

Hebrews 4:12 Commentary

PREVIOUS

CLICK VERSE
To go directly to that verse

NEXT

- [Hebrews 4:1](#)
- [Hebrews 4:2](#)
- [Hebrews 4:3](#)
- [Hebrews 4:4](#)
- [Hebrews 4:5](#)
- [Hebrews 4:6](#)
- [Hebrews 4:7](#)
- [Hebrews 4:8](#)
- [Hebrews 4:9](#)
- [Hebrews 4:10](#)
- [Hebrews 4:11](#)
- [Hebrews 4:12](#)
- [Hebrews 4:13](#)
- [Hebrews 4:14](#)
- [Hebrews 4:15](#)
- [Hebrews 4:16](#)

CONSIDER JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST
Click chart to enlarge
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
[Swindoll's Chart](#), [Interesting Pictorial Chart of Hebrews](#), [Another Chart](#)

The Epistle to the Hebrews				
INSTRUCTION Hebrews 1-10:18				EXHORTATION Hebrews 10:19-13:25
Superior Person of Christ Hebrews 1:1-4:13	Superior Priest in Christ Hebrews 4:14-10:18			Superior Life In Christ Hebrews 10:19-13:25
BETTER THAN PERSON Hebrews 1:1-4:13	BETTER PRIESTHOOD Heb 4:14-7:28	BETTER COVENANT Heb 8:1-13	BETTER SACRIFICE Heb 9:1-10:18	BETTER LIFE
MAJESTY OF CHRIST	MINISTRY OF CHRIST			MINISTERS FOR CHRIST
DOCTRINE				DUTY
DATE WRITTEN: ca. 64-68AD				

See [ESV Study Bible "Introduction to Hebrews"](#)
(See also [MacArthur's Introduction to Hebrews](#))

Borrow [Ryrie Study Bible](#)

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ([NASB](#):

Greek: [Zon](#) (PAPMSN) [gar o logos tou theou kai energeis kai tomoteros hyper pasan machairan distomon kai diiknoumenos](#) (PMPMSN) [achri merismou psuches kai pneumatos, armon te kai muelon, kai kritikos enthuseon kai ennoion kardias](#);

BGT Ζ ν γ ρ λ γ ο ς τ ο θε ο κ α ν ε ρ γ ι ς κ α τ ο μ τ ε ρ ο ς π ρ π σ α ν μ χ α ι ρ α ν δ σ τ ο μ ο ν κ α δ ι ῖ κ ν ο μ ε ν ο ς χ ρ ι μ ε ρ ι σ μ ο ψ υ χ ι ς κ α π ν ε μ α τ ο ς ρ μ ν τ ε κ α μ υ ε λ ν , κ α κ ρ ι τ ι κ ι ς ν θ υ μ σ ε ω ν κ α ν ν ο ι ν κ α ρ δ ι α ς·

Amplified: For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Barclay: For the word of God is instinct with life; it is effective; it is sharper than a two-edged sword; it pierces right through to the very division of soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it scrutinizes the desires and intentions of the heart. ([Westminster Press](#))

NLT: For the word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are. (NLT - Tyndale House)

Phillips: For the Word that God speaks is alive and active; it cuts more keenly than any two-edged sword: it strikes through to the place where soul and spirit meet, to the innermost intimacies of a man's being: it exposes the very thoughts and motives of a man's heart. (Phillips: Touchstone)

Wuest: for actively alive is the word of God, and energetic, and sharper than any two-edged sword, going through even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a sifter and analyzer of the reflections and conceptions of the heart. (Eerdmans)

Young's Literal: for the reckoning of God is living, and working, and sharp above every two-edged sword, and piercing unto the dividing asunder both of soul and spirit, of joints also and marrow, and a discerner of thoughts and intents of the heart

KJV For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

NKJ For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

NET For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword, piercing even to the point of dividing soul from spirit, and joints from marrow; it is able to judge the desires and thoughts of the heart.

CSB For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart.

ESV For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

NIV For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

MIT For God's word is vital, effective, and sharper than every double-edged sword. It penetrates to lay open soul, spirit, bone joints, and marrow. It also critiques the motives and rationalizations of one's heart.

NJB The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts more incisively than any two-edged sword: it can seek out the place where soul is divided from spirit, or joints from marrow; it can pass judgement on secret emotions and thoughts.

NRS Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

RSV For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

NAB Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart.

GWN God's word is living and active. It is sharper than any two-edged sword and cuts as deep as the place where soul and spirit meet, the place where joints and marrow meet. God's word judges a person's thoughts and intentions.

BBE For the word of God is living and full of power, and is sharper than any two-edged sword, cutting through and making a division even of the soul and the spirit, the bones and the muscles, and quick to see the thoughts and purposes of the heart.

ASV For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

- **Word of God** - Heb 13:7; Isaiah 49:2; Luke 8:11; Acts 4:31; 2Co 2:17; 4:2; Rev 20:4
- **Living** - Ps 110:2; 119:130; Ec 12:11; Isa 55:11; Jer 23:29; Ro 1:16; 1Co 1:24; 2Co 10:4,5; 1Th 2:13; Jas 1:18; 1Pe 1:23; Jn 6:51; 1Pe 2:4,5
- Related Resource: Inductive study on The Power of God's Word
- [Hebrews 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 4:12-13 God's Powerful Word](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 4:1-13 Entering Into God's Rest](#) - John MacArthur
- [Hebrews 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Isaiah 55:11 (ACTIVE - EFFECTIVE WORD) So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; **it will not return to Me empty**, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

Jeremiah 23:29 (PENETRATING WORD) "Is not My word like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock?"

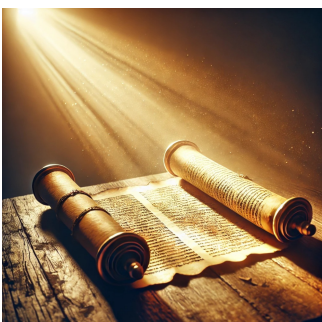
1 Thessalonians 2:13 (TRANSFORMING WORD) For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also **performs its work in you who believe**.

1 Peter 1:23+ (LIVING WORD) for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the **living and enduring word of God**. 24 For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, 25 BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER." And this is the word which was preached to you.

Romans 1:16+ (ACTIVE - POWERFUL WORD) For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for **it is the power of God for salvation** to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Acts 20:32+ (ACTIVE/ABLE - POWERFUL WORD) And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Acts 7:38+ (LIVING WORD) "This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received **living oracles** to pass on to you.



THE POWER OF THE WORD OF THE LIVING GOD

For (gar) - Always pause to prayerfully ponder and peruse this poignant term of explanation and you will often be rewarded by your Teacher the Spirit with rich spiritual insights on the text! In this case the writer is explaining why we must heed the exhortation in Hebrews 4:11 to be diligent to enter God's rest. The danger is we may fall like Israel fell if we fail to enter His rest, His salvation by grace through faith.

Henry Alford says it this way "Such an endeavour (Heb 4:11) is well worth all our **diligence**—for we have One to do with, Who can discern and will punish every and even the most secret disobedience."

Marcus Dods says "In Heb 4:12-13 another reason is added for dealing sincerely and strenuously with God's promises and especially with this offer of rest."

Peter O'Brien explains that "The long paraenetic (Pertaining to instruction, exhortation or command) section from Heb 3:1 to Heb 4:11 is concluded by a masterly literary piece that affirms the power of God's word and the impossibility of hiding from His judgment. This affirmation about the word of God in Heb 4:12–13 is joined to the preceding paragraph by **For (gar)**, and provides an additional reason for the exhortation to make every effort to enter God's rest that is enjoined in Heb 4:11."

Ligonier Ministry (Before the Face of God) on Hebrews 4:12 - This passage is introduced by the word **for**. This word means what is about to be said relates to the preceding thoughts. We have been told to pay close heed to God's Word of promise and threat. It promises a reward of rest in him if we are faithful, a curse of restlessness if we are unfaithful. We must pay heed, for God's Word is alive and active. It cannot be ignored. It provokes us to obedience or to rebellion.

The point is that Hebrews 4:12 is one of those passages we frequently memorize but often do so out of context. Yes, it is true the **Word of God is living and active**, and most of us who have walked with Jesus for a few years have experienced its supernatural power in various ways. But if we read Hebrews 4:12 in context (context is king for accurate interpretation! = Keep Context King), we learn that the writer was explaining something he had previously stated. I remember memorizing Hebrews 4:12 some 40 years ago, but it was not until about 20 years later when I was learning inductive Bible study, that I truly understood the meaning of this great verse. Now, don't misunderstand -- this verse is still applicable to the Word of God in general, but that was not the specific intent of the writer. He was primarily referring to the Word of God that he had just **warned** the Hebrew readers (e.g., God's Word from Ps 95:7 quoted in Hebrews 3:7, 13, 15, Heb 4:7) in the long section beginning in Hebrews 3:1 and through a final summary exhortation in Hebrews 4:11+. Now in Hebrews 4:12, the writer explains why the Word of warning is effective and why they should take heed to the warning.

For (gar) the word (logos) of God is living (zao - present tense - continually living) **and active (energes) and sharper (tomos) than any two-edged (distomos) sword (machaira), and piercing (diikneomai) as far as the division (merismos) of soul (psyche) and spirit (pneuma), of both joints and marrow, and able to judge (kritikos) the thoughts (enthumesis) and intentions (ennoia) of the heart (kardia)** - In the Greek the emphasis is on **living** (placed first in the sentence). **The Word of God** is not the Word of man! When the Bible speaks, God speaks (Isa 55:11)! It came down from heaven and is not from earth. The writers were merely human agents moved by the Spirit Who used their own personalities (2Pe 1:21+). When you receive the **Word of God**, you are communicating personally and intimately with God. To reject the Word of God you are rejecting the Almighty God!

Some commentators feel that **Word of God** is another name for Jesus (E.g., see [Spurgeon's discussion in The Word a Sword](#)). Indeed, Jesus is called "the Word" (Jn 1:1+, Rev 19:13+) but in context, the writer is referring to the written revelation from God and not the person of Jesus Christ (Although to be sure the living Word and the living Lord are somehow mysteriously [to me] intimately linked together in time and eternity.)

So what is the writer referring to by the **word of God**? This verse is frequently taken (out of context) as a description of the **word of God** in general which of course is not an inappropriate application. Indeed one can make a list of at least 5 wonderful characteristics of the "word of God" from this description. But the careful reader must remember that accurate interpretation is dependent on interpreting the text in context and failure to interpret **word of God** in the context of the writer's argument is to miss his main reason for inserting this description at this point in the book of Hebrews.

The purpose of this and the following verse (Hebrews 4:13+) is clear—no one can escape God's notice. All insincerity, unbelief, and hypocrisy will be exposed, for our hearts are entirely open before Him. The Word of God here refers to whatever God speaks—promise, warning, law, or gospel—each fitted to penetrate the heart, uncover true motives, and reveal a person's real spiritual state. Whether read, preached, remembered, or impressed by the Spirit, God's truth acts like a sharp sword, laying bare the whole person so there is no hiding from its searching power (cf. Isa. 49:2).

In summary, the **word of God** in Hebrews 3–4 is the writer's warning and because this Word is **living and active** it will penetrate their hearts to reveal whether their profession of faith—seen in their persevering obedience (Heb 3:6+, Heb 3:14+)—is genuine or merely superficial.

Is living ([zao](#) - present tense - continually living) **and active** ([energes](#)) -- This is an amazing statement which we too often read past. The Bible is living. **Living** ([zao](#)) refers to life in contrast to death. The words just spoken possess inherent vitality, able to impart life to the reader's soul. God's Word is not dead, inert, or powerless—it is alive with power and fully capable of producing life. It has a pulse. It has the mind of God in it. It speaks to us. It runs after us. It lays hold of us. As noted above in the Greek **living** ([zao](#)) is the first word in the sentence which literally would read "living for the Word of God is! This draw our attention and emphasizes this quality of the Word of God. God wants to make sure we grasp that this is not like any other book ever written. All the other books written are "dead books!" And because it is alive, it speaks to every person in every culture, in every country, addressing them where they are and telling them exactly what they need to hear. There is no book more relevant for your life than the Bible! Moses declared to Israel "it is not an idle (empty, vain) word for you; indeed **it is your life**." (Dt 32:47+) The Word is never empty, never lifeless, never flat, never tired, never sluggish. We may be sluggish, dull, etc, but the Bible is never dull, never boring. It is as if an unstoppable current of power surges through it—dynamic and alive! Jesus emphasized the living nature of God's Word, declaring, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the **words** that I have spoken to you are spirit and are **life**." (Jn 6:63+)

Spurgeon on the Word of God is living - The Word of God is alive. This is a living Book. This is a mystery that only living men, quickened by the Spirit of God, will fully comprehend. Take up any other book except the Bible, and there may be a measure of power in it, but there is not that indescribable vitality in it that breathes, and speaks, and pleads, and conquers in the case of this sacred volume. It is only because Jesus is not dead that the Word becomes living and effectual, "and sharper than any double-edged sword"; for, if you leave Christ out of it, you have left out its vitality and power. As I have told you that we will not have Christ without the Word, so neither will we have the Word without Christ. If you leave Christ out of Scripture, you have left out the essential truth that it is written to declare.

The **living and active** nature of the **Word of God** is like the Lord's picture of the Word as a **seed**—both possess life and power, and both can produce spiritual fruit (Gal. 5:22–23+). Yet a seed does nothing until it is planted (John 12:24+). When a person hears and understands the Word, the seed is planted in the heart; what follows depends on the condition of the soil (cf. Luke 8:15+). Scripture is active, effective, powerful, and productive—capable of bringing about change in a heart with receptive soil! It is "energetic," never idle, never taking a day off, always at work, tireless in its power to act.

C H Spurgeon on the Word as like a **living** seed - Plants unknown in certain regions have suddenly sprung from the soil: the seeds have been wafted on the winds, carried by birds, or washed ashore by the waves of the sea. So vital are seeds that they live and grow wherever they are borne; and even after lying deep in the soil for centuries, when the upturning spade has brought them to the surface, they have germinated at once. Thus is it with the Word of God: it lives and abides forever, and in every soil and under all circumstances it is prepared to prove its own life by the energy with which it grows and produces fruit to the glory of God.

