

LIVINGHOPE

BIBLE CHURCH

4 | 2 PETER 1:16-21

HOW TO GROW IN THE WORD

Rejoice saints, you have everything you need for life and godliness in God's word by his Spirit. It is vital to be constantly in the word since it is more confirmed to build your faith than even the greatest of miracles!

Outline

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Call to Worship

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever! ² Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures forever." ³ Let the house of Aaron say, "His steadfast love endures forever." ⁴ Let those who fear the LORD say, "His steadfast love endures forever."—Psalm 118:1-4

Songs

O Come All Ye Faithful

Angels We Have Heard on High

What Child is This?

Thy Word is a Lamp Unto My Feet

King of kings

Announcements

WELCOME: We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet if you are visiting with us.

Introduction

Twenty years ago, the lights went out in New York City at the worst time. According to the New York Times, at 5:07 p.m. on a bustling Friday, office lights, elevators and computer screens all went dark. The impact rippled through the subway system, as disabled signal lights brought the subway lines to a halt at the height of the evening rush hour. Tens of thousands of stranded.

What would it be like to live without electricity and lights? Imagine living in complete darkness. We sometimes fear in modern times what might happen if the electric grid was attacked or if it failed. But think about this. The electric lightbulb wasn't invented until 1882 and wasn't in widespread use until 1900. In 1925, less than a hundred years ago, only half of the homes in the U.S. had access to electricity. Only half. That's astounding.

I think we agree that being in darkness is a terrible thing. We are grateful for modern electricity. But how much more grateful are we for spiritual light? All of us have several Bibles in our possession, and most of us have access to over twenty on our phones in our pockets, both in print and audio. Connecting with God through his word is a greater miracle than raising the dead or the greatest of miracles.

Psalm 119:105 | Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

The Process of Growth

In our passage, Peter tells us how to grow in Christ by knowing him and his excellencies in an intimate way. He says, we grow by hearing God's voice in his word, by walking in the word through self-control and perseverance. That results in a heart of godliness, serving others in brotherly affection and love.

In his plea to his listeners and to us, he asks us to "make your calling and election sure" (1:10). We know what election is, that's God's choice of you. Your calling is the Holy Spirit's effectual work in your heart so that you can hear his voice. The proof of your calling is your response to God's voice. But if you are not in God's word, it's impossible to hear God's voice. We need to experience the divine nature by enjoying God's precious and very great promises (1:4).

The Power of God's Word

The passage in front of us is all about God's word. As privileged as Peter is to see all the miracles and the very glory of Christ revealed to him, we are not shortchanged. We have a word that is more fully confirmed: the word of God!

Key thought: Rejoice saints, you have everything you need for life and godliness in God's word by his Spirit. It is vital to be constantly in the word since it is more confirmed to build your faith than even the greatest of miracles!

God's Word is Like a Seed

The best way I can illustrate the power and importance of the word is to have you imagine a seed. A seed is just a dead seed until you put it in the soil and you water it. If you want to grow in the Christian life, Peter is saying you've got to get into the soil of the word and water it with the sweet calling of the Holy Spirit in your life. When you read God's word, you've got to know it's for you. That starts with the person of Christ.

1. KNOW THE PERSON OF CHRIST (1:16)

The point of growing in God's word is to see Jesus Christ and walk with him. You cannot come to the Father except through him (Jn 14:6). Christ reveals the Father.

John 1:18 | No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

He's the way, the truth, and the life, and no one can come to the Father except through him (Jn 14:6). In order to know Christ and walk with him, you have to know who he is in his word. The Old Testament presents Christ as an actual person who will enter into human history as a human being. Christ is not some myth, but he is historical, he is redemptive, and he is personal. Listen to Peter's eyewitness testimony, having walked with him for three and a half years.

2 Peter 1:16 | For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

Peter walked and talked with him. He's not a figment of Peter's imagination, like the mythical pagan gods, which are no gods at all. Jesus is the God who entered history, not some myth. Peter witnessed Jesus' entrance into history. He witnessed his perfect life, his glorious miracles, his substitutionary death, and triumphant resurrection. He ate with the King of kings, spoke with him, heard his preaching, observed his joy and sorrow, and beheld his glory at the Mount of Transfiguration. Our Lord often stayed with Peter at his mother-in-law's home when he was in Capernaum, so when he says Jesus is not a myth, he's speaking as a firsthand eyewitness.

CHRIST IS HISTORICAL

Peter's going to tell us that the word of God is so powerful because its center piece is the eternal, transcendent Christ who entered into time and space.

