“THE POWER of GOD’S WORD”
by Dr. D. W. Ekstrand

Introduction

The Hebrew term for “word” — dabar — is used 394 times in the Old Testament to characterize a communication as “the word of God” & “the word of the Lord;” as such, it is the expression of His being. The intelligible word of the Lord is the supreme means by which God makes Himself known to us as His creatures. The Lord revealed Himself to Samuel and others “through His word” (1 Sam 3:21). By such a word the world was brought into existence and history set in motion (cf. Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, etc, Jn 1:3; Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:3). The word of the Lord is the source of life (Ps 119:25), a light to our path (Ps 119:105), the understanding of reality (Ps 119:169), and is exceedingly trustworthy (cf. Is 45:23; 46:10; 55:11; Mt 5:18; 24:35).

With the hellenization (Hellen meaning Greek) of the Mediterranean world in the 3rd century BC (i.e., making the culture Greek) the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek by some seventy-two Jewish scholars around 250 BC, because “Greek” had become the mother tongue throughout the Greek empire. This text became known as the “Septuagint” (from the Latin word “seventy”) — it is commonly referred to as being authored by seventy scholars (an approximate number). The book of Exodus refers to the seventy elders of Israel (Ex 24:1; 24:9); in addition, the membership of the Sanhedrin (the Jewish Supreme Court) was composed of that number, even though the actual number was seventy-two (six from each of the Twelve Tribes). Rounding off numbers was not an uncommon nuance in Hebrew and other ancient cultures. So the Septuagint was a pre-Christian Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures redacted by Jewish scholars and adopted by Greek-speaking Christians — it is interesting to note that some of the Old Testament “quotes” by Jesus Himself (as recorded by the gospel writers) were actually direct quotes from the Septuagint. The Greek terms rhema and logos were used to translate the Hebrew term dabar — as such, they are direct equivalents. In the familiar phrase “the word of the Lord came,” it is rendered logos (cf. 2 Sam 24:11; 1 Kg 6:11), and rhema (cf. 1 Sam 15:10; 2 Sam 7:4; 1 Kg 17:8). In the prophetic books of the Bible the translators generally used the word logos to denote God’s message to the prophets for proclamation to the people. The New Testament (which was also written in Greek) uses both rhema and logos with apparent indifference to any significant nuance of meaning. In addition to “the word of God” and “the word of the Lord,” there is “the word of Jesus” (cf. Mt 28:75; Jn 2:22; 4:50), and “the word of Christ” (cf. Col 3:16; Jn 5:24; 17:17) — thus they are one and the same. The word of the Lord is the word (logos) of Jesus Christ… and His words (rhemata) are spirit and life (cf. Jn 6:63).

The first disciples spoke “the word of God” with boldness (cf. Acts 4:31; 6:7; 19:20). Paul and Barnabas “proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues” (Acts 13:5). This “good word of God” (Heb 6:5) is “the word of truth” (Col 1:5)... “God’s gospel” (cf. Rom 1:1; 15:16; 1 Th 2:2, 8, 9) and “Christ’s gospel” (Mk 1:1; Rom 15:19; 2 Cor 2:12) — it is “the word (rhema) of faith” (Rom 10:8). By this living and enduring word (logos) of God man is born anew (1 Pet 1:23) and by this word (rhema) of God man lives (Phil 2:16; Mt 4:4; Jn 6:63) — such is the word of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:19) and the message of salvation (Acts 13:26), which find their summary and dynamic in “the message of the cross” (1 Cor 1:18). In John’s gospel (1:1-2) the term Logos (Word) is used in an absolute sense to identify Christ as the incarnate Son of God — while He walked among men He was the incarnate speech and mind of
God; as such He communicated eternal life to those who received Him. John declared that “this Word” had an existence beyond the limits of time — “the Word was with God” in the intimacy of the eternal relationship, and “the Word was God” in the actuality of His essential nature. Though the Word (Jesus) was personally distinct from God (yet Himself truly God), He made God known. Throughout John’s prologue (Jn 1:1-18), the “Logos” is set forth as the personal self-disclosure of God in His total being; the virtual concrete expression of His personality. Hence, the Word is more than simply divine reason or conceptual truth; it is the very person of God Himself. In Jesus Christ, the Word was made flesh (Jn 1:14) — there is a real incarnation of God, real eternal deity. Therefore Jesus Christ is the perfect personal expression of God’s self-revelation (reflect on that!), not just a teacher sent from God.

The apostle John identified Jesus as “the Word of God” — “the Logos of God” (Jn 1:14; Rev 19:13). Historically, the Greek term “logos” (“word”) was a common expression in the ancient Greek world that philosophers used to describe the eternal principle by which the universe exists, as well as the creative energy that generated it — it had nothing to do with a divine personal God; logos to the ancient Greeks was simply a rational way of looking at the material universe; in a word, it was “impersonal reason” — the absolute intelligence or explanation behind all that exists. The ancient Greeks believed a universal intelligence lay at the foundation of all that exists; to them everything was “reasonable.” In similar fashion, “coherent reason” lies at the foundation of modern science; scientists believe there are “laws” by which the universe exists and operates… and their task is to discover those laws; with that in mind, many scientists here in the West also believe in an impersonal universe; and refer to it as “evolution.” The root idea behind the Greek term “logos” is that of intelligible communication. Hence, when John applied the term Logos to Jesus Christ, he was saying that “the Word of God” was the concrete expression of God’s personality (God is what His Word says)… it was the personal self-disclosure of God… the self-manifestation of God… the expressed mind and will of God. So this ancient abstract philosophical idea was in actuality a LIVING REALITY — GOD! As the expression of His being, the intelligible Word of God (i.e., the Eternal Logos, Jesus) is the supreme means by which God makes Himself known to us as His creatures; furthermore, He gives us the wherewithal to understand and believe His revelation (cf. Acts 16:14).

It was by the Word (i.e., the Eternal Logos, Christ) that the universe came into existence (Jn 1:1-3). Writes Paul, “In Christ all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible… all things have been created through Him and for Him… and in Him all things hold together” (Col 1:16-17). Likewise, says the author of Hebrews, “Christ is the radiance of God’s glory, and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power” (Heb 1:3). So the Word of the Lord is the source of all life (Ps 119:25). In Revelation 19:13 the exalted Christ is specifically designated “the Word of God.” One of the reasons this abstract concept is so difficult for Christians here in the West to understand, is that we see “words” as simply expressions of thought and mere concepts — our words have no inherent power in them. For instance, if we were to command some inanimate object to “Disappear!” absolutely nothing would happen. In contradistinction to our words, however, God’s words are alive and active and powerful — His words are not mere concepts or thoughts; they are the expressed reality of His will, and are manifested as such; everything that exists God “spoke” into existence (cf. Gen 1:3, 6, 14, 20, etc.) — He is the power and genius behind all that exists. Thus the Eternal Word (the Divine Logos, the Divine Reality, Jesus Christ) is eternal intelligence, and the eternal administration and perpetual execution of the divine will. Reflect upon the following passages in Scripture:
Moses writes, “Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God” (Ps 90:2).

The Lord told Isaiah: “He never tires and His understanding is inscrutable” (Is 40:28).

Paul says, “God’s judgments are unsearchable & His ways unfathomable” (Rom 11:33).

And, “From Him and through Him and to Him are all things” (Rom 11:36).

Likewise writes Paul, “God works all things after the counsel of His will” (Eph 1:11).

Peter describes the Eternal Word as “a sure word of prophecy/reality” (2 Pet 1:19).

It is “the creative power of all that exists” (Gen 1:3, 6; Ps 33:6, 9; 148:5; Heb 11:3).


And it is the means by which “God holds all things together” (Col 1:17).

**So, Christ is the eternal, transcendent, operative Reality who sustains the entire universe** (both the seen and unseen worlds), maintaining the power and balance necessary to the existence of all things in conformity to His absolute, perfect and holy will (Heb 1:3)... everything He does is true and right and good and pure and faultless (cf. Gen 1:31; Ps 100:5; 119:68; Lk 18:19; Jn 1:14; 10:11; Rom 8:28; Eph 1:4; 5:27; Col 1:22; 1 Jn 1:5). It is important to remember that God is not restricted like we are as human beings, who simply think one thought at a time... God is always conscious of everything in all creation (He’s omniscient), and the omnipotent active power behind all that exists.

