

## **Living Out the Word**

Jesus became God's words in the flesh!

In John 1:14 (MSG), we learn that *"The Word (Jesus) became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish."*

Jesus Christ was God's living Word. Throughout His life on earth, He lived out the will of the Father and fulfilled the Law of God. As we walk with Jesus and put God's Word into action, this will change our lives and make us become more like Christ in our heart attitudes and character.

Unfortunately many Christians have read the Bible and have some knowledge of it but their lives are not quite changed, as God desires.

This is the case when we read the Bible and do nothing about it! It's true that knowing the Word of God in our head isn't enough! Jesus desires for us, His followers to LIVE OUT His Word!

*"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. Matthew 7:24-25 (NIV)*

Interpreting the Bible and applying it in our daily life is essential to an effective Bible Study. We can do this through learning the tools and skills to help us observe the text, dig out the meaning, and then apply it to our lives.

Some people view the Bible as an un-climbable mountain, a dark cave into which we fear to trespass. Be encouraged, and be comforted; you can indeed do it.

Through today's lesson, I pray that you can climb that mountain and venture into the cave with confidence. In fact, you will be able to extract the truths and applying them just by posing some simple questions!

The Bible is as a diamond mine, filled with precious nuggets that can be applied to your life to transform and renew it! As with any mine, you do have to start digging; we will show you how to do this. Remember the more you dig, the more you will find! And the more you apply God's truths in your life, the more Christlike you will become!

**Last week we talked about the Three Basic Essential Questions that help you learn how to interpret the Bible:**

1. *What does the text say?*
2. *What does the text mean?*
3. *How does this text apply to me?*

The primary purpose of this method is to teach you how to study God's Word in a logical, clear, and concise way.

Today we are going to expand on this similar idea but spend more time to focus on the third question, "**How Does this text Apply to me?**" We will do this by providing extra simple questions to assist you to more deeply dig out, learn God's truths and especially apply them into your life.

**Remember to** Start with the proper approach—that of prayer and reverence. If we do not have the right attitude and mindset, we will not get much out of God's Word, because our will gets in the way of His!

**Prayer!** *"Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law"* (Psalm 119:18). This is the essential, first step to always, always starting anything—especially the studying of the Bible and communication with God! Ask God into your study as your Teacher. Ask Him to free your mind from distractions and help you concentrate. You are entering a learning partnership with Christ!

**Attitude!** Have a good attitude based on seeking Christ rather than seeking self or just information. Our minds must be clear and childlike before Him, because, when you read His Word, you are standing before the face of God—the Holy God! So, adjust to a good attitude and reverence for God and His Word.

### **Applying God's Word: "How does this apply to me?"**

This is the key question that we ask to see how the truth of what we are reading applies to our lives. We are called to be the person who gets in His Word, who sees, knows, and applies it, will be growing and useful for Christ. He or she will be exhibiting good character and godliness as he or she moves into actually applying Christianity, to being "doers of the Word" (Prov. 28:13-14; Mark 3:7-8; John 8:47; Rom. 12:15; Col. 3:12; James 1:2-27; 1 John 1:8-9).

This is the step where the rubber of the tires meets the road. All the previous two questions lead up to this. This is the main point of why we study the Bible, to do something with it. Of course we all do something with it, either we ignore it or we are transformed by it.

So as you are asking this question, keep the followings in mind:

- Pray and ask God how to implement His truth to you.
- True application comes only from the result of a life transformed.
- The Fruit of the Spirit are the result of a life transformed by Christ.
- The Word of God's purpose is to transform us into His image and character (Rom. 12:1-3)! God uses His Word to transform us; it is what He does to give it and what we do after we receive it - He sends us His Spirit, we respond.

Application comes out of a Changed life. And leads to a life transformed!  
Jesus commands us to build our lives on His Word. (Matthew 7:24-27)

### **[LET'S LISTEN – 12 MINS)**

Under this question, "*How does this text apply to me?*" – there are 4 essential questions we can further ask ourselves as we are learning to apply God's truth in our lives.

