

Seeking My King & His Kingdom

Lesson #35 The POWER of God's Word

At the Water Gate in Jerusalem there was no eloquent preaching, no sensational sermon.

Ezra preached straight from the Scriptures, reading for hours on end.

The people grew excited as the Word "came alive" in them; stood and listened to God's Word.

The Work of the Word of God + Spirit of God = 3 Immediate Results

1. They Thanked God
2. Prayed with uplifted hands
3. Bowed down before Him and worshiped Him

The Living & Active Word of God is Sufficient
Provides EVERYTHING Necessary for Life & Godliness

Heb. 4:12-13 For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.

II Tim. 3:16-17 All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Ps. 19:7-11 The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul;

The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;

⁸ The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart;

The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;

⁹ The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever;

The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.

¹⁰ More to be desired *are they* than gold,

Yea, than much fine gold;

Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

¹¹ Moreover by them Your servant is warned,

And in keeping them there is great reward.

II Pet. 1:3 seeing that His Divine Power has Given to us EVERYTHING pertaining to life and godliness, through the True Knowledge Of Him who called us to glory and virtue.

The ultimate goal: Comprehend the Power and Sufficiency of God's Word

Be like newborn babes > Passion and desire for the pure life giving milk of God's Word.

Pure means undiluted. Many want the Word but we mix it up with other information.

Apples lose much of their healthy benefit when they are dipped in sugar. A candied apple is sweet but its nutritional value is diluted because something with no value has been added to it.

Many of us will read, hear and talk to others about the Word, but then dip it in human viewpoint.

Remember: The transformation of your life and your eternal destiny was a miracle worked through the Word of God which is living and abiding.

It is the source of your continued transformation and your continued power.

Truth: If it transformed you in the beginning, it will keep on transforming you.

Phil. 2:16 holding fast the Word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

Stay very close "to the pure milk of God's Word."

Bible studies that drift away from "thus saith the LORD" may "feel good" but only God's Word discerns the thoughts and intentions of our heart. Only God's Word provides everything the believer needs for true, fulfilling and abundant life.

D. L. Moody: "The Overcoming Life"> "The Bible was not given to increase your knowledge, but to Change Your Life. I have an idea that we are down here in training, that God is just polishing us for some higher service." [of His Kingdom> there will be no end!]

As the Holy Spirit transforms me into the image of Jesus Christ, I am blessed to be a channel of blessing to others.

Ps. 1:1-2 Blessed *is* the man who WALKS NOT in the counsel of the ungodly,

NOR STANDS in the path of sinners, NOR SITS in the seat of the scornful;

² But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.

I. We Must Be Directed By The Word.

a. Israel: a unique and separate people; among the nations but not contaminated by them.

b. As God's people, we are to be in the world but not of the world.

c. Beware Of Friendship With The World. It can lead to:

(1) Being Spotted By The World

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this:

to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to Keep Oneself Unspotted From The World.

(2) Loving The World

I John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

(3) Results In Conforming To The World

Rom. 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

I Cor. 11:32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

Example: Gen. 13:10-12 And Lot lifted his eyes and SAW all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere, like the Garden Of The LORD, Like The Land Of Egypt as you go toward

Zoar. ¹¹ Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east...

1. Lot looked toward Sodom, pitched his tent toward Sodom and soon moved into Sodom.

a. Lot was saved. II Peter 2:7-8 and delivered righteous Lot, *who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked...

b. Lot lost ALL when the Lord destroyed the cities of the plain. [Gen. 18-19; I Cor. 3:11-23]

Consider: Abraham, the outsider, had a greater ministry to the world than did Lot, the friend of the world.

TRUTH: We move into sin and disobedience gradually.

Prov. 4:14-15 Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not walk in the way of evil.

¹⁵ Avoid it, do not travel on it; Turn away from it and pass on.

Consider: If you follow the wrong counsel, then you will stand with the wrong companions and finally sit with the wrong crowd. Example:

Matt. 26:31 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written:

'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock Will Be Scattered.'

1. When Jesus was arrested, Peter didn't follow Christ's counsel and FLEE from the garden.

2. Peter followed and entered the high priest's courtyard.

It was here HE STOOD WITH THE ENEMY. [John 18:15-18 Simon Peter was following Jesus, and *so was* another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest, ¹⁶ but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷ Then the slave-girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also *one of* this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." ¹⁸ Now the slaves and the officers were standing there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself.]