C H Spurgeon said "Why, the Book has wrestled with me; the Book has smitten me; the Book has comforted me; the Book has smiled on me; the Book has frowned on me; the Book has clasped my hand; the Book has warmed my heart. The Book weeps with me, and sings with me; it whispers to me, and it preaches to me; it maps my way, and holds up my goings; it is the Young Man's Best Companion, and is still my morning and evening Chaplain."

Charles Simeon on living says "The word is not a mere dead letter, that will soon vanish away: it lives in the mind of God: it lives in the decrees of heaven: it lives and will live forever: nor will millions of ages cause it to be forgotten, or in the least enervate its force. All besides this shall wax old, and decay: but this shall endure, without the alteration of one jot or tittle of it, to all generations

Leon Morris on living and active - "Living and active" shows that there is a dynamic quality about God's revelation. It does things. Specifically it penetrates and, in this capacity, is likened to a "double-edged sword" (for the sword, cf. Is 49:2; Ep 6:17+; Re 19:15+; and for the double-edged idea, cf. Re 1:16+; Re 2:12+). ([Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

*God's Word makes us
living sacrifices*

Ligonier Ministry (Coram Deo) on **double-edged sword** - Scripture is described as a sword, not a mace used to beat people or an ax used to hack people. This sword cuts people apart; it is a sword by which we are sacrificed. That is why it is said to cut apart "joints and marrow." Such language may imply the work of the priest in cutting up the animal sacrifice. God's Word makes us living sacrifices (see Rom. 12:1+). The sword is **double-edged**; it cuts no matter how it is used. It always cuts, for it has no blunt side. Beyond this, some have speculated that the two edges are God's eternal Word and his temporal words, or perhaps the Old and New

Testaments—but there is no biblical foundation for such opinions. More likely the two edges imply that the Word brings life to some and death to others, just as Jesus' parables illuminated truth for some of his hearers and confused others (Matt. 13:10–16+). In fact, the sword of the Word brings judgment to all. To some of us it is a sacrificial judgment that leads to new life; to others it is a word of condemnation (John 12:48+).

Let the Word of God do its Work!

*If you are cold, let it WARM you,
If you are asleep, let it WAKE you,
If you are a backslider, let it WARN you,
If you are defiled, let it WASH you.
If you are disobedient, let it WHIP you.
If you are uncertain, let it WITNESS to you.
If you are unsaved, let it WIN you.*

Barnes on **living and active** writes that "Its power is seen in awakening the conscience; alarming the fears; laying bare the secret feelings of the heart; and causing the sinner to tremble with the apprehension of the coming judgment. All the great changes in the moral world for the better, have been caused by the power of truth. They are such as the truth in its own nature is fitted to effect; and, if we may judge of its power by the greatness of the revolutions produced, no words can over-estimate the might of the truth which God has revealed.

Spurgeon on **active** - Perhaps "energetic" is the best rendering, or almost as well, "effectual." Holy Scripture is full of power and energy. The Word of God is that by which sin is slain, and grace is born in the heart. It is the that which brings life with it. How active and energetic it is, when the soul is convinced of sin, in bringing it forth into gospel liberty!

WORD OF GOD QUOTES

For a more complete list click [The Word of God Quotations and Illustrations](#)

Vance Havner "The storehouse of God's Word was never meant for mere scrutiny, even primarily for study but for sustenance.

Scottish pastor **Thomas Cuthrie** - "The Bible is an armory of heavenly weapons, a laboratory of infallible medicines, a mine of exhaustless wealth. It is a guidebook for every road, a chart for every sea, a medicine for every malady, and a balm for every wound. Rob us of our Bible and our sky has lost its sun."

Will H. Houghton "The Bible calls itself food. The value of food is not in the discussion it arouses but in the nourishment it imparts.

A W Pink "God's design in all that He has revealed to us is to the purifying of our affections and the transforming of our characters....Everything in Scripture has in view the promotion of holiness.

Leon Morris - The Word of God is unique. No sword can penetrate as it can.

D L Moody - The Scriptures were not given to increase our knowledge but to change our lives.

Thomas Brooks - "The Word of the Lord is a light to guide you, a counselor to counsel you, a comforter to comfort you, a staff to support you, a sword to defend you, and a physician to cure you. The Word is a mine to enrich you, a robe to clothe you, and a crown to crown you.

John Flavel "The Scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering and the most comfortable way of dying.

Martin Luther - "The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold on me."

Frank Cooke "The foundation of every reformation of the Holy Spirit is the Word of God made plain to the people.

Brian Edwards - Philosophy and religion may reform, but only the Bible can transform.

Vance Havner - "There is no devil in the first two chapters of the Bible and no devil in the last two chapters. Thank God for a book that disposes of the devil!"

The **word of God**, the Bible, describes itself and its work in many ways (See [similar lists below](#))

- **Isaiah 55:11** God's word will not return to him empty, but will do what God desires and achieve the purpose for which he sent

it.

- **Jeremiah 23:29** God's word is like fire and like a hammer that can break a rock into pieces.
- **John 6:63** God's word is spirit and life.
- **Acts 7:38** God's word is living.
- **Ephesians 6:17+** God's word is part of the believer's armor—the sword of the Spirit.
- **Hebrews 4:12** God's word is living, powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, judging people's thoughts and intentions.
- **1 Peter 1:23+** God's word is living and enduring, through which people are born again.

AND SHARPER THAN ANY TWO EDGED SWORD: kai tomoteros huper pasan machairan distomon:

- Ps 45:3; 149:6; Pr 5:4; Isaiah 11:4; 49:2; Acts 2:37; 5:33; Eph 6:17; Rev 1:16; 2:16; 19:15,21
- [Hebrews 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 4:12-13 God's Powerful Word](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 4:1-13 Entering Into God's Rest](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

Psalms 149:6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand,

Proverbs 5:4 But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword.

Isaiah 49:2 He has made My mouth like a sharp sword, In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me; And He has also made Me a select arrow, He has hidden Me in His quiver.

Acts 2:37+ (WORD IS SHARP) Now when they heard this, they were **pierced to the heart**, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

Acts 5:33+ (WORD IS SHARP) But when they heard this, they were cut to the quick and intended to kill them.

2 Corinthians 2:16+ (DOUBLE EDGED SWORD) to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?

Ephesians 6:17+ (DOUBLE EDGED SWORD) And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

THE BIBLE IS "RAZOR SHARP"

And sharper (tomos) than any two-edged (distomos) sword (machaira) - Note the small word **and** (kai in Greek), which links all these attributes together. The Word does not possess just one of them—it possesses them all simultaneously. The Word of God is the sharpest weapon in any arsenal—sharper than the finest surgeon's scalpel. It is two-edged, with no blunt side. Every book, chapter, verse, and word is razor-sharp, able to cut deeply; there is not a dull line in the entire Bible. Because it is two-edged, it cuts both ways—it comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable; it tears down and builds up; it convicts and converts. It brings both bad news and good news; it saves and condemns; it heals and hardens; it gives life and puts to death.

It is alive in every part, and in every part keen to cut the conscience, and wound the heart.

Spurgeon on sharper than any two-edged sword - The revelation of God given us in Holy Scripture is edge all over. It is alive in every part, and in every part keen to cut the conscience, and wound the heart. Depend upon it, there is not a superfluous verse in the Bible, nor a chapter that is useless. The Word of God is so sharp a thing, so full of cutting power, that you may be bleeding under its wounds before you have seriously suspected the possibility of such a thing. You cannot come near the gospel without its having a measure of influence over you; and, God blessing you, it may cut down and kill your sins when you have no idea that such a work is being done. Yes, when Christ comes, He comes not to send peace on the earth, but a sword; and that sword begins at home, in our own souls, killing, cutting, hacking, breaking in pieces. Blessed is that man who knows the Word of the Lord by its exceeding sharpness, for it kills nothing but that which ought to be killed. It quickens and gives new life to all that is of God; but the old depraved life, which ought to die, it hews in pieces, as Samuel destroyed Agag before the Lord (1Sa 15:33).

As **D. Martin Lloyd-Jones** said "The first thing the Bible does is to make man take a serious view of life."

Vincent - The Word of God has an incisive and penetrating quality. It lays bare self-delusions and moral sophisms. For the comparison of the word of God or of men to a sword, see Ps. 57:4; 59:7; 64:3; Eph. 6:17. Philo calls his Logos the cutter, as cutting chaos into distinct things, and so creating a kosmos.

*Men do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself,
but because it contradicts them.*

Albert Barnes on **two-edged sword** - "The word mouth was given to the sword because it seemed to devour all before it. It consumed or destroyed, as a wild beast does. The comparison of the word of God to a sword, or to an arrow, is designed to show its power of penetrating the heart, Ecclesiastes 12:11. "The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies." Comp. Isa 49:2; "And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword." Rev 1:16+: "And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword;" Re 2:12+; Re 19:15+. The comparison is common in the classics, and in Arabic poetry....The idea is that of piercing, or penetrating; and the meaning here is, that the word of God reaches the heart--the very centre of action and lays open the motives and feelings of the man. It was common among the ancients to have a sword with two-edges. The Roman sword was commonly made in this manner. The fact that it had two edges made it more easy to penetrate, as well as to cut with every way. (Ibid)

*The double edged sword ministers of death to those who reject it,
and life to those who receive it.*

Spurgeon - The Word of God is like the sword of Goliath, which had been laid up in the sanctuary, of which David said, "There is none like it, give it me" (1Sa 21:9). Why did he like it so well? I think he liked it all the better because it had been laid up in the holy place by the priests. But I think he liked it best of all because it had stains of blood on it—the blood of Goliath. I like my own sword because it is covered with blood right up to the hilt—the blood of slaughtered sins and errors and prejudices has made it like the sword of Don Rodrigo, "of a dark and purple tint." The slain of the Lord have been many by the old gospel.

Warren Wiersbe - In comparing the Word of God to a sword, the writer is not suggesting that God uses His Word to slaughter the saints! It is true that the Word cuts the heart of sinners with conviction (Acts 5:33; 7:54), and that the Word defeats Satan (Ep 6:17). The Greek word translated "sword" means "a short sword or dagger." The emphasis is on the power of the Word to penetrate and expose the inner heart of man. The Word is a "discerner" or "critic." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

Mark Twain -- Most people are bothered by those Scripture passages which they cannot understand. But for me, the passages in Scripture which trouble me most are those which I do understand.

ILLUSTRATIONS

POWER TO PIERCE - George Whitefield, the great 18th-century evangelist, was hounded by a group of detractors who called themselves the "Hell-fire Club." They derided his work and mocked him. On one occasion one of them, a man named Thorpe, was mimicking Whitefield to his cronies, delivering his sermon with brilliant accuracy, perfectly imitating his tone and facial expressions, when he himself was so pierced that he sat down and was converted on the spot.

*You will not be afraid of the terror by night,
or of the arrow that flies by day.*

ILLUSTRATION OF POWER TO PIERCE - A young soldier in World War II carried a small New Testament in the breast pocket of his uniform. One day, during a fierce battle, a bullet struck him squarely in the chest. Miraculously, it lodged in the little Bible, stopping just short of his heart. Later, when he opened it, the bullet had pierced through the pages until it stopped at Psalm 91: "You will not be afraid of the terror by night, or of the arrow that flies by day." Tears filled his eyes—not only had the book saved his life physically, but the very words it contained began to penetrate his heart. That day, the soldier testified, the real bullet that struck him was not made of lead—it was the living Word of God, which pierced his soul and brought him to faith in Christ. Glory! Hallelujah!

ILLUSTRATION OF POWER TO PIERCE - A preacher once spoke at an open-air meeting where a skeptic stood in the crowd, arms crossed, determined not to listen. Midway through the message, the preacher quoted Hebrews 9:27: "*It is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment.*" The words struck the man so forcefully that he later said it felt as if someone had looked straight into his soul and spoken his deepest secret. That single verse haunted him for weeks until he surrendered to Christ. The preacher never knew—but God's Word had pierced where no human persuasion could reach.

ILLUSTRATION A forest ranger once described how lightning can split a tree. A single bolt, in an instant, rips through thick bark and hardwood, penetrating straight to the core. Sometimes it kills the tree; other times, it opens it up so sunlight and rain can bring new growth. God's Word works the same way—it strikes suddenly, cutting through the thickest defenses of the human heart, exposing what's inside. For some, it brings life; for others, it confirms death—but no one remains untouched.

ILLUSTRATION During the California Gold Rush, miners would swirl river sediment in a pan, letting water wash away the dirt until only the heavy gold remained. In a similar way, God's Word swirls through the human heart, sifting motives, stripping away pretense, and leaving only what is real. Nothing can hide from its penetrating work—it exposes the worthless and reveals the treasure within.

ILLUSTRATION A lighthouse on a rocky shore sends out a powerful beam that cuts through dense fog, revealing jagged reefs hidden beneath the waves. In the same way, God's Word pierces through the fog of self-deception and denial, exposing hidden dangers in the heart. It does not merely illuminate the surface—it reveals what lies beneath, where the shipwrecks happen.

ILLUSTRATION A master jeweler uses a sharply focused beam of light to examine a diamond. The light penetrates every facet, revealing flaws invisible to the naked eye. In the same way, God's Word shines into the deepest recesses of our hearts, exposing hidden cracks and impurities—not to shame us, but so the Master Craftsman can refine and perfect us.

ILLUSTRATION Archaeologists sometimes use ground-penetrating radar to see beneath the earth's surface, detecting what lies hidden long before a shovel ever breaks the soil. God's Word works the same way—it penetrates beneath the surface of our outward lives, revealing the unseen motives, desires, and thoughts buried deep within, bringing them into the open where God can deal with them.

ILLUSTRATION A skilled locksmith can slide a thin pick into a lock and feel every hidden pin inside until the mechanism clicks open. In the same way, God's Word slips past our defenses, touching the hidden places of the heart, aligning what is out of order, and unlocking us to the truth.

ILLUSTRATION In ancient battles, archers sometimes used specially designed arrows with narrow, hardened tips that could pierce even the strongest armor. God's Word is like that—crafted by the Master, it penetrates the toughest layers of resistance, reaching the heart no matter how thick the defenses, striking with accuracy and power that cannot be stopped.

