

# The Ability of God's Word - Study 2

by Bob Hoekstra

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*The ability of God's Word is its power to produce a rescued life, a changed life, and a watered and fruitful life in believers.*

**Duration:** 55:59

**Scripture:** Psalm 1:1-3, Psalm 19:7-8, John 5:39-40, Romans 10:17, Romans 15:4, James 1:21-22

**Topics:** "Gods Word", "Spiritual Transformation"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the transformative power of God's Word, highlighting the importance of seeking understanding and receptivity through the Spirit's work. It explores how the Scriptures have the ability to produce a rescued life, a changed life, a watered and fruitful life, a persevering, comforted, hope-filled life, and a faith-developing life. Ultimately, the sermon focuses on the central theme of the Scriptures testifying of Christ, leading to a Christ-focused, Christ-acquainted, and Christ-like life.

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## Transcript

Well, our study today continues on the ability of God's Word, and our title in this study is God's Life-Giving, Life-Developing Word. And we need the Spirit of the Lord to work in His Word in our hearts for understanding and receptivity, so let's pray together about this grand issue. Lord, we thank You so much for Your Word.

Lord, we could only underestimate its majesty and the many ways You've used Your Word in our lives thus far in our pilgrimage. And Lord, we pray, as we open up the Word of God, would You pour out Your Holy Spirit with anointing, with insight, with understanding, with confirmation, with affirmation. And we pray, Lord, that You would work deeply within us, causing Your Word to do that which it alone has the ability to do.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. God's Life-Giving, Life-Developing Word.

Some scriptures, again, that show insight from heaven into what God's Word can do. The ability of God's Word. Again, when we come to the Word of God, the focus is not biblically on our ability to take the truths that are found there and then manufacture out of them a life pleasing to God.

It's great to have that desire to have a life pleasing to God, but the means to get there is so phenomenally heavenly and beyond just our own human resolve and capacity to function. The Word of God, inspired,

authoritative, inerrant, it's also all-sufficient. It brings along with it, since it's God's Word, the ability to make changes in our lives.

And it's good to study that theme. When we study the theme of the ability of God's Word, that truth draws us more and more to the Word of God. It also builds in us a greater confidence in the Word of God.

Also, that makes us more ready and more equipped to share and minister the Word of God with others. All of these consequences of the great ability of the Word of God. We'll look at 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 ability aspects of the Scriptures.

First, in James chapter 1, verses 21 and 22, where we see that God's Word is able to produce a rescued life. A rescued life. We need it, everyone needs that.

And the Word itself has the ability to produce that kind of life. James chapter 1, verse 21. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls.

But be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. We're called here to lay aside what you might call things that quench the work of the Spirit of God in our lives. Things that undermine appetite and openness and destroy people's receptivity to the Word of God.

Filthiness, overflow of wickedness. And instead, rejecting such things. Lord, I don't want to get into such things, I don't want to walk in such things.

I renounce them. But instead, Lord, I want to receive with meekness your implanted Word. Receiving with meekness.

You know, this is another corollary important issue. When you're thinking about the ability of the Word of God, then you're thinking about, okay, how to respond to the Word of God. How to access that ability.

Well, here it's described as receiving the Word with meekness. With meekness. With a humble spirit admitting our great need for the Word.

Meek. Compliant with another. Yielding before another.

And, of course, the other is the Lord Himself that is speaking to us through His Word. To receive with meekness. What a gracious arrangement for the Lord.

Not that anyone has to be an instant expert on the Word, or even be known along the way by others as an expert on the Word. But, oh, to be known as one who comes before the Lord in His Word with a meek heart. With a submissive, compliant attitude.

You know, Lord, what you say, that's how I want to live. In fact, this is really what verse 22 is about. Wanting to be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving ourselves.

That's part of a meekness in coming to the Word. Wanting our will displaced by the will of God revealed in the Word. Not just hearing the Word.

Oh, it is so important to hear the Word. But, not settling for just hearing it and saying, well, I can check off that book, I've heard the whole thing, I've studied the whole thing, gone through the whole thing, now I'll go

on to the next project. No, in hearing the Word, Lord, the words that I hear from you and your Word, I want my life to be defined, explained, and guided by all of that.

