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# 1

## THE POWER of the WORD in the BELIEVER'S LIFE

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### Part 1

**I**t is vital for every Christian to know how to study the Bible. You should be able to dig into God's Word yourself to glean and gain all the riches the Bible contains. I often think of the words of Jeremiah who said, "Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jer. 15:16a). The Word of God is a tremendous resource. Christians should not be handicapped in their ability to study God's Word for themselves. So we are going to be examining how to study the Bible. But first, we should see why it is important to study it.

Walter Scott, a British novelist and poet and a great

Christian, was dying when he said to his secretary, “Bring me the Book.” His secretary looked at the thousands of books in his library and said, “Dr. Scott, which book?” He said, “The Book, the Bible—the only Book for a dying man.” And I would have to add that the Bible is not just the only Book for a *dying* man, but it’s the only Book for a *living* man, because it is the Word of life, as well as the hope in death.

So we come to the Word of God with a tremendous sense of excitement and anticipation. But before I share with you how to study the Bible, I must tell you about the authority of the Word of God. Then you will see the importance of Bible study. Also, we must state from the very beginning that the Scripture is the Word of God. It is not man’s opinion, it is not human philosophy, it is not somebody’s ideas, it is not a pooling of the best thoughts of the best men—it is the Word of God. Consequently, there are several things we need to realize about it.

## The Attributes of the Bible

### 1. *The Bible Is Infallible*

The Bible, in its entirety, has no mistakes. Specifically, in its original autographs it is without errors. In Psalm 19:7 the Bible says of itself, “The law of the Lord is perfect.” It is flawless because God wrote it—and He

is flawless. Therefore, if God wrote the Bible, and if He is the ultimate authority, and if His character is flawless, then the Bible is flawless and is the ultimate authority. You see, because God is perfect, the original autographs, the original transmissions of the Word of God, must also be perfect. So, the Bible is infallible, and that's the first reason to study it; it is the only Book that never makes a mistake—everything it says is the truth.

Not only is it *infallible*, but there's a second word we use in describing the Bible, and that is:

## 2. *The Bible Is Inerrant*

The Bible is not only infallible in total, but inerrant in its parts. In Proverbs 30:5–6 it says, “Every word of God is pure. . . . Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.” So every Word of God is pure and true.

The Bible is not only *infallible* and *inerrant*, but:

## 3. *The Bible Is Complete*

Nothing needs to be added to the Bible. Now that may be a surprise to some people, because there are those today who believe we need additional revelation. There exists a philosophy-theology known as neo-orthodoxy. It tells us that the Bible was simply a comment in its day on human spiritual experiences, and today humans are

still having spiritual experiences. Therefore, humanity needs another comment. One writer said that we need a Bible to be written today, just as we did when the Bible we have in our hands was written, because we need somebody to comment on what God is doing now. He also said that when Tom or Mary stand up in your church and say, "Thus says the Lord," they are as equally inspired as Isaiah, Jeremiah, or any of the other prophets (J. Rodman Williams, *The Era of the Spirit*, Logos International, 1971).

In other words, they claim that the Bible is not complete. That's the current philosophical-theological thought. Let's look at the end of the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation: "If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (22:18b–19). The Bible ends with a warning not to take away anything, and not to add anything. That's a testimony of its completeness. It is *infallible* in its total, *inerrant* in its parts, and it is *complete*.

A fourth way to describe the Bible's attributes is to say that:

#### 4. *The Bible Is Authoritative*

If it is perfect and complete, then it is the last Word—the final authority. Isaiah 1:2 says, “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the Lord has spoken.” When God speaks everybody listens and obeys, because His is the final authority. We can discuss its implications, its applications, and its meanings, but we shouldn’t discuss whether or not it is true.

In John 8 Jesus was confronted by some of the Jewish leaders, and there were other people present. Verses 30b–31 say, “Many believed in him. Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.’” In other words, He demanded response to His Word because it *is* authoritative.

In Galatians 3:10 it says, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” That’s a tremendous claim to absolute authority. In James 2:9–10 we read, “But if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.” To violate the Bible at one point is to break God’s law. The Bible is authoritative in every part.

