

The Power of the Word, Study 6

The Divine Purpose of the Word, Part 3

So far we've looked at two divine purposes of the Word of God.

The 1st one in II Timothy 3:15 tells us that the Bible is able to make us wise for _____ through faith in Christ.

Before beginning the study, take some time to pray, asking the Holy Spirit to teach you and to impress more strongly upon you the importance of His Word.

List again the four divine purposes in vs. 16:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

In this study, we'll look at the 2nd purpose listed in this verse.

Here is the Strong's Concordance definition of the second of those Greek words:

ἔλεγμα (elegmon) = a proof, persuasion, conviction, reproof, something that is proved or tested, confirming conviction of the inner reality of the birth of faith; i.e., tests of faith that prove the genuineness of our faith (as I Peter 1:6-9 says)

"Reproofs" or tests of our faith are essential to prove our convictions and to solidify what we believe.

I Peter 1:3-9 starts out in verses 3-5 with a brief list of our blessings in Christ. List them:

These are cause for great rejoicing, but Peter goes on to explain that our reality in the here and now is quite different. What does he say is our common experience? (vs. 6)

Peter's use of the adjective "various" is an interesting choice of words. Our personal trials may be different from those others have, and they come in all different sizes, some very small and minor and some quite large and devastating; yet they all have the same purpose. What is the purpose according to verse 7? _____

God is using every single trial, no matter if it's just a minor irritation, to prove whether our faith is sincere, real, genuine. Do we really believe what we say we believe? But He's not just standing apart from us, scrutinizing us, watching to see how we respond. He is actively

The Power of the Word, Study 6

The Divine Purpose of the Word, Part 3

involved, purposely bringing trials into our lives that help us apply His Word to any and every given situation. In other words, God doesn't just give us His Word so that we mentally know certain lofty ideals or platitudes. He wants to make those truths reality in our lives. He wants to help us live them out in the most practical of ways in the nitty-gritty of real life. So He brings His Word to bear upon each trial, solidifying or proving the sincerity of our convictions: Will we trust Him? Will we believe that He is good in this hard thing we're going through? Will we let Him shape us through it and teach us new ways of responding to people and situations that reflect His character? Will we live out what we say we believe? Each test of faith met with the truth of God's Word deepens our convictions. We come to "know that we know that we know." And that knowledge, which provides a solid foundation for our convictions, governs our responses such that, over time, our lives are transformed: those new responses become who we really are!

Referring again to verse 7, what does Peter say about the value of our faith?

This is how God views our faith and how He wants us to see it, too. Think about your station in life and your thoughts about money, wealth, and things you would like to have. Which is more valuable to you: your growth in the Lord or your financial situation? What do you spend more time thinking about? It's kind of a tough question, isn't it?! We live in this world and we have to function in this world. So much of our lives revolves around physical, tangible things. God is not saying that those things aren't important or that they don't have value. Just the opposite, in fact! He is recognizing their supreme value in this world. But by comparison, our faith has so much greater value.

Nor is God trying to divide our lives between what is spiritual and what is physical and tangible. Biblical Christianity always and fully integrates the spiritual and the physical worlds. This paragraph in I Peter (and really the whole letter!) explains how the two worlds are integrated: the physical events of this life are designed by God to provide opportunities for spiritual growth. *Everything* that comes into our lives is His tool to shape us spiritually and to strengthen our inner convictions.

What will the proving of our faith bring to Christ? (vs. 7)

When? _____

What should our love for Jesus bring us in the here and now? (vs. 8)

The Power of the Word, Study 6

The Divine Purpose of the Word, Part 3

And this is in the midst of “various trials”! But it’s not only our love for Jesus that brings us joy. Verse 9 gives us another reason to rejoice. What does Peter say is the end of our faith, or the goal or end result?

Our soul is comprised of our mind, our will, and our emotions. Before we come to Christ our soul is sin-saturated. When we come to Christ for salvation, we are not receiving a ticket in our back pocket to heaven, rather we are receiving the gift of righteousness as we saw from Romans 5 and 6 in Study 4. From the moment we receive Christ as our Savior, He begins the process of saving our souls from SIN. This is God’s divine purpose for any and every trial that comes into our lives. He is using it to extricate the sinful self-focus that is so natural to us and so ingrained in us from birth. Each trial or test of faith places before us a new opportunity to respond in faith by choosing to stand on what God’s Word says rather than on our own natural propensities and our own understanding. Often His Word can seem very counterintuitive to our ways of thinking.

Read Isaiah 55:8-9. What 2 things is God comparing in these verses?

His _____ with our _____

His _____ with our _____

What comparison does God use to help us understand the difference in verse 9?

As the _____ are _____ than the _____

That’s quite a huge gap! Will you trust Him with the trials, struggles, frustrations, and irritations—all the things you have to wrestle with day in and day out—which He’s allowed in your life? Will you let His Word shape and govern your responses, and in that way, solidify your convictions that His ways expressed in His Word are right and good?

Take some time to pray over these things. Ask yourself some of the questions in this lesson, and ask God to search your heart and to expose your heart. Let Him know you in the deepest places of who you are, and let Him help you know yourself.