It was into the Greco-Roman world two thousand years ago that God sent forth His Son in the fullness of time (Gal 4:4) — God had providentially prepared the way for the coming of Jesus (the Messiah of God): Greece united the civilizations of Asia, Europe, and Africa, and established one universal language and culture... Rome made one empire of the whole world, and Roman roads made all parts of it accessible... the Diaspora (the dispersion of the Jews among the nations) paved the way for the propagation of the good news of the coming of the Messiah in their Synagogues and their Scriptures. Thus, God sent forth His Son in the fullness of time; it was at this divinely planned moment in history that the Eternal Logos entered into space, mass and time (the created order)... as John writes, the Eternal Word was made flesh (Jn 1:14); Jesus was a real incarnation of God, real eternal Deity. Jesus of Nazareth was the perfect personal expression of God’s self-revelation; incidentally, that is all the human mind is capable of understanding — all our earthly minds can comprehend (because we are temporal creatures) is the Son of God who emptied Himself of significant eternal aspects of His deity (cf. Phil 2:6-7); without His emptying Himself we would be incapable of comprehending the eternal reality of who He is — besides “No man can see God [in His fullness] and live” (cf. Ex 33:20; 1 Tim 6:16). So Jesus was not merely a teacher sent from heaven... He was GOD — VERY GOD!

In several passages in the New Testament the word of God is used to designate the written Scripture themselves. The Lord Jesus authenticated this use by declaring that Scripture, as the word of God, cannot be broken (Jn 10:35). Peter describes it as “the sure word of prophecy” (2 Pet 1:19) because it results from God’s out-breathing (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21). Therefore what is Scripture is the “word of God.” The leaders of the early church believed faith in the writings of Scripture as being “the word of God.” Augustine said, “What is the Bible but a letter of God Almighty addressed to His creatures, in which we hear the voice of God, and behold the heart of our Heavenly Father.” The great reformers, Martin Luther & John Calvin, specifically said that the Bible is God’s Word. The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England state that the Bible is “God’s Word written,” while the Westminster Confession affirms that since God is the author of Scripture it ought to be received because it is the “Word of God.” Thus to speak of Scripture is to accurately specify it as God’s Word written.”
The prophets of the Old Testament were sure that they were recording God’s word for Israel, and leading New Testament Christians, like the apostle Paul, believed themselves to be stating God’s word for the churches. The designation “Word of God” and “Word of the Lord” in the New Testament refer in particular to Jesus Christ, as well as the biblical writings. Christ Himself is the ultimate Word, the Word in an absolute and personal sense — “the Word made flesh” (Jn 1:14). The apostolic preachers went forth with the gospel of God’s salvation sure in the conviction that they were proclaiming the Word of God. In summary then, “the Word of God” and “Word of the Lord” belongs in turn to God’s own revelation of Himself made known personally in Christ, and embodied in written form in the Scriptures.

The Word of God is a Living Reality

The Word of God is a “living reality,” not simply a set of teachings that define reality or a book of forensic truths. The Word of God is dynamic, not static… it is active, not quiet… it is ever at work, not impotent and dormant… it is efficacious and operative, not ineffectual and latent… it is immanent and ever-present, not silent and distant. As the author of Hebrews says, “The Word of God is living (emphatic), active and full of power” (Heb 4:12) — this is to be understood of Christ, the essential Word of God. The Hebrew people knew the Word of God as the Messiah, therefore the apostle John makes use of this expression when writing to them (cf. Jn 1:1)… that men not reject the Gospel (Christ), because He is the author, sum, and substance of it — He is the living God, omnipotent and omniscient… not a thing, but a person who as Judge discerns all things, even the secrets of men’s hearts (Heb 4:12). As the apostle John later writes, “Jesus is the Word of God” (Rev 19:13)… the Word who spoke all things into existence out of nothing (cf. Gen 1:3, 6; Ps 33:6, 9, 148:5; Is 55:11; Heb 11:3)… the Word who has life in Himself (cf. Jn 1:4; 11:25; 14:6)… He is the living God, our Redeemer and Mediator, the author and giver of life (natural, spiritual and eternal) — the ever-powerful One who “works all things after the counsel of His will” (Eph 1:11). “In Him all things hold together” (Col 1:17); that is, Christ is the eternal, transcendent, operative Reality who sustains the entire universe (both the seen and unseen worlds), maintaining the power and balance necessary to the existence of all things in conformity to His absolute, perfect and holy will (cf. Heb 1:3)… as mentioned above, He is always conscious of everything in all creation, and the omnipotent power behind all that is — as the apostle Paul writes, “From Him and through Him and to Him are all things” (Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16). Remember, God is “eternal” in every regard, and being as we are “temporal creatures,” we neither have the capacity to fathom or comprehend His significance or His greatness.

The Holy Scriptures are the Word of God — when the person of Christ takes up residence in our hearts in the person of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 8:9-10; Col 1:27), His Word convinces powerfully, converts powerfully, transforms powerfully, preserves powerfully, and comforts powerfully. It makes a soul “humble” that has long been proud, and a perverse spirit “meek and obedient.” Deeply rooted sinful habits that were once natural to the soul, are removed and cut off by the Sword of the Spirit (Heb 4:12-13; Eph 6:17) — the Word of God — therefore it reveals to men their sinful thoughts, their purposes and vileness, and the dark principles by which they are moved. The Word of God reveals to the sinner all that is in his heart. Through the cross of Christ we become the very righteousness of God (cf. 2 Cor 5:21); thus we are to encourage ourselves by the excellence of our High Priest to come boldly to the throne of grace (Heb 4:16). Mercy and grace are the desperate needs of all men — mercy to pardon all our sins, and grace to purify our souls.
Besides our daily dependence upon God for present supplies, there are seasons of adversity and temptation when we must come boldly before His throne with reverence and godly fear to receive His mercy and grace; God kindly invites us to the mercy-seat where love and grace reign.

*After we labor diligently in His Word, God blesses us with a sweet and satisfying rest.* Diligent striving in the Word (Heb 4:11) is incumbent upon us, because we have to do with a God whose “word” is heart-searching and whereby we are judged — it is the judicial power whereby it doomed the disobedient Israelites from entering into the Promised Land, and it is the judicial power that excludes wayward Christians from entering the heavenly rest. Similarly, Revelation 19:15 presents the Word’s judicial power as a sharp sword going out of Christ’s mouth to smite the nations — the same word which is saving to the faithful (Heb 4:2) is destroying to the disobedient (2 Cor 2:15-16). God knows what is in man (Jn 2:25), so His word reaches as far as to the most intimate and accurate knowledge of man’s most hidden parts, feelings, and thoughts, distinguishing what is *spiritual* (the higher part of man that is receptive to the ministry of Spirit of God) from what is *carnal* (the lower part of man’s fallen sinful nature) — thus the Word of God divides the closely joined parts of man’s immaterial being, soul and spirit, and penetrates to the innermost parts of his being… everything is laid bare and naked before God (cf. Heb 4:13; Prv 20:27), even the hidden thoughts and intentions of the heart which the individual himself is completely unaware (cf.1 Cor 4:3-4). Dearly beloved, we have the privilege of entering into the holy presence of God by the blood of the Lord Jesus, our Advocate, who has purchased for us everything our souls need and desire (Heb 4:16). We are given *grace* in this life, and *glory* in the life to come.

**The Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit**

Judges 7 records the story of Gideon and his 300 men — Gideon and 32,000 Israelite troops gathered near the camp of the Midianites, whose army numbered 135,000. Though Gideon was ready to do battle, God had other plans — He was about to show His people just how powerful a God He was. God told Gideon to let all those who were afraid of the upcoming battle to return home — 22,000 men chose to leave their ranks, leaving a fighting force of only 10,000. But God was looking for an even smaller group of men, so He told Gideon to have the remainder drink from the spring, and those who drank the water like a dog would remain, and the others were sent home. Finally, with only 300 men, Gideon and his little army surrounded the Midianite camp. On signal they blew trumpets, broke the pitchers covering their torches and shouted, “The sword of the Lord of Gideon!” (Jud 7:20). The unimaginable happened: the entire Midianite army was routed. Scripture tells us that “God set every man’s sword against his companion throughout the whole camp” (Jud 7:22)… so before the Israelites even reached for their swords, God plunged the enemy camp into chaos and resounding defeat. The Israelites were delivered from their foes by a divine miracle. This story illustrates the point that it is GOD who ultimately gives the victory in life… *THE SWORD OF THE LORD* is what delivers us.