The Bible is *infallible, inerrant, complete, authoritative*. As a result, we can make an additional claim that:

### 5. *The Bible Is Sufficient*

The Bible is sufficient for a number of things. First it is sufficient for our salvation. In 2 Timothy 3:15 Paul said to Timothy, “And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” First of all, the Bible is *sufficient* to “make you wise for salvation.” Ask yourself this question: What is more important than salvation? Nothing! It is the greatest reality in the universe—and the Bible reveals that salvation.

Second, 2 Timothy 3:16 (emphases added) indicates the Bible is sufficient for our perfection: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable *for doctrine*”—that means “teaching, principles of wisdom, divine standards, or divine truths”; “*for reproof*”—that means you’re able to go to someone and say, “Hey, you’re out of line. You can’t behave like that; there’s a standard and you’re not keeping it.” Scripture is also profitable “*for correction*”—that says to the person you’ve just reproved, “Now don’t do that, do this instead; this is the right path.” You teach, you reprove, you show the correct way—and further it is profitable “*for instruction in righteousness*.” Now you point to the new way and show them how to walk in it. The Bible is a fantastic book. It can take somebody who doesn’t know God, who isn’t saved, and then save them. Then it will teach them, reprove them when

they do wrong, point out the right thing to do, and then show them how to walk in that right path.

The result is stated in verse 17: “That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” The incredible reality of the Bible is that it is *sufficient* to do the whole job.

Third, the Bible is sufficient in its hope. In Romans 15:4 it says, “For whatever things were written before [referring to the Bible] were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” The Bible is the source of patience and comfort, ultimately giving us hope now and forever.

Finally, the Bible is sufficient in its blessing. I think of the tremendous text of James 1:25, “But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty [the Scripture] 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.” When you read it and then do it—you’re blessed.

Back in James 1:21, James says that we should “receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” The Greek text literally means it is able to “save your life.” In other words, it will save your life if you receive the Word of God. I think by that he means that it will give you the fullest life imaginable. But it is possible also for a Christian who doesn’t obey the Word of God to lose his life. In 1 Corinthians 11 some

of the Christians in Corinth violated the practice of the Lord's Table or Communion, and He took them home. Verse 30 says, "For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep [are dead]." Ananias and Sapphira disobeyed God's command and dropped dead in front of the whole church (Acts 5:1–11). So James said, "If you receive the implanted word, and you obey it, and you continue in it, it has an incredible way of perfecting you, of blessing you, of saving your life." All these things are true of the Word of God.

### *6. The Bible Is Effective*

Consider the words of Isaiah 55:11: "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please." God's Word is effective. One of the incredible things about being a teacher of the Word of God is that it will do what it promises to do.

I often wonder about the door-to-door salesperson who tries to demonstrate his product, and then it doesn't work right. I remember the story of the lady who lived in the country, and a vacuum cleaner salesman came by with a high-pressure sales pitch. He said, "I have the greatest product you've ever seen. This vacuum cleaner will eat up anything. In fact, if I don't control it, it will suck up your carpet." Before she could say anything, he said, "I

want to give you a demonstration.”

He immediately went to the fireplace and threw some of the ashes in the middle of the carpet. He also had a bag of stuff which he dumped on the carpet. Then he said, “I want you to watch it suck every bit of that up.” She stood there aghast. Finally, he said to her, “If it doesn’t suck up every bit of this, I’ll eat it all with a spoon.” She looked him right in the eyes and said, “Well sir, start eating, because we ain’t got no electricity.”

It’s pretty tough to have your product be inoperable or ineffective. But that never happens with the Bible—it is *always* effective—it always does exactly what it says it will do. That’s a tremendous reality about the Scripture.

First Thessalonians 1:5 is a great verse about the effectiveness of the Scripture: “For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance.” In other words, when you hear the Word of God, it isn’t just words. When the Word goes forth it has power; it is powered by the Holy Spirit, and we have the assurance that it will do what it says.

