

THE TEACHING
LEGACY
 OF DEREK PRINCE

The Active and Powerful Word

This year, the primary focus of our 2021 Teaching Legacy series, “Standing Strong,” has been on the topic of endurance. It is an absolutely essential quality for the Christian life—especially when our faith is being tested. What makes endurance so important?

The Lord Himself answered this question when He told his disciples in Matthew 24:13, “But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” Jesus afforded top priority to endurance—and so must we.

How can we endure to the end? One critical factor is the title of this letter, “The Active and Powerful Word.”

The True Source

In our previous Teaching Letter, “The Indispensable Word,” we covered the comprehensive authority of the Word of God as expressed by Paul in 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that

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

If you and I are to be complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work, our source must be the Scriptures.

What Can the Word Do?

Hebrews 4:12 gives us a vivid analysis of the nature of the Word of God:

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.

The Word of God is not dead—it is not just black marks on white paper. It is alive, and wherever it is applied, it brings life. The Word is more powerful than all the lies with which Satan has filled the world.

The Bible also reveals that man is a triune being (spirit, soul, and body) created in



the likeness of a triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). In that vein, the Word of God is the only instrument sharp enough to separate what is soulish from what is spiritual.

Also, the Hebrews passage says the Word can divide between the joints and the marrow. This speaks of the remarkable penetration of the Word of God. It goes deeper than any surgeon's scalpel or psychiatrist's probing can penetrate. It is the only tool that takes us right into the very depths of human personality.

Somebody once told me, "When you are reading your Bible, your Bible is also reading you." As we read the Word, let's remember that the Word is doing its work on us.

▲ Eight Effects of Receiving God's Word

In 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Paul is writing to believers who had responded in a wonderful way to the gospel, receiving it "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe." This is an important point: What the Bible will do in us depends in part on how we receive it.

Paul was saying to the Thessalonians that God's Word had worked effectively in them because they believed it. In this section, let's look at eight effects God's Word can have in our lives when we properly receive it.

1) God's Word produces faith. During World War II, I spent a year in hospital in the deserts of North Africa with a skin disease the doctors could not cure. I was a new Christian, and I kept saying to myself, "I know if I had faith God would heal me."

Then, I would always say, "But I don't have faith."

As I was reading the Word one day during this time, Romans 10:17 jumped off the page: "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." I realized if I didn't have faith, I could get it. And so can you.

2) God's Word is the seed of the new birth.

"Love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever" (1 Peter 1:22-23).

It is by the "incorruptible seed" of God's Word, received into our hearts by faith, that we are actually born into the family of God. The nature of a seed determines the nature of the life that comes from it. If you plant an apple seed, you don't get an orange tree. In the same way, because the Word of God is incorruptible, the life it produces is incorruptible—it is divine, holy, eternal.

3) God's Word is spiritual nourishment. Once you and I have been born again, we need the nourishment of God's Word for spiritual growth. When we are spiritual infants, we need milk. But as we grow, we need more 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 (Hebrews 5:13-14).

For us to mature, we need to know how to apply the Word of God. You and I need to use it to recognize the forces we are dealing with. If you and I don't live actively by the Word of God, we will never be able to take more than milk. Solid food is for those of us who have practiced, exercised, and applied the Word diligently and regularly in our lives.

4) God's Word brings mental illumination. In Psalm 119:130, the psalmist is speaking to God, and he says:

*The entrance of Your words gives light:
It gives understanding to the simple.*

The light God's Word brings to our minds and hearts is different from education. Education is not light. A person can be educated, yet totally in the dark. Education is useful, but it is not light and understanding.

5) God's Word provides physical healing.

*My son, give attention to my words;
incline your ear to my sayings. Do
not let them depart from your eyes;
keep them in the midst of your heart.
For they are life to those who find
them, and health to all their flesh
(Proverbs 4:20-22).*

I was about seven months into my lengthy hospital stay in North Africa before I discovered Romans 10:17: "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." I began to look through the Scripture again with a new hope. But I had a problem. When I would read promises about healing, my thought was, "That only means He heals my soul. He's not really interested in my body—it's going to die anyhow." But when I got to Proverbs 4:20–22, I couldn't get

around it. God says His words are "life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh."

When I looked in the margin, the alternative reading for "health" was "medicine." I thought, "How do people take their medicine?" Three times daily, after meals. Over a period of a few months, I took God's Word as my medicine three times daily after every meal. It gave me complete and permanent healing in one of the unhealthiest climates in the world!

6) God's Word is the key to victory over sin and Satan. Many of our young people today question whether it is possible to lead a pure life. Most of their educators tell them it isn't possible. But the Bible says it is.

*How can a young man cleanse his
way? By taking heed according to Your
word. Your word I have hidden in my
heart, That I might not sin against You
(Psalm 119:9, 11).*

When I worked amongst African young people, I saw those words fulfilled time and time again. Those young people maintained pure and clean lives. Why? Because they gave heed to the Word of God.

7) God's Word cleanses us. It makes us holy and acceptable to Him.

*Husbands, love your wives, just as
Christ also loved the church and
gave Himself for her, that He might
sanctify and cleanse her with the
washing of water by the word, that
He might present her to Himself a
glorious church, not having spot or
wrinkle or any such thing, but that she
should be holy and without blemish
(Ephesians 5:25–27).*

That is not a suggestion to husbands; it is a command! How will Jesus provide Himself with a bride who is holy and without blemish? Through the washing of water by the Word of God. The Word of God sanctifies us. It cleanses us.

8) God's Word is a spiritual mirror. When you and I look into the Word, it doesn't just show our physical appearance. It shows you and me what we are really like inside.

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; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does (James 1:23–25).

When you look in a mirror and see something wrong, the sensible thing to do is tend to it. If your hair is out of order, you

brush it. James says you need to respond when you look in the mirror of the Word of God. You need to see your spiritual self in it—and then take whatever action it shows you to take.

Taking Action

Are you ready to take action to experience the impact of God's Word upon your life? Let's do so together with the following prayer:

Lord, I give thanks for Your wonderful, active, and powerful Word. I open myself to it completely, asking You to use Your Word to make its maximum impact upon all aspects of my life. Amen



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For further study, we are making the CD "God's Word: Your Inexhaustible Resource" available to you at no charge. Just use the enclosed reply slip to request your copy.

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