

Authority and God's Word - Part 2

by Derek Prince

Derek Prince emphasizes the living power of God's Word and its essential role in spiritual growth and healing.

Duration: 29:43

Scripture: Psalm 107:20, Psalm 119:9, Psalm 119:130, Proverbs 4:20-22, Ephesians 5:25-27, Hebrews 4:12, James 1:18, James 1:23-25

Topics: "Gods Word", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

This sermon delves into the profound nature of God's Word as described in Hebrews 4:12, emphasizing its living and powerful essence that penetrates the deepest parts of our being. It explores the distinction between the soul and spirit, highlighting the importance of discerning between the two through the Word of God. The sermon also touches on the transformative effects of God's Word, such as faith-building, new birth, spiritual nourishment, mental illumination, physical healing, victory over sin and Satan, and sanctification.

Transcript

Let's go on to a really interesting and important theme, which is the nature of God's word. This is very, very interesting. In Hebrews chapter 4 and verse 12, we get a kind of analysis of the nature of the word of God.

Hebrews 4 verse 12, For the word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. You notice it's compared again to the 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. So the word of God is not dead. It's not just black marks on white paper.

It's not just sounds that come from a preacher's mouth. It's alive. It's living.

And wherever it comes, it brings life. The word of God is alive and powerful. Thank God it is powerful.

It's more powerful than all the lies with which Satan has filled the world. The word of God is the ultimate answer. And then it says piercing even to the division of soul and spirit.

Spirit. This is very interesting. I must not get sidetracked on it.

But the Bible reveals that man is a triune being. Spirit, soul and body. A triune being created in the likeness of a triune God.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But the only way we can learn to distinguish between the soul and the spirit is by the word of God. It's the only instrument that's sharp enough to penetrate and separate what is soulish from what is spiritual.

It's very important because if you study the New Testament, we don't have time to go there. You find that the soulish in many ways is in opposition to the spiritual. In 1st Corinthians chapter 2, Paul says the soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are spiritually discerned.

So it's important that we learn to distinguish between what is spiritual and what is soulish. But only the word of God can do that. It can also divide between the joints and the marrow.

So that the Scripture can penetrate where no surgeon's scalpel can penetrate. And where no psychiatrist's probing can penetrate. It's the only thing that takes us right into the very depths of human personality.

And then it says it's a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. To discern means to analyze, to see into the very nature of something. And somebody said years ago, when I was a young believer, it's always stuck with me.

Remember when you're reading your Bible, your Bible is also reading you. Now let's turn also to 1st Thessalonians for a moment. Just for one further aspect of what the Bible will do.

1st Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 13. Paul is writing to the believers in Thessalonica, who had responded in a wonderful way to the message of the gospel. And he says for this reason we also thank God without ceasing.

Because when you receive the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed 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. You understand that what the Bible will do in you, depends in part on how you receive it. If you merely receive it as the word of God, it will not work its full work in you.

As a word of man, I'm sorry, as a word of man. But if you receive it as the word of God, it works effectively in you. And when you read your Bible, take time from now and then to say the Lord I believe this is your word.

I receive it as your word, let it work in me everything you've sent it to do. In every area of my being, spirit, soul and body. Because I believe it.

And then we need to see a remarkable statement that Peter made in 2nd Peter chapter 1. One of the most remarkable statements I think anywhere in Scripture. Just verses 3 & 4 of 2nd Peter chapter 1. And it's in the middle of a sentence. The Apostles wrote rather long sentences.

I think Paul wrote the longest. But Peter came up with some pretty long ones too. And in English we usually have to divide them up.

So I'm not going to go back into the beginning of this sentence. I'm going to start in the middle. His divine power, that's God's divine power, has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who has called us to glory and virtue.

That's an amazing statement. It says God's divine omnipotent power has already given to us everything we're ever going to need. And you might respond well God I don't seem to have it.

Where is it? And the next verse tells you. By which has been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises. That through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

So how has God given to us all things that we need for life and godliness? Where are they? They're in the promises. And I like this little sentence that I'm calling the provision is in the promises. Would you say that with me? The provision is in the promises.

So if you want to receive all that God has provided for you, you have to receive it through his promises. Because in them is everything you're going to need. But it also comes through the knowledge of Jesus.

Because the scripture reveals Jesus. And the amazing statement, if this weren't so clearly written in the Bible, I wouldn't dare to say it. Is that through partaking of the promises, we can be partakers of the divine nature.

Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Now we need to be very careful. Because there's a kind of teaching which I won't name.