- 1) *What is God telling me?*
- 2) *How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?*
- 3) *What will I do about it? When?*
- 4) *What does God want me to share with someone else?*

### **1. "What is God Telling Me?"**

This is where you are seeking conviction, and allowing the work of the Spirit, through His Word, to show you principles and precepts to apply to your life (John 16:5-16). Be aware that sometimes you may not like what is shown, but it is what you need to hear. This is where we *hear* His voice, where we become transformed and renewed, and we grow in our faith and practice. This requires that our will be poured out and surrendered to His. We must learn to study the Bible so we are challenged and convicted to gain more insights into God's character and call for us!

Conviction is very important to make us aware of our wrong ways and for us to align our path with His Way. God has His ways of refining and purifying us so that the waste products of pride and selfishness can be tossed aside while His real redemptive work and sanctification come to us in power and conviction. People of strife in the world, and Christians who are weak in their faith will hold on to their will and not allow conviction or change to enter their routine or life. Do not let this happen to you!

- As a Christian, the reality of who you are in Christ must hit home in power and certainty at some time or another. Has this happen to you? If so, how? If not, what would it take?
- God, the LORD over all, is LORD of our lives, too. Thus, He should have the primary place in our lives, where we recognize, trust, and serve Him with joy.
- God, our LORD, is to be trusted, loved, and enjoyed so we can be challenged to take His precepts into our will and actions.
- Here are some further personal questions you can use to challenge yourself. Take a careful look at the passage you are studying; as you realize that it is

indeed God's most precious Word, examine your life and compare it to the passage. Now ask yourself:

- 1) How do I exhibit a life of *fruit, character, love, faith, and maturity* in my daily life now?
- 2) How can I develop the willingness to be a more *disciplined, character, fruit and faith* driven person who will realize *I am called, empowered, and filled by Christ*?
- 3) What blocks His work in me from working and being exhibited in me?
- 4) How can I accept and commence His work, and discipline myself to carry it out?
- 5) What can I do to make His work in me function better, stronger, and faster, even in times of uncertainty and stress?

So, what is our LORD telling you?

## **2. "How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?"**

This is the step that helps us *internalize* what we are learning. It is the process of interpretation, which means determining the meaning of the text—not just what it says, but what we do with it. Thus, when we ask "what does it mean?" we then need to determine how the answer is going to "fit" into our lives so we are changed individuals.

Wise people are those who are willing to grow and improve themselves. It is not an IQ thing; intelligence has nothing to do with wisdom (Proverbs 1:5-7; 3:11-12). You must be willing to learn about your personality and what you need to improve and work on; God's Word is the key to opening our hearts and minds.

- *How do you begin to be a person who learns? Be a person who listens!*
- *No matter what is happening in our lives, God is working and leading us in the direction of learning and growing (Rom 8:28-29).*
- *Our hurt and pain, our rejection and loneliness may cloud us for a time, but we must not let it mislay our focus.*
- *God knows our suffering and has a plan to work it out—if not now, then in the life to come (Psalm 146).*
- *To grow in Christ, we need to know and do God's will. (Matt. 7:24-29, Rom. 12:2, Col. 1:9)*

There are so many passages where God is directing us upward to learn rather than inward to be filled with guilt and condemnation!

(Ex 33:13; Job 6:24; Job 34:32; Psalm 25:4-5; Psalm 27:11; Psalm 51:6; Psalm 86:11; Psalm 119:12; 26; 33; 64; 66; 68; 108; 24; 135; 171; Psalm 143:10—and there are many more!)

These are the principle verses for us as sincere, authentic Christians who are held responsible for doing something with our Christian lives. We are not called just to look good on the outside; rather, we are called to be right with God both outside in and inside out! This is implied in all that we do and believe (Prov. 19:17; James 1:26-27).

### **3. "What will I do about it? When?"**

This is the question that we ask to see how the truth of what we are reading applies to our lives.

Remember the main point of why we study the Bible is to do something with it! Of course, we all do something with it; either we ignore it or we are transformed by it. We must ask ourselves, ***"How can the teaching about God's Word relate to my problems, feelings, values, attitudes, situations, ambitions, needs, desires, and relationships?"***

Jesus calls us to be doers with His Word. When we really hear God's Word, without any barriers, it will impact us existentially (change us internally) down to the depths of who we are in personality, thinking, and attitudes, then it will lead us to godly actions. It will model and show both a loving concern for others and His precepts in concert. We have to be willing to hear it before we can practice it. If we do not practice, it becomes useless. This does not mean doing something without the knowledge to do it right, or going off without purpose or direction (James 1:21-27).