In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul identifies the “sword” (the Word of God) as the only offensive weapon in our arsenal (cf. Eph 6:17) — without it we are little more than heavenly armoured moving targets. While the rest of the armor is undoubtedly vital, it is only the sword (the Word) that allows us to launch an attack on the enemy. Though a Roman infantryman would often go into battle with more than his sword (he usually had lead-weighted darts, a dagger, and a spear), the sword was his chief weapon of attack (he never went into battle without it).
Sword of the Spirit is “the powerful, living Word of God” (Eph 6:17), and it is the Spirit of God who effectuates its usefulness in our lives — when we place our trust in (that’s faith), the Holy Spirit makes it efficacious. Remember, the Word of God (Scripture) is “God-breathed” by the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:20-21); that is, it is the “divinely-inspired” written word of God. Jesus quoted the appropriate words of God when He was tempted by Satan in the wilderness — three times the Holy Spirit gave Him divine wisdom for that specific occasion, and He responded saying, “It is written” — “God’s Word says” (cf. Lk 4:1-13). Just as Jesus lived by the eternal Word of God, so too we must learn to “live by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Mt 4:4). In His priestly prayer to the Father the night before He went to the cross, the Lord Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them in the truth; Thy Word is truth” (Jn 17:17). God’s Word is “unerring truth,” and when it is followed it guides us in the paths wherein we need to walk (cf. Prv 6:20-22). Scripture tells us that we can be destroyed by lack of the knowledge of God (Hos 4:6), but it also tells us we will be blessed if we hear and keep His Word (Lk 11:28). As the psalmist writes, “Thy Word is a light to my path” (Ps 119:105); that is, it illuminates that I might see. It is the ultimate tool for learning how to live the best possible life, for living a life free from the restraints of stumbling in darkness.

The book of Acts teaches us that Paul was stoned and left for dead in the city of Lystra on his first missionary journey by a number of Jews because of his preaching (Acts 14:19). Later, Paul encouraged the followers of Christ to “continue in the faith,” in view of the widespread persecution that was then prevalent, knowing that it is “through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). The pathway to future glory with Christ is filled with tribulations. As Paul wrote to the Romans, “We are children of God… if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him…. the sufferings of this present time [however] are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Rom 8:16-18; also cf. 2 Cor 1:5; Phil 3:10; 1 Pet 4:12-13, 18; 5:6-10). James, the blood brother of Jesus, wrote: “Brethren, consider it all joy when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (Jam 1:2-4). It’s important for the believer to realize that there is no growth without trials… no matter how uncomfortable they may be, they are essential in our journey as Christians. The promises of eternal glory are given “to him who overcomes” (cf. Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21), not to him who remains as he is. All true believers “fight the good fight of faith” and overcome in various degrees (cf. 1 Cor 3:12-15; Rev 22:12); their God-given faith enables them to overcome the world with all its temptations and allurements. Listen carefully, this does not imply that we are saved by overcoming — not at all — but that our overcoming proves the reality of our conversion experience. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is that eternal living reality that causes us to walk in newness of life (cf. Rom 6:4; 8:5, 9, 12-13; Gal 5:16-17). In short, we overcome all the trials and temptations of life by exercising faith in the Word of God (cf. 1 Tim 1:5; 4:7-8; 6:12; 2 Tim 2:15; 3:16-17; Jam 1:12, 22; 2:14, 19-20; 1 Pet 2:2; Rom 10:17). There is no enemy the Word of God, coupled with His Spirit, cannot defeat… so, arm yourself with the Sword of the Spirit by diligently studying the Word of God, and step out and confront the enemy head-on. Never forget, God’s Word properly used employs the very power of God Himself… and if God is indeed for us, who can be against us? (cf. Rom 8:31).
The Power of the Word of God

The ultimate goal for the believer is to comprehend the power and all-sufficiency of God’s Word. With everything mentioned above, it should not come as a surprise to anyone that there is “power” in God’s Word. It is the “power” behind all that exists! the “power” that sustains the entire universe! the “power” that makes us new creations in Christ! the “power” that is transforming us into the image of Christ! the “power” that will one day usher us into God’s presence in heaven absolutely pure and blameless, without any spot or wrinkle! Beloved, it is the “power” of the Word wherein we must develop confidence (cf. Heb 3:6, 14; 4:14-16; 10:19, 23, 35-39; 11:1). Every true child of God “fights the fight of faith” (and it is a fight) and “perseveres to the end” (even though at times he may feel like giving up) — this non-stop fighting is not the result of our own righteousness, but the result of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives (cf. Ezek 36:26-27); ultimately, God is at work in our hearts as believers causing us to walk in His ways (cf. Phil 2:13; Gal 5:16-17; 2 Tim 2:13; Heb 13:5; Ps 32:8-9). So never forget, the living eternal Christ, the author of all things, is at work in your life! (whether you have confidence in that truth or not!). As the apostle Paul said, “He who began a good work in you will perfect (complete) it until the day of Christ Jesus” (cf. Phil 1:6; Rom 8:28-31; 1 Th 5:23-24; 1 Pet 5:6-10). The truth is, if our salvation depended upon us in any way, none of us would make it! to think otherwise is simply proud thinking, because all we bring to the table is sin and failure (cf. Rom 7:18). Thus Paul himself responded, “Thanks be to God, JESUS gives us the victory!” (Rom 7:24-25). In short, the key to living the Christian life is to “get your eyes off of yourself and put them on Christ!” (which is no easy task because of the indwelling presence of our sinful flesh). Though we as believers all “stumble in many ways” (cf. Jam 3:2; 1 Jn 1:10; 2:1-2), “we all persevere to the end!” (to the praise of His glory!). God’s written word is the manual for living that defines reality for us, and teaches us how to walk uprightly and bear fruit to the glory of God (cf. Mt 13:23; Jn 15:5-11; Rom 1:16-17; Gal 5:22-25); when we abide by the Word (that’s faith), God efficaciously causes our efforts to bear fruit. In the final analysis, it is not that we are men and women of great faith, but that we exercise faith (feeble though it may be) in a great God! Be sure to read all of the references that are listed above, because they will help build your confidence in God (rather than yourself), which is the essence of faith. If the foregoing is a difficult issue for you, read a study I did titled, “The Game Changer!” You can check it out on my website — www.thetransformedsoul.com

The Word is living and powerful — receive it simply with the thought that it will work in you. Keep yourself occupied with the Word, and give it time. The Word has a divine life in itself, so carry it in your inmost parts, and it will work life in you. It will work in you a faith that is able to give you the grace to stand in the midst of turmoil, tribulation, temptation and suffering. When you study the Word, receive it as God intends, and it will work mightily in you. Learn to rely upon it, so that when you have to do with God’s Word, you have to do with a word that can be surely trusted, and when you do it will itself work faith in you (cf. Rom 10:17). If I receive the word as God’s Word… that is, if I trust in the word and in the living God (which makes it operable), then that commandment will work in me the desire and the power to obey. When I humbly weigh and hold fast the command, it works the desire and the will to obey… it urges me strongly towards the conviction that I can certainly do what my Father says. The Word works both faith and obedience… the obedience of the Christian is the obedience of faith. I must believe that through the Spirit I have the power to do what God wills. Therefore, learn to receive God’s Word trustfully — although you may not fully understand it, especially if you are
young in the faith, continue to meditate upon it; it has a living power in it, and will glorify itself. Take a promise a promise of God, say to yourself that it is certainly true; then go to God and say to Him that you rely on Him for its fulfilment… ponder the promise, and cleave to it in your conversation with God. Take God’s Word and hold it fast, and it will accomplish its work with divine power. Approach God’s Word with the understanding that God Himself is in His Word with His life and His power (His Word is not merely forensic truth)… thus God’s Word works faith and obedience in the heart. **What is critical here is that you never separate the Word and the Living God from each other** — their essence is one and the same — they are inseparable. Separating God from His Word would be akin to separating the sun from sunlight… separating mass from space… separating heat from energy; in short, to separate God from His Word is like separating God from Himself… in doing so, you are reducing God’s Word to nothing more than a collection of divine truths, abstract concepts, and impersonal ideas… no wonder it loses its power! Note the words of Paul in Colossians 3:16 — “Let the *word of Christ* dwell in you richly.” Now, is it Christ or is it His Word that is dwelling in you? *(read* Col 1:27; Jer 31:33; Ezek 36:26-27). *The Living Word* (Christ) has taken up residence in your life in the person of the Holy Spirit! *(cf. Jn 14:16-17; Col 3:16; Rev 19:13).* It should also be remembered, that the Spirit and the Word also always go together *(cf. Eph 6:17; 2 Pet 1:21)* — don’t separate them! Ask God for the grace to carry every Word of His in your heart, with the assurance that it (He) will work in you all His good pleasure *(cf. Phil 2:13).* Regarding the “power” of God’s Word, it is always helpful to remember that…

