

House On The Rock Life Group Study outline 2023

May: Reigning by The Word

Outlines for the month

Week 1: Getting back into the Word ✓

Week 2: The Assurance of God's Word

Week 3: The Word, the Weapon

Introduction

What do you crave? Some type of food perhaps? An experience of a lifetime? Something else – or even someone?

How about God's Word – would you say that you truly crave God's Word?

If not, maybe you have ruined your appetite by feeding on the junk food of this world. "Hunger makes a good cook," as the saying goes. If you don't sense your great need for God and His Word, it may be because you've filled up on other things – social media, television, work, or the myriad other things screaming for your attention. Shut them off! Such junk food makes you feel full, but it doesn't nourish the soul. Don't waste your time eating it.

This is not to say you should not interact with the world around you. But you must understand the difference between chalk and cheese. They may have similar colours, but one is food and the other is not. In the same way, while you learn about life using all the sources of knowledge available to you; above all else, ***make sure you read your Bible***. Hunger for God's truth. Drink it in like a nursing infant. This is the one thing you need if you are to grow in your salvation.

Pilot text

1 Pet 2:1-3 [TPT] 1So abandon every form of evil, deceit, hypocrisy, feelings of jealousy and slander. 2In the same way that nursing infants cry for milk, you must intensely crave the pure spiritual milk of God's Word. For this "milk" will cause you to grow into maturity, fully nourished and strong for life —3especially now that you have had a taste of the goodness of Yahweh and have experienced his kindness.

- According to the pilot scriptures, what are some characteristics of the Word of God?
 - **The Word is likened to a mother's milk - pure, spiritual and nourishing.** God has designed a mother's milk as the perfect food for newborn babies. It will immunize her baby from many illnesses and nourish her baby for growth. God's Word will protect Christians from the many spiritual diseases which abound and nourish them to grow in the Lord. A mother's milk will make her baby grow for months without any other food. God's Word will nourish Christians so that they "grow toward salvation" (2:2).

- Our pilot text says we should desire God’s Word like nursing infants cry for milk. What can we do to “intensely crave” God’s Word?
 - **Put away relational sins that hold us back** (these typically occur as we relate with others). Not only do they negatively affect others, they use up our emotional and mental energy; preventing us from using these to love and desire God’s Word.
 - **Focus on the goodness and kindness of God.** Constantly reminding ourselves of what God has done for us is a key to constantly renewing our minds, motivating us to want to know Him more.
- How can we “drink” this pure and spiritual milk?
 - **Read it.** There is no miraculous way to know what’s in the Bible without reading; no shortcut to spending time going through the text and familiarising ourselves with scripture.
 - **Study it.** This milk is spiritual and not physical - *logikos*, according to the Greek. Because we cannot see it, in order to access the truths within it, we must dig deeper than the surface to find the *logos* of the Word.
 - **Taste it.** If you think of reading is 2D, studying as 3D, then tasting is 4D. No matter how well an author describes the taste of your favourite food, it will never quite match the experience of actually tasting it. In the same way, to truly get into the Word, we have to have the 4D experience of knowing the Author and what is in His mind.
- For more reading on the subject, see [here](#) (provided by bible.org).
- Questions for discussion (use scriptures to support your position):
 1. How can a person know if a preacher is giving out pure or watered-down milk?
 2. Must every Christian become a student of the Word in order to grow? What if a person just isn’t a reader?
 3. Should we read the Word only when we’re motivated or even when we don’t feel like it? Why?

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If you're going to base your entire life on something, you want to know that it is solid. If you're going to stake your eternity on that same thing, you really want to be sure that it is the truth. It would be utterly tragic to spend your life on a path that you thought led to heaven, only to find out too late that you were wrong.

As Christians, we build our lives and stake our eternity on the truth of God's Word. But how can we know that it's true? How can we be sure that it isn't just a collection of quaint writings from a bunch of Jewish guys who lived thousands of years ago?

And, since even Christians interpret the Bible in so many different ways, how can we know that our interpretation is correct? Some people say that we cannot know the exact meaning of Scripture. How can we know for sure that what the Bible says is true and that we are correct in our understanding of it?

Pilot text

2 Pet 2:16-21[TPT] 16We were not retelling some masterfully crafted legend when we informed you of the power and appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we saw his magnificence and splendour unveiled before our very eyes. 17Yes, Father God lavished upon him radiant glory and honour when his distinct voice spoke out of the realm of majestic glory, endorsing him with these words: This is my cherished Son, marked by my love. All my delight is found in him! 18And we ourselves heard that voice resound from the heavens while we were with him on the holy mountain.

19And so we have been given the prophetic word—the written message of the prophets, made more reliable and fully validated by the confirming voice of God on the Mount of Transfiguration. And you will continue to do well if you stay focused on it. For this prophetic message is like a piercing light shining in a gloomy place until the dawning of a new day, when the Morning Star rises in your hearts.

