

GROWING IN **GOD'S WORD**

SEPTEMBER 2014



WELCOME TO LEARN & LEAD!

We're thrilled to have you participate in Learn and Lead. Our prayer is that the next three months would help you develop as a leader, and in turn, your local church would be blessed, and ultimately the nations would be blessed.

Here's an overview of the programme:

WHY?

1. Strengthen future leaders' theology and relationship with God through the Word
2. Prepare leaders and future leaders to understand & function within an apostolic environment

HOW?

1 initial 3 month term (September - November 2014)

- Teaching takes place once-per-month, 8am-12pm on a Saturday at a host church in the northern Gauteng region

Homework

- Homework is for the purpose of getting learners into the habitual, regular study of God's Word, and specifically into scripture which deals with the upcoming month's subject;
- Learners should plan ahead and schedule time (i.e., daily) to pray and read through material;
- Given 1 month in advance of the Saturday teaching sessions;
- Homework will be the notes from the speaker(s) of the upcoming Saturday sessions. All points in the outline will include exhaustive scripture reference supporting the point being made, which learners will look up.

No tests, per se (this is leadership development, not academia), but rather simple feedback papers:

- Each week in the homework notes will conclude with a question, which the learner must answer in the answer page provided;
- Additionally, after the Saturday teaching, learners will answer the following questions, and email all answers together with the homework answers:
 - What 3 main things have you learned through the material this month?
 - For each of these three learnt concepts, state how they will practically apply to your life as a disciple of Jesus.
 - For each of these three learnt concepts, state how they will practically apply to your present role as a leader in the church.
 - Please describe any other way in which truth you have learned through Learn & Lead this month will apply to your life and/or leadership function.
- Learn & Lead is a complement to the leadership development done by local church elders. An elder from each learner's church will receive the learner's feedback in order to stay abreast of the learner's development.

WHAT (SUBJECTS) & WHEN?

13 September - "Growing Deep in the Word"

25 October - "Biblical Leadership, Eldership & church governance"

22 November - "Apostolic Church and Model"

HOW TO DO HOMEWORK

One of main reasons for the homework is to simply kick-start a **daily, habitual dependence on the Word of God** (this is a needed habit of all future church leaders!!)

Therefore it is not simply "homework," as in mere reading, mental assimilation of information. Treat it as intimate time with God. Spend at least 15-20 minutes daily:

- Reading the material
- Meditating on the material, especially on any scripture references
- Talking to God about the material, seeking grace to make the truths taught real in your own life

Pace yourself as you wish (i.e., anything from splitting each week's material evenly over six days, to reading the entire week each day for six days...whatever works best for you)

You will find questions at the end of each week's materials. Kindly answer them on the Word document provided.

Engage your faith: don't approach this as more work to get done in your busy schedule. Approach this as your lifeline, and trust God to use your Learn and Lead studies to accomplish a deep and significant work in your life development as a leader in His Church.



LEARN & LEAD!

MONTH 1: GROWING DEEP IN THE WORD

MONTH 1 OBJECTIVES:

1. Develop a daily, habitual dependence upon the Word of God;
2. Understand the role of the Word of God in the life of the believer, and the building and leading of the church;
3. Develop skills in more deeply mining revelatory truth from the scriptures.

OVERVIEW

The Word of God! Without it we are on shaky ground; we stray from our commitment to God; we diminish our intimacy with the Lord; we will not be effective representatives for Him. To be a believer and not commune with Jesus, the Living Word and not be a student of the scriptures, we assign ourselves to defeated living.

The Word, in all its contexts and aspects, is essential for our being equipped for what God has called us to do. The place we give His Word determines the course of our lives. When we give His Word the place He gives His Word, we experience Him the way He intended we experience Him. What place does He give His Word? According to Psalm 138:2 He places His Word above His name.

When His Word is alive in us, we are able to overcome strongholds in our minds – even to keep them from being established in our thinking. When we “let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly” (Colossians 3:16), we make Christ our stronghold and we live life to the full as He intended and effectively represent Him on earth.

In this course of study, we will consider God’s word and its practical application in our lives.