- All power belongs to God; that’s why He is called God Almighty! *(cf. Gen 17:1; Ps 62:11; Rev 4:8).*
- God’s Word has the power to Convict us of Sin *(cf. Acts 2:37).*
- God’s Word has the power to Regenerate us *(cf. Jam 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23; 2 Pet 1:4).*
- God’s Word has the power to give us Saving Faith *(cf. Rom 10:17; Acts 16:13-32).*
- God’s Word has the power to give us Prevailing Faith *(cf. Mk 11:24; Jn 15:7; 1 Jn 5:4, 14-15).*
- God’s Word has the power to Cleanse us *(cf. Eph 5:25-26).*
- God’s Word has the power to Build us up *(cf. Acts 20:32; 1 Pet 2:2; 2 Pet 1:5-7).*
- God’s Word has the power to Equip us for Service *(cf. 2 Tim 3:16-17).*
- God’s Word has the power to make us Fruitful Believers *(cf. Ps 1:1-3).*
- God’s Word has the power to Strengthen us *(cf. Is 40:29-31; 2 Cor 4:16; Col 1:9-11; 1 Pet 5:10).*
- God’s Word has the power to give us Wisdom *(cf. Ps 119:130; 2 Tim 3:16-17).*
- God’s Word has the power to give us Assurance of Eternal Life *(cf. 1 Jn 5:13; Jn 3:36).*
- God’s Word has the power to bring Peace to our Heart *(cf. Ps 85:8; Is 26:3; Phil 4:6-9).*
- God’s Word has the power to bring Joy to our Heart *(cf. Jer 15:16; Jn 15:11).*
- God’s Word has the power to give us Patience, Comfort and Hope *(cf. Rom 15:4).*
- God’s Word has the power to protect us from Error and Sin *(cf. Mt 4:4,7,10; Ps 119:11; 2 Tim 3:13-16).*

I was reminded in my own devotional studies today of our weakness and God’s goodness. The psalmist David in Psalm 37 tells us to “Trust in the Lord… delight in the Lord… commit your way to the Lord… and rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him… [He then goes on to say], Fret not yourself, it only tends to evil…. The steps of a man are established by the Lord… when he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, because the Lord is the One who holds his hand… the righteous (God’s children) are *never forsaken,*… The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; He is their strength in time of trouble. The Lord helps and delivers them… because they take refuge in Him” *(Ps 37:2-8, 23-25, 39-40).* Barbara Duguid and Wayne Duguid Houk have written a prayer of confession on this passage in their book “Prone to Wander” — An abridged version of
it goes like this: “Almighty Lord, we tend to enjoy You when You give us what we want, but we become anxious, fretful, and angry when life is hard and You seem unwilling to rescue us from painful circumstances. We spend many days haunted by guilty fears over the sins that we have committed, forgetting the wounds that forever will scar the hands of Your Son, and that plead forgiveness for us every moment of every day. We forget that You alone are our stronghold in times of trouble, and that You are working all things together for our good. Thank you Father for Your beautiful Son… we praise You that His flawless obedience is ours through faith [and we wonder, how can it be?] Father, cause us to find overwhelming delight in the salvation You have given us through Christ. Stir our weak souls to arise and shake off the fearful guilt we cling to with stubborn pride. Open our eyes more and more to see our great High Priest, crushed for us, and now pleading for us before Your throne. May we treasure His love and believe with all our hearts that nothing can separate us from it (cf. Rom 8:37-39), not even the sins with which we continue to struggle. Give us such great confidence in the gospel that we may run joyfully to You in the midst of our weakness [and darkness], to hear Your pardoning voice, and to feel the ardent and passionate embrace of our true Father” (Prone to Wander, P&R Publishing, New Jersey, 2014, pp. 44-45).

**Key Passages Regarding the Word**

God’s Word is full of passages that address the many problems we face in life — ultimately as believers we need to come to an understanding of *the power and all-sufficiency of God’s Word*. Following are a number of passages that reveal the power of God’s Word to help us overcome all the issues that beset us.

**2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17** — “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (for this purpose) that the man of God may be adequate” (“artios” means fitted, or complete), *equipped for every good work.*” Of paramount importance is the idea of believing that every word of Scripture is inspired or “God-breathed” — whereas all human thoughts and wisdom are fallible, the Word of God is infallible, and contains no error whatsoever. So in some mysterious miraculous way, God communicated His word to men and led them to record it perfectly for permanent preservation; therefore it is immutable and never changes (cf. Ps 33:11; 119:89, 160; Is 40:8; 55:11; Mt 24:35; Heb 13:8). Paul says in First Corinthians, “These things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Holy Spirit” (2:13). As Peter points out, the writers of the Bible did not give their own private interpretation of things, but wrote the message which was given to them by God (cf. 2 Pet 1:20-21). So contrary to what many men say, the holy Scriptures are **GOD’S WORD**, not that of mere men. The psalmist declares, **“Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven”** (cf. Ps 119:89). Jesus Himself declared that “**Scripture cannot be broken**” (cf. Jn 10:35). The Pentateuch (Genesis thru Deuteronomy) contains at least 680 claims to divine inspiration… the Historical books contain 418 claims… the Poetic books contain 195 claims… the Prophetic books contain 1,307 claims. Likewise, the New Testament contains more than 300 direct quotations and at least 1,000 indirect references from the Old Testament — almost all of them declaring or implying that they were God’s own Word. That means there are more than 2,600 claims in the Old Testament, and more than 1,300 Old Testament quotes and indirect references in the New Testament; so all told, that means there are nearly 4,000 substantive references to divine authorship throughout the Bible. The book of Hebrews opens with the declaration, “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in
the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son” (Heb 1:1-2). With that in mind, Paul tells us that God’s Word is profitable for teaching (doctrine) — it sets forth the mind of God with regard to such themes as the Godhead, man, sin, salvation, holiness, the church, and future events… that it is profitable for reproof — it speaks to us pointedly concerning those things in our lives that are displeasing to God… that it is profitable for correction — it sets forth the way in which our lives can be made right… and that it is profitable for training in righteousness — the grace of God teaches us to live godly lives, but the word of God traces out in detail the things which go to make up a godly life. Through the Words of Scripture the man of God may be complete (mature), thoroughly equipped with all that he needs to bring forth every good work — which is the very goal of salvation (cf. Eph 2:8-10). Did you catch that last statement? God did not save us for no purpose! We have been saved to do good works and love others! And that means “taking God’s Word seriously” (cf. Heb 11:6).

Perhaps the following story might help one see the significance of being “adequate, equipped:” A few hundred years ago armies and sailors were often plagued by “Scurvy” — in 1753 after a four year sea voyage in which a thousand sailors lost their lives, James Lind, a Scottish naval surgeon discovered that their “limited diet” was the cause. Over time he found that a diet with “citrus fruit” provided a dramatic cure for the disease. As a result of his findings, in 1795 daily doses of “lime juice” were prescribed to all British sailors, and the disease of Scurvy quickly vanished. Sadly, the British were the only people who accepted the idea that Scurvy was the result of a dietary deficiency, because in America during the Civil War (1860s), 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… in short, they were not adequately equipped! So the message is this: without a significant daily regimen of God’s Word in your life you will not be adequately equipped to live it victoriously! Remember, that is the very purpose God gave us His Word! The famous 19th century American hymn writer, Fanny Crosby, who lost her sight when she was just six weeks old, published more than 2,000 hymns during her life, of which sixty are still commonly used today in churches all over the world — including “Safe in the Arms of Jesus” and “To God be the Glory.” One of her hymns includes these words:

Thanks for Thy Word, O blessed Redeemer!
Open our eyes its beauty to see;
Grant us Thy grace to study it wisely,
Close every heart to all but Thee.

Thanks for Thy Word of precept and promise,
Lamp to our feet and light to our way,
Help us, O Lord, its counsel to follow,
Meekly by faith its truth receive.

