

Biblical Solutions for Life Issues

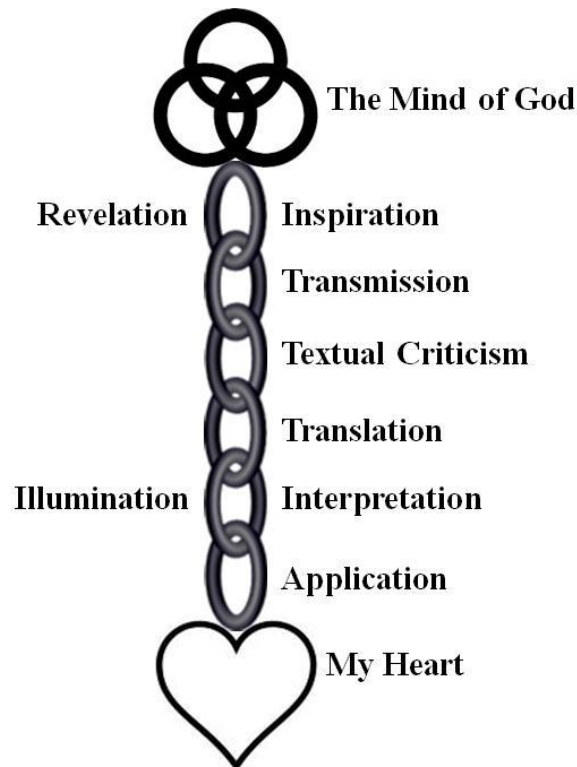
Topic 7 – The Powerful Word of God

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God's Communication Process

We began our study several weeks ago by looking at the presuppositions of Biblical discipleship. The very first presupposition is that the Bible, the Scriptures, is the inspired Word of God. It is important that we understand the process by which God has communicated to man. This allows us to appreciate the uniqueness and power of the Bible.

We can compare the process by which God communicates to man to a series of links forming a chain. The process begins with a desire on the part of God to communicate His truth to man and ends with the application of that truth in the heart of the child of God.



Revelation – God has revealed Himself to mankind: generally through creation and specifically through the Bible. In general revelation, God communicates His attributes, eternal power, and divine nature (Rom 1:18-20). Specific revelation is found only in the Bible which is God's complete moral will for mankind. General revelation is sufficient for *condemnation* (no one has an excuse, Rom 1:20), specific revelation is sufficient for *salvation* and *sanctification* (2 Pet 1:3).

²⁰For since the creation of the world **His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.** Rom 1:20

³seeing that **His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.** 2 Pet 1:3

Inspiration – Inspiration explains the means and extent of the Bible being the Word of God and refers to God breathing out Scripture (2 Tim 3:16). God is the source of Scripture and as such it takes on His qualities of inerrancy (without error) and infallibility (trustworthy). God “moved” or “superintended” or directed (but did not dictate to) the human authors so that, using their own personalities and styles, they composed and recorded without error in the original manuscripts God’s specific revelation to mankind (2 Pet 1:21-22). Inspiration is verbal (extending to the very words) and plenary (including all of the words). This is shown by the Lord Jesus’ and Apostle Paul’s statements, usage, and arguments (Matt 5:18; 22:31-32; Gal 3:16).

So, the Bible is the inspired, plenary, verbal, infallible, inerrant in the original manuscripts Word of God! God’s words are the believer’s delight (Jer 15:16).

¹⁶**All Scripture is inspired by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:16-17

²⁰But know this first of all, that **no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation,** ²¹for **no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.** 2 Pet 1:20-21

¹⁶Your words were found and I ate them, **And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart;** For I have been called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts. Jer 15:16

Transmission – Transmission refers to the process in which the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek manuscripts (and their copies) were copied as accurately as possible. As the church spread, more and more copies of the Bible were made. In the 4th century, when Christianity received official sanction from the State, commercial book manufacturers hired trained scribes, Christian and non-Christian, to make mass copies of the NT. To ensure accuracy, a corrector was hired to proof read each copy. In spite of the effort of those that loved God’s Word and cared for its exact duplication and in spite of the hiring of professionals, the copiers did not make exact copies; they made errors in copying. The important point to take away is that the integrity of Scripture is maintained even with textual variants. The clear consensus of Greek scholars is that very little teaching is affected by the variations that resulted from scribal error. No Christian doctrine hangs on a textual variant. God has sovereignly maintained the integrity of the original through sovereignly bringing about the transmission of the original through scribal copying.