ILLUSTRATION A skilled ice climber uses a sharp pick to drive deep into solid ice, creating a secure hold where none seemed possible. In the same way, God's Word strikes into the hardest heart, gaining a foothold where no other tool can, anchoring truth securely so that real change can begin.

ILLUSTRATION A seed from a tiny plant can work its way into a crack in solid concrete. Over time, its hidden life and steady growth force the slab apart. God's Word works the same way—entering even the smallest opening in a person's heart, it grows with unstoppable power until it breaks through the hardest resistance and transforms the entire life.

ILLUSTRATION A skilled potter sometimes uses a thin wire to slice through a lump of clay, revealing air pockets or hidden impurities inside. In the same way, God's Word cuts through the outer form of our lives, exposing what is hidden within—so the Potter can remove what would weaken the vessel and shape it for His use.

ILLUSTRATION A beam of X-rays can pass through flesh and bone, revealing what the human eye cannot see. In the same way, God's Word penetrates beyond outward appearances, exposing the hidden fractures, diseases, and motives of the heart so that the Great Physician can bring true healing.

An unknown writer said,

"This Book is the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers.

Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding; its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable.

Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, practice it to be holy.

It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's character.

Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed.

Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end.

It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully.

It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure.

Follow its precepts and it will lead you to Calvary, to the empty tomb, to a resurrected life in Christ; yes, to

PIERCING AS FAR AS THE DIVISION OF SOUL AND SPIRIT: kai diiknoumenos (PMPMSN) achri merismou psuchês kai pneumatos:

- [Hebrews 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 4:12-13 God's Powerful Word](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 4:1-13 Entering Into God's Rest](#) - John MacArthur

**CUTTING TO THE CORE:
PENETRATING REACH OF THE WORD**

And piercing ([diikneomai](#) - present tense - continually) **as far as the division** ([merismos](#)) **of soul** ([psuche](#)) **and spirit** ([pneuma](#)) - **Piercing** ([diikneomai](#)) means penetrating and going through, so that no barrier (even a calloused heart) cannot stop it! This is not describing a superficial wound but a thorough penetration that fully accomplishes its goal. **As far as** emphasize the extent of the penetration—there is no stopping until the innermost part is reached. God's Word does not merely graze the surface of human thoughts but it goes to the ultimate point of discernment. **The division** ([merismos](#)) does not necessarily splitting apart physically, but discerning the boundary or difference between two things. Although the meaning of **soul and spirit** is debated (see [below](#)), regarding the **soul** ([psuche](#)), the immaterial part of man that relates to God or that realm of God-consciousness, the deepest, God-ward aspect of man's being. The important point is that the Word reaches the deepest, most hidden places of a person's being—places even we can't separate or fully understand.

Vincent on **piercing** - The form of the expression is poetical, and signifies that the word penetrates to the inmost recesses of our spiritual being as a sword cuts through the joints and marrow of the body. The separation is not of one part from another, but operates in each department of the spiritual nature.

Vine adds that "the writer's meaning is not merely that the Word of God produces conviction and distinguishes between the emotions of the soul and those of the spirit; it has power to exclude not only from Canaan but from heaven. Let him therefore who is guilty of unbelief take heed. Let him beware of seeking rest in the wilderness. ([Collected writings of W. E. Vine](#))

Spurgeon on **piercing** - While it has an edge like a sword, it has also a point like a rapier, "Piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit." The difficulty with some men's hearts is to get at them. In fact, there is no spiritually penetrating the heart of any natural man except by this piercing instrument, the Word of God. But the rapier of revelation will go through anything.

*It opens a man to himself
and makes him see himself.*

Spurgeon- As you have seen hanging up in the butcher's shop the carcasses of animals cut right down in the center, so the Word of God is "**piercing to the dividing of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow.**" It opens a man to himself and makes him see himself. It divides asunder soul and spirit. Nothing else could do that, for the division is difficult. In a great many ways writers have tried to describe the difference between soul and spirit; but I question whether they have succeeded. No doubt it is a very admirable definition to say, "The soul is the life of the natural man, and the spirit the life of the regenerate or spiritual man." But it is one thing to define and quite another thing to divide.

Soul and spirit - Guthrie explains that "The New Testament use of pneuma for the human spirit focuses on the spiritual aspect of man, i.e. his life in relation to God, whereas psyche refers to man's life irrespective of his spiritual experience, i.e. his life in relation to himself, his emotions and thought. There is a strong antithesis between the two in the theology of Paul.

How precious is the Book divine,
By inspiration given!
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine,
To guide our souls to heaven.
-John Fawcett

Charles Ryrie on **piercing** ([diikneomai](#)) **as far as** - The meaning is that the Word pierces to the depths of soul and spirit, not between the two. They stand for the innermost facets of our immaterial nature, just as joints and marrow the material aspect. Both soul and spirit can be involved in what pleases or displeases God. (For soul, see Mark 12:30 and 1 Peter 2:11; for spirit, see 1 Cor. 2:11 and 2 Cor. 7:1). Also see note on 1 Thess. 5:23-24. ([The Ryrie Study Bible](#))

Believer's Study Bible on **piercing** ([diikneomai](#)) **as far as** - God's word is sharp and penetrating, acting as a critic of the thought-life and the motivations or purposes of the human heart. Note that the word of God has the unique ability not merely to discover the merit of men's actions but also to reveal hidden motivations. Thus, "all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (v. 13). ([Believer's Study Bible](#))

Spurgeon on **soul and spirit** says this sword "divides asunder soul and spirit. Nothing else could do that, for the division is difficult. In a great many ways writers have tried to describe the difference between soul and spirit; but I question whether they have succeeded. No doubt it is a very admirable definition to say, "The soul is the life of the natural man, and the spirit the life of the regenerate or spiritual man." But it is one thing to define and quite another thing to divide."

Leon Morris - We should not take the reference to "soul" and "spirit" as indicating a "dichotomist" over against a "trichotomist" view of man, nor the reference to "dividing" to indicate that the writer envisaged a sword as slipping between them. Nor should we think of the sword as splitting off "joints" and "marrow." What the author is saying is that God's Word can reach to the innermost recesses of our being. We must not think that we can bluff our way out of anything, for there are no secrets hidden from God. We cannot keep our thoughts to ourselves. There may also be the thought that the whole of man's nature, however we divide it, physical as well as nonmaterial, is open to God. With "judges" we move to legal terminology. The Word of God passes judgment on men's **feelings** (enthymeseon) and on their **thoughts** (ennoion). Nothing evades the scope of this Word. What man holds as most secret he finds subject to its scrutiny and judgment ([Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

Richard Phillips laments that "we are living in a time when many Christians, even evangelicals who once were singularly known and even derided for their devotion to the Word, are losing confidence in the Bible's effectiveness. Yes, it is inspired; yes, it is useful; but it must be augmented by human means or wisdom or methods. Our evangelism now relies on manipulative psychological ploys, our spiritual growth depends on techniques and programs and store-bought gimmicks, our worship reflects the glitter of Hollywood entertainment. Far different is the message of the writer of Hebrews, who says that nothing is able to escape the revealing, energetic Word of God. Therefore, it alone is sufficient for our every need. ([Hebrews: Reformed Expository Commentary](#))

ILLUSTRATIONS - At an airport security checkpoint, an X-ray scanner sees through luggage, detecting what the eye cannot. It distinguishes between harmless objects and dangerous contraband, even if they're packed tightly together. **Application:** The Word "scans" our inner being, distinguishing whether a motive is soulish (self-driven) or spiritual (God-driven)....Two samples of blood look identical to the naked eye. But under microscopic analysis, the DNA reveals entirely different origins. Application: Soul and spirit can appear similar in outward expression, but the Word of God "analyzes the DNA" of our thoughts and intentions.

Related Resources:

- [Do we have two or three parts? Body, soul, and spirit? Dichotomy or Trichotomy?](#) Gotquestions.org
- [What is the difference between the soul and spirit?](#) Gotquestions.org
- Dr Wayne Grudem's discussion of on [page 408 of Systematic Theology](#) - The Essential Nature of Man "What does Scripture mean by "soul" and "spirit"? Are they the same thing? EXPLANATION AND SCRIPTURAL BASIS - INTRODUCTION: TRICHOTOMY, DICHOTOMY, AND MONISM

OF BOTH JOINTS AND MARROW AND ABLE TO JUDGE THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTIONS OF THE HEART:: harmôn te kai muelôn kai kritikós enthymêseôn kai ennoîôn kardias:

- **Able to judge** - Ps 139:2; Jeremiah 17:10; 1Co 14:24-25; Ephesians 5:13; Revelation 2:23
- Related Resource: Simple Inductive Study on the Power of God's Word
- [Hebrews 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 4:12-13 God's Powerful Word](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 4:1-13 Entering Into God's Rest](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

Jeremiah 17:10 "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.

Psalms 139:2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar.

Psalms 119:105 Nun. Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

1 Corinthians 14:24-25+ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by

all, he is called to account by all; 25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

Ephesians 5:13+ But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.

THE POWERFUL WORD THE PERFECT JUDGE

Of both joints ([harmos](#)) and marrow ([muelos](#)), and able to judge ([kritikos](#)) the thoughts ([enthumesis](#)) and intentions ([ennoia](#)) of the heart ([kardia](#)) --This is obviously a figure of speech emphasizing that all parts of the person are subject to the effects of the Word of God. The Word is able to **judge** ([kritikos](#))—to discern and decide—like a skilled surgeon who instantly knows what must be done. God's Word, like His eye, sees the hidden doubts and unbelief in "the thoughts and intents of the heart." The divine Surgeon's "scalpel" penetrates to the very core of our being, reaching "joints and marrow," not merely separating them, but fully exposing what lies within. The imagery of **joints and marrow** emphasizes the extreme penetrating power of God's Word. God's Word is the perfect discerner, the perfect [kritikos](#) (English = critic ~ "the Divine Critic"). It not only analyzes all the facts perfectly, but all motives, and intentions, and beliefs as well, which even the wisest of human judges or critics cannot do. The sword of His Word will make no mistakes in judgment or execution, and for that we should be grateful!

In the context of Hebrews 3-4, we never see Israel or Moses arguing with God's verdict of "guilty" of always going astray in your hearts leading to the sentence that they "shall not enter My rest." All deceptions are disclosed and brought to the light by God's Truth. God had given Israel a wonderful **motivation** (the promise of a Land flowing with milk and honey) and His **guiding Truth** (the Law) and a **leader** (Moses) and despite all these advantages, Israel for the most part willfully, obstinately choose grumbling, unfaithfulness and rebellion over gratitude, faithfulness and obedience (see Acts 7:51+).

THOUGHT - Aren't we all a lot like Israel from time to time? We stubbornly choose our path rather than the Lord's path which promises blessing! Such is the nature of our old sin nature, constantly seeking to drag us off the highway of holiness (Isa 35:8+) and into the pit of destruction.

*Scripture is not only pure
but purifying!*
--William S Plumer

As famous Bible teacher **Henrietta Mears** wrote "Hebrews 4:12 shows the power of God's Word. Let the Word search and try you! Let God's Word have its proper place in your life. It searches out every motive and desire and purpose of your life, and helps you in evaluating them. Christ is the living Word of God. He is alive (quick) and powerful and all wise and all knowing." (BORROW [What the Bible is All](#))

God's Word is powerful and effective which is the very reason that is Satan launches his greatest attacks against the Word of God, doing anything and everything he can to undermine the Word and derail or discourage those who preach and teach it faithfully. As a teacher I can personally testify to this truth. In the parable of the sower, our Lord describes Satan's attack "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. (Mt 13:19+) "He snatches the seed of the living and active Word from the hearer's heart before it has a chance to take root."

John MacArthur - Many people gladly listen to the gospel, but before their decision is made, some intrusion distracts them and the effectiveness of the witness is lost, along with the soul of that hearer. In another person's heart the word is accepted at first with joy, but when Satan sends "affliction or persecution... because of the word, immediately he falls away" (Mt 13:20, 21+). Many people seem to be genuine and faithful believers—until hardship, criticism, or persecution come. When the price for faithfulness becomes too high, they reveal that they never had true faith in the first place. Still another hearer also accepts the word in a superficial and temporary way, but as he trusts in his wealth the word is choked and "it becomes unfruitful" (Mt 13:22). Because he wants the world, he forsakes the word. (See [Ephesians Commentary - Page 371](#))

Spurgeon on **judge the thoughts and intentions** - The Word not only lets you see what your thoughts are, but it criticizes your thoughts. The Word of God says of this thought, "it is vain," and of that thought, "it is acceptable"; of this thought, "it is selfish," and of that thought, "it is Christlike." It is a judge of the thoughts of men. And the Word of God is such a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart that when men twist about, and wind, and wander, yet it tracks them. There is nothing so difficult to get at as a man. You may hunt a badger, and run down a fox, but you cannot get at a man—he has so many doublings and hiding places. Yet the Word of God will dig him out, and seize on him. When the Spirit of God works with the gospel, the man may dodge, and twist, but the preaching goes to his heart and conscience, and he is made to feel it, and to yield to its force. The Word of God gets at the very

marrow of our manhood; it lays bare the secret thoughts of the soul. It is "able to judge the reflections and thoughts of the heart." Have you not often, in hearing the Word, wondered how the preacher could so unveil that which you had concealed? He says the very things in the pulpit that you had uttered in your bedchamber. Yes, that is one of the marks of the Word of God, that it lays bare a man's inmost secrets; indeed, it discovers to him that which he had not even himself perceived. The Christ that is in the Word sees everything.

*Thoughts are words to Christ; we should therefore
take heed not only what we say and do, but what we think.*

--Matthew Henry

William Newell on judge the thoughts and intentions - We have known people suddenly arrested in their deepest being by reading a verse of Scripture. The thoughts, and necessarily, the intents of the heart, they found discerned, and themselves the object of an infinite Intelligence, but yet an Intelligence not like that at Sinai, when the glory and power and majesty of God were openly displayed; but in the written Word of God, which, being "living and active," had pierced them. This piercing may have resulted in their conviction of sin, and accepting Christ and salvation; or it may have been resisted. Nevertheless, the power of the Word of God is here seen, and we greatly need to meditate upon it in these days.