All of that would be related, I do believe, to receiving with meekness. The Word of God. And notice what it's called here, the implanted Word.

It's like a language you'd use to plant a seed into an appropriate soil for growth. Well, the soil where the Lord wants to plant His Word is our heart. And the way to open up our heart to take that seed is to receive it in meekness, anticipating this great ability of the Word, this great ability, which is able to save your souls.

And of course, this here, this is written to believers. Verse 19, So then, my beloved brethren. This is a word to believers.

You say, well, wait a minute. Talking to believers about the saving of their souls? Wasn't that already accomplished? Or is it in question? Is it in danger? Does it have to be entered into again? Oh, no, not at all. This is not talking with believers about salvation from sin and condemnation and justification.

This is talking about an ongoing rescued life. Yes, everyone on earth needs to have their soul saved from guilt, condemnation, alienation from God, from the destination of hell. But we're talking to believers here.

There's another kind of saving work that needs to be done there. In fact, that's why we used in this section heading, the Word is able to produce a rescued life. Rescue is a good synonym for this word save.

And there are all kinds of things that we believers need to be rescued from. There are things we need to be rescued through. There are destinations and objectives that the Lord is aiming us toward, but we need to be rescued and saved and delivered unto.

And the Word of God is able to produce a rescued life. Rescuing us from foolishness, rescuing us from fruitlessness, rescuing us from confusion, rescuing us from the heavy attacks and battles of the enemy. There are all kinds of things that believers need to be saved, have their souls saved.

Their souls, their mind, emotion, will, personality, character, rescued from, through, or unto. The Word has the ability to do it. And so often the tendency is all these things we need to be saved from and rescued through, it is natural thinking, you know, that, okay, it's up to me.

No, what's up to us is going to the right place to get the right help from the right one, the Lord, and do it in the right way. The right place is His Word. The right way, in the Word, meekly receiving it.

It's almost like saying, Lord, here's my heart, plant the Word deep in the core of my being and let the Word go to work on me and in me and through me, rescuing me from, through, and unto, all those things that would accomplish the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God in our lives. God's Word is able to do that. One of the many reasons we want to go into it and receive it humbly.

A second issue in the ability of God's Word, let's look in Psalm 19. Psalm 19. These scriptures are about the ability of God's Word to produce a changed life, a changed life, a transformed life.

Psalm 19, verses 7 and 8. Notice as we read in these two verses, there's a construction here in the way God speaks to us in this section of scripture that's kind of like we found in Hebrews 4.12, where first there was a statement about the character of the Word of God, living, sharp, powerful, and then we were told what it's able to do. That's how the construction is here. Watch as we go through.

First, a statement about the character of the Word of God, and after each statement about the character of the Word, there's a statement about the ability of the Word, what it's able to do in our lives. First, the law of the Lord is perfect. That's the character of the Word.

Therefore, what is it able to do? Converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure. There's the character again.

What's it able to do with that character? Making wise the simple. Verse 8, the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

Now let's think of each of those. They have great encouragement for us and great insight on how to minister with others that we might be discipling or encouraging or comforting. Psalm 19, 7, the law of the Lord is perfect.

The law of the Lord. When you hear that phrase, a natural tendency would be to think of the Ten Commandments or commandments in the Scripture. I think there are two basic usages of that kind of phrase.

The usages would be the specific, precise, limited context, say particularly the Ten Commandments, the law of Moses, the law of the Lord. But there's another use of that phrase. That is the broadest possible generic use, synonymous with what? The Word of God.

The Word of God. And you have four descriptive terms of the Word of God in these two verses. The law of the Lord, the testimony of the Lord, the statutes of the Lord, the commandment of the Lord.

How do you know whether the narrow usage of the word is in view or the broad generic? How do you know whether it's the Ten Commandments or more broadly the whole Word of God? Well, that would have to be revealed by the context itself, by what is being said about that terminology. And it's very clear here that this is the broad use of the term, the law of the Lord, because the ability of the word is given, converting the soul. Does the law of the Lord, Ten Commandments version, narrow version of that usage, can that convert a soul? No.

By works of the law, no flesh shall be justified. You can't get saved by the Ten Commandments. Converted, you know, new life.