But many of you would know the name of it. Which is very fashionable today. Which teaches that if you go on long enough and do the right things, you can become a God.

I'm sure some of you have encountered that teaching. In fact let me tell you it's called New Age. I used to use the phrase New Age.

I said the New Age is coming. And then they stole it from me. And I had to think of something else.

So I said the kingdom of God is going to be established on earth. Jesus is going to establish his kingdom. And that they don't like.

But anyhow the New Age incorporating a lot of Hindu philosophy and so on. Teaches then if you go on long enough. And incidentally the Mormons teach the same.

They don't say it publicly at first. But it's there. That you can become a God.

I want to tell you that is obviously false. And I'll tell you one basic reason. God is uncreated.

We are created. And the created can never become uncreated. It's a deception.

But we can become partakers of the nature of God. As we receive and imply the promises. I always think of Jacob's ladder.

You probably remember the dream he had. He was out in the desert by himself. And he went to sleep, pillowed on a stone.

How many of you would like to use a stone for a pillow. Well I'll tell you when I was in the Sudan. Amongst the Hadandawa in the northern Sudan.

I found they did use stones for pillows. And I watched a Sudanese one day. He took a long stone with a rather sharp edge.

Put it on the ground and put his, the back of his head on the stone. And happily went to sleep. So it is possible.

But most of you wouldn't enjoy it. But Jacob was sleeping with his head on a stone. And I heard somebody say once.

I'd give, I'd be willing to sleep with my head on a stone. If I could have what Jacob had after that. Because he had a vision, a dream of an, of a ladder reaching to heaven.

The foot was on the earth. The top of the ladder was in heaven. And the angels of God were ascending and descending.

And Jesus himself was at the top of the ladder. And he spoke. But I think of the Bible in the sense like Jacob's ladder.

You see every promise is one rung on the ladder. And every time you appropriate a new promise, you go one step higher. And ultimately it will take you to heaven.

So don't ever neglect your Bible. It's the key to your well-being. It's the key to your success.

It's the most precious gift that God has ever given us. And let's bear in mind as we have so many Bibles today. And we discuss whether we'll use this translation or that translation.

Or whether we want it illustrated or with notes. Let's remember that there are millions and millions and millions of people in this, in the world today, who've never once opened a Bible. They don't have any choice.

And let's remember another thing. That in the past, in previous centuries, men and women laid down their lives, in sacrifice, to preserve the Bible for you and me. So let's treat it with reverence.

Let's be respectful to the Bible. Because it is the way that God comes into our lives. Now I want to deal in closing this particular section, with something exciting.

Which I only have a short while to deal with. That is the effects of God's Word. Paul said to the Thessalonians, it works effectively in you, because you believe it.

So I want to point out to you, eight effects that God's Word can have in your life. These are things that God's Word will do for you and for me. We'll turn first of all to Romans chapter 10 and verse 17.

Actually I can quote it without looking at it. Romans 10 17. So then, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

Now that is a wonderful scripture. Because I lay in hospital for one year on end, in the deserts of North Africa. With a skin disease that the doctors couldn't heal in that climate.

They eventually called it chronic eczema. And actually they really don't have a cure for that disease, even today. And I had just newly become a Christian.

And I kept saying to myself, I know if I had faith, God would heal me. But the next thing I always said was, but I don't have faith. And there I was, in what John Bunyan calls the slough of despond, the valley of despair.

I don't have faith. And then one day, a brilliant ray of light shone into that dark valley. And it came from Romans 10 17.

So then, faith comes. If you don't have it, you can get it. You don't need to stay without it.

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. And faith is coming to many of you, even now, while you're hearing the Word of God. You know that in the time of the New Testament, the majority of people who wrote, who read, read out loud.

Even if they were to themselves. For instance the Ethiopian eunuch was in his chariot reading the prophet Isaiah. And Philip heard him read, although he's reading to himself.

And it's not something to be said about reading out loud. Because when you hear yourself read, faith comes, you see. All right, that's the number one product of the Scripture.

Number two is, it produces the new birth. It's by the Word of God, that we are born again. James chapter 1 and verse 18.

Speaking of what God says, of his own will, he brought us forth by the Word of truth. That's the Bible. That we might be a kind of first fruits of his creature.

Of his own will. You know why God did it? Because he decided to do it. We don't get any further explanation than that.

And when you get back to the beginning of everything, it all starts with God's decision. God decided to bring forth the people for himself. And he decided that he would be brought forth by the Word of God.

