

The Power Of The Implanted Word

God's Word commands us to "receive with meekness the implanted word" after having "put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness" (James 1:21). This "implanted word" we are to receive is "able to save (our) souls" (James 1:21). It is also able to cause us to be born again (1 Peter 1:22-25), set us apart from a sinful world (Psalm 19:7-11; John 17:15-17), and keep us and the church pure (Psalm 119:9, 11; Acts 20:28-32). With this in mind, is there any doubt how important the Bible is to faithful Christians? However, in order to truly benefit from the powerful Word of God, we have to do some things.

First, we have to "put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness" (James 1:21; cp. Colossians 3:5-9). In order for the implanted word to bear its fruit in our lives, the weeds of sin must first be uprooted. We can't hope to benefit from any study of the Bible if we continue to dwell on the spiritually filthy and engage in wickedness. Could this be why many do not get that much out of Bible study?

Second, we have to have the proper attitude when we study God's Word. Specifically, we have to receive the implanted word "with meekness" (James 1:21). A humble and receptive attitude is essential in order to get the most out of Scripture. It will help if we remember that we are sinners also, and we can easily be deceived. So we should study, not to simply learn facts, and not to win religious debates and arguments — but to learn God's truth to save ourselves and those around us (Psalm 119:18).

Third, God's Word must be "implanted" in our hearts (James 1:21). That means we have to take the words out of the pages and implant them in our hearts. Otherwise, we are no different from the Old Testament Israelites who only gave lip service to the words of God written on stone in the Ten Commandments. As Christians under the New Covenant, we are under a better covenant than they were in that God's Word is to be "written on (our) hearts" (Hebrews 8:6-13). So we need to ask ourselves where is God's Word today? Is it only in ink inscribed on paper? Or have we read it and meditated upon often enough that it has become implanted in our hearts as well?

Finally, we must be "doers of the Word and not hearers only" (James 1:22-25). In other words, God's Word must be applied to our lives. Otherwise, we deceive ourselves, and usually the only ones who are deceived are us! If we are the type of people who like to say "Amen!" to a scriptural sermon and yet continue doing the exact opposite of what we've heard (cp. Ezekiel 33:30-32), God isn't deceived. Neither is Satan. Most likely our spouses, our children, and many others will also see right through us, all while we continue to deceive ourselves by thinking, "I'm a good, faithful Christian because I go to church all every Sunday," all while not acting like a Christian Monday through Saturday. This is why the true blessings from God's Word come not by "looking into the perfect law of liberty" alone, but also by "continuing in it" and being "a doer of the work" (James 1:25). It is not just the reading of the Bible that provides peace and joy, but also the actual application of it to our lives when we faithfully obey it.

God's Word is called "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25) because of its power to save us, regenerate us, sanctify us, and preserve us. That's how it provides true freedom — liberation from the guilt and dominion of sin. What gives God's Word its power is the message it contains: the gospel (Romans 1:16). Undoubtedly most if not all who read this have heard the good news about the death of Jesus Christ for our sins and His resurrection by the power of the Holy Spirit, proving He is our Savior and Lord ... but simply hearing is not enough! We must also lay aside the filthiness of sin through repentance (Acts 17:30-31), and humbly receive the gospel message with faith (John 3:16). We must be a "doer of the Word" by choosing to obey if we want God to save us (Hebrews 5:9). This is why we must also be baptized in order to receive salvation and the forgiveness of our sins (Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21).

May we receive God's Word with meekness and obey it, because that is how it is able to save our souls!

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