3. Peter ultimately SAT with them.

Luke 22:55 After they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter Was Sitting Among Them.

Result: He denied Christ 3 times.

II. *We Must Be Delighted With The Word & Meditate On The Word*

Ps. 1:2 But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.

a. Meditate = to mutter

Joshua 1:8 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.

Wiersbe: "If we speak to the Lord about the Word, the Word will speak to us about the Lord. That is abiding in the Word. [I John 2:14, 24]

Note: As God's people, we should prefer The Word of God to:

(1) Food Ps. 119:103; Job 23:12; Jer. 15:17; Matt. 4:4; I Peter 2:2

(2) Sleep Ps. 119:55, 62, 147-148, 164

(3) Wealth Ps. 119:14, 72, 127, 162

Consider: The way you treat your Bible [His Word to us] is the way you treat Jesus Christ.

Important Point: The verbs in Ps. 1:1 [walks, stands, sits] are in the perfect tense and indicate a settled way of life. The verb, meditate in verse 2, is in the imperfect tense and speaks of constant practice. He keeps meditating. It Is A Source Of Spiritual Energy.

The Person Who Is A Blessing

Ps. 1:3 He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither and whatever he does shall prosper.

Heb. 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder Of Them That Diligently Seek Him.

Gird Up My Mind To Guard My Hope

Phil. 2:5-7 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

A. Diligent Mind: I Pet. 1:13a Therefore, Prepare Your Minds For Action, [gird up the loins of your mind; roll up the sleeves of your mind; Mindset: Prepare to engage in a battle or race]

1. In Israel a person wore as the basic garment a long shirt of linen or wool that reached to the knees or ankles. Over this a mantle [like a poncho] might be worn, but the mantle was laid aside for work. The shirt was usually worn long, but for active service, such work or war, it was tucked up into a belt at the waist to leave the legs free.

The runner would get in trouble if he ever allowed his garments to fall down and become entangled in his legs.

If he allowed those loose ends to keep dangling, he would surely lose the race.

Peter's allusion pictures a mind prepared for active work.

The expression first occurs just prior to the exodus of Israel from the land of Egypt:

Ex. 12:11 "Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste—it is the LORD's Passover"

a. 9 plagues have already come upon the Egyptians

b. The 10th and final plague will be the smiting of every firstborn in Egypt.

c. The Israelites were to prepare for this final plague and the resulting exodus by eating the first Passover meal. This meal must be eaten in a very unusual way to emphasize that God's people were about to leave the land of their bondage.

d. This meal was to be eaten hastily with sandals on their feet and staff in hand. In addition, their garments were to be tucked into their girdle or belt so their feet would be exposed.

All of this was to remind and assure the people of God that they were soon to depart.

e. They were to be mentally and physically ready to move out.

The idea of Readiness For Action is seen in virtually every other instance of the expression.

a. I Kings 18:46 Elijah girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel.

b. II Kings 4:29 Gehazi was told by Elisha to gird up his loins, take Elisha's staff and hurry to the Shunammite's son who had died.

c. Jer. 1:17 Jeremiah was commanded to gird up his loins and to prophesy:

"Now, gird up your loins, and arise, and speak to them all which I commanded you.

Do not be dismayed before them, lest I dismay you before them"

Note: Girding the loins seems to include the dimension of Courage or Resolve.

The task he was called to do was not a pleasant one and could bring persecution.

d. Job 38:3 God challenges Job to gird up his loins. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

Job 40:7 "Now gird up your loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me."

This appears to be related to his Mental Outlook and not to his physical clothing.

I Pet. 1:13a,b Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, BE SOBER,

B. "Gird up the loins of your mind"- Diligent to remove anything that would hinder your spiritual growth and obedience. - cause you to trip up

Clear, focused mind on the task that is set before me; not numb with intoxicating influences

Luke 12:35-40 Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;

And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately...

Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

1. Girding up the loins of the mind corrects a too casual attitude toward the Lord's coming which will prevent us from being caught unaware and unprepared at His coming.

