

Words of Life

God wants everyone to be able to understand the Bible, for its message is essentially how we can have and enjoy the greatest kind of life, free from the futility of pointlessness, free from the limitations of our human, earthly thought patterns, free from the fear of death and dying.

Not everyone understands it this way. In fact, many are so convinced they can't understand the Bible that they never give it a second look. It's strange how we will study most any other subject with diligence only to have the acquired knowledge perish with us. But the words of the Bible are words of life!

...I have set before you *life* and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may *live*, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, and cleaving to him; for that means *life* to you...(Deut. 30:19, 20, italics mine).

Even here in the Old Testament, which many think offers only wrath, God plainly wants us to choose *life*. And there are many similar expressions in the Old Testament:

Thou shalt show me the path of life...(Ps. 16:11).

The fear of the Lord leads to life: and he who has it rests satisfied...(Prov. 19:23).

...the Lord has commanded the blessing, life for evermore (Ps. 133:3).

Thy commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me.

I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation.

I understand more than the aged, for I keep thy precepts.

I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep thy word.

I rejoice at thy word like one who finds great spoil. (Ps 119:98-101, 162).

Then there is Isaiah's word:

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace...(Isa. 55:10-12).

Notice, in the same way God blesses man with rain and snow--to feed him and sustain his life--so he also sends forth his word. His purpose is that we may have joy and peace (v. 12).

As one might expect, the New Testament overflows with the same thought. Listen to the words of the Lord Jesus:

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life (John 5:24).

...the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life (John 6:63).

...I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly (John 10: 10).

The rest of the New Testament uses terms like: "holding fast the word of life" (Phil. 2:16) and "...the word of his grace which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance..." (Acts 20:32). Peter calls it "the living and abiding word of God" (1 Peter 1:23).

The writer of Hebrews tells us: "...the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit...and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

So we seem to have ample evidence from the Bible itself that it is eminently worthwhile for us to read and understand the Bible. From the Scriptures we have cited, we could even put it stronger: it is really a "life and death" matter.

God's Problem

But God had a problem. Since he is obviously bigger than both of us--infinite, eternal and utterly unchanging--he could find it difficult to communicate with the likes of us who live on an entirely different plane. As Isaiah puts it, speaking for the Lord,

For just as the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than yours, and my thoughts than yours (Isa. 55:9, Living Bible).

Yet God was so concerned that we know the beauty of his plan and the surpassing scope of his love for us that he broke through the communication barrier. He took the trouble to put his thoughts toward us in a book, so we can know what life is all about, in time and eternity. But more than that, we can know him, this God who cares about us. His communication went even further: He sent his personal emissary, his Son, to show us what he is like and what we should be like. So we have both a written and a personal revelation.

In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature...(Heb. 1:1-3, italics mine).

First we are told, "God spoke in many and various ways by the prophets..." Multi-media communication we call it today. Then the Bible tells us he sent his Son, a living, walking, talking, loving demonstration of his own nature, in three-dimensional, living color. He really wants us to understand and know him! I suspect that no one has ever taken such initiative and such care to be understood.

His Book tells us more. It says: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth...(John 1:1 and 14).

He even called his Son "the Word" (and, I might add, the *last* word) so concerned is he about communication with man--for "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (John 1:18). God records the life and love of the *Living Word*, the Lord Jesus, in his Book in *written* words. The concern of God's heart to reveal himself to us is beautifully expressed by the apostle Paul in these words:

...we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is

written,

"Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him."

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words (1 Cor. 2:7-13 NASV, italics mine).

Did you catch the import of that?

- What man could not understand through his eyes, or ears, or heart, God has *revealed* to us. Some *revelation*, I'd say! Just what I always wanted to know, but could never find out. But that's not all.
- We have received the Spirit who is from God--*that we might* know the things God has freely given us. God sent us a private tutor to teach us of his good gifts so we might enjoy them. That's *illumination*. How good can it get? But that's still not all.
- He communicated in *words* taught by the Spirit, matching up spiritual concepts with spiritual words! That's *inspiration*. He took man's words, used human writers and speakers with all their fallibility and frailty, to say exactly what he wants us to know--in human language.

And what did he say? Well, you'll have to read his Book to get it all, but primarily he wants us to know that he loves us and is available to live our lives with us and in us to make life great--in time and eternity. But he doesn't kid us about the real problems and difficulties we'll face either. He just tells us the truth.

How does he say it? He isn't stuck with limited imagination and creativity as we often are, so he uses all of the various and varied means of communication available in human language. He uses straight-from-the-shoulder talk like logical, reasoning discourse; commands as to exactly what we must do; real-life stories about real people; as well as less direct but equally effective teaching through parables, figures of speech, poetry, songs, history, intrigue, prophecy, and all kinds of blood-and-thunder stories.

But in all of its various moods and modes of expression he tells us the truth about himself--and about us.

[Phase 1: Chapter 2](#)

[Back to Discovery Publishing Page](#)

[Back to Peninsula Bible Church Home Page](#)

First published in book form in 1978 by Word Books, Waco, Texas. [Copyright \(C\) 1997 Discovery Publishing](#), a ministry of [Peninsula Bible Church](#). This data file is the sole property of Discovery Publishing, a ministry of Peninsula Bible Church. It may be copied only in its entirety for circulation freely without charge. All copies of this data file must contain the above copyright notice. This data file may not be copied in part, edited, revised, copied for resale or incorporated in any commercial publications, recordings, broadcasts, performances, displays or other products offered for sale, without the written permission of Discovery Publishing. Requests for permission should be made in writing and addressed to Discovery Publishing, 3505 Middlefield Rd. Palo Alto, CA. 94306-3695.