By the Scripture. And that's what brought you and me to know God. To become a new creation.

The people of God. It's by the Word of God. And then in first Peter, he goes on on the same theme.

First Peter chapter 2 verses 22 and 23. First Peter chapter 2 verse 22 and 23. Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart.

Notice how you purify your soul, by obeying the truth. Not by hearing the truth, but by obeying it. And what will be the love? What will be the result? The result will be sincere love.

And then Peter goes on, having been born again. Notice that, having been born again. Not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible.

What is the incorruptible seed? Through the Word of God, which lives and abides forever. So it's the seed of God's Word, received into the heart by faith, that produces the new birth. The seed is incorruptible, the life it produces is incorruptible.

The nature of the seed determines the nature of the life that comes from it. If you plant an apple pip, you don't get an orange tree. The nature of the seed determines the nature of the life.

The Word of God is incorruptible and the life it produces is incorruptible. It's divine, it's holy, it's eternal. And then, once you've been born again, what you need is nourishment.

And the marvelous thing is, that God's Word has provided suitable nourishment for every stage of spiritual growth. When you're just a little spiritual baby, you need milk. And that's what Peter says in the next chapter of 1st Peter, in verse 2. 1st Peter chapter 2, verse 2. As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby.

So once you're born again, you should have a very healthy appetite for the Word of God. And there are many of us here tonight, I'm sure could testify. When we were born again, the one thing we wanted to do, was read the Bible.

We were born healthy infants, with a healthy appetite for the one thing that could really nourish us. But then as we grow up, we need things like bread. But we don't need to turn there.

Jesus said to Satan, when he tempted him to make bread out of stones. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. So God's Word is not only milk, it's also bread.

But as we grow up, we need more solid food. And this also is provided in Hebrews chapter 5. The writer of Hebrews is writing to Jewish people, who had a knowledge of the scripture from their background. And he's telling them what God might wish to say to some of us.

Because of all you know, you should be doing better than you are. He said you've got the knowledge of the scripture, but you're not using it. I'll just read these words.

In Hebrews chapter 5 verse 12. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the articles of God. And you've come to need milk and not solid food.

What was the evidence? They couldn't digest more than the very simplest basic truths. For everyone who partakes only of milk, is unskilled in the word of righteousness. For he is a baby, but solid food belongs to those who are of full age or mature.

That is those who by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. You understand, to mature you have to exercise your senses. You have to practice.

You have to apply the word of God. You have to use it to recognize the situations that you're in. The forces that you're dealing with.

That's the way to maturity. If you never really seriously apply the word of God. If you don't live by the word of God, you will never become mature.

You'll never be able to take more than milk, or maybe a little bread. But solid food is only for those who have practiced, who have exercised, who have applied the word, diligently, regularly, in their lives. So that's the third result from the word of God, is spiritual nourishment.

The fourth result is mental illumination. And I want to turn to Psalm 119. A familiar verse to many I'm sure.

Psalm 119, verse 130. The psalmist is speaking to God and he says, The entrance of your words gives light. It gives understanding to the simple.

So the entrance of God's word into our minds and into our hearts, gives light. It's different from education. Education is not light.

You can be educated and totally in the dark. How do I know? Because I was. Highly educated and totally in the dark.

Until the light of the word of God shone into my life. So remember, education is not light. Years ago I was dealing with African students in East Africa, whose one ambition was to get education.

And I wrote a little tract for them once called, You are seeking education but are you also finding wisdom. I pointed out wisdom and education are not the same. And in this tract I pointed out something which has shocked some people.

Most of the trouble in the world is caused by educated fools. Theodore Roosevelt, former president of the United States, once said this. He said if a man is a thief, he'll steal a railroad car or carriage or compartment.

But if you educate the same man, he'll steal the whole railroad. So please bear in mind education is a useful thing. But it is not light.

In fact as I say, some of the most educated minds are in the deepest darkness. It's only the entrance of God's word that gives light. And then God's word provides physical healing.

And I say this out of my own personal experience. Let's turn to Psalm 107 for a moment. Reading from verse 17 through verse 20.

Fools, that's the people in the other church, that's never you and me. Fools, because of their transgression and because of their iniquities, were afflicted. Does it ever occur to you that some of us are afflicted, because we've been leading a wrong life? I've heard so many people come for healing to me.

Very rarely do they ever suggest that the source of their problem is their wrong living. But it says fools, because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorred all manner of food and they drew near to the gates of death.