Word (3056) (**logos** from **lego** = to speak with words; English = logic, logical) means something said and describes a communication whereby the mind finds expression in words. Although **Lógos** is most often translated **word** which Webster defines as "something that is said, a statement, an utterance", the Greek understanding of **lógos** is somewhat more complex. To secular and philosophical Greek writers, **logos** did not mean merely the name of an object but was an expression of the thought behind that object's name.

LOGOS IN HEBREWS - Heb. 2:2; Heb. 4:2; Heb. 4:12; Heb. 4:13; Heb. 5:11; Heb. 5:13; Heb. 6:1; Heb. 7:28; Heb. 12:19; Heb. 13:7; Heb. 13:17; Heb. 13:22

Lógos then is a general term for speaking, but always used for speaking with rational content. **Lógos** is a word uttered by the human voice which embodies an underlying concept or idea. When one has spoken the sum total of their thoughts concerning something, they have given to their hearer a total concept of that thing. Thus the word **lógos** conveys the idea of "a total concept" of anything. **Lógos** means the word or outward form by which the inward thought is expressed and made known. It can also refer to the inward thought or reason itself. Note then that **lógos** does not refer merely to a part of speech but to a concept or idea. In other words, in classical Greek, **lógos** never meant just a **word** in the grammatical sense as the mere name of a thing, but rather the thing referred to, the material, not the formal part. In fact, the Greek language has 3 other words (rhema, onoma, epos) which designate a **word** in its grammatical sense. **Lógos** refers to the total expression whereas **rhema** (see word study) for example is used of a part of speech in a sentence. In other words **rhema**, emphasizes the parts rather than the whole.

Cremer explains that **logos** is used of the living, spoken word, "the word not in its outward form, but with reference to the thought connected with the form,... in short, not the word of language, but of conversation, of discourse; not the word as a part of speech, but the word as part of what is uttered."

Living (2198) (**zao**) refers literally to natural physical life (opposite of death, Acts 22:22, 25:24, 28:4, Ro 7:1-3, 1Cor 7:39, of Adam = 1Cor 15:45; 2Cor 4:11 = refers to natural lives of believers; Php 1:22 - "to live on in the [physical] flesh"; 1Th 4:15,17 = believers physically alive at time of Rapture; Heb 2:15; Heb 9:17; James 4:15 = "we shall live" physically if God so wills it!), to come to life after death (Mt 9:18), to recover life after sickness (Jn 4:50). **Zao** refers to supernatural, spiritual life (cf Jn 11:25, 26), Paul explaining that Christ "lives because of the power of God." (2Cor 13:4) In Rev 16:3 "living thing" refers to the biological life of all the sea animals. In Rev 19:20 the Antichrist and his False Prophet will be "thrown alive into the lake of fire," indicating they will have conscious awareness of their torment (forever and ever).

ZAO IN HEBREWS -Heb. 2:15; Heb. 3:12; Heb. 4:12; Heb. 7:8; Heb. 7:25; Heb. 9:14; Heb. 9:17; Heb. 10:20; Heb. 10:31; Heb. 10:38; Heb. 12:9; Heb. 12:22

Active (1756) (**energes** from **en** = in + **érgon** = work) describes that which is working, efficient, effective, operative or powerful. Describes something that is fully functioning and bringing about what it is designed to accomplish. **BDAG** - "pertaining to being at work, active, effective, able to bring about a result." **Louw/Nida** - "Pertaining to being able to cause something to happen" **Energes** describes activity which produces results or which is effective in causing something to happen or to come about. The somber warnings that have reverberated through Hebrews 3-4 are working and effective words which are able to accomplish their purpose.

In Hebrews 4:12 the writer states that the Word of God is **active** (energes), not dormant but it is energized with

divine power to accomplish what God intends (e.g., Isa. 55:11). In other words, God's Word is not merely truth on a page (which it is of course), but it is operational and results-producing whenever God Spirit sends it forth. Imagine a seed—the life inside is not visible, but it's at work the moment it touches soil, pushing roots down and shoots up. That's *νεργής*; God's Word is already at work the moment it enters the heart (cf 1Pe 1:23+, Jas 1:18+), with unstoppable, self-propelling force. Like a high-voltage wire buzzing with untapped power, the Word is fully energized—prone to spark a reaction the moment it's engaged. Like a radio signal silent until tuned in, a frequency carries invisible energy. So too, God's Word carries spiritual transformation that activates when we "dial" into it (cf 1Th 2:13+). Just as a drop of gasoline can ignite or a spark can trigger wildfire, a single verse can ignite deep change—its power lies in its inherent energy.

It's not merely truth on a page—it is operational and results-producing whenever God sends it forth.

Energes is only used three times in the NT.

Paul uses to describe "a wide (megas = great, large) door for **effective** (energes - God opened this door) [service] (not in the original Greek) has opened to me, and there are many adversaries (literally = those lined up against me). (1Co 16:9+)

Philemon 1:6+ - and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become **effective** (energes) through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake.

Gilbrant on energeis - In classical Greek thought, *energēs* had a social or ethical sense. Thus it denoted work as a burden laid on a man. The word group in Hellenism was used of cosmic or physical forces at work in man or the world around. Man was judged by his works, which were the basis and meaning of life. His works would include his deeds and his manner of conduct as a life-style. In the papyri *energēs* describes objects which have been made usable. Examples of this would be tilled land or a working mill. So one can see the object as receiving the effects from another source. While *energēs* is not found in the Septuagint, the works (*erga*) of God are. The activities of God result in His glory and honor. In contrast, the works of man come out of and result in the curse, sin, and vanity. In the New Testament the verb form *energeō* is used almost exclusively for the work of divine or demonic powers. In 1 Corinthians 16:9 Paul implied that it is God who ultimately makes the work effectual; He was opening a "great and effectual" door of ministry. In Philemon 6 Paul prayed that Philemon would be active or zealous in sharing the faith in which God had empowered him. Hebrews 4:12 says, "The word of God is quick, and powerful (*energēs*)."
([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Writing to Philemon Paul prays "that the fellowship of your faith may become **effective** (energes) through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake.

Using the related verb **energeo** Paul writes to the saints at Thessalonica thanking God "that when you received (took hold of) from us the **word** of God's message, you accepted (put out the welcome mat so to speak) it not as the **word** of men, but for what it really is, the **word of God**, which also **performs its work** (**energeo** - **present tense** = continually) in you who believe. (1Thessalonians 2:13+)

Sharper (5114) (*tomoteros* from *temnō* = to cut) is the comparative of **tomos** which means sharp or cutting. It is used only here in the NT. It means finer edged.

Gilbrant - "Tomos occurs first among classical writers in the Fifth Century B.C. in the works of Sophocles. *Tomōteros* is found first in extant papyri dating from the Third Century B.C. In its earliest extant appearances the word is used literally of objects such as swords. The word can be used metaphorically also. For instance, pseudo-Phocylides (First Century A.D.) says, "Surely, a word is sharper to a man than an iron weapon" (124). The word does not appear in the Septuagint."
([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Two-edged (1366) (**distomos** from **dia** = through or **dis** = twice + **stoma** = mouth), double-mouthed like a river (Polybius), branching ways (Sophocles), applied to sword (**xiphos**) by Homer and Euripides. *Distomos* occurs three times in the New Testament (Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 1:16; 2:12). *Distomos* describes something with two mouths, so in figurative usage, it refers to a double-edged instrument, like a sword sharpened on both sides. *Distomos* pictures both sides of the blade sharpened to an edge; (figuratively) what penetrates at every point of contact, coming in or going out." Figuratively, it speaks of the Word of God as dual-purpose instrument, which is designed both for offense (cut through error) and defense (guard truth). The Word preached both convicts of unbelief and protects believers from error. It administers correction and encouragement with equal force.

Distomos occurs three times in the Septuagint

- Jdg 3:16 = "Ehud made himself a sword which had two edges"

- Ps 149:6 = "Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand"
- Pr 5:4 = "But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword. ")

Sword (3162) (**machaira**) refers to a relatively short sword (even dagger) for cutting and stabbing. It is obviously used in the figurative sense in Hebrews 4:12, but is still penetrating nevertheless!

Friberg - originally a large knife for killing and cutting up; in the NT sword, saber; literally, as a curved weapon for close combat (small) sword, dagger (Jn 18:11); figuratively, as a symbol of violent death (Ro 8:35), of hostility (Mt 10:34), of the power of life and death (Ro 13:4); metaphorically, for the penetrating power of words spoken by God (Eph 6:17) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

MACHAIRA - 26V - Matt. 10:34; Matt. 26:47; Matt. 26:51; Matt. 26:52; Matt. 26:55; Mk. 14:43; Mk. 14:47; Mk. 14:48; Lk. 21:24; Lk. 22:36; Lk. 22:38; Lk. 22:49; Lk. 22:52; Jn. 18:10; Jn. 18:11; Acts 12:2; Acts 16:27; Rom. 8:35; Rom. 13:4; Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12; Heb. 11:34; Heb. 11:37; Rev. 6:4; Rev. 13:10; Rev. 13:14

Piercing (1338) (**diikneomai** from **diá** = through + **hiknéomai** = to come) means to go through, to reach through, and so to penetrate, pierce, pass through (One other Scriptural use in the LXX of Ex 26:28+). It was used in ancient Greek of missiles (as moving through a three dimensional space). The figurative idea is to thoroughly penetrate.

Division (3311) (**merismos** from **merizo** = to partition, divide into parts <> **meros** = part) denotes primarily a division or partition. It refers to the act of distribution or apportionment as of spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit. The word of God has an incisive and penetrating quality. It lays bare self-delusions and moral sophistries.

Gilbrant - F.F. Bruce says that what is meant in that verse is "the word of God probes the inmost recesses of our spiritual being and brings the subconscious motives to light" (New International Commentary on the New Testament, Hebrews, p.82). The passage is not necessarily trying to make a distinction between body components, but is perhaps saying that God's Word can discriminate between man's thoughts and intents. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Merismos is used 2 times in the NT and 2 times in the Septuagint (LXX)...

Joshua 11:23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their **divisions** by their tribes. Thus the land had rest from war.

Ezra 6:18 Then they appointed the priests to their **divisions** and the Levites in their orders for the service of God in Jerusalem, as it is written in the book of Moses.

Hebrews 2:4+ God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by **gifts** (distribution, apportionment) of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the **division** of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Soul (5590) (**psuche** or **psyche** from **psucho** = to breathe, blow, English = psychology, "study of the soul") (Click word study on **psuche**) is the breath, then that which breathes, the individual, animated creature. However the discerning reader must understand that psuche is one of those Greek words that can have several meanings, the exact nuance being determined by the context. It follows that one cannot simply select of the three main meanings of psuche and insert it in a given passage for it may not be appropriate to the given context. The meaning of **psuche** is also contingent upon whether one is a dichotomist or trichotomist. Consult Greek lexicons for more lengthy definitions of psuche as this definition is only a brief overview. (Click an excellent article on **Soul** in the Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology; see also ISBE article on **Soul**) (See also [Man A Trinity = Spirit, Soul, Body](#))

BAGD's lexicon makes the point that "It is often impossible to draw hard and fast lines in the use of this multivalent word. Generally it is used in reference to dematerialized existence or being... Without psuche a being, whether human or animal, consists merely of flesh and bones and without functioning capability. Speculations and views respecting the fortunes of psuche and its relation to the body find varied expression in our literature. (Borrow [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament, and other early Christian literature](#))

Lawrence Richards adds that as "As with many biblical terms, the basic meaning of psyche is established by its OT counterpart, rather than by its meaning in Greek culture. "Soul" refers to personal life, the inner person. Of its over one hundred NT uses, **psyche** is rendered by the NIV as "soul(s)" only twenty-five times...While there is much overlap in the NT uses of psyche and pneuma (spirit), there seems to be some areas of

distinction as well. Often the focus of contexts in which these terms appear overlaps. Thus, both are used in speaking of personal existence, of life after death, emotions, purpose, and the self. But psyche is also used of one's physical life and of spiritual growth, while pneuma is associated distinctively with breath, worship, understanding, one's attitude or disposition, and spiritual power (Borrow [Expository Dictionary of Bible Words](#))

(1) **One meaning** is reference to the principle of life generally, the vital force which animates the body which shows itself in breathing, the "life principle" (the breath of life) as found even with animals (cf Luke 12:20 "...*this very night your **soul** is required of you...*", Acts 3:23 "*every **soul** that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed*") . To the Greeks the psuche was the principle of physical life. Everything which had physical life had psuche. Everything which is alive has **psuche**; a dog, a cat, any animal has **psuche**, but it has not got **pneuma** or spirit. Psuche is that physical life which a man shares with every living thing; but pneuma or spirit is that which makes a man different from the rest of creation and kin to God.

(2) A **second** meaning refers to the earthly, natural life in contrast to supernatural existence (Mt 6:25 '*do not be anxious for your **life**...*', Ro 11:3 "*...they are seeking my **life**...*"). This refers to So that the word denotes "life in the distinctness of individual existence" (Cremer).

(3) A **third** meaning of **psuche** is in reference to the inner nonmaterial life of man for which the physical body serves as the dwelling place often with focus on various aspects of feeling, thinking, etc and thus can refer primarily to the mind, to the heart, to desire (Lk 10:27 "*love the Lord...with all your **soul***", Mk 14:34 "*My **soul** is deeply grieved...*", Eph 6:6 "*doing the will of God from the **heart** [psuche]*", Heb 12:3 "*so that you may not grow weary and lose heart*"). One might say this meaning refers to the inner self, the essence of life in terms of thinking, willing, and feeling. Here psuche describes the seat and center of the inner human life in its many and varied aspects.