So far we have seen that the Word of God is *infallible* in total, *inerrant* in its parts, *complete* so that we are to add or subtract nothing, *authoritative* so that it is absolutely true and commands our obedience, *sufficient* so that it is able to do to us and for us everything we need,

and *effective*—it will do exactly what it says it will do. Finally:

### *7. The Bible Is Determinative*

The Bible is determinative because how you respond to the Word of God determines the essence of your life and your eternal destiny. In John 8:47 Jesus said, “He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.” In other words, the determination of whether an individual is of God or not of God is based on whether he listens to the Word of God. First Corinthians 2:9 says, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” Man could never conceive of God’s dominion on his own. Man could never conceive that he would be a part of it. Man could never conceive in his own humanness, in his own patterns of logic, all that God has prepared for him. But verses 10–12 say, “But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by

God.” Then verse 14 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God.”

There are two kinds of people: the people who receive the things of God, and the people who do not—the people who can receive, and the people who cannot. The unbelieving people can't receive it because they don't have the Holy Spirit. But the people who know God have the Holy Spirit, and they receive the Word of God. The Bible is the ultimate determiner. Those people who receive the Word of God indicate by their understanding of it that they possess the Holy Spirit—and that proves they are believers.

I remember talking to a man who continually admitted that he didn't understand the Bible. But he couldn't because he didn't have the one thing necessary to understand it—the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in his soul. So, the beauty, glory, and capabilities of the Word of God are presented to us in these simple words: it is *infallible, inerrant, complete, authoritative, sufficient, effective, and determinative*. Now somebody might come along and say, “Well, that's really great that the Bible makes all those claims for itself. If all of this is true then I've got to find out about those principles. But how can I really be sure that it's true?”

We live in a world where people really don't respond to authority very well. In fact, our whole world kicks

against authority. We want to deny the authority of the home. There's a fight now to deny the authority of the man in our society. The women want to fight against that and maybe sometimes it has been oppressive. There often needs to be a little more balance, but it can be a fight against authority. Young people on junior high, high school, and college campuses sometimes fight against those in administration. There is sort of an antigovernment feeling in some cases. It's kind of rugged individualism; everybody's his own god. We're back to, "I'm the master of my fate. I'm the captain of my soul." We really don't like to respond to authority. So when you come along and say to somebody, "You know, I want to tell you the Bible is the absolute authority. It's absolutely sufficient and efficient," it comes across as harsh.

People respond with, "Well, how do I know that? I'm not going to accept that unless you can show me how." So how do we really determine that the Bible is true? Of course, ultimately you can't really prove it is true, but there certainly are some convincing things that make our faith sane.

## The Authenticity of the Bible

There are five basic areas that prove that the Bible is true. The first area is:

## 1. *Experience*

I believe the Bible is true because it gives us the experience it claims it will give us. For example, Scripture says God will forgive our sin (1 John 1:9). I believe that. I accepted His forgiveness, and He granted it. But you may say, “How do you know that?” Because I have a sense of freedom from guilt; I have a sense of forgiveness. The Bible says that “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). I came to Jesus Christ one day and experienced the passing away of old things and all things becoming new. The Bible changes lives. Someone said that a Bible that’s falling apart usually belongs to somebody who isn’t. That’s true because the Bible can put lives together. Millions of people all over the world are living proof that the Bible is true. They’ve experienced it.

Although that’s a great argument in one sense, it’s a weak one in another sense, because if you start basing everything on experience, you’re going to run into some people who have had some pretty wild experiences. Therefore if you base your proof all on human experience, you can encounter problems. So, experience is just one area of proof, and it’s probably the weakest one, but it’s still evidence for some.

A second thing that proves the validity of the Bible is:

## 2. *Science*

Some people say, “Well, the Bible is not a science book; it’s scientifically incorrect, and it doesn’t use scientific language. Why does the Old Testament say that the sun stood still? Now we know that the sun didn’t stand still. In fact, in the old times they thought the sun was going around the earth instead of the other way around. That’s just a typical biblical flaw.” But what happened is that the earth stopped revolving, and it *appeared* that the sun stood still (Josh. 10:13). In trying to analyze the statement scientifically, people still see only what appeared to have happened. We all do that. When you get up in the morning and look toward the east, you don’t say, “Oh my, what a lovely earth rotation.” No, you call it a sunrise, and people understand what you’re saying. Likewise, you don’t look to the west and say, “What a lovely earth rotation.” No, it’s a sunset.