2 Peter 1:16a | For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is no myth but is the God who entered into history. Peter is writing from the standpoint of a firsthand observer. Did Zeus ever enter history? Thor? No, they are mythical fictitious gods that never made out of the imaginations of men. With the success of the Marvel franchise, we've realized that these myths can be extremely entertaining in the world of fantasy, but that's where it ends. No one in their right mind worships Zeus or Thor or the pantheon of Roman or Greek gods any more than they worship Superman or Captain America. These are mythical and fantastical figments of the imagination. Their power today lies in camera tricks and green screens. Fantasy can be fascinating, but you would really pity the soul that came out of a movie theater as if it were church. Why? Because these are myths and fantasy. Peter says, following Christ is entirely different than following the pagan gods, because Christ is historical.

Christ is no myth but is the God who entered into history with power. Peter made known his power and his coming. His birth was prophesied. Isaiah said the Mighty God would be born into history. Paul proclaims it to the Galatian believers.

Galatians 4:4-5 | When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

The glorious God who exists outside of time and history, entered history, which is truly his story. Flavius Josephus (37–100 A.D.), a Jewish general and historian, lived and died in the first century wrote in his *Antiquities of the Jews* that Jesus was a true historical person.¹ Though Josephus never claimed to be a follower of Christ, he writes accurately of him. Consider the words which he wrote while John the apostle was still alive.

There arose about this time Jesus, a wise man, if indeed we should call him a mere man; for he was a doer of miraculous deeds, a teacher of the people who received the truth with pleasure. He won over many Jews, and also Greeks, and they became his disciples. This man was the Jewish Messiah. And when Pilate had condemned him to the cross because of the accusations by the chief men among us, those who had loved him at first did not cease loving him; for he appeared to them on the third day alive again. The divinely appointed prophets had foretold these things and thousands of other marvels about him. And even now the tribe of Christians, so named after him, still thrives to this very day.² —General Flavius Josephus (A.D. 93)

Josephus affirms what Peter is saying. Jesus is historical. Not only that, his miracles are not magic or myths, but he actually healed people. His miraculous birth was prophesied. Peter says, “I’m not making this up. I’m an eyewitness.” Jesus was human. He walked among us in history.

CHRIST IS REDEPTIVE

2 Peter 1:16b | When we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter and the apostles saw Jesus’ divine attributes on display. They were well acquainted with his power. They could testify that he was Yahweh in human flesh. Jesus came as the Mediator on his mission: the ultimate prophet, priest, and king. He was the eternal Word who revealed himself to Moses as the great “I am” at the burning bush and was now in human history.

The Disappointment of Human Redeemers

Israel had waited and was disappointed at human mediator after human mediator. All the prophets and priests and kings had fallen short of God’s glory. Moses wasn’t the ultimate redeemer. David wasn’t the ultimate mediator. They all pointed to Jesus Christ in their writings. And then John the Baptist said, “I’m not the one!” He literally pointed to Jesus, and he said, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29).

The Witness of Jesus as Divine-Human Redeemer

Peter interviewed witnesses of Jesus’ birth. Peter testified of Jesus’ power and coming. Peter is an eyewitness of Jesus’ life, and he had much opportunity to interview other eyewitnesses. Peter was acquainted with those who witnessed his birth. He likely interviewed the *shepherds*. Being from Galilee, Peter must have heard the story of Christ’s miraculous birth from *Mary* herself on various occasions.

Peter witnessed of Jesus’ death and resurrection. He saw Jesus, the Son of God die, and he saw the power of his resurrection. Then he witnessed Jesus’ glorious ascension to the right hand of the Father. Not only that, but Peter also received the promised Holy Spirit at Pentecost. He also made known the power of Christ at his second coming that could happen at any moment, which he paints in glorious imagery later in his epistle (cf 3:8-13).

¹ Cf Van Vorst Robert E., *Jesus Outside the New Testament: An Introduction to the Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000).

² Flavius Josephus. *Antiquities of the Jews* (A.D. 93), 18:3:3. Also see F.F. Bruce. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 111-112.

Is Jesus Your Redeemer?

Peter is saying, “We want you to know, the ultimate Redeemer-Mediator has come! We’ve verified his miraculous *power* and the accuracy of his prophetic *coming*. This is the Christ, the King of the world. He’s the only mediator between God and man” (cf 1 Tim 2:5).

