

How to Pray the Word

Fasting and long hours of prayer do not build faith.....reading books about faith and men of faith and their exploits stirs in the heart a deep passion for faith, but does not build faith. The Word alone is the source of faith. E.W.Kenyon.

Little of the Word with little prayer is death to the spiritual life. Much of the Word with little prayer gives a sickly life. Much of prayer with little of the Word gives more life, but without steadfastness. A full measure of the Word and prayer each day gives a healthy and powerful life. Andrew Murray.

A personal observation: I consider this chapter as of the utmost importance. To me it constitutes the foundation of the book. Our whole life, also our prayer life, should be built on the Word of God. One of the main purposes of this book is to bring people back to pray the Word.

During the past few decades a major prayer awakening was experienced worldwide. The prayer movement went through many phases and many different new things were tried out. A return to the Word is one of the most positive things that crystallized from of this. Increasingly Christians are using the Bible again as their handbook on prayer.

In the next paragraphs we deal with several matters regarding the Word and praying the Word.

The Bible is the Word of God

The Word is *unchangeable and indestructible*, because it is the eternal Word of God. People come and go, but the Word remains unchanged. We have to continue to read the Word, pray the Word, believe in the Word, obey the Word and live the Word.

A.W. Tozer said: We are not to edit the Word. It is not for us to adapt the Word to suit us. It is not for us to determine where the Word is right or wrong. John Newton said: I will put down all inconsistencies in the Bible to my own ignorance.

Our job is not to judge the Word, but to obey it. Too many people have opinions about the Word, want to judge the Word, but do not want to submit to the Word.

The Word comes to us on God's authority. You choose one of only two options: you either reject the authority of the Word or you accept the authority of the Word.

The Word is not dependent on our emotions or our intellectual understanding. The Word stands above our emotions or intellect.

The 16th century Reformation taught us the important principal of *sola Scriptura*, which means: only the Word (the Word only).

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim.3:16-17) For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet.1:21) These principals guided the Church through all centuries. Do not compromise or discard any of these principals. The opinions of people change, but the Word stands firm. Live from the Word and pray the Word.

The power of the Word

Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. (Rom.10:17) Without faith we cannot pray because prayer without faith does not please God. (Heb.11:6) God confirm His Word and His promises with an oath. (Heb.6:17) He cannot be unfaithful to His Word. God reveals Himself in His Word. He shows His character to us through His Word. The promises in the Word are in accordance with His being and His character, to which He can never be unfaithful.

“All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.” (1 Pet.1:24-25) The Word comes to us with authority because God has authority and power. God will never break His Word just as He will never break His covenant with the day or the night. (Jer.33:20)

The Father refers to *the Son as the Word*. Before the world was created the Word was already there. (1John 1:2) The Word and the Lamb that was slain and who is standing in the centre of the throne, are one and the same Person. The authority of the written Word is in the risen, living, almighty Jesus.

The Word of God is not in chains. The powers of darkness and the powerlessness of people cannot bind it. (2 Tim.2:9) Jails, hospitals, drug addiction, the darkest night, depression and extreme poverty cannot limit the Word of God. He who appeals to the Word, appeals to the living Christ for whom nothing is impossible. When the Word of God is being prayed by a believing, praying heart, it will break the power of evil, set us free from sin, save us in critical situations and change the world. The Word of God has power to create and re-create. Hudson Taylor said: *“We (Christians) are supernatural people: born again through a supernatural birth, driven by a supernatural power and nourished by supernatural food, taught by a supernatural Teacher from a supernatural Book.”*

The Word is God: John 1:1-3 teaches us: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.* Jesus is the Word of God and the Word is God. The Word was from the beginning. Because God is a triune God, God and the Word can never be separated.

God made Himself subservient to His Word. God is faithful to His Word. We can say that God ‘submits’ to His Word. *For You have magnified Your Word above all Your Name* (Ps.138:2, NKJV). This means that God sets His Word above His Name. What His Word says, He will do.

