

**One Book One Authority (Chapter 6)**  
**THE WORD OF GOD VS. THE WORD OF MEN**  
**Dr. Doug Stauffer 334-221-1611 (cell) [www.BibleDoug.com](http://www.BibleDoug.com)**

The *truths* contained in the word of God are innumerable and take on a life of their own. Unfortunately, these profound truths are sometimes cheapened due to their apparent simplicity. Consider this case in point concerning the words of God. The Bible says that the words of God are *spirit* and they are *life*.

***John 6:63*** *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: **the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.***

Jesus begins this verse from the gospel of John by saying that ***the spirit quickeneth*** (or makes alive); He goes on to point out that the words themselves are ***spirit***. Therefore, it is the words that have a life of their own. The book of First Peter provides further insight into this matter. It tells the reader that the word of God brings about our new birth, providing the believer with eternal life.

***1 Peter 1:23*** *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.***

Once again, it is important to recognize the magnitude of the truth communicated. The realm of this truth does not end with the simple fact of our new birth by the word of God. Similar to John chapter 6, Peter mentions that the word of God is *alive*! The Bible says that all scripture *is given* by inspiration of God. Inspiration carries with it the connotation of being God-breathed. The *breath of life* from God made Adam a living soul.

***Genesis 2:7*** *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.***

Because God's word has a life of its own, God designed His word to speak to our hearts. That is why one's approach to the Bible is of utmost importance. Is the Bible the mere words of men or the very words of God Himself? If the words of the Bible are the words of men, how can anyone justify trusting his life, eternal destiny and soul's security to something so potentially flawed?

The writings of men can make you smile and laugh or cause you to frown and weep. When you read the Bible, however, its words should speak directly to your heart since they are spirit and life. The word of God not only gives life, but it also has the power to change a life. God designed His word that way—to mold and make the life of the believer into what it ought to be for the service of the Lord.

The word of God makes life worth living. Like Paul, we should strive to live a holy life—one at which unbelievers cannot justifiably point the finger of blame. Like a father to his children, Paul exhorted, comforted and charged the believers in Thessalonica.

***1 Thessalonians 2:10*** *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: **11** As ye know how we*

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*exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, 12  
That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.*

One of the main purposes of scripture is to exhort, comfort and charge the believer so that each person can walk *worthy of God*. Can you imagine such a lofty goal? Most preaching comes from the perspective that we, as mere sinful creatures, cannot be worthy of anything related to an infinitely holy and righteous God. The Bible teaches otherwise. The Bible says that we can walk worthy and that we should do so. Yet, Christians seem to be groping in the dark for the answers, searching for an inaccessible approach to living this kind of life.

The next verse (verse 13) continues this line of thought with the words "*for this cause.*" For what cause? It is the cause just mentioned in verse 12 which enables us to walk worthy of God!

***I Thessalonians 2:13 For this cause also thank ye God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.***

The cause of verse 13 is the desire of every Christian who sincerely wants to walk worthy of God. Paul continues with the means of achieving this lofty goal. It all revolves around one's approach to the word of God. Does the Christian go to the word with a believing and trusting heart or with an unbelieving and doubting approach? **ONE'S HEART APPROACH TO THE BIBLE IS THE KEY TO WALKING WORTHY OF GOD!**

God has chosen to work out His will through the instrumentality of men. In times past, God would sometimes send a voice from heaven or even an angel; instead, He now chooses to use His perfect word to reach, teach and instruct. There is no other instruction or revelation given to Christians in order for them to *walk worthy of the Lord (Colossians 1:10), worthy of this calling (2 Thessalonians 1:11)* and *worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called (Ephesians 4:1)*.

To be pleasing to the Lord, every Christian must live according to the will of God. Here is the million-dollar question: How does a Christian know for certain the will of God? How does he know for certain where to find the word of God? Upon what authority does he dare stake his eternal future, let alone his present actions? Pause for a moment and ask God to speak to your heart through His word before examining the four crucial elements from verse 13 of Second Thessalonians, chapter 2.

- I. The Majesty of the *Word of God***
- II. God's Condemnation of the *Word of Men***
- III. How Man Transitions from the *Word of God* to the *Word of Men***
- IV. How God's Word Works Effectually in an Individual's Life**

In this study, we will consider the Christian's correct approach to the word of God. We will then consider the four-step process whereby the Devil elevates the words of men above the very words of God.

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**I. The Majesty of the *Word of God***

The Bible not only affects the entire world, but also reaches into the life of an individual to miraculously change that individual's life. Its convicting power remains one of the major reasons that people want to rid the world of the word of God. Consider the power it has in the life of a person's life. It regenerates (rebirths) a lost soul by circumcising the body of flesh away from the soul.

***Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

The word of God not only has the power to save but can also perceive one's every thought and intention! It knows what you are thinking even if everyone else has no clue as to your thoughts! It knows what you intend to do before you do it! This is the reason why conviction overpowers those who hear the word of God preached in a church service or on the street. You simply cannot hide anything from the word of God, least of all your motives for doing the things you do.

Most people never consider how God exalts His word above all else. How different would we react if we considered God's word as equivalent to standing face-to-face with the Almighty as He spoke to us? This is what the word of God teaches about itself. Bible critics would take a 180 degree turn if they considered their actions in light of God's word from God's perspective.

***Hebrews 4:13** Neither is there any creature that is not **manifest in his sight**: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

The word of God is piercing, similar to a pair of eyes. The Bible also says that we are manifest in **HIS** sight, further substantiating that the word of God is alive and can see. Most Christians familiar with passages from the book of John know that they speak of the Son of God as the incarnate Word. They know that the Son left heaven's glory and became flesh, but many of them seem to skim right over the significance of His name.

***John 1:1** In the beginning was **the Word**, and the Word was with God, and the **Word was God**. **2** The same was in the beginning with God.*

Before the reader is told that Jesus Christ is God or the Son, He is introduced by His title which is "*the Word*."<sup>1</sup> In John's later epistles, the scriptures again refer to Christ as the Word in **1John 5:7**. Christ's title is further emphasized by the scripture as it repeatedly points out that the Word was made flesh.

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<sup>1</sup> The **Word of God** (capital "W") refers to the Second Person of the Trinity, the eternal Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. Whereas **the word of God** (small "w") refers to either the *written* or *spoken* revelation of God's inspired words of truth. The **word of God** did not die on the cross, rise from the dead nor will it come again in power and glory, but the **Word of God** did and will. ([www.brandplucked.webs.com/douglutilekpsalm12.htm](http://www.brandplucked.webs.com/douglutilekpsalm12.htm))

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*John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

It is quite interesting that the Bible refers to God the Son as the Word. Is this just another name for God, or does it reflect something with much greater significance? John says that the Word dwelt AMONG men. Today, God does not simply dwell among us; each member of the Trinity (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) dwells in the believer! Romans chapter 8 offers a glimpse into the one God in three persons indwelling the believer.

*Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the **Spirit of God dwell in you** (God, the Holy Spirit). Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And **if Christ be in you** (God, the Son), the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if **the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus** (God, the Father) from the dead **dwell in you**, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

Since God the Son is the Word and He indwells every believer, then the Word dwells in every believer today!!! Again the scripture repeatedly drives home the point that Christ lives in the believer: "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; **which is Christ in you, the hope of glory**" (**Colossians 1:27**).

God and his word are inseparably linked. Genesis chapter 1 repeatedly declares, "And God said..." referring to the Word as the Creator. No matter how Satan instigates man's betrayal of God Almighty, man cannot separate God from His word. Time and again, the scripture is described as having personality.

Even a familiar passage like Isaiah chapter 55 gives indication that the word of God has personality. Carefully note how the scripture repeatedly expresses this point. The Bible says that the word comes from the mouth of God. Could this be considered inspiration? If it comes from God's mouth, it is certainly God-breathed.

*Isaiah 55:11 **So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.***

Is this word limited in some way because man cannot grasp the significance and meaning of this statement? The Bible says that God's word will accomplish and prosper in whatever He sends it forth to do. Is this promise limited merely to God's speaking audibly from heaven in the Old Testament? Christians apply it all of the time to the present day situations as they quote the scripture to someone. The Bible says that the word of God goes forth out of the mouth of God. Has God's word become impotent because we no longer hear it audibly from heaven? Absolutely not; the opposite is actually true!

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Upon the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter heard the actual voice of God from heaven. Peter, through inspiration, reflects upon this event and contrasts his physically hearing the voice from heaven with reading the written word of God. Notice the preeminence that he gives to the written word of God.

*2 Peter 1:17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. 19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:*

Second Peter chapter one calls the written word of God "a more sure word of prophecy" than hearing the actual audible words from God the Father in heaven. Repeatedly, God elevates His written word above all else. The Bible contains numerous other examples.

### **David or the Holy Ghost?**

The Bible tells us to compare spiritual things with spiritual things. This principle is especially necessary when considering the Old Testament its corresponding New Testament passages. As you read the first six verses of Psalm 95, it is evident that these words proceeded out of the mouth of David. Verse 1 says, "let us sing unto the LORD..." We know David as the penman of Psalm 95.

