but the wicked writes his remembrance in the sand. The righteous man ploughs the furrows of earth, and sows a harvest here, which shall never be fully reaped till he enters the enjoyments of eternity; but as for the wicked, he ploughs the sea, and though there may seem to be a shining trail behind his keel, yet the waves shall pass over it, and the place that knew him shall know him no more for ever. The very "way" of the ungodly shall perish. If it exist in remembrance, it shall be in the remembrance of the bad; for the Lord will cause the name of the wicked to rot, to become a stench in the nostrils of the good, and to be only known to the wicked themselves by its putridity.

May the Lord cleanse our hearts and our ways, that we may escape the doom of the ungodly, and enjoy the blessedness of the righteous!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. As the book of the Canticles is called the Song of Songs by a Hebraism, it being the most excellent, so this Psalm may not unfitly be entitled, the Psalm of Psalms, for it contains in it the very pith and quintessence of Christianity. What Jerome saith on St. Paul's epistles, the same may I say of this Psalm; it is short as to the composure, but full of length and strength as to the matter. This Psalm carries blessedness in the frontpiece; it begins where we all hope to end: it may well be called a Christian's Guide, for it discovers the quicksands where the wicked sink down in perdition, and the firm ground on which the saints tread to glory.— Thomas Watson's Saints Spiritual Delight, 1660.

This whole Psalm offers itself to be drawn into these two opposite propositions: a godly man is blessed, a wicked man is miserable; which seem to stand as two challenges, made by the prophet: one, that he will maintain a godly man against all comers, to be the only Jason for winning the golden fleece of blessedness; the other, that albeit the ungodly make a show in the world of being happy, yet they of all men are most miserable.— Sir Richard Baker, 1640

I have been induced to embrace the opinion of some among the ancient interpreters (Augustine, Jerome, etc.), who conceive that the first Psalm is intended to be descriptive of the character and reward of the JUST ONE, i.e. the Lord Jesus.—John Fry, B.A., 1842

Verse 1. The psalmist saith more to the point about true happiness in this short Psalm than any one of the philosophers, or all of them put together; they did but beat the bush, God hath here put the bird into our hand. John Trapp, 1660

Verse 1. Where the word blessed is hung out as a sign, we may be sure that we shall find a godly man within. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 1. The seat of the drunkard is the seat of the scornful. Matthew Henry, 1662-1714

Verse 1. "Walketh NOT....NOR standeth....NOR sitteth," etc. Negative precepts are in some cases more absolute and peremptory than affirmatives; for to say, "that hath walketh in the counsel of the godly," might not be sufficient; for, he might walk in the counsel of the godly, and yet walk in the counsel of the ungodly too; not both indeed at once, but both at several times; where now, this negative clears him at all times. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 1. The word (Heb) haish is emphatic, that man; that one among a thousand who lives for the accomplishment of the end for which God created him. Adam Clarke, 1844

Verse 1. "That walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." Mark certain circumstances of their differing characters and conduct. I. The ungodly man has his counsel. II. The sinner has his way; and III. The scorner has his seat. The ungodly man is unconcerned about religion; he is neither zealous for his own salvation nor for that of others; and he counsels and advises those with whom he converses to adopt his plan, and not trouble themselves about praying, reading, repentance, etc., etc.; "there is no need for such things; live an honest life, make no fuss about religion, and you will fare well enough at last." Now "blessed is the man who walks not in this man's counsel," who does not come into his measures, nor act according to his plan.

The sinner has his particular way of transgressing; one is a drunkard, another dishonest, another unclean. Few are given to every species of vice. There are many covetous men who abhor drunkenness, many drunkards who abhor covetousness; and so of others. Each has his easily besetting sin; therefore, says the prophet, "Let the wicked forsake HIS WAY." (Isaiah 55:7) Now, blessed is he who stands not in such a man's WAY.

The scorner has brought, in reference to himself, all religion and moral feeling to an end. He has sat down—is utterly confirmed in impiety, and makes a mock at sin. His conscience is seared, and he is a believer in all unbelief. Now, blessed is the man who sits not down in his SEAT. Adam Clarke.