It should be noted that there is an additional meaning of a derivative of psuche (**psuchikos**) which is used to described a "soulish" person, one who is still unregenerate and in Adam, and thus a person whose life is dominated by the unredeemed nature (1Cor 2:14, 15:44, 46, James 3:15, Jude 1:19)

Vincent offers the follows thoughts on **psuche** - The **soul (psuche)** is the principle of individuality, the seat of personal impressions. It has a side in contact with both the material and the spiritual element of humanity, and is thus the mediating organ between body and spirit. Its meaning, therefore, constantly rises above life or the living individual, and takes color from its relation to either the emotional or the spiritual side of life, from the fact of its being the seat of the feelings, desires, affections, aversions, and the bearer and manifester of the divine life-principle (pneuma). Consequently **psuche** is often used in our sense of heart (Lk 1:46; Lk 2:35; Jn 10:24; Acts 14:2); and the meanings of psuche, soul, and pneuma, spirit, occasionally approach each other very closely. Compare Jn 12:27 and Jn 9:33; Mt 11:29 and 1Co 16:18. Also both words in Lk 1:47. In this passage psuche, soul, expresses the soul regarded as a moral being designed for everlasting life. See Heb 6:19; Heb 10:39; Heb 13:17; 1Pe 2:11; 1Pe 4:19. John commonly uses the word to denote the principle of the natural life. See Jn 10:11, 15; Jn 13:37; Jn 15:13; 1Jn 3:16" (Vincent, M. R. Word studies in the New Testament. Vol. 2, Page 1-400).

Spirit (4151) (**pneuma** from **pnéo** = to breathe) refers to the immaterial part of the human personality in contrast to the outward and visible aspects of flesh and body.

PNEUMA IN HEBREWS -Heb. 1:7; Heb. 1:14; Heb. 2:4; Heb. 3:7; Heb. 4:12; Heb. 6:4; Heb. 9:8; Heb. 9:14; Heb. 10:15; Heb. 10:29; Heb. 12:9; Heb. 12:23 **Pneuma** in NT - 380x in 345 verses and **in the NAS** is translated breath(3), Spirit(239), spirit(103), spirits(32), spiritual(1), wind(1), winds(1)

[Click for an in depth 20 PAGE discussion of PNEUMA in the New International Dictionary of the New Testament](#)

Joints (719) (**harmos** from **arô** = adjust, join properly together. Found only here in NT) refers to articulation of body = joint. Liddell-Scott- in pl. the fastenings of a door, a fissure in the tomb made by tearing away the stones at their joinings, Soph. A joint lies concealed yet essential for movement—God's Word penetrates even where life's motion originates.

Marrow (3452) (**muelos** from **muô** = shut. Found only here in NT) literally, the soft filling of bone cavities marrow; figuratively, as denoting the inmost part of the being. Marrow symbolizes the deepest core of life. In Hebrews 4:12 (only used in NT), the pairing of "joints and marrow" with "soul and spirit" underscores that no part of human existence is beyond scrutiny or reach. Muelos in Septuagint - Gen. 45:18; Job 21:24; Job 33:24

Able to judge (2924) (**kritikos** = verbal adjective **-ikos**, from **krino** = to divide, separate, to judge, to sift out and analyze evidence) means related to judges, fit for judging, skilled in judging. This is the only use in the Bible

Vine writes that **kritikos** "signifies possessed of a power to judge. The Word of God, which is God's own voice, scans, and sits in judgment, for instance, upon, the unbelief which leads to departure from the Living God.

Thoughts (1761) (**enthumesis** from **en** = in + **thumos** = strong feeling, passion, mind, thought) means an inward reasoning or deliberation and conveys the idea of pondering or thinking out. Our English word "reflection" is an accurate translation. Westcott notes that the word refers to the action of the affections and is related to the will.

There are 4 uses of **enthumesis** in the NT (no uses in the LXX)...

Matthew 9:4+ And Jesus knowing their **thoughts** said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?"

Matthew 12:25+ And knowing their **thoughts** He said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself shall not stand.

Acts 17:29+ "Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and **thought** of man.

Hebrews 4:12+ For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the **thoughts** and intentions of the heart.

Intentions (1771) (**ennoia** from **en** = in + **noûs** = mind) means literally that which takes place in the mind. **Ennoia** describes a mental conception that follows consideration or deliberation. It is closely allied to **enthumesis** for both refer to the act of consideration or reflection. Like phroneo, **ennoia** relates to thought, especially to the development of a perspective that will provide insight and so shape our attitude and guide our actions.

Intention (*The road to hell is paved with good intentions*) is a determination to act in a certain way and describes what one intends to accomplish or attain. Intention represents the deliberate exercise of the will with reference to the consequences of an act attempted or performed. In Logic **intentions** describe conceptions formed by directing the mind towards an object.

There are 12 uses of **ennoia** in the Septuagint (LXX), all in Proverbs (Prov. 1:4; 2:11; 3:21; 4:1; 5:2; 8:12; 16:22; 18:15; 19:7; 23:4, 19; 24:7)

Regarding the uses of **ennoia** in **Proverbs** NIDNTT writes that...All the Hebrew equivalents mean understanding, wisdom, knowledge, and so **ennoia** retains its sense of reflection, insight, perception, wisdom, though not the theoretical meaning of concept. (See online [Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology](#))

The only other NT use of **ennoia** is in 1Pe 4:1 + - Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same **purpose** (**ennoia** - way of thinking, purpose describes a more settled determination), because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.

Vincent writes that **ennoia** "is the definite conception which follows **enthumesis**."

Barclay compares **enthumesis** and **ennoia** writing that the former "is the emotional part of man, (while) **intention** (**ennoia**) is the intellectual part of man. It is as if he said: "Your emotional and intellectual life must alike be submitted to the scrutiny of God." ([Daily Study Bible](#))

Heart (2588) (**kardia** [word study]) does not refer to the physical organ but is always used figuratively in Scripture to refer to the seat and center of human life. The heart is the center of the personality, and it controls the intellect, emotions, and will. The heart is a person's "control center". Just as "air traffic control" directs all inbound and out bound flights, so too the heart exercises a similar control over the "safe" flight of one's being. In Hebrew thinking, the **heart** represents the entire person and their inner motivation.

KARDIA IN HEBREWS - Heb. 3:8+; Heb. 3:10+; Heb. 3:12+; Heb. 3:15+; Heb. 4:7+; Heb. 4:12+; Heb. 8:10+; Heb. 10:16+; Heb. 10:22+; Heb. 13:9+;

MacArthur commenting on **kardia** writes that "While we often relate **heart** to the emotions (e.g., "He has a broken heart"), the Bible relates it **primarily to the intellect** (e.g., "Out of the **heart** come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders," Matt 15:19). That's why you must "watch over your heart with all diligence" (Proverbs 4:23+). In a secondary way, however, **heart** relates to the will and

emotions because they are influenced by the intellect. If you are committed to something, it will affect your will, which in turn will affect your emotions." (Drawing Near. Crossway Books) MacArthur adds that "In most modern cultures, the **heart** is thought of as the seat of emotions and feelings. But most ancients—Hebrews, Greeks, and many others—considered the **heart** to be the center of knowledge, understanding, thinking, and wisdom. The New Testament also uses it in that way. The **heart** was considered to be the seat of the mind and will, and it could be taught what the brain could never know. Emotions and feelings were associated with the intestines, or bowels." (See [Ephesians Commentary - Page 45](#))

Hughes explains that what Paul is saying here is that "The **heart** is the wellspring of man's spiritual life, and that is where the Roman Christians' obedience was rooted. It was not just a formal obedience—it came from the center of their being. This is the example of slavery Paul holds up for us all: a heartfelt obedience to Christ and his Word. It is an obedience which brings liberation. (See [Romans: Righteousness from Heaven](#))

Vine writes that **kardia** "came to denote man's entire mental and moral activities, and to stand figuratively for the hidden springs of the personal life, and so here signifies the seat of thought and feeling. ([Collected writings of W. E. Vine](#))

It is notable that 6 of 12 uses of **kardia** or "heart" are in Hebrews 3 and 4, which are also pivotal chapters regarding the nature of true belief which allows one to enter His rest (see all uses below)

The Word is A Sword by C H Spurgeon (This is a summary in the Biblical Illustrator from his sermon on Hebrews 4:12 entitled [The Word a Sword](#))

It may be most accurate to interpret this passage as relating both to the Word of God incarnate, and the Word of God inspired. Christ and His Word must go together. What is true of the Christ is here predicated both of Him and of His Word.

I. First let me speak CONCERNING THE QUALITIES OF THE WORD OF GOD

It is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword."

1. The Word of God is said to be "**quick**." It is a living Book. Take up any other book except the Bible, and there may be a measure of power in it, but there is not that indescribable vitality in it which breathes, and speaks, and pleads, and conquers in the case of this sacred volume. It is a living and incorruptible seed. It moves, it stirs itself, it lives, it communes with living men as a living Word. That human system which was once vigorous may grow old, and lose all vitality; but the Word of God is always fresh, and new, and full of force. Here, in the Old and New Testaments, we have at once the oldest and the newest of books.

2. The Word is said to be "powerful," or "active." The Word of God is powerful for all sacred ends. How powerful it is to convince men of in!

How powerful it is for conversion!

3. Next, the apostle tells us that this Word is **cutting**. A sword with two edges has no blunt side: it cuts both this way and that. The revelation of God given us in Holy Scripture is edge all over. It is alive in every part, and in every part keen to cut the conscience, and wound the heart. Depend upon it, there is not a superfluous verse in the Bible, nor a chapter which is useless. Doctors say of certain drugs that they are inert — they have no effect upon the system one way or the other. Now, there is not an inert passage in the Scriptures; every line has its virtues.

4. It is **piercing**. While, it has an edge like a sword, it has also a point like a rapier. The difficulty with some men's hearts is to get at them. In fact, there is no spiritually penetrating the heart of any natural man except by this piercing instrument, the Word of God. Into the very marrow of the man the sacred truth will pass, and find him out in a way in which he

cannot even find himself out.

5. The Word of God is **discriminating**. It divides asunder soul and spirit. Nothing else could do that, for the division is difficult.

6. Once more, the Word of God is **marvelously revealing to the inner self**. It pierces between the joints and marrow, and marrow is a thing not to be got at very readily. The Word of God gets at the very marrow of our manhood; it lays bare the secret thoughts of the soul.

II. SOME LESSONS.

1. Let us greatly reverence the Word of God.
2. Let us, whenever we feel ourselves dead, and especially in prayer, get close to the Word, for the Word of God is alive.
3. Whenever we feel weak in our duties, let us go to the Word of God, and the Christ in the Word, for power; and this will be the best of power.
4. If you need as a minister, or a worker, anything that will cut your hearers to the heart, go to this Book for it.
5. If we want to discriminate at any time between the soul and the spirit, and the joints and marrow, let us go to the Word of God for discrimination.
6. And lastly, since this Book is meant to be a discernor or critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart, let the Book criticise us.

Spurgeon - Many and many a time have persons written to me or spoken with me and said, "Did you intend in the sermon to make a personal allusion to me?" I have said, "Yes, I most certainly did. But I never saw you in my life and never knew anything about your case; only he that sent me commanded me to say this and that, and he knew who would be there to hear it, and he took care to guide my thoughts and words, so as to suit your case exactly, so that there could be no mistake about it."

A W Pink has the following chapter entitled **The Power of God's Word to Convict Men of Sin..**

In Hebrews 4:12 we have a Scripture which draws attention to this peculiar characteristic of the Bible—

"For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The writings of men may sometimes stir the emotions, search the conscience, and influence the human will, but in a manner and degree possessed by no other book the Bible convicts men of their guilt and lost estate. The Word of God is the Divine mirror, for in it man reads the secrets of his own guilty soul and sees the vileness of his own evil nature. In a way absolutely peculiar to themselves, the Scriptures discern the thoughts and intents of the heart and reveal to men the fact that they are lost sinners and in the presence of a Holy God.

Some thirty years ago there resided in one of the Temples of Tibet a Buddhist priest who had conversed with no Christian missionary, had heard nothing about the cross of Christ, and had never seen a copy of the Word of God. One day while searching for something in the temple, he came across a transcription of Matthew's Gospel, which years before had been left there by a native who had received it from some traveling missionary. His curiosity aroused, the Buddhist priest commenced to read it, but when he reached the eighth verse in the fifth chapter he paused and pondered over it:

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

Although he knew nothing about the righteousness of his Maker, although he was quite ignorant concerning the demands of God's holiness, yet he was there and then convicted of his sins, and a work of Divine grace commenced in his soul. Month after month went by and each day he said to himself,

"I shall never see God, for I am impure in heart."

Slowly but surely the work of the Holy Spirit deepened within him until he saw himself as a lost sinner; vile, guilty, and undone.

After continuing for more than a year in this miserable condition the priest one day heard that a "foreign devil" was visiting a town nearby and selling books which spoke about God. The same night the Buddhist priest fled from the temple and journeyed to the town where the missionary was residing. On reaching his destination he sought out the missionary and at once said to him,

"Is it true that only those who are pure in heart will see God?"

"Yes," replied the missionary, "but the same Book which tells you that, also tells you how you may obtain a pure heart," and then he talked to him about our Lord's atoning work and how that "the blood of Jesus Christ

His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

Quickly the light of God flooded the soul of the Buddhist priest and he found the peace which “passeth all understanding.”

Now what other book in the world outside of the Bible, contains a sentence or even a chapter which, without the aid of any human commentator, is capable of convincing and convicting a heathen that he is a lost sinner?

Does not the fact of the miraculous power of the Bible, which has been illustrated by thousands of fully authenticated cases similar to the above, declare that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, vested with the same might as their Omnipotent Author? ([Divine Inspiration of the Bible](#))

Related resource:

- Inductive Study on the Power of God's Word)

Ray Stedman writes that...

David asks, in Psalm 19:12, “Who can discern his errors?” The answer he gives in the psalm and that of the writer of Hebrews is the same. Only the Word of God, which is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword, is capable of exposing the thoughts and attitudes of a single human heart! We do not know ourselves. We do not even know how to distinguish, by feelings or rationale, between that which comes from our souls (psyches) and from our spirits (pneumas). Even our bodily functions (symbolized here by joints and marrow) are beyond our full knowledge. Only the all-seeing eye of God knows us thoroughly and totally (Ps 139:1–18), and before him we will stand and ultimately give account.