*Psalm 95:7 For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. 10 Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: 11 Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.*

When the passage from Psalm 95 is cross-referenced with **Hebrews 3:7-11**, the scripture provides further insight into this *sure word of prophecy*. It is obvious that Hebrews refers to the narrative provided in Psalm 95. The book of Hebrews begins with a very interesting observation about this narrative from the book of Psalms. The New Testament passage refers to the Holy Ghost and not David as speaking the words.

*Hebrews 3:7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. 10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. 11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)*

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David, indeed, was the instrument used to write the Psalm, but the book of Hebrews refers to the Holy Ghost as having spoken the words contained therein. This is how we must consider the entire word of God; the words that we read in the pages of the Bible are not **the words of men**. They are the very words of God. Again, considering Second Peter chapter 1, David and writers like him, “*spake as they were moved by*” God, the Holy Ghost.

***2 Peter 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.***

If the Bible says that these men were moved by the Holy Ghost, and Hebrews records the fact that David’s words were inspired by the Holy Ghost, then it is appropriate that we likewise magnify God’s word to that same level. The Bible is not to be treated as just another book. God elevates his word and we should do no less!

### **Moses or the Scripture?**

The scripture provides further insight by connecting Exodus chapter 9 with Romans chapter 9. Moses spoke the following words to Pharaoh, quoting God:

***Exodus 9:16 And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.***

When you read the verse from the book of Exodus, are you reading what Moses said or are you reading the very words of God? This is a prime example of how “*holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*” Now, consider how the Apostle Paul is *moved* to describe the interaction between Moses and Pharaoh.

***Romans 9:17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.***

Since the word of God is alive, it was the *scripture* that spoke to Pharaoh through the mouth of Moses. Exodus records the words of Moses, and Romans explains to us that it was the scripture that actually spoke to Pharaoh. This is why the Bible is called the word of God. The Bible does not merely *contain* the word of God; it *is* the word of God. God designed the Bible to speak to your heart because it consists of the very words of God.

If the Bible does not speak to your heart, then there is something wrong. Either there is a problem with your heart or there is a problem with what you are reading. If you have the word of God, sooner or later it will solve your heart problem. If you do not have the word of God (i.e. the right Bible) in your hands, there is little hope of fixing your heart problem without a change in the text you are reading. There are thousands of pages of written documentation proving that the modern versions are not the true word of God. Against scriptural warnings, these versions add to, subtract from and are constantly changing God’s words.

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I am not aware of any modern version proponent who claims that any of the modern versions contains the infallible words of God. That is why there is no such thing as an "NIV-only", "NASV-only" or a "Living Bible-only" movement. In fact the modern version movement can best be illustrated as a bible buffet leaving the individual starving with each successive meal.

Why are Christians less excited than ever about Bible study, and why is dedicated daily Bible reading almost nonexistent? It is because the modern versions do not contain life. Yet, the word of God is alive and in accordance with this record from the book of Exodus, the scripture ought to speak to you.

I have studied these modern versions for my writings and know that they do not, cannot and have never spoken to my heart. Modern versions are not God-breathed and contain no life in them. When you read the scripture, you should be hearing from God Almighty. Ask any of the modern version proponents if they believe life comes from reading any of their particular version or versions. Not one of them will claim that any modern version is the word of God, perfect and without error. Not one of them will claim it has personality and certainly none will claim its infallibility.

The modern version copyright holder, much like Judas Iscariot, is allowed to carry the bag (*John 13:29*) and with every update and change continues to betray the Lord for 30 pieces of silver. The modern versions are best described as the hot air of men's ramblings produced by those worshiping the almighty dollar. With over 150 different modern versions, it is not the Holy Ghost that is confused.

The book of Exodus provides further insight into these truths by recording God's instructions to Moses in verse 13 (three verses prior to the verse quoted above).

*Exodus 9:13 And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.*

Similar to Moses in the book of Exodus, every Bible-believing pastor who stands before a congregation with an open Bible should boldly proclaim, "Thus saith the Lord." He can trust the scripture, the words of God Almighty, to speak to his hearers. Yet, things are not so simple because Satan always complicates matters.

Why are there so many churches and Christians struggling concerning the matter of personal faith? Could it be that most modern pastors using their modern versions do not believe the Lord is saying anything when they stand to read? Could it be that the hearer in the pew has no greater faith in the word he is hearing than that of his modern pastor? Rather than a message from God, more is generally said concerning the eloquence of the speaker.

The Bible points out that the key to faith is the word of God. Can faith be increased or even exist

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at all if an individual approaches the word of God as the word of mere mortals?