The point is, Jesus comes in power to save. Jesus saves! He is not just a historical religious figure. He’s God in human flesh who dies for mankind. He rose to raise us all to newness of life. He came on a mission and has the power and authority to redeem anyone who comes to him in humble, repentant faith. Have you come to this great Redeemer? Do you know him?

CHRIST IS DIVINE

How we need to know Christ intimately as the God man who entered history. We need to experience his redemption, and that his power and coming was for you personally. He’s no myth but your actual redeemer. Peter then tells us the greatest thing about knowing Christ. He’s divine. And Peter is an eyewitness of his majestic divine glory.

2 Peter 1:16c | But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

Peter now refers to one of the greatest miracles recorded in the New Testament. This is the transfiguration experience he had with Jesus when he revealed his glory to Peter, James, and John. The Greek word for “majesty” is a very rare New Testament word. In every reference, it means the majesty of God’s divine and transcendent attributes (i.e., Lk 9:43).³ It’s a word referring exclusively to God in the New Testament. It’s an obvious reference to the unveiled divine glory of Christ that he had with the Father before the world existed (cf Jn 17:5). This is the divine majesty of the glory cloud in the Old Testament. This the divine glory of the burning bush. This is the divine glory of Sinai which made Moses’ face glow with the majesty of God.

Christ Manifests His Deity at the Transfiguration

Jesus had predicted that some of the apostles would see the manifestation of his divine greatness.⁴

Matthew 16:28 | Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

Soon after Jesus said this, he took Peter, James, and John—his inner circle—to a mountain and revealed his glory to them (cf Mt 17, Mk 9, and Lk 9). You see Christ is not just human, he is divine. He revealed his eternal attributes to his disciples. There, before their very eyes, Jesus was transfigured in brilliant and translucent light. On either side of Jesus stood the great Hebrew prophets Moses and Elijah.⁵ What’s the point Peter is making? This one who entered history is the God of history, the Almighty who has power over life and death, power enough to bring two of the greatest figures of the Old Testament with him. Jesus Christ is the Word from the beginning. As John says:

John 1:1-3, 14 | In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.... ⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

³ Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 104.

⁴ MacArthur, *2 Peter and Jude*, 60.

⁵ Helm, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude*, 215.

Peter and John both testify: “We have seen his glory.” Peter says, “I’m an eyewitness of his majesty.” Jesus is historical; he’s redemptive, and he is God almighty.

Christ Manifests His Deity to us at Regeneration

The question is, though you’ve not been to the Mount of Transfiguration, if you’ve been born again, you’ve had something more miraculous. Peter says you are “partakers of the divine nature.” And because of the glorious Christ living in you, you’ve now “escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire” (1:4).

The whole point of growing in the word of God is to know Jesus Christ intimately. He’s our divine redeemer that entered into history but has entered into you by the Holy Spirit!

Peter tells us how he personally observed Christ entering into history. Now he tells us how he worshipped the glorious Christ at the Transfiguration. What a privilege, but we have the same privilege if Christ dwells in us.

2. EXPERIENCE THE **WORSHIP OF CHRIST (1:17-18)**

God calls people and elects them because he wants a people to worship him. We are given a new heart and new eyes from the Holy Spirit. God wants us to worship his Son in all his power and glory. Peter got to see the glory of Christ unveiled at transfiguration event.

WORSHIP THE REVEALED CHRIST

2 Peter 1:17a | He received honor and glory from God the Father.

The Apostles Eyes were Opened

Peter, James, and John witnessed the moment the Father recognized Jesus as the Son of God. What a revelation! They could never have understood the vast glory of Jesus had he not revealed himself to them. He received glory and honor from the Father and was revealed to be the glorious Son of God before their very eyes.

Your Eyes Have to be Opened

They worshipped him because he revealed himself to them. He elected them and called them. It’s the same for us. God has to open your eyes. It’s a miracle. You can’t worship the Father unless he reveals himself to you through Christ. In fact, no one can know and worship Christ unless he reveals himself to them.

Matthew 11:27 | No one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

By Nature, Our Eyes are Blind

We are all naturally blinded to God. Through sin, we have transferred authority of our lives from God to the devil.

2 Corinthians 4:4 | The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God... 6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Indeed, the Father himself must initiate our coming in faith to him.

John 6:44 | No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

God Opens Our Eyes by the Word

When I visited Israel, I got to go to the Mount of Transfiguration, and it was a joyful experience. But when God saved me 33 years ago, I didn't need Christ to physically appear in his glory. It would have been amazing to hear the voice of the Father from heaven. But what I heard was the voice of the Spirit calling in my heart through the word of God. It was by his word he birthed us as the first installment of his new creation.

