

The Power of the Word of God to Change Lives

Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. (Proverbs 30:5)

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31-32)

I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you.

But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him. (1 John 2:26-27)

Introduction

As I continue to write the Essentials series there are several aspects of Bible study that continue to weigh on my soul as critical to convey to readers. These are underlying principles behind my teaching that I assume readers understand, however, I am not so sure that this is a safe or reasonable assumption on my part. By laying them out here, I think it will help readers to be more cognizant of where I am coming from. This, I hope, will bring us closer together on these pages for optimal growth in Christ.

Growth In Christ, including the Essentials series, is meant to be “solid

food” for the Christian and not “milk” (Hebrews 5:11-14). I am serving the greatest King of all eternity and I only wish to help train elite soldiers for Him. He deserves nothing less. The Christian life is difficult. We need all the rich depth of fortification from the Word of God for our souls that we can get.

Studying the Bible is *not* just an intellectual endeavor to learn about God. If you adhere to it, the Word of God literally has the power to change your soul in the midst of the corrupted world because it is truth. How does this actually work? This teaching will answer this question in great detail.

The Word of God

Let us start with the reality that Jesus is called, “The Word of God.” This was revealed to the apostle John as he described here:

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. (Revelation 19:11-13)

It is not clear to me from John's description whether "The Word of God" is the "name written that no one knows but himself" and was thus revealed at that time or if that name remains undisclosed. It does make sense though if it is "The Word of God" and God chose to reveal it to John at that time. I mention this because I believe John wrote his gospel *after* the book of Revelation since his gospel includes the following extraordinary insight that I think may have been influenced by what he saw in the Spirit on the Day of the Lord:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ...

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-5, 14)

To be clear, God may have chosen to reveal to John that The Word of God was the name written that no one knew so that he would come to the revelation that "All things were made through him, and without

him was not any thing made that was made," given John's existing knowledge of the Creation account in Genesis.

It is important to note that the Greek word, *logos*, translated here in English as "Word," has a deeper meaning than our simple, modern use of the the term "word" in a strictly communicative or grammatical sense. *Logos* implies word in a deeper sense, carrying with it a concept or measure of revelation.

God's actions of speaking His creation into existence were done through the second person of His Triunity, the Son of God, Jesus Christ. God spoke through His Word and the Spirit created. Because of this dynamic, Jesus Christ has a controlling connection to the information that God created the universe with. This is why the apostle Paul could make such an astonishing claim as this:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. **And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.**
(Colossians 1:15-17)

The reality that Jesus Christ is before all things and in him all things

are held together explains how God actually operates His omniscience and omnipresence. It explains how not one sparrow can fall to the ground without Him allowing it and how he knows the number of hairs on your head (Matthew 10:29-30). In the context of the Creation account, I have concluded that this is what God would have us to understand by revealing to us that Jesus has the name, The Word of God.^[1] This truth is crystalized by the following verses:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the **Word of life**; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:1-3; KJV)

*(Note: the English Standard Version does not capitalize "Word" here which is a serious error. The King James Version, New King James Version, New International Version, New American Standard Bible, and American Standard Version **all** properly capitalize Word in this verse.)*

It is interesting to me that John started off this letter focused on Jesus Christ as the Word just like he did with his gospel. This tells me that he recognized this as an important revelation that was at the forefront of his focus. Yet, there is still more along this vein.

The Spirit of Truth

John was the only Biblical author to use the name, "Spirit of truth," for the Holy Spirit. Jesus said three things about the Spirit of truth:

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” (John 14:16-17)

“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.” (John 15:26)

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” (John 16:13-15)

Allow me to summarize His key points concerning the Spirit of truth:

- He lives in believers to help them, but unbelievers cannot receive Him nor know Him.
- He bears witness about and glorifies Jesus Christ.
- He guides believers into all the truth.
- He reveals things that are to come.
- He reveals to us what is in Christ and our life in Him.

In essence, the Spirit of truth is here to reveal to us the life in Jesus Christ that God created through the Word of God. God created the truth or *real* life through Him and unbelievers are blind to this. He is the Spirit “of truth” because He sheds light on this truth. He constantly helps us by revealing Christ, guiding us into His truth, and teaching us about our lives in Him.

Because the word of God comes from the Spirit of truth and spans all human history—past, present, and future—it is *the* source of absolute truth about life. The Psalmist declared, “The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever” (Psalm 119:160). Furthermore, believers have the same Teacher within them confirming this truth as they read and hear it. God’s Creation was corrupted by the entrance of sin into it. People are now born with a spiritual nature of sin, separated from God, which corrupts their souls, makes them susceptible to the demonic deceptions of the

fallen world, and ultimately leads to their physical deaths. The depraved world—unbelievers with souls being poisoned by sin—cannot hear the word of God. Conversely, those of us with believing faith, and thus, ears to hear what the Spirit is saying, can have our souls transformed as we live out the truth that God created through and in Jesus Christ.

