

THE WORD
is your **art**

**The Importance of
Knowing God's word**



STEPHEN BENNETT

The Word Is your Art

*“The Importance of
Knowing God’s word”*

*By
Stephen Bennett*



An Awesome City Ministries Publication

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Cover Art - Harry Llufrío, { [HYPERLINK http://www.gingernreadman.net](http://www.gingernreadman.net) } Hong Kong

Completed text 2005 - Awesome City Music Publishing

Published by Awesome City Music Publishing. { [HYPERLINK http://www.awesomecitymusic.com](http://www.awesomecitymusic.com) }

PO Box 1312 Dee Why NSW Australia 2099

First edition 2005

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ISBN

one

Dedication

*'Hear this, all you people; give ear, all you inhabitants of the world,
Both low and high, rich and poor together: My mouth shall speak wisdom;
And the meditation of my heart shall be **understanding**' Psalm 49:1-3.*

Acknowledgements

*Harry and Mina Llufrío in Hong Kong,
For continued great support, love, and design.*

*Our awesome Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
In whom we learn to trust more and more.
On the finer narrow road of faith.*

The Bible

Words of the Artist called God

*“A certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him,
“Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!” But He said,
“More than that, **blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!**”
Luke 11:27-28.*

*‘Jesus answered and said unto them,
“Ye do err, **not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.**”’ Matt 22:29 (KJV)*

*‘And He opened their understanding, that **they might comprehend the scriptures**’
Luke 24: 45.*

*“**I have given them Your word**; and the world has hated them, because they are not of
the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that you should take them out of the
world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as
I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth: **Your word is truth**. As You sent me
into the world, I also have sent them into the world”
John 17:14-16,18.*

Body

Body
Dawn

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Dawn

'In the beginning (before all time) was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, And the Word was God Himself' John 1:1. 'By faith we understand that the worlds were framed (fashioned, put in order, and equipped for their intended purpose) by the word of God, So that what we see was not made out of things which are visible' Hebrews 11:3.

Dawn says, “Ahh now I get it!” Dawn is beautiful. Dawn is the beginning of a new day. When God creates He does it with words; He paints a new picture. The world around us is held together by His words – His picture frame. Life is created, ordered, and equipped with words. These words come from the invisible world. When placed in our hearts, minds and mouths, they are powerful. Spoken and believed by faith, they steer our lives. Life is a gallery full of priceless art. We need to learn how to paint masterpieces.

*

It's a balmy summer's day in OZ, and a Christmas beetle just flew in the window. I consider God's ways as I take in the wonder of this little buzzing creature and its multi-colored coat, flashing orange, purples and greens, in the light of the sun. What an artist is God, and He made these things with words. His art just flew in the window and made me happy! This bug's life came into mine as I hummed a tune, writing this introduction 'to those who are **called, sanctified by God the father, and preserved in Jesus Christ' Jude 1b. "Hey Jude...the word...hmm...ta ta da dee da...won't let you down, take a sad song and make it better..."** – must be the heat. I get up, look out at the sun, and in the pleasant warmth I am reminded of Him again. **'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light" and there was light' Genesis 1:1-3.** Now I see!

The first dawn was introduced to the earth. It warmed its fledgling beginnings with radiant rays created from words; painted by the tongue of the Omnipotent Artist of the universe. I type words; as an artist I love them. They are paint; hues of expression - when crafted with the Lord's guiding hand, they can change lives. This book is for you the believer. It is about God's awesome word. Words that won't let you down, words that will change your life: to give you hope, wisdom, knowledge, revelation, and a loving reverence for God. Words that will make you stand tall, having confidence in who you are and what you believe. In our frenetic world we have lost the art of waiting and being still, our hope and trust is in so many other things, yet **'I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope' Psalm 130:5.** Hope is found in His word. His word is your priceless art.

I tap the laptop and glance at my mobile, man, it's 2005, and this decade is flying by. It has dawned on me that we are half way through it already. Life seems to go faster than ever before, like the blur of a Humming bird's wings. The last ten years have been unique in the Body of Christ as the Lord prepares His Church for an unprecedented end-time move in the nations. A mighty army of love, power, and resources, rising up to do the will of the Father, and to accomplish His last purposes as it is written in the word of God. For many in these days there has been a renewed passion for Jesus: to be close to Him, and to know Him deeper and more intimately.

Many Christians want to get closer to the Lord, yet have relied so much on feelings and experiences, they are all good of course, but the greatest way to know the Lord apart from prayer is to abide in His words. The days of being a lukewarm Christian, just trying to be spiritually fed, getting by on a once a week duty pilgrimage to church has to end. We must review what we actually believe in; to know it, understand it, making our foundations solid, to walk maturely, and make a difference on the earth.

Many new writers are emerging in this time; they have searched the scriptures for years, and are releasing great revelation from the word for this end-time generation. God is calling his church to go way beyond the boundaries of our historic and recent forefathers. To go over the fences of fear and unbelief that have stopped the Church fully possessing all that God has. The fullness of the promises of God set out in the word, have yet to be fulfilled for many nations.

Jesus said, *'Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do He will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My father'* **John 14:12**. Jesus said this in context of *'whatever you ask in My name that I will do'* **John 14:13**. He also said, *'If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples'* **John 15:7-8**. To be disciple's of Christ and conduct our lives well, we need to fully live in Him, and have His words living in us; then with great power we will ask according to His will, and we will bear much fruit. From the invisible world, He will generate out of nothing the things that we ask with His words. The end-time Church is a glorious Church that will do great works, as God calls the cities and nations of the earth to Himself.

With Christ, the nations are our inheritance and the ends of the earth are our possession. To fully possess our promised lands we need to know His word. *'Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe to do, that you may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers'* **Deuteronomy 8:1**.

Victory must be gained over our own needs, so we can be further equipped to do what really matters. You were not created to just exist, scrape by, and just make it through. Part of the purpose of being on the earth is to live in dominion with Christ; to live a productive, blessed life, for the betterment and salvation of others as well as ourselves. There is still a mammoth harvest to reap in this world. There are 6 billion people on the planet, only about 2 billion have heard the gospel. The laborers are few, and the job won't be done with a weak Church without resource. The whole counsel of God's word must be embraced and taught like never before. Individually, we have a responsibility and call, to know His word and live it out with unlimited possibility. The world faces increasingly desperate times. The traditions, denominational pride - old and new - legalism, lack of knowledge, and consequently, the ineffectiveness of churches, must be overcome if we are to move forward with apostolic authority in these days.

There is an ultimate stature of power, beauty, and reality that the Body of Christ has yet to come into. Worldly competitiveness, and carnality of living, must be replaced by great quality in people who truly ambassador Christ and the truth of the Bible. The gospels show a Jesus who in his relatively short ministry, challenged, and vehemently broke down religious, cultural, social, and economic barriers. His reputation was constantly on the line with the accepted norm of the status quo. He associated with people of poor repute, sinners, and the down and outers. He showed them The Way. Jesus shows us the same today. We must have an ear to hear what the spirit is saying and respond.

In this digital age the world is now a vast interconnected planet, everything is far more easily accessible, and global mindedness is normal fare. It will take great faith and trust to walk with Him in His provision in these last days as things accelerate on earth – that strength comes from His word. *‘Let us **lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith**’ Hebrews 12:1-2.*

My genuine hope is that this book will show you the imperative of how important the word of God is to being effective in life - revelation that you can study, and prove for yourself. Whether you are a musician, artist, businessman, housewife, minister, whatever vocation, at the end of the day, you need to have mature understanding of God’s word as you grow in Him; a solid foundation is vital. The first section of this book briefly sets out the extraordinary journey of the word in history. When you understand and appreciate that journey, and realize the urgent times we live in, you will hunger for His word more and more. The rest of this text will help build in you a greater foundation and a love for the greatest of all artistic endeavors - the word of God.

The Bible is The Truth for all humanity; the promises of God are absolute, and are available to those who will study to show themselves approved – people who have a listening ear, with a heart to believe. I want to challenge every reader to take a hold of the truth of the word of God like you have never done before, and allow it to turn your world around, because it is true, and it works!

*“**Let your heart retain My words; keep My commands, and live. Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, do not turn away from the words of My mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; Love her, and she will keep you**’ Proverbs 4:4-6.*

*‘**Your words were found, and I ate them; and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart: for I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts**’ Jeremiah 15:16.*

The sun is rising – feel the heat!

Chapter 1

The Word in History 1

'Ancient Days'

'Thus says the Lord, "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it, then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk in it"' **Jeremiah 6:16.**

It is a miracle and an honour that we have the word of God in such abundance as we do today. There are many Bible versions, language translations, study helps, tapes, CD's, DVD's, computer programs, and other learning formats - more than ever in man's existence. It is possible for over 6 billion people on planet Earth to access sound doctrine! History has given us this great heritage. It is important to understand the expedition of God's word down the corridors of time, and to fully appreciate where we are in history; the last days - where God knew that humanity would need great access to His word.

Hundreds of years ago, God allowed things to be set up that would ultimately release His word to the whole world. The early 16th century Reformists would never have imagined the unprecedented way this has happened today. As we reflect on history you will understand why it is so important to really know the word of the Lord in these end times. What a privilege it is now, to eat of the fruit of history laid down for us by the struggles and blood of many a great men of God. The finest of work is yet to be done in these days and it will be quick. *'He makes peace in your borders, and fills you with the finest wheat. He sends out His command to the earth. His word runs very swiftly'* **Psalms 147:14-15.**

The literal history of the word of God goes back before time began. In relation to our modern world, significant events took place during the word's historical pilgrimage. The knowledge of these events should stir us, to comprehend the incredible importance of the days we live in. We now have such a great opportunity in this New Millennium to experience the fullness of God's promises, with such wonderful unencumbered access to the word of God, availability and understanding which we have seen dramatically increase in the last 100 years. This is a time unlike ever before - if we embrace it! We would be unwise not to! *'Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, But he who hates reproof is stupid'* **Proverbs 12:1.**

Ancient Texts Hand Copied

'Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write these words: for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and Israel"' **Exodus 34:27.** During the hundreds of years of Old Testament times, when there were no printing press or copy machines, Hebrew scribes meticulously copied and re-copied by hand the scrolls of the original Old Testament writers. By the time Jesus was born this had been accomplished for over 1400 years. Perhaps the scribes twiddled their toes in the desert sand as they worked; that same sand was to become the silicon chip of the future carrying their years of labor around the globe - accessible to everybody on the World Wide Web! The historical miracle is that the original Bible texts maintained amazing accuracy through the various changes in Hebrew language, the Aramaic influences brought on after Israel's captivity in Babylon, and then continually penned from 500BC and into the future.

Versions

Around 300BC even Greek versions of the Old Testament had appeared; a version called *The Septuagint* (which is Latin for 70, being the number of Israeli elders who translated it in Alexandria), is often referenced today in the Greek Orthodox Church. This commitment to preserving the old texts continued down through history in Israel well after Christ's time, the Hebrew Masoretic scribes (approx. 500 AD) being the more well known. ***'Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the Lord your God shall keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers. And He will love you, and bless you and multiply you'*** Deuteronomy 7:12.

Other versions were penned as copies and influences spread, such as the *Syriac* version of the Old Testament in Greek Mesopotamia called *the Peshitta* (200-500 A.D), and the *Coptic* version in Egypt that is still used today. The *Gothic* version (360 A.D), is the first translation into the language of the Germanic family - being English, German, Dutch and Scandinavian; it was completed around the Rhine and Danube areas by people known as Goths. Goth Bishop Ulfilas was responsible, and settled his people in what is now Bulgaria.

Latin Vulgate

The New Testament writers completed their work within 60 years of Jesus's crucifixion. This was in an age when literature flourished. It was hand copied and gathered constantly from the earliest days; around 15,000 complete New Testament manuscripts that were copied then, exist today - many on old papyrus. A Latin version of the New Testament was apparently written about 200AD; Latin began to replace Greek as the dominant language of the Roman Empire.

A standard Latin text known as the *Vulgate*, or *common language* of the Medieval times, was completed around 405AD; it was completed by the scholar Jerome at the request of the Pope of his day. Jerome was the secretary to Bishop Damascus of Rome. The *Vulgate* contained *the Pentateuch* (the first five books of the Bible written by Moses, the first person in the Bible to write anything down, they contained poetry and prophecy). This was an important book as it was the vehicle through which the gospel arrived in Western Europe. It was a standard for centuries. Until the 20th century no Bible translations other than those based on the *Vulgate*, were recognized as authoritative by the Roman Catholic Church.