WEEK 1: 18 – 23 AUGUST

1. INTRODUCTION – JESUS IS YOUR #1 PRIORITY!

- A** Only **practical application** will result in anything
- i. Settle this in your heart: relationship with Jesus is your #1 priority & this must be reflected in your daily diary. Your number one priority each day is time with Jesus & then abiding in Jesus...let NOTHING in the way of that! (John 15:4-5)
 - ii. This charge is not “adding on” to your schedule...it is “liberating you to” live in the freedom of having intimacy with Jesus as your first priority
 - iii. The church is being built on God’s Word – therefore **only people who are current, regular & intimate with the Word should be leading it!!** Do you want to lead or influence? **START HERE!**
 - iv. Practical application: What to do now:
 1. Some say that performing a task every day for 21 days will create a habit. We want a habitual dependence upon and devotion to God’s Word!! This month – today – start your **21-day habit of time in God’s Word & presence...**and then continue through Learn & Lead (and beyond!) with your new habit.
 - v. If you are moving towards real leadership & influence in the Church that Jesus is building, you wouldn’t just be helped by this habit...you will desperately NEED this habit!

2. THE ROLE OF GOD'S WORD FOR THE CHURCH LEADER:

A As leaders in the Church, what exactly are we leading the church towards, and with what do we lead it?

Matthew 16: 13-18

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and **on this rock I will build my church**, and the gates of Hades (i.e., hell) will not overcome it.

- i. "I will build My church"
 - a. Jesus is, in fact, building His Church. Anyone functioning in any degree of leadership within that picture must be building with **Jesus the same thing that He is building**
 - b. How is Jesus building His Church? ...
- ii. "On this rock" -
 - a. The rock, as per the context of this passage is **revelation of Jesus** - the phenomenon of the Holy Spirit revealing in our innermost being Who He actually is
 - b. Jesus IS God's written Word made flesh, alive. The true end of the scriptures is to behold Jesus, the person, in them - this is the rock upon which He builds the Church
John 1:1, 14 in the beginning was **the Word**, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 14 **The Word became flesh** and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
John 5:39-40 you study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that **testify about me**, yet you refuse to **come to me to have life**.
 - c. The Church is being built on the "rock" of revelation of Jesus:
 - i. Revelation of Jesus is therefore the primary resource ANY LEADER in the church has to lead in what Jesus is building
 - ii. Revelation of Jesus - Jesus, Himself - IS what the Church is being built into! (Ephesians 4:13; Romans 8:29)
 - iii. Revelation of Jesus through the Holy Spirit is the goal of studying the scripture - seeing and encountering Him (John 5:39-40, see above)
- iii. **The Church is therefore being built INTO the image of Jesus, by being built UPON the revelation of Jesus**
- iv. **The first step of leadership in the Church that Jesus is building is having living revelation of Jesus - possessing "rock" He can use to build with**



B

The "why of the Word"...the role of God's Word in the fulfilment of His plan for His people

Exodus 19:5-6

And now if you will **obey My voice indeed**, and **keep My covenant**, then you shall **be a peculiar treasure to Me** above all the nations; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall **be to Me a kingdom of priests** and **a holy nation**. These are the words which you shall speak to the sons of Israel.

- **i. "Obey My voice indeed"**
 - a. "Obey" – original Hebrew word used means:
 - i. Listening to obey, hearkening
 - ii. Posturing as a learner
 - iii. Includes idea of "indeed" ... a decisive action
 - iv. To find Jesus in the scriptures, we must read them listening in order to obey, hearkening, posturing ourselves as learners, and obeying with absolute decisiveness!
- **ii. "My voice" – original Hebrew word used does not just refer to words, teachings or instructions, but the actual sound.**
 - i. Suggests relationship, being close enough to hear
 - ii. Obeying the voice of Jesus is not merely His recorded words, but "hearing Him" in our innermost being as we study Him in all the scriptures
- **iii. "Keep covenant"**
 - a. What is the covenant we must keep?
 - i. God gave Himself fully to us in Jesus, and we give ourselves fully to Him through Jesus
 - ii. How? Relating to Jesus as Lord
Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God made this same Jesus, whom you crucified, **both Lord** and Christ.
Matthew 7:21-23 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord! Lord! shall enter the kingdom of Heaven, **but he who does the will of My Father in Heaven**. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord! Lord! Did we not prophesy in Your name, and through Your name throw out demons, and through Your name do many wonderful works? And then I will say to them I never knew you! Depart from Me, those working lawlessness!
 - b. We see Jesus revealed as we keep covenant with Him – our posture in reading the scriptures is to relate to Him in His covenant role: Lord
- **iv. Promises: what happens as we "obey His voice" & "keep covenant" through His Word:**
 - a. "Kingdom of priests" – represent God with authority
 - a. Great commission is to teach others **what Christ has taught you** – the Word (Matthew 28: 20)
 - b. Holy Nation - Transformed by renewing of your mind – from the Word (Romans 12:1-2)
 - c. Peculiar treasure
 - a. Bring pleasure to God
 - b. Receive His special favour
 - d. The entirety of God's plans for His people – the Church – revolves around our having revelation of Jesus **through the scriptures!**



