

Chapter 9 Moving on in the Word



I can make it without reading the Word everyday; after all, I am very busy.

The Word of God has been the biggest thing in my life since I met Jesus. In 1979 when I first met Him I was in several desperate situations. The only time I had any relief and peace in my life was when I was taking in the Word. I was like an addict who had to have more of the Word all the time. I could not get enough of the Word. It spoke to my heart, it understood me, it gave me hope in hopeless situations, and best of all it was not an “it,” it was a “He.” “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1,2).

As I mentioned, I met the Lord while reading the Book of Revelation and studying Bible prophecy. After that day of salvation, I studied Revelation with vigor for almost two years. I was amazed at the way the Word of God was so perfect. I noticed that the Old Testament lined up perfectly with the New Testament. I saw hundreds of prophecies fulfilled to the very date, as foretold hundreds, even thousands of years earlier. It amazed me the way God inspired the Bible and left it for us. What a treasure I had found!

One of the most amazing things I discovered was that not only could I read the Bible, but also the Bible could read me. It told me things about myself that only God could have known. When I would cry out for answers, The Holy Spirit would open an Old Testament story that fit my situation perfectly. I believe that there is a Scripture in the Bible for every moment in our lives. All we have to do is ask, seek and knock.

If you are a new believer, you must learn to make the Word of God first place in your life! There is no other way to have a deep, personal relationship with God and find His victory in every situation.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible has been given to mankind by the breath of God, which is the Holy

Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who takes the words of Scripture and makes them alive for you in your life.

There are two meanings for “word” in Scripture: one is logos, and the other is rhema. Logos means the Word of God in general. Rhema means the Word of God coming directly from the lips of Jesus to you. It is a personal Word to you. The Holy Spirit takes logos and makes it rhema!

Some people can actually memorize the Bible and remain atheists. “...not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Corinthians 3:6b).

What is the Bible all about? When I first met the Lord, I kept asking ministers to give me a brief outline of what the Bible is all about. I never got it from them. I really do not have space to do it here. I do, however, wish to give you a basic outline from which you may build as you study for yourself.

The Bible is about God creating everything from nothing with His Word. It tells about Him creating man. Then it tells the story of man. It tells how he rebelled against God’s authority and put himself under Satan’s authority. It tells how God’s wonderful redemption plan was executed so that man could be restored to a right relationship with God.

The Old Testament goes into great depth describing God’s acts in creating a family for Himself in the race of Israel starting with Abraham. Much of the Old Testament focuses on the story of Israel. That is important because Jesus was the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose name was later changed to Israel. Jesus was God’s plan to redeem man back to God, and Israel played a big part in that. The Israelites kept the Scriptures in tact, and Jesus came as an Israelite. Jesus said, “You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22).

Not only is the Old Testament the history of Israel, it also serves to give us shadows and types in its stories that we may apply to our lives today. “Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did” (1 Corinthians 10:6).

“These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfilment of the ages has come” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

For example, look at 1 Kings 18:8-16. Read the story about the woman giving away her last morsel of food during the famine, and how God wonderfully supplied food for her and Ellijah. You may apply this

personally for your life as I have to mine. God can use supernatural means to supply your needs.

The four Gospels are partial historical accounts of the birth and life of Jesus and of some of the things that our Lord did while He walked this earth. They reveal to us the character of God. The religious people during that time, and our time also, thought that God was a cold hearted, hard to please old man. Jesus revealed God as a God of mercy and grace. God is revealed as a friend to the poor, the sick, the sinners and the helpless. He taught us many lessons about the Kingdom of God in the Gospels.

The Gospels explain how Jesus died for our sins, was raised from the dead on the third day, and how He sent His disciples into the world to preach the Good News.

The Epistles have various messages. Paul, who wrote two thirds of the New Testament, had a special revelation from the Lord regarding what happened between the Cross where Jesus died, and when He sat down at His Father's right hand. He had a revelation of the defeat of Satan and who God made us to be in Him. Paul had a revelation of the Bride of Christ, the Church. Peter, James, and Paul give good practical advice on living the Christian life.

Paul wrote a very special message to the Galatians. He emphasizes that not only were we saved by grace and grace alone, but that we can only live out our lives by grace and not by works or legalism. Our old nature, the flesh, continually tries to take control by any means possible. Two common means for the flesh is legalism and self-righteousness. Let us never forget that everything starts and ends with the grace of God.

