

Essential Truths I: Living With God

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The Word of God

Read Luke 6:47-49

The foundation of a person's life is just as important as the foundation of a house. If the foundation of a house is not strong, it will not weather strong storms when they come. But what kind of foundation is strong enough, is steady enough, to weather the storms of life around us?

Read 1 Corinthians 3:11

Jesus is the only sure foundation for your life. He is the only absolute reference point in the world, the only one who never changes (**Hebrews 13:8**).

But how do we build our lives on the Lord Jesus Christ? We do so by hearing and obeying his Word. Did you notice in **Luke 6:47-49** how Jesus interprets his own parable?

- **The life with poor foundations** – "...the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice..."
- **The life with strong foundations** – "...[the one who] hears my words and puts them into practice..."

Everything around us changes. But the Bible declares that there are two things never change:

- God (**Malachi 3:6**)
- God's Word (**Psalms 119:89**)

Read 1 Peter 1:24-25

God has designed the Bible – God's eternal Word – to be the absolute foundation for your life. So let's take a look at the nature of God's Word, the Bible.

▶ The Word ◀

God
Origins
Jesus
The Cross
The Blood
Resurrection
Repentance
Grace
Faith
Water Baptism
Holy Spirit
Temptation
Fellowship
Generosity
Kingdom of God
Worship
Prayer
Eternity
Second Coming
The Call

The Purpose of God's Word

Read Ephesians 4:14-15

God's Word has a dual purpose in your life:

- **To cause you to grow up in Christ** – “Then we will no longer be infants...[but] will in all things grow up into...Christ.”
- **To protect you from danger** – “Then we will no longer be...tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful speaking.”

The Word of God is one of the most precious gifts God has given us. In his Word we discover everything about who God is and what he requires of us.

Read 2 Peter 1:4

The Bible is packed to the full and overflowing with “very great and precious promises” from God. These promises are especially designed by God to help you do the same two things that we just discovered in **Ephesians 4:14-15**:

- **To cause you to grow up in Christ** – “...he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may *participate in the divine nature...*”
- **To protect you from danger** – “...he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may...escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”

Any promise given by God has these two functions – to help you participate in God's own nature and to help you escape that which would destroy your life. The promises of God's Word have not been given so that you can indulge yourself in “corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (note **James 4:4**; **1 Timothy 6:9-11**). No, the promises of God's Word have been masterly crafted to help you *participate* in God's nature and *escape* the corruption of the world.

Exercise

Take a look below at just a few examples of God's “very great and precious” promises and determine how each promise helps you to “participate in the divine nature” or “escape the corruption that is in the world caused by evil desires.”

Read Matthew 6:6

Read Matthew 6:25-31

Read Matthew 7:7-8

Read Hebrews 13:5-6

Read Philippians 4:6-7

Read Philippians 4:19

Most people think of God's Word as simply a series of commands given by God for us to obey. But this is not exactly true. While God does lay down specific commands for us to obey, the way he does this is through promises.

Imagine a hungry child holding in her hands an orange. It is not a very nice looking orange. It is slightly moldy and has obviously seen better days. But it is all she has and she is beginning to peel the orange, ready to eat it. You look at that orange and can smell the rancid odor. You know it could be harmful to the child.

Now you have two approaches you can take. This first is one of simple command: "Give the orange to me! That orange is going to bring you harm!" What do you think the reaction of a hungry child would be to that?

The second approach is one of promise: "That orange has gone bad, but look what I have for you!" You produce an bright new orange in your hand, fresh and juicy, and extend your hand to the child. "Come, let's swap oranges."

God's Word takes the second approach. Yes, God gives commands, but his commands are balanced by promises. Anything you give up in obedience to God is replaced by something far greater and far better.

Read Mark 10:29-30

The Creative Word

Read Isaiah 55:10-11

The Word of God has great creative power. God created the universe by his word (**Psalm 33:6,9; Hebrews 11:3**) and sustains the universe by his word (**Hebrews 1:3**). The Word of God has the same kind of creative power in your life.

The Word of God is like water

Read Ephesians 5:25-27

The Word of God has a powerful cleansing effect. You start life in the kingdom of God totally "washed clean" by the Spirit of God through his Word (**John 15:3**). And as you continue to read and absorb God's Word, it enables you to live a life that pleases God.

Read John 17:17

The Word of God is like light

Read Psalm 19:8

Before you knew the Lord, your life was in spiritual darkness (**Romans 1:21; Ephesians 2:1-2; 4:17-18**). Now, as you read the Bible, God's Word is like a bright light, shining on areas of your life that God wants to change, and shedding light on the path God wants you to walk with Him.