The Word of God creates. (John 1:3) There is creative power in the Word. Jesus is the Word of God and through the Word God created the universe. When God speaks, His Word creates. God the Father *thought* the Creation, the Son *spoke* the Word and the Holy Spirit *brought forth* the creation. In Genesis 1 we read that God said: *“Let there be light...”* *“Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants.... “Let the earth produce living creatures....”* The words God spoke created; out of nothing it brought something into being.

God’s Word is alive, it re-creates and restores. Jesus Christ, the Word, came to earth to restore, to re-create, to reconcile. *The Word of God is living and active.* (Heb.4:12) The words spoken by God are alive, full of power, release energy, and are active. When we take the Word of God, the Word that comes from the mouth of God; and speak it, it has creative power. When we speak the Word of God it brings life, creates and re-creates, brings into being, reconciles, releases power, destroys the works of the devil and restores order. Take note of the following parts of Scripture about the life-giving power of the Word: *I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live* (John 5:25) *The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.* (John 6:63) The Holy Spirit, who is the spirit of Christ, the Word, brings forth life. What Jesus tells us comes from the Spirit and brings life. The Word of God cannot be chained. (2 Tim.2:9) It quietens the storms, heals the sick, raises the dead, restores relationships, reconciles people with God. The Word of God

destroys the work of the devil, drives out evil spirits and sets people free from the power of Satan. When Satan tempted Jesus, Jesus answered him with the words: *"It is written...."* and *"It is also written..."* (Matt 4:4, 7, 10) He overcame the temptations by quoting from Scripture. We do not gain victory over the evil one through our own formulas; our victory lies in living from God's Word as Jesus did.

God is His promises. God gives us His promises in writing in His Word. The Word is God's promise. The Spirit of God is the Promise of God. (Acts 1:4) We read in Acts 1 how the Early Christian church asked for the Promise of God, the One God promised. They asked for God's promise and they got it. God acts on His Word, He keeps His promises, and He fulfils His promises, because His promises are His words. In His sovereignty He voluntarily put Himself in submission to His Word. This means, in fact, that His Word is His command to Himself. Take careful note of what the Word says about the promises (the words of God): *Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. (Heb.10:23) O Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant. (2 Sam.7:28) Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, (Rom.4:20) "Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses." (1 Kings 8:56) The word of the Lord stands forever. And this is the word that was preached to you. (1 Pet.1:25) Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. (Matt.24:35) Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth (John 17:17) Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. (Ps.119:89)*

The Word is active: Heb.4:12 describes this characteristic: *For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.* In Rev.1:16 we read of Jesus: *out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword.* The Word is like a sword that divides, exposes, brings to light, and helps us to understand what is really happening in our hearts. God says: *Is not My Word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces (Jer.23:29)*

The Word and God's creative purpose: We are God's representatives on earth. We act on God's behalf. Gen.1:26 teaches us that God commissioned *us* to rule on earth, to cultivate it and keep watch over it. We are co-workers of God; He rules over the earth *through* us. According to His Word, God chose not to rule on earth without us. The dominion over the earth was given to us. We have a choice in the course of events. God only achieves His purpose with creation when man allows God to reveal His will to him and then in obedience execute His will. Without our permission and co-operation, He will not do it – not because He cannot, but because this was His decision and He made Himself subservient to His Word. Read Matt.17:20 again: *I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.* It is important to note that there is a connection between what we say and what is possible or impossible. What we say will create, will bring into existence.

God's desire is not that we work for Him, but with Him. We are co-workers of God. *The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man. (Ps.115:16)* The Word teaches us our creative purpose, why we were made, what our calling is, what we are destined for. The promises in the Word are to enable us to reach our creative purpose (destiny, calling). God is not in the first place interested in our plans, our ideas, our ideals and our desires. He created us for a purpose and in His sovereignty and omnipotence He is busy working out His creative purpose for us and for the world. That is why we have to live on the basis of and out of the Word. Josh.1:8 and Ps.1:1-2 teach us to reflect on the Word day and night. Ps.119 teaches us that the Word should control and saturate every facet of our life, our thoughts, will and emotions.