Out attitude determines our action. A Christian who is looking for the return of Jesus Christ has a greater motivation for present obedience than a Christian who ignores the Lord's return. Contrast the lives of Abraham and Lot. [Gen. 12-13; Heb. 11:8-16]

1. Abraham had his eyes of faith on the heavenly city so he had no interest in the world's real estate.

2. But Lot, who had tasted the pleasures of the world in Egypt, gradually moved toward Sodom.

3. Abraham brought blessing to his home; Lot brought judgment.

Their outlook determined their outcome!

Peter's First Command: Hope Fully in God's Grace!

Fix Your Hope Completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

An action you do with your mind and your heart. It's a command to hope.

Note: Girding up the loins of my mind and being sober are the means to the end - HOPE FULLY

1. What is the object of my hope? The Grace of God

"Fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Grace is on the way. Hope in it. Hope in it fully! Hope fully in God's grace.

God's Command and Delight: Hope in God

Ps. 147:10-11 He delights not in the strength of the horse: He takes not pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His steadfast love.

God's command and delight is not first what you can perform for Him with your strength.

It is first that you hope in what He can perform for you with His strength.

The first human counterpart to divine grace is hope. Grace is coming to you; hope in it.

Let your whole soul be engaged in hope. Don't be partially hoping and partially doubting.

Let grace get all the glory! Show the world that grace is all-satisfying. It will meet every need.

Grace first, hope second is confirmed by the word "therefore" at the beginning of verse 13.

"Therefore . . . fix your hope completely." "Therefore . . . hope fully." This word makes Peter's first command dependent on All The Grace he has exulted in for the 12 verses.

V. 1: Since God has chosen you

V. 3: Since God has caused you to be born again to a living hope

V. 4: Since God is keeping an inheritance for you imperishable, undefiled, and unfading

V. 5: Since God is protecting you through faith so that you won't lose that inheritance

V.6-7: Since God is refining your faith by fire so that it will receive praise and glory and honor

V. 8: Since you are swimming with the strokes of love and faith and joy in Christ

V.10-13: Since prophets and angels are on tiptoe to see all that God's grace is going to do in your life, THEREFORE, HOPE FULLY IN THIS GRACE.

Note: The imperatives of Christian living always begin with "therefore." Peter does not begin to exhort Christian pilgrims until he has celebrated the wonders of God's salvation in Jesus Christ.

Christianity is not first a faith or a feeling or a theology. It is first the sovereign, initiative-taking action of God. Only now do we hear a command: AFTER Peter celebrates (for 12 verses) the sovereign action of God in election and in the resurrection of Jesus and in the causing of new birth, and in the keeping of our inheritance, and in the preservation of the faith of the saints, and in the providential working in affliction to refine us, and in the foreordaining, predicting work of prophets—only now do we hear a command.

The first command is **FIX YOUR HOPE FULLY IN GRACE.**

Christianity: God graciously, freely acting to save people; and, man hoping fully in that grace.

Peter provides 2 ways to "Hope Fully In That Grace."

1. Gird Up the Loins of Your Mind

Turn the robes of your mind into running shorts. Girding the mind is a means to hoping fully in grace. What is the mind to be doing so actively that it produces hope?

The answer is TRUTH. Hope happens when our minds are girded up with truth, and active in truth.

I Pet. 1:14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance;

If we want hope to flourish in our hearts, we must gird up the loins of our minds with truth instead of ignorance.

2. Being Sober

Keeping sober is the mental condition which enables one to act prudently and with a clear head.

I Pet. 4:7 be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

I Pet. 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Don't let your mind drink in things that numb the mind (and heart) to the value of God's grace. Drunkenness distorts reality by making the mind insensitive to what is true and real and valuable.

Sex is one drug that intoxicates and numbs the mind to spiritual reality. It can be true of money, career, power, romance novels, soap operas, fishing, computers, and gardening.

Know what numbs your mind to God and avoid it.

Stay sober for the sake of a full and passionate hope in God's grace.

Do not be satisfied with half-hoping hearts. Engage our minds with the hope-producing truth of Scripture. Guard our minds from the hope-diminishing causes in the world.

Howard Hendricks: *Living By The Book* - The Bible was not written to satisfy your curiosity.

It is to make you conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. It is not to make you a smarter sinner, but to make you like your Savior. It is not to fill your head with a collection of Biblical facts, but to transform you.

II Pet. 3:18 My prayer for each of you is that you might "*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*"

For the glory of God, take up the call to be diligent, to gird up your mind, to be sober and fix your hope fully in the grace of God.

Phil. 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Acts 20:32 "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."