You can't. You get convicted of your need to be converted by the narrow use of that term, the law of the Lord, the Ten Commandments. So this is, and all of these are the broad generic synonyms for the Word of God.

But notice the character of the word. The law of the Lord is perfect. It's perfect.

It's flawless. Therefore, it is able to convert the soul, to save the soul, to restore the soul, to renew the soul, to revive our lives. God's Word is able to do that.

And obviously, this is the great need everyone on the planet has, you know. To meet the Lord in His Word, the gospel through the Word, and then stay in the Word day by day along the way, that the Word of God might do this ongoing work in our lives. Salvation, transformation, restoration, renewal, reviving.

People talk about recovery movement, recovery groups. Listen, a group gathered around the Word are people who are going to be recovered, you know. Who are going to be recovered from the trouble they

were in to the place of life God has for them.

God's always had a plan and provision for that. And it is His Word, His able Word. Able to bring a changed life from death in Adam to new life in Christ, and then transformation by the work of the Spirit through the Word of God.

Middle of verse 7, the testimony of the Lord is sure. Here's another characteristic of the Word of God. The Word of God is sure.

It's certain. It's reliable. You can count on it.

You can stake your time and eternity upon it. It's sure. So what is it able to do in light of that characteristic? It's able to make wise the simple.

Boy, everyone starts out one measure of a fool or another, you know. And everyone needs to be made wise. Well, here's where it happens and here's who it happens with.

It happens in the Word of God. It happens in the Word of God. And in what kind of life does it take place? The simple.

The simple. You know, to come to the Word of God, to put it sort of in the vernacular as a simpleton, you know, Lord, what do I know? I know so little. And any right good thing I've learned from you anyway.

And there are many, many, many things I still need to learn. And every believer on the face of the earth, young or old, can rightly say that before the Lord. That's really coming as a simple one.

What would the contrast be in the vernacular? The know-it-all, you know. One who thinks they've got the answers for everything. You know, the testimony of the Lord doesn't make wise the self-proclaimed wise ones.

The wise guys, you know. If you're a wise guy, you're not going to wise up in the Word. Why? Because you think you already know it, you know.

It's those who come to the Word as a simple one. One needing to learn. That's the one in whose life the sure, reliable Word of God goes to work to make them wise.

And you can see them here and there and everywhere in the body of Christ. In a given group at a given time, they might not be the highest percentage of the group. But you can find where the Lord is known and loved and where people get into His Word.

You can find wise people and you can even recognize how they got there. They lived in the Word and they have a simple heart and mind. They still believe that there are things they need to keep learning from the Lord.

The testimony of the Lord is sure. It's reliable. You can count on it.

And because you can put that confidence in it, what it does with those who trust in it, it turns them into wise people. Verse 8. The statutes of the Lord are right. There's another declaration of the character of the Word of God.

It's right. It's correct. If you find anything in life that differs from the Word of God, you know which one is wrong and which one is right.

And it doesn't matter if you're talking to the genius theoreticians in the world of science or philosophy or wherever. If there is a difference between what people hold to and say and teach and the Word of God, you know they're wrong and the Word is right. Because this is just one of the characteristics of the Word of God.

It's right. It's correct. After all, this is from a God who knows all and a God who does not err.

So whatever He has said by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit is right. And people who embrace that, here's what happens to them. The Word of God is able to rejoice their heart, to produce within them an inner joy.

You know, it is such a joy to know where to go to find the right answers. For life, for death, for heaven, for hell. To find out about God, to find out about people.

It's in the Word of God. His statutes are right. And embracing that, taking in the Word, knowing that, it rejoices the heart.

And then in verse 8 in the middle, The commandment of the Lord is pure. Another characteristic of the Word of God. The commandment of the Lord is pure.

There are no impurities there. It's not standing on, based on or proclaiming the speculations of man. There's no humanistic additives there, you know.

It's just pure. Right from a God who is pure. That's the character of the Word.

So what's it able to do in light of that? Enlighten the eyes. You might say, enabling us through His Word to see that which is unseeable by the natural eye or by the natural eye of perception, the human mind. Okay, we've seen some here about the ability of God's Word to produce a rescued life.

