



THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD

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"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God" (John 1:1-2).



Reading through the Bible with all understanding, we find there is power in the Word of God, which has existed from the beginning.

During the creation, the Word of God played a crucial role. When we read the book of Hebrews (11:3), we learn by which means God created the world: it was through the spoken Word. With this thought in mind, we may go back to the first book in the Bible, Genesis, and read the details about how God created the world (1:1-25).

During the creation, God created the visible from the invisible. He spoke and things happened automatically. That's the power of the Word of God during creation. It is only when God created man that He created the visible from that which appears, the dust from the ground (Genesis 2:7).

God's Word has also been a source of power throughout the Christian Age. Here are several ways:

1. THE WORD OF GOD IS LIKE A HAMMER THAT BREAKS EVIL HEARTS AND MINDS: "Is not my word like a fire...And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces" (Jeremiah 23:29)?

- Jesus Christ was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil after His baptism. After He had fasted forty days and nights and became hungry, the devil tempted Him in three ways (Matthew 4:1-11).
- Each time Jesus was tempted, He

quoted Scriptures from the Old Testament for the purpose of breaking down the devil's temptations. Jesus was skillful in using the Word, and we need to be extremely careful in using the Word, lest we use it incorrectly.

- In the second temptation, the devil wanted to use the Word to convince Jesus to give in to Him; but it didn't work. He wanted to use the Word for his own gain.
 - The accounts of the conversion of Simon, the magician (Acts 8:9-25), and of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:1-19) are examples of how the Word was used to break down evil hearts and minds. In each case, it was the Word that convinced them to follow Jesus.
2. THE WORD OF GOD IS LIKE RAIN: IT FALLS ON EVERYONE (Isaiah 55:11-12)
- The record reveals in the book of Deuteronomy that the law was to be read to all of Israel every seven years. The main reason for this reading was so "that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God..." (Deuteronomy 31:11-13).
 - We can use the Word in this same way. We teach our children from a very young age so that they should grow in the knowledge of the Word (Proverbs 22:6). We have an example of Timothy, a young preacher who worked hand in hand with Paul. Timothy grew up in the knowledge of the Word through the teaching of his grandmother (Lois) and his mother (Eunice) (2 Timothy 1:5, 3:14-15).
 - This consistent kind of teaching also has to be done with new converts. We need to continue teaching those whom we have just baptized so that they may come to a full knowledge of the Word (Matthew 28:19-20). Paul does the same in Ephesus (Acts 19:10; 20:31).
3. THE WORD OF GOD IS LIKE A MIRROR OR A SCALE (James 1:22-25).
- Paul uses the Word in this way when

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April Topics

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APRIL 2020 NEWSLETTER

he appears before Felix and Drusilla (**Acts 24:24-25**). In this conversation, Felix trembles after seeing the picture of his life.

- We need to use the Word of God in this same way so that we can see if we meet God's standard.

4. THE WORD OF GOD IS LIKE A LAMP/LIGHT (**Psalms 119:105**)

- If we want to walk in light, then, we have to live by the Word of God. It will guide us in the right path.

5. THE WORD OF GOD IS LIKE A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD (**Hebrews 4:12**)

- Peter preaches to those who have gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, upon the coming of the Holy Spirit. Those who heard his preaching were pricked to the heart; and after asking a question about what they should do, three thousand were baptized (**Acts 2:37-41**).

God's Word indeed has great power, but this power is fully realized only when it is rightly taught, obeyed, and used properly.

WHAT ABOUT MY FRUIT?

Landon Hughes
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One of the quickest ways to identify someone who is NOT a Christian is to notice a lack of spiritual "fruit" in his or her life. The "fruit of the Spirit" that Christians should demonstrate is listed in **Galatians 5:22-23**: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Jesus tells His disciples they would be able to decipher between false prophets and true servants of God by the actions of the people they would encounter: "You will know them by their fruits" (**Matthew 7:15-16**). Certainly, there should be identifiable fruit produced in the lives of people who claim to be followers of Christ.



This thought raises this question: Is having recognizable fruit in our lives enough to save us from our sins?

Jesus says in **John 14:6**, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus is not a way, as in one of many, for us to be reconciled to God; He is THE way, as in the one and only way we can be saved. No matter how many good works we may perform in this life, we can never be saved from

our sins without the plan of salvation that Jesus himself orchestrated for us through his death, burial, and resurrection.

This gracious plan, outlined for us in God's word, involves *belief* in Jesus Christ (**Acts 16:31**), *repentance* from our past sins (**Luke 13:3**), *confession* of Jesus as the Son of God (**Romans 10:9, Acts 8:37**), and being *baptized* in water for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16, 1 Peter 3:21**).

Beyond that point, the scriptures make it clear that we must be a faithful, *fruitful* Christian unto death (**Revelation 2:10**). Obviously, we can see that just living good, moral lives and producing observable fruit in our daily lives is not a means of salvation (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). We must obey Jesus Christ in order to receive God's wonderful, matchless grace (**Matthew 7:21**).

A great example of this plan is found in **Acts 10** where we meet the first Gentiles who became Christians. We read about a man named Cornelius, who was a well-respected, benevolent, and God-fearing man (**Acts 10:1-2**). Despite the wonderful man Cornelius was, however, the Bible teaches he was not saved from his sins until he believed and obeyed the message of Jesus Christ, the one that Peter delivered to him and his household (**Acts 10:6-7, 42-48**). The good fruit Cornelius produced was not enough to save him!

