

## 513 God's Word Can Help

Some folks look at the Bible as if it were an old book about people in another place and time and had no relevance or meaning in our lives today. Others think of the Bible as a book of myths and legends about people who never lived.

But what if the Bible is from God and is as relevant as today's newspaper? What if the teaching and advice it gives is just what you need to live a happy and productive life? What if you are the one missing out because you never opened the book of God?

The psalmist David gave one of the most important statements regarding Scripture of all time in Psalm 19:7-11. He said, "The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward."

The word of the Lord is perfect, blameless

- Restores the soul—there are times when I need restoring
- makes wise the simple—I need wisdom
- rejoices the heart—I could use some good news that fills me with joy
- enlightens the eyes—I need to see clearly things I haven't seen before
- Endures forever—Jesus said when heaven and earth pass away, his words will continue (Matt. 24:35)
- righteous altogether—the Bible is the great source of all morality, right and wrong
- more desirable than gold, sweeter than honey

### The Word of God can do many things for you.

#### 1. *It Can Build You Up.*

When Paul was saying good-bye to the elders at Ephesus, he pointed them to God and his word: "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." (Acts 20:32) Peter said, "like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation" (1 Pet. 2:2). The Word of God nourishes our lives with truth and with God's "good sense" or wisdom. It helps us through the pitfalls of life.

The word doesn't merely nourish us; it gives us eternal life. Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63). The life God gives us is real life, filled with good, with joy, with love, with truth. Jesus said in John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." Abundance here is not in possessed things but those wonderful, intangible things of the heart and soul, that make life meaningful and beautiful.

#### 2. *The word of God can help you find faith.*

John wrote in John 20:30-31, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."

Paul knew the value of the word as the source of faith. He wrote in Rom. 10:17, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the

word of Christ." The more we study, the more we believe and see reason to believe.

Jesus challenges us to try His word out to see if it is Divine. He was not afraid to put the word out and let people find out for themselves that it was truly God's Word. He said in John 7:17, "If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself." Many people are unhappy with their Christianity, and in part I can see why. Their attempts have been half-hearted. They play at their faith and wonder why their faith is not the power for good they had hoped.

#### 3. *It Can Give You Hope*

Paul said of the Old Testament in Rom. 15:4, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." It's helpful to remember that David defeated Goliath, that Esther won over evil Haman, that God took care of widowed Ruth, and that God did not forget Job in his sorrow. Jeremiah wrote the book of Lamentations at a time when Jerusalem had fallen into sin and was being punished by God with destruction. At the very worst of times, Jeremiah said in Lamentations 3:21-26, "This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him." The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the person who seeks Him. *It is* good that he waits silently For the salvation of the LORD."

In His own time, God blesses our lives and helps us through the greatest of heartbreaks. The Bible gives us the hope we need to live.

#### 4. *It Can Protect You*

In Matthew 4, Jesus went into the wilderness and fasted for forty days and nights, and the devil came to tempt Him. And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" (4:3-4). Notice that Jesus answered the devil by quoting from the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy 8:3 and saying, "It is written!" God's word in the mind of Jesus stands as authority for His life.

"Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning You'; and 'On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" (don't tempt God) Now the devil knows the Scripture and sometimes uses it to deceive and tempt. But Jesus properly put things into context. One must never test God needlessly.

Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'" Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him. (Matt. 4:9-11).

Each time Jesus was tempted, He went to the authority of the word of God that stands written. Many people want to bend the word of God, others ignore it, some hate it, and others deny it; but the word of God stands.

Paul knew that we needed something to help us in our conflict with Satan. In Ephesians 6:10-13, Paul says, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of

the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, *take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything to stand firm.*” Part of that armor is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (Eph. 6:17). The truth is a powerful protector.

Solomon in Proverbs 2 describes God’s gift to the person who will pay attention to His words: “He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones.” (2:7-8) “Discretion will guard you, Understanding will watch over you, To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things” (2:11-12). For the upright will live in the land, And the blameless will remain in it; But the wicked will be cut off from the land, And the treacherous will be uprooted from it. (2:21-22)

#### 5. *It Can Lead You to Salvation*

The Word of God is message of salvation, the way that God helps us understand what He is willing to do for us, if we will but hear and respond in faith and obedience. In Rom. 1:16, Paul said, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” The gospel is God’s good news for you and me, telling me of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. He died for our sins, was buried, and rose again assuring us of life beyond this life.

Paul further explains about the need for God to speak in His Bible to us, “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). Man by his own wisdom and reasoning cannot discover the whole truth about God. So God gave us the gospel, the Word in the Bible, so that we might know Him and find the salvation that He so graciously has provided for us. Of course this message is only valuable if we are willing to believe it and follow it.

Peter saw the value of the Word. He said in 1 Peter 1:22-25, “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God. For, ‘All flesh is like grass, And all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers And the flower falls off, But the word of the Lord endures forever.’ And this is the word which was preached to you.” God’s Word is the cause of our new birth in Christ. The gospel is necessary for us to hear and obey.

The Hebrew writer helps us understand that God takes His word seriously and asks that we do the same. In Hebrews 2:1-3, he wrote: “For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away *from it*. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? It’s easy to get away from God’s Word, from church, and from prayer, so that we lose sight of God. We don’t mean to quit, we just neglect until we drift away.

How long has it been since you read your Bible closely? Prayed fervently? Been to church to worship God? Many people expect the blessing of God in their lives but have never taken the time to know God well through a serious study of His Word. The greatest need of our time is for people to study God’s Word for themselves, rather than listen to watered down versions of Christianity on television or radio. The Bible can never have an impact on your life until you are willing to study it and put it into practice. If you find that your life is drifting, perhaps it is because you have gotten away from God.

James described a deluded man in James 1:22-25. He said, “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers

who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.” Imagine looking into the mirror at yourself and walking away without combing your hair or fixing yourself up.

Most people say now and then, “Well, I know I should, but...” People don’t always do what they know they need to do to please God. Someday is not on the calendar, my friends. Today is really the only you have. Today is the day to draw close to God by studying His Word, by getting back into church, by humbly praying to the Father.

To become a Christian, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, trust Him and His Word, repent of your sins, confess His name before others, and be baptized (immersed in water) for the forgiveness of your sins.

Let the word of God be a standard for your life, a guide for your morals and your relationships with others. The word can be a blessing to your life. Remember what David said in Psalm 19? “They (God’s Words) are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.” (19:10-11). Don’t cheat yourself out of the blessing of God by leaving your Bible on the shelf.

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