Textual Criticism – Textual criticism is the science that studies the biblical texts in an attempt to identify and remove transcription errors and to recover the original text. Textual criticism compares existing manuscripts to determine which textual variant is correct. This scholarly work strives to reconstruct the original text as closely as possible.

Translation – In order for God’s Word to reach all nations (cf. Matt 28:19) it must be translated. God validated the work of translation by quoting the Greek translation (the Septuagint) of the OT extensively in the NT. If the NT can quote the Greek translation of the OT then translations of the Bible are important. If people are going to understand the Word of God, then Bible translations are essential. Translation involves seeking the most accurate rendering of the original language manuscripts into our own language. However, only the original manuscripts are inspired – not translations.

Illumination – Illumination refers to the Holy Spirit’s ministry as He works in the believer to bring spiritual understanding, enabling us to perceive spiritual truth, and heart application of Scripture (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Cor 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20). Because of illumination, any believer, by depending on the Holy Spirit and using proper rules of interpretation, can study the scriptures for his/her own growth and edification, and lead others to salvation in Christ. Each believer is responsible to read and study the Scriptures for themselves and not depend solely on other individuals or an institution (Acts 17:11).

¹²Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*. ¹⁴**But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.** 1 Cor 2:12-14

Interpretation – Interpretation refers to how we understand what Scriptures say by applying hermeneutics: the art and science of Biblical interpretation. The correct hermeneutic is the normal or plain, literal, grammatical, historical method of interpretation. This method takes the plain literal sense while understanding the historical, immediate, and wider contexts and the uses of figures of speech.

Application – Application is bringing truth to bear on one’s heart so that transformation results. This step is frequently left out. When it is, the chain is broken and the communication process is short-circuited! This link emphasizes that truth is meant to result in heart-level change.

²²**But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.** ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. James 1:22-24

“If there is a command to be obeyed, we obey it. If there is a promise to be embraced, we claim it. If there is a warning to be followed, we heed it. This is the ultimate step: we submit to Scripture and let it transform our lives. If you skip this step, you will never enjoy your Bible study and the Bible will never change your life.” John MacArthur

- ❖ Am I concerned with what God says?
- ❖ Do I desire to be a “doer” of God’s Word?
- ❖ How often do I think about honoring God with my choices?

Sufficiency of Scripture

The Bible is authoritative (see Matt 4:4, 7, 10) and fully sufficient for all matters of faith and conduct – for salvation and sanctification. The Bible is the standard for faith and practice for every believer (Matt 5:18; 2 Tim 3:15-17; Heb 4:12; 2 Pet 1:20-21). Only the Scriptures are fully sufficient to meet all the spiritual needs of God’s people. It is all-sufficient in regards to the soul of man, in our relationship to God, and in our relationship to others. It is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks (2 Pet 1:3; Matt 4:4; Heb 4:12; 2 Tim 3:15-17; 1 Pet 2:2; Psa 19:7-13; 119:9, 11; 119:24).

²like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, **so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,** 1 Pet 2:2

⁷The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. ⁸The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. ⁹The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether. ¹⁰They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

¹¹Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward. Psa 19:7-11

⁹How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping *it* according to Your word. ¹⁰With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. ¹¹Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You. Psa 119:9-11

²⁴Your testimonies also are my delight; *They are* my counselors. Psa 119:24

The Bible is powerful and therefore able to accomplish God's purpose (Isa 55:11) in the lives of people for which He sends it forth. The words of Scripture are able to work their intended result (1 Thess 2:13) because the author, the Holy Spirit, is at work in the lives of the readers.

¹²For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Heb 4:12

⁸“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD.

⁹“For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; ¹¹So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; **It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.** Isa 55:8-11

¹³For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, **which also performs its work in you who believe.** 1 Thess 2:13

The Scriptures bring about transformation in our lives. Other books were given for our information; the Bible was given for our transformation.

❖ Do I believe that I can be transformed by God or have I lost hope?

⁶*For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. Phil 1:6

❖ If I believe God's promise then what should be true?

Because the Bible is authoritative, sufficient, and powerful, we need to be taking it in voraciously. God's will for us is found in God's Word. We must go through the day thinking about God's Word.