James 1:18 | Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

The Spirit speaks through the word. That's why you can't be saved outside of the word of God. And you also cannot grow in Christ outside of the word of God. You can't see straight without the word of God.

Augustine's Eyes Opened

The ancient African pastor and theologian Aurelius Augustine rejoiced when God opened the spiritual eyes of his heart. Listen to his praise.

You called, you cried, you shattered my deafness, you sparkled, you blazed, you drove away my blindness. You shed your fragrance, and I drew in my breath, and now I pant for you. I tasted, and I now hunger and thirst. You touched me by your word and Spirit, and I now burn with joy because of your peace.⁶

God must grant spiritual sight, or we could never see, but when we do see, we rejoice and worship. Let's praise and worship him that he has revealed the Father to us!

WORSHIP THE BELOVED CHRIST

Christ is beloved by the Father, and true happiness in life is attained when Jesus is the blazing center of our lives. We have fullness of joy! Imagine the joy of hearing the Father's love declared over his beloved Son. The Father gives the Son as a gift to the world, that whoever trusts in him will have eternal life. The Father is "well pleased" in the Son's perfectly fulfilled mission.

2 Peter 1:17 | For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

When Peter, James, and John saw Jesus' glory, they worshiped him. They set up three tabernacles, if you remember, one for Jesus and also for Moses and Elijah. God the Father, here given the title "the Majestic Glory" wants Jesus alone to be worshipped.

Suddenly Moses and Elijah are gone, but the voice comes out of heaven that this is God's beloved Son, and they are to worship only Jesus. We are to love Jesus with the same love that the Father has for his beloved Son.

⁶ Saint Augustine Bishop of Hippo, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, trans. E. B. Pusey (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996), Book 10, chapter 27.

WORSHIP THE DIVINE CHRIST

2 Peter 1:18-19a | We ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.¹⁹ And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed...

Can you imagine, seeing Christ in all his majesty and hearing the heavenly voice of the Father? Perhaps you might say, “It sure would be much better to be there where Peter was, then I could really worship Christ. If I could just experience all his majesty, power, and glory. Then I could have a closer walk with him.”

Peter says, the miracles, the transfiguration, they all confirm the word of God. The writer of Hebrews tells us that “God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles” to confirm the word of God (Heb 2:4).

Listen you have a more fully confirmed word of prophecy than the very transfiguration. The Bible is where you can experience really Christian growth, because it is there you experience the majesty of Christ in an even greater and surer way than Peter did that day he saw Christ revealed. The very Author of the Bible is not just with you but he is in you. Worship the divine Christ by experiencing him in the word.

3. RECEIVE THE **WORD OF CHRIST (1:19-21)**

We need to experience the worship of Christ and the person of Christ, and we can only do it through the sufficient, authoritative word of God. More authoritative than any miracle is the forever settled word of God.

2 Peter 1:19-21 | And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation.²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The point of spiritual sight is to see Jesus Christ and witness for him. We see Jesus in the Bible, which is more sure than the miracles and even the transfiguration itself.

THE WORD IS SUPERIOR

2 Peter 1:19a | And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed.

Peter says that God’s word is more fully confirmed because the miracles, including the transfiguration. These all confirm the word of God. Peter is saying that the prophetic word of the Old Testament has all been more fully confirmed through the life and miracles of Christ.

We found our lives on the word, not on the miracles. The theological term for the authority of the Bible is infallibility, that is, it cannot fail. While miracles reveal God’s power, God’s word has authoritative promises that he will fulfill with absolute certainty for every child of God. It is a more sure word of prophecy, Peter says, than even the glorious transfiguration of Jesus.⁷ We are brought into that same glory through the word of God.

⁷ Charles Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1901), 268; Cf Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 97–98.

Remember the story of the rich man and the beggar named Lazarus? The rich man burning in Hades wanted for God to raise Lazarus from the dead and warn his brothers. Jesus' response is telling. They didn't need a miracle. They needed the word of God.

Luke 16:31 | He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'

Throughout redemptive history, God himself has repeatedly emphasized that his inspired word is inerrant, infallible, and the all-sufficient source of truth, which does not require human confirmation (Psa 19:7; 119:160; Jn 17:17; 1 Cor 2:10–14; 1 Thess 2:13; cf Pro 6:23; Dan 10:21).⁸ It is more fully confirmed through all the signs and wonders Jesus did. His word is settled in heaven.