Until the 16th century all Bible versions in the language of all of Western Europe, were based on the Latin Vulgate. Most versions were only in part, and had limited circulation. Few people in ancient England could read, and many Bible stories were sung and memorized, especially the Psalms and the gospels. The earliest old English version was the *Lindisfarne* Gospels, written in Latin in 700 AD.

"The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tried in the furnace of earth, purified seven times' Psalm 12:6.

End of the Dark Ages

In the 15th century, we see the beginning of the printing of Biblical text on the printing press, everything up to then was hand copied! A man called Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), a Catholic priest from Rotterdam, agreed with the famous chief Reformist Martin Luther and others, demanding the scriptures be published for anybody to read. He was also a relentless critic of the Roman Church. However, when the Reformation took hold he stayed outwardly Catholic and criticized the Reformers as much as his own church! In 1516 he published a Greek New Testament text with a printer in Switzerland. It served as a basic guide for the translators of the King James Bible in England, and became a template (*textus receptus* - the received text), for the continual refinement of the original Greek by other reformists and scholars for the next 200 years. Today you are privileged and honored to be able to approach the Greek New Testament with great confidence in its accuracy, something that many of us can take for granted. *'For you will light my lamp; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness. For by you I can run against a troop and by my God I can leap over a wall. As for God His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is proven; he is a shield to all that trust him.'* **Psalm 18:28-30.**

The beginning of the Reformation in the sixteenth century with the Augustinian monk Martin Luther, marked the end of what is commonly called the Dark Ages of the Church. The reformation was a revolt against the hypocrisy of Rome and its religion. It was a cry from the man Luther, who had the revelation of the *real truth* of the word of God in his heart – his darkness had been enlightened to trust in God that we are justified by faith in Him alone, not institution. He desired to see men set free in the Biblical truth he had found. We will take a further look at Martin's incredible impact in accelerating the journey of God's word in the next chapter.

Holy Roman Empire

In the thousand years prior to the Reformation, the development of Papal power and the seat of Authority of the *Western*, or *Latin Church*, were in Rome. *The Holy Roman Empire* was established in 800A.D (sometimes called *The German Empire* - the old Roman Empire fell in 476 A.D). Rome held the persistent claim to be the ruling church, with the Pope claiming to be the *Universal Bishop* of the church. This eventually led to the final rending and separation of the *Western* (Latin) Church, and the *Greek Church* that was based in Constantinople in 1054 AD.

The four hundred years that followed this period in the Middle Ages of the Medieval Church (476 - 1453 A.D), saw the rise of the great crusades of Rome. These wars were mainly to free Jerusalem and the Holy Land of Islamic rule and to kill heretics that were against Roman Catholicism - even in Christian countries! Many wars were fought at the call of the Church of Rome, and ecclesiastical power greatly increased along with the wealth of rich trading that developed through them, particularly from the Orient. The Catholic Church had great domination over princes and nations in Europe by the 15th century, where bishops and popes had much political control. The vast wealth and unscrupulous use of power by religious churchmen paved the way for revolt against the Roman Catholic Church in the Reformation.

Seeds of Reformation

The desire for Reformation was not new, in the centuries before the 16th century, reforming voices of opposition began to rise, but the timing was not yet right. Around 1170 the *Cathari Puritans* in France circulated the word of God by the New Testament, and were promptly terminated by a crusade in the early 1200's! About the same time a merchant named Peter Waldo of Lyons, established an order of evangelists in the south of France called *The Poor Men of Lyons*, teaching, preaching, and circulating the word. Again they were bitterly persecuted and the followers scattered, their descendants constitute a small group of Protestants in Italy today. Still want to be an evangelist?

The Wycliffe Bible

In the 14th century John Wycliffe (c.1330 - 1384), a distinguished scholar, preacher and Master of Balliol College Oxford England, began a movement in the UK, for freedom from Roman power, and for the reforming of the Church. He attacked Monasticism, the false Roman doctrine of transubstantiation in communion, and urged a simpler Church according to the New Testament pattern - emphasizing man's direct responsibility to God, and the word being accessible to the laity and the unlearned.

If he lived in Europe Wycliffe would have been killed for sure. Wycliffe was protected by powerful British nobles, but He died in 1384; by this time he had translated the Old and New Testaments from the Latin Vulgate, which we know today as the Wycliffe's Bible! Thankyou John – see you in heaven! The common people gladly received his book. His followers were called *Lollards*, because they traveled preaching in *Lollardy*, meaning common speech, but they were finally persecuted and extinguished, such is the cost of following what you believe! This oppression was conducted by the *Constitutions of Oxford*, where it was forbidden to read, or translate the Bible into English, without permission of a bishop or local church council. This enforcement lasted 100 years. The Roman Catholic Church condemned Wycliffe's work and burned many of the hand written copies. Imagine all that work up in smoke! Oh for a hard disk in those days! Praise God for pioneers, nonetheless, his preaching and translation paved the way for the Reformation and the famous King James Bible version more than 200 years later. Are you getting the important picture? Hope you are not bored!

Cry reform and burn!

There were other Reformation voices including John Huss of Prague Bohemia, who was influenced by Wycliffe; he was burned at the stake in 1415 because Rome ruled that faith was not to be kept with heretics! Jerome Savonarola a Dominican monk preached against the ecclesiastical evils of the day. He packed the great cathedral of Florence with everyday people eager to listen, obey his teachings, and the word of God. He was eventually hanged in 1498 only 19 years before Luther nailed his theses on the cathedral door at Wittenberg. This is what it really meant to *burn for Jesus and go on the road with my ministry!*

The Positives of Rome in the Middle Ages

Even during the Dark Ages, the Roman Church gave the world some of the greatest achievements of the finer things of life, and all were wrought under the direct influence of the Church. Nearly all the schools and universities of the Middle Ages arose in the abbeys and monasteries, which many of us now gawk at in our visits on tour buses! Universities - including the famous Oxford and Cambridge - were established mainly by churchmen, these institutions grew out of earlier church schools. Early artists and their art were almost without exception for the service of the Church. The great cathedrals and architectures of Europe, the awakening of literature with Dante in Italy, art with its great series of painters such as Giotto, and also many architects and sculptors.

The arts never belonged to the world, but that's another book!

Chapter 2

The Word in History 2

'Monasticism and the Reformation'

'The secret things belong to the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law' **Deuteronomy 29:29**

Monasticism was a major influence in the Middle Ages all over the known world, and can be traced back as far as Egypt during the 4th century, as it grew it became more ordered. The earliest of these groups were the *Benedictines* founded in 529 A.D, which became the greatest of the monastic communities of Europe. There were many different orders that followed over the next 500-600 years, including the *Cistercians*, *Franciscans* and *Dominicans*. Monastic rules required obedience to the monastery head, poverty, or the non-possession of property, and personal chastity. We get much of our impoverished church thinking from these mindsets that still hangs around today! Much of monastic life was given to the copying of books, historical writings, with attention to art, architecture, agriculture, and especially literature and libraries. Great scholars, bold thinkers, philosophers and theologians came from these institutions. *Thomas Aquinas* the Dominican monk (1225 -1274 A.D) was probably the most famous. In the eyes of Rome during the medieval period, he became the most celebrated of all in philosophy and theology.

Monasteries were also a place of refuge, hospitality, and an amazing catalyst of education. Most of these ascetic orders began with the best of intentions, however much evil arose alongside all the good that came from them. Monasticism made the celibate life *a higher life* that was unnatural and unscriptural. It enforced the monastic life upon untold thousands of noble men and women, secluding multitudes from family, social, civic, and national life. The wealth of the monasteries grew, and as happened over centuries, discipline became lax, with immorality and idleness. They also wallowed terribly in luxuries that divorced people from the real world. At the start of the Reformation, monasteries everywhere in Europe were very low in the estimation of the people. An era was waning, light was coming to a Dark Age; permanent reform was in the wind, the time was right. ***'Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction, but he who regards reproof will be honored'* Proverbs 13:18. 'Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law' Proverbs 29:18. 'Hear, O earth! Behold, I will certainly bring calamity upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not heeded My words, nor to My law, but rejected it' Jeremiah 6:19.**

The Great Awakening

The Reformation, dated in the period 1453-1648, began in Germany and spread all over northern Europe, resulting in national churches with no allegiance to Rome. Another exciting force in this time of cultural changes was known as the *Awakening of Europe*, or the *Renaissance*, with renewed interest in literature, art, science and new ways of thinking. The thinkers of the Middle Age period were mainly churchmen dealing with religious truth.

The Renaissance however had interests in art, classical literature, Greek and Latin, with modern aspirations and thought that drew further apart from religion. Within this renaissance shift came the first gleams of modern science. The Renaissance frontrunners were literary inquirers, not monks, but searching layman, mainly in Italy. This was also fueled by the influx of Greek scholars after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, this is the period that the Reformation historically takes its beginnings.

In northern Europe, the awakening in Germany, England, and France, was more religious and spiritual, all however, were undermining the Roman Catholic order of things, along with an emergence of a spirit of nationality that was revealing an unwillingness to submit to a foreign rule, particularly over national churches. This aided the Reforming movement. The world stage was being set for an increasing escalation of thought, discoveries, and exploration; constant change for the next 400 years that exploded into the 20th century, where we have seen unparalleled development on all levels of human life. In the latter half of the 20th century changes were measured in decades, not in centuries. Then more recently measured in years, but now in the *Information Reformation*, almost by months! Are you getting a little bit excited!

The Reformation

'And the prophets become wind, for the word is not in them' **Jeremiah 5:13**. The leader of the reformation was Martin Luther, a Catholic monk, but he was a man who had the wind of God's Spirit in him because of the revelation of the word – a prophet that would bring major change to the world! The word Reformation means improvement by change or correction. This word actually appears in the Bible!

'It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience - concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation' **Hebrews 9:9-10**. The reformation mentioned here refers to the New Covenant Jesus made as opposed to the Old Testament priesthood rituals. Jesus now being our eternal High Priest through the final sacrifice He made for our sins by His death and resurrection. In a way this holds a prophetic tone to future events. Jesus was the *new thesis* nailed to the *timber doorway* of the cross of Calvary. Martin Luther's written thesis was nailed on the *timber door of the old*, when in the 16th century he resisted the fleshly religion of the ordinances of men, which Catholicism had become. He stood for the truth of a *Jesus Reformation* that had actually happened around 1600 years before by Christ Himself! I wonder if Martin ever knew the profound effects of his holy inspired actions on the future of today's world! *'Then the Lord said to me, "You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word"* **Jeremiah 1:12**. Through Martin Luther, God was about to dramatically execute His word!

Martin Luther

'And Micaiah said, "As the Lord lives, whatever my God says, that will I speak" **2 Chronicles 18:13**. Martin Luther had this heart. That is why He had such a profound effect on the history of the word of God.

In Saxony Germany in the 16th century, the major explosion of the modern Reformation was through this great man of God, Martin Luther. He was a professor in the University of Wittenburg. In the morning of October 31st 1517, Luther nailed a parchment to the oak door of the Wittenburg Cathedral; it contained 95 theses or statements, nearly all relating to the sale of Catholic indulgences. This was a Roman system where one could buy certificates signed by the Pope. These would pardon all sins for the holders of those certificates, as well as friends, dead or alive, on whose behalf they were purchased - this was done without confession, repentance, penance, or absolution by a priest! A man called John Tetzel who went through Germany selling these said, "*As soon as your coin clinks in the wooden chest, the souls of your friends will rise out of purgatory to heaven.*" I am sure Luther said, "*What, run that by me again!*" Luther totally denounced this, and struck very hard at the authority of the Pope, the priesthood, and Rome. God had his man and it was time to rise. The devil had reached a holy roadblock in Martin Luther; the word of God would not be mocked any more! *'All the words of My mouth are with the righteousness; nothing crooked or perverse is in them'* **Proverbs 8:8.**

Marty Burns the 'Bull'

Pamphlets were printed, and Luther's thoughts were made known throughout Germany. Gods timing for the invention of the printing press was impeccable. The more Rome resisted Luther, the more resolute he became in standing firm in the truth of the Scriptures. Pope Leo X excommunicated Luther by a Papal Bull Decree, which in Luther's mind was bull anyway! He called it *the execrable bull of Antichrist*. Luther was no whimp. When you start getting serious about the word of God things get stirred up! He burnt the Bull along with copies of Roman canon law and renounced the Roman Catholic Church at the Wittenburg gates before all the professors, students, and the people. *'And like their bow they have bent their tongues for lies. They are not valiant for the truth on the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know Me, says the Lord'* **Jeremiah 9:3.**

In 1521 Luther was summoned before a council of the German rulers in a place - believe it or not - called Diet, Worms, on the Rhine River, the Emperor Charles let him go. Martin had literally stirred up a holy can of worms! He was a man at war, and also a songwriter of warring songs such as *'A Mighty Fortress is our God'*.