¹⁴I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches. ¹⁵**I will meditate on Your precepts And regard Your ways.** ¹⁶I shall delight in Your statutes; **I shall not forget Your word.** Psa 119:14-16

⁹⁷O how I love Your law! **It is my meditation all the day.** Psa 119:97

In every difficult time, in every temptation to sin, for overcoming every idolatrous master, God's Word has the answer. As we go through the day and enter new circumstances; we need to be thinking: “What are God's precepts, principles, and promises now?”

¹¹**Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.** Psa 119:11

1. Precept: These are specific rules or commands of what God directs or forbids; God's orders.

Illustration: If a road sign reads "Speed Limit 55 MPH," it gives a rule that must be followed.

A biblical precept is: ³²Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Eph 4:32

2. Principle: These are general directions or guidelines; a general truth meant to inform our outlook and behavior. A principle has multiple applications.

Illustration: If a road sign reads, "Drive Carefully," it gives us a general principle to be applied in a variety of conditions.

A biblical principle is: ²³All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify." (1 Cor. 10:23). In Christ we have liberty to do a number of things not specifically forbidden in Scripture, but are they profitable?

3. Promise: These are declarations by God of something that He will do. A promise is a pledge; it is God giving His word.

Illustration: An example of a promise is "speed limit strictly enforced (i.e. you will get a ticket if you exceed the speed limit)."

A biblical promise is: ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:7)

- ❖ What precept or principle do I struggle obeying/applying?
- ❖ What promise do I struggle believing?

What is my Delight?

There are many things that we can "delight" in. If we were honest with ourselves, there are times when we delight in the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life (1 John 2:16); i.e. we bow before other masters. But we need to ensure that God's Word is our delight.

⁸I **delight** to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart." Psa 40:8

¹Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly **delights** in His commandments. Psa 112:1

¹⁶I shall **delight** in Your statutes; I shall not forget Your word. Psa 119:16

²⁴Your testimonies also are my **delight**; *They are* my counselors. Psa 119:24

³⁵Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, For I **delight** in it. Psa 119:35

⁴⁷I shall **delight** in Your commandments, Which I love. Psa 119:47

⁷⁷May Your compassion come to me that I may live, For Your law is my **delight**. Psa 119:77

⁹²If Your law had not been my **delight**, Then I would have perished in my affliction. Psa 119:92

¹⁴³Trouble and anguish have come upon me, *Yet* Your commandments are my **delight**. Psa 119:143

¹⁷⁴I long for Your salvation, O Lord, And Your law is my **delight**. Psa 119:174

- ❖ What do I delight in?
- ❖ How is that demonstrated?

Psalm 1 contrasts two people (righteous and unrighteous) and what they delight in (or love): one delights in God's Word; the other in the ways of the world.

The Way of the Righteous

- A. "How blessed..." – Means being happy, blessed, content because one is on the right path.
- B. The Righteous Does Not...
 - 1. "Walk in the counsel of the wicked" – The righteous man does not think or believe like the wicked. Instead, the Word of Christ is our counselor.
 - 2. "Nor stand in the path of sinners" – The righteous man does not behave like sinners. He is not going along the road with sinners.
 - 3. "Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!" – The righteous man does not belong to scoffers (those who speak horribly about God).
- C. The Righteous Does...
 - 1. "Delights in the law of the Lord" – The righteous man hungers for God's Word
 - 2. "He meditates in God's law day and night" – The righteous man "chews the cud" of God's Word. He only has God's Word on his mind two times a day: day and night!
- D. How the Righteous is Blessed
 - 1. "like a tree firmly planted by streams of water" – The righteous man is planted by God. He will be continually fed on the Word of Christ. He will be strong and stable with deep roots. The life of the righteous man is marked by strength and stability.
 - 2. "Which yields its fruit in its season" – The righteous man delights in the Word of Christ and it brings forth fruit which is a changed life; being more like Jesus.
 - 3. "And its leaf does not wither" – The righteous man stays close to Christ in hard times.
⁷"Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD And whose trust is the LORD. ⁸"For he will be like a tree planted by the water, That extends its roots by a stream And will not fear when the heat comes; But its leaves will be green, And it will not be anxious in a year of drought Nor cease to yield fruit. Jer 17:7-8
 - 4. "And in whatever he does, he prospers" – The righteous man prospers, not in material possessions or health, but in character, fruit, and work of the Lord.