When someone asks you if you’d like another helping at dinner, you could say, “Well, gastronomical satiety admonishes me that I have arrived at a state of deglutition consistent with dietetic integrity.” Or you could say, “No, thanks, I’ve had enough.” You don’t always need a scientific answer for everything. Sometimes just pure observation is sufficient. The Bible says some things from the viewpoint of human observation. But on the other hand, whenever the Bible speaks about a scientific prin-

ciple, it is dead accurate. In fact, let's examine more closely three areas the Bible addresses.

The first is rainfall. In Isaiah 55:10 it says, "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater." Isaiah spoke centuries before the hydrological cycle was ever discovered. He said, "The rain and the snow come down and don't return again until they have watered the earth." But it's only been in modern times that hydrology has been understood. This is what happens: the rain falls down on the land, it waters the land, it runs off into the streams, down to the rivers, into the sea, and from the sea it returns again to the clouds; then it is taken over the land and dropped again. The ever constant hydrological cycle, and Isaiah 55:10 laid it out.

Some might say, "Well, a blind pig can find the slop once in a while—maybe Isaiah just took a lucky guess." That might have been a possibility, but the Bible discusses the same information in several other portions. Job 36:27–29 comments, "For He draws up drops of water, which distill as rain from the mist, which the clouds drop down and pour abundantly on man. Indeed, can anyone understand the spreading of clouds, the thunder from His canopy?" Once again a discussion of rain.

Compare also what it says in Psalm 135:7: “He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; He makes lightning for the rain; He brings the wind out of His treasures.” This is another wonderful mention of the sequence of rain and the ascending vapors from the sea to plant the water again in the clouds.

The fixed orbits of the heavenly bodies provide another scientific observation in Scripture. Jeremiah 31:35–36 (NASB) and Psalm 19 discuss this. I really feel that as you get into the Bible you will find incredible things about science that reveal the truthfulness of God’s Word. You never need to be ashamed of the Bible. You’re never going to run into a problem in the Bible that you can’t solve in one of two ways: first, by looking through the rest of Scripture and understanding how to interpret it; second, by realizing that you’re never going to understand it until you meet God. There are some things we don’t understand or know, but we’re not going to run into an error in the Scripture—not even scientifically.

A third scientific observation concerns balance. Within the science of geology there is a study called isostasy, which is fairly new. Isostasy is the study of the balance of the earth, and it says that equal weights are necessary to support equal weights. So, land mass must be supported equally by water mass. But scientists really haven’t discovered anything new. If we go back again to

Isaiah, who was not a scientist but simply a prophet of God, we find this: “Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?” (Isa. 40:12). God knew all about isostasy. It’s just incredible when you come to the Bible and start to study it scientifically.

It was said of Herbert Spencer, who died in 1903, that he had discovered the greatest fact about the categorizing of all things in the universe. He said everything could fall into these five categories: time, force, action, space, and matter. The world hailed him as a great scientist, a great man of discovery. But all five of those categories are in the first verse of the Bible: “In the beginning (time) God (force) created (action) the heavens (space) and the earth (matter).” Genesis 1:1 shows us that when the Bible speaks, it speaks accurately. So, science is a good way to show the authority and validity of Scripture.

### 3. *Christ*

In addition to experience and science, another area of tremendous evidence for the truth of the Bible is the very life of Christ. *Jesus Himself believed in the authority of the Bible.* In Matthew 5:18 He says, “Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means

pass from the law till all is fulfilled.” Furthermore, He showed His trust in the authority of Scripture by quoting from every part of the Old Testament. Jesus believed in the absolute, inspired authority of the Word of God.

#### 4. *Miracles*

The fourth area of proof that the Bible is true is that of miracles. The Bible is a divine book because it includes miracles, and that proves that God is involved in it. It has to be a supernatural book because of all the supernatural activity it reports. Now some might say, “Well, how do you know all the miracles are true?” Because Scripture tells of miracles and provides supportive information. For example, when Jesus rose from the dead, more than five hundred people saw Him after the resurrection. Those are enough witnesses to convince any jury. The miraculous nature of the Bible speaks of God.

So experience, science, the testimony of Christ, and the miracles of the Bible all prove that Scripture is true. Yet there is one more compelling line of evidence.