Lutheran Protestants

On his way home Martin was arrested by soldiers of the local elector Frederick - they sympathized with him and took him to the castle of Wartburg in Thuringia, where he stayed for a year. While war and revolt raged in the empire and the peoples religious diet of worms and warts were being picked off (yuck! ok!), Martin translated the New Testament into the German tongue which is regarded as the foundation of the German written language. Amazing what you can do in a year! He completed the Old Testament several years later. Leaving the castle, he resumed leadership for the Reformed Church before it got into excesses. That didn't take long, but such is the way of men! The southern princes led by Austria adhered to the Roman Church and the North were mainly followers of Luther.

In 1529 at another council at Diet, Catholic rulers condemned and forbade the teaching of what was now called Lutheranism. Where Lutheranism was not dominant, and in areas already Lutheran, the Catholics ruled that they had freedom to exercise their own religion. The Lutheran leaders formally protested, and they became known as *Protestants* and their doctrines the Protestant religion.

Like the prophet Daniel God was very much with Luther because He had set His heart on the truth, as a consequence He changed the world. God moved because of him, and a reformation was set in motion that has impacted us right up to the present day. *'Then He said to me, "Do not fear Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before God, your words were heard, and I have come because of your words" Daniel 10:12.*

Calvin

The same spirit of anti-Luther also broke out in many other European lands, including Italy and Spain, where Protestantism was relentlessly quashed. However, the wheels were in motion and Protestantism found its later leader in Frenchman John Calvin, the greatest theologian of the church after Augustine. At 27 years Calvin published the Institutes of the Christian religion in 1536, which became the standards of Protestant doctrine in the future.

Counter Reformation

The Catholic Church did not lie down - the devil never does either - they had a Counter Reformation to subvert the Protestants and promote Catholic missions. A powerful influence in this time was the *Society of Jesus*, or the *Jesuit Monastic Order*, established in 1534 in Spain by Ignatius Loyola (1495-1556). It was initially squashed because of excessive zeal; however, by 1814 it became the most potent force for strengthening the Catholic Church around the world, even to this day. St Francis Xavier (an original Jesuit) organized missions to India, China and the East, where today Roman Catholics in the East number in the millions. St Francis was considered a gentleman, and was also respected by Protestants. He died in China at the young age of 46.

Inquisition

The very dark side of this Counter Reformation was the *Inquisitions* of every Roman Catholic government to destroy the Protestant Faith. The Spanish inquisition was one of the worst, where untold multitudes were tortured and killed for their faith. In that tidal wave of Latinos passion, Protestantism was totally crushed. A war began in Germany in 1618 as a result of the clashes of faith - sounds a familiar human habit! It lasted for 30 years and involved nearly all the nations of Europe, finishing in 1648. Germany suffered inconceivably. The boundaries of Catholic and Protestant states were mainly set in that time as they continue today. Historically the Reformation is considered finished in this period.

Chapter 3

The Word in History 3

'Printing the Word and the Versions'

*'Where the word of a king is there is power; and who may say to Him,
"What are you doing?" He who keeps His command will experience nothing harmful;
And a wise man's heart discerns both time and judgement' Ecclesiastes 8:4-5*

In the 1400's, on the Rhine River at Mayence Germany, a man called Gutenberg invented the printing press – it changed everything. With movable types, 1000's of anything could be printed and circulated, the world would never be the same. His first work was the Gutenberg edition of the Latin bible in 1456; undoubtedly printing was a gift from God! We also find with much interest that a man with the most significant printing of an English translation, was also a friend of Martin Luther as was Desiderius Erasmus, his name was William Tyndale (1484 -1536).

Tyndale

'The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary: He awakens me morning by morning, He awakens my ear to hear as the learned' Isaiah 50:4. William Tyndale was a learned man, a scholar of Oxford and Cambridge universities. Though a member of a Catholic order he began his work in Germany in 1524, having to work secretly, hiding from Catholic authorities. By 1530 Tyndale had published the New Testament in Europe and the Pentateuch from the Old Testament. It was different to Wycliffe's in that it rendered from the original Greek and not the Latin, and was circulated printed, not handwritten!

What we know today as *Bible English* is really *Tyndale's English*, and his wording was retained greatly in the King James Version. Tyndale's work was the earliest Bible version in English since the invention of printing, and the one that has shaped all the translations since! It was first printed in Cologne; after problems there, it was then continued in Worms Germany, 6000 copies were completed. These New Testaments were smuggled into England and sold, although officially banned. However, King Henry the Eighth authorized Tyndale's arrest, he was promptly jailed for 17 months, then in 1536 he was strangled and burned at the stake as a heretic by British agents in Belgium! Real nice! Not! Believe or die! Are you grateful yet! Can you see the picture emerging? The effort that God has taken, to get that Bible of yours into your hands, so you can actually live by the word and enter the fullness that the Lord desires for you? Want to be a pioneer? Let's continue...! *'Teach me Your way O Lord, and lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies' Psalm 27:11.*

Coverdale - Scripture into Verses

In the same year of Tyndale's death, another Englishman, and associate of Tyndale, was Miles Coverdale (1488-1568), he published an English translation of the whole Bible - the first complete one in print. He then worked on another version this incorporated the best of Tyndale and other translators and new insights from the Greek and Hebrew. It was finished in 1537, and it stirred popular interest in the scriptures throughout the land.

With the growing interest in scripture, a landmark royal injunction was released in September 1538. It stated: *"One book of the whole Bible of the largest volume in English should be placed in every parish in England where everyone had access to it."* As a result of this, the *Great Bible* was finally printed in London by 1539; it was a Coverdale revision and essentially a copy of Tyndale's. Resistance continued however, with Queen Mary Tudor on the throne in 1553 enforcing Catholic policy and banning English Bibles. Coverdale fled to Switzerland with other translators, a place where John Calvin had established a Protestant stronghold. William Whittingham of Geneva organized these guys and published a Bible by 1560 called the *Geneva Bible*, this one was the first to divide the scriptures into verses, and translated from the original Biblical languages. It was popular in England and Scotland among the people, but not church officials, a reaction to this, was the publishing of the *Bishops Bible*, translated by bishops, but not as good in scholarship as *The Geneva Bible*.

"Henry the Eighth I am I am!"

King Henry the Eighth broke from Rome in 1534 because the Pope would not sanction his divorce from Queen Katherine, the sister of the emperor, Charles the Fifth. His royal pompousness wanted to be head of an English Catholic Church version, with him as the head. He killed both Catholics and Protestants, and was somewhat of a hindrance, and a help to the Reform movement. Thomas Cranmer, who was the Kings advisor during this time, went on as the leader of the English Reformation and was the first Protestant as the head of the English Church. He was one of the compilers of the English Prayer book; however, he suffered burning at the stake at the hands of Queen Mary in 1556. Having church every week on Sunday is such a drag - so hard isn't it! Yeah right!

Elizabethan Era - The Word Unstoppable

Praise God Queen Mary didn't last long on the throne! Queen Elizabeth the 1st took the throne in 1558. This period was called the '*blest Elizabethan era*', the most religious age in English history, and where the Anglican system was finally cemented. The word of God was freed again and the people of England used the *Geneva Bible* very widely for the next two generations. The Church of England was re-established and took the form in which it is today. The word had come down through history and thanks to the English was now on an unstoppable roll! *'I will worship toward Your holy temple, and praise Your name for Your loving kindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name'* Psalm 138:2.

Presbyterians and Church Nationalism Strengthened

In Scotland John Knox resisted the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots, and established the Presbyterian Church as the established church of Scotland. Within 100 years, by the end of the 16th century, nearly every land in North Europe and west of Russia had established its own national church, and were now broken away from Rome who was *the only Church* 100 years before. God was on the move!

Papacy Revealed

Thousands of people were now starting to see that the Papacy of Rome was so far removed from the ideal of New Testament truth. Realization dawned that ***true religion and its answers, was founded in the word of God - the Holy Scriptures***. Roman Catholicism had substituted the authority of their Church institution, for that of the Bible. They taught their church was infallible, and the authority of the Bible proceeded only from its authorization by the Roman Church institution. They withheld the scriptures from the average person, and strongly opposed every translation of them into the language of the common people. The stage was now set for the most famous of all bibles - *The King James Version*.

King James Bible

'It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter' Proverbs 25:2. In 1603 James the Sixth of Scotland became King James the First of England. He sought to bring peace to the hostile religious factions of Great Britain; in that year the King convened a meeting in Hampton Court Palace in southwest London. (A great place to visit - take the train from Victoria Station in London to Hampton, walk across the bridge over the River Thames, and you are there!). In that meeting Dr John Reynolds proposed another version to honour the new King - the most important version in the history of English translations. It was completed by 47 scholars, and was reviewed by a committee of 12. It became the *Authorized Version* because King James had authorized the project. That is what you call a good decision! It was first published in 1611 and revised in 1615, 1629, 1638, 1762, and 1769. The last revision of 1769 is perhaps what you have on your shelf, hotel room, or the little red book you got as a kid in school! For the next 300 years the King James Version, remained *The Version*, in the English speaking world.

The Fruit of Reform

The Reformation brought the lost word of God back to the people. It brought sweeping reforms of change, where the godly minded could now go direct to the Bible for guidance, not having to go through a priest, who supposedly held the only key to the word! Reform continued through the following centuries with movements and continual refinements, including the *Presbyterian Puritans*, the *Congregationalists*, and the *Baptists* in the 17th century. These all arose from the English Church. What a mighty great purpose from God England had to the nations, and still should have! With the English Church in decline in the early 18th century, the *Methodists* arose, led by John Wesley. He influenced thousands in England, and later in America he formed the *Episcopal Church*. He continued to develop the Methodists into other lands although the church was not officially called Methodist until after he died. There were also many other great men and women of God and movements in these centuries.

In this brief overview, we can see that the wheels of change and the hunger for the truth of God's word were beginning to shift more rapidly. With the industrial revolution looming in the 19th century in the economies of England and Europe, the scene was being set for an awesome century unlike any other in history - our last 100 years.

Chapter 4

The Word in History 4

'The Word in the modern era'

'So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it' Isaiah 55:11.

In the 1970's, Thomas Nelson publishers, in Nashville, Tennessee, USA, commissioned the *New King James Version* with over 130 Bible scholars. The most notable changes were the replacement of *thee and thou's*. (I have found this the best of all the versions that I have used for general study use in my personal life). Since Wycliffe in 1380, and Tyndale in 1530, there have been over 200 other English versions of Scripture to this present day. In 1996 the *New Living Bible* was published - appropriately by Tyndale publishers! Wouldn't he be chuffed - if only he knew! We can meet him one day in forever land and give him our appreciation – I am sure he would love the royalties also!

The Word Now

The 20th century saw colossal Pentecostal and Charismatic revival, renewal, and the restoration of the truth's of the word; faith, healing, incredible worship, the gifts of the Spirit, prospering, revelation of who we really are in Christ, and so much more. It's because of the great history of the centuries, the pioneers, and all who have laid their lives down for the Lord, that we now have the millions of copies of God's word, in untold languages, now being produced for people all over the world! The past and all its struggles have ultimately been about the ***word of God!*** With the word in our hands, you and I are poised on the edge of the most unique time in history.

The 20th century is over and it's now 2005. The world system races ahead at warp speed. Much in our world is obviously insecure in the nations, with wars, rumors of wars, terrorism, earthquakes, and tsunamis; many believe we are in the last of the last days before Christ's return. However, as my wise, good friend, and Bible Scholar, Dr Peter Rowe says, "*We should be making a difference in this world rather than being disaster interpreters, getting on with what we are here for; to pray and to win the lost. The moral of this is to plan your life as if the Lord is coming back in a hundred years, but live it as if he may come back today.*"

It is now the time to be the glorious Church that the Bible says will rise - as we give ourselves to God's ways and His end-time purposes. This is your heritage now! What a legacy of truth we have been left by all the pioneers of God's word over the hundreds of years! What a journey for all for us! The billions at the end of the ages! How do you feel now? Bored? I pray not! I hope you are stirred in your spirit, and that you realize the enormity of what you now have in Christ.