The power of the word of God is unleashed in our reading and our hearing as the Spirit of truth moves into action interpreting it to us. Alongside of this, the Spirit of truth reveals to us Jesus Christ and our life in Him. *Here is the connection between the word of God and the Word of God: the Spirit of truth uses His word to reveal to us the Word of God, Jesus Christ.*

The Power to Change Souls

The Bible, is an integrated compilation of texts written over thousands of years by men inspired by the third person of God's Triunity, the Spirit of God. Thus, the Bible is legitimately the word of God because it was essentially written by the Spirit of God (through men). *(Anyone who thinks that John 1:1-18 was simply written by a 1st century Galilean fisherman is kidding himself.)* This is why, in all my teachings, I consistently quote the Bible to confirm, enhance, illuminate, and underpin the truths that I strive to teach through the

empowerment of the same Spirit. I say, "the apostle John wrote" or "kind David wrote" but what I am always absolutely implying is that this is what God wrote for our learning. The Bible says the same thing:

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
(2 Timothy 3:16)

Moreover, the gospels recorded Jesus frequently referring to the authority of the word of God. Six times He said, "have you not read" or "have you never read." Eleven times He said, "is it not written" or "it is written," three of which were towards Satan. On six other occasions he referred to the authority or the fulfillment of "Scripture". During the ministry of Jesus and the early church period, Scripture was a reference to the earlier books of the Bible which were in existence at that time (what we now call the Old Testament). The use of the term now includes the New Testament so that Scripture is essentially a synonym for the Bible. Jesus frequently quoted and referenced Scripture for the same reason that I previously mentioned: it is absolute truth. This came out when Jesus declared to the Jews:

"Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—*and Scripture cannot be broken**—do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?" (John 10:34b-36)

Jesus declaring that the Scripture "cannot be broken" nails down the fact that the word of God is foundational truth that has the power to shape, but itself, will not be shaped.

The word of God has the power to change the souls of those of us who apply it because it literally feeds us with the truth in the midst of a false environment bent on our destruction. Jesus said "to the Jews who had *believed* him":

"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31b-32)

Jesus asked God in prayer:

"Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth." (John 17:17)

Sanctify means to cleanse and make holy for God. This is what the word of God does to the soul of the believer.

The Bible provides further validation that the word of God has the power to change the soul through its descriptions of it being *alive*. The apostle Peter described it as “living and abiding” (1 Peter 1:23) and the author of Hebrews wrote:

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. **For the word of God is living and active**, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:11-13)

Jesus used a seed in His parable of the sower to symbolize the word of God. A seed is barely noticeable, yet *it has the inherent power to create something far greater than itself that will keep on multiplying and change the entire landscape of a region*. The seed of the word of God has the power to dramatically transform the landscape of your soul if you are good ground, walking in the light and watered by the Holy Spirit.

Principles of Biblical Study

Building upon the foundation of the Word of God that I have laid in this teaching, I want to leave readers with 3 key principles for studying the Bible:

1. The Holy Spirit is the Teacher
2. Take the Bible literally unless you obviously should not
3. Use the Bible to interpret the Bible

The Holy Spirit is the Teacher

Believers that are empowered by the Holy Spirit have the Spirit of truth with them to teach them the Bible. John explained this anointing:

But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. ...

I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. **But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.** (1 John 2:20-21, 26-27)

Anointed believers have everything they need to learn the Bible. Teachers are gifted to illuminate the word of God, but it is the Spirit Who is the real Teacher. If we are not being taught by Him, we know nothing. This is why there are some people who read the Bible everyday and get nowhere. There are many concepts in the Bible that must be spiritually discerned for the believer to truly understand them. Thinking this through to a deeper level, we discover that *God actually controls the understanding of His word in the hearts of men.* He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Literal Unless Obviously Not

The Bible should be interpreted literally, unless it is obvious that it should not be. Keep in mind that the word of God contains many symbolic references and uses many literary devices.

The word of God is always preeminent to the word of man. Never, ever exalt a concept derived from man over the word of God because of your lack of knowledge. The reality of a literal 6-day Creation over evolution is perhaps the most prominent example. I have found that in every field, notably archaeology and the sciences, there are people whose work proves the truth of the Bible in every respect. Seek and you will find. The internet leaves you with no

excuse.

The Bible Interprets The Bible

Beyond patiently listening to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, using the Bible itself to interpret the Bible will be your most profitable and accurate tool. The Bible is a cohesive guide put forth under the direction of the Holy Spirit. To quote Dr. Chuck Missler, the Bible is a “highly integrated message system.” The best way to study a word, concept, or phrase in the Bible is to examine its usage elsewhere in the Bible. I do this constantly with the help of Blue Letter Bible. This process allows the Holy Spirit to teach you thoroughly as you comprehensively review what He has written regarding a particular topic.

Conclusion

I hope you found this detailed study on the Word of God, the word of God, and this overview of Bible interpretation guidelines helpful for understanding where I am coming from as I bring forth teaching on True Vine Life. The whole purpose of True Vine Life is to equip believers with the word of God so that they will come to know *the* Word of God more clearly and powerfully.

1. Note: Jesus is *not* the word of God as in the Biblical texts which is why the only place the Word of God is capitalized in our English translation Bibles is John 1:1-5, 14; 1 John 1:1; and Revelation 19:13 where this revelation is specifically dealt with by John. Likewise, in our modern grammar, the “Word of God” is capitalized when used as an alternative name for the Bible, but the “word of God” as a reference to Biblical texts or statements of God is not.