Psalms 119:189, NKJV | Forever, O LORD, your word is settled in heaven.

This goes with Peter's point that we already have everything we need for life and godliness. Miracles have their place, and God uses them, but we do not need to establish our lives on miracles but on the forever settled word of God. It is in the written word of God where we find absolute assurance of eternal life. It is in the word of God where we can grow and change into the image of Christ.⁹

THE WORD IS CLEAR

Peter says we need to pay attention to God's clear word to light our path. The light of God's word will show us the way.

2 Peter 1:19b | To which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

By his word, the Bible, the Lord has spoken to us in a way that is understandable. Theologians use a very long unclear word to describe the clarity of God's word: perspicuity. It means God's word is clear and understandable so that if we read it we can be saved. That doesn't mean that everything is the clearest that it could be. That's why the main thing is the plain thing, and the plain thing is the main thing. Or to put it another way, if the plain sense makes sense, seek no other sense.

Thus Peter likens Scripture to a lantern that provides light to a dark and sinful world.¹⁰ God's word gives us wisdom and direction and light when we cannot see. It's like the dawn in the morning as the sun rises. Let Christ the Morning Star, the Sun of righteousness rise in your hearts through the word.

Psalms 119:105 | Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

The Story of an Ancient African Bishop

How precious is the word? Does it mean anything to you? Some hardly read it today, but in the year A.D. 303, the Roman Emperor Diocletian issued a decree which he hoped would extinguish the spreading flames of Christianity. One of his primary objectives was the seizure and destruction of the Bible. Later that year, officials enforced the decree in North Africa. One of the targets was Felix, an African Bishop of Tibjuca, a village near Carthage. The mayor of the town ordered Felix to hand over his Scripture, according to the emperor's decree.

⁸ John F. MacArthur Jr., *2 Peter and Jude*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2005), 61–62.

⁹ Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 18, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 109.

¹⁰ John F. MacArthur Jr., *2 Peter and Jude*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2005), 63.

Though some judges were willing to accept scraps of parchment, Felix refused to surrender the word of God at the insistence of mere men. Roman authorities finally shipped Felix to Italy where he paid for his faithfulness with his life. He laid down his life rather than surrender his Bible.¹¹ Hallelujah.

God's word is clear. If you want to grow, pay attention to God's word. Growth comes from digesting his word and putting it into practice. The blessed man meditates on the law (instruction) of the Lord day and night (Psa 1:1-2). Bishop Felix understood that it was precious enough to surrender his life. This is where you get genuine spiritual sight. Spiritual sight is how we perceive God and is infinitely more important to have than physical sight. It dawns as the morning star, the sun rising in our hearts.

If you are not growing, you have to ask, am I reading God's word until God's love rises in me, illuminating my life and overcoming the darkness in my heart?

THE WORD IS OF DIVINE ORIGIN

The Bible came from God. It is divinely inspired. Peter says that "men spoke from God."

2 Peter 1:20-21 | Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God.

Men spoke from God. That means the Bible is not a collection of human ideas. It wasn't someone's "own personal interpretation" of how things should be. It wasn't produced by man's will, but by God's will and by the direct hand of God. That means it's powerful! It was not produced by the ideas of men, but men spoke from God. He used their personalities, but he guided and breathed out the message and guarded them from error.

Since the word is divine, it is perfectly designed to change your life. Psychology is not only not sufficient, but also often deceptive and deviant. Medications are often dispensed as a cure all. People are angry and disappointed. Regardless of medical conditions, we need medicine for our soul. God designed you, and he made his word to treat the ailments of your soul.

Hebrews 4:12 | For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

In the book "How God Used D.L. Moody," his assistant R.A. Torrey said the divine word of God was D.L. Moody's secret to fruitfulness. He was not an educated man. He wasn't a sophisticated man. He was a weak and desperate man who depended on the divine word of God. Torrey said the consumption and application of the Bible is the secret to real Holy Spirit power. His words make a strong point.

You may talk about power; but, if you neglect the one Book that God has given you as the one instrument through which he imparts and exercises his power, you will not have it. You may read many books and go to many conventions, and you may have your all-night prayer meetings to pray for the power of the Holy Ghost; but unless you keep in constant and close association with the one Book, the Bible, you will not have power. And if you ever had power, you will not maintain it except by the daily, earnest, intense study of that Book. Ninety-nine Christians in every hundred are merely playing at Bible study; and therefore, ninety-nine Christians in every hundred are mere weaklings, when they might be giants, both in their Christian life and in their service.¹²

You want power? You need the God-breathed word of God.