*Romans 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Since faith comes by hearing the word of God, it stands to reason that every person is responsible to embrace the Bible as God's word. If the Bible contains errors, it cannot be the word of God. If the Bible is not the word of God, it is the word of men. If it is the word of men, it has no capacity to generate faith. And without faith, you cannot please God (*Hebrews 11:6*).

History shows us that every spiritual renewal and authentically God-sent revival springs from how the individual approaches God's word. Every great move of God began with *a revival of faith*, and you cannot have faith apart from the word of God. Revival is God's strengthening His people to continue doing what He wants them to do. Three examples of historical revivals are as follows:

- The Great Awakening (1738) which spread revival throughout the colonies
- The Sandy Creek Revival (1755) which created the Bible Belt in America
- The revival of modern missions set in motion through William Carey (1792)

Each of these momentous events was ignited by the elevation of God's word above the traditions and precepts of men. All of these events, of course, took place when one Book reigned supreme. None of these events is even remotely possible today without a return to scriptural principles long ago shunned by the modern church movement.

### **Abraham or the Scripture?**

Another example of the personality of the word of God is found when Genesis is cross-referenced with its corresponding passage in Galatians. Genesis testifies that God spoke directly to Abraham.

*Genesis 22:18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.*

This event involving Abraham took place long before Moses penned the book of Genesis. Paul references the occasion in the book of Galatians. Galatians refers to the promise recorded in *Genesis 22:18*. Regarding what took place with Abraham, Paul writes that *the scripture* foresaw the future and preached the gospel to Abraham!

*Galatians 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.*

By now it should be obvious how closely God and His word are associated. The Bible says that the scripture *foresaw* and *preached*—two action verbs not attributed to something considered



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inanimate. Moses, who penned Genesis, was not even born when God spoke these words to Abraham; therefore, the scripture could not be referring to the written word of God on earth. Instead, it refers to the word from heaven that Abraham heard (that which is settled forever in heaven—*Psalm 119:89*). In fact, the verse in Genesis mentions the *"voice of God."*

What is the practical application of these truths? The pastor humbly stands before his congregation as he opens the word of God. He tells the people to turn to a certain passage in the Bible. He prays and asks God to bless the message. His eyes gaze down to the pages before him as he begins to speak. He reads a passage from the Bible and allows God to preach to the hearts of the people. Man's thoughts and his opinions are not what his congregation needs. They desperately need to hear from God Almighty as He speaks from heaven through the pages of His word using this instrument of flesh. God's word receives the preeminence (*Colossians 1:18*).

### **The Personified Word Again**

Why don't Christians seem to get it? Why are they growing so cold? One reason lies in the fact that Christians are being hardened through the *deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13)*. It is imperative for Christians to stay tenderhearted or all the preaching in the world will be ineffective, ricocheting off their hardened hearts. The Devil knows this and will do anything within his power to destroy a person's faith in the word of God. Destruction of God's one and only true word is the one hurdle that he can never cross.

Proverbs chapter 30 gives further insight as to why John chapter one refers to Jesus, first and foremost, as *the Word*. Verse 4 of Proverbs begins by asking five obvious questions and emphatically ends with the query *"if thou canst tell."*

***Proverbs 30:4** Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? **who** hath gathered the wind in his fists? **who** hath bound the waters in a garment? **who** hath established all the ends of the earth? **what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?***

Each of the five questions points directly to God. After the rhetorical questions asking the source of all those miraculous things, the reader is asked, "What is his name?" God then mocks every Bible critic who refuses to provide the obvious answer to His question. Can you tell me who it is? So, *"what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?"* God immediately follows with the answer in the next verse.

***Proverbs 30:5** Every word of God is pure: **he** is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.*

The answer to those five questions is *"every word of God"*! Who ascended or descended? Who gathered the wind? Who bound the waters? Who established all the ends of the earth? What is his name? ***His name is the word of God who did all of this.*** Can you see why and how God magnifies His word even above His name? The personality of the word continues following the *colon* in verse 5. *He* (every word of God) is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Why

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am I a Bible believer? How could any preacher be any less given God's testimony concerning his word? It is simply dishonest to stand in a pulpit and proclaim to be holding God's word if you do not believe it to be GOD'S VERY WORDS.

If this *whole* line of thought from Proverbs chapter 30 ended with the truth conveyed thus far, that should be enough for any Bible critic to fall on his face in repentance toward God Almighty. But there is more! The next verse gives a strict command concerning God's words: Don't mess with them!

*Proverbs 30:6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*

This is the middle warning concerning tampering with God's word, along with the two others found in *Deuteronomy 4:2* and *Revelation 22:19*. This points out why all of the modern versions contain so many contradictions and lies. The truth reproves every liar, and God blinds every person who tampers with his holy word so that they do not even recognize their most egregious blunders.