Also the ability of God's Word to produce a changed life. Let's go to Psalm 1 and look at the ability of the Word to produce a watered and fruitful life. This planet is a dry and weary land where no water is.

People who don't know the Lord and the access to His living water through the Word of God. What dry lives they live. What barren lives they live.

What thirsty, frustrated lives they live. But the Word of God, it's able to produce a watered, fruitful life. Let's look at Psalm 1, verses 1 through 3. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither, and whatever he does shall prosper. What a great ability of the Word is revealed here and inferred here.

Psalm 1, speaking of our need for God to work in our hearts and lives, and the warning to watch out for the foolishness of man. Verse 1, blessed is the man. Every clear-thinking person, until you really fear the Lord, that's the beginning of knowledge.

Every clear-thinking person wants to seek God for blessing in his life. Well, here's where it comes. Blessed is the man.

This is the person, the life that is blessed by God. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly. It is the will of God that we not get our counsel from the ungodly.

Where is that? The world! Man's theories, man's philosophies, man's guesses about how man works, and what's going on inside, and how the mind works, and the heart gets changed, and all that. Not to take that from dead and blind human theoreticians speculating on humanity. We don't walk in that path, nor stand in the path of sinners, not finding our friendships of fulfillment and our path of endeavor with those who do not know the Lord, nor sits in the seat of the scornful, kind of hanging out, looking like we're a part of those who disdain the things of God.

But, instead, but, not finding our hope in the world, but, verse 2, his delight. Who is this one referred to by the pronoun his? The blessed man. Here's the delight of the blessed man.

It's in the law of the Lord, again, the word of God. And in his law, in his word, the blessed person meditates day and night, receives the word and thinks about the word. You know, biblical meditation, not humanistic worldly meditation, where you're kind of taught to empty yourself, you know.

This is a big thing in the emerging church movement. And even among those in the church world that are trying to avoid using the term emerging church, but they're still into this contemplative spirituality where they kind of empty their mind. The only thing they might add is maybe a mantra of repetition or something to try to get focused in, as they say, on God.

No, just get in God's word and meditate on it. Biblical meditation is objective thinking on the content of the truth of the word of God, exercising your mind to just consider, read a verse, think about it, pray about it, read a chapter, think about it, pray about it, read a book, think about it, pray about it, the pieces, the parts, the insight on God and life and all of that. That's what we're to delight in.

And here's what happens to people that live like that. He, the blessed person, shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither, and whatever he does shall prosper. Whatever he gets into shall find spiritual success.

That would be true biblical prosperity. So a life fed by the word of God, not fed by the counsel of man, a life that's delighted with the word of God. You know, not just routinely tucking it in because someone said they ought to, but actually delighted with the word, you know, motivated by it, excited to think that here are the words of the living God, that He has kindly inspired holy men of old to write down for our reading the things that are on the heart and mind of the Lord God Almighty.

Wow. Don't let the pages and the package and the cover fool you. This is not just more religious literature.

You know, people have their philosophy books. False religions of the world have their, quote, holy books. And everywhere you go, almost, people have some kind of packaged and organized writing.

You know, here's ink on pages and leather or pretend leather, who knows what it is, you know? And it looks like another religious book. No, no, don't be fooled, huh? What we hold in our hands, this is so unlike anything else on the entire planet. This is the word of God.

These words came from the heart and mind of God. And, oh, we're to delight in them. I think often when I read this verse, I think of my dear wife of 42 years now when we were engaged way back decades ago.

We wrote to each other. Boy, when her letters arrived, wow, I'm telling you, I was not casual about those letters in any way. I was highly motivated to get at those contents, you know? I didn't toss it over or say, well, if I have time, I'll check this out in a few days.

No way. If I was out at the mailbox, it was open before I got into the apartment, you know? And one reading, are you kidding? I'd have five immediate readings the first time I opened it, you know? I loved this person, and I had reason to believe that she loved me. And I wanted to hear from her.

And I would mull over phrases, you know? Read it again. Oh, man, I didn't catch that implication, you know, the first time I read it. Well, if that can happen among human beings on human communication, how about with the living God? You know, this is his love letter to us.

For God so loved the world. The glory of this, he loved us so much he gave his son for us, and this is where he tells us about all of that, you know? Those who stay away, those who stay away from the philosophies of man, those who get into the Word of God and recognize it for what it is and sense more and more the ability of what it can do, it just becomes a delight. What a delight.