This overview we have studied will help strengthen your faith, in doing and believing God's word. You can appreciate your place in present terms. Now you can see the hand of God and his orchestration in history. He has prepared the way for you this day, to get a hold of the truth once and for all, and like honey - stick to it!

The journey for this honor has taken many hundreds of years. Now you can study with revelation and let the corridor of history smile down at you! The word of God is your art. He is our creator – paint away!

Chapter 5

The Word Profits You Today

*'Incline your ear to **hear the words of the wise**, and apply your heart to my knowledge; For it is a pleasant thing if you keep them within you; Let them all be fixed upon your lips. So that your trust may be in the Lord; **I have instructed you today, even you.** Have I not written to you excellent things of counsels and knowledge. That I may make you know **the certainty of the words of truth**, that you may answer words of truth, to those who send to you?' Proverbs 22:17-21.*

In the Old Testament wilderness, Moses had a huge congregation - every thing was laid on a plate for them. The silver spoon was in their mouths, yet the desire for the world, the enticements of Egypt, even the security of its bondage had them tangled up. This *Church in the desert* had left Egypt, yet they preferred things *the world's ways* rather than God's. We can all learn from past mistakes! *'This is he (Moses) who was in **the congregation in the wilderness** with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles of God. Whom our fathers **would not obey**, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt'* Acts 7:38-39.

Old Time Example

*'Now all these things happened to them as **examples**, and they were written for **our admonition** on who the **ends of the ages have come**'* Corinthians 10:11. This historical movie is an example of how not to do things with God. Examples in scripture call our attention, to mildly rebuke, advise, or warn us. Most of this ancient Israeli congregation never entered into the promises of God. It will pay us to give intelligent assent to God's word and adjust our thinking, understanding, and feelings, to the will of God.

Saved not Consecrated

*'Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, **all were baptized** into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, **all ate the same spiritual food**, and **all drank the same spiritual drink**. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that **Rock was Christ**. But with most of them **God was not pleased**, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became **our examples**, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted'* 1 Corinthians 10:1-6.

All of this dune surfing congregation were willingly saved and baptized; they heard the messages preached, went down on the altar calls, attended the meetings, went along with the programs, and perhaps even gave into the offering plate. However, their hearts were far from doing the will of God. Their lust or desires were misdirected away from the complete truth of God's ways. They craved, set their hearts upon, longed for, and coveted the ways of the world they had been delivered from. They had come through the Red Sea baptism, but the old ways still clung to them like soiled sheets. Taking the new plow of faith with God was not enough for them, and they kept looking back to their old ways in downtown Egypt - their hearts becoming crusty, like pillars of salt. At the end of the day, you can do all the spiritual things that look right, and go along with the religious crowd for years, but still end up scattered in the wilderness of life, never receiving God's best from His word.

Trust in the World?

'And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, (Exodus 32:6) "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor murmur, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition on who the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except, such is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it' 1 Corinthians 10:7-13. 'Abstain from every form of evil' 2 Thessalonians 5:22.

They preferred the worship of other things: to party, rage, follow the trends, drinking their fill, letting down their moral guard, willingly exploiting God's goodness toward them in rebellion to His ways. Even in His presence, they complained and whined about everything when they did not need to! They gave legal ground to the devil, bringing them to an ultimate death, not seeing the promises fulfilled as God's people. They were in church life doing the religious duty, but never going on from the provision of God in a desert place, to tasting the milk and honey of God's provision in the Promised Land.

You may say, "Well I don't do any of those evil things." These Israelites of *Desert Storm Christian Fellowship*, by their baptism into Moses, brought themselves under obligation to the fullness of the law - to Moses, and to God's covenant He made with them, and also to be set apart to the service (or ministry) to God. Yet in doing all the right religious activities, the formulas, and every other success principle, it didn't change their hearts! Even after seeing the Lord's amazing grace, provision, and miracles, time after time in a desert place. It takes more than all the signs and wonders; it takes intelligent obedience to all of God's counsel in His word. *'Now O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments, which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you' Deuteronomy 4:1.*

Today Listen to the Lord

*"Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness...and said, "They always go astray in their heart, and have not known my ways," ...but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. So we see that they could **not enter in because of unbelief**" Hebrews 3:7-8,10,13,19.*

'For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it' Hebrews 4:2. God's will is that His word profits your life - today! Keep your hearts open to His word for your own spiritual good. Entering in requires faith and diligence - this book will help you do that!

Enter the Lord's rest

*"Let us therefore be diligent to **enter that rest**, lest anyone fall after the same example of **disobedience**. For the **word of God** is **living and powerful**, and **sharper** than any two edged sword, piercing even to the division of **soul and spirit**, and of **joints and marrow**, and is a **discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart**. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him whom we **must give account**' Hebrews 4: 11-13.*

For us now, in whose days, the end of the ages are truly reaching their concluding period, our hearts can be drawn away to desire and trust in far subtler forms of idolatry in the world, rather than in the truth of God's word. We can keep our windows of heaven closed up to the abundance and promises of God. We must all give account of our lives to the Lord, in how we walk out our lives in His word.

Entering God's rest is to be received into His favor, and live in rest; to settle down, colonize, to be in peace in a place of absolute trust in God. It is like being a repository - a place where things are safely stored. When we are obedient to God's word, we begin to find a place in Him where we are at peace. We settle down into a new way of living, we re-colonize our lives, re-order, re-structure, pioneer, and establish something new in them. This is Promised Land living in the New Testament. You become God's repository, he can trust you; *you can trust you*. Moses desert congregation never found that place with God. *'Then they despised the pleasant land; they **did not believe his word**.'* Psalm 106:24. *'Aaron shall be gathered to his people: for **he shall not enter the land** which I have given to the children of Israel, because **you rebelled against My word** at the water of Meribah'* Numbers 20:24.

Enough is Enough

*'For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the **will of the Gentiles** - when we walked in licentiousness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries'* 1 Peter 4:3. Moses team died. Don't lie down on the inside, there is a way out, a way to improve; a way to be an abundant blessing, to learn, hear, and renew! Today don't harden your hearts, but take heed of God's word.

*"This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should **no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind**, having their understanding darkened, **being alienated from the life of God**, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart, who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. **But you have not so learned Christ**. If indeed you have **heard Him** and have been **taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus**: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be **renewed in the spirit of your mind**' Ephesians 4:17-23.*

Let the cry of your heart be, *'Teach me Your ways O Lord; **I will walk in Your truth**; unite my heart to fear Your name'* Psalm 86:11.

It's time to stop being alienated and cut off from what truly belongs to you, otherwise you may as well throw most of the pages of your Bible away. You can't just believe the bits that suit yourself or only what you have been told. Perhaps you have never really dug deep and inquired about the truth in God's word. We don't need darkened understanding and to be ignorant of the life of God, there is enough of that in the religious world and its history. We have to renew the spirit of our minds, and understand the Lord's ways of life through His word. *'The works of the Lord are **great, studied by all who have pleasure in them**' Psalm 111:2.*

We are all blessed in this time of history to have a sure foundation of understanding from the word of God. We have insight into the historical perspective of the times we live in, and how the word of God has arrived to us today, let's all press forward out of our deserts and into the paths of His promises. Let your cry to God be heard!

*'Show me your ways O Lord; **teach me your paths**' Psalm 25: 4.*

*'**Blessed** are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with a **whole heart**' Psalm 119:2.*

*'And he said to them, "**Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe all the words of this law**"' Deuteronomy 32:46.*

*'Turn at My reproof; surely I will pour out My Spirit upon you; **I will make My words known to you. But whoever listens to Me will dwell safely and will be secure without fear of evil.**' Proverbs 1:23,33.*

The word profits you today!

Chapter 6

The Foundation

*'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are **right**, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgements of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yes than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb, moreover by them your servant is warned and in keeping them is **great reward**'*
Psalm 19:7-11.

Intelligent, construction site workers dig very deep when they are building a giant city high rise. Have you ever looked into that big messy hole? Sometimes the depth of their digging is as much as half the finished height of the building. There is hard work and effort that you will never see in all the mud, rocks, steel, and hard hats, yet, it is such a vital part of the strength and durability of the building. It is wondrous to see them dig down so far before a structure is put in place that will last a long time.

Eventually the dream of a new skyscraper is finished; it completely dwarfs the *little* cathedral next door, the traditional place of worship that stood for hundreds of years – that once was the center of town! Now the old church building looks like a Lilliput model of moss colored sandstone, dusted in carbon monoxide; standing uncomfortably close is now another glistening glass spire that has appeared out of yet another hole in the city.

The world of mammon gloats again in its persistent pursuit of riches. Another ode to the system of mystery Babylon stands erect and proud, stroking the sky with the arrogance of Babel. We admire it nonetheless - it looks beautiful, a work of art. How many more will rise, in the clusters of steel, in the cities of the world? These gleaming spires that take care of the worlds business, are visions diligently thought through from beginning to end. Each step is carefully weighed, engineered and planned out; a dream in the minds of men, held up and secured by much deep work that will go unseen.

God also has a modern dream for your life, one that will make you stand as a gleaming example for him. His dreams are better than the dreams of men. The truth of the Lord's plans to build our lives, are found *in His word*. Plans to make you prosper and increase day by day, so you can be a blessing and be blessed - if you are prepared to dig deep! *'O Lord, how great are Your works! Your thoughts are very deep. A senseless man does not know, nor does a fool know this'* **Psalm 92:5-6.**

Many blue prints are needed for a grand project. Things have to be done right, and all the correct information set in place before the vision can actually stand firm and permanent. If you cut corners you can end up like the old movie *Towering Inferno*; when they built that high-rise they wired it cheap, it caught fire, things fell apart, and people died – they had to start over. The right specifications were ignored. Many Christians do the same with God's word. In Christ you have to be willing to pay the price for top quality. It takes more time but it is worth it! *'Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom'* **Psalm 51:6.**

Biblical foundations for every area of our lives are essential. Mature understanding of why we believe what we believe, and do what we do, is vital. This is our strength for actions and disciplines in life. As a Christian you ought to know thoroughly what the word says about everything. The word of God is your color palette to paint your life with, and the plans to be the creative architect of your world with Jesus. Don't be a moss-covered icon of tradition, dwarfed by an ever-changing world. Start digging and do life by the blue prints of God - His word!

Commendation to Godliness

"...I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness..." 1 Timothy 3:15 –16a.

Godliness is a mystery. Mysteries are also for unraveling. When they are delved into and researched they can be solved. When things are discovered there are rewards. The telephone invention changed the world. Penicillin helped increase mans fight against disease. Computers and digital technology have turned our lives upside down. God has given us the intelligence to seek and find, and in doing so we can build life to the real glory of God. When we find God's ways of doing things, we find personal liberty, freedom, and a new way of living in a pressured world. This ultimately blesses the Church. His foundation is the deep concrete building slab of His unshakeable Word! *'Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Your Spirit is good, lead me in the land of uprightness' Psalm 143:10.*

Nourished in Sound Doctrine

Paul said. *"If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of good doctrine which you have carefully followed. But reject profane and old wives fables, and exercise yourself rather to godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come" 1 Timothy 4:6-8.*

If I am teaching things that are sound in this book, then I am being a good minister for the Lord. My sincere prayer is that you be completely *nourished in your faith*, not lacking any spiritual nutrients at all. Imbued, fit and healthy in the good doctrine of the word of God, so you can stand up and really *do God's word practically* in your life. Why? Because it is a godly Christian thing, and part of the mystery of godliness is to handle all aspects of your life in a proper biblical way. Profitability in all of your life, your ministry, marriage, finances, whatever you do, is part of the promise of your father.

The Lord is truly interested in your life that now is – whatever condition it may be in at the moment. Some people hate the word doctrine, but the bible informs us to be nourished in this good stuff, or else you won't know which way to walk and what path to take when it comes to dealing with things in your life - especially in these days. ***'Your word is very pure; therefore your servant loves it' Psalm 119:140.***

Make Your Ways Straight

The apostle Paul called Timothy his *'beloved son, my true son in the faith.'* Through his encouragement to Timothy we are told to ***'Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires...'*** **2 Timothy 4:2-3.** It is time for all of us to be true sons and daughters in the faith, making solid mature decisions in our hearts that *'in all your ways, know, recognize, and acknowledge Him, and he will direct and make **straight and plain** your paths'* **Proverbs 3:6** Amp.