The role of God's Word in our earthly destiny / "promised land" / developed leadership function

Joshua 1:3-9

I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them. "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to **obey all the law** my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, **that you may be successful** wherever you go. **Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

- **i. What is your "promised land?"**
 1. The earthly fulfilment of God's calling and destiny for you
 2. The taking of your God-given place of authority in His plan
- **ii. The "law" and the "Book of the Law" are Old Testament types of revelation of Jesus, the Living Word (Hebrews 8:5, 10:1)**
- **iii. What must we do with the revelation of Jesus in our promised land?**
 1. Obey (vs. 7)
 2. Don't turn from it in any way (vs. 7)
 3. Keep it on your lips (discuss it) (vs. 8)
 4. Meditate on it day and night - daily, regular, intimate devotion (vs. 8)
 5. Do everything "written" in it (vs. 8)
- **iv. What promise is given as we esteem the revelation of Jesus in this way?**
 1. Be successful wherever we go (vs. 7)
 2. Be prosperous and successful (vs. 8)
- **v. How does God prepare us to inherit our "promised land?"**

Deuteronomy 8:3 And He humbled you and allowed you to hunger, and then He fed you with manna, which you did not know, neither did your fathers know it, so that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone, but **by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God shall man live.**

 1. The key to our preparation is to become habitually dependant upon hearing "every word that proceeds from the mouth of God"
 2. Jesus is the Word proceeding from His mouth...we must hear and see Him to know how to live (Hebrews 1:2; Mark 9:7)
- **vi. The very purpose of our "promised land" (calling/destiny) is to live out the revelation of Jesus! HE is our promised land!**

Rick Joyner: "Dwelling in the presence of the Lord is more important than possessing our promises, for even the most glorious promised land would be a terrible place without Him."

 - a. In a sense, inheriting your promised land begins now! Being with Him, hearing Him IS the promised land
 - b. What are you to do in your "promised land," anyways? **Live out His Word** (revelation of Jesus)
 - c. The way God leads you TO your promised land - hearing and obeying Him - is the essential way of life IN the promised land. Hearing and obeying Him today is the way to get to your destiny, as well as the only way to prepare you to live in it!

3. HANDLES FOR GAINING REVELATION OF JESUS IN THE SCRIPTURES:

- A** Turn your heart to Jesus as Lord when reading the scriptures
II Corinthians 3: 14-16 (But their thoughts were blinded; for until the present the same veil remains on the reading of the old covenant, not taken away.) But this veil has been done away in Christ. But until this day, when Moses is read, the veil is on their heart. But whenever it turns to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.
- i. **A veil is upon our hearts, keeping us from “seeing” Christ & His kingdom**
 - ii. **How do we remove the veil? (Vs. 16) Turn to the Lord!**
 - a. Speaks of: 1) Submission (turn to the Lord), and 2) worship
 - b. Have a “got to have God” attitude
- B** Hebrews 11:6
But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
- i. **Our ultimate goal in “coming to God”: pleasing Him**
 - ii. **Two ways we must believe:**
 - a. Believe He is (practice recognising that He exists, is present & listening)
 - b. Believe He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Let that understanding fuel our perseverance in prayer & seeking God
 - iii. **We are diligently seeking Him (not just answers, or even the reward, but the “rewarder”)**

4. TOOLS FOR MORE DEEPLY STUDYING THE SCRIPTURES

- A** The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. As with Afrikaans to English, there is often a breakdown in translating from one language to another. It is therefore best to study the scriptures with study tools from the original language:
- i. **Strong’s Concordance** – this takes any English word from the KJV version and shows you what original Hebrew or Greek word was used, and what an expanded definition of that word would be, as well as all the other places in scripture where that same word was used. POWERFUL tool in expanding ones understanding of what an author meant by using a particular Hebrew or Greek word.
 - ii. <http://m.biblestudytools.com/> Great resource for the general student of the bible
 - iii. **Recommended Bible Translations/Versions:**
 - a. English Standard Version
 - b. New King James Version
 - c. New Living Translation
 - d. The Message Bible
 - e. God’s Word Translation
 - f. New International Version
 - g. Revised Standard Version
 - h. The Amplified Bible