1 PETER 2:1-2 — “Put aside all malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy and slander, and like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to your salvation.” Because Christians are partakers of the divine life (cf. 2 Pet 1:4), they should no longer act in an unloving manner… by harboring evil thoughts against another person… by holding a vengeful thought against them… by being dishonest and deceitful… by pretending to be someone they are not because of selfish motives… by envying others because of their prosperity and success… or by denigrating others to make themselves look better. All these sins are violations of the funda-
mental commandment to “love one’s neighbour as oneself.” Since all of the sins mentioned above stunt spiritual growth, it is important for us as believers to “be nourished by the pure milk of the Word.” The ultimate goal toward which all spiritual growth in this life is moving is that of “conforming us to the image of Jesus Christ” (cf. Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18; Gal 4:19; Gen 1:26). Peter says that believers should “thirst for the milk of Word” like a newborn baby crying for milk, because it is only by the milk of the Word whereby we grow spiritually. As God’s children we must long for the pure milk of the Word, because it is the only thing that satisfies the need within and brings peace to our hearts (cf. Ps 42:1-2; 84:2; 119:103, 143, 165). It is like an oasis in the desert of our lives (cf. Ps 63:1; 119:114; 143:6), whereby we receive genuine refreshment for our souls (cf. Jer 15:16; Ezek 3:3). Ultimately, God’s Word is the very presence of God Himself ministering grace and life and peace to our hearts. His Word recalibrates our thinking, and quiets our restless minds (cf. Ps 19:7). Writes Paul, “We are transformed by the renewing of our minds” (Rom 12:2) — that means God’s Word causes us to think the way He thinks. Incidentally, a major characteristic of a healthy new baby is its instinctive yearning for its mother’s milk. Christians are to crave what is “true and pure” in contrast to what is “deceitful and impure” in the old life. After conversion, the believer should be marked by continuous growth (cf. 1 Cor 3:1-4; Heb 5:11-14). This growth comes from the teaching about Christ and God and righteousness that is at the very core of the Word.

Since it is by “faith” that we grow (cf. Rom 1:17; 4:20; 2 Cor 5:7; 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 2:22; Heb 12:2; Jam 2:20; 1 Jn 5:4), it is essential that we spend considerable time in the “Word” — as Paul said, “Faith comes by hearing the Word of God” (Rom 10:17). When we humbly reflect and meditate upon God’s Word, the Holy Spirit causes it to penetrate the heart and give us understanding that we might obey it — remember, “the Word of God is living and active and pierces as far as the division of soul and spirit, and judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (cf. Heb 4:12); it is only when we fail to approach it with humility, a sincere and contrite spirit, and a willingness to obey it, that it does not become efficacious in our hearts (cf. Ps 51:17; Jam 1:21-25; 4:6, 8; Jn 7:17). Paul exhorts us to “work out our salvation with fear and trembling (i.e., with genuine reverence and sincerity before God), but work with the understanding that we work not alone, God is also at work in us to will and do His good pleasure” (cf. Phil 2:12-13) — so “growth” is a cooperative work that we do in conjunction with the Holy Spirit, who ultimately is the One who effectuates the changes in our hearts (cf. 1 Cor 3:6). Of this we can be certain, God will do His part, but He insists that we cooperate with Him and do our part (read Ps 32:8-9; 2 Tim 2:13; and 1 Cor 3:6). Contrary to what some believers think, God’s demands are not unreasonable or excessive… and don’t tell me that your giving Him an “hour” of your time every day is just too much to ask — if that is your thinking, you are really living for yourself and not for Christ. Ask God to create in you a clean heart and renew a steadfast spirit within you, and restore unto you the joy of His salvation, and sustain you with a willing spirit (cf. Ps 51:10, 12 and Ezek 18:31). Remember the words of Jesus: “Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls. My yoke is easy, and My load is light” (cf. Mt 29:29-30). Again, God is not nearly as rigid and demanding as many believers perceive Him to be — that is what Satan wants you to believe! — God is well aware of how weak and feeble and frail we really are (cf. Heb 4:15-16; Ps 103:14).

**Psalm 1:1-3** — “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked… But his delight is in the law of the Lord. And in His law he meditates day and night. 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.” The Hebrew word “blessed” in the Old Testament (eshet) refers to a state of prosperity or happiness that God bestows upon the
believer; its New Testament Greek counterpart (makarios) means to be fully satisfied despite one’s circumstances (cf. Mt 5:11-12) — it means all is well between God and you, even when you are weeping over the pain of a broken body or heartbreaking relationship. The psalmist tells us that the blessed man does not walk in the council of the ungodly, but walks in the ways of God: his footsteps are actually ordered by the Word of God rather than the thinking of carnal men… his company is with the congregation of the righteous rather than with the multitude of those who do evil… and he finds no rest in the atheist’s scoffings, because he has learned better philosophy than that of the infidel. Writes Spurgeon, “Though the seat of the scoffer might be lofty, it is very near to the gate of hell; destruction will swallow up the man who sits therein.”

The blessed man delights in the law of the Lord — he delights to make it his rule of life, and meditates on it day and night. The law of the Lord is the daily bread of the true believer. The word “delight” (chephets) means to feel great favor towards something because of its intrinsic qualities; thus the individual is easily attracted to it because it is desirable. So what you delight in is what will direct your life; therefore be careful about what you enjoy. Is your delight in the law of God? Do you study His Word? Do you make it your best companion and hourly guide? If not, this blessing does not belong to you. The one who delights in the law of God will be like a tree firmly planted the rivers of live and grace — not a wild tree, but a chosen, planted one (cf. Mt 15:13). Trees have roots; the most important part of a tree is its “root system.” The reason roots are important is because they determine the trees nourishment. The rivers of mercy and grace, are a never-failing source of supply to the believer. The man who delights in God’s Word brings forth fruit in its season — it brings forth patience in the time of suffering, faith in the day of trial, and holy joy in the hour of prosperity. Though God delights in blessing His children, we must prepare ourselves for His blessings by first appropriating the resources He has given to us — we must delight in the Word of God and feed and meditate upon it constantly, because therein is our spiritual nourishment. God wants His people 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 (the world is anything that separates us from God or causes us to disobey Him)… second, we must be saturated with the Word (by meditating on the Word we allow the Holy Spirit to implant the Word in our hearts). As spiritual trees, we need light, water and roots to live — such is necessary for us to be fruitful believers, and fruitfulness is a quality of the man of grace. His leaves do not wither or lose their beauty, and whatsoever he does prosperity; it is not outward prosperity which the Christian most desires, but inward soul prosperity that he longs for. Spurgeon reminds us, “There is 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.”

**PSALM 119:9-11** — “How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy Word. With all my heart I have sought Thee; do not let me wander from Thy commandments. They Word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee.” We maintain purity in the Christian life by daily feeding upon the Word and storing it up in our hearts (the command-center of our lives) so that we can heed the Word. Remember, the Word of God is living and active and powerful… not simply some collection of abstract teachings. It is the Word that actively renews our minds and transforms our thinking — as we feed and meditate upon it, and affirm it to be true (that’s faith), the Holy Spirit cleanses us within, brings healing to our soul, and quickens our sluggish nature. The psalmist is not a legalist — he has no illusions whatsoever that He can do God’s will in his own strength; he is entirely dependent upon God to
keep him, and recognizes his responsibility in the matter — that of affirming the truths of God’s Word and feeding and meditating upon them. No wonder Jesus tells us to “abide in His Word” (cf. Jn 8:31), because it will determine our walk.

As Spurgeon notes, we have within ourselves a tendency towards that which defiles, therefore we must feed upon the Word that it might teach us how to overcome the world (cf. Gal 6:14; 2 Pet 1:4), the flesh, and the devil. The Bible must be our road map… therefore we must study it daily that we might be inspired and encouraged to heed and follow it. “Blessedness” is a conditional promise (cf. Ps 119:1) — it must be practically sought for as the Word describes. As John Calvin says, “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.” The believer must aspire after steadfastness and persevere in walking in the ways of God. William Cowper, the 18th century English poet, when commenting on verse 11 said, “Among the many excellent virtues of the Word of God, this is one: that if we keep it in our heart, it will keep us from sin.” Note again, God’s Word needs to be kept in our heart (the command-center of your life); and that only happens when we humbly and prayerfully meditate and reflect upon it. If the concept of “meditation” is somewhat confusing to you, consider its usage in the animal world — cows have several stomachs, and when they are grazing in the pastures they immediately swallow their food into one of their stomachs, whose function is merely for “storage”… at a later point the cow will bring a portion of the food back up and “chew on it” (this is referred to as a cow “chewing his cud”). In like manner, the believer needs to repeatedly bring back up those truths that he has been studying in the Word, and chew on them (that is, carefully reflect on them); incidentally, this is the same word that is used to describe a cow chewing its cud. As human beings, our flesh makes us very prone to walk in darkness and sin… it is only when we mount a counteroffensive against our flesh by meditating upon God’s Word that we are strengthened in the inner man by the Holy Spirit and are able to walk uprightly in this world. There is a “continual battle” going on in our souls between the flesh and the Spirit, and we must constantly be attending to that battle by meditating upon God’s Word (cf. Gal 5:16-17). Only God’s Word can impact the believer’s heart and empower him to stand victoriously.

