

The Power of the Word of God, Part 3

The Primary Importance of the Word

In Part 2 of this series, we looked at the Originator of the Word: the Holy Spirit. “Holy men of God spoke (and wrote) as they were moved by the Holy Spirit,” II Peter 1:21 says. The Word of God can never be separated from the Spirit of God. We looked primarily at II Timothy 3:16-17: “All Scripture is inspired by God,” or “God-breathed.” The Holy Spirit is the Divine Breath who wrote the Word through human agency. Just prior to those two verses, we are given a clue about the life-integrated importance of the Word, which will lead into the Divine Purpose for the Word and the Divine Focus of the Word in the next two studies. Before starting this study, take a few moments to pray, thanking God for His Word and asking the Holy Spirit, the Divine Author, to reveal His truth to your heart.

II Timothy is Paul’s second letter to Timothy, his “son” in the faith.

What is the one instruction Paul gives to Timothy in verse 14? _____

Paul says in this verse that Timothy didn’t just learn God’s Word but that he became assured of it, confident that it is the truth. His faith was firmly rooted. At the end of verse 14, where does Paul say that confidence or assurance came from?

According to II Timothy 3:15, when was Timothy taught the Word of God?
from _____

Look back at II Timothy 1:5. Who taught him the Bible?
his _____ and his _____

This is what *bibleref.com* calls “lifelong immersion in the Word of God.”

Teaching the Word of God from the earliest days—“lifelong immersion”—and modeling, or living out the truth we believe, has a powerful impact on the next generation.

We have to realize at this point in history, during the time that Timothy lived, the New Testament hadn’t been written yet. They only had the Old Testament. Would Lois and Eunice, Timothy’s grandmother and mother, have had a copy of the Old Testament? It’s doubtful, especially since Timothy’s father was a Greek and they lived in Greece. So how would they have known the Scriptures to teach it to Timothy? It’s an interesting question to ponder. Write down your ideas: _____

By considering their circumstances and resources, we can perhaps begin to understand the depth of their devotion to and hunger for God’s Word. Perhaps they went to the local synagogue each week, eagerly listening to the reading of the scrolls and repeating it over and

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over in their minds so they could remember it always. Perhaps after synagogue, they went home and discussed together what they'd heard. Perhaps they managed to have Timothy tutored by the local rabbi. Or maybe they wrote down the Scriptures that were read so they could reread them at home.

Israelite women and children were more likely to have been educated than those in the Gentile world because of the high value the Jewish people put on the Word of God. In fact, during the time of the founding of America, education was a high priority because of the importance placed on the Bible. Many fathers read the Bible to their children daily in the home; and as a culture, people understood the value of the Word of God. They particularly wanted their children to be able to read and study the Bible.

As Christian parents, we have the high privilege and sacred calling to teach our children the Word of God from the very beginning of their lives and all the way through. As I learned more about the development of a child in the womb and about the power of God's Word, I began to read the Bible out loud when I was pregnant. After my children were born, I would read the Bible aloud to them while I was nursing. This not only gave opportunity for my children to hear the Word early on, but it nourished my soul as well.

A dear older couple we spent time with taught us that our souls needed spiritual food as much as and as often as our bodies needed physical food. From what that couple modeled, my husband began the habit of reading the Bible after every meal to our family. In these ways, children grow up with the concepts of the Word of God, and even their vocabulary is shaped by the Bible as they learn to talk. The Bible becomes a natural and necessary part of our everyday lives.

However, these verses in II Timothy show us the importance of not only teaching our children the Word of God but also living before them an authentic faith. Timothy's faith was both "caught" and taught. If we don't live what we teach, our children will not have assurance of the truth of the Gospel. We are assured of the Gospel as we witness its transforming power in the lives of those who claim to be followers of Jesus and as we experience its transforming power in our own lives. Statistical studies prove the effectiveness of spiritual instruction taught and modeled by parents throughout a child's growing-up years.

One of my sweetest memories of my oldest son happened as he was beginning kindergarten. He came into my bedroom one morning while I was reading the Bible and said, "I can't wait to be able to read, Mommy, so I can read the Bible like you do each day." How precious that was! And what a significant understanding of the primary reason our children need to learn to read well: so they have personal, daily access to God's Word!

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The lifelong impact of generationally passing on the Word of God cannot be overemphasized. God knows the powerful influence of parental teaching far better than any of us, which is why He commanded us to pass on His truth generationally.

Read Deuteronomy 6: 4-9.

Verse 4 is called the *Shema* in the Jewish culture. It is the understanding that God has revealed Himself as the one and only true God. The Bible teaches monotheism: one God, as opposed to the polytheism of pagan cultures which had many gods. However, the word *one* in this verse can also mean “number one” or “of first importance and priority.” So I like to think of this verse as not only telling us that there is one God alone whom we worship, but as also calling us to make God our top, first priority. “Hear, O Israel (God’s people), the Lord our God, the Lord is FIRST.”

What is the primary command and focus of our lives to be? (vs. 5)

with _____

and _____

and _____

Take a few minutes to meditate on those 3 avenues of love. In what practical ways can we use those 3 parts of ourselves to love God?

Where does God want His Word to be? (vs. 6) _____

Notice where God’s Word has to be first of all! It bears repeating: in our own _____.

What are the 2 commands given in vs. 7?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

when you _____

when you _____

when you _____

and when you _____

In other words, when and how often are we to be talking about God’s Word with our children?

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Where else does God want His Word to be? (vss. 8-9)

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

In everything we do we should be reminding ourselves and our children of God's Word; everywhere we turn in our homes and on our property, there should be things reminding us of God's Word. Wow! This is not only "lifelong immersion" but also whole-life saturation! I don't know about you, but I am both convicted and inspired by this. May our lives and homes reflect an understanding of the value and power of God's Word through such an earnest desire to meditate on it, putting it before us and talking about it at every turn.

But Timothy's home life, his mother and grandmother, weren't the only ones who had a spiritual influence in his life. The following verses tell of someone else who had a significant impact on his life. Who was that? And how was that to affect his life?

II Timothy 1:13:

Who? _____

What was taught? _____

Exhortation: _____

II Timothy 2:2

Who? _____

Exhortation: _____

II Timothy 3:10-14

Who? _____

What was taught? _____

Exhortation (vs. 14): _____

We can see from these verses that Timothy not only learned from listening to Paul's teaching but also through observing how he lived his life. Paul modeled his faith, showing Timothy what it means to be a Christian. It was the merging of his way of life and his teaching that had such a profound impact. Paul's beliefs and actions weren't out of alignment with each other. They were integrated, without hypocrisy.

Paul sums up this modeling lifestyle in I Corinthians 10:32-11:1.

What is the exhortation in 10:32? _____

What did Paul try to do? (vs. 10:33) _____

Why? (10:33) _____

What is the exhortation in 11:1? _____