The Bible is our guiding light, regardless of what our own opinions are the many areas of Christian life. The Lord wants to make things straight forward and plain for you. God loves us deeply as children of faith. His Word gives us sound doctrine and teaching, in an increasing unsound, enticing and entangling world system. You may be in a church tradition, or movement still steeped in poverty thinking where *"it's pious to be skint"*, or *"I am but a worm just barely saved"*; the incredible victory you actually have by faith in Christ Jesus, may not really be believed or embraced. Wherever you are in life, at the end of the day, regardless of what is said the word of God is your final precedent, not the traditions of men. It is your responsibility to maturely know the truth in every area.

*'The grass withers, the flower fades, but **the word of our God stands forever'** Isaiah 40:8. 'And all bare Him witness, and wondered at **the gracious words** which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son' Luke 4:22.* All of Gods counsel is valid, and it will never fail you if you take the responsibility to *believe and do it.* Watch the word of God work in your life like a grand old building standing the test of time – it's your true foundation!

Chapter 7

Diligently Seek the Word

*'Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself,
Lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life.
And teach them to your children and your grandchildren' Deuteronomy 4:9.*

In all my travels and ministry, one of the things I have observed amidst all the busyness of many Christian's lives, is a general lack of consistent diligence in knowing and understanding the revelation of the word of God, particularly in the areas of provision. In these times life is certainly intense, busy and distracting, but this is amazing in light of all the great teaching that is in the Body of Christ today. I have also learned that the areas of provision, and your spiritual authority, will always be vehemently contended for and resisted by our adversary the devil. If you want to live a life in freedom, according to Gods best in the varying seasons of your Christian walk, a mature acceptance of responsibility is required to change, whether you like it or not. It is to your glory to do so! The words of God require us to change to live a powerful life in Christ, and be able to do all manner of good work. *'Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth' 2 Timothy 2:15.*

Seek – To your Glory

*'It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of Kings is to **search out a matter**' Proverbs 25:2.* We are all kings and priests in Jesus, but you don't wear a crown of reward without a bit of digging around, busting a few nails, and picking the dirt out – that's how you find gold mines! To search means to penetrate, examine intimately, finding out and trying for yourself. To seek with the Lord is synonymous with intimacy and intelligence, which has its root in love. It is not just a religious performed exercise for points with God. Intimacy pleases our God; our faith must be couched in intimacy. The obvious analogy is the deep intimacy we can have in marriage. The Lord wants us to investigate deeply: who He is, what He is, and what He says. This pleases Him, and releases hidden treasures for our lives. The Lord is our *Treasure Island*, but you have to endure and enjoy the adventure of getting there. Wisely following the map of His words, and being the ones who find the chest of Gold!

Seek in Faith - Be Rewarded

*"But without faith it is **impossible** to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a **rewarder** of those who **diligently seek Him**' Hebrews 11:6.* Without faith - well it's just impossible. So you better understand what you believe in. He can't help himself in giving you something back! God is a remunerator - rewarder; He pays wages, and gives recompense for services rendered. He gives *good* remuneration that is profitable to the receiver! The way God sees it, the doing of His will, prayer, study, believing, and spending time with Him, is a form of working for God! He will make sure that you get a profitable return in one way or another! Not just everlasting life, but in the here and now! It is Gods great desire to reward you, but you must seek Him out of love. To seek is to search out, investigate, crave, demand and worship. This requires motion and action, doing, inquiring, plotting or planning. To ascertain by enquiry, to question, to seek for something hidden. To learn with intelligence!

Seeking - Is Worship

Seeking is actually worship in the eyes of God, as much, if not more than singing in a church meeting! It really is up to you to seriously work it out. The more you investigate the more you will crave, because the honey in the Promised Land baby is addictive! Remember when you were first in love? You were completely dotty! Totally gob-smacked if you are British! You could not concentrate on anything, except quitting work at the end of the day and being with the person who has besotted you. ‘*Oooh what a feeling*’, and it wasn't Toyota! Suddenly, your life had vision and you were creative with flowers, chocolates, dates out, poems, and general love silliness!

Seeking God is more than just a quick prayer before lights out. It embraces your life, intelligently consuming you like fire. It is the fabric of being a human being. To question, to inquire, to learn and improve. Hidden things become revealed, and over time you will find it's not that hard any more: through seeking, through His word, you begin to see, you begin to say, “*Hey there is a plan here*”. You become bolder, having a faith that is totally assured and demanding. Faith that is pure and powerful in the will of God, unshakeable, because you have the dream of God in your heart, the truth of who He is, and the reality of his promises echoing within you.

You may be seeking now, out of an urgent need, that's ok! God loves it when you come to Him in times like this. Desperation may drive you to do something about your life, but revelation should be your motivation. Not just a bunch of followed formula's that someone tells you. So look to God with a worshipper's heart in your time of need and He will help you! ‘*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come **boldly** to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to **help in time of need***’ Hebrews 4:15-16.

Seek - Press In!

No matter how much we listen to teaching, some of us can still be spiritually deaf to the truth. You must learn to press in for yourself, you cannot just be a hearer of the word and not be a doer, or you will deceive yourself and be robbed of Gods best for your lives (James 1:22). Even in Jesus day they pressed in. ‘*And it came to pass, that, as the **people pressed upon Him to hear the word of God**, He stood by the lake of Gennesaret*’ **Luke 5: 1** (KJV).

The people of His day pressed in and implored Christ – this happened many times in scripture. They pressed in to get done what they desired, and you know what? Jesus did it! ‘*And they brought to Him one that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they **begged** Him to put His hand on him. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers into his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, **He sighed**, and said to him, “*Ephphatha,*” that is, “*Be opened*”. *Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly*’ **Mark 7:32-35**.*

When you don't understand or hear right, you don't speak right, and when you do, it can sometimes be a load of old irrelevant poppycock. Why did Jesus sigh? Perhaps He grieved for all those in a state of natural and spiritual audio impediment; people unable to hear Him plainly and diligently to *do what he says*.

Maybe you need a mighty thrust of the finger of God in your ear ole' - to unblock that inner drum that doesn't beat to the Savior anymore! Or perhaps sweet holy spit dripped on your tongue, snorted up from the Savior's hairy nostrils will get your attention! Then the tangled vocal string of your own opinions will be loosed. Then you can speak and live like you are meant to - in line with God's truth, and the correct creative purposes your tongue was made for! Press in my friend and the result of Jesus touching your world will be as plain as ABC. *'The preparations of the heart belong to man, but **the answer of the tongue is from the Lord**' Proverbs 16:1.*

Seek - You work it out!

*'Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to do **His good pleasure**' Philippians 2:12-13.*

It is time for a workout in the scripture gymnasium, but you need to use the right equipment! Working out your salvation is to *fully* work out, accomplish, finish and fashion. To rescue, or bring *safety*, physically or morally, to deliver, and bring health. You are like clay. Life can splat you from time to time, and put your pot out of shape. Let the Potter rescue you now, today, through His word, and bring your life to a position that's safe and sound. Get yourself to work in the word. God will change you; it is His utmost satisfaction, delight, wish and purpose. God is motivated by an unfathomable kindness, as you are obedient. It is His *good pleasure*, to see you move ahead!

Start the music the work out begins!

Chapter 8

Equipped in the Word

*'For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written **for our learning**,
That we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have **hope**' Romans 15:4 (KJV).*

It is now time for some new learning, it's part of what the Bible is for, and what history over thousands of years has established for us. Through the word we can have hope for every part of our lives, and all we need to live it effectively.

Believe

Ask yourself this question: Do you **really believe the entire gospel**? Consider these following verses from the bible.

*'And this I pray, that your **love** may abound still more and more in **knowledge** and **discernment**, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ' Philippians 1:9-10.*

Paul was saying something like this: *"I pray your love abounds in **fully acquainted recognition**, in the truth you have. That you may approve things that **differ**, that **matter** and are of **more value** to give you're attention to, that are **transportable** in life, and able to be carried in your character through into eternity."*

*'All scripture is given by **inspiration of God**, and is **profitable** for doctrine, for reproof, correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may **be complete**, **thoroughly equipped for every good work**' 2 Timothy 3:16-17.*

*'The **entirety of your word is truth**, and everyone of Your righteous judgements endures forever' Psalm 119:160.*

Have you been as diligent as you would like to be, in searching, studying, and understanding the word of God for the things that really matter? Are you getting unhooked from *Neighbors* and *Match of the Day*, and the millions of channels available on TV? Is the lack in your life, contributing to you not being fully equipped for all the good work God wants you to fulfill in your daily life and destiny? It is? Ok then read on.

Capture Your Thoughts

*'Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the **knowledge** of God, bringing every **thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ**' 2 Corinthians 10:5.* We must maturely except that the precedent we need in life is set in the word; there we find our blue print, admonition, guidance and correction for the Lord's best for us. Our opinions and traditions can kill us. Obedience to the word is not an option. Wrong thinking needs to be captured into the liberty of Christ's ways of thinking. For example, when the subject of finances is mentioned among believers, it can be a sensitive issue – but why? There are great answers from our Father in His manual for life.

Equipped - Obedience

Are you in debt, can't make ends meet, life's in a mess, and you are desperately wanting to change to see the Lord's blessing? God's word will put you on the right track. Don't be like some - *'But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord who has believed our report?" So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God' Romans 10:16-17. 'Therefore to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient...they stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed' 1 Peter 2:7a-8b.*

The word is your answer! Faith comes and gives us the ability to do, as you have an *ear to hear* with understanding. Be disobedient and stumble, the choice is yours. Do your knee's need a bandaid?

'And the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith' Acts 6:7.

Increase in the knowledge and understanding of the word of God. As the revelation of the word spreads in the holy nation of your own body, obedience will rise, faith will come, and you will have clarity on how to overcome anything. Multiplication, increase, and growth will be a result, not just in financial matters, but every area of your life will be touched!

Are you equipped enough?

Chapter 9

Beware of False Gospels

*'I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ to a **different gospel**, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to **pervert the gospel of Christ**. But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the **revelation of Jesus Christ**'*
Galatians 1:6-7, 11-12.

The gospel the apostle Paul preached (that constitutes most of the New Testament), was not given to him by men or religious institutions. It came by revelation inside of him by the Spirit of God. Yet Paul also had years of Old Testament study – a foundation in him that God could pour revelation into. That is why it is important that *you know* the purity of the truth of God's word as it lives in you richly. That it becomes revelation in your own life by the Holy Spirit of God, as *you* approve all things. This becomes your motivating factor - because *you know*. Then you are never swayed and robbed by any old wind of doctrine that blows your way. There are reportedly 22,000 versions of Christianity on the earth; it pays to be close to the Lord, especially today - don't be deceived! *'For **the ear tests words**, as the palate tastes food. Let us choose justice for ourselves; **let us know among ourselves what is good**'* **Job 34:3**

Consider What You Hear

*'Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, **considering the end of their conversation**'* **Hebrews 13:7** (KJV). Even when you are under the covering authority of your church and the ministry you are committed to, it is also important to understand the context of scriptures for yourself. Some scripture can be taught out of context, and presented in such a way, that you are continually left with rudimentary principles and formulas that can easily be devoid of Christ's participation. For example, *"just be positive, confess success, or follow these easy ten to 20 steps."*

Over time you can subtly end up with a selfish gospel, using only principles from truth. You never really *grow properly* and fully in the Lord, knowing Him intimately. You hang around in *babydom* and a middle of the road Christian safety zone. Your Christian life can become performance oriented in the tasks and things you do, or justified in how much you give, yet still devoid of much continual maturing revelation in your walk with Christ.

The Bible tells us to responsibly consider the conversation of those who speak the word. Why? So you can *know for yourself!* Everything I write in this book - check it out! If you are in a denomination, religion, or cult where things are said, and you know they are wrong, check it out for yourself. Seek out some *wise* counsel from other sources if you are not sure. There is safety in this and it is fine to do that. Don't fear men. Don't allow your precious life to be exploited and then get years down the track and kick your self in the backside for all the wasted time, when you could have been *entering in to the Promised Land!* *'Where there is **no counsel, the people fall**: but in the multitude of counselors there is **safety**'* **Proverbs 11:14.**

False Prophets and Teachers

*'But there were also **false prophets** among the people, even **as there will be false teachers** among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By **covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words**; for a long time their judgement has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber' 2 Peter 2:1-3.*

Basically don't be gullible, get sucked in, and get ripped off with what you have and what should be yours. The false will covet what you have and drain it from your life. Peter warns that many will walk this road in the last days. It can happen in any denomination, stream, or franchise of institutions. It may look good and right but will ultimately be destructive to you. Be wise, and prayerful; not every Christian project, vision, theme park, and dream that has Gods name attached to it, is necessarily in the will of God. If there is the false, as we are told in scripture, there must be the true, that is why it is an imperative that you are wise with your life. *'To receive the instruction of **wisdom, justice, judgement and equity**; to give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will **hear and increase learning**, and a man of understanding will attain **wise counsel**' Proverbs 1:3-5.*

Understand God's Words

Religion, traditions and the ways of men will not really desire, or want to truly understand the words and ways of Jesus. They will use His words and acknowledge Him, but the heart and the reality can be far from them. If you are entangled within something like this, it can ultimately destroy Christ in you, diluting your hope, motivation, and God given energy. Religion sought to kill Jesus in His day - you will only be robbed if you allow yourself to be complacent and never inquiring. Christ even accused such religious people as being motivated by satan, not only that, but the devil was their spiritual father.