Read Psalm 119:105,130

The Word of God is like a seed**Read 1 Peter 1:23**

In the same way that a seed contains the full life of the tree that will grow out of it, so God plants the seed of his life in our hearts through his Word.

Read Luke 8:4-15

Notice how, in **verse 11**, Jesus says: “The seed is the word of God.” When you hear God’s Word, it is like a seed sown into your heart, designed to bring forth life. If your heart is hard and unreceptive, the seed is “snatched away” and is unproductive. But if you receive it and obey it – allow it to “take root” – then God’s Word begins to work in your life.

Read James 1:21-22***The Word of God is like food*****Read Matthew 4:4**

The Word of God causes you to grow spiritually. When you received Christ, you were “born of the Spirit” by the word of God (**John 3:3,6; 1 Peter 1:3,23; James 1:18**). In order for you to grow up in Christ, you now need to continue to feed on God’s Word.

The Word of God is like a sword**Read Hebrews 4:12**

The Word of God can cut right to your heart, making you aware of sin (note **Acts 2:36-37**). God’s Word, stored in your heart, can also be used as a weapon against the attacks of Satan (note how Jesus used God’s Word in **Luke 4:1-14**).

Read Ephesians 6:17**Renewing Your Mind****Read Romans 12:2**

As you spend time in God’s Word, the Holy Spirit will bring major changes to your thinking so that your attitude aligns with God’s own attitude to life, and your behavior aligns with God’s own holiness.

One of the greatest promises of God’s Word has to do with the very beginning of your life in Christ.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17

This verse is a fact. If you are in Christ, you *are* a new creation. Your old life *has* gone. A new life *has* come. But there is still a process of renewal God is doing in your life, and this process is called the “renewing of your mind.”

Read Ephesians 4:22-24

Regular exposure to God's Word is absolutely vital for you to have a strong, healthy life in Christ. The Word of God helps you to close the door on sin and open the door to the righteousness of God outworked in your life.

Read Psalm 119:8

A Love for God's Word

Read Psalm 119:103

The more time you spend in God's Word, the greater your love for that Word will grow. This is because you are not just reading words on a page; you are reading the heart of God himself. God and his Word go hand in hand, and a love for God means a love for his Word.

Think of it this way. Imagine a wife who has been expectantly waiting for the return of her husband from a long overseas trip. He has written to her, expressing his undying love for her and his longing to be back with her. Those words, written in a letter, are the expression of the heart of the husband. The wife loves that letter, because while her husband is away, that letter is her husband in written form. It is the expression of her husband's love for her.

This is what the Word of God means for us. The Bible is God's heart in written form. By reading the Bible, you are discovering everything about who God is and his great love for you.

Read 1 Peter 2:2-3

When you first come to Christ, this is described as a "new birth" experience (**1 Peter 1:3; Titus 3:5**). A new believer is described as being spiritually like a baby. You have a new life in Christ, but there is much growing yet to do.

Just as a baby needs natural milk in order to grow, so you too need the nourishment of God's Word so that you can "in all things grow up into...Christ" (**Ephesians 4:15**). For this reason, it is important to receive God's word regularly. We do this in three ways:

- ☞ We sit under regular teaching (**Acts 2:42; 2 Timothy 3:16**)
- ☞ We read God's Word each day (**Psalm 119:9,11**)
- ☞ We share God's Word with each other (**Colossians 3:16**)

As you absorb God's Word, you become familiar with God's will and God's ways. This gives you special authority in prayer (**John 15:7; 1 John 5:14-15**). Through God's Word, you discover God's nature, and the Holy Spirit helps you to participate in that nature by changing you into the likeness of Jesus (**Romans 8:29**). **Ephesians 4:13** tells us that God's goal is:

"...we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to *the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*"

This is God's plan for you life – that you will grow up into the full likeness of Jesus

himself! As you respond in faith to God's Word, the Holy Spirit works each day to conform you to the image of Christ. This is the power of God's Word in you life!

Read John 8:32

The Word Become Flesh

Read John 1:14

Jesus is called "the Word of God" (**John 1:1**). When He "became flesh," God's message took on human form in the life of Jesus.

Read 1 John 1:1

Now God wants the same thing to happen in your life. God doesn't want you to just read the Bible and learn *about* him. He wants his words to become a part of your life – to *change* you. Then people will not just hear God's Word in word form. Like Jesus, they will see the Word of God as a daily reality in your life.