JOSHUA 1:6-9 — Joshua, “Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 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. 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. 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.” Three times God commanded Joshua to “be strong and courageous!” After Moses died, God chose Joshua to lead the children of Israel into the Promise Land that was filled with adversaries and pagan idolatry — thus temptation and warfare were inevitable. So what does God tell Joshua he must do? In spite of the fact they needed weapons that were in good working order, God tells Joshua that above everything “make sure the Sword of the Word of God is your focus!” — everything else God would graciously supply. Furthermore, it’s not enough that Joshua simply carry around a copy of the Law in his backpack… he needed to read it and meditate upon it every single day! Joshua literally fulfilled Jehovah’s instructions to not let the Word depart from his mouth. When the city of Ai was destroyed, and all of Israel was
standing on both sides of the ark before the Levitical priests… Joshua “read all the words of the law…. there was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which he did not read before all the assembly of Israel” (cf. Josh 8:34-35). Joshua remained faithful to this critical instruction even unto his dying day. Knowing that he was going to die soon, he instructed 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… or mention the name of their gods… but you are to cling to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day. For the LORD has driven out great and strong nations from before you.” (cf. Josh 23:6-9).

The phrase “shall not depart from your mouth,” means that the book of the law should be a constant topic of conversation among them. They were to “meditate upon it day and night,” because whatever you think about all day long will show up in your conversation. So the Lord is saying that “you ought to be dominated by the Word of God.” When you meditate on it and talk about it, pretty soon you begin to live it out… then you will make your way prosperous and have success. There are many Christians who can’t do according to all that is written in it because they don’t understand it; that’s why it is incumbent upon us to “study the Scripture,” so that we will be careful to do it (cf. Jam 1:22). Joshua’s strength and courage would come from meditating on God’s Word… from believing its promises… from living in obedience to its precepts. Obviously we need strength and courage spiritually… and that comes through the Word! Moses gave this same counsel to the entire nation back in Deuteronomy 11; now God is applying it specifically to Joshua. God feeds the birds, but He doesn’t throw the food into their nests… in the same way, God has given us His Word to nourish our souls, but we must take the initiative to read and study it. But we often fail to do this, and depend on everything but Him… and then we wonder why our faith is so feeble. If we will diligently study His Word, God will feed our hungry souls. As A. W. Tozer said, “Read it much, read it often, brood over it, think over it, meditate over it…. The Holy Spirit wrote the Word for human usage, and if you make much it, He will make much of you. It is through the Word that God reveals Himself — if you want to find Him, go into His Book” (cf. Prv 8:17; Jer 29:13).

We are to study and meditate on God’s Word that we may “be careful to do according to all that is written in it.” Knowledge of God’s Word is not enough — we must “be careful to do” what it commands (cf. Jam 1:22). This doesn’t mean that God’s Word is some kind of spiritual magic genie, where all you have to do is say the right words and “bingo!” you’re delivered… though that’s the way many of us would like God’s Word to work, that is not how it works. We are to reflect upon the truths of God’s Word (cf. Rom 10:17; Phil 4:8; Col 3:16), and let His law control our thoughts and actions — there is nothing automatic about it; it requires a knowledge of the Word, meditating upon it, and prayerful obedience to it. Beloved, we are all living in the midst of a “spiritual war,” of which none of us is exempt, and we must “fight the fight of faith” (cf. 1 Tim 6:12), which is no easy matter (contrary to what some in the Christian community claim). When we abide in God’s Word, “God will make our way prosperous and successful.” Ultimately the source of true genuine success is God Himself… as long as we humbly seek the Lord, God will make us prosper (cf. 2 Chr 26:5; Ps 84:11-12; 146:5; Jam 1:17; 4:6). In the Christian life, success and prosperity are not to be measured by the physical, material standards of the world; the issue for us is spiritual blessing and spiritual prosperity (i.e., real peace and joy and fruitfulness). As the Scottish novelist and Christian apologist George MacDonald said, “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 helps us evaluate our motives in decision-making with regard to success and prosperity. We learn to introspectively ask ourselves the right questions when we diligently study the Word of God, because God’s Spirit is at work in our minds, prompting and coaxing us (He is the power behind the Word). It is easy to fall into the trap of substituting human wisdom and understanding for obedience to God’s Word. This passage is calling us to “think biblically” (by reading and soaking in and reflecting on the Word of God) so that we “live biblically” in all we say and do.

**EZRA 7:10** — “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.” Ezra was the priest who led the second expedition of Jews back from Babylonian exile to their homeland, and was firmly established in Jerusalem as “chief judge,” and teacher of the law of Moses to the people. So great was his sense of dependence upon God that every step he took was marked by some devout acknowledgment of the divine help “according to the good hand of God upon him” (cf. Ez 7:6, 0, 27, 28; 8:22, 31). God’s sovereign hand of blessing was on Ezra because he was so completely immersed in His Word (7:10). Ezra had “set his heart” (not his head) to study, obey and teach God’s law to others — the idea of having his heart set conveys the idea of being firmly committed to a particular course of action with unwavering steadfastness (his was a determined pursuit). As Ezra knew, one could not teach with power until he himself had practiced what he had studied. His heart was prepared by “confession of sin” (cf. 1 Pet 2:1-3) — it is impossible to study the Scriptures profitably with an impure mind. The “heart” does not refer to the intellect, but speaks to that which rules one’s very being — the seat of affections, thoughts, emotions, desires, and will (cf. 1 Kg 3:9-12; Prv 17:22; 2 Chr 12:14). The study of the Word consumed Ezra’s life. John Bunyan, the famous 17th century English preacher and author, was also consumed with the study of God’s Word. Of him Charles Spurgeon remarked, “He studied our Authorized Version… till his whole being was saturated with Scripture… his soul was full of the Word of God!” The Hebrew word for “study” carries the idea of seeking with care, inquiring, pursuing, and searching; conversely, the Greek term conveys the idea of attempting to learn something by careful investigation or searching (cf. Prv 2:1, 2, 3, 4, 5). 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; he was not content to skim the surface and simply gain a superficial knowledge of the text.

Ezra not only studied the Word, he also “practiced” it — the Hebrew word carries the idea of expending energy in the pursuit of something. Ezra mastered the Word, and the Word mastered him. His careful study led to a holy life — 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. A class of scribes arose in Jesus’ day who sought to follow the Law, but not from the heart… which prompted Jesus to say, “This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me” (Mt 15:8). The evangelist Dwight Moody said, “God did not give us the Scriptures to increase our knowledge, but to change our lives.” Likewise A. W. Tozer responded, “Theological truth is useless until it is obeyed; the purpose behind all doctrine is to secure moral action.” Biblical “teaching” seeks to guide people to follow the will of God, by bringing the authoritative declaration of the Word of God… to which the late British theologian John Stott replied, “Many preachers bear more resemblance to entertainers than expositors” (an expositor is someone who carefully explains what the Scriptures teach). The great Scottish Reformer John Knox said, “I have never once feared the devil, but I tremble every time I enter the pulpit” (cf. Jam 3:1). 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. The late 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.

**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.” Whenever Jeremiah began to relish God’s Word, it became a delight and a joy to his soul, in contrast to the majority of people who despised it — “The wise men are put to shame, they are dismayed and caught; behold, they have rejected the word of the LORD; what kind of wisdom do they have?” (cf. Jer 8:9). Jeremiah found his consolation in the Word — he ate it and he digested it and it became a part of him. Beloved, we need to digest it so that it becomes part of our being, and when we do, it will bring joy and rejoicing to the heart just as it did for Jeremiah. Only the Word of God can do this. Jeremiah was in real difficulty — his hometown had rejected him and got rid of him… his own family rejected him… and his life was in danger. As soon as Jeremiah found the liberating truths in Scripture (notice he took the initiate to examine God’s Word), he eagerly laid hold of them and appropriated them; the truths he discovered delivered him from his anxiety and eagerly laid hold of them and appropriated them; the truths he discovered delivered him from his anxiety and brought joy and delight to his heart — that’s the “power” of God’s Word (GOD); remember the Word (GOD) is living and active! (cf. Heb 4:12)... He turns anguish into joy by removing the disquieting thoughts in our minds when we feed upon His Word, and replaces them with His peaceful presence (cf. Phil 4:6-9). Warren Wiersbe notes that Jeremiah “experienced the loneliness of leadership and the anguish of ministry, but God encouraged him as he fed on His Word. Though God may not take away the painful circumstances in which we find ourselves, He can displace the angst we experience with His joy.