- **iv. Recommended Bible programmes:**
 - a. Inexpensive good ones:
 - i. E-Sword – downloadable bible study programme. HIGHLY recommended. Includes virtually any version of the bible, most for free, Strong’s Concordance, Thayer’s definitions, maps, commentaries, etc. Make sure to download Thayer; Brown-Driver-Briggs; Keil & Delitzsch; Vincent’s Word Studies; Expositor’s Bible Commentary. Free download: e-sword.net
 - ii. Power Bible CD
 - b. More costly good ones:
 - i. Logos Bible Software
 - ii. PC Study Bible
- **v. Before you go further! Spend a little bit of time investigating these options and select a study tool with which to study more deeply. You will want to incorporate this tool(s) into your study throughout Learn and Lead.**

QUESTION: Heart and hands...what have you sensed being spoken to your heart as you’ve studied through this material this week? What do you need to “put your hands to” and do now in response? (Be specific)

WEEK 2: 25 – 30 AUGUST

Three Aspects of the Word

For weeks 2-4, we will be looking at three aspects of the Word of God: 1) the Living Word, 2) the “rhema” Word, and 3) the scriptures.

1. The Living Word, a Person – God the Word, Logos - the cosmic Mediator between God and the world, who is the personification of God's Truth and Wisdom
(see <http://www.bible-researcher.com/logos.html>)

A The word logos was already in use in the Jewish world when John wrote this. But when he asserts that the Logos became flesh he is indeed saying something that was never dreamt of by the Greek philosophers.

B John 1:1-5 – “In the beginning was the Word...the Word was God...all things were created by Him...”

- 1. Here John gives clarity to Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...and God said, let there be light and light became.” **Creation** came by the Word.
- 2. Hebrews 1:3 – “...upholding all things by the word of His power.” **Sustaining** comes by the Word.
- 3. 2 Thessalonians 1:3-10 – The elements will be **destroyed** by the Word (He is Alpha and Omega). Verses 8-10 – “8) in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9) These shall be punished with **everlasting destruction** from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10) **when He comes, in that Day**, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed”

- 4. In John 1:10-13, John speaks of the **new creation**: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to **become children of God**, to those who believe in His name: ...born...of God." 1 Peter 1:23 - "...born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, **through the Word (Logos) of God...**" Just as when my father's seed and my mother's egg coming together gave me life with their DNA, Christ's seed has caused us to be God's born again children with His DNA. Christ lives in us in seed form and it is in the purpose of God for "Christ to be **formed** in us" - Galatians 4:19. This takes place as we serve to the Lord, the Word in all of the dynamics of intimate relationship:

- Worship through lives laid down
- An open ear and heart to His voice
- Dependence on Him for grace to obey
- Stepping out to accomplish what He says
- Thanking, loving, worshipping Him for the results

C John 1:14 - And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

- 1. God's Word is more than a book - He is a Person, Christ!
- 2. God intends His Word to be flesh or manifested in His Church until He returns.

D John 1:18 - No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

- 1. 18b in the Bible in Basic English - "He has made clear Who God is"
- 2. 18b in the Contemporary English Version - "He has shown us what God is like"
- 3. 18 b in the Montgomery New Testament - "He has interpreted God."
- 4. John 14: 9 - "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father"

E Logos is a Person and:

- 1. He **begun/created** all matter - The Alpha The Author
- 2. He **sustains** all matter
- 3. He will **destroy** all matter - The Omega
- 4. He is the seed of the **new creation**
- 5. He, in the Person of the Holy Spirit, is the aegis of the formation of Christ in us (**the Word continuing to be flesh in the earth**).
- 6. Jesus lived His life to declare, reveal, and interpret God - the Father. Jesus came to show us or **manifest** what/who God is like and above all God is a Father, a very good Father!
- 7. We discover Father God's goodness through an intimate, practical relationship with Jesus, the Living Word, through the Person of the Holy Spirit.

F Hebrews 4:12, 13 - "The Word (Logos) is living and powerful & sharper than a double-edged sword. It penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes 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.

- 1. The language of these 2 verses clearly indicates the writer is referring to a person. Once again we see that the Word (Logos) is a person - a Divine Being.
- 2. In 1:2, 3a the writer declares, "...in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also **he created the world**. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and **he upholds the universe by the word of his power**."