What a privilege. What a pleasure to be in the Word of the living God. And then to think on it.

Folks have sometimes said to me, what have you found most valuable in ministering the Word? I'll tell you this, paying attention to the Word prayerfully. I've found nothing greater than that. Just prayerfully pay attention to the Word of God and read it and pray in it and pray about it and read in it and do it again and do it again.

The words deserve that much attention. This is God speaking. Surely we should quiet our hearts and focus on his Word and say, Lord, by your Spirit let me hear from you.

Those who live that way will find God's Word is able to turn their life into a tree planted by the rivers of water, a luxuriant growing spiritual entity, a tree that brings forth its fruit, fruitfulness spiritually speaking. And the leaf will not wither, even though there will be dry seasons at times around us or within us. But whatever we engage with in the name of the Lord, fueled by the ability of the Word of God, it's going to prosper.

It's going to come to spiritual benefit for us and those to whom we minister. Let's look at another one. Let's go to Romans 15 verse 4. Romans 15 verse 4. And see that God's Word is able to produce a persevering, comforted, hope-filled life.

It's kind of a mouthful, but it's a heartfelt too. Isn't that what we want? Isn't that what we need? A persevering life? A comforted life? A hope-filled life? Wow, just those three words. What a blessing to find out that God's Word is able to bring that to us and specifically mentions that in just one simple verse of Scripture.

Romans 15 verse 4. For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we, through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope. Whatever things were written before, all these writings of the Scripture, they're written for our learning. Paul's speaking of his team, missionary team, and the saints at Rome that he was writing to and applicable to any group of saints that read it.

These Scriptures were written for our learning. To what end? What does God want to affect in us by His Word? That we, through the patience, that could be translated perseverance, and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope. We need patience in our lives.

Both the absence of impatience, where we just can't wait and let God do His work in His time. And it's very much related to the other translation, perseverance. There are so many things, aren't there, in life that we're just called to persevere through, to press on through.

Yeah, there are difficulties and possibilities God just lifts us out of sometimes, and don't we appreciate that? He's just so hard and impossible and agonizing and painful, and we cry out, and He just lifts us out of the dilemma. I had one of those yesterday, where just a phone call out of the blue came. I was telling the guys earlier, the ID caller said, the U.S. government.

That's an ominous starting to your telephone call. I'm thinking, whoa, who's after me from the government? I know the devil's after me, but who's coming after me? I picked it up, and it was a lady who works for an agency of correspondence and confirmation on files and details, and it just happened to be on issues that we've been wrestling with, making some decisions for our family and our ministry, and this lady worked for that agency, and it was astounding. She said, I was going to send you a letter, but I said, no, I'll call them, and I called and didn't get you, and I wrote the letter, and I was just about to put it in the agency mail, and I thought, I'm going to call their number one more time, and I was there and answered the phone, and she said, I'm so glad I found you.

We can maybe just handle this in a few minutes on the phone. You may have some questions. When I heard the agency she worked for, I said, I can't believe you've called.

I said, we've been wrestling with things and been talking to experts and conflicting opinions, and there's confusion, and my wife and I were just talking last night and thought that this was a course of action, but we're just thinking if we just had some good counsel, and she said, well, let's see if I can help you, and she's a very kind lady, and she said, tell me about where you work, and I said, well, it's the International Prison Ministry. Oh, you work at a ministry. How blessed you are, and I'm thinking, wow, I didn't expect that response, you know, and she said, tell me about that ministry, and I said, well, it was founded years ago by my father who was a friend of inmates and chaplains and helped them so much through six and a half decades of ministry.

They nicknamed him Chaplain Ray, and she said, you're kidding. Chaplain Ray was your father. I'm now beside myself in amazement, you know.

Wanted to check that idea. U.S. government? There's no way. She must be an undercover agent for God.

So we talked, oh, I know, we talked 30, 40 minutes, and we talked more about the Lord than we did about this issue that turns out she was able to give great help on, and I said to her, I said, this is such a blessing, and she said, yeah, this is quite a divine encounter, and I said, do you have an extension there as we follow through on this if I want to call you on these issues for clarification? She said, I'll tell you what. We've got a better idea. Let me give you my personal cell phone number, and I thought, well, that's good.