The images the author employs in this marvelous passage are effective ones. Like a sharp sword which can lay open the human body with one slashing blow, so the sword of the Scripture can open our inner life and expose it to ourselves and others. Once the ugly thoughts and hidden rebellions are out in the open, we stand like criminals before a judge, ineffectually trying to explain what we have done. Yet such honest revelation is what we need to humble our stubborn pride and render us willing to look to God for forgiveness and his gracious supply.

Plainly, Scripture is the only reliable guide we have to function properly as a human in a broken world. Philosophy and psychology give partial insights, based on human experience, but they fall far short of what the Word of God can do. It is not intended to replace human knowledge or effort, but is designed to supplement and correct them. Surely the most hurtful thing pastors and leaders of churches can do to their people is to deprive them of firsthand knowledge of the Bible. The exposition of both Old and New Testaments from the pulpit, in class rooms and small group meetings is the first responsibility of church leaders. They are “stewards of the mysteries of God” and must be found faithful to the task of distribution. This uniqueness of Scripture is the reason that all true human discovery in any dimension must fit within the limits of divine disclosure. Human knowledge can never outstrip divine revelation.

The remaining verses of chapter 4 (vv. 14–16) properly belong with the subject of chapter 5 and will be considered there. Thus far we have seen that Jesus is far greater than any angel, eclipses Moses as the spokesman of God, and leads believers into a far superior rest than Joshua led Israel into. In chapter 5, we are introduced to the major theme of Hebrews: the high priesthood of Jesus. He is superior in every respect to the priesthood of Aaron, and encompasses a ministry which the Old Testament only faintly shadowed in the mysterious ministry of Melchizedek to Abraham. ([Stedman, Ray: Hebrews IVP New Testament Commentary Series](#))

A surgeon exposes the operating field with a bright, powerful light to illuminate every dark crevice and then with a sharp knife is able to lance the abscess to remove the infected pocket or to excise the portion of the organ that is being ravaged by cancer. Such is the power and potential of the “scalpel” of the Word of God to expose and excise the sin in our innermost being.

Pierced by the Word of God - A Meditation on Hebrews 4:12- John Piper

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

The term "word of God" may mean a word spoken by God without a human mouthpiece. But in the New Testament it regularly means a word or a message that a human speaks on God's behalf. So, for example, in Heb 13:7 it says, "Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith."

So the "word of God" in Heb 4:12 probably refers to the truth of God revealed in Scripture that humans speak to each other with reliance on God's help to understand it and apply it.

"Living and active."

The word of God is not a dead word or an ineffective word. It has life in it. And because it has life in it, it produces effects. There is something about the Truth, as God has revealed it, that connects it to God as a source of all life and power. God loves his word. He is partial to his word. He honors his word with his presence and power. If you want your teaching or witness to have power and produce effects, stay close to the revealed word of God.

Sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow.

What does this living and effective word do? It pierces. For what purpose? To divide. To divide what? Soul and spirit. What does that mean?

The writer gives an analogy: it's like dividing joints and marrow. Joints are the thick, hard, outer part of the bone. Marrow is the soft, tender, living, inner part of the bone. That is an analogy of "soul and spirit." The word of God is like a sword that is sharp enough to cut right through the outer, hard, tough part of a bone to the inner, soft, living part of the bone. Some swords, less sharp, may strike a bone and glance off and not penetrate. Some swords may penetrate part way through the tough, thick joint of a bone. But a very sharp, powerful double-edged sword (sharp on each side of the point) will penetrate the joint all the way to the marrow.

"Soul and spirit" are like "bone joint and bone marrow." "Soul" is that invisible dimension of our life that we are by nature. "Spirit" is what we are by supernatural rebirth. Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Jn 3:6). Without the awakening, creative, regenerating work of the Spirit of God in us we are merely "natural" rather than "spiritual" (1Co 2:14-15). So the "spirit" is that invisible dimension of our life that we are by the regenerating work of the Spirit.

What then is the point saying that the "word of God" pierces to the "division of soul and spirit"? The point is that it's the word of God that reveals to us our true selves. Are we spiritual or are we natural? Are we born of God and spiritually alive, or are we deceiving ourselves and spiritually dead? Are the "thoughts and intentions of our heart" spiritual thoughts and intentions or only natural thoughts and intentions. Only the "word of God" can "judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" as Heb4:12 says.

Practically speaking, when we read or hear "the word of God," we sense ourselves pierced. The effect of this piercing is to reveal whether there is spirit or not. Is there marrow and life in our bones? Or are we only a "skeleton" with no living marrow? Is there "spirit," or only "soul"? The word of God pierces deep enough to show us the truth of our thoughts and our motives and our selves.

Give yourselves to this word of God in the Bible. Use it to know yourself and confirm your own spiritual life. If there is life, there will be love and joy and a heart to obey the word. Give yourself to this word so that your words become the word of God for others and reveal to them their own spiritual condition. Then in the wound of the word, pour the balm of the word. ([Pierced By the Word of God :Desiring God](#))

Related Resource:

- Excellent sermon - John Piper on [The Word of God: Living, Active, Sharp](#) - emphasizes the importance of connecting Hebrews 4:12 with Hebrews 4:11. Excerpt - "Verse 12 is giving a reason or a support or a ground for the call to diligence in verse 11. Verse 11 says in essence: Be sure that you know and trust the word of God referred to in verse 2—the good news of God's promises and forgiveness. Then verse 12 says: Yes, and one reason to do this is because this word (the good news referred to in verse 2) is living and active, etc. So today's text is an argument for why we should be so diligent to enter God's rest by hearing and believing God's word."

Wayne Grudem - Hebrews 4:12

This verse, which talks about the Word of God "piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow," is best understood in a way similar to 1 Thessalonians 5:23. The author is not saying that the Word of God can divide "soul from spirit," but he is using a number of terms (soul, spirit, joints, marrow, thoughts and intentions of the heart) that speak of the deep inward parts of

our being that are not hidden from the penetrating power of the Word of God. If we wish to call these our “soul,” then Scripture pierces into the midst of it and divides it and discovers its inmost intentions. If we wish to call this inmost nonphysical side of our being our “spirit,” then Scripture penetrates into the midst of it and divides it and knows its deepest intentions and thoughts. Or if we wish to think metaphorically of our inmost being as hidden in our joints and in the marrow, then we can think of Scripture being like a sword that divides our joints or that pierces deeply into our bones and even divides the marrow in the midst of the bones.⁸ In all of these cases the Word of God is so powerful that it will search out and expose all disobedience and lack of submission to God. In any case, soul and spirit are not thought of as separate parts; they are simply additional terms for our inmost being. (See page 414 [Systematic Theology](#))

See Dr Wayne Grudem's discussion of

- [See page 408](#) - The Essential Nature of Man "What does Scripture mean by “soul” and “spirit”? Are they the same thing? EXPLANATION AND SCRIPTURAL BASIS - INTRODUCTION: TRICHOTOMY, DICHOTOMY, AND MONISM

Sigmund Freud and the Word of God - Few thinkers in recent times have exerted so pervasive an influence as Sigmund Freud. Although he claimed to be an atheist, he continually speculated about religious issues as if subconsciously haunted by the God whom he denied.

When Freud turned 35, his father sent him a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures he had given to him when he was a boy. Sigmund had read and studied that book, at least for a while. Enclosed in that worn copy of the Scriptures was a note from the elder Freud reminding his son that “the Spirit of the Lord began to move you and spoke within you:

‘Go read in My Book that I’ve written and there will burst open for you the wellsprings of understanding, knowledge, and wisdom.’”

His father expressed the hope that Sigmund might, as a mature man, once again read and obey God’s law. We have no evidence, however, that Freud took to heart his father’s exhortation. How different his life and influence might have been if he had!

A French soldier who had served ably in Napoleon’s army lay dying of a wound received in battle. As they probed his shattered ribs to find the fatal bullet he said, “Dig a little deeper and you will find the emperor.” If we dug deeply enough, would we find Christ in our hearts? That’s a question we all must ask ourselves.

The Robber - When evangelist John Wesley (1703-1791) was returning home from a service one night, he was robbed. The thief, however, found his victim to have only a little money and some Christian literature.

As the bandit was leaving, Wesley called out,

“Stop! I have something more to give you.”

The surprised robber paused.

“My friend,” said Wesley, “you may live to regret this sort of life. If you ever do, here’s something to remember: ‘The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin!’”

The thief hurried away, and Wesley prayed that his words might bear fruit.

Years later, Wesley was greeting people after a Sunday service when he was approached by a stranger. What a surprise to learn that this visitor, now a believer in Christ as a successful businessman, was the one who had robbed him years before!

“I owe it all to you,” said the transformed man.

“Oh no, my friend,” Wesley exclaimed, “not to me, but to the precious blood of Christ that cleanses us from all sin!”

God’s Word is an arrow that never misses its mark. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Word Is Central by Theodore Epp

Philippians 2:15,16; Psalm 119:9-16

Never forget the centrality of the Word of God to the believer’s witness. The Christian is to study the Word, apply it to himself and

then translate it into daily living before a crooked and perverse world.

And every believer may be assured that as God's Word is held forth it will have an effect on those who hear it.

Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (NASB).

There is no substitute for holding forth God's Word, for if people are to come into right relationship with Jesus Christ, they must know what God's Word says.

Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (NASB). So if those we witness to are to be able to have faith in Christ, they must have the Word of God presented to them.

We must first benefit from the Word ourselves before we become concerned about passing it on to others. We cannot do the work of God or have the right attitudes (as urged in the previous verses) unless God's Word is doing its work within us.

The Word of God goes to the deepest parts of our nature. It exposes, sifts, analyzes and judges even our thoughts (see Heb. 4:12).

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Ps. 19:7).

GOD'S WORD

In the Steven Spielberg film, "Minority Report", law enforcement officials handed down judgments before a law was broken based on incriminating evidence from a person's brain scan. Reality may be moving closer to science fiction than we'd like. Recent research using brain imaging to predict activity linked to lying, violent behavior and prejudice has lead neuroscientists to develop a way of looking into a person's brain and reading intentions before a person acts. The controversial research breaks open new opportunities for scientists to probe a person's mind and eavesdrop on their thoughts. A team recently used high-resolution brain scans to identify patterns of activity before translating them into meaningful thoughts, revealing what a person planned to do in the immediate future. One of the researchers, John Dylan-Haynes from the Max Plank Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences in Germany said, "Using the scanner, we could look around the brain for this information and read out something from the outside there's no way you could possibly tell is in there. It's like shining a torch around, looking for writing on a wall." Other researchers are cautious about the discoveries. A neuroethics society has been established to consider the ramifications of the research. Barbara Sahakian, from Cambridge University said, "A lot of neuroscientists in the field are very cautious and say we can't talk about reading individual's minds, and right now that is very true, but we're moving ahead so rapidly. It's not going to be long before we will be able to tell whether someone's making up a story, or whether someone intended to do a crime with a certain degree of certainty."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/frontpage/story/0%2C%2C2009229%2C00.html>; Submitted by Jim Sandell.

It is a scary thought to think that someone will be able to read our minds. But really, when you think about it, someone already can. God knows our hearts and His word judges our thoughts and intentions, not just our actions.

Hebrews 4:12 (GW) "God's word is living and active. It is sharper than any two-edged sword and cuts as deep as the place where soul and spirit meet, the place where joints and marrow meet. God's word judges a person's thoughts and intentions." (Fresh Illustrations - Jim Wilson)

First In Our Lives - Actor Sylvester Stallone is applauded for his strongman movie roles as Rocky and Rambo. But what is he really like in his personal life? During an interview he honestly admitted, "If I were watching a home movie of my life, I would shake my head in despair and wonderment. It's a comedy of errors."

Suppose a movie were made of your life or mine. Would it reveal not only errors and poor choices but also a sinful person who doesn't even act like a follower of Christ? Would we be ashamed of some scenes? Would we be motivated, as Stallone says he was, to shift our values and start paying attention to "relationships . . . and putting someone else first"?

Jesus wants to be the "someone else" in our lives whom we put first (Matthew 6:24+, Mt 6:33+). But how do we do that? It starts with confession of any sin that is between us and Him, and then experiencing the Lord's cleansing and forgiveness (Psalm 32:5-+). Then we are gradually changed by Him through the work of the Holy Spirit and by the Word of God (Galatians 5:22+, Gal 5:23+; Hebrews 4:12). If we make our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ our first priority, He will make us into the kind of people He wants us to be (Philippians 2:3, 4+, Php 2:5, 6, 7+, Php 2:8+). —Vernon C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Search me, O God, and know my heart today;
Try me, O Savior, know my thoughts, I pray.
See if there be some wicked way in me;

Cleanse me from every sin and set me free. —Orr

The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to change the people of God.

A "Dangerous" Weapon - One Sunday evening at church a short-term missionary reported on her overseas experiences and told about crossing into a communist country. At the border, the guards asked, "Do you have any guns, drugs, or Bibles?"

Although they probably hadn't read it, those communist border guards apparently believed Hebrews 4:12. To them, the Bible was as dangerous as guns and drugs. Guns injure and kill the body. Drugs alter and distort the mind. The Bible exposes and destroys falsehood. But the Bible threatens more than their religion of atheism. It threatens their place of power and control over the people because it gives to the people what no government can. The Bible enriches lives, instills hope, and frees the human spirit, which makes it as threatening to an atheistic government as guns and drugs.

In Psalm 119, the psalmist refers to some of the powerful effects of the Word of God on his life. It revives his soul (Ps 119:25⁺); it imparts inner strength (Ps 119:28⁺); it guides him into truth (Ps 119:30⁺); and it enlarges his heart (Ps 119:32⁺).

We who are blessed with both the Old and New Testaments have God's full and final written revelation of Himself. When we meditate on the truths of this powerful book, we experience its impact on our lives by the indwelling Holy Spirit, who makes it real to us. Guns, drugs, and the Bible all wield power, but only the Bible destroys what is false and builds what is true. —D. J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**No weapon in Satan's arsenal can destroy the sword of the Spirit,
which is the Word of God.**

Changed By The Book -He was trouble. He lived in a home for orphans, but he didn't like it. He was disobedient and miserable, so he ran away. When he did, he took with him the Bible his housemother had given him. Several years later, the young man returned to the home he had abandoned. He told the people that while he was gone, he had begun reading the Bible. "Now I want to accept Christ," he told his astonished listeners.