¹¹ Bruce L. Kelly, *Christian Theology in Plain Language* (Nashville, TN: Word Books, 1985), 41.

¹² R.A. Torrey, *Why God Used D. L. Moody* (Edinburgh, UK: CrossReach Publications, 2015), 15-16.

THE WORD IS AUTHORITATIVE

Because the Bible came from God, every word is authoritative.

2 Peter 1:20 | Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.

Men spoke from God, and therefore the word carries the authority of Almighty God. It is God-breathed, so you will be judged by the word. Since God spoke it, you and all mankind are obligated to follow it.

2 Timothy 3:16 | All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

THE WORD IS SPIRIT-INSPIRED

Because the Bible came from God, every word is authoritative. Those who wrote Scripture were not giving their own ideas, but they were carried along, like a ship on the ocean waves, by the Holy Spirit of God.

2 Peter 1:21 | For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

“Carried along” is the words that describe how the wind blows a sailing ship across the waters. For Peter, it was as if the writers of Scripture raised their spiritual sails and allowed the Spirit to fill them with his powerful breath of revelation as they penned its divine words (*cf* Lk 1:70).¹³ God used their own words and personalities as they were borne along as a ship by the inspiration of the Spirit.

Are you neglecting God’s word in your life? What about your children? You cannot depend on the local church to bring your children to Christ and worship with them. Church is one day a week, but you are to worship with your children every day. Sunday school does not replace family worship. And what about you? Do you have a hunger and thirst that you are fulfilling every day? Are you in God’s word consistently, not for mere duty, but because you need the Lord? Job said, I need the Bible more than food.

Job 23:10 | I have treasured up the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

Matthew 4:4 | Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

It would be better to starve from physical food than to neglect the word of God.

When I was a kid, we were so poor living in Louisiana that the welfare man, Mr. Haney would give us double the free cheese and free butter. One of the reasons I liked going to school is I could get a hot lunch there with red beans and rice, jambalaya or gumbo. I had friends who were even poorer than me, and they learned what hunger pains were. They knew how to survive for days without food. Dear saints, do you have hunger pains for God’s word? Are you hungry to know Christ better? You know that the world cannot satisfy your hunger pains!

When my twin sister was younger, lost in her sins and without Christ, she really struggled with anorexia. She had plenty of food, but she wouldn’t eat it. I think there is some spiritual anorexia going on. You’ve got the word of God right in front of you, loads of spiritual food, but you are starving.

¹³ John F. MacArthur Jr., *2 Peter and Jude*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2005), 65.

Maybe you've been so depressed for so long you've forgotten the joy of the Lord. Maybe your bitterness is eating you up, and you've forgotten the goodness of God. I'm asking you to dive back into the word and prayer on a personal level. Lead your family there. Stop living with hunger pains. Dive into the word. Get some encouragement from someone in the body so you get into it "day and night" (Psa 1:2).

Peter says, "I saw the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration." He says, "I experienced him. He's not a myth. He's the Son of God. I walked with him. I saw him die and rise again. I saw him!" And that made all the difference, didn't it? It changed Peter. Peter wants the same change in each of us. We experience the Lord through the word of God, by the power of his Spirit, and we are changed into his image. Look to Jesus in his word, and you will be transformed! Paul speaks of this amazing experience.

2 Corinthians 3:18 | We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.

Conclusion

"Blinding Laser Weapons" are a type of weapon that are designed to blind soldiers on the field of battle. Most countries adhere to international law to minimize the power of their lasers. China, however, instead of limiting the power of such weapons, took full advantage of the potential, developing the battery-powered Portable Laser Disturber. Its desired effect was to injure or blur the eyes of enemy combatants. By seeking to blind the enemy, they render them completely unable and unfit to fight. A soldier doesn't have to be destroyed in order to be rendered useless. Blinding them is enough.¹⁴

Satan doesn't have to get rid of us to take us out of the battle. All he needs to do us render us useless by blinding us to the truth. He just needs to get you out of the word. If you have been stuck, then the only way to get unstuck is by committing yourself to a daily, regular, devotional study of the word. Open your heart to the Spirit, and let God speak to you. Listen to his precious voice.

¹⁴ Sebastien Roblin, "China's Laser Guns: Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Them." The National Interest. The Center for the National Interest, May 12, 2018. <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/chinas-laser-guns-everything-you-always-wanted-know-about-25806>.