Verse 1. In the Hebrew, the word "blessed" is a plural noun, ashrey (blessednesses), that is, all blessednesses are the portion of that man who has not gone away, etc.; as though it were said, "All things are well with that man who," etc. Why do you hold any dispute? Why draw vain conclusions? If a man has found that pearl of great price, to love the law of God and to be separate from the ungodly, all blessednesses belong to that man; but, if he does not find this jewel, he will seek for all blessednesses but will never find one! For as all things are pure unto the pure, so all things are lovely unto the loving, all things good unto the good; and, universally, such as thou art thyself, such is God himself unto thee, though he is not a creature. He is perverse unto the perverse, and holy unto the holy. Hence nothing can be good or saving unto him who is evil: nothing sweet unto him unto whom the law of God is not sweet. The word "counsel" is without doubt here to be received as signifying decrees and doctrines, seeing that no society of men exists without being formed and preserved by decrees and laws. David, however, by this term strikes at the pride and reprobate temerity of the ungodly. First, because they will not humble themselves so far as to walk in the law of the Lord, but rule themselves by their own counsel. And then he calls it their "counsel," because it is their prudence, and the way that seems to them to be without error. For this is the destruction of the ungodly—their being prudent in their own eyes and in their own esteem, and clothing their errors in the garb of prudence and of the right way. For if they came to men in the open garb of error, it would not be so distinguishing a mark of blessedness not to walk with them. But David does not here say, "in the folly of the ungodly," or "in the error of the ungodly;" and therefore he admonishes us to guard with all diligence against the appearance of what is right, that the devil transformed into an angel of light do not seduce us by his craftiness. And he contrasts the counsel of the wicked with the law of the Lord, that we may learn to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing, who are always ready to give counsel to all, to teach all, and to offer assistance unto all, when they are of all men least qualified to do so. The term "stood" descriptively represents their obstinacy, and stiff-neckedness, wherein they harden themselves and make their excuses in words of malice, having become incorrigible in their ungodliness. For "to stand," in the figurative manner of Scripture expression, signifies to be firm and fixed: as in Romans 14:4, "To his own master he standeth or falleth: yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand." Hence the word "column" is by the Hebrew derived from their verb "to stand," as is the word statue among the Latins. For this is the very self-excuse and self-hardening of the ungodly—their appearing to themselves to live rightly, and to shine in the eternal show of works above all others. With respect to the term "seat," to sit in the seat, is to teach, to act the instructor and teacher; as in Matthew 23:2, "The scribes sit in Moses' chair." They sit in the seat of pestilence, who fill the church with the opinions of philosophers, with the traditions of men, and with the counsels of their own brain, and oppress miserable consciences, setting aside, all the while, the word of God, by which alone the soul is fed, lives, and is preserved. Martin Luther, 1536-1546.

Verse 1. "The scornful." Peccator cum in profundum venerit contemnet—when a wicked man comes to the depth and worst of sin, he despiseth. Then the Hebrew will despise Moses (Exodus 2:14), "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" Then Ahab will quarrel with Micaiah (1 Kings 22:18), because he doth not prophecy good unto him. Every child in Bethel will mock Elisha (2 Kings 2:23), and be bold to call him "bald pate." Here is an original drop of venom swollen to a main ocean of poison: as one drop of some serpents' poison, lighting on the hand, gets into the veins, and so spreads itself over all the body till it hath stifled the vital spirits. God shall "laugh you to scorn," (Psalm 2:4), for laughing Him to scorn; and at last despise you that have despised him in us. That which a man spits against heaven, shall fall back on his own face. Your indignities done to your spiritual physicians shall sleep in the dust with your ashes, but stand up against your souls in judgment. Thomas Adams, 1614.

Verse 2. "But his will is in the law of the Lord." The "will," which is here signified, is that delight of heart, and that certain pleasure, in the law, which does not look at what the law promises, nor at what it threatens, but at this only; that "the law is holy, and just, and good." Hence it is not only a love of the law, but that loving delight in the law which no prosperity, nor adversity, nor the world, nor the prince of it, can either take away or destroy; for it victoriously bursts its way through poverty, evil report, the cross, death, and hell, and in the midst of adversities, shines the brightest. Martin Luther.

Verse 2. "His delight is in the law of the Lord."—This delight which the prophet here speaks of is the only delight that neither blushes nor looks pale; the only delight that gives a repast without an after reckoning; the only delight that stands in construction with all tenses; and like AEneas Anchyses, carries his parents upon his back. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 2. "In His law doth he meditate." In the plainest text there is a world of holiness and spirituality; and if we in prayer and dependence upon God did sit down and study it, we should behold much more than appears to us. It may be, at once reading or looking, we see little or nothing; as Elijah's servant went once, and saw nothing; therefore he was commanded to look seven times. What now? says the prophet, "I see a cloud rising, like a man's hand;" and by-and-by, the whole surface of the heavens was covered with clouds. So you may look lightly upon a Scripture and see nothing; meditate often upon it, and there you shall see a light, like the light of the sun. Joseph Caryl, 1647.

