

WEEK NINE

THE LIVING WORD

“Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them.

Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.”

JOSHUA 1:6–8

Imagine if someone offered you a special gift that would guarantee you direction, prosperity, and success. A gift that would give you the ability to rise above any circumstance and stand against any enemy. A gift that would keep you from sin, destruction, and despair. Wouldn't you be eager to receive this gift? Well, you can! Through the gift of the Bible, we have access to all of that power. If we read God's Word and apply it to our lives, we will see Him fulfill the promises contained in its pages.

Ask Yourself: Am I regularly consuming the Word of God and letting its truth replace my old way of thinking?

Write John 1:1–3

Jesus was present at the world's beginning, and He is the Word. Jesus and the Word of God are one and the same, which has profound implications! In Jesus, the Word was manifested in human form, and through the Word, we have Jesus manifested on written pages. If Jesus appeared to you in the flesh right now and someone around you was sick or depressed, you probably wouldn't have any trouble believing that Jesus could heal them and set them free. The same power that is in Jesus is in the Word. The Word of God is powerful! We have to receive that truth in order for the Word to work in our lives. If at some point we feel the Word has lost its power, it's

not because the Word has changed, it's because we've stopped mixing the Word with faith. If you want to fall in love with Jesus, find Him in the Word, and make the Word a priority in your life. If you want more power, consume more of His Word. Then the Word will come alive.

Write John 6:63

The word Spirit is “pneuma” in the Greek, and it means “the Presence or breath of God.” The Bible is not just a collection of words in a book that you can study to improve your life; instead, it is a powerful body of truth—the very breath of God—that has the ability to bring about its own fulfillment.

Write Isaiah 55:11

The Word is literally Spirit and life. If you try to understand the Bible with only your mind, it will be dry and without power. Studying the Word is important, but if we don't include the Spirit of God in the process, the words we read will be exactly that—just words on a page. If your experience with the Bible has been unexciting up to this point, rest assured you are not alone. Like trying to read a novel without the correct prescription glasses, many of us are trying to read the Bible without the one thing that will help us see. We need the Spirit of God for the Word to come alive!

“But I have a greater witness than John—my teachings and my miracles. The Father gave me these works to accomplish. And they prove that he sent me. And the Father who sent me has testified about me Himself. You have never heard His voice or seen Him face to face, and you do not have his message in your hearts, because you do not believe me—the one he sent to you. You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me!”

JOHN 5:36–39

In the New Testament, we often see Pharisees questioning the legitimacy of Jesus' claiming to be the Son of God. The Pharisees were religious scholars who knew the Scriptures better than anyone at that time. They could even recite the first five books of the Old Testament from memory! But in the Scripture above, Jesus points out that there is more to knowing God than intellectually knowing the Scriptures. He confronts the Pharisees, saying “You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me!” You are missing the big picture if you're only reading the Word to get a thought for the day.

The Bible can come alive, introduce you to the true character of Jesus, and genuinely change your life.

Ask Yourself: Am I reading the Bible out of duty or out of desire to know God?

THE WORD REVEALED

One of the most incredible stories of the Bible is the account of young Mary and her visit with the angel Gabriel who tells her she is about to become the mother of the Savior of the world. Take a look at the details in Luke 1:26–37.

Mary's initial response to the angel was to question how she could bear a child as a virgin. In verse 37, Gabriel says, "Nothing is impossible with God." The word "nothing" in Greek is two words: "no rhema." "Rhema" is the Greek word for "word," and it means "revealed word." You may have experienced the rhema Word of God while listening to a sermon: It seemed like the words leapt from the speaker's mouth and landed right in your heart. You may have also experienced rhema while reading your Bible: The words jumped off the page and spoke directly to the battle you were facing.

That's the Word at work! When it becomes revelation to you, no word God speaks will be void of the power for its fulfillment.

Write Luke 1:38 and note Mary's response to the angel's news.