#### 5. *Prophecy*

There is no way to explain the Bible’s prediction of historical events unless we see God as the Author. Peter Stoner, an expert in mathematical probabilities, wrote in his book *Science Speaks* that if you take just eight of the

Old Testament prophecies Christ fulfilled, and add up the probabilities that these eight prophecies could come to pass by accident, it would be one chance in  $10^{17}$  that such an accident could happen—and yet every detail has come to pass. One chance in  $10^{17}$  would be like filling the state of Texas two feet deep in silver dollars, putting an X on one of them, and giving a blind man one pick. He'd have one chance in  $10^{17}$  of picking the one with an X on it. That's how much probability there is of these eight prophecies (with their specific details) ever coming to pass by accident. That's incredible! When the Bible speaks prophetically it is right, and it contains literally hundreds of fulfilled prophecies.

So we can look at experience, science, Christ, miracles, and fulfilled prophecy to see that the Bible is true. It's an incredible book—the greatest treasure imaginable.

The Bible is God's holy Word; it's a tremendous resource. But the Christian who never approaches it with an intense commitment to study it is forfeiting a tremendous blessing.

Bible scholar Donald G. Barnhouse was once traveling by air and reading the book of Romans. You might think he was the last man on the earth who needed to read the book of Romans because he wrote volumes on the book. But he was reading Romans and there was a seminary student sitting next to him on the plane. The

student was reading *Time* magazine and kept looking up from his magazine and staring over because he kept thinking he recognized this man. Finally, the student asked him, “Sir, I don’t want to interrupt you but aren’t you Dr. Donald Barnhouse?”

When Dr. Barnhouse responded yes, the student shared, “Dr. Barnhouse, you’re such a fabulous teacher of the Scripture. I wish that I could know the Bible like you do.”

Dr. Barnhouse looked at him and said, “Well you could start by putting down *Time* magazine and reading the Bible.” That sounds like a hard shot, but he’s right.

I think about the great Bible teacher who had a young man come up to him and say, “Oh sir, I’d give the world if I knew the Bible like you.” The Bible teacher looked him right in the eye and said, “Good, because that’s exactly what it will cost you.” You must realize what a precious gift the Bible is. This is the treasure of God. It can do what you need done in your life. To walk away from it is incredible.

## THE BENEFITS OF STUDYING GOD’S WORD

I want to give you six areas that appear as major benefits, because these are the things that are going to become

your motivation. I'll provide the first two to conclude this chapter and present the remaining four in our next chapter.

### BENEFIT ONE: The Source of Truth

In John 17:17b Jesus prayed to the Father and said, "Your word is truth." That's a great statement, but do you realize what it is to have the truth? Quite often when I confront people about Jesus Christ they say, "But I don't know what the truth is." Even Pilate came to the place in his life when he looked at Jesus and said, "What is truth?" (John 18:38a). Many people have that same thought; nevertheless, we're in a world that searches for truth.

By the 1980s people printed nearly three thousand new pages of information every sixty seconds. Yet today's digital age produces more content than any organization can accurately count. One thing is certain—our society is chasing truth.

The Bible even says that humans are "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7). Do you know what that's like? I remember when I was in junior high school, I had a terrible time with algebra. I'd go home and work on one of those silly problems for hours. Then I'd go back to school the next

day without the answer, and that was so frustrating to me. But you've had that problem too: you've worked on something and never solved it or found the answer. And that's the way it is with people in the world. They read, they study, they think, they reason, they listen, they talk, they interact, and they never get the real truth. They never settle on anything, and the frustration is overwhelming.

I remember talking to a man who just kind of left society altogether; he just bailed out and got on drugs. He had graduated from Boston University but was living in the woods, sleeping in a small tent. I asked him, "What made you do this?"

He said, "Well, I searched for the answer so long, I finally decided to blow my mind on drugs. At least now I don't even have to ask the questions." Now that's the despair of never knowing the truth.

The writer Franz Kafka gave a great illustration about education. He pictured a bombed-out city consisting only of rubble. Everywhere there were people bleeding and dying; there was smoke and smoldering fire—just total rubble. But in the middle of the city was an ivory tower piercing the sky, pristine white, untouched by any bombs. Then, there was a solitary figure winding his way through the rubble. When he got to the tall white building, he walked in and went up to the top story. He

came to a dark hall, and at the end of it was a little light. He walked in the darkness until he came to the light, turned, and walked into a bathroom. Inside sat a man with a fishing pole fishing in the bathtub. The solitary stranger said to him. “Hey, what are you doing?”

The man said, “I’m fishing.”

The stranger looked in the bathtub and said, “There are no fish in the bathtub and there is no water.”

The man said, “I know,” and kept on fishing.

Kafka said, “That is *higher education*.”

You see, man has lost the truth.

It’s fantastic to realize—and sometimes I think we forget it—that every time we pick up the Bible, we pick up the truth. What a tremendous legacy we have. But we can’t take it for granted, and we certainly can’t let it just sit around. So the first reason I believe we need to study the Word of God is that it’s the source of truth. Jesus said, “If you abide in my word . . . you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31b–32). What did He mean by that? Like the man who works on a math problem and finds the answer—he’s free. Just like the scientist in the lab pouring the different solutions into test tubes, he stays with it until he says, “Eureka, I found it!”—then he’s free. Humanity will search and struggle and grapple and grope for the truth until it finds it—then people are genuinely free.

One reason to study the Bible is that the truth is there. The truth about God; the truth about man; the truth about life; the truth about death; the truth about you and me; the truth about men, women, children, husbands, wives, dads, and mothers; the truth about friends and enemies; the truth about how you ought to be at work and how you ought to be at home; even the truth about how you ought to eat and drink, how you ought to live, how you ought to think—the truth is all there. What a resource we have. Cherish it.

### **BENEFIT TWO: The Source of Happiness**

A second reason you should want to study the Bible is it's the source of happiness. Some would rather use "joy" or "blessing," but "happiness" says it. The truth is there and it brings us happiness. In Psalm 19:8a it says, "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." It's just talking about the principles of the Scripture. When you begin to study the Bible and learn the great truths it contains, you will get excited. I study the Bible a lot because I'm constantly teaching and preaching the Word, but I also study it on my own because I love it so much, and the exhilaration that comes to me in the discovery of great truths in the Word of God has never diminished. The greatest thrill I've known in my life is the

tremendous exhilaration that comes to my heart when I have cracked open the shell of an incredible truth in the Word of God. In fact, Proverbs 8:34 says, “Blessed [happy] is the man who listens to me.” In Luke 11:28 Jesus says, “Blessed [happy] are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” Do you want to be a happy person? Then obey God’s Word.

It’s amazing to me how so many people know what the Bible teaches, but they don’t obey it—so they forfeit happiness. Some people say, “Well, the book of Revelation is so hard to understand. I study the other stuff, but I don’t want to get involved in Revelation.” But look at what Revelation 1:3 says: “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy.” The word “blessed” means “happy.” Do you want to be happy? Read Revelation. Yes, to be happy, read the Word of God and respond to it. I love 1 John 1:4 that says, “And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.”

Then there’s a wonderful statement made by our Lord in that magnificent fifteenth chapter of John in which He presents Himself as the Vine. In verse 11 He says, “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.” What a tremendous thought—joy from the Scripture.

In Luke 24 Jesus has risen from the dead and He is on His way to Emmaus with the two disciples who don’t

recognize Him (vv. 13–32). Beginning in verse 24 they tell Jesus, “And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said: but Him they did not see. Then he said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!’” Christ is talking to them, but they don’t know who He is. “Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” After His resurrection, nobody knew who Christ was until He revealed Himself to them. “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Jesus taught them through the Scriptures, and they were listening. Then as they had their meal, all of a sudden the light dawned: “Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.” Then I love this, “And they said to one another, ‘Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?’” When He opened the Scriptures to them, their hearts virtually burned within them.

There is joy in the Word of God if you obey it. If you don’t keep His Word, then there’s no joy. However, I would also add that God is gracious. He doesn’t expect us to be able to keep every single principle all the time and never waver, but it is a matter of heart attitude. If your

heart is committed to obeying the Word, then He'll fill your life with joy. I know people want to know truth and they want to be happy, especially those of us who are Christians. Thus there is no excuse for us not knowing the truth and not living lives that are filled with exhilaration and joy—we have it available right in the Word of God.