

Foundation 6: The Word of God

The Mind Set on the Flesh

When Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they died. (Gen. 2) Not all knowledge produces life in us, quite the contrary! Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived, warned us of exactly that: *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”* (Prov. 14:12) The enemy works to sow seeming truths (i.e., subtle lies) into our thinking and the thinking of those around us. James also points this out in chapter 3 of his letter: *“Who is wise and understanding among you? . . . This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic . . . But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”* (James 3: 13, 15, 17)

James and Solomon warn us about a type of thinking that Paul refers to as having our “mind set on the flesh.” (Rom. 8) It means to think like a mere man, to think in a worldly way. Look at how Paul describes it:

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and

*peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God;
for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.
So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*
(Rom. 8:5-8)

There it is again! The mind that is set on the flesh, the mind filled with earthly “wisdom,” the mind that has been tempted into eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil produces just what it did for Adam and Eve -- death. BUT Jesus came to give us life and life abundantly! (Jn. 10:10)

For many of us, our mind is on the throne of our heart, but God wants to be! Perhaps we have been trained by universities and hold multiple degrees. Perhaps we’ve learned a lot through life experience. Our tendency is to run everything God’s Word says through the filter of our training and experience. God is saying “today is the day you can make a change and start to run everything the world says through the filter of My Word!”

That’s the difference. When God’s Word becomes our authority, litmus test, standard, and plumb line, we become spiritually-minded! Everything prior to that is being carnally-minded. When we are carnally-minded we can overlay a few spiritual ideas and concepts on top of our thinking, but our own thoughts and opinions “rule the roost.” We must become spiritually-minded and test all other concepts and ideas against the Word of God, for that is what produces “life and peace!” What a promise!

What does the Word do?

So, what does abiding in the Word, being spiritually-minded, do for us? Here's a short list of the benefits:

The Word makes us wise: The only place to find spiritual truth is in the Word of God. *"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making **wise** the simple."* (Ps. 19:7) *"You, through Your commandments, make me **wiser** than my enemies; for they are ever with me."* (Ps. 119:98)

The Word feeds our spirit making us strong in the spirit: There is only one kind of food that can feed our spirit. Not human food, not dog food, not gold fish food, only Holy Spirit-breathed God food, which is the Word of God! Jesus said *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. **The words** that I speak to you **are spirit**, and they are life."* (Jn.6:63) The Word strengthens our spirit enabling our spirit to dominate the desires of our flesh. Whichever we feed the most (the flesh or the spirit) will be the strongest in our lives. (see Gal. 6:7-8)

The Word develops our Faith: As we saw in the last chapter, Romans 10:17 shows a strong connection between our faith and God's Word *"So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."* There's no scriptural support for praying for more faith. The bible teaches us that there are only three ways to increase our faith: by exercising/using the faith that we have, by growing in knowledge of God's love for us, and through hearing and reading the Word. (Luke 17:5-8, Rom. 10:17, Eph. 3:17-20, Gal. 5:6).

The Word is our weapon against satan's attacks: The Word is the only offensive weapon listed in the armor of God. *"Taking the sword of the spirit **which is the Word of God...**"* (Eph. 6:17)

The Word keeps us from being deceived by false doctrines or lies of the enemy: *"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons..."* (see 1 Tim 4:1, Jn.8:32)

The Word equips us to accurately minister to others: *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* (2 Tim. 2:15) *"Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."* (1 Pet. 3:15)

The Word makes us true disciples: *"If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed,"* (Jn. 8:31) Godliness does not just happen. Discipline is the road to godliness and holiness. Paul tells Timothy to *"...exercise yourself to godliness, for bodily exercise profits little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."* (1 Tim. 4:7,8) The Lord of course works in us, but we must submit to Him through meditation in His Word.

The Word makes us Free: *"If you abide in my word... you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."* (Jn. 8:32) Think about how many people are trying to "get free" of something: addiction, debt, depression, cyclical failure, sin, etc. What will make them free?!? The truth *that they*

know from the Word of God!

The Word produces Spiritual growth and maturity: As mentioned before, there is only one kind of food that can feed our spirit, and that is the Word of God. And this is essential in order to grow spiritually. *“As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word, **that you may grow** thereby.”* (1 Pet. 2:2) The bible refers to the Word as “milk,” “water,” “meat” and “solid food.” (Jn. 6:63, 1 Pet. 2:2, Heb. 5:12-14, and many more.)

The Word renews our Minds: As we look into the spiritual mirror (the Word of God; James 1:23), we begin to see who we are “in Christ” and that we are no longer children of the devil. The word calls this process an “awakening to righteousness.” As this happens, innately we change into the image that we have seen ourselves to be in God’s Word. *“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”* (Prov. 23:7) *“Be not conformed to this world, but **be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.**”* (Rom. 12:2.)