20You must understand this at the outset: Interpretation of scriptural prophecy requires the Holy Spirit, for it does not originate from someone's own imagination.

21No true prophecy comes from human initiative but is inspired by the moving of the Holy Spirit upon those who spoke the message that came from God.

- From the pilot text, what do we understand about God’s Word?
 - **The testimony of the Bible is solid (1:16-19).** We not only have the apostolic witness to Jesus as they saw Him on the mount of transfiguration (1:16-18), but also (v. 19 in Greek begins with “and”) “we have the prophetic word made more sure.” “We” refers first to the apostles (as in 1:16-18), and by extension to the church. By extension, it also applies to all of the Old Testament, since the Scriptures all tie together. The idea is that the Old Testament prophecies about the Lord are confirmed and clarified by the transfiguration, where the disciples saw a prophetic preview of Jesus in His glory. In summary, we have the solid foundation of the prophetic word, which was further confirmed by the apostles’ experience of seeing Jesus’ glory on the mount of transfiguration.
 - **We must interpret the Bible correctly, because it is not the word of man, but the inspired Word of God (1:20-21).** Peter’s point is, we are not free to interpret the Word in any way that we please. We should always follow these principles:
 - First, we must always interpret a text in light of its context.
 - Second, the Bible interprets itself. Especially, individual authors interpret themselves. If you let Paul in context interpret Paul on justification by faith and James in context interpret James on justification by works, they do not contradict each other.
 - Third, interpret the Bible based on grammatical, linguistic, and historical considerations. Words mean something and languages put words together in structured ways. We must seek to determine what the text meant to the original author and readers in their historical setting before we ask how it applies to us in our culture.
 - For more reading on the subject, see [here](#) (provided by bible.org).
- Questions for discussion (use scriptures to support your position):
 1. Since Christians have so many different interpretations of the Word, how do we determine which are right and which are of primary importance?
 2. How would you answer a critic who pointed out supposed “contradictions” in the Word? What should you say?
 3. How can we know that the Holy Spirit really inspired the authors of Scripture and that they weren’t just making it up?

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Can you imagine a soldier carefully putting on each piece of armour to protect himself and then going into battle without a weapon? That would be suicidal. While David could go up against Goliath without wearing Saul's armour, he had to take his weapon. While the other pieces of armour that we have considered were necessary to protect the soldier from the enemy's attacks, they could not kill the enemy. Only the sword could do that.

In New Testament times there were two types of swords. One was a large broadsword, swung with both hands to hack at the enemy. The other was a shorter, two-edged sword used to cut and thrust. Peter used this type of sword to swing at Malchus, who probably ducked to the side so that the blow did not split his head open, but rather cut off his ear (Matt. 26:51).

The soldier without a sword wouldn't last a minute if the enemy got close enough for hand-to-hand combat. The enemy doesn't just shoot at us from a distance, but also moves in close to kill. In our Christian walk, we must understand this reality of our warfare. But beyond that, we must realise that for us to be victorious, we need to know how to take up and effectively use the sword.

Pilot text

[Matt 4:3-4a \[NKJV\]](#) *3Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." 4But He answered and said, "It is written..."*

[2 Tim 4:2\[TPT\]](#) *Proclaim the Word of God and stand upon it no matter what! Rise to the occasion and preach when it is convenient and when it is not. Preach in the full expression of the Holy Spirit —with wisdom and patience as you instruct and teach the people.*

[2 Cor 4:13 \[TPT\]](#) *We have the same Spirit of faith that is described in the Scriptures when it says, "First I believed, then I spoke in faith." So we also first believe then speak in faith.*

- How can we use the Word as a weapon?

- **Defensively, use the Word to ward off the temptations and attacks of the enemy.** When Jesus was tempted by the devil (Matt 4:3-10), his response each time was “it is written”, because there was a Word for everything the enemy attempted.
- **Offensively, use the Word in preaching, counselling and evangelism (2 Tim 4:2).** Preaching of God’s Word is central to the advancing of the church against the gates of hell (Matt 16:18). As Paul argues in Romans 10; people will not believe in the God the Gospel (good news) unless someone tells them. Through preaching, counselling and evangelism we can proactively bring the light of the gospel to shine on the daily lives of those around us.
- **Creatively, use the Word to bring God’s will for us into reality by faith (2 Cor 4:13).** When we believe God’s Word concerning us and declare it by faith, we are engaging our creative God-nature which God himself demonstrated to us during the events of Genesis 1.
- For more reading on the subject, see [here](#) (provided by bible.org).
- Questions for discussion (use scriptures to support your position):
 1. Must we physically have the Bible in our possession (either paper or digital format) to to effectively fight the enemy? Why/why not?
 2. A sister is excited about sharing her faith in the workplace but concerned that she might get into trouble for doing so. What would you advise her?
 3. If a believer told you that he intends to use the creative power of the Word to make someone fall in love with him; what would you say to him?