Verse 2. "In His law doth he meditate day and night."—The good man doth meditate on the law of God day and night. The pontificians beat off the common people from this common treasury, by objecting this supposed difficulty. Oh, the Scriptures are hard to be understood, do not you trouble your heads about them; we will tell you the meaning of them. They might as well say, heaven is a blessed place, but it is a hard way to it; do not trouble yourselves, we will go thither for you. Thus in the great day of trial, when

they should be saved by their book, alas! they have no book to save them. Instead of the Scriptures they can present images; these are the layman's books; as if they were to be tried by a jury of carvers and painters, and not by the twelve apostles. Be not you so cheated; but study the gospel as you look for comfort by the gospel. He that hopes for the inheritance, will make much of the conveyance. Thomas Adams.

Verse 2. To "meditate," as it is generally understood, signifies to discuss, to dispute; and its meaning is always confined to a being employed in words, as in Psalm 32:30, "The mouth of the righteous shall meditate wisdom." Hence Augustine has, in his translation, "chatter;" and a beautiful metaphor it is—as chattering is the employment of birds, so a continual conversing in the law of the Lord (for talking is peculiar to man), ought to be the employment of man. But I cannot worthily and fully set forth the gracious meaning and force of this word; for this "meditating" consists first in an intent observing of the words of the law, and then in a comparing of the different Scriptures; which is a certain delightful hunting, nay, rather a playing with stags in a forest, where the Lord furnishes us with the stags, and opens to us their secret coverts. And from this kind of employment, there comes forth at length a man well instructed in the law of the Lord to speak unto the people. Martin Luther.

Verse 2. "In his law doth he meditate day and night." The godly man will read the Word by day, that men, seeing his good works, may glorify his Father who is in heaven; he will do it in the night, that he may not be seen of men: by day, to show that he is not one of those who dread the light; by night, to show that he is one who can shine in the shade: by day, for that is the time for working—work whilst it is day; by night, lest his Master should come as a thief, and find him idle. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 2. I have no rest, but in a nook, with the book. Thomas a Kempis, 1380-1471.

Verse 2. "Meditate." Meditation doth discriminate and characterise a man; by this he may take a measure of his heart, whether it be good or bad; let me allude to that; "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7. As the meditation is, such is the man. Meditation is the touchstone of a Christian; it shows what metal he is made of. It is a spiritual index; the index shows what is in the book, so meditation shows what is in the heart. Thomas Watson's Saints' Spiritual Delight.

Verse 2. Meditation chews the cud, and gets the sweetness and nutritive virtue of the Word into the heart and life: this is the way the godly bring forth much fruit. Bartholomew Ashwood's Heavenly Trade, 1688.

Verse 2. The naturalists observe that to uphold and accommodate bodily life, there are diverse sorts of faculties communicated, and these among the rest:

1. An attractive faculty, to assume and draw in the food;
2. A retentive faculty, to retain it when taken in;
3. As assimilating faculty to concoct the nourishment;
4. An augmenting faculty, for drawing to perfection.

Meditation is all these. It helps judgment, wisdom, and faith to ponder, discern, and credit the things which reading and hearing supply and furnish. It assists the memory to lock up the jewels of divine truth in her sure treasury. It has a digesting power, and turns special truth into spiritual nourishment; and lastly, it helps the renewed heart to grow upward and increase its power to know the things which are freely given to us of God. Condensed from Nathaniel Ranew, 1670.

Verse 3. "A tree."—There is one tree, only to be found in the valley of the Jordan, but too beautiful to be entirely passed over; the oleander, with its bright blossoms and dark green leaves, giving the aspect of a rich garden to any spot where it grows. It is rarely if ever alluded to in the Scriptures. But it may be the tree planted by the streams of water which bringeth forth his fruit in due season, and "whose leaf shall not wither." A. P. Stanley, D.D., in "Sinai and Palestine."

Verse 3. "A tree planted by the rivers of water."—This is an allusion to the Eastern method of cultivation, by which rivulets of water are made to flow between the rows of trees, and thus, by artificial means, the trees receive a constant supply of moisture.

Verse 3. "His fruit in his season."—In such a case expectation is never disappointed. Fruit is expected, fruit is borne, and it comes also in the time in which it should come. A godly education, under the influences of the divine Spirit, which can never be withheld where they are earnestly sought, is sure to produce the fruits of righteousness; and he who reads, prays, and meditates, will ever see the work which God has given him to do; the power by which he is to perform it; and the times, places, and opportunities for doing those things by which God can obtain most glory, his own soul most good, and his neighbour most edification. Adam Clarke.