**MATTHEW 4:1-4** — “Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After He had fasted for forty days, the tempter challenged Jesus to turn the stones into bread,” to which Jesus responded, “It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” Incredible as it may seem to some believers, Jesus “lived by faith” just like we are called to do; that is, He trusted in His Father’s Word (Scripture). Though Jesus was “fully God,” He was also “fully human,” a dimension of His being that most believers are strangely unaware. The Christian community worldwide seems to only focus of the “deity of Christ,” and pretty much ignores the “humanity of Christ.” Regarding His deity, the apostle Paul says the following: “Although [Jesus] existed in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking on the form of a bond-servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (cf. Phil 2:6-7). The exact implication of His emptying Himself of His deity in some regard is simply beyond a human’s ability to understand. Yet what we do know about Christ is that He actually lived a life of perfect faith while He was here on earth. For a fuller understanding of this subject, you might want to read my study titled, “The Jesus Few Believers Know” — you can find it on my website. Incidentally, the first Adam came into this world and fell as a result of the serpent’s (the devil’s) work in the Garden of Eden when Eve and he “failed to believe” God’s Word… on the other hand, the last Adam (Jesus) came into this world and met the devil in a head-on confrontation in the wilderness — Satan did everything He could to lure Jesus to evil, yet Jesus emerged unscathed; He never ceased believing God throughout Satan’s vicious encounter (a level of encounter that we will never experience). As Scripture says, “He knew no sin whatsoever” (cf. 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:22; 1 Jn 3:5).
Though Jesus was faced with all of the human enticements to sin, and was tempted in all ways such as we are (thus He is able to fully sympathize with us—Heb 4:15); yet He never once yielded to it, or ceased trusting the Word of His Father. Of this we can be sure—that the temptations Jesus experienced were very real. Just because we can’t fully reconcile everything that He went through in our minds, doesn’t mean that we reject something that Scripture clearly teaches. Obviously there is a deep mystery connected with the temptation that Jesus experienced, and rather than forcing a reconciliation of all of the facts (and erring on the matter), suffice it to say, we must simply defer to a divine level of knowledge that transcends our human’s ability to understand.

For a believer to walk uprightly in this world, he must adequately feed upon the Word of God: that is, he must read and ponder every word of Scripture… not just those passages in the New Testament that are easier for him to understand… because some of the so-called “dry chapters” provide us with some of the brightest gems of spiritual truth. Remember, the Old Testament is the foundation upon which the New Testament is built. These were the Scriptures the Lord Jesus studied and lived by. Sadly, most preachers today virtually exclude the Old Testament from their preaching repertoire (except a few psalms); thus the sheep of such flocks are not fully nourished on what God intended for His people to hear. Smorgasbord Christianity (a very limited diet) was never God’s plan for His church. As the founder of the daily devotional book Our Daily Bread, Richard De Haan, says, “Many people are not familiar with the symptoms of starvation around the world. 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. The fact is, when people reach serious levels of starvation they don’t even want to eat the food that is placed before them. ‘Spiritual starvation’ follows much the same course. If we have been feeding daily on God’s Word, it is natural to ‘feel hungry’ when we skip our quiet time. But if we continue to neglect it, we will ultimately lose all desire to study the Scriptures. Therefore, if you have lost your taste for the ‘bread of life,’ confess your negligence and ask God to revive your appetite for His Word by pouring your soul into it”—being confident of the fact that “if you draw near to God, He will draw near to you” (cf. Jam 4:8).

**JOB 23:10-12** —“God knows the way I take; when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot has held fast to His path; I have kept His way and not turned aside. I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.” With those thoughts in mind, think about what the Lord said to Satan—“Have you considered My servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil” (Job 1:8). Job was a man who ultimately was subjected to suffering more than any of us will ever understand, and yet in the face of such affliction he affirms that “he shall come forth as gold.” As Job states in verse 12, 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. Though Job was not perfect, 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 and His will for their life. If we are daily taking in the “bread” of 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 (cf. 1 Pet 1:6-7). But if
we resist God’s will and fail to feed on His Word (truth), the furnace experience will only burn us and make us bitter. Would you spend time to prepare a meal for yourself even if you didn’t feel like cooking? In all probability you would do so, reasoning that you need to eat to maintain your health. How do you answer the same question when it comes to “spiritual food” from the Word? Do you skip it because you are too busy, too tired, or don’t feel like it? Or do you discipline yourself to feed upon it?

**ISAIAH 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.” As Charles Spurgeon comments, “God will dwell with those that tremble at His word; those who tremble at God’s Word do so because they believe it to be all true.” Someone once said to an old Puritan, “There is no reason why you should be so precise,” to which he replied, “I serve a precise God.” The God of Israel is a jealous God, and His people know that. Moses was not permitted to enter the land of Canaan for what seemed to be a fairly insignificant sin, yet he was shut out from the land of promise for it… for God is stricter and more particular with those that are near to Him than those who are not (cf. Heb 12:5-8). Moses had sinned at Meribah when he was leading the children of Israel through the wilderness (Num 20:12); by not revering and sanctifying Jehovah in the eyes of the people, he forfeited the privilege of entering into Canaan. As Spurgeon says, “We know the love of God will never cast us away… [nevertheless] we tremble lest we should abuse that grace. A holy trembling is a sign of life — if you can quiver before the eternal majesty of God’s voice, you are not altogether dead in trespasses and sins” (cf. Eph 2:1-5). The sweetest fellowship with heaven is to be had by humble souls that tremble at His Word. God will deny no blessing to a thoroughly humbled spirit. Humility makes us ready to be blessed by the God of all grace (cf. Jam 4:6), and fits us to deal efficiently with our fellow men. The apostle Paul said, “God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed” (cf. 2 Cor 9:8).

Many despise God’s warnings and perish. Happy is he who trembles at the Word of the Lord. The young king **Josiah** trembled at God’s Word, and he was spared the sight of the evil which the Lord determined to send upon Judah because of her great sins (cf. 2 Kg 22-23). Have you this tenderness? 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. The young king Josiah was “trembler” (cf. 2 Kg 22:11) — “and it came about when the king heard the words of the book of the law, that he tore his clothes.” Tearing one’s clothes was often a sign of grief (cf. 2 Kg 6:30) or sorrowful repentance (cf. Joel 2:12-13). The humility of the king was evidenced in this action — he tore his clothes in genuine remorse. Josiah was of a tender spirit, and trembled at the word of the Lord when we saw the evils that sin had brought upon the nation. As **Spurgeon** states in “A Good Start,” “I labor under the opinion that there never was a time in which the people of God had greater need to understand this principle than now — the Church and the world appear to be alike, bewitched with folly. The signs of the times indicate a carnival of delusions. Blessed is the sheep that knows his Shepherd, and will not listen to the voice of strangers. The way to be kept steadfast is to let the Word of God abide in you” (cf. 1 Jn 2:14; Col 3:16). Imagine how Spurgeon would respond to the Church today, just a hundred years later?
Spurgeon goes on to say, “We are to believe in the doctrines of God’s Word — these will make us strong. What vigor they infuse! Get the Word well into you, and you will overcome the wicked one… keep a fast hold of the doctrines of grace, and Satan will soon give in over attacking you” (cf. 1 Jn 2:1; Jam 4:7). Get the promises of God to lodge within you, and you will overcome the wicked one.

The Lord Jesus struck Satan a killing blow by quoting divine precepts (cf. Mt 4:1-11). Once you learn the precepts of God, you must have the Word in your affections, to love it so that it is as honey to you (cf. Ps 19:10; 119:103; Ezek 3:3). Men go after novel and false doctrines because they do not really know the truth; conversely, a man who truly knows the doctrines of grace is never removed from them. Once you get the truth really into you, it will enter into the texture of your being, and nothing will ever get it out of you. You will be on your guard if the Word abides in you, for it is written, “When you walk about, it will guide you; when you sleep, it will watch over you; and when you are awake, it will talk to you” (cf. Prv 6:21-22; Prv 3:13-26). The Word of God will be a bulwark and a high tower to you (cf. Prv 30:5-6; 18:10; Ps 20:1), a castle of defense against the foe. Therefore, see to it that the Word of God is in you, permeating your thoughts, and so operating upon your outward life. Aspire to this unceasingly!

Spurgeon concludes his remarks with these words: Those who are not subordinate, “trifle” with the Word rather than “tremble” at it. The Word is not their teacher, but they are its critics…. If God will speak to us [through His Word] there must be a deep seriousness of heart (Is 66:1-2). George Fox founded the Society of Friends in England in the 17th century; he was called a Quaker because he trembled at the Word of God. The Old Testament prophet Habakkuk describes the same feelings (cf. Hab 1:2, 13; 2:20; 3:2), as do many others. God never comes to us without causing us to tremble, because he that bears Christ within him, feels the weight of the Divine glory and is filled with awe. There is no room for levity with God because his Divine inspirations are very weighty.