The Way of the Wicked.

- A. "The wicked are not so" – They are the opposite of the righteous. They believe, behave, and belong differently. They do not delight in the law. They are not firmly planted nor yield fruit; they wither and do not prosper.
- B. "they are like chaff which the wind drives away" – Wheat was threshed by beating it on a hard surface to dislodge the grain. It was then tossed into the air and the grain would fall back to the ground, but the chaff (husks) would be blown away by the wind. Chaff is useless. The wicked are worthless, dead, and without substance.
- C. "Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous." – Those who reject Christ and His Word will be judged.

Summary Contrast.

- A. "For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish"

The Bible is God's love letter to us with the intent to change our hearts. When we interact with God's Word, it will change us.

- ❖ What difficult times have come into my life?
- ❖ Can I give thanks for how God, through His Spirit and Word, established deep roots? If not, commit to be a doer of the Word and be prepared for the next difficult time.

The Spirit and the Word

Last week we talked about being filled with (or controlled by) the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18-6:9). The usual, expected position of the believer is to be filled with the Spirit. The believer who is worshipping God will be filled with the Spirit. When a believer is submitted to God and his Word, the indwelling Holy Spirit produces Christ-like heart motives, attitudes, words, reactions, and relationships. One of the results of Spirit filling is progressive sanctification, being progressively transformed into Christ's image (2 Cor 3:18). The outside will match-up with the inside. We will change to exhibit Christ-like character.

The Scriptures play an important role, in conjunction with the Spirit, in changing us. In fact, being filled with the Spirit and allowing the Word to dwell in our hearts are the same spiritual reality (compare Eph 5:18-6:9 and Col 3:16-4:1).

	Ephesians 5:18-21	Colossians 3:16-4:1
Command	And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit	Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you
Words	speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs	with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms <i>and</i> hymns <i>and</i> spiritual songs
Worship	singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord	singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God
Reactions	always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father	Whatever you do in word or deed, <i>do</i> all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.
Relationships	and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ... (Wives..., Husbands..., Children..., Fathers..., Slaves..., Masters...)	Wives..., Husbands..., Children..., Fathers..., Slaves..., Masters...

What does this mean? We have been set free from the power of sin (Rom 6). Yet we still fight the sin nature (Rom 7). We are free to choose righteousness, but require the power to do it. The Spirit gives this power as He applies the Word to our heart. Not only can we choose righteous one time, but we can grow and change at the heart level.

The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to produce the will of God in a believer's life. Dale Whitehead in sermon on 1 Thess 5:19-20

The Word in the heart and mind is the handle by which the Spirit turns the will. The MacArthur NT Commentary - Colossians and Philemon

The Spirit is powerful. God's Word is powerful. Therefore, the believer in the most dire, seemingly hopeless circumstances can be encouraged, comforted, and changed as the Spirit applies the Word to our heart.

- ❖ Am I discouraged and down cast? Take hope because of who God is, what He has done for me through Christ, and what He continues to do through the Spirit and Word.

Conclusion

Do I desire to be blessed? Do I desire to have great peace? Do I desire to be blameless? Assuming yes, according to these passages, what must I do?

¹How blessed are those whose way is blameless, Who walk in the law of the Lord. ²How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all *their* heart. ... ¹⁶⁵Those who love Your law have great peace, And nothing causes them to stumble. Psa 119:1-2, 165

Biblical Solutions for Life Issues

Topic 7 – The Word of God

Read Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16-16; and Psalm 119:9-11 and answer the following questions.

What can God's Word do powerfully in my heart?

Am I treasuring God's Word in my heart?

What does/would treasuring God's Word look like?

Read Psalm 119 each day for one week.

What are all the different names that God gives to the Bible? What can I learn for how to view the Bible from this?

How is the Bible described? What can I learn for how to view the Bible from this? What place should the Bible have in my life?

How is the heart of the righteous man toward the Bible described?

Read Psalm 19 each day for one week.

What are the two types of revelation spoke of in this Psalm? How are they different? What is the impact of each on the recipient of the revelation?

What are the different names give to the Bible in Psa 19:7-9? What can I learn for how to view the Bible from this?

What does the Bible do to the believer from Psa 19:7-9? Am I experiencing this? Why or why not?

Does Psa 19:14 describe my heart? If not, what needs to change so that it does?