You may ask yourself these questions.

- *What must I do to make God's Word real in me?*
- *How does this personally apply to me?*
- *What is my response?*
- *What has been my response in the past?*
- *In what scenario in my life can I apply this principle?*
- *What illustration or analogy can I develop to remember the truth it contains?*
- *How does the truth apply to my life?*
- *What is my personal prayer regarding these truths?*
- *What changes/improvements could I make in light of the truth?*
- *How should I carry out these changes?*
- *How can I live out this principle facing a critical and unkind world?*

#### **4. "What does God want me to share with someone else?"**

The Word of God's purpose is to transform us into the image of God—to model His character! And then, we can tell and show others. God uses His Word to transform us; it is what He does, and then what we do. He sends us His Spirit; we respond.

This incorporates a prime key to the success of finding our purpose in life, which is found by growing in Christ and applying His precepts. What we have learned will positively impact others just as what we refuse to learn will negatively affect others. The simple application of love, character, and fruit, and the willingness to be disciplined and to use them will be our signature, as a contagious Christian of the faith, in our witness and impact to others around us. Our trust and obedience will help us cross any barriers.

In obedience, we become willing to serve God rather than our needs, even before we know what the call may be, and take this mindset into life and to others! To grow even further, we can be more contemplative in His Word and in prayer.

You may also ask these questions:

- *Now that I know more and what to do, did I do it?*
- *How can I converse my faith and what I have learned to others in the character of His Spirit and Fruit? To grow in Christ, we need to be willing and able to share with others what we have learned; this is mentoring, and we do it as a lifestyle and example as well as by being a counsellor and guide to others.*
- *What can I do to get more motivation and accountability to keep going? To be accountable, let someone else you know and trust hold you to your promises, especially as they relate to the study of God's Word.*

#### **CONCLUSION**

In the Book of James, God is warning us not to just know, but also to do something with what we have learned. His Word must impact us; for this to happen, we must listen to Him so His precepts will affect us. We do not want to be as James says, "hearers only." This is a statement that characterizes self-delusion and hypocrisy.

In contrast, some Jews at that time believed they were required to memorize the Law (Word of God), but did not need to practice it. How many Christians do you know who do this too? I know some! For them, the value was only in the learning; the practicing of it was treated with contempt. We must realize how important this question is and not glance over it, because complacency is deadly to a church; it will fall swiftly and hard into absolute worthlessness and eventually close (Ezek. 33:30-32; James 1:21-27).

Hearing His Word is also the standard skill we need in order to be “doers of His Word,” and to apply His precepts into our lives; it also helps mature the lives of others.

Is your faith weak? Are you listening to God? The first job of a Christian who wants to grow in his or her faith formation is to listen. Effective listening is essential to growing in faith or building a friendship!

This must transpire so we can be “doers of the word and not hearers only” (James 1:22). How we choose to listen and lead our lives will be the proof that we belong to God and are not living just for ourselves (Luke 8:21).

To grow in Christ, we need to be equipped by His precepts and ready for His service. (2 Tim. 3:15-16)

Growing in the Spirit is a day-by-day progression, just like learning to read, the study of mathematics or science, or learning to play a musical instrument. It takes time and effort! So, do not be discouraged if your goals do not come about as quickly as you would like. If no application comes to your mind, pray, and pray again. Let God show you His way, not our way.

## **LAST WORDS**

Why not start studying God’s Word seriously today!? You can stand in an ice-cream shop all day long and stare at all of the flavours, but no enjoyment or satisfaction will come until you bite into a scoop for yourself!

The Word of God’s purpose is to transform us into the image of God, to model His character! This can happen when you take the time to hear, read, study, meditate and practice it! Then you will be able to appreciate the Bible for all that it is worth!

So next time when it comes to the Word of God, make sure you...

- **See it!**
- **Know it!**
- **And Just Do it!**