God highly esteems His word by magnifying it above His name (*Psalms 138:2*). His word is to be held in preeminence. Why would He magnify His word so highly? He does so simply because He knows that His name is only as good as His word. You cannot believe God if you cannot take Him at His word any more than you can trust an individual whose word is untrustworthy.

That is why I believe that those who attack the Bible might as well be attacking the Saviour—the Son of God. Since God repeatedly attributes life to His word, could this be why God does *not* say that all Scripture *was given* by inspiration (past tense)? If God's word is alive and is ascribed animate traits, it would seem that God would be careful not to say that His inspiration only occurred in the past.

*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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

The word of God should speak to your heart. As it is read, all scripture *is* given by inspiration of God. It is alive! If it fails to speak to your heart, there is no problem with the word; the obstruction involves a heart problem. The trouble today is very similar to the problems recorded in the first century and throughout every age: the *word of men* has usurped the rightful place of the word of God.

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**Chapter**

**God's Condemnation of the *Word of Men***

There is a remarkable difference between sermons today and those preached even a few decades ago. Simply reading some of the sermons from the past can bring great conviction to the attentive reader. Today, too much sermon content covers current events and personal opinions rather than the doctrines and teachings established in the word of God. God repeatedly condemns this sermonizing throughout His word with Jeremiah chapter 23 giving one of the most poignant illustrations.

*Jeremiah 23:25 I have heard what **the prophets** said, that **prophesy lies in my name**, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. 26 How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are **prophets of the deceit of their own heart**; 27 Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal.*

This passage counsels the preacher against preaching their own thoughts or ideas and then identifies the outcome of such preaching taking the place of God's word. Its consequences are clearly illustrated. This type of preaching is a damnable thing for a fallen creation and causes God's children to forget Who God is.

Preachers need to be preaching the infallible, inerrant word of God, not the words of men. As the condemnation continues, God mockingly tells the self-satisfied preacher who wants to preach his dreams to go for it, but to be honest when he speaks! Do not act as though you are listening to or following God's leading in what you are doing. Both the preacher and God know better. When you tell your dreams, call them what they are. Do not give God "credit" for that which He has never tolerated.

The scripture continues by revealing God's true desire for those who have His word and know it (the true Bible believer). Since God chooses to be heard through the instrumentality of men, He commands us to speak His word faithfully!

*Jeremiah 23:28 The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and **he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully**. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD.*

Once the partition is firmly erected between the dreamers and the preachers, God questions the value of each by asking, "What is the chaff to the wheat?" According to God's word, the dream-preachers are preaching useless chaff; the word-preachers are preaching the nutritious wheat. The wheat is not to remain mixed with the chaff, lest the good become polluted. These opposing groups are to be separated from each other (**2Corinthians 6:17**).

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The *chaff* which contains no nutritional value is unfit for consumption, and its end is to be burned. Chaff is useless, similar to the thoughts of men who fail to align themselves with the perfect word of God. The chaff is valueless, has no real substance and is easily scattered by the wind—similar to the doctrines and thoughts of men.

On the other hand, the *wheat* is the pure grain once the chaff has been winnowed away. It has nutritional value, much like God's true word which provides food for the soul. Every God-called preacher must learn to distinguish between the chaff and the wheat. This applies to his preaching, as well as to the bibles marketed as God's word.

Unfortunately, the chaff preachers have almost unlimited access to a glut of “chaff” bibles which communicate every thought imaginable. Contrast this with Jeremiah's description of God's word as a burning fire in his heart. He could not refrain from speaking the word.

*Jeremiah 23:29 Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*

Jeremiah likens the word to a fire and a hammer. The fire burns and the hammer breaks. Three chapters earlier, Jeremiah admits his reluctance to preach anymore in the name of the Lord. He wishes to quit. Can he simply throw in the towel, or does God's word drive him to faithfully continue?

*Jeremiah 20:9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. **But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.***

The Bible's description of itself is quite remarkable. God's word crushes the hardened heart with the force of a hammer. It is like an inextinguishable fire burning inside the bowels of the preacher. This is why the Bible issue remains on the forefront of today's spiritual battles. You must have the true word of God in your heart for it to effectively do its work. We need a hammer and a burning fire, not a ceremonial gavel and smoke with no substance.

Since Jeremiah contrasts the word of God with the word of men, consider another example from this same book. In Jeremiah chapter 23, God rebukes the prophet (or preacher) that steals God's words from others.