Unfortunately, a common misconception in the religious world today is that those who believe in the necessity of adhering to New Testament *commandments*, such as baptism (**Acts 10:48**) or scriptural worship (**John 4:24**), have the idea they are *earning* their salvation. However, we should be on the lookout for critics of this nature: many of them unwittingly fail their own test.

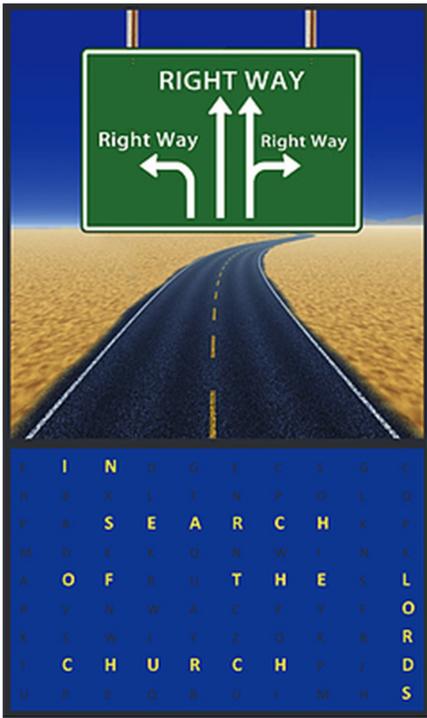
On one hand, those who have this misconception will label one's convictions of obeying the aforementioned commandments as a false, "works-based" salvation. Yet, on the other hand, these very same critics will often turn right around and make statements such as, "My granny could never be lost just because she wasn't baptized! She was such a good lady who produced wonderful fruit!" Now if that is not a belief in salvation based on one's good works, I do not know what is.

When considering the age-old question of "What must I do to be saved?" may we never be guilty of believing that our "good fruit" in life could ever take the place of faithful obedience to God's commandments.

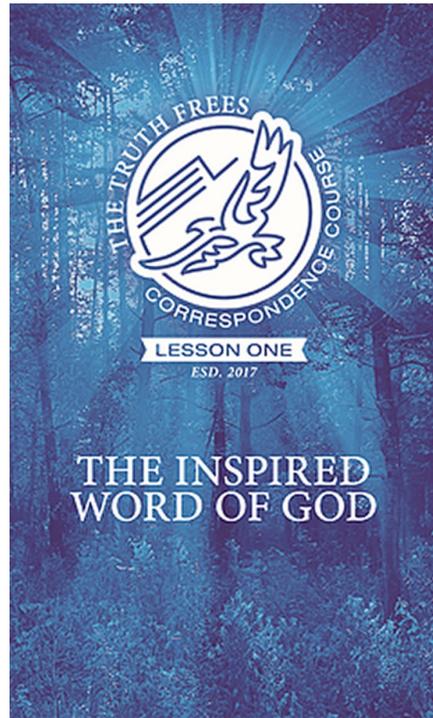


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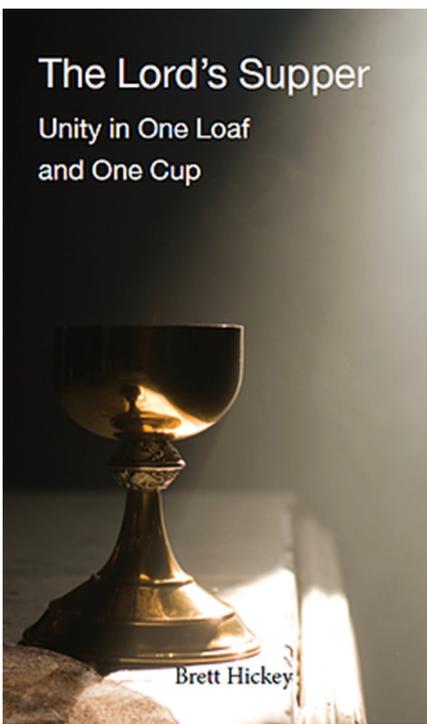
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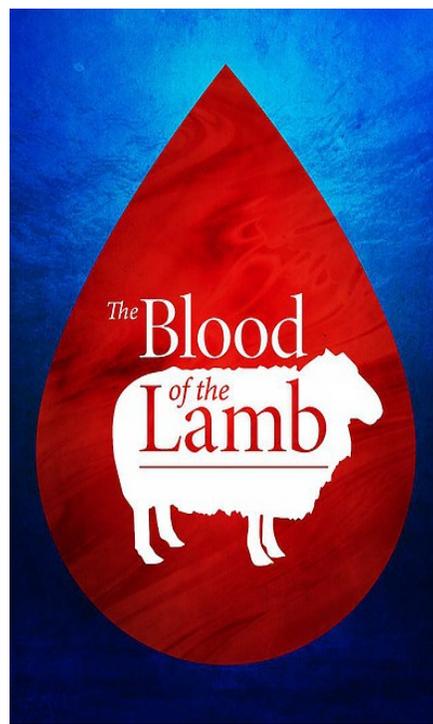
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