They were at the point of death. The doctor could do no more for them. Then it says, then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble.

My comment on that is, people often leave it very late to pray. They were at death's door and it suddenly occurred to them, it might help to pray. And what did God do? Listen, he saved them out of their distresses.

He sent his word and healed them and delivered them from their destructions. Notice three things that God does when he sends his word. He saves, he heals and he delivers.

The three great acts of God's mercy. Saving from sin, healing from sickness and delivering from demon power. He accomplishes primarily through his word.

Some of you, I know this from experience. You're looking to find some preacher, who will lay hands on you and pray for you and you'll be healed. Well may it happen.

But I know, because many people come to me. They think if I pray for them they'll be healed. But they aren't.

And in fact I've come to the place where I'm a little bit concerned. Because I see they're really looking to Brother Prince, not to the Lord. And let me tell you, without any preacher, you can be healed.

If you receive God's word. For he sent his word, healed them, delivered them from their distresses. And then there comes my favorite verse.

Which is what got me out of hospital, when no medication would do it. Proverbs chapter 4 verses 20 and 21 and 22. And I quote it in the old King James Version.

Because that's how it came to me. My son attend to my words. Incline thine ear unto my sayings.

Let them not depart from thine eyes. Keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life to those who find them.

And health to all their flesh. God's words he says, will be health to all our flesh. Now there I was.

I'd been about seven months in hospital. The doctors were not healing me. And I was saying if only I had faith, I knew God would heal me.

Then I got that scripture. Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God. I began to hope.

And then I began to look through the scripture again, with a new hope. But you see I had a problem. I'd been a philosopher, a professional philosopher.

And the job of philosophers is to make simple things complicated. That's when they, that's when they get elected. And so I couldn't take the Word of God in its simplicity.

I read promise after promise about God healing. But I thought that only means he heals my soul. He's not really interested in my body.

That's just corrupt. It's going to die anyhow. Bless the Lord O my soul.

Forgive it all thine iniquities. Heal it all thine diseases. I said that's only my soul's diseases.

But when I got to Proverbs 4 verses 20 through 22. I couldn't get around it. God says his words are life to those that find them.

And health to all their flesh. And I said not even a philosopher can make flesh mean anything but flesh. Health to my whole physical body.

Then I looked in the margin. And the alternative reading for health was medicine. And I happen to be what the armies call a medical orderly.

I said how do people take their medicine. The answer is three times daily after meals. I said that's what I'll do.

I can't go into the details. But over a period of three or four months. I took God's Word as my medicine.

Three times daily after every meal. And it gave me complete and permanent healing and health. In one of the most unhealthy climates in the world.

The Sudan. So I'll tell you brothers and sisters, it works. Now let's come to just three more results of the Word of God.

Very quickly. The next one is victory over sin and Satan. Psalm 119 verse 9 and verse 11.

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to your word. And then again in verse 11. Your word have I hidden or stored up in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Many, many of our young people today really question whether it's possible to lead a pure life. And most of the educators will tell them it isn't. They'll recommend what they call safe sex.

Which is never safe. But the Bible says a young man who gives attention to his way according to the Word of God. Can lead a pure life.

And I thank God when I worked amongst African young people. I saw those words fulfilled time and time again. They were made pure and they led clean lives.

Because they gave heed to the Word of God. And you remember that we looked in Matthew 4. When Jesus encountered Satan. He only met him with one weapon.

It is written. And then again and we're going very quickly now. In Ephesians 5 verses 25 through 27.

Ephesians 5 25 through 27. Husbands love your wives. Just let me tell you husbands that's not a suggestion it's a command.

Husbands love your wives. Just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word.

That he might present it to himself a glorious church. Not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. But that it should be holy and without blemish.

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. John said of Jesus this is he who came by water and by blood. Not by water only but by blood.

By the blood of his sacrifice he redeems us. But by the water of his word he cleanses and sanctifies us. We need both.

We're redeemed by the blood that we might be cleansed by the Word. And finally James says and we won't turn there. But in his first in his epistle chapter 1 verses 23 to 25.

The Bible is a spiritual mirror. When you look into it. It doesn't show you your physical appearance.

It shows you what you're really like inside. And James points out when you look in a mirror and see there's something wrong. The sensible thing to do is tend to it.

If your hair is out of order you brush it. If your face is dirty you wash it. You'd act on what you see in the mirror.

And James says you need to do that when you look in the mirror of the Word of God. You need to see your spiritual self in it and act on whatever it shows you that you need to do.

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