The Word enables us to walk free of sin: This is a natural byproduct of “renewing our minds” (as seen above). David says it this way, *“Your word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against you”* (Ps. 119:11). Paul says as we renew our minds by the Word of God, we will realize (awaken to the fact) that we have been made the righteousness of God, and this will cause us to have a righteousness-consciousness, instead of a sin-consciousness... the end result being that we will resist (walk away from) sin. *“Awake to righteousness, and sin not.”* (1 Cor. 15:34)

The Word fills our heart with Joy and Peace: This is because the Word of God is literally pregnant with all of the fruit of the Spirit. As you feed on the Word of God, you are literally putting the fruit of the Spirit into your heart, which then produces the fruit of the Spirit in your life. There are hundreds of scriptures to bear this out. I give you this challenge: Increase your bible reading by a considerable amount for 30 days straight (always reading it out loud), and see if you don't notice a tangible increase in Love, Joy and Peace in your life by the end of that 30 days. Then, don't read the Word at all for the next 30 days, and afterwards take an assessment of your love, joy and peace levels. "*The Word of God is living (alive) and powerful.*" (Heb. 4:12)

What is the Word of God?

The Word is Spiritual Knowledge: The Word of God is literally pregnant with revelation knowledge. This knowledge is in the form of a seed lying dormant in each and every verse, just waiting to be planted in the regenerated human heart. Once planted, it brings spiritual understanding (revelation knowledge). This knowledge can take place immediately, in the form of a *rhema*, or over a period of time. A *rhema* is when the written word (*logos*) becomes a spoken word (*rhema*) and "leaps" off of the page while meditating on the bible. However, often times this knowledge (revelation) comes over a period of time, as it gets planted into the heart through meditation, and then begins to grow. (see Mk. 4:26-29, Ps.49:3) Whether "gradual release" or instantaneous,

revelation comes by the working of the Holy Spirit as He opens the eyes of our understanding. However, we must give Him something to work with by sowing the Word into our hearts! (Jn.14:26)

The Word is Spiritual Food: The Word of God is also loaded with spiritual food (fruit). Different scriptures carry different concentrations of spiritual fruit. Some carry more “love fruit” in them while others carry more “peace fruit” or “hope fruit” or “self-control fruit,” etc. It is exactly like the food we eat to nourish our bodies. When we eat meat for example, it is full of protein. You need protein to build absolutely every structure in your body, from fingernails to enzymes to hormones to bones to muscles to neurotransmitters. Without protein, we would die. When we eat bread, or potatoes, we take in lots of carbohydrates, which are necessary for providing our bodies the fuel to burn in order to keep us going. You will notice that each food however, carries with it different concentrations of nutrition. Some are loaded with protein, while others have little protein but are loaded with carbs., or fatty acids, etc. So it is with the Word of God. The good news is that once you understand this, you can use it to a great advantage; to expedite growth in areas that you wish to focus on. If it’s love that you want to grow in, then find all the scriptures you can on that subject. Scriptures such as 1 Cor. 13:1-8 are absolutely loaded with the love of God which when planted in the human heart, will produce a harvest of the love of God!

Meditation is the process necessary to plant this seed in the heart. *“The sower sows the Word.”* (Mk.4:14, 26-29) If you are wanting to grow a crop in a specific area, simply find scriptures that talk about that subject, and know that when you meditate on those scriptures, they will produce that very fruit that you seek. Look at Isa.55:11 *“So shall my Word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”* The Lord is telling us that what the Word reveals, THAT is what it will produce in the human heart. If it reveals the peace of God, and you meditate on that word, it will produce His peace in your heart. As you feed on a particular spiritual food, you will find spiritual strength (i.e., *faith*) in that area. Just as human food produces strength in the body, spiritual food produces strength in the heart which the bible calls “faith.” Again, Rom.10:17 tells us exactly that, *“now faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”*

Scriptures

“but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Gen. 2:17)

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. (Prov. 14:12)

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but

is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. (James 3:13-17)

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Rom. 8:5-8)

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (Jn. 10:10)

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. (Ps. 19:7)

You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me. (Ps. 119:98)

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The WORDS that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” (Jn.6:63, caps added for emphasis)

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. (Gal. 6:7-8)

So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. (Rom. 10:17)

And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'?" (Luke 17:5-8)

that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, (Eph. 3:17-20)

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love. (Gal.5:6)

Taking the sword of the spirit which is the Word of God . . . (Eph. 6:17)

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons ... (1 Tim 4:1)

"If you abide in my word . . . you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (Jn.8:32)

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15,

KJV)

“Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” (1 Pet. 3:15)

“If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed,” (Jn. 8:31)

...exercise yourself to godliness, for bodily exercise profits little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. (1 Tim.4:7-8)

As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby. (1 Pet.2:2)

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” (Jn.6:63)

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Heb.5:12-14)

For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; (James 1:23)

For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. (Prov.23:7)

Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Rom. 12:2, KJV)

Your word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against you (Ps. 119:11)

Awake to righteousness, and sin not. (1 Cor. 15:34, KJV)

The Word of God is living (alive) and powerful. (Heb. 4:12)

And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. (Mk. 4:26-29, KJV)

My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall give understanding. (Ps.49:3)

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” (Jn.14:26)

“The sower sows the Word.” (Mk.4:14)

“So shall my Word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” (Isa.55:11)