That's 24-7 access maybe. I mean, it's wonderful when the Lord just lifts you out of something, you know, and that was a critical dilemma that just was pressing in on us. It was like the Lord just lifted because she said along the way, well, listening to what you're saying, she said, it's probably unconventional for me to

say this as an agent here, but I would say this is what you should consider doing, and she just laid it out, and I said, I can't believe you said that.

She said, my wife and I were talking about that very course of action last night. It is a blessing when the Lord just, you know, here's the mess crushing in on us, and he just delivers us. But as we know, many things God has ordained are not like that for us.

They're more where we learn patience, and we get humbled, and we get stretched, and perseverance becomes critical. Well, look, these things were written for our learning, that we through the perseverance of the Scriptures might have hope. The perseverance of the Scriptures.

The Scriptures are the entity that has the ability to develop in our lives perseverance. That's why it's called the perseverance of the Scriptures. Those who are in the Word find that the Word received and walked in develops in their lives.

Patience or perseverance. And then this matter of comfort. Oh, how often we need to be comforted.

This planet, maybe you've noticed, is an uncomfortable place. There's just a lot of pain. There's just a lot of difficulty.

It's fallen. It's flawed. It's not the way God designed it.

This is not what He intended. Heaven! That's what He intended. So, along the way, we're going to need much comfort.

Much comfort. So, it's the Word where we get it. That we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures.

The Lord says to us in our trials through His Word, There, there, I'm with you. It's going to be okay. I'm for you.

I'm not against you. I'll never leave you. I'll never forsake you.

It's the comfort of the Scriptures. And when those two are developing in our lives, the perseverance and comfort of the Scriptures, this leads to hope. For whatever things were written before were written for our learning that we through the patience, perseverance, and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

As we're in the Word, letting the Word work in us. It's patience-developing, perseverance-building work, and it's consoling work. This just leads to hope.

Hope is a result. Hope, you know, expectation, encouragement, confidence in God, all of this coming into our lives right through the ability of the Word of God. Let's look at another one.

Romans chapter 10, verse 17. So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. This speaks to us about the ability of the Word of God to produce a faith-developing life.

Anyone who's been a Christian very long at all knows faith is a very important issue, isn't it? Biblically, spiritually, personally. It's a gigantic issue. And don't you often feel like you need more faith, or you need faith to be developed more, that, yes, we've trusted God through this, and we've trusted God through that, and trusted God through the other, but, oh, then there's this issue.

There are always those issues that are testing our faith, that are stretching our faith. And we need to know how to proceed to have faith developing in our lives. Well, here it is.

You don't pump it up. Faith is not something man produces. Faith is something that develops in a life through a relationship, a revealing relationship with the Lord.

That is, the Lord is revealing Himself to us, we're seeing how faithful He is, we're trusting in Him in specific areas, and He's proving to be faithful, and faith grows. But it's all anchored into the Word of God. So then faith comes by hearing.

There's a certain kind of hearing that produces faith. What kind of hearing? Hearing by the Word of God. So then faith comes by, you might say, listening to the Word of God, paying attention to the Word of God.

Faith is a meaningless issue or entity until you examine its object. A lot of people talk about faith, and it has nothing to do with biblical faith. Well, I believe in God for this.

Well, why? Well, because I want it bad, and I just want to stay positive. Forget it. That's not biblical faith.

Biblical faith has nothing to do with positivity. That's a total worldly philosophy. Faith means you're trusting in something.

Biblical faith is trusting in God or trusting in His Word. You've got to have the right object of faith, or faith is just wishing. Well, here it's obvious.

The Word of God is to be the object of our faith. Whatever God has said and revealed there, we need to learn it and just count on it. Stake our everything there.

Stake our time and eternity on what God has said in His Word. As we hear the Word of God, receive God's Word, our faith grows because He gives us truth to believe in. So the Word is able to produce a faith-developing life.

Though there are many other aspects of the ability of the Word of God, let's look at one more in John 5. And in many ways, this strikes at the heart of the greatest aspect of the ability of God's Word. John chapter 5. We'll see in verses 39 and 40 that the Scriptures are able to produce a Christ-focused, Christ-acquainted, Christ-like life. Boy, what an ability that is.