Verse 3. "In his season." The Lord reckons the times which pass over us, and puts them to our account: let us, therefore, improve them, and with the impotent persons at the pool of Bethesda, step in when the angel stirs the water. Now the church is afflicted, it is a season of prayer and learning; now the church is enlarged, it is a season of praise; I am now at a sermon, I will hear what God will say; now in the company of a learned and wise man, I will draw some knowledge and counsel from him; I am under a temptation, now is a fit time to lean on the name of the Lord; I am in a place of dignity and power, let me consider what it is that God requireth of me in such a time as this. And thus as the tree of life bringeth fruit every month, so a wise Christian, as a wise husbandman, hath his distinct employments for every month, bringing forth his fruit in his season. John Spencer's Things New and Old, 1658.

Verse 3. "In his season." Oh, golden and admirable word! by which is asserted the liberty of Christian righteousness. The ungodly have their stated days, stated times, certain works, and certain places; to which they stick so closely, that if their neighbours were perishing with hunger, they could not be torn from them. But this blessed man, being free at all times, in all places, for every work, and to every person, will serve you whenever an opportunity is offered him; whatsoever comes into his hands to do, he does it. He is neither a Jew, nor a Gentile, nor a Greek, nor a barbarian, nor of any other particular person. He gives his fruit in his season, so often as either God or man requires his work. Therefore his fruits have no name, and his times have no name. Martin Luther.

Verse 3. "His leaf also shall not wither." He describes the fruit before he does the leaf. The Holy Spirit himself always teaches every faithful preacher in the church to know that the kingdom of God does not stand in word but in power. 1 Corinthians 4:20. Again, "Jesus began both to do and to teach." Acts 1:1. And again, "Which was a prophet mighty in deed and word." Luke 24:19. And thus, let him who professes the word of doctrine, first put forth the fruits of life, if he would not have his fruit to wither, for Christ cursed the fig tree which bore no fruit. And, as Gregory saith, that man whose life is despised is condemned by his doctrine, for he preaches to others, and is himself reprobated. Martin Luther.

Verse 3. "His leaf also shall not wither." The Lord's trees are all evergreens. No winter's cold can destroy their verdure; and yet, unlike evergreens in our country, they are all fruit bearers. C. H. S.

Verse 3. "And whatsoever he doeth, [or, maketh or taketh in hand] shall prosper." And with regard to this "prospering," take heed that thou understandest not a carnal prosperity. This prosperity is hidden prosperity, and lies entirely secret in spirit; and therefore if thou hast not this prosperity that is by faith, thou shouldest rather judge thy prosperity to be the greatest adversity. For as the devil bitterly hates this leaf and the word of God, so does he also those who teach and hear it, and he persecutes such, aided by all the powers of the world. Therefore thou hearest of a miracle the greatest of all miracles, when thou hearest that all things prosper which a blessed man doeth. Martin Luther.

Verse 3. A critical journal has shown that instead of "Whatsoever it doeth shall prosper," the rendering might be, "Whatsoever it produceth shall come to maturity." This makes the figure entire, and is sanctioned by some MSS. and ancient versions.

Verse 3. (last clause). Outward prosperity, if it follow close walking with God, is very sweet; as the cipher, when it follows a figure, adds to the number, though it be nothing in itself. John Trapp.

Verse 4. "Chaff." Here, by the way, we may let the wicked know they have a thanks to give they little think of; that they may thank the godly for all the good days they live upon the earth, seeing it is for their sakes and not for their own that they enjoy them. For as the chaff while it is united and keeps close to the wheat, enjoys some privileges for the wheat's sake, and is laid up carefully in the barn; but as soon as it is divided, and parted from the wheat, it is cast out and scattered by the wind; so the wicked, whilst the godly are in company and live amongst them, partake for their sake of some blessedness promised to the godly; but if the godly forsake them or be taken from them, then either a deluge of water comes suddenly upon them, as it did upon the old world when Noah left it; or a deluge of fire, as it did upon Sodom, when Lot left it, and went out of the city. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 4. "Driveth away," or tosseth away; the Chaldee translath for "wind," "whirlwind." Henry Ainsworth, 1639. This shows the vehement tempest of death, which sweeps away the soul of the ungodly.

Verse 5. "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment," etc. And may not a reason also be conceived thus, why the ungodly can never come to be of the congregation of the righteous: the righteous go a way that God knows, and the wicked go a way that God destroys; and seeing that these ways can never meet, how should the men meet that go these ways? And to make sure work that they shall never meet indeed, the prophet expresseth the way of the righteous by the first link of the chain of God's goodness, which is his knowledge; but expresseth the way of the wicked by the last link of God's justice, which is his destroying; and though God's justice and his mercy do often meet, and are contiguous one to another, yet the first link of his mercy and the last link of his justice can never meet, for it never comes to destroying till God be heard to say Nescio vos, "I know you not," and nescio vos in God, and God's knowledge, can certainly never possibly meet together. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 5. The Irish air will sooner brook a toad, or a snake, than heaven a sinner. John Trapp.