*Jeremiah 23:30 Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that **steal my words every one from his neighbour.***

Much like the situation in Jeremiah's day, the very words of God have today been stolen from a whole generation. God is against all of the modern versions that all claim to be “the word of God.” Interestingly, that is probably why so many of them emphasize the *message* rather than the *word*. Yet, the message that these modern versions contain frequently make changes that do not

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even make sense.

*(NIV) Jeremiah 23:30 “Therefore,” declares the LORD, “I am against the prophets who steal from one another words supposedly from me.*

Why would God concern Himself about words being stolen from somebody if they were only “*supposedly from Him*” and not really from Him? God blinds the eyes of these modern version translators so that they cannot even see their errors. God is concerned about His word being stolen; and this is precisely what the modern versions have done from cover to cover. Interestingly, they now offer words that are *supposedly from Him*. They are caught in a trap of their own making and remain too blind to see it.

Just to show you how ridiculous things are becoming, here is the same verse from *The Message* by Eugene H. Peterson © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. *The Message*, if you recall, is the version most quoted by Rick Warren in his two best sellers: *The Purpose Driven Life* and *The Purpose Driven Church*.

*(The Message) Jeremiah 23:30 I've had it with the 'prophets' who get all their sermons secondhand from each other. Yes, I've had it with them. They make up stuff and then pretend it's a real sermon.*

Now, look back to the real word of God—the King James Bible! The last part of *Jeremiah 32:36* describes what these modern versions have done to the words of God. They have perverted the words of the living God.

*Jeremiah 32:36 ...ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the Lord of hosts our God.*

No wonder millions of so-called preachers are so confused and have no power in the pulpit. They don't stand behind the pulpit proclaiming, “*Thus saith the Lord*” and there is no power without the word of God. God repeatedly rebukes those who steal His word from men. The people are destroyed because there is little convicting power in these modern versions.

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**Chapter**  
**How Man Transitions from Word of God to the Word of Men**

This section candidly reveals how many Christians have gotten into such a mess. The Devil, as the master architect, has cunningly moved the Church away from standing valiantly for the word of God to elevating the word of men in its place. Many professing Christians in the twenty-first century, following the lead of their last century predecessors, seem to tolerate every known gimmick rather than basing their continuance on sound biblical principles. Although this next section pertains to those who have created the modern versions, its relevance for the life of each and every Christian should not be overlooked.

This is the clearest step-by-step illustration of how a person devolves into vainly going through the motions of worship. He may begin by holding the *word of God* high, but after step one he will eventually elevate the *word of men* in the rightful place of God's word. There are four steps descending down the trail of worshipping God in vain. Step one begins the downward spiral as the word of God is laid aside.

**1. Laying aside the word of God**

*Mark 7:8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.*

Once the word of God is set aside, its authority and power are quickly ignored. With the Bible out of sight and out of mind, it will be replaced by every imaginable trick and tradition. With the escalation of worldly devices, people's opinions will be elevated far above the esteemed position once held by the word of God. At this point, you do not have to reject God's truths; you must simply neglect them.

Maybe the only attention paid to the word of God is on Sundays. During the week, the Bible is "on the shelf" in fact and in practice. These actions will eventually lead to your rejecting God's truths precept-by-precept. Some will claim that this could never happen to them. Others will look back in amazement looking back at how they ever started down that path they swore they would never travel. It all begins with neglect—either innocently or purposefully.

**2. Rejecting the word of God**

*Mark 7:9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.*

Once you have laid aside the word of God, tradition will take on greater significance and importance. Once the word of God has been neglected, when faced with its precepts, you will reject its once-treasured truths. This is a very dangerous point at which to find yourself. The Bible warns, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (*James 4:17*). At this point you begin to cross the line—a very, very dangerous threshold. Steps

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one and two will produce step three.

**Step one**—you *lay aside* the word of God

**Step two**—you *reject* the word of God

**Step three**—the word of God rejects you!

### 3. Make the word of God of None Effect

*Mark 7:13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.*

The word of God remains quick and powerful, but once it has been laid aside and rejected, the individual begins to notice that it no longer seems to have the same effect. You begin to look for someone or something to blame. In good churches, the pastor takes the brunt of the heat; in lukewarm churches, the problem is anything but the pastor. In either case, the sermons rarely ever convict or cause self-reflection.

Once an individual has *laid aside* the word of God, it becomes very easy to reject its precepts. Once the word of God is *rejected*, its influence becomes ineffective. The fortunate Christians are those who find themselves at this juncture, looking back in amazement, and who respond by diving into the word of God in an attempt to right their course.