That's the heart of the kingdom of heaven. In Philippians 3, Paul says that knowing the Lord, that's the surpassing value of life. Verse 8, there's nothing higher than that.

That's why we're here on this planet. That's why we're here in this universe. To get to know Him.

Well, the Word of God is able to produce a Christ-focused, Christ-acquainted, and therefore Christ-like life. Verse 39, John 5. Jesus said to those around Him, particularly to the Jewish leaders, You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

Oh, this most significant ability of God's Word. He starts out in this section saying you search the Scriptures. And they did.

That was a Scripture-searching generation. The leaders of Israel sort of rose to prominence and authority by their searching of the Scriptures, by sort of becoming Bible experts. Hey, these are the men with the know, with the answers.

So they did search the Scriptures. But Jesus put His finger on why they searched the Scriptures. They were doing a good thing, searching the Scriptures, but with a bad motivation.

They had a bad reason driving them in their quest for Bible knowledge. For in them, that is in the Scriptures, in their possession of them, because they were given the custody of the written Word of God, in their mastery of them, everyone came to them to find out how to live rightly in light of them, and when they were following them, and when they were contradicting them. For in them you think you have eternal life.

In their possession of the Scriptures, in their so-called mastery of the Scriptures, they thought they had eternal life. They thought that they had it made with God. They thought they had a lock with God.

They thought they were in God's in-group, because, hey, come on, we're the Bible men. We're the Bible answer men. We know.

You want to know when you violated the Sabbath? Walked too far? Come and ask us. We can tell you how many steps to count, and know you're still observing the Sabbath. And we can tell you when you've taken one too many, and you're violating the Sabbath.

Oh, what mighty holy men to come up with that. And there are other even more ridiculous ones, like, you know, the experts could unroll the scroll of Isaiah, you know, longest scroll in the Old Testament, and spread it out, and gather everyone, and say, look right there. See my finger on that letter? That letter is the middle letter of the book of Isaiah.

And, of course, everyone would go, whoa, does he know his Bible? Well, he had some trivia, Bible trivia information, you know. But they thought because they possessed the Word, they were the masters of the Word, that they had eternal life. Hey, they had a lock with God.

Heaven was theirs. How foolish they were. Look what they missed.

Look what they would not do with the Word. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life. And these, the Scriptures, are they which testify of me.

They should have been in those scrolls, not looking for the middle letter to impress and wow people. They should have been in those Scriptures looking for a testimony of the Lord, a revelation of the Lord, a revealing of who He was. But this was their problem, and the Lord nailed their hard hearts in verse 40.

But you are not willing to come to me that you may have life. Yeah, they were willing to go to the Word to get information for their own advancement. But they were not willing to go to the Word to get insight on the Lord so they might come to Him and find that in Him alone was the life that God had for sinners on this earth.

How about us? Are we willing to go to the Word? Yeah, evidently, probably so. Many Christians are willing to go to the Word. But they miss the highest purpose and ability of the Word, that is to testify of Christ, to reveal the Lord to us.

Do we let the Word testify to us of the Lord Jesus Christ that in Him we may find more life? If we're born again, we found life in Christ. But Jesus said, I came that you may have life, and have it what? More abundantly. Where do you get it? How does that grow? You get into the Word to learn of the Lord of life who multiplies and fills us with His life.

And it grows to an abundance of life. When we go to the Word, are we willing to come to Christ, the only way to initially find life with God, the only way continually to grow in life with God? See, it's the Word that is able to produce a Christ-focused, Christ-acquainted, Christ-like life. Oh, the ability of the Word.

What does God want to do with such truth? Draw us into the Word. Fill our hearts and lives with the Word of God and radically change us more and more into what He wants us to be, accomplishing what He wants us to do. Well, let's pray together, shall we? Lord, what a blessing to be in Your Word together.

What a blessing to consider how able Your Word is. Lord, may we unleash this great ability of the Word by getting in the Word, getting the Word in us, and relying upon what Your Word alone can do. Thank You, Lord, again.

Your yoke is easy, Your burden is light. Change us by Your able, powerful Word, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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