After the Word became revelation to Mary, she believed. She had settled in her heart ahead of time that anything God would speak to her would be true. So when the rhema Word came from Gabriel, she was prepared to obey. Have you settled in your heart that once you hear God speak, you will obey? If aspects of the Word don't make sense to you or you're not yet seeing the fulfillment of a Biblical promise, remember that God is not looking for you to understand; He's looking for you to obey. We need to say, "God, I may not understand it, but I choose to trust You anyway."

Can you remember a time when you experienced the rhema Word of God?

WAYS TO ACTIVATE THE WORD OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE

1. Make God's Word a priority.

We will always make time for the things that are important to us. Just as our bodies need food for fuel, our spirits need the Word. As you spend time reading your Bible each day, it will bring you life.

2. Believe what you read.

Choose to believe that the Word is true. God says that it is impossible to please Him without faith. If you put your trust in God's Word, you will see your faith and confidence grow as you read it!

Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word about Christ.

ROMANS 10:17 NIV

3. Meditate on Scripture.

Don't just do a daily reading and put the Word away. Think about it. Psalm 1:2 says the righteous man delights in the law of the Lord and meditates on it day and night. The word “meditate” means “chew the cud.” In other words, you should get the nutrients out of it and swallow it—then, recall it again and chew on it some more. Chew on it all day long, and you'll be mindful of it and able to do what it says. Consistently recalling truth to mind paves the way for rhema or revelation to take place and puts faith into motion.

WAYS TO MEDITATE ON THE WORD OF GOD

1. Speak God's Word out loud.

Find declarations in Scripture that you can speak out loud to strengthen your spirit. Saying Scripture out loud effectively reminds your soul of what is true, and when the Word comes out of your mouth, it will build your faith. Memorize truth and promises from the Word so that you can speak specific Scripture over specific situations. For example, when you are battling the enemy, use a verse like 1 John 4:4 (NASB), “Greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world.” If the passage is not in first person, make it personal. Read Luke 10:19 like this: God has given me “authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm me.” When your circumstances appear overwhelming, remind yourself, out loud, of the truth. In the appendix, you will find Scripture to help you in situations you may face.

Write the following verses in first person, making them personal to you. Then say them out loud.

ROMANS 8:37

PSALM 27:1

PSALM 103:3

PHILIPPIANS 4:19

2. Think about the Word day and night.

If you are tuned in to God for only one of your sixteen waking hours, the world may often seem more real to you than God and His truth because you are spending much more time in the world. Bring your world and God's world together and make them one. Your secular world shouldn't be any different than your sacred world.

3. Make meditation practical.

When it comes to meditation, frequency is key. It's not how much, it's how often. Reading through the Bible three times a year may be a great goal, but it will be meaningless if you aren't taking time to allow specific truth to sink into your heart. Learn how to find nuggets and chew on them throughout the day. Choose a verse, and study it. Recite it to yourself. Talk about it with your friends. Write it down in a journal. Post it on your refrigerator or bathroom mirror. It may be more beneficial to read a specific verse ten times a day rather than reading for 30 minutes.

In Proverbs 3:1–4, underline what we need to do with God's words.

My child, never forget the things I have taught you. Store my commands in your heart. If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying. Never let loyalty and kindness leave you! Tie them around your neck as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart. Then you will find favor with both God and people, and you will earn a good reputation.

Read Psalm 119:97–100 and list the benefits of meditating on God’s Word.

DO WHAT IS WRITTEN

There may be times when we are actively studying the Word, learning its truth, and getting excited about it, but do we consistently do what it says? What would it be like if we began putting what the Bible says into practice every day? We would see the truth of the Word at work in our lives. The promises of God are fulfilled when we walk in obedience to His Word.

Read James 1:22. According to this verse, how can we deceive ourselves?

In James 1:23–25 (NLT), we find a premise to the promise of seeing God’s power work in our lives. “For if you listen to the Word and don’t obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like.

But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it."

Make your daily time in the Word sacred. Don't let anything interrupt. Find one verse that resonates with you, say it out loud, think about it all day long, put it into practice, and see what happens.

Meditation will turn into revelation.

Revelation will activate your faith.

When your faith is activated, things change!

Journal: *Below is a space for you to write what you're learning, thoughts on this week's topic, or what you feel God is leading you to do.*