G

Continuing in Hebrews 4:14-16, the writer shifts from speaking of the Logos to speaking of our High Priest, but **there is no shift in the context.**

- 1. Jesus, the Word (Logos) and our High Priest, who has passed through the heavens
 - a. has empathy for us because He was tempted as we are (without sin)
 - b. is the one with whom we relate
 - c. as He depended on God when He was on earth, the same God is the One to whom we can boldly come to find grace for help
- 2. The context is the Word, our High Priest; the person with whom we relate; and from whom we find help when needed.
- 3. Acts 6:7, Acts 12:24 – “the Word of God increased and multiplied.” This coupled with Acts 9:31 – “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, **it multiplied.**”
- 4. When the church multiplies by God’s means...
 - a. At peace
 - b. Being built up
 - c. Walking in the fear of the Lord
 - d. Walking in the comfort – Greek paraklesis (a drawing near; encouragement; strengthening) – of the Holy Spirit
- 5. ...then the church multiplies. So the Word multiplies.
- 6. This is not church growth as in simply adding numbers of people to the roster of attendees.
- 7. This is church growth as in influence! People under the influence of the Holy Spirit, walking as God directs, doing His will, bring the **manifested** Word of the Lord to communities of earth! This is the Word made flesh on earth.

QUESTION: We saw that by God’s Word the universe was created, is sustained, will be destroyed, and is the seed of new creation. What is the practical application of this to you in your daily life?

WEEK 3: 1 – 6 SEPTEMBER

NOTE: The difference in usage of Logos and RHEMA is not absolute. Although these words do mean what is written here, there is some interchangeable usage in the scriptures. Accordingly, we have used scriptures with logos in the RHEMA section and visa versa.

2. THE RHEMA WORD

A

Greek rhema – utterance, a revelatory word spoken to us by God the Holy Spirit.

1. A rhema word can be scripture or a directive word spoken by the Holy Spirit.

B

It is a word the Holy Spirit evinces to us, we receive by faith and make our own. Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4 – “...Man shall not live by bread alone, but **(man shall live)** by **every Word (rhema)** that proceeds from the mouth of God.”

- 1. As with Logos, **RHEMA is relational.** RHEMA comes from the mouth of God and is received in a heart-to-heart, face-to-face relationship with God, the Word.
- 2. Jesus said man or **mankind** is to live according to all the words God speaks.
- 3. **It is His revealed RHEMA word to us that gives us stability to live effectively.**

- C** Psalm 109:105 – “Your word is a lamp to my feet, a light to my path.”
- 1. Hebrew for word is dabar, the Old Testament equivalent of RHEMA.
 - 2. Dabar means words, speech, sayings, utterances
 - 3. As we hear God in practical relationship with Him, having a heart to do **what He says, then what He says to us is a light and a lamp to our way.**
 - 4. Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament has this to say of this verse, “The word of God is his constant guide, to which he has entrusted himself for ever. The way here below is a way through darkness, and leads close past abysses: in this danger of falling and of going astray the word of God is a lamp to his feet, i.e., to his course, and a light to his path.”
 - a. Psalm 119:130 – “The entrance of God’s word gives light it gives understanding to the simple.”
 - 1. Entrance means unfolding, opening, doorway
 - 2. Simple is open-minded or hearted
 - 3. God’s word will not provide light unless we allow it in with an open-to-whatever-God-says-mind/heart

D John 6:63, 66-68. 63) “The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”

E John 15:7, 8. 7) “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” Wuest – “If you maintain a living communion with me and my words are at home in you, I command you to ask at once, something for yourselves and it will be yours.”

F Luke 1:37, 38 MNT. “37) No word of God shall be void of power.”

G Romans 10:17 with James 2:20-24

- 1. Romans 10:17 – “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
- 2. James 2:21-23 – “21) Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22) Do you see that **faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?** 23) And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God.”
 - a. Faith **comes** by HEARING what God says
 - b. Faith is **developed, matured, and perfected** by DOING what God says.”
 - c. In reality, faith that ONLY HEARS what God says is imperfect and underdeveloped faith. Even when we HEAR God’s Word regularly, faith is ONLY COMING - it is not growing.
 - d. Faith that COMES BY HEARING will GROW and be perfected when WE PUT INTO PRACTICE what we hear God say (James 2:14-26).

H David and Abraham as examples of hearing and obeying God w/ James 1:19-25

- 1. Acts 13:22 - And when He (God) had removed him (King Saul), He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, **a man after My own heart, who will do all My will (pleasure).**'
- 2. James 2:23 – “And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “**Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.**” **And he was called the friend of God.**”
- 3. Genesis 12:1-4 – Here God said to Abraham, leave you family, your father’s house, your country. **Go to a land I will show you after you go.** Hebrews 11:8 reveals that he went out not knowing where he was going. All of this because God said to do it.
- 4. In Genesis 15:5 God shows Abraham the star-studded heavens and said that just as you cannot count the stars, you will not be able to count the children you are going to be the father of. In verse 6 we read that Abraham believed God, the basis of his righteousness.