The Epistles talk about the Second Coming of Jesus. This is a subject that has been misunderstood by believers and non-believers alike for centuries. We will cover this subject more in later chapters.

The epistle to the Hebrews emphasizes the Blood Covenant and compares the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. It reveals Jesus in a wonderful way.

The Book of Acts is in a class by itself. On the surface, it is the history of the first several years of the Church after the ascension of Jesus. It shows the Holy Spirit being poured out on all mankind starting with the Day of Pentecost. It shows God including the Gentiles in salvation. It shows the start of the early church, and the missionary trips made by the first century believers for church planting. It shows the ministry of The

Holy Spirit working through ordinary men as if Jesus Himself was doing the work (in the Name of Jesus). The Book of Acts is without end. Technically, it is still happening.

The Book of Revelation is probably the most misunderstood book in the Bible. While I believe there is a lot to be learned about end times in Revelation, I believe that too many believers limit Revelation to future history and do not make personal a application of it in their present day lives. We will cover this more in later chapters.

Can I trust the Word of God? There is really nothing in this world that can be trusted except the Word of God. People come and go, ministers come and go, institutions, schools, children, parents come and go, everything changes.

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35). “For ever, O LORD, your word is settled in heaven” (Psalms 119:89). “I will worship toward your holy temple, and praise your name for your lovingkindness and for your truth: for you have magnified your word above all your name” (Psalms 138:2).

How can you know the above Scriptures which testify about the Word are true?

We need to be able to trust The Word of God no matter what comes our way! If there is one thing that The Word of God dares to do that no other book in the world does, it is to accurately predict the future. This proves beyond argument that only God could have authored the Bible.

Prophecy proves beyond argument that only God could have authored the Bible. There are 8,352 verses directly or indirectly concerned with prophecy in Scripture. About one verse in six tells of future events. God’s challenge to the world is that we might prove Him. “I am the LORD: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass” (Ezekiel 12:25a).

Buddhists, Confucianists and the followers of Mohammed have their sacred writings, but in them the element of prophecy is conspicuous by its absence. The destruction of Tyre, the invasion of Jerusalem, the fall of Babylon and Rome were all accurately predicted in the Bible and fulfilled to the smallest of details. The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem was foretold hundreds of years before it happened by the prophet Daniel - TO THE VERY DAY. The forming of Israel as a new state in 1948 was foretold to the day and month in the Old Testament.

Prophecies about Jesus

There are over 300 prophecies that Jesus fulfilled in His birth, life, death, and resurrection, but consider as an example only the seventeen most prominent ones.

The combined probability against these seventeen predictions occurring is equal to:

1 chance in 480,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. (480 billion x 1 billion x 1 trillion).

Isaiah 42:9 says, “Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; before they happen, I cause you to hear.”

I highly recommend that you study the many lessons in the ISOB curriculum, such as lessons 110 through 114 about the Word of God.⁴

I submit that it is impossible the Bible is not the inspired Word of God! Doubt will certainly come to you, especially as a new believer. Keep these facts in your mind to fall back on in times of trial, and God will see you through. The Word of God is true and perfect. **You can trust it!**

Most Christians do not give enough value to the Word of God. They feel that it is strictly intellectual and cognitive. Also, many feel that it contains errors or at least simple stories.

Isaiah foretold that people would not give any value to Jesus when He came. Too many people are still not giving enough value to Jesus, who is the Word of God.

“He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not” (Isaiah 53:2,3).

How the Word works.

The Word of God is a seed. Seed do not make noise, nor is their growth activity obvious. The Word of God contains life, as do seeds. It contains the very race and spirit of the speaker.

This is the mystery of the Kingdom of God!

⁴ International School of the Bible curriculum is available free at www.isob-bible.org, or you may send email to info@isob-bible.org.

I strongly suggest that you meditate on Mark chapter 4, the parable of the sower and the seed, the Word of God. It is one of the most important teachings of Jesus.

Jesus said that **the mystery** of the Kingdom of God is embedded in this parable: “And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know **the mystery** of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables” (Mark 4:11).

The Kingdom of God may seem like a far off place to you, but Jesus said that it is within your reach right now. He said that if you turned (repented) that you would find the Kingdom of God within your reach.

