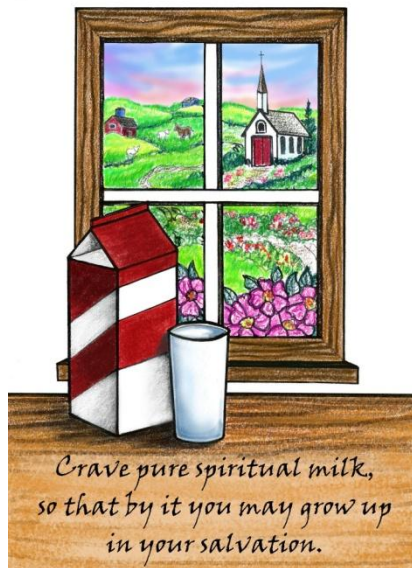


SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 10

THE WORD OF GOD IS POWERFUL

Scripture Texts: 1 Peter 1:22-25; 1 Peter 2:1-3



The Bible is neither a charm nor an idol. The Bible was not given to us to worship but to obey, that we may grow thereby. Have we grown? Are we strong spiritually? Is our soul being filled with the fullness of God? Are we getting to know Him better? Are we finding more commands and promises and walking in them? The Bible will open these ways to us. It is food for the soul. It is milk for the young and meat for the mature saint.

God's Word, the Bible, is inspired, true, eternal, and powerful to bring men to conviction and salvation. To exercise its power, the Word must fall into good ground, a heart responsive to its teaching and yielding to its Author. As the rain makes the earth bring forth, so God's Word, falling on a heart that's absorbed by it, brings forth fruit unto God (**Isaiah 55:10-11**).

MEMORY VERSE: *Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. —Matthew 22:29*

What Is the Bible?

What is the Bible? Some call it writings of men. Some say it grew from the experiences of men as they lived and learned. If that were so, it would be faulty, as all men are. It would have to be revised frequently, like school textbooks, when new knowledge is gained. But it is always up-to-date, always suits our present needs.

If it were the work of men, why would it condemn man in his natural state, which it does in both the Old and New Testaments? See **Jeremiah 17:9-10; Luke 13:3**. Why would it predict his downfall? It is natural to man to predict his success. See **Psalms 9:17**. Why would it make man accountable to God rather than to himself?

What is the Bible? Here it is called the **Word of God** and **the truth through the Spirit**.

1 Peter 1:22 The soul is **purified** by **obeying the truth through the Spirit**. When one reads or hears the Bible, the Holy Spirit impresses upon the heart the promises and commands of God. He convicts the conscience of sin (**John 16:8**). When the man heeds the conviction, believes the promises, and obeys the commands, he is stepping into the Spirit's realm. He is **obeying the truth through the Spirit**. He is made a new creature in Christ and is ready to testify to it in water baptism. By an act of God in him, he is born into the Kingdom of God, born of the Spirit. Now he can use the love of God that he has been given to **love . . . with a pure heart fervently**. The tool by which this comes about is God's Word. Therefore, the man is **born again . . . by the Word of God**.

The Word Endureth

1 Peter 1:23-25 God's Word is **incorruptible** seed. It can never die or wear out or become out of date. It is called seed in the parable of the sower (**Luke 8:11**). When it falls into good soil in a heart, it grows, for it is living. It **liveth and abideth for ever**. Look at these two words *live* and *abide*. The Gospel is not a dead, stiff thing. It is alive, it breathes the air of Heaven; it has heart and hope and pain and joy in it, and it moves with power (**Luke 4:32**).

Our **flesh is as grass**. Our bodies grow old, weaken, and die. The Bible is not like this. It **endureth for ever**. Peter wanted his readers to know exactly what he meant by **the Word of the Lord** or **of God**. He said, "It is what I have been preaching to you when I preached the Gospel." It is the Bible (which contains the Gospel) that is **the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16)**.

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We cannot expect to be strong Christians if we neglect God's Word. Much of the weakness of God's people is a lack of knowledge of His Word. Can you think of some reasons for this lack? Where can we start to increase its study? It is in the home where God commands that His Word be taught diligently (**Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Ephesians 6:4**). Even though the Sunday school is an effective means of teaching, it can never take up the slack that the home leaves.

Set Priorities in Order

1 Peter 2:1 Laying aside . . . There is always a laying aside when one is saved. All that is connected with sin must go. The self-life must die; the Christ-life takes its place. Paul said, **I am crucified with Christ**—dead (**Galatians 2:20**). The attitudes here to be laid aside—**malice . . . guile . . . hypocrisies . . . envies . . . evil speakings**—are all of the flesh. They must all be renounced before the Bible can be a power for good in our lives. The renouncing is done by repentance.

Growth of Newborn Soul Is Essential

1 Peter 2:2-3 When repentance is finished and trust is placed in Jesus Christ, the soul is **newborn**. The newly converted one is alive, healthy, and holy, but still a baby in Christ. He needs to grow. How? **Desire the sincere milk of the word**. God's Word is food for the soul. It is called both **milk** and **meat** in **Hebrews 5:12-14**. The Lord, through the Holy Spirit, takes the same Word and supplies milk to the babes and meat to the more mature saints. The Holy Spirit knows which is essential in each one.

Babies are born hungry for natural food. Souls are reborn hungry for spiritual food. Days of crisis lay ahead for both. If the baby's hunger is fed properly, he continues to grow. The hungry soul is fed by hearing and reading God's Word and being obedient to it, thus growing in grace and becoming strong spiritually. One grows **IF so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious**. It is only a living soul that can grow. A baby puts everything in its mouth. A newborn soul also grasps eagerly for food. This desire comes from God, not from our efforts to work up an appetite. A saved person grasps at every bit of spiritual food and knowledge.

The Bible Is Spirit and Life

The Bible was not given to us to worship but to obey. Its power is not in the book, but in the Words in the book. The book is but paper and ink; the Words are **spirit** and **life** (**John 6:63**). All should fear to dishonor its statements and its Words. The Bible is a path to God. It is a pattern for building a house that will not fall. To know the Bible only is to die. To come to know the God of the Bible is to live (**2 Corinthians 3:6**).

The Bible has power (1) to convict one of sin, (2) to reveal Christ and His salvation, (3) to lead one into communion with the Spirit of God, (4) to lead one in right daily living, (5) to prepare one for Heaven, and (6) to convince others.

JUST A THOUGHT

"What really matters is what happens in us, not to us."