

The Word of God

The Bible was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by over 40 authors from all walks of life, including shepherds, farmers, tent-makers, fishermen, priests, philosophers and kings. Despite these differences in occupation and social standing, and the span of 1500 years over which it was written (from about 1450 BC to about 100 AD), the Bible is remarkably cohesive. The Bible reveals God's purpose and plan, as well as His nature and will. Everything in the Bible is God's inspired message to us, and knowing, applying and holding to His Word in all situation, is essential for our salvation and ongoing spiritual growth.

Salvation and the Word

1 Timothy 4:16

- Why it is important to watch our lives and teachings carefully?
- What do you think it means to watch your life closely? And your belief system/teachings?
- Your life can be compared to your house while your beliefs/doctrine is like your boundary wall. Why is it important to maintain both your house and your boundary wall?

John 12:48-50

- What will be the role of God's Word on judgement day?
- Why should there be no surprises for anyone on judgment day?
- What can those who obey God's Word look forward to?

Authority and Usefulness of the Word

2 Timothy 3:14-17

- What is the link between the Word and salvation? What does it mean that all Scripture is "God-breathed"?
- What practical uses of the scriptures are mentioned here?

Teaching is aimed at understanding a command or principle in the Bible. **Rebuking/Reproof** is showing us how we have fallen short of God's Word. **Correcting** is helping us to change to align with the scriptures. **Training in righteousness** is coming up with specific plans to align our life with God's Word in future.

Hebrews 4:12-13

- How should the Word of God act like a sharp sword in our lives?

Response to the Word

Mark 4:1-8; 13-20

- What does the seed in this parable represent? And who is the farmer?
- What are the four different responses to the Word that Jesus mentions?
- Which response best explains how you have typically received God's Word in your life?
- What happens when the word is received by humbly (represented by the fertile soil) and acted upon?

Grounded in the Word

Matthew 7:24-27

- What is the difference between the two houses? Which house best describes what your life has been like?
- What response to the Word of God is required to be able withstand the storms of life?

John 8:31-32

- Who are truly disciples of Jesus?
- What happens to those who hold to/abide in Jesus' words?
- Have you faithfully held on to God's Word through good times and tough times in your life?
- No one does this perfectly but this is the goal that we strive for!

James 1:22-25

- What do people use mirrors for? How is the Bible like a mirror?
- What approach to the Word of God results in blessing?

Acts 17:11

- Why were the Berean Jews praised by Paul for being more noble than the Thessalonian Jews?
- Do you think it took humility to do what the Bereans did? Why or why not?
- Why is it important to compare what people say with what the scriptures say?
- Will you take up a challenge to be like the Bereans by examining God's Word daily, with a humble heart?

FURTHER STUDY

Romans 10:17. How do you think reading the Bible builds our faith?

Mark 7:5-9. What are some religious traditions that can get in the way of obeying the Word of God?

Psalms 119:97-106. How would you summarise the Psalmists view of the Scriptures? What benefits are associated with studying and obeying God's Word according to this passage?

REFLECTION

- What have you learnt through this study about the purpose of God's Word?
- What have you learnt through this study about the importance of regular reading of the Bible?
- What new habits would you like to cultivate to become more knowledgeable about God's Word?
- What will it take for you to put the Word into practice and to faithfully hold on to it?