What a remarkable book the Bible is! Read by a hurting and troubled young man, this Book was used by God's Spirit to show him his need for salvation. We live in a world that needs what the Bible offers. People need to read its words of comfort, hope, cleansing, and joy. They need to discover in its pages the good news of salvation in Christ.

Not everyone who reads God's Word turns to Christ. Jesus made this clear in the parable of the sower (Lk. 8:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15). We are to be sowers of God's Word, but we don't decide who will receive it. Our job is to scatter the seed.

Maybe you've been looking for a good witnessing tool and never thought that God's Word is the answer. Why not give a Bible to those you want to reach. Then watch what happens. They can be changed by His Book. —Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The world's greatest Book is the Bible,
Its words are inspired and true;
Some may have scorned as they read it
But found their lives changed and made new. --Byer

God's Word is an arrow that never misses its mark

Nothing Hidden

Read: Hebrews 4:12–16

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Hebrews 4:13

In 2015 an international research company stated that there were 245 million surveillance cameras installed worldwide, and the number was growing by 15 percent every year. In addition, multiplied millions of people with smartphones capture daily images ranging from birthday parties to bank robberies. Whether we applaud the increased security or denounce the diminished privacy, we live in a global, cameras-everywhere society.

The New Testament book of Hebrews says that in our relationship with God, we experience a far greater level of exposure and accountability than anything surveillance cameras may see. His Word, like a sharp, two-edged sword, penetrates to the deepest

level of our being where it “judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account” (Heb. 4:12–13).

Nothing is hidden from God's sight. Nothing is greater than God's love.

Because Jesus our Savior experienced our weaknesses and temptations but did not sin, we can “approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (vv. 15–16). We don't need to fear Him but can be assured we'll find grace when we come to Him.

Nothing is hidden from God's sight. Nothing is greater than God's love. Nothing is stronger than God's mercy and grace. Nothing is too hard for God's power.

Discover how you can develop and maintain a meaningful prayer life. Read Jesus' Blueprint for Prayer at discoveryseries.org/hj891.

No part of our lives is hidden from God's grace and power.

By David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

THE WORD IS A "WORD..."

...of all the good words" Jos 23:14
...of Thy lips" Ps 17:4
...of this salvation" Acts 13:26
...of God" Acts 13:44, etal
...of the Lord" Acts 13:48, etal
...of His Grace Acts 14:3, 20:32
...of the Gospel" Acts 15:7
...of promise" Ro 9:9
...of faith" Ro 10:8
...of Christ" Ro 10:17
...of the Cross" 1Co 1:18
...of reconciliation" 2Co 5:19
...of truth" 2Co 6:7, Col 1:5, 2Ti 2:15, Jas 1:18
...of life" Php 2:16
...of God's message" 1Th 2:13
...of His power" Heb 1:3
...of righteousness" Heb 5:13
...of the oath" Heb 7:28
...of exhortation" Heb 13:22
...(living & abiding) 1Pe 1:23
...of Life" 1Jn 1:1
...of My perseverance" Rev 3:10

Metaphors for the Bible and the Word of God

- a) Scripture Is like a Counselor Ps. 119:24
- b) Scripture Is like Fire Je 5:14; Je 23:29
- c) Scripture Is like Gold Ps. 19:9-10
- d) Scripture Is like a Hammer Jer. 23:29
- e) Scripture Is like a Heritage Ps. 119:111
- f) Scripture Is like Honey Ps. 19:9-10; Ps. 119:103
- g) Scripture Is like a Lamp Ps. 119:105
- h) Scripture Is like a Light Ps 119:105; Ps 119:130; 2Pe 1:19
- i) Scripture Is like Milk 1 Co 3:1-3; Heb 5:11-13; 1 Pe 2:2
- j) Scripture Is like a Mirror Jas 1:23-25
- k) Scripture Is like Rain Isa 55:10-11
- l) Scripture Is like a Seed 1 Pe 1:23
- m) Scripture Is like Snow Isa 55:10-11

- n) Scripture Is like Solid Food Heb 5:11-12, 14
 - o) Scripture Is like a Sword Eph 6:17; Heb. 4:12
 - p) Scripture Is like Water Eph. 5:25-26
-

The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery ([ONLINE](#)) has an interesting analysis on judgment "Judgment as the Great Exposé. The popularity and success of exposé in all forms of the media may be due in part to the ability of the reader/listener to anonymously sit in judgment against the exposed. Few things can rival the protracted examination of another's sins to quiet one's own conscience and sense of depravity. In the final exposé, the shroud of anonymity will be stripped as each individual stands naked before the Judge of the Universe (Mt 12:36, 37; 1Cor 4:5; Heb 4:12-13)....

Images of the Bible. The most prevalent image by which biblical writers refer to the collection of words that became our Bible is word. The Bible is "the word," specifically the Word of God. The implication is that the Bible exists through the medium of language, whether oral or written. It is further implied that this word is a communication, inasmuch as the purpose of words is to convey meaning to the understanding of the listener or reader. Finally, to speak of the Bible as the Word of God (as the Bible itself does repeatedly) is to imply that the Bible carries authority for a person's life because of the authority of its human authors as spokespersons of God and because of the authority of the ultimate author, God himself.

God makes a promise. Faith believes it. Hope anticipates it. Patience quietly awaits it.

In truth thou canst not read
the scriptures too much;
And what thou readest,
thou canst not read too well;
And what thou readest well,
thou canst not too well understand;
And what thou understandest well,
thou canst not too well teach;
And what thou teachest well,
thou canst not too well live.

Martin Luther.

Writer Amos Wells reflected our need for thorough Bible study in this verse:

I supposed I knew my Bible,
Reading peacemeal, hit or miss,
Now a bit of John or Matthew,
Now a snatch of Genesis,
Certain chapters of Isaiah,
Certain Psalms (the twenty-third),
Twelfth of Romans, first of Proverbs --
Yes, I thought I knew the Word!
But I found that thorough reading
Was a different thing to do,
And the way was unfamiliar
When I read the Bible through.
You who like to play at Bible,
Dip and dabble, here and there,
Just before you kneel, aweary,
And yawn through a hurried prayer;
You who treat the Crown of Writings
As you treat no other book,
Just a paragraph, disjointed,
Just a crude, impatient look,
Try a worthier procedure,
Try a broad and steady view;

You will kneel in very rapture
When you read the Bible through.

Paul Borthwick, *Leading the Way* by Navpress, 1989, p. 139.

In January, 1984, I was painting the home of an 89 year-old lady in Spokane. She had a large family Bible prominently displayed on the coffee table and remarked that it was 116 years old and a priceless heirloom. I commented on how remarkable that was, and added, "It doesn't matter how old the Bible might be, what's on the inside is what matters." She immediately replied, "Oh, I know. That sure is the truth. Why, we have family records and births and marriages and deaths that go so far back, all recorded in that Bible; we could never replace them."

John Underhill.

The noted Bible scholar James M. Gray told a story that underscores the importance of reading the Scriptures for personal growth. He said that when he was a young Bible teacher he became deeply impressed by the peace and spiritual poise of a friend with whom he often talked. Since Gray wanted that same stability, he asked his companion the secret of his confident bearing and positive outlook. **"It all started through reading Ephesians,"** said the man. Gray was surprised by this simple response. He had read Ephesians many times but had never experienced the same strength he saw in his friend. Noticing Gray's puzzled look, the man explained. "On one occasion, when I was on a short vacation, I took a pocket edition of Ephesians with me. Lying down one afternoon, I read all six chapters. My interest was so aroused that I read the entire epistle again. In fact, I did not finally lay it down until I had gone through it some 15 times." He then said, "When I arose to go into the house, I was in possession of Ephesians; or better yet, it was in possession of me. I had the feeling that I had been lifted up to sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus--a feeling that was new to me." **This testimony encouraged Gray to master the Scriptures for himself. He began to saturate his mind and heart with God's Word so that he could freely and effectively communicate it to others.**

James M. Gray.

According to James Hamilton, there are two kinds of Bible readers--those who skim the surface and those who dig deep. He describes them by comparing them to two common insects. He writes, "One is remarkable for its imposing plumage, which shows in the sunbeams like the dust of gems; as you watch its jaunty gyrations over the fields and its minuet dance from flower to flower, you cannot help admiring its graceful activity, for it is plainly getting over a great deal of ground.

"But in the same field there is another worker, whose brown vest and businesslike, straightforward flight may not have arrested your eye. His fluttering neighbor darts down here and there, and sips elegantly wherever he can find a drop of ready nectar; but this dingy plodder makes a point of alighting everywhere, and wherever he alights he either finds honey or makes it. If the flower-cup be deep, he goes down to the bottom; if its dragon- mouth be shut, he thrusts its lips asunder; and if the nectar be peculiar, he explores all about till he discovers it. . . His rival of the painted velvet wing has no patience for such dull and long-winded details. . . The one died last October. The other is warm in his hive, amidst the fragrant stores he has gathered." Which type of Bible reader are you? Butterfly or bee?

I study my Bible like I gather apples. First, I shake the whole tree that the ripest may fall. Then I shake each limb, and when I have shaken each limb, I shake each branch and every twig. Then I look under every leaf. I search the Bible as a whole like shaking the whole tree. Then I shake every limb--study book after book. Then I shake every branch, giving attention to the chapters. Then I shake every twig, or a careful study of the paragraphs and sentences and words and their meanings.

M. Luther.

Noted Bible teacher E. Schuyler English told of Michael Billester, a Bible distributor who visited a small hamlet in Poland shortly before World War II. Billester gave a Bible to a villager, who was converted by reading it. The new believer then passed the Book on to others. The cycle of conversions and sharing continued until 200 people had become believers through that one Bible. When Billester returned in 1940, this group of Christians met together for a worship service in which he was to preach the Word. He normally asked for testimonies, but this time he suggested that several in the audience recite verses of Scripture. One man stood and said, "Perhaps we have misunderstood. Did you mean verses or chapters?" These villagers had not memorized a few select verses of the Bible but whole chapters and books. Thirteen people knew Matthew, Luke, and half of Genesis. Another person had committed to memory the Psalms. That single copy of the Bible given by Billester had done its work. Transformed lives bore witness to the power of the Word.

E. Schuyler English.

A man in Kansas City was severely injured in an explosion. Evangelist Robert L. Sumner tells about him in his book *The Wonders of the Word of God*. The victim's face was badly disfigured, and he lost his eyesight as well as both hands. He was just a new Christian, and one of his greatest disappointments was that he could no longer read the Bible. Then he heard about a lady in England who read braille with her lips. Hoping to do the same, he sent for some books of the Bible in braille. Much to his dismay, however, he discovered that the nerve endings in his lips had been destroyed by the explosion. One day, as he brought one of the braille pages to his lips, his tongue happened to touch a few of the raised characters and he could feel them. Like a flash he thought, I can read the Bible using my tongue. At the time Robert Sumner wrote his book, the man had "read" through the entire Bible four times.

Robert L. Sumner, *The Wonders of the Work of God*.

While studying in the Holy Lands, a seminary professor of mine met a man who claimed to have memorized the Old Testament--in Hebrew! Needless to say, the astonished professor asked for a demonstration. A few days later they sat together in the man's home. "Where shall we begin?" asked the man. "Psalm 1," replied my professor, who was an avid student of the psalms. Beginning with Psalm 1:1, the man began to recite from memory, while my professor followed along in his Hebrew Bible. For two hours the man continued word for word without a mistake as the professor sat in stunned silence. When the demonstration was over, my professor discovered something even more astonishing about the man--he was an atheist! Here was someone who knew the Scriptures better than most Christians ever will, and yet he didn't even believe in God.

Jack Kuhatschek, BORROW [Taking The Guesswork Out of Applying The Bible](#), IVP, 1991, p. 16.

On February 11, 1962, Parade Magazine published the following brief account -- itself a commentary on artificial motivation.

Still Munching Candy

At the village church in Kalonovka, Russia, attendance at Sunday school picked up after the priest started handing out candy to the peasant children. One of the most faithful was a pug-nosed, pugnacious lad who recited his Scriptures with proper piety, pocketed his reward, then fled into the fields to munch on it.

The priest took a liking to the boy, persuaded him to attend church school. This was preferable to doing household chores from which his devout parents excused him. By offering other inducements, the priest managed to teach the boy the four Gospels. In fact, he won a special prize for learning all four by heart and reciting them nonstop in church. Now, 60 years later, he still likes to recite Scriptures, but in a context that would horrify the old priest. For the prize pupil, who memorized so much of the Bible, is Nikita Khrushchev, the former Communist czar.

As this anecdote illustrates, the "why" behind memorization is fully as important as the "what". The same Nikita Khrushchev who nimbly mouthed God's Word when a child, later declared God to be nonexistent -- because his cosmonauts had not seen Him. Khrushchev memorized the Scriptures for the candy, the rewards, the bribes, rather than for the meaning it had for his life. Artificial motivation will produce artificial results.

David Jeremiah - THE POWER OF THE WORD HEBREWS 4:12 [Sanctuary: Finding Moments of Refuge in the Presence of God](#)

A young German monk desperately wanted to find relief for his tormented soul. He prayed, he studied, he even went on a pilgrimage to Rome. Still he found no peace. Finally, when studying Paul's letter to the Romans, the eyes of his heart were opened: "The righteous will live by faith" (Romans 1:17 NIV). Martin Luther, the father of the Protestant Reformation, finally found the assurance he had sought for so long.

Because the Word of God is alive (Hebrews 4:12), it is able to bring about changes of all sorts. Whereas Martin Luther was able to find assurance of salvation through faith alone, another person may find freedom from anxiety through a knowledge of God's sovereign control over life. The Word of God is used by the Holy Spirit to probe the deepest parts of the human heart and bring illumination. Perhaps there is an area of life where change has eluded you. If you will search the Word of God, you will discover the truth the Holy Spirit can use to satisfy your deepest longing (Proverbs 2:1-5).

The Word of God will bring forth the will of God in the life of the willing child of God.