- 5. In Genesis 22 Abraham is faced with a dilemma. God tests him by asking him to take Isaac - his only son, the one he loves, the son of promise - and offer him as a sacrifice **"on the mountain I will show you."** **God trusted Abraham because Abraham trusted God. From Abraham's perspective, God had a dilemma. God said to Abraham He would bless the whole earth through Isaac; now God says to sacrifice Isaac.**
 - a. In verse 3 we see that Abraham rose up early and chopped the wood for the sacrifice and prepared to leave to the mountain. He rode his donkey for 3 days before reaching the mountain.
 - b. Verse 4 & 5 - 4) Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5) And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; **the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.**"
 - c. Because Abraham believed what God had said to him concerning Isaac as the son of promise, He left the dilemma with God rather than taking it to himself. **God's RHEMA word to him sustained him when he otherwise would've disobeyed the command to sacrifice Isaac.**
 - d. Again Hebrews 11 sheds light on Abraham's faith: 17-19 - "17) **By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,** 18) of whom it was said, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called,' 19) concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense."
 - e. Because Abraham believed what God said - His Word - and "did not stagger at the promise of God through unbelief" (Romans 4:20) he did what verse 4 says - He worshipped! With no guitar and no song he did what true worship means: **He took all he was, all he had, his future, his reputation and he unreservedly lay it all down to God for His pleasure and purpose.**
 - f. **God's Word moves us to faith; faith moves us to worship as Abraham did.**
 - g. So, David is the man after God's heart because He did all God's will and honoured all He said.
 - h. Abraham, along with Moses (Exodus 33:11), is the only person in scripture called the friend of God because He acted on what God said.
 - i. But according to what Jesus said in John 15:14 - "You are my friends if you do whatever I say." - **any believer who acts upon His Word is His friend.**

James 1:19-25 ESV

19) Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be **quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;** 20) for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. 21) Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and **receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.** 22) But be **doers of the word, and not hearers only,** deceiving yourselves. 23) For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24) For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25) But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, **being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.**

- 1 Matthew 4:1-11 - Satanic opposition that Jesus overcomes by speaking God's Word against the words of Satan. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 - "Our weapons are mighty through God for pulling down strongholds, casting down imaginations and all high things exalted against knowledge of God and bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."



- a. Jesus overcame Satan by speaking the Word against every attack
 - First satanic attack: "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to be bread." Jesus **said**, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Jesus is speaking the scripture – Deuteronomy 8:3
 - Second satanic attack: "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down." Jesus retaliated with scripture, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God." – Deuteronomy 6:16
 - Third satanic attack: "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Boldly Jesus declares more scripture, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" – Deuteronomy 6:13; 10:20

J Honouring God's Word

- 1. Isaiah 66:2 – "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who **trembles at My word.**" We must revere His Word to the place we tremble at the weight of what He says and the responsibility of doing it.
- 2. Luke 10:38-42 – "38) Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39) And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. 40) But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." 41) And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42) "But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."
 - a. Martha was doing a good thing – serving Jesus and His disciples and friends. Mary chose a better thing to do – sit at Jesus' feet and hear His Word.
 - b. Jesus said Martha was cumbered, Greek perispao .
 - It means to be distracted, to be over-occupied, to draw away from, and to be driven about mentally.
 - Jesus told her she was careful, Greek merimnao .
 - It means to be anxious, to be troubled with cares. It even has the connotation of to seek to promote one's own interests.
 - c. Jesus also told Martha she was troubled, Greek turbazo .
 - d. It means to be disturbed or disquieted.
 - e. Martha's distraction with less important things led her to accuse Jesus of not caring that Mary isn't helping her.
 - f. Jesus said, "Only one thing is needful (necessary) and Mary has chosen the good part that shall not be taken away from her."
 - g. Not bad things but lesser things distracted Martha. A distraction is a sidetrack, an interference or interruption. **Martha was following Jesus as Mary was, but the outcome of her life was different to Mary's because she did not prioritise the Word.****
 - h. Mary chose listening to what Jesus was saying. **Jesus said that because of her choice to do this, she would not lose it.**
 - i. We should have Job's perspective about what God says in 23:12, "I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; **I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.**"
 - j. Job doesn't say more than my dessert or more than my snack. He says, more than my necessary food!
 - k. Job makes the decision that if it comes to eating essential foods or not having God's Word, He chooses God's Word!
- 3. The Parable of the Sower: Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23; Mark 4:3-9, 13-20; Luke 8:4-8, 11-15
 - a. Let's look in detail at Mathew's account of this parable (with a little bit of Mark's account thrown in).

Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23

3) Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4) "And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. 5) "Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. 6) "But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. 7) "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. 8) "But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9) "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

18) "Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19) "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. 20) "But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21) "yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. 22) "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches (Mark adds lust of other things enter in and) choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23) "But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

b. In the parable we see:

- 4 Soils or Kinds of Hearts

- **Hard**
- **Rocky**
- **Thorny**
- **Good**

- A Sobering Truth

Four kinds of soils into which the Word is sown do not bear fruit. Lack of fruit-bearing is because the Word did not find lodging in the soil to fruition.

c. Let's consider a composite of the 3 Gospel accounts:

- 4 Essentials for Bearing Fruit that Lasts

- **Hear the Word**
- **Receive/Accept the Word**
- **Understand the Word**
- **Keep/Guard the Word**

d. Our tendency is to want to understand BEFORE we receive/accept. When we receive/accept the Word on the basis that God said it, He grants us understanding of the Word.

e. Matthew is the only Gospel writer who gives us the parable of the wheat and tares, or the wheat and weeds. Its placement after the parable of the sower is significant.

● 4. The Parable of the Wheat and Tares

Matthew 13:24-30, 36b-39

24) Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like **a man who sowed good seed in his field;** 25) "but **while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat** and went his way. 26) "But **when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.** 27) "So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' 28) "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' 29) "But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 30) '**Let both grow together until the harvest,** and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."

Jesus Explains the Parable

36b) And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." 37) He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38) "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. 39) "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.

a. The Parable of the Sower Compared to the Parable of the Wheat and Tares

- In the Parable of the Sower:
 - 1 Sower – Jesus
 - 1 Seed – Word of God
 - The Soil – Hearts of People
- In the Parable of the Wheat and Tares:
 - 2 Sowers
 - o The sower of good seed, Jesus
 - o The sower of the tares, evil seed, Satan
 - 2 Seeds
 - o Evil seed – sons of the wicked one
 - o Good seed – sons of the kingdom
 - o The field is the world
 - In the parable of the sower Jesus sows His Word into our hearts to change us into His sons.
 - In parable of wheat and tares, He sows us, His sons, His seed (the Word made flesh), into the field of the world to change the world.

K

The Word as:

1. Water – Christ sanctifies and cleanses the church by washing us with the water of His Words: Ephesians 5:26
2. Fire and a Hammer - Jeremiah 23:28, 29 - 28) "**The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; and he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?" says the LORD. 29) "Is not My word like a fire?" says the LORD, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?**
 - God is speaking through His prophet and says the prophet who has a dream, let him tell the dream.
 - The prophet who has my word let him speak it faithfully.
 - He then asks, "What is the chaff to wheat"?
 - He is saying if an unfaithful prophet has a dream it is chaff and it is nothing to the wheat. The wheat is God's word.

- 3. Food – Ezekiel 3:1-3; Jeremiah 15:16; Hebrews 5:12-14 NLT, NIV
- 4. The Word with the Spirit
 - a. Genesis 1:2, 3 – “the Spirit was moving (brooding) over the face of the water and God’s word came forth, ‘Light Be!’ And light was.
 - b. 2 Samuel 23:2 – David said, “The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue.”
 - c. Jeremiah 1:12 RSV – God said, “I am watching over my Word to perform it.”
 - d. Acts 4:31 – “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.**”
 - e. Ephesians 6:17 – “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of **the Spirit, which is the word of God**”

QUESTION: Self-analysis – Which most describes your heart in relation to what God says:

- Hard
- Rocky
- Thorny
- Good

Or would you say that your heart varies according to what you hear? For example, you have no problem receiving provision from the Lord but you are challenged to receive healing from Him.

WEEK 4: 8 - 12 SEPTEMBER

3. SCRIPTURE – GRAPHE.

- a. Scripture alone is not the Word of God but scripture contains the Word of God. John 5:38-40 – “38) But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. 39) “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. 40) “But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.” Here Jesus declares that the purpose of the scriptures is to testify of Him and that it is entirely possible to study them and miss Him. If we make the Scriptures “The Word of God” rather than Jesus, we have created an idol. **Your faith is not to primarily be in the scripture, your faith is to be in Jesus.** That is why Jesus opened the understanding of the disciples so that they could see all that was written in “the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms” concerning Himself (Luke 24:44- 45). The primary purpose of the scriptures is to create a history and a context in which Jesus can be clearly seen.