Verse 6. "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." Behold how David here terrifies us away from all prosperous appearances, and commends to us various temptations and adversities. For this "way" of the righteous all men utterly reprobate; thinking also, that God knoweth nothing about any such way. But this is the wisdom of the cross. Therefore, it is God alone that knoweth the way of the righteous, so hidden is it to the righteous themselves. For his right hand leads them on in a wonderful manner, seeing that it is a way, not of sense, nor of reason, but of faith only; even of that faith that sees in darkness, and beholds things that are invisible. Martin Luther.

Verse 6. "The righteous." They that endeavour righteous living in themselves and have Christ's righteousness imputed to

them. Thomas Wilcocks, 1586.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. May furnish an excellent text upon "Progress in Sin," or "The Purity of the Christian," or "The Blessedness of the Righteous." Upon the last subject speak of the believer as BLESSED—

1. By God;
2. In Christ;
3. With all blessings;
4. In all circumstances;
5. Through time and eternity;
6. To the highest degree.

Verse 1. Teaches a godly man to beware, (1) of the opinions, (2) of the practical life, and (3) of the company and association of sinful men. Show how meditation upon the Word will assist us in keeping aloof from these three evils.

The insinuating and progressive nature of sin. J. Morrison.

Verse 1. in connection with the whole Psalm. The wide difference between the righteous and the wicked.

Verse 2. THE WORD OF GOD.

1. The believer's delight in it.
2. The believer's acquaintance with it.

We long to be in the company of those we love.

Verse 2. I. What is meant by "the law of the Lord."

II. What there is in it for the believer to delight in.

III. How he shows his delight, thinks of it, reads much, speaks of it, obeys it, does not delight in evil.

Verse 2. (last clause). The benefits, helps, and hindrances of meditation.

Verse 3. "The fruitful tree."

- I. Where it grows.
- II. How it came there.
- III. What it yields.
- IV. How to be like it.

Verse 3. "Planted by the rivers of water."

I. The origination of Christian life, "planted."

II. The streams which support it.

III. The fruit expected from it.

Verse 3. Influence of religion upon prosperity.—Blair.

The nature, causes, signs, and results of true prosperity.

"Fruit in his season;" virtues to be exhibited at certain seasons—patience in affliction; gratitude in prosperity; zeal in opportunity, etc.

"His leaf also shall not wither;" the blessing of retaining an unwithered profession.

Verses 3, 4. See No. 280 of "Spurgeon's Sermons." "The Chaff Driven Away."

Sin puts a negative on every blessing.

Verse 5. The sinner's double doom.

1. Condemned at the judgment-bar.
2. Separated from the saints.

Reasonableness of these penalties, "therefore," and the way to escape them.

"The congregation of the righteous" viewed as the church of the first-born above. This may furnish a noble topic.

Verse 6. (first sentence). A sweet encouragement to the tried people of God. The knowledge here meant.

1. Its character.—It is a knowledge of observation and approbation.
2. Its source.—It is caused by omniscience and infinite love.
3. Its results.—Support, deliverance, acceptance, and glory at last.

Verse 6. (last clause). His way of pleasure, of pride, of unbelief, of profanity, of persecution, of procrastinating, of self-deception, etc.: all these shall come to an end.

WORKS UPON THE FIRST PSALM

The Way to Blessedness: a Commentary on the First Psalm. By PHINEAS FLETCHER. London. 1632

A Discourse about the State of True Happiness, delivered in certain Sermons in Oxford, and at Paul's Cross. By ROBERT BOLTON. London. 1625

David's Blessed Man; or, a Short Exposition on the First Psalm, directing a Man to True Happiness. By SAMUEL SMITH, preacher of the Word at Prittlewell in Essex. 1635 [Reprinted in Nicol's Series of Commentaries.]

Meditations and Disquisitions upon the First Psalm of David.—Blessed is the Man. By SIR RICHARD BAKER, Knight. London. 1640 [The same volume contains Meditations upon "Seven Consolatorie Psalms of David," namely, 23, 27, 30, 84, 103, and 116.]

The Christian on the Mount; or a Treatise concerning Meditation; wherein the necessity, usefulness, and excellency of Meditation are at large discussed. By THOMAS WATSON. 1660.