Jesus was telling us to change, to repent from struggling to get our needs met, and to become fruit bearers with the Word of God.

“From that time on Jesus began to preach, **‘Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matthew 4:17). That is to turn and change directions. When you do, you will find the Kingdom of God so close that you can take hold of it.

You may ask, what did He mean? Turn from what? What is the Kingdom of God? I believe that we are to turn from the world’s way of living life to the Kingdom’s way of living life. I believe that this applies to our entire life. I also believe that Jesus was not simply saying to these people, “Stop sinning and repent from your immoral ways.” No, Jesus was giving us the plan for living life.

Mark chapter 4 tells us about the Word. The Word is sown in our hearts and the Devil comes to steal it. How? He does it by taking advantage of the various conditions of our heart.

a. The hard heart, the wayside or hard road, Mark 4:15. At once Satan takes away the message that is sown in them. Some people are just shallow and don’t care.

b. The stony ground, Mark 4:16. They receive and accept at first. But they have no real root. When trouble and persecution arise for the Word’s sake, they become offended, displeased, indignant, and resentful; they stumble and fall away. The Word is lost. Some people can’t stand the pressure. They can’t see anything growing right away, so they give up.

c. Thorns, Mark 4:18. The Word is implanted as a seed and grows, however cares, anxieties, distractions, pleasures, delights and false glammers choke it. Deceit of riches, craving and passionate desires for other things creep in and choke the Word. Some people give in to peer pressure and their desire to be popular and materialistic.

One of the reasons we do not believe others and do not believe God's Word is because of the condition of our heart. The reason we think others are lying when they are being honest is because it is *our* nature. The reason we have a hard time believing God is because we cannot believe ourselves.

d. Good soil brings forth fruit, Mark 4:20. Growth does not depend on good weather, but good soil. Luke 8, the same parable, says good soil is an honest, virtuous, just, noble and worthy heart. It produces thirty, sixty, one hundred times the amount sown. The word "one hundred" means, according to Strongs Concordance, an uncertain amount of the same origin.

God has given us His Word to supply all of our needs. Our three basic needs are love, security and significance. If we will receive the Word into our hearts and resist the devil as he tries to steal the Word, God will cause fruit to grow in our lives that will supply all of our needs. This is not empty theology. I can personally testify that the Word of God does indeed work this way. **The devil knows it, God knows it, now we need to know it!**

I challenge you to make a continual study of Psalm 119 as a testimony of what the Word of God will do.

Some examples of what Psalms 119 says about the Word:

God commanded you to keep it in your heart; The Word directs your ways; You will not be put to shame; God will not forsake you; You keep your way cleansed with the Word; The Word will become more to you than all the riches; You will see wondrous things in the Word; God gave you His Word so you would not feel like a stranger on the earth; God rebukes the proud and arrogant who wander from The Word; The Word counsels you and delights you; The Word revives and stimulates you (vs. 25); When you meditate in the Word you understand God's wonders; The Word will strengthen you when your life seems like it is dissolving and hopeless; The Word will remove you from the way of falsehood; You have to choose the way of truth and set the Word before you; God will give you a heart willing to run the way of the Word; The Word will keep you safe from idols; The Word is only for those that fear

and worship God; The Word will turn away your reproach; The Word will renew your life; The Word will bring you God's salvation, keep you safe and heal you; It will give an answer to those who taunt and reproach you (vs. 42); The Word will give you liberty and freedom (vs. 45); It will keep you from being put to shame; The Word brings hope and, God's will to your life; The Word will comfort and console you in your affliction; The Word will heal and deliver from danger, it will provide for your needs, it will comfort and speak to you, it will be you with in danger, it will keep you from danger; When enemies attack the Word keeps you safe; God's favor and grace comes through the Word; It teaches you good judgment, wise discernment and knowledge; It will keep you from going astray; It will keep you safe when the wicked lie about you (vs. 69); The Word is better than gold and silver; You were made to hear the Word; The Word gives hope, but sometimes you have to wait and be still for it; The Word is hidden for those that seek; God's tender mercies come though the Word; It will make your heart blameless, sincere and wholehearted; Even though you suffer sometimes, that is when you know to turn to the Word; The Word is faithful and sure; Forever, the Word is settled in Heaven (vs. 89); Unless you had been in the Word you would have perished; It kept you safe when the wicked came after you; Everything has its limits expect for The Word (vs. 96); It makes you wiser than your enemies; It gives you more insight than even your teachers; You can keep that Word only when you stay honest; The Word is sweet; The Word is a lamp unto your feet and light to your path; The Word heals and gives you life; The Word gives you joy; The Word is a hiding place; You need to stay in good company of friends so that you may keep the Word; The Word is better than anything conceived by man (vs. 129); It gives understanding and comprehension to the simple; The Word keeps evil from overtaking you; The Word is pure and you love it; Even when you are in trouble The Word brings you delight; The Word binds you to eternity [It transfers the Life of God to you.]; You have childlike trust in the Word; The Word