Some who were once on fire for God wonder why their hearts seem so cold. Others look with *disbelief* at those seen stumbling in their Christian walk. Still others look with *scorn* at fallen brethren, never supposing that they themselves would one day cross over this once unimaginable threshold. What do you do when the word of God no longer affects you? The most important thing to do is to go back to where you lost that power and relationship.

Unfortunately, many people pass through the first three steps and blindly on to the fourth. They are past feeling and past the point of regret and continue to “worship” with no power. They mask their lack of relationship with a false spirituality, one that is only outward and superficial. They soothe their conscience by comparing themselves with others who have fallen deeper and further into this pit of tradition. Or they look around and find so many other who are doing the very same thing and feel justified in their plunge. Frequently, their outward appearance looks respectable and no one, least of all themselves, would ever imagine that they have arrived at this fourth and final step.

### 4. Worship God in Vain

*Mark 7:7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

God's ways are not our ways; nor are His thoughts our thoughts. God begins revealing this four-step process by placing the words “*vain worship*” in a neon sign before He outlines the three

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steps of getting there. He begins the illustration by showing the end result of faulty worship (verse 7). He then explains the step-by-step progression of how the individual (or church) arrives at this ungodly Christ-forsaken position.

Once the person has laid aside the word of God, they will eventually reject it. Once the word of God is rejected, it will *no longer* have the God-honored effect. Since the word of God for the rejecter is without effect, the resultant worship is but vain. Unfortunately, the majority of the world is worshiping God in vain, and this includes most groups who name the name of Christ. This truth is illustrated when you consider that there are so many religions and denominations. Those who have rejected God's word are simply worshiping Him in vain.



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**Chapter**

**How God's Word Works Effectually in an Individual's Life**

That which God promises, He always performs without ever failing once in six thousand years of recorded history! The word of God cannot work effectually in any individual who fails to believe the promises of God. Yet, the Bible critic points an accusatory finger at God's word looking for proof that He has somehow and at some time failed. For instance, all Bible critics believe God has failed to keep His promise and commitment below.

***Matthew 24:35** Heaven and earth shall pass away, but **my words shall not pass away.***

Combining Matthew chapter 24 with other truths from God's word reveals the extent of God's promise. It is really quite simple. God promised to preserve His *words* IN A BOOK till heaven and earth pass away. God's perfect word can be found in only one book today. Consider the following verses:

***Psalms 40:7** Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of **the book** it is written of me, & I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.*

***Isaiah 30:8** Now go, write it before them in a table, and **note it in a book**, that it may be for the time to come **for ever and ever**:*

***Isaiah 34:16** Seek ye out of **the book** of the LORD, and **read**: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.*

***Revelation 22:19** And if any man shall take away from **the words of the book** of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are **written in this book.***

God's promise makes no sense whatsoever if God has failed to insure that these words are available on this earth. Either God kept His promise and man has access to His words, or God lied and He lost some of these words. If some of the words have been lost then man does not have any assurance that he is reading the true words of God.

God is the God of the here and now, as well as, the God of history. Absolutely nothing takes Him by surprise. No honest historian would deny that God knew the extent of the influence of the King James Bible; how English would become the global language and how this Bible would be used to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth. He also knew that the King James Bible would be used as the basis for hundreds of foreign language translations. He also knew that Satan would attempt to thwart God's efforts by attacking that one book. The following verse reveals exactly how the word of God effectually works:

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*I Thessalonians 2:13* For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, **the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.**

The two key definitions for “effectual” offers further insight:

1. Producing the desired result or intended effect  
*"What effect does God want to have in your life?"*
2. Having adequate power or force to produce the effect  
*"What does God want to effect (produce) in your life?"*

Galatians provides another parallel usage of the same word, *effectually*. When the word of God is effectual, it gives the idea of it working *mightily* in a person's life

*Galatians 2:8* (For he that wrought **effectually** in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was **mighty** in me toward the Gentiles:)

The context of Galatians shows that the word of God works *effectually* in the life of every Bible believer submitted to its precepts. Yet, few people seem to understand the extent of the Bible corruption taking place, even in Paul's day during the first century. He distinguished between himself and the MANY who were corrupting God's word.

*II Corinthians 2:17* For we are not as **many, which corrupt the word of God:** but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

It is dishonest or just plain ignorance when modern version publishers footnote a particular passage in their modern versions, stating that the “*oldest and best manuscripts*” differ from the King James Bible. Just because something is older and more closely dated to the “*original*” does not mean that it is better, clearer or more accurate. In fact, in light of the scriptural statements warning of events taking place during the first century, it seems that these supposedly older manuscripts are more likely to be *corrupt*.