The sphere of the impossible: The Word helps us to understand what is possible for God. Luk.1:37 teaches us: *Nothing is impossible for God.* The direct translation would be: *Not one of God's words is without power.* The Word takes us into the sphere of the humanly impossible. The Word that goes out of God's mouth will not return empty but will accomplish what He desires and achieve the purpose for which He sent it. (Isa.55:11) When we pray the Word; the creative, re-creational and restoring power of the Word is released. God is *I AM.*

That means He can, He is able.... I AM is present tense, He is there every moment, actively busy working. Acts 20:32 tells us about the working of the Word. *"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."*

We must speak the words of God and build our lives on the Word: The Word is full of grace and truth. (John 1:14) When we speak the words of God, it brings God's grace and truth to people. Jesus says in John 17:8: *"I gave them the words you gave me."* Jesus only spoke what He heard from the Father. *"For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."*(John 12:49-50) *"The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me."* (John 14:10, 24)

Note 1 John 5:14: *This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.* Where do we find the will of God? In His Word. In other words, when we ask anything according to God's Word, God's will, we have confidence to approach God and know that we will receive what we have asked.

Jeremiah said he ate God's words: *when your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God Almighty.* (Jer.15:16) Mary, the mother of Jesus, told the waiters at the wedding; *"Do whatever he tells you."* In Luk.1:38 Mary told the angel: *"May it be to me as you have said."* In other words, may the word that he brought from God and spoke, be fulfilled. Mary gave her consent that it may happen. The apostle Peter took Jesus at His word and he saw the power of God. *"Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."*(Luk.5:5) Jesus teaches in Matt.4:4 *"It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

We have to make sure that we live from the Word of God if we want to succeed spiritually, be prosperous and do the will and the works of God. *Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.* (Josh.1:8) *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*(2 Tim.3:16-17)

The relation between the Word and faith: The Word activates faith. What people say can motivate us to believe, can stir the desire to believe in our hearts, but it is not until we read, pray and proclaim the Word itself, that faith enters into our hearts. In Luk.4:32 we read: *They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority.* Why? Because when we speak the words of God we can speak with authority and this authority creates faith in our hearts. Faith comes from the Word we hear. *Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.* (Rom.10:17)

The world was formed and put in order by the Word of God to serve His purpose for the world. *By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.* (Heb.11:3) When we speak the Word of God in faith and claim the promises, it brings order, it creates and re-creates.

When Satan wants to deceive and seduce us and make us powerless, he brings doubt about the Word of God into our hearts. Take a look at the following two verses: *Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"*(Gen.3:1) *Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.*(Luk.8:12) This was Satan's scheme from the beginning and it still is. When we doubt the Word and the words of God, we do not have any power to speak life and order, and consequently we are destroyed.

Why do we have to pray the Word?

When we understand the authority of the Word and the position of the Word in our lives, it follows that we have to pray the Word. The following are some reasons why we should pray the Word:

- God introduces His will in the Word. When we pray the Word we pray the will of God and when we pray according to the will of God, the Word says our prayers will be answered. (1 John 5:14-15)
- Secular books provide knowledge and insight, but it is only when we read the Word that we *come to faith*. When we pray the Word, faith is sown in our hearts. (Rom.10:17)
- The Word/Scripture reveals God's priorities. When we pray according to the Word we learn what these priorities are and we will consequently be able to adapt our lives according to these priorities.

The Word has *authority*. When God the Father created the universe He did it through His Son, the Word. The Word spoke a word and there was light and life and people and heavenly bodies. When we proclaim the Word, it becomes a declaration in the spiritual kingdom—the Word still has the same power. When we call on the living Word, it has the power to give life and to re-create.

The Word teaches us about God—His character, power, works, abilities and attributes. When we understand God better we are able to pray with more faith. Faith is as strong as the One in whom you believe.