*'Why do you **not understand my speech**? Because you are not able to listen to **My word**. You are **of your father the devil**, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and **does not stand in the truth**, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar, and the father of it. But because **I tell you the truth, you do not believe Me...he who is of God hears God's words**: therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God' John 8:43-45,47.*

These are very strong words from the Lord. If you are of God you will get into His word, hear them and do them. Our entrance into Gods promises must be through Jesus Christ. Faith and patience inherit the promises! Jesus said, religion that tries to enter through other ways other than through the door of Christ is a thief and robber. You will ultimately be robbed of what is actually yours in Christ if you follow the wrong thing. *'Most assuredly, I say to you, He who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but **climbs up some other way**, the same is a thief and a robber' John 10:1.*

Tradition and Legalism Kills Your Spirit

*'Then the Pharisees, and some of the scribes, came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. Now when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed, hands, **they found fault**. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, **holding the tradition** of the elders. When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not walk **according to the tradition** of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?" He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honor's Me with their lips, but **their heart is far from me**. And **in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**' "**For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men** - the washing of pitchers and cups: and **many other things you do.**" And said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your **tradition**" **Mark 7:1-9.***

Jesus had observed this all His life, by the time His ministry started He had a gut full of their hypocrisy. He knew tradition and legalism kills your spirit. Religious ways pre-occupy themselves with inconsequential issues that have really no bearing on the truth of the Bible. Often entreated by men who look and act spiritual, but often cannot even maintain themselves what they ask people to do. The real purposes of Jesus are generally far from their hearts, and the issues they get involved with. This is either by ignorance, denial, or plainly being deceived. Some people are caught up in this sort of vain worship and don't even know it, actually thinking God is pleased in their teaching of what they have been told to teach, or what they are brought up with.

Vain worship and tradition does not have to be over hundreds of years, it can happen over a short span of time - tradition can be set up easily in a decade, or even less! Historically, traditional orthodoxy is a common case in point with priesthood vows of poverty and celibacy. The fruit of this history speaks for itself in the excesses of luxuries, financial corruption, and the various indulgences and perversions of many kinds. Some of the worst are documented in the media today. The killing of unwanted baby's to hide sin in the priesthood. Pedophilia, the sexual interfering of children who are in the care of these who lay aside the commandments of God to uphold the traditions of men. They do not enter through the doorway of Jesus. They rob and steal from people, driven by carnality and the devil. If you submit to such you may be similarly *raped and pillaged* from the life in Christ you could and should have.

Listen - make sure you *intelligently* understand the doctrine of God's word. Know whom you serve, what you serve, and what is the truth. What could look like the most enticing, coolest modern religion around, may not be what it seems! There are religions and cults that are obviously off the wall, and there are many that look, taste, feel and seem like the real thing. Don't be robbed of God's resources for your life and destiny. Jesus Himself warned us that a little bit of the most subtle of untruth, can in the long term, damage and negate the whole lump!

*'How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But to beware of the **leaven** of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of **the doctrine** of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees' Matt 16:11-12.*

Know of the Doctrine

*'And the Jews marveled, saying, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent me. **If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine**, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" John 7:15-16 (KJV).*

It is important that you are: *"Rooted and built up **in Him** and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. **Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ**" Colossians 2:7-8.*

*'And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, **choke the word**, and it becomes unfruitful' Mark 4:19.*

Pure Word

*'Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. **Do not add to His words, lest He reprove you, and you be found a liar**' Proverbs 30:5-6.*

God's word is pure; deception will always want to make it impure, to draw you away from the purity of the truth. We must treasure His word and arm ourselves with it, then we can be aware of the false and understand what is real. *'I have more understanding than all my teachers, for **Your testimonies are my meditation**' Psalm 119:99.*

*'Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come **unless the falling away comes first...**' 2 Thessalonians 2:3. The apostle Peter warns us that in the last days there will be a great falling away from what is true. Do not be deceived; beware of false gospels.*

Chapter 10

Receive the Word

'So they read distinctly from the book in the law of God; and gave the sense, And helped them to understand the reading. And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people' Nehemiah 8:8-9.

The Lord has been refreshing and awakening His Church, pouring out His Spirit around the world and doing marvelous things in recent times. Whatever has happened in the past, in your life, it is time to move on, and get with the plan! Most people have a story to tell; perhaps you have felt ripped off, or lost money. You didn't get what was due, prayers were unanswered, or you've been disillusioned in some way. That's life sometimes on our imperfect planet! Even the best of people and churches can make mistakes.

Perhaps you've tried living in the financial ways of the world, which have entangled you, and yet you are still trying to please God like many believers. Maybe it feels just too hard to keep going in life; you are tired of the slog, and now you want to change, realizing your family, destiny, and fulfillment depend upon it. You're in a good place to leave the past behind and move up and forward toward new goals. Have your mind positioned this way, I encourage you, it is a mature thing to do. *'Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind' Philippians 3:13-15.*

Receive the Word Now

*'Therefore, my beloved brethren, let everyman be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. 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...But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be **blessed in what he does**...pure and undefiled religion is this; to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world' James 1:19-22,25,27.*

It is time now to make a decision to really receive God's word with a willingness to change. Many people know about God's word - they have *heard it all before*. They can understand it, even preach it, but yet still not *fully receive* it into their own lives. Sometimes you just have to slow down, make some quality choices and change. God's liberty means freedom, unrestrained to come and go as a citizen of heaven, free without obligation. Blessing is certainly attached to freedom! The Bible tells us that God's word of freedom, and potential for blessing, is written on the tablets of our hearts. That is why frustration eats at you when you meander in mediocrity. This freedom is implanted in you, or as the King James Version says, *engrafted*. Mediocrity tries to tug and pull at what is grafted into you! *'But the word is very near you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it' Deuteronomy 30:14*

Grafted In

*'You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be **grafted in**"'* **Romans 11:19**. New Testament believers have been grafted into Christ by faith in Him. He is the root and the tree holding the branches. He is the source of all things we need.

The previous verse says, *'...remember that you do not support the root, but the **root supports you**'* **Romans 11:18a**. In God's support of us, He spiritually grafted the fullness of His word into our hearts, like a skin graft! The word of God can become new flesh in your life! Holy non-plastic divine surgery! Engrafted means to puff or blow, to swell up, implying to germinate, grow, spring up and produce!

Receive with Humility

*'Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and **He will lift you up**'* **James 4:10**. Make a decision in the spirit of humility and a gentleness of heart to lay aside your pride, formulas, strong self will, and what you have known that does not work. Regardless of what has happened in your life, receive in you, by a decision of faith, the truth of what God says for you. You will find God's perfect word will begin to fill you like air in a balloon! You can actually feel this happening! The wind of the Spirit inflates your faith; truth germinates in you like a flower and begins to be productive for you in your natural world. *Revelation then comes*. You will say; *"Oh right now I understand!"* You then live out that revelation *with faith* not just because of what someone just told you, or some *how to formula*, or just a goal pursuing, *positive thinking* process. You actually grow and mature in Christ, staying consistent in that way by His revelation in you. That word in you then produces more seed, the cycle of the word ruling in your life continues to expand, and you move on in God as an unshakeable Christian! So receive it!

The Promise

The promise in the book of James is this - keep looking into the perfect law of liberty, *do it and you will be blessed*. James said, part of *true religion* being expressed in our outward acts of life is to avoid being spotted by the world (made defective in living). This is achieved by keeping ourselves unblemished and entangled by any present conditions of human affairs, that alienate us from, and are in opposition to God. This includes physically, morally and in relation to the sum of all possessions and temporal things on earth. This is what the scripture refers to as the world, which in the Greek language is *kosmos* - the adornments of this world. If you have a lot of spots from being caught up in the world system, then it's time to change, because your religion is being defiled.

The Parable of the Sower Explained

The most famous parable that Jesus taught is *The Parable of the Sower*. It is about receiving His word – the seed. Jesus said, *'For whoever has (the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven), to him **more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him**'* **Matthew 13:12**. Religion had become dull of hearing God's truth, and Jesus was teaching that when we genuinely have the truth of His word, more of it would be given to us in abundance. If we did not have it, we could lose what even we had! *'A man who wanders away from understanding will rest in the congregation of the dead.'* **Proverbs 21:16**

One of the keys to understanding the parable is to realize that through faith in Christ ***you are good ground*** – even though you may not feel that way. With that in mind, you will understand that you can change the foundation of your life - regardless of who you are, and whatever circumstances you are in. Meditate on this, receive the word, understand it, and then you can multiply!

*“Therefore **hear the parable of the sower**”*

1. *“When anyone **hears the word of the kingdom**, and **does not understand it**, then the wicked one comes (the devil) and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who **received seed by the wayside.**”*
2. *“But he who **received the seed on stony places**, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he **has no root in himself**, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.”*
3. *“Now he who **received seed among the thorns** is he who hears the word, and **the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word**, and he becomes **unfruitful.**”*
4. *“But he who **received seed on the good ground** is he who **hears the word and understands it**, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” **Matthew 13:18-23.***

The devil, lack of understanding, lack of foundation in your life, persecution, cares of the world, and the pursuit of temporal riches can rob you of the word. In Christ you are good ground to receive the word. Stay in the word, stay yielded to Jesus and you will hear it by the Spirit of God and you will understand it. Then you'll be really productive in life bearing much fruit.

Receive!

Chapter 11

Changed by the Word

'My son, if you treasure My words, and treasure My commands within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; Yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God' Proverbs 2:1-5.

"Yeah this is all great stuff but how do you stay in the word all the time, I've tried it before?" Sound familiar? Nothing is ever that easy at first, but it can get easier. The more you practice the better you get. How hungry are you? How much do you want Gods best for your life? Are you satisfied with where you are? There are many detailed helps books available, but the following brief suggestions will assist you.

Discipline

Consistent disciplined reading. One scripture verse or chapter can change your day! You don't have to read and know the whole Bible in a day to try and get it right! It is a lifetime journey, with layer upon layer of discovery and revelation! Make it a goal to quietly read a minimum of a chapter a day, and allow the Spirit of God to speak to you through the words. Put yourself in the situations you are reading about, let the images of the word sink into your spirit, like when you watch a movie. The revelation of God's word is like pictures, you can recall them easily.

Memorize a verse, think about it during the day, put it into practice and do it! Listen to the word, through CD's, DVD's or Christian TV. Speak the word when you pray, write down prayers with God's word, like a script, and pray it out in faith to God. Remind yourself of God's word in any creative way you can, keep it before your eyes. *'Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth, and teach you what you shall say' Exodus 4:12.*

Meditate

Set time aside to study. Meditate on the word! "What do you mean, isn't that spooky New Age stuff?" The word meditate is actually in the Bible. Christian meditation is not emptying your mind as New Age philosophy teaches, but *filling* your mind with God's word! Meditating in the word, is ruminating, churning over, pondering, fermenting, thinking, even talking to yourself, giving the word space and time to breathe, taking its place in you - basically using your brain! This is part of the blue print to genuine success and prospering in the Lord. Our busy world is speeding us up to the point where we now have *Attention Deficit Disorder* at epidemic levels in society. God says, *'Be still and know that I am God' Psalm 46:10.* Take time out.

*'This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate in it day and night**, that you may observe to do according to **all that is written in it**. For then you will make your way **prosperous**, and then you will have **good success**. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage...' Joshua 1:8-9a.*

If your entanglements in life have caused you grief, it's God's will that you get free of them, the choice is yours. The results are prosperous and good - what a promise! However, the Lord has a condition thrown in there - be strong and courageous! Why? It isn't always easy, but you will win in the end – stay faithful to the Lord. The cry for personal revelation of God's word runs throughout history - consider the meditations on the excellence of the word of God from Psalm 119.