Spurgeon sermon excerpt - [The Word a Sword](#)

There is not an inert passage in the Scriptures; every line has its virtues. Have you never heard of one who heard read, as the

lesson for the Sabbath-day, that long chapter of names, wherein it is written that each patriarch lived so many hundred years, 'and he died'? Thus it ends the notice of the long life of Methuselah with 'and he died.' The repetition of the words, 'and he died', woke the thoughtless hearer to a sense of his mortality and led to his coming to the Saviour. I should not wonder that, away there in the Chronicles, among those tough Hebrew names, there have been conversions wrought in cases unknown to us as yet. Anyhow, any bit of Holy Scripture is very dangerous to play with and many a man has been wounded by the Scriptures when he has been idly or even profanely reading them. Doubters have meant to break the Word to pieces and it has broken them. Fools have taken up portions and studied them on purpose to ridicule them and they have been sobered and vanquished by that which they repeated in sport. There was one, a member of the 'Hell-fire Club,' a desperate fellow, who went to hear Mr Whitefield. He stood up at the next meeting of his abominable associates and delivered Mr Whitefield's sermon with wonderful accuracy, imitating his very tone and manner. In the middle of his exhortation he converted himself, came to a sudden pause, sat down broken-hearted and confessed the power of the gospel. That club was dissolved. That remarkable convert was Mr Thorpe of Bristol, whom God so greatly used afterwards in the salvation of others. I would rather have you read the Bible to mock at it than not read it at all. I would rather that you came to hear the Word of God out of hatred to it than that you never came at all.

A W Tozer - RESPONSE TO THE WORD Hebrews 4:12 [Mornings with Tozer: Daily Devotional Readings - Page 17](#)

Men and women who read and study the Scriptures for their literary beauty alone have missed the whole purpose for which they were given.

God's Word is not to be enjoyed as one might "enjoy" a Beethoven symphony or a poem by Wordsworth.

The reason: The Bible demands immediate action, faith, surrender, committal. Until it has secured these, it has done nothing positive for the reader, but it has increased his responsibility and deepened the judgment that must follow.

The Bible was called forth by the fall of man. It is the voice of God calling men home from the wilds of sin; it is a road map for returning prodigals. It is instruction in righteousness, light in darkness, information about God and man and life and death and heaven and hell.

Further, the destiny of each individual depends upon the response to that Voice in the Word!

Henry Blackaby- Living and Active Hebrews 4:12 [The Experience - Page 65](#)

The Bible is unlike any other book ever written or ever to be written. In fact, book is an inadequate description of the Bible. The dictionary describes a book as a printed work on sheets of paper, bound together within two covers. The Bible is that, but it's so much more! The Bible consistently tops best-seller lists. For centuries, even unbelievers have studied the Bible as in intriguing piece of literature. They know it contains everything good literature should include: love, romance, mystery, murder, intrigue, and advice on everything from parenting to prosperity. But what is it that sets the Bible apart from other literature? Christians know the answer to that question.

Why can Christians read the same verses on the same pages day after day, year after year, and still get something new out of them? Because we aren't just reading a book. We are interacting with almighty God through his written Word.

Every word in every chapter, from Genesis to Revelation, is there by God's inspiration. When you read your Bible, the Holy Spirit will apply the verses you read to your life. As you read about holiness, the Spirit will make you aware of areas that you've not given over to Christ. As you read about love, the Spirit will assure you of God's love for you. You will find encouragement in God's Word, just when you need it the most. Don't neglect your Bible reading just because you've read it before or because you think you already know what it says. God's Word is alive, and it can change your life today if you let it.

The Big Questions - Author Ronald B. Schwartz asked scores of well-known contemporary writers to name the books that influenced them most deeply. Their responses ranged from the novels of Dostoevsky to the popular stories of Mark Twain. The works of Dickens, Shakespeare, and Faulkner were mentioned many times. But topping the list was the Bible. Why?

Perhaps because most writers want to deal with the "big questions" of life, and the Bible is the ultimate book for life's big questions: Who am I? Why am I here? Is there a God? Does life have any meaning or purpose?

The pages of Scripture bring us face to face with ourselves, with God, and with His grand design for our lives. The Bible, according to the late journalist Malcolm Muggeridge, is "the book that reads me." The writer of Hebrews said, "The Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a

discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

When we read the Bible, God speaks personally and powerfully to us about the big questions that matter most in life. -- David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What is the meaning of life here on earth?
What is its purpose, and what is its worth?
God has the answers in His holy book;
That is the first and the best place to look. —Hess

The Bible is God's answer book.

Change The Word? - The Bible, God's written Word, changes lives. Its message of salvation makes the most profound change, of course, but Scripture can also change the way we treat others. It can provide a firm foundation for society with its clear teachings on institutions such as marriage, family, and the church.

But what happens when what the Bible clearly says—as understood for centuries by learned believers and scholars alike—is rejected? Those who reject its teachings try to change the Word.

Two Greek words can help explain this: **eisegesis** and **exegesis**. **Eisegesis** is the process of reading into a passage something that is not there—inserting a meaning that flows from a personal agenda. By contrast, **exegesis** means drawing from the passage the clearly intended meaning, using context, other Scripture passages on the same topic, and legitimate tools of understanding such as Bible commentaries.

Instead of trying to change God's Word to fit our own ideas, let's allow the Word to change us. As we read His Word and obey it, the Holy Spirit will transform us into the kind of people God wants us to be.

Don't change the Word—let it change you.—Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Lord has given man His Word,
His will He has made known;
Let man not try to change that Word
With words that are his own. —D. De Haan

The Bible—eternal truth and never-fading beauty.

Excuses - Unbelief, indifference, busyness, and laziness are some of the excuses people give for not reading the Bible. Gamaliel Bradford, a renowned American biographer who explored the lives and motives of famous individuals, candidly admitted, "I do not read the New Testament for fear of its awakening a storm of anxiety and self-reproach and doubt and dread of having taken the wrong path, of having been traitor to the plain and simple God."

Fear of facing up to failure, guilt and sin is not a very reasonable reason to avoid reading the Bible! It's about as irrational as refusing to see a doctor because there's a suspicion that cancer has started to develop in one's body.

Yes, the Bible does indeed compel us to face ourselves. It is like an x-ray machine that penetrates below the facade of goodness and shows up any spiritual malignancy. It enables us to see how God views all the worst diseases of the soul. But the Bible does more than expose a fatal condition. It introduces us to the Great Physician, who can cure our sin and bring spiritual healing.

If you read the Bible with a willingness to obey the truth, you will find life's greatest cure. Vernon C. Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Instill within our hearts, dear Lord,
A deep desire to know Your voice;
We need to learn to hear
Your Word That we may make
Your will our choice. - Dennis J. De Haan

Many people criticize the bible because the bible criticizes them

Hebrews 4:12 Undiscovered Country

The Word of God is living and powerful. —Hebrews 4:12

I studied the map as my husband and I drove up the east coast of Virginia. We were looking for any road that would take us to the seashore. Finally, I found one and we turned toward the sun.

In only a few minutes, we were laughing in delight when—just before the seashore—we happened upon a national wildlife refuge. All around us were dunes and marsh and beach grasses and an abundance of gulls, egrets, and blue herons. It was active and loud and wonderful! We had arrived at Chincoteague and Assateague Islands—famous for the annual pony swim from one island to the other. Others had realized its value and beauty long before, but to us it was undiscovered country.

The Scriptures are like “undiscovered country” to many. They have never discovered the valuable treasures found in the eternal words of the Bible. The Bible is alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, exposing our innermost thoughts and desires (Heb. 4:12). It is like a lamp to illuminate our path (Ps. 119:105), and it has been given to equip us for God’s purposes (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Open the Bible and read it so you can find these treasures. It’s time . . . to discover!

Exhaustless store of treasured gems

Within this Book I hold;

And as I read, it comes alive,

New treasures to unfold.

—Mortenson

Rich treasures of God’s truth are waiting to be discovered by you.

Hebrews 4:12 One Verse

The Word of God is living and powerful. —Hebrews 4:12

Which of the 31,173 verses in the Bible is your favorite? And do you think that verse can make a difference in someone’s life?

God has used certain verses to make a remarkable impact on the world. For example, the author of Pilgrim’s Progress, John Bunyan, touched the lives of thousands by preaching from John 6:37, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.”

Noted reformer Martin Luther greatly influenced the course of church history because of his understanding of Romans 1:17, “The just shall live by faith.” And missionary pioneer William Carey introduced the gospel to India after being touched by the words of Isaiah 54:2, “Enlarge the place of your tent.”

As a young person about to embark on my first overseas missionary venture, I was moved, challenged, and comforted by Jeremiah 33:3. God used this verse to remind me to call on Him because He had “great and mighty” things in store for me.

Maybe a specific verse from Scripture has touched your heart in a special way. Share that truth with others—because God’s Word will always have an impact.

May the Word of God dwell richly

In my heart from hour to hour,

So that all may see I triumph

Only through His power.

—Wilkinson

One truth from the Bible is worth more than all the wisdom of man.

A W Pink has a pithy challenge for the modern church...

There is grave reason to believe that much Bible reading and Bible study of the last few years has been of no spiritual profit to those who engaged in it. Yea, we go further; we greatly fear that in many instances it has proved a curse rather than a blessing. This is strong language, we are well aware, yet no stronger than the case calls for. Divine gifts may be misused, and Divine mercies abused. That this has been so in the present instance is evident by the fruits produced. Even the natural man may (and often does) take up the study of the Scriptures with the same enthusiasm and pleasure as he might of the sciences. Where this is the case, his

store of knowledge is increased, and so also is his pride. Like a chemist engaged in making interesting experiments, the intellectual searcher of the Word is quite elated when he makes some discovery in it; but the joy of the latter is no more spiritual than would be that of the former. Again, just as the successes of the chemist generally increase his sense of self-importance and cause him to look with disdain upon others more ignorant than himself, so alas, is it often the case with those who have investigated Bible numerics, typology, prophecy and other such subjects.

The Word of God may be taken up from various motives. Some read it to satisfy their literary pride. In certain circles it has become both the respectable and popular thing to obtain a general acquaintance with the contents of the Bible simply because it is regarded as an educational defect to be ignorant of them. Some read it to satisfy their sense of curiosity, as they might any other book of note. Others read it to satisfy their sectarian pride. They consider it a duty to be well versed in the particular tenets of their own denomination and so search eagerly for proof-texts in support of "our doctrines." Yet others read it for the purpose of being able to argue successfully with those who differ from them. But in all this there is no thought of God, no yearning for spiritual edification, and therefore no real benefit to the soul.

Of what, then, does a true profiting from the Word consist? Does not 2 Timothy 3:16,17+ furnish a clear answer to our question? There we read,

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Observe what is here omitted: the Holy Scriptures are given us not for intellectual gratification and carnal speculation, but to furnish unto "all good works," and that by teaching, reproving, correcting us. Let us endeavor to amplify this by the help of other passages.

[\(Profiting from the Word-Chapter 1 The Scriptures and Sin\)](#)

Hebrews 4:12 A Question Of Motive

The Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. —Hebrews 4:12

Read: Hebrews 4:11-16 | Bible in a Year: 1 Chronicles 7-9; John 6:22-44

My wife and I were stopped at a railroad crossing to allow a train to pass. As we waited in the line of cars, the driver next to us suddenly darted through a nearby parking lot and headed in the direction of the next available railroad crossing.

I turned to Marlene and said, with some righteous indignation, "Look at that guy. He's trying to get around the train instead of waiting like the rest of us." As soon as I said those words, the man, camera in hand, hopped from his car to take pictures of the oncoming train. I had judged his motives, and I was dead wrong.

Although we can observe behavior and outward appearance, only God can see what's in the heart. That is one reason we all need the Word of God so desperately. Hebrews 4:12 says, "The Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

When we find ourselves ready to judge another person's motives, let's pause and remember—only God can see the heart, and only His Word can expose its motives. Our responsibility is to let the Lord and His Word convict us about our own hearts.

The Bible is a lamp from God,
A sword of truth and light;
It searches heart and soul and mind,
And helps us know what's right.
—Bosch

People will be judged by the way God sees them not by the way we see them.

Hebrews 4:12 A Powerful Word

The Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. —Hebrews 4:12

Read: Hebrews 4:12-13 | Bible in a Year: Exodus 9-11; Matthew 15:21-39

When a teenager named Poh Fang learned about Jesus' love for her and received Him as her Savior, her parents weren't sure about the merits of Christianity. So they sent her older sister with her to church to keep an eye on her. But something happened that

they didn't expect. The powerful Word of God penetrated the heart of the older sister, and she accepted Jesus as her Savior as well.

The psalmist said of the Word of God, "Your precepts . . . have given me life" (Ps. 119:93). That's the testimony of Poh Fang and her sister and of all who know Christ as Savior. His Word is "powerful . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

God's Word shows us our sin and its consequences: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23); "the wages of sin is death" (6:23). It tells us of God's love and salvation: "God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, . . . made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)" (Eph. 2:4-5). And it gives wisdom for daily living: "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps. 119:105).

Thank You, Lord, for Your powerful Word, which gives us life and direction for daily living.

Many books inform, but only one transforms—the Bible.

Hebrews 4:12 Exploratory Procedure

The Word of God is living and powerful, . . . a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. —Hebrews 4:12

Read: Hebrews 4:11-16 | Bible in a Year: Jeremiah 34-36; Hebrews 2

I have a friend who recently underwent a laryngoscopy. I winced as he explained how his doctor took a camera with a light on the end and stuck it down his throat to try to find the cause of his pain.

It reminded me that God's Word is like a laryngoscopy. It invades the unseen areas of our lives, exposing the diseased and damaged spiritual tissue that troubles us. If you're wincing at the thought of how uncomfortable this divine procedure might be, consider Jesus' words: "Everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed" (John 3:20). Internal intrusions may be uncomfortable, but do you really want the disease?

Welcoming God's Word to penetrate the deep, dark places of our hearts is the only way to find true healing and the spiritual health we long for. Believe me, the procedure will be thorough. As the writer of Hebrews assures, God's Word is "sharper than any two-edged sword" (4:12)—piercing all the way through the external stuff of our lives, all the way down to our thoughts, intentions, and motives.

So what are you waiting for? With God's Word you don't need an appointment. The divine Surgeon is ready when you are!

Ever present, truest Friