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### The Indispensable Word of God

By Andrew Murray

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). The illustration that our Lord uses, in which the Word of God is compared to our daily bread, is most instructive. Bread is indispensable to life. We all understand this. However strong a person may be, if he takes no nourishment, he will grow weaker, and life will become extinct. Even so with the Word of God. It contains a heavenly principle, and works powerfully in them that believe.

Bread must be eaten. I may know all about bread. I may have bread, and may give it to others. I may have bread in my house and on my table in great abundance, but that will not help me; if through illness I am unable to eat it, I shall die. And so a mere knowledge of God's Word and even the preaching of it to others will not avail me. It is not enough to think about it, I must feed on God's Word, and take it into my heart and life. In love and obedience I must appropriate the words of God, and let them take full possession of my heart. Then they will indeed be words of life.

Bread must be eaten daily. And the same is true of God's Word. The Psalmist says that blessed is the man whose "delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night" (Psa. 1:2). "O how love I Thy law; it is my meditation all the day" (Psa. 119:97). To secure a strong and powerful spiritual life God's Word every day is indispensable.

When on earth the Lord Jesus learned, loved, and obeyed the Word of the Father. And if you seek fellowship with Him, you will find Him in His Word. Christ will teach you to commune with the Father through the Word, even as was His custom. You will learn, like Him, to live solely for the glory of God and the fulfillment of His Word.

#### How to Read God's Word

Here are some simple rules for Bible reading.

Read God's Word with great reverence. Meditate a moment in silence on the thought that the words come from God Himself. Bow in deep reverence. Be silent unto God. Let Him reveal His Word in your heart.

Read with careful attention. If you read the words carelessly, thinking that you can grasp their meaning with your human understanding, you will use the words superficially, and not enter into their depths. When someone tries to explain anything wonderful or beautiful to us, we give our entire attention to try to understand what is said. How much higher and deeper are God's thoughts than our thoughts. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:9). We need to give our undivided attention to understand even the superficial meaning of the words. How much harder to grasp the spiritual meaning?

Read with the expectation of the guidance of God's Spirit. It is God's Spirit alone that can make the Word a living power in our hearts and lives. Read Psalm 119. Notice how earnestly David prays that God will teach him, and open his eyes, and give him understanding, and incline his heart to God's ways. As you read, remember that God's Word and God's Spirit are inseparable.

Read with the firm purpose of keeping the Word day and night in your heart and in your life. The whole heart and the whole life must come under the influence of the Word. David said: "O how love I Thy law; it is my meditation all the day" (Psa. 119:97). And so in the midst of his daily work, the believer can cherish God's Word in his heart, and meditate on it. Read Psalm 119 again, until you accept God's Word with all your heart, and pray that God may teach you to understand it, and to carry out its precepts in your life.

#### The Word and Prayer

"Quicken me, O Lord, according to Thy Word" (Psa. 119:107).

Prayer and the Word of God are inseparable, and should always go together in the quiet time of the inner chamber. In His Word God speaks to me; in prayer I speak to God. If there is to be true intercourse, God and I must both take part. If I simply pray, without using God's Word, I am apt to use my own words and thoughts. This really gives prayer its power, that I take God's thoughts from His Word, and present them before Him. Then I am enabled to pray according to God's Word. How indispensable God's Word is for all true prayer!

When I pray, I must seek to know God aright. It is through the Word that the Holy Spirit gives me right thoughts of Him. The Word will also teach me how wretched and sinful I am. It reveals to me all the wonders that God will do for me, and the strength He will give me to do His will. The Word teaches me how to pray – with strong desire, with a firm faith, and with constant perseverance. The Word teaches me not only what I am, but what I may become through God's grace. And above all, it reminds me each day that Christ is the great Intercessor, and allows me to pray in His Name.

O Christian, learn this great lesson, to renew your strength each day in God's Word, and so pray according to His will.

Then we turn to the other side – Prayer. We need prayer when we read God's Word – prayer to be taught of God to understand His Word, prayer that through the Holy Spirit I may rightly know and use God's Word – prayer that I may see in the Word that Christ is all in all, and will be all in me.

Blessed inner chamber, where I may approach God in Christ through the Word and prayer. There I may offer myself to God and His service, and be strengthened by the Holy Spirit, so that His love may be shed abroad in my heart and I may daily walk in that love.