The Prayer Gallery of Psalm 119

*"How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to **Your word**" V9.*

*"**Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things from Your law**" V18.*

*"My soul melts from heaviness; **Strengthen me according to Your word**" V28.*

*"**Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end**" V33.*

*"This is my comfort in my affliction, for **Your word has given me life**" V50.*

*"It is **good for me** that I have been afflicted, that I may **learn Your statutes**. The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of shekels of gold and silver" V71-72.*

*"They almost made an end of me on the earth, but I did not forsake **Your precepts**" V87.*

*"Forever, O Lord, **Your word is settled in heaven**" V89.*

*"**Through Your precepts** I get understanding; Therefore I hate every **false way**" V104.*

*"I am Your servant; Give me understanding, that I may **know Your testimonies**" V125.*

*"Direct my steps by **Your word**, and let **no iniquity** have dominion over me" V133.*

*"I rise before the morning and cry for help; **I hope in Your word**" V147.*

*'Plead my cause and redeem me; **revive me according to Your word**' Psalm 119:154.*

*"The **entirety of Your word is truth**, and every one of Your righteous judgements **endures forever**" V160.*

*"Princes persecute me **without a cause**, but my heart stands **in awe of Your word**" V161.*

*"I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek your servant, for I do not forget **Your commandments**" V176.*

The psalmists loved the Lord, they served Him, and perhaps were more diligent than most of us. Nonetheless they knew that a solid grasp of God's word, and a genuine reverence for it, was *absolutely vital* to their lives. They didn't just read a few bits over Cornflakes and tea in the morning before rushing off to do more important things, or a little before bed, totally knackered from the day's toil! *In their hearts, they gave themselves to the word.*

If these men of God were hungry for it, how much more us! Perhaps use a few lines of their cries in your prayers as you grapple with Gods word and enter into the truth of it.

Time to change.

Chapter 12

Filled with the Word

'For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. That you may have a walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering and joy" Colossians 1:9-11.

This is what it means to be filled - well stocked, stuffed, gorged and crammed! To *bring the level up in your life!* To furnish, influence and satisfy you. This enables you to execute an office, or position. To be filled means to be covered over and complete. Why do you think children cram at school? So they can make it! Increasing in the knowledge of God, is a protection that covers you from attack, error, deception, the opinions and ways of men, and keeping your mind on the right axis - Jesus Christ. To be fruitful is to be fertile, fruitbearing, to be ripe like plucked fruit. To bear or carry fruit.

Think of your most favorite fruit, be it juicy mangoes, peaches, dripping pineapple, plums and pears. Delightful rock melon, strawberries, raspberries and cream hmm...dribble dribble slurp. Quick get a tissue you slobber! God made tree's to bear this stuff, and we drool at the thought. This is how we are meant to be in our lives, not barren struggling people all the time, but fertile land. You literally carry in your character and makeup, the ability to put your hand to almost anything, and you will do well! Your soil is good if you are a *person of the word*. Your life is pluckable! Other humans want to eat from your life. You have something to offer, something to behold, and something desirable. You are a walking vision, worth following, a mobile ministry of goodness! You are enabled by God to do wonderful things of worth that perhaps you never even thought of! That is what it is to be strengthened with Gods might!

The word strengthened comes from the Greek word *dunamoo*, which means to enable you. How? Through Gods power and ways! You will need it! What for you ask? Patience, long suffering and joy! Often in that order, things steadily begin to happen until you experience the joy of fullness. You then realize it is all real and worth the journey! It is in this journey where most people give up. That is why you need to be strong to change. It is through the *dunamis* miraculous power of God. This power in you has the qualities of meaning, purpose, abundance, ability, and might. Now that is a miracle. Who wouldn't want it?

Walk in Truth

"As His divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" 2 Peter 1:3-4. Christianity is not something you have to feel all the time, whether it is the pomp of orthodoxy, or sometimes the performance hype of contemporary style meetings! Christianity is something you *do and act upon daily*. It is an intelligent believed assent of faith, appropriated in your actions on God's word through your knowledge of Him.

You only rip yourself off otherwise. It is amazing that some Christians still struggle with basic things, like Gods desire to bless us, prospering, and being healed, even when they have been in the Lord for years. The reality is God has already given us *everything* for life. Through our growing knowledge and understanding of the *truth*, we learn the promises that he has provided through the New Testament Covenant. Our character will develop and we are able to live the divine way of the mystery of godliness - living godly in a corrupt world. ***'If you walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and perform them, then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit' Leviticus 26:3-4.***

Think about this, and say it slowly - *exceedingly great and precious promises!* This means to super-abound or be abundant, over or superior. To be in excess, be superfluous to what was before. To make you abound. The word is a superlative of the Greek word *megas*, where the cool street word *mega* comes from! It means to be big, high, loud, mighty - apply it as wide as you want!

The Character of God - His divine nature in us - carries with it realities that are to be outworked and experienced in daily life. The truth provided by Jesus in the New Testament promises are *way over the top* in comparison to anything in the Old Testament! This reality has to apply to all areas of your life. You are a new creation, and there is a new way of living! As surfers say after a good wave ride, Jesus is *totally stoked*, when you understand and are filled with His word! ***"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" 3 John 1:4.***

Lack of Knowledge

The Old Testament prophet Hosea gives a warning that stands relevant to the *entirety of the counsel of God* to this day. ***"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..." Hosea 4:6a.*** It is the will of God that you *increase always* in your knowledge of Him. Why? - It will strengthen you and make you fruitful in everything. To be destroyed means to be dumb or silent. Literally to fail, perish, be utterly undone, be cut down, to cease being effective, and be brought to silence. Phew! Now perhaps Jim Carrey's movie *Dumb and Dumber* has a different slant (I don't recommend it)!

Don't be dumb, and worse still, if you ignore the word of God the next step down is dumber! It is simply your own fault if you allow yourself to be robbed of eternal riches when you don't have to be! The main reason and consequence of the 16th century Reformation in Europe, was God's desire for rescuing an ongoing free access to His word for the whole world. This reformation brought incredible change, whereby anyone could come direct to God and his word. Individuals could be directly responsible to the Lord in their actions and relationship with Him - not through the traditions of men by an exclusive Roman religious priesthood. ***'Because you have forgotten the God of your salvation, and have not been mindful of the Rock of your stronghold, therefore...the harvest will be a heap of ruins in the day of grief and desperate sorrow' Isaiah 17:10-11.***

Tip for New Christians

"As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" Peter 2:2. If you are a young believer, be a good student and lover of the word of God. It will give you intelligence and spirit that will keep you unshakeable in the buffeting winds of life in these end-times. Growth will be your constant companion, and your armor will be strong to resist the devil's attacks on your life. This is inevitable in being *a really full on Christian*. The enemy of your soul will always want to attack your life and your faith, because he is a thief, robber and murderer and he can't help himself. It is therefore vital to understand what your Father's book says – be filled and you will be strong! *'The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil'* **Proverbs 15:28.**

Glass of milk?

Chapter 13

Live Every Word

'My son, do not forget My law, but let your heart keep My commands; For length of days and long life and peace they will add to you. Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, and so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man'
Proverbs 3:1.

In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus told the devil the following truth when He rebuked his temptations - a powerful truth that the devil wants to rob you of. *'But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God' "* **Matthew 4:4.** Every, every, every, every...word!

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" John 1:1,14.

The gospel of John shows us that Jesus is the Word, even the devil has to bow down to the words in the Bible, and the name of Jesus. You will not have a revival of God's ways in your life, without a personal revelation revival of His word in you. The Bible is *Jesus in word form!* It is your ticket for transforming and transporting you into another dimension of living. If you do not attend to it and lay aside the distractions of this world, you will never grow and maintain the word as a living force of power within you. People who do give it their all are dangerous to the powers of darkness. The devil hates them! Even the angels that have been given to minister to you will heed your words. His words - that have an awesome effect in the spirit world! *'Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of the Lord'* **Psalms 103:20**

Often in our comfortable go to church on Sunday lifestyle, that nice Bible - which still has some of the gold leaf page edges stuck together - can become a Sunday accessory like a handbag! The Bible is for reading, feeding, studying and experiencing! It is literally food, nutrients that can effect everything in your life. God's health food store!

The Word Is Food

Most people go out every day and buy bread and milk from the dairy, milk bar, or corner store; these items are a basic daily staple to the diet. The word is the same. The following shows us what the word is to our well being, and lives in general.

'And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst"' John 6:35. He also told us to pray this way. *'Give us this day our daily bread'* **Matthew 6:11.** Give us our daily Jesus! His word is the building blocks for a successful diet: toasted, fried, hot, snacked, crusty whatever, we all basically need, and eat bread! *'A man's stomach shall be satisfied from the fruit of his mouth, and from the produce of his lips he shall be filled. Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit'* **Proverbs 18:20-21.**

The word is *pure milk*, it isn't pasteurized, lite, non-fat, and tampered with, but as it is! The King James Version calls it *sincere milk*. The closest thing to this on earth comes from the mother's breast. The first year in the life of a baby depends upon this foundation of feeding for health and growth; all the commercial milk formulas, as good as they are, can't even match the purity of mum! Even baby's poop is cleaner from mother's milk! All those consummate nappy changers with trained noses said "Amen!"

*'For when the time you **ought to be teachers**, you have need that **one teach you again** which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of **strong meat**. For everyone that **useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness**: for he is a babe. But **strong meat** belongeth to them **that are of full age**, even those who by reason of use have their **senses exercised** to discern both good and evil" Hebrews 5:12-14 (KJV).*

'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the father sealed' John 6:27 (KJV).

" ' Whom will He teach knowledge? And whom will He make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little there a little' " Isaiah 28:9-10.

Even though the word is milk, there comes a day when babies have to start eating solids, leaving the comfort of the breast behind. The Lord is constantly at the ready to fill and feed His children with the sincerity and pureness of a mother. There are times when older believers in the Lord who really ought to be skilful, have to come back for another suckling of milk, because they have never moved on and become maturing full aged believers. If that's you, you look dumb in a nappy!

When you are off milk, you start to eat meat, or other solid foods that take your body forward in its maturing process. More importantly you also start to feed yourself. Some people say the following when they have become dull of hearing! "Gee whiz, I've heard it all before" - yawn! Or, "I never really get fed there at church" or, "How about some deep meat". It is true that some churches are pretty light on in teaching, but who said you could survive on one meal a week anyway? Grow up and learn how to use the knife fork and spoon! You can't fight without eating! Spiritual weakness will halt you between two opinions!

It has been said it takes about 20 years to develop a person's spirit. Time is always a factor, line upon line, day after day. There does come a time when you have to eat the strong meat of the word! Sometimes this can be hard to swallow, but because you are mature your response will be, "Yeah I can handle that," because your senses have been exercised through the word of God, and you are teachable enough to change. Knowledge and freedom comes to those who labor for strong meat, you will then live in your life skillfully, discerning and wise. The word is food, eat it, and you will change and prosper – it's the promise!

*'So I have come down to **deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from the land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey'** Exodus 3:8.*

The Lord's Promised Land of promises for your life has a foundation bed of milk - *pure word!* You need that to stay in the land! When you are experiencing the promises of God, what will keep you there possessing that land is the sweetness of the reality of it! You will say, *"Man there is no other way to live!"* The honey will make you 'sticky', you will want to *stick in the land*, Gods word will keep you stuck there, life will smell sweet and good, and you will be a blessing to yourself and others!

*'But he knows the way that I take: when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way, and not turned aside. I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; **I have treasured all the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.** For He is unique, and who can make Him change? And whatever his soul desires, that he does' Job 23:10-13.*

The Word is Light

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a **light to my path**". "The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple" Psalm 119:105,130.*

Jesus said, *"I am the **light of the world**. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" John 8:12b.*

*"Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is **full of light**" Luke 11:34a.*

Jesus - *"A light to **bring revelation to the Gentiles**" Luke 2:32a.*

*'But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has **blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them'** 2 Corinthians 4:3-4.*

His word will give you direction, even if you are uneducated or plain stupid! Through the word you will know who you are and where you are going. You will no longer *not know*. Don't let the devil deceive you, *know the gospel* of light and the rich glory that it has!

The word light in Psalm 119, means illumination, a luminary, happiness, clear, morning, glorious, and set on fire! You will be like a very happy mobile light bulb! It will show in your physical body and personality. You will shine having that special something. You will be at peace, at ease, living revelation life, even if things are tough. You become a luminary of truth. Why? You can see clearly, things will begin to make sense as you really see the word and put it into action. There is a difference between being set on fire for God, and just being pumped up because of a meeting or the smart elocution of men!
"I can see clearly now the rain is gone..."