These “*older*” manuscripts owe their longevity to disuse and rejection by the faithful followers of Christ. The manuscripts that were received, believed and used were not left sitting around collecting dust. Their wear and tear meant that they had to be replaced by copies and then copies of copies. Anyone who has had to replace a worn out Bible can attest to the fact that the wear occurred because of use and not because of neglect.

Satan’s tactics are not always evident. He would like nothing better than to remain behind the scenes hidden from public view. Part of Paul's ministry was to renounce the hidden things of dishonesty by bringing error to light. He said that he did not handle the word of God deceitfully but preached Jesus Christ.

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***II Corinthians 4:1** Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; 2 But have **renounced the hidden things of dishonesty**, not walking in craftiness, **nor handling the word of God deceitfully**; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

Similar to the events taking place in the first century, the scripture warns of two of the most sinister trends taking place today. Paul penned that he did not corrupt the word of God, nor did he handle it deceitfully. Unfortunately, too many so-called Christian ministers today cannot honestly and boldly proclaim the same. As we follow the narrative, the solution for avoiding these two pitfalls becomes obvious. A minister of the gospel is to preach Christ.

***II Corinthians 4:5** For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.*

The preacher does not need to preach about himself; he is called to preach Christ Jesus the Lord. The preacher is not to preach his thoughts, his dreams or even his opinions. He is to stand firm, boldly proclaiming "*thus saith the Lord*" and allow the word of God to speak to his congregation.

### **The Destruction of Faith**

Sin affects everybody and everything with which it comes into contact. One of the primary results of preachers' corrupting and deceitfully handling the word of God is the destruction of the faith of the hearers. The Bible plainly points out that without faith, the preaching of God's word will be ineffective rather than life changing.

***Hebrews 4:2** For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but **the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith** in them that heard it.*

The Bible alone is insufficient to bring about change. A Christian, lacking any semblance of faith, will consider the Bible a closed book. Satan knows this! He knows that if he can destroy a person's faith in the word of God, he can make the word of God unprofitable in that person's life.

Satan's goal is to destroy faith in God's word through confusion and whatever other means are available to him. The preacher can preach until he is blue in the face and the Bible can be read endlessly, but the preaching and the Bible must be mixed with faith in the heart of the hearer to have its God-intended effect. This truth applies to the individual, the church and even to nations of people. The book of Psalms shows that Israel limited Almighty God through their actions.

***Psalms 78:41**...yea, they turned back and tempted God, and **limited the Holy one of Israel**.*

Similar to Israel's limiting of God, an individual or church lacking faith can also limit God. God stands poised to bless if only God's people will turn to Him in faith and fully trust Him. God is

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not the problem; man is! Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

### **Only One Thing Required**

The Bible mentions only ONE thing required of stewards. What is this single requirement? Is it to give monetarily to the church? Is it to attend church? Is it to be kind and courteous to everyone at all times? Here is what the Bible says:

***1 Corinthians 4:1** Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. **2** Moreover it is **required in stewards**, that a man be found **faithful**.*

The one thing required of each and every Christian is FAITHFULNESS!!!!!! Should a Christian be faithful in giving to the church, in church attendance and in his interactions with others? Yes, yes, yes! God takes all of these priorities and lumps them into one word—faithfulness.

Faithfulness covers every aspect of the Christian life. No matter the subject and no matter the question, the answer is faithfulness. How does God want me to give? How does God want me to witness? How does God want me to pray? How does God want me to attend church? The answer to each is “faithfully.” Faithfulness answers every question that a Christian can muster. Faithfulness covers every aspect of the Christian life.

How do you get the word of God to work effectually in your life?

***1 Thessalonians 2:13** For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, **which effectually worketh also in you that believe**.*

You are to receive the word of God as the word of God. You are to believe its every precept and to reject all of the counterfeits. Welcome to the 21<sup>st</sup> century battleground—the same battleground that has existed in various forms since the Garden of Eden. Never lose sight of the fact that a *faithless* approach to the word of God always produces a vain worship. Noah Webster, the compiler of the first English dictionary in 1828 may have said it best.

*The principles of genuine liberty, and of wise laws and administrations, are to be drawn from the Bible and sustained by its authority. The man, therefore, who weakens or destroys the divine authority of that Book may be accessory to all the public disorders which society is doomed to suffer.<sup>2</sup>*

*FM 8/4/96; VBC 10/2/01; JARRIEL 2/27/03; PILGRIM REST 2/10/08; DON HARRIS 6/15/08;*

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<sup>2</sup> Noah Webster. (n.d.). Great-Quotes.com. Retrieved March 30, 2011, from Great-Quotes.com Web site: [www.great-quotes.com/quote/1023704](http://www.great-quotes.com/quote/1023704)

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