Some Quotes Regarding the Word of God

Abraham Lincoln addressed a group of African-Americans in 1864 who had given him a special presentation Bible, saying: “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.”

The 18th century French Enlightenment philosopher and avowed atheist Voltaire boasted that within 100 years of his lifetime, Christianity would be swept from the earth… but only 40 years after his death, his own house and printing press were being used by the Geneva Bible Society to produce Bibles and other Christian literature! God does have a sense of humor. Voltaire was the supreme example of the proud, self-sufficient humanist. The organized Christian Church was an abomination to him.

The 19th century American evangelist and founder of Moody Bible Institute, Dwight L. Moody, said, “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.”

The British theologian, J. I. Packer, once said, “If I were the devil, one of my first aims would be to stop folk from digging into the Bible.”

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One of the most eloquent preachers in 19th century America was Phillips Brooks, pastor of Trinity Church in Boston. He said, “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 the telescope itself. 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.”

Howard Hendricks, a noted professor of theology at Dallas Theological Seminary, states in his book Living by the Book, “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.”

The renowned 17th century Puritan minister and writer, Thomas Watson, said, “Leave not off reading the Bible till you find your heart warmed… let it not only inform you, but inflame you.”

Amy Carmichael, the 20th century missionary to India, who gave her life to rescuing abused children from corrupt pagan temple worship, spent the last twenty years of her life crippled by arthritis. She stated, “Never let good books take the place of the Bible. Drink from the Well, not from the streams that flow from the Well.”

The great 19th century British preacher, Charles Spurgeon, in his sermon on Hosea 2:23, exults in the authority and efficacy of God’s Holy Word. Says Spurgeon: “There is no authority that is so powerful over the minds of Christian men as that of the Word of God. [All the truths of Scripture] are invested with divine authority…. Dearly beloved, if you want comfort, never rest satisfied with the mere words of men… be not content unless you get the truth from the mouth of God. Say in your spirit, ‘I shall not be comforted, unless God Himself shall comfort me.’ Notice how Paul teaches in his letter to the Romans that the very essence of the authority of the Scriptures lies in this, that God speaks through His revealed Word — “As He says also in Hosea” (cf. Rom 9:25; Hos 2:23). It is GOD speaking in the Bible whom we ought to hear… [it is only then that] it has power. 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…. Listen to its voice until God Himself speaks it with power to your heart. [Beloved], do not regard anything [I preach] unless it agrees with what is written in the Bible. If it is only my word, throw it away; but if it is God’s truth that I declare to you… you will disregard it at your peril. Let me make one other observation — God’s Word is like ‘wheat’ in the hand of a [dead] mummy that had lain there for thousands of years; but when men took it out of his hand, and sowed it… there sprang up the bearded wheat which has now become so common in our land. [By way of application], when you take a divine promise, spoken hundreds or thousands of years ago… lo, it is fulfilled to you!” That is the magnificent power of God’s Eternal Word.

Spurgeon goes on to comment on Proverbs 6:20-22 — The Word is LIVING! How else could it be said: “It shall talk with thee?” A dead book cannot talk. It is clearly a living book… and a speaking book — “The Word of God liveth and abideth forever.” The vast majority 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… 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… its speech still drops as the rain fresh from heaven; its truths are overflowing founts
Thus being filled. When I read a promise spoken three thousand years ago, it is as fresh as though it fell from the eternal lips today. God’s Word is always sure, steadfast, and full of power. It is never out of date... it is never stagnant or defiled... but always clear and refreshing; thus, ever living.

Closing Thoughts

There can be no fullness of power in life and service if the Bible is neglected. Though many magnify the work of the Holy Spirit in their pulpits, the instrument through which the Holy Spirit works is largely forgotten — God’s Word. Believers are continually urged to pray for faith, but you can never get faith by merely “praying” for it, nor can you get it by an effort of the “will.” Faith is the product of a specific cause, and that cause is the Word of God (cf. Rom 10:13-14, 17). Faith must have a foundation, and that foundation is God’s Word (not the thoughts and words of men). We cannot obtain power and we cannot maintain power in our lives, and in our work or in our ministry to others, unless there is deep and frequent meditation upon the Word of God. If our leaf is not to wither and whatsoever we do is to prosper, our delight must be in the law of the Lord and we must meditate on it day and night (cf. Ps 1:1-3). Of course, it is much easier and more agreeable to our spiritual laziness, to go to a convention or revival meeting and claim a “filling with the Spirit,” than it is to steadfastly and diligently day after day and year after year dig into the Word of God — sadly, many in the pulpit preach an easy street kind of holiness, where you just sit back in your easy chair and let God do all the work... but no such thing exists. Furthermore, a filling with the Spirit that is not maintained by persistent study of the Word will soon vanish. It is well to bear in mind that precisely the results which Paul in one place ascribes to being filled with the Spirit (cf. Eph 5:18-22), he ascribes in another place to letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly (cf. Col 3:16-18) — carefully compare these two passages.

Thus being filled with the Spirit and letting the Word of Christ dwell in you are two sides of the same coin. Remember, the Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (cf. Eph 6:17) — as mentioned earlier, do not separate the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, as if the Holy Spirit acts independently of the Word; He operates in conjunction with the Word. The verb “to be filled” is the Greek term pleroo — it literally means “to fill a vessel,” it is often used of the sails on a boat that are being filled with the wind to move it along. When we are full of the Word, God graciously moves us along in righteousness and holiness. Just as a person can be full of pain, joy, love, and virtue, so he can also be filled with God — that is, possessed and inspired by God. A man can be full of the Holy Spirit... full of wisdom... full of faith... and full of good works (cf. Acts 6:3, 5; 9:36). The erroneous idea that being filled with the Holy Spirit is some kind of ecstatic spiritual experience, is simply foreign to Scripture. If you are struggling with this concept, take the time to read my two studies “Walking by the Spirit” and “Signs, Wonders & Miracles” — they will give you a significantly more complete examination of this issue. You can check them out on my website: www.thetransformedsoul.com Following are a number of usages of the Greek term pleroo in the New Testament —

- Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit (Lk 4:1).
- The Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a fishing net being filled with fish (cf. Mt 13:48).
- On the day of Pentecost the believers were all filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).
- Peter said to Ananias, “Satan has filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit” (Acts 5:3).
• Stephen “was a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 6:5).
• Barnabas “was a good man, full of the Spirit and of faith” (Acts 11:24).
• Paul “was filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:9).
• Paul’s prayer was for believers to be “filled up to all the fullness of God” (Eph 3:19).
• Paul say, “In Christ you have been made complete (full)” (Col 2:10).
• Paul writes, “He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law” (Rom 13:8).
• Paul writes, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace” (Rom 15:13).
• Paul writes, “May the God of hope fill you with you with all joy and peace” (Rom 15:14).
• We are to “be filled with all knowledge that we might minister to each other” (Rom 15:14).
• We have “been filled with the fruit of righteousness through Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:11).
• Paul prays that we would “be filled with the knowledge of God’s will” (Col 1:9).
• Numerous times John speaks about “our joy being made full” (Jn 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; 2 Jn 1:12).

It is also important to note that when Paul commands us to “be filled with the Holy Spirit” (Eph 5:18), he states it in the “present tense,” meaning we are to “continually” be filled with the Holy Spirit (it’s not a one time decision, but a moment-by-moment decision throughout our lives)… and he states it in the “passive voice,” meaning we are the recipients of the action, because God is the One who must do the filling; our responsibility is to simply cooperate with God by humbly submitting to His Word that HE might fill (control) us. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul states it this way, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell with you” (Col 3:16) — you’ll notice the context for both of these verses is identical! (read Eph 5:18-19 and compare it with Col 3:16). Obviously Paul knew of no filling with the Holy Spirit divorced from a deep and constant meditation upon the Word; it simply doesn’t exist. When we do our part (saturate ourselves with the Word), God does His part (fills and controls us). Just as God is the originator of His Word, so He is the fullfiller of His Word; it accomplishes His good purposes (cf. Is 46:10; 55:11; Acts 13:33). Again, do not separate God from His Word! To sum it all up, anyone who wishes to obtain and maintain fullness of power in the Christian life and service must daily and constantly feed upon the Word of God — He is your counsellor in life, and He ministers grace and truth to your mind and heart through His Word. Following is a closing prayer from an anonymous source that I had in my notes:

May God’s Word become a joy and a delight to your heart.
Through it may God give you wings to rise above the clouds of trial that block the sun,
and soar above gray skies and see the love and goodness of His Son.