The Word is Water

'That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word' **Ephesians 5:26.** *'Counsel in the heart of a man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out'* **Proverbs 20:5.**

Water means a shower or rain. God's word is like your daily shower, or a thunderstorm that comes and makes a dry and thirsty land sparkle. There is always daily muck that can try and stick to your life diluting what you really should be. You know how good it feels to have a hot shower, powder, and moisturize. The constant showering in the word of God will clean out and clean up your world. You will have a deeper well inside of you to draw from, and you will desire more and more to keep it full and clean!

The Word is a Sword

'And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God' **Ephesians 6:17.** *'For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword'* **Hebrews 4:12a.** *"Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations'* **Revelations 19:15a.**

The word sword means knife or judicial punishment, a battle, controversy and striving. The word of God is a fighting armory machine, sharper and more powerful than any superhero! So powerful in fact that inherent in the word is the power to shake nations. It brings clear legal light to any situation and pronounces honest judgment over it. Its truth will cause controversy, will sort the men from the boys, and will cause a Godly striving in you to press forward and fight the good fight of faith and win. Grab the machete of God and carve yourself a new track, you may have a battle on your hands, but I think you will agree that you have the upper hand! Pray this - *'Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips'* **Psalms 141:3.**

The Word is Life

'Holding fast the word of life' **Philippians 2:16a.** *'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled concerning the word of life'* **1John 1:1.** *'Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life'* **John 14:6a.** *'In Him was life'* **John 1:4a.** *"To be spiritually minded is life and peace"* **Romans 8:6b.** *'It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life'* **John 6:63 (KJV).** *'But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life'* **John 5:40.** *'Then Simon peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life'* **John 6:68.**

The life spoken of in these scriptures is from the Greek word *Zoe*. A lifetime, to live lively and quickened, a breath or spirit with vitality. I am sure when you look at your Bible next time as it sits on the table, you will swear you saw it moving! The study of words, particularly Gods word never ceases to amaze me! The word of God could be printed on toilet paper, but it will do you no good until that word peels off the page, melts in your mouth, salivates and slides down into your spirit, and becomes revelation life in you.

It virtually comes alive, breathing its power in and through you! You become quickened in your mortal bodies; the word becomes flesh. When it is with you, a lifetime of power will never leave you - unless you let it! You think right, like God wants you to think. It will give you hope, vision, assurance and peace in everything you do!

To whom shall you go for answers for your world? Will you go away from Jesus's words? The apostle Peter after having a revelation of Jesus as the Christ said the same thing. *'Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" Then Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*' **John 6:67-69**. If all the worldliness of life has failed you, where will go? You decide.

If you really love Jesus - Keep His Word

'But he said unto them, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of". Therefore said the disciples one to another, "Hath any man brought him ought to eat?" Jesus saith unto them, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work"' **John 4:32** (KJV). All of us desire to do the will of God. If we love the Lord this should be our food – His word.

'Jesus answered and said unto him, "If a man loves Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him"' **John 14:23**. There is your promise! Jesus will live in all your situations if you keep His word. He will love you through it, and show you the best way. He will bring along His Dad, Jehovah Jireh your provider, and will take residence in a personal condominium - your life. He will live with you through every situation and circumstance until you stand in complete victory!

'Then answered Jesus and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what he sees the Father do: for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all the things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel." "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous; because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent me' **John 5:19-20,30**.

We are all being changed to be more like Christ. His character is to live every word.

Chapter 14

The Word is Your Art

'By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible' Hebrews 11:3.

The word is your art, a global picture frame! "What?" you say! Yes! When it is alive and breathing in you with revelation understanding, the word of God is a creative force to be reckoned with. When it is on your lips spoken and confessed in faith, it will pull together your world! The greatest picture you can paint for yourself, is the renaissance of God's word in you. It is a living reformation. Your life is held together in the picture frame of the word. When people see it in you they will want to inquire to the substance of it. It is a priceless pearl you pay the price for. It cannot be sold at a Sothebys, or a Christies auction house! You frame your life by faith, bringing the reality of the invisible world into your present visible existence. All things are possible if you believe, and the good things you hope for in your personal dreams, your family, and touching this planet for the Lord, can happen - believe it or not?

You are Framed

Framed is *kartartizo* in Greek. It basically means to complete thoroughly, to make perfect, join together and prepare. From a widely applicable Greek word *kata*, which is to bring down in a place or time, or distribute. This is a derivative of *artios* - to be fresh, complete and perfect, from *arti*, through the idea of suspension. The whole idea of art suspends you into somewhere else; movies, music, fine art do that, they take you somewhere. God's word is a fine art - it takes you to where He is, to see like Him and do as He does.

Once upon a time in the aeons before Adam and Eve, God spoke the fullness of the words that cascaded in Him like a washing machine at full tilt! He knew their power. He's God after all! In a certain space and time he brought together all the planets, stars and solar systems, suspending them in a breath taking gallery of Divine artiness! He connected all their incomprehensible light years, into a unique harmonious whole. Each star and planet was fresh and perfect, all in their place to fulfill their celestial function. His prize marble-as far as we know, apart from ET and the Trecky Klingon's, is the beautiful mother of all planets - Earth! On it - you and I!

Look out your window and gaze in wonder at the heavens like Abraham did. You can say with faith, and the Spirit breathing His perfume inside of you, "Now we understand!" We know that it is all held together by words! Created with these invisible things, the power of the living Holy Spirit. Things that you really do know exist. How? - By faith in Jesus Christ. All things are at your disposal in life, because our Lord wants you to believe and have faith like He does. Hence the framing of your world in due time.

Faith is your paint

'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen' **Hebrews 11:1**. Faith is life substance and it comes by the word of God. Real victory in your life starts with faith in Jesus. It is not a heavy trip to keep Gods word. If you really want to get unentangled from the world's ways, you can.

'For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?' **1 John 5:3-5**

God's love is *agape* in the Greek language. This is His affection or benevolence (desirous to do good, well wishing, kindness and helpful), His love feast. To love in a social and moral sense. God so desires for you to do well in life. It is the very heart of the feast of his feelings toward you. He is concerned for your social status in all its details as well as your moral character. He wants the best for you no matter where you are in life! If you are a born of God believer in Jesus, you can overcome the world and its pull on you. It is a result of being re-born; part of the journey of why we are here. Do you want to be an overcomer of the things that constantly overcome you? Then have faith in this and receive the optimum of his benevolence toward you. Some people find it hard to receive anything from anyone; this is not a godly character trait. Learn to receive as well as give. Most people have to learn this art. It is more blessed to give, but receiving is the result!

His Art Prospers You

'Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers' **3 John 1:2**. Say all! Say it again, all! You got it! This is the prayer of John, and hence the will of God, that you prosper in all things. Why? - That your prospering brings glory to God. Jesus healed, and it brought glory to God, His dad! It was not, "of the devil!" *'If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you, which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord that heals you'* **Exodus 15:26**.

Prospering in your body, your feelings, emotions, mind, your finances, and every other part of your life is the will of the Lord. Absolutely astoundingly and amazingly, many people don't believe this! To prosper means to help on the road of progress, to succeed in reaching, and a prosperous journey. Figuratively speaking, to succeed in business affairs, do good, and to be well done! How many people would love to hear their Dad's say that!

No matter how tough it gets or what you may suffer, God's heart is that you have a prosperous, ever growing, improving journey in all things, whatever the context it takes in the various cultures and levels of economic status in our world. So one day God will say, "well done good and faithful servant, enter into my rest!" He is a creator, an artist that wants to see prospering in what He has created – you. He has given you His word to paint with, and to see it happen.

Chapter 15

Set in the Word

"Set your mind on the things above, not on things on the earth".

'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom'. 'And whatever you do in word or deed, Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him' Colossians 3:2,16-17.

Live in You Richly

The rich dwelling of His word in you means to live copiously and abundantly full of it. It also means to be wealthy, with the fullness of wealth: literally money, possessions, abundance and the valuable bestowing of all you need. *The feeling* of being intimate and deeply acquainted with God and His word, is like being filthy rich. Perhaps the excitement of winning a multi-million dollar lotto! However, the strength of the base of real wealth as the Lord sees it, is *security in Him* - He wants you to find that *first*.

There is a link between being richly full of the word, and the potential and realization it has in you, that anything is possible even financial security. When your security is in Him first, you will know that your trust will not be in things alone like money. Wealth and abundance could then be entrusted to you for your blessing and the furtherance of the work of the kingdom of God. *'Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is'* **Ephesians 5:15.**

Whenever I have recorded an album, or do some project, there is always thousands of dollars involved. Most times we have never had a penny to start with; we look to His word and trust in Him, and He provided the tens of thousands we have often needed in the past. I write books in faith as God leads me, being obedient to Gods word and timing. Some books, like songs, are penned over years and there is a time for their release. I have found he will supply a way to make it happen. God's word is true; if it wasn't, nothing could be achieved, because I would not have the natural wherewithal to do it!

When you know his will through his word, you think different - by faith, as if you have it already. Whether it's ten, ten thousand or one hundred thousand, or a million, God will entrust you with the fullness of whatever you need, which will bless others as well as yourself.

The Word Established

Jesus said: *"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* **John 8:31b-32.**

'Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty' **2 Corinthians 3:17.**

Hands up if you want to be free! We have now established the imperative of understanding the word of God in your life as a sure foundation. A love of the truth, and of Christ, with an intelligent knowing of why you do what you do, will bring freedom, liberty and revelation in all your life.

This is vastly different to a *must do* and *I have to* approach. This way often brings legalism and the fear of men, devoid of genuine love and personal revelation from God's word. It is different to just using basic principles of positive thinking, affirmation, goal setting, and the singular pursuit of success. These principles may be good, but you can action them without Christ at their heart. When you understand you are free, you will want it more, yet, with maturity and purpose. No intimidation or guilt will burden you, and you will take hold of your life boldly with spiritual fortitude, great faith and prospering power. Nothing will be able to stop you being a victor for you will be very strong! *'The Lord gives voice before His army. For His camp is very great; **for strong is the one that executes His word.** For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; who can endure it?'* **Joel 2:11.**

One final thought from the word of life. *'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**'* **Psalm 1:2-3.**

Say, *"Whatever! I said whatever! Go on I dare you...whatever!"*

"Go ahead and paint your world, the word is your art, be filled with it richly, it is so important!"

Selah

About the Author

Originally from England, Stephen has been in active Christian ministry over 24 years. Stephen's gifting spans various creative fields as a prophet singer, songwriter, musician, worship leader, recording artist, author, poet, and as a creator, presenter, producer of Christian television, film, and documentary programs. Awesome City Music Ministries was founded in the early nineties with his Australian wife Rebecca. They have traveled widely in various nations ministering into churches and conferences. Stephen has a strong prophetic, apostolic gift in the arts. His wife Rebecca is also a gifted musician and songwriter with a sensitive passion for worship. They both have a call to various nations, and have a great heart for Gods House to rise and be glorious in this reforming apostolic era of the Church.

Stephen has recorded on various albums over the years and has produced several of his own with Rebecca; amongst other recording work, the powerful prophetic albums *Hear the Sound*, *Future Dreams*, *The Gathering* and *Black Lady Dancing*. His challenging teaching book *Prophet Musician*, with other books, music, teaching and video productions, has brought revelation and blessing to many. Stephen has worked with, and spoken prophetically into the lives of many gifted musicians and leaders. In 1997 Stephen was commissioned to produce the feature length video film for the now historic, 'Wembley Stadium Live, *Champion of the world*' worship event in England, which featured Noel Richards, Matt Redman, Delirious, and others. This prophetic film has helped to launch ministries, and has inspired bigger vision, stadium praise and gatherings around the world.

Stephen has worked as a music overseer with various small and large music departments in churches, to help bring concise vision and re-structuring so they can move forward to facilitate what the Lord desires to do in this hour. In Europe, he has music directed at revival and healing events in such venues as the *Royal Albert Hall*, and *Wembley Arena* in London.

Stephen continues to write books, produce, teach, and being a creative prophetic and apostolic voice to the Church. The Lord has raised up Stephen and his wife to be a mentoring and creative ministry to a wide community of musicians, singers and artists in the nations and local church. Stephen and Rebecca are currently based in Sydney Australia. They both have strong passionate hearts for Jesus, and to see the nations rise up in awesome worship to God. He and Rebecca have been married over 14 years with three children, Jesikah Faith, Jamin Lee and Chelsea Dance Bennett.

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Tommy Tenney: God Chasers' 'Gods favorite House'- www.godchasers.net

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