brings God near to you, nearer than your foes; It seems that when the writer was in trouble the Word meant more to him; The wicked cannot work things out because they are far from The Word; All of God's Word endures forever; You rejoice at The Word as one who has found a treasure; The Word causes you to praise Him; The Word causes God to hear you and deliver you; It causes God's hand to be ready to help; Even when you go astray like a lost sheep, The Word stays in you to bring you back to God; Since the Word of God is the only stable thing, then you need to measure all other words against God's or their character against God's character.

What will the Word do?

When Satan heard the Word in the Garden of Eden, he was defeated. When Pharaoh heard the Word, he let God's people go. When Moses heard the Word, the Red Sea Split. When the walls of Jericho heard the Word, they fell. When Gideon heard the Word, his outnumbered forces slaughtered the enemy. When Samuel heard the Word, he wasn't sure who it was. When Elijah heard the Word, he raised the dead, stopped the rain, and started it again. When Naaman obeyed the Word, his leprosy was cleansed. When Goliath heard the Word, he was felled by a stone and a youth. When Jehoshaphat heard the Word, his enemies defeated themselves with a battle. When Nehemiah heard the Word, the temple and the wall were rebuilt in record time. When Esther heard the Word, she saved an entire nation. When Job heard the Word, even his suffering was worth it: He saw God and his fortune was restored. When David heard the Word, he was comforted, made safe and forgiven from the worst crimes a man could commit. When Solomon heard the Word, it was worth more than all the silver and gold. When the maiden in Song of Solomon heard the Word, she fell in love with her eternal lover. When Isaiah heard the Word, his lips were cleansed and he foretold of a Savior who would die for our sins. When Jeremiah heard the Word, Israel had to become slaves due to their sin; but later their slave masters were overthrown. When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego saw the Word, He was with them in the fiery furnaces of life. When Daniel saw the Word, He had shut the lion's mouths. When Ezekiel and the other prophets heard the Word, they saw the coming King who would save them from their enemies.

When the Blind man was touched by the Word, he saw. When the Word touched the leper, he was clean. When demons saw the Word, they fled. When the Centurion heard the Word, his servant was healed. When the adulterous woman saw the Word, she was forgiven. When the prostitute touched the Word, she was made clean and loved much. When John the Baptist saw the Word, he saw the Lamb who would take away our sins. When John saw the Word the first time, he saw God's Word become flesh. When the religious people saw the Word, they argued with Him and called Him demon possessed. When the crowds saw the Word, they considered Him to be of no value, traded his life for a thief's, and executed Him with the punishment of a criminal. Although He spoke this world into being, they did not recognize him. They only saw Him as that "bloody mess" on the Cross.

When John saw the Word in the Book of Revelation, he saw a victorious One who conquered death, hell and the grave; the One who was raised from the dead, and clothed with a robe which reached to His feet and a girdle of gold about His breast. His head and His hair were white as snow (white as in fire) and His eyes flashed like a flame of fire. His feet glowed like burnished bright bronze as it is refined in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. John saw the Ruler and Judge of the Universe!

When Satan sees the resurrected Word, he sees that He, The Word, is The King of Kings and Lord of Lords. His eyes blaze like a flame of fire and on His head are many kingly crowns. At every one of our "final battles" in this life, Satan sees him with a sword in His mouth on a white horse, dressed in a robe dyed in blood. "And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:16).

You need to continue in the Word with a consistent Bible Study. There are many good ones you may purchase, or you may design one for yourself. ISOB has a free discipleship course available on the Internet or on CD-ROM for use with your personal computer.⁶

⁶ International School of the Bible curriculum is available free at www.isob-bible.org, or you may send email to info@isob-bible.org.