The test of whether or not something is of God is not, “Is it in the Bible?” But it is, “Does this contradict scripture?” According to John 20:30, 31 and John 21:25, Jesus did many other things not recorded. So there are things God does today that are not found in scripture. If there is something that contradicts or violates scripture then God is not doing it.



b. "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for **teaching**, for **reproof**, for **correction**, and for **training in righteousness**, that **the people of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.**" 2 Timothy 3: 16, 17 ESV.

1. Without scripture we are **untaught, untrained, uncorrected**, and **lawless**.
2. Knowing scriptures without practically knowing Jesus, the Living Word, will not bring you life; only Jesus gives life. **The Pharisees posture toward the scriptures actually hindered them from coming to the Living Word, Jesus - and this happens still today.**
3. Many see scripture as an end; God gave them as a means to an end.
4. Jesus and the 1st Century Church did not have a Bible. They knew scripture but spoke from their hearts out of the well of "knowing" Him.
5. Without Bibles, they turned the world upside down! The 21st Century Church with millions of Bibles is being turned upside down by the world. What's the difference? We know the book of God; they knew the God of the book! The purpose of the book of God is to be a tool the Holy Spirit uses to bring us into increasing intimacy with the Living Word - the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. What a great advantage we have over those many generations ago - we have the Bible!
7. But if not used the way God intended we are less effective WITH the Bible than they were WITHOUT the Bible.
8. Our main motivation to study scripture should not be to have messages to preach or even to simply gain knowledge.
9. Studying scripture is a tool to enhance my relationship with Jesus, the Living Word. In this way of study, Jesus affects me and enables me to live truth, not just prepare truth to preach.
10. If I preach something I'm not living, my inconsistent life kills my message. My greatest impact on people is by what I live.

c. Practically studying scripture

● 1. Study and Meditation (to mutter)

- a. "Gaze upon Him,
Consider Him,
Contemplate Him, as you desire to imitate Him." - Clare of Assisi to Agnes of Prague, 1253
- b. The words of Scripture thrill my soul as nothing else ever can. They bear me aloft or dash me down. They tear me in pieces or build me up. The words of God have more power over me than ever David's fingers had over his harp strings. - Charles H. Spurgeon
- c. **The study of scripture is to connect our hearts to the One who works wonders.** - Bill Johnson
- d. Exegesis of Scripture is first and foremost about seeing Jesus in the sacred text, since He is the whole point of the Bible—John 5:39. - Ron Larson

● 2. Posture yourselves to hear with your heart what God is saying in the word.

- a. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice." John 10:3, 16, 27 - Believe it and listen.
- b. Asking, Seeking, Knocking - Matthew 7:7-11; Luke 11:9-13
- c. Ministry to one or many is no different. Biblical counsel is the same as ministering the word in a service. You receive the word for one the same as you receive a message to preach.
- d. **Make study a time of relating to Jesus.** Mark: 34B - when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples. We have the advantage of having scripture; but without a "knowing Him" relationship, the letter kills us & those to whom we speak it!
- e. **Pray and personalize these prayers before study:** Ephesians 1:17-23; 3:14-21; Colossians 1:9-12
- f. **Pray in the Spirit before study to edify yourself.** 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4, 14, 15

- g. Always study in context. Even if studying a topic or subject, study all the verses on that subject contextually, where they were set. The scriptures are precious and essential. But taking them out of context makes them say things they don't say. **"A text without a context becomes a pretext for a proof text" and leads to false doctrine and heresy at worst or teaching something not exactly accurate at best.** Peter put it in this way, "...untaught and unstable people twist (scriptures) to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures." (2 Peter 3:16). Before we embrace "a truth" or get ready to preach "a truth" check the context to make sure it reads as it appears to read as a "stand alone" verse. And, let's not search for "stand alone" scriptures to prove our points of view.
- h. **Reading and meditating scripture WITHOUT living them will turn us into Pharisees without our minds renewed.** I can know the scriptures & not know the Living Word, Jesus (John 5:39, 40). He is the Word made flesh. Scripture is a tool to enhance my relationship with Him.

QUESTION: List 3 study practices from this week that you were already practicing. Name anything you practice in your personal study time that we did not list that you believe is very beneficial for you. What new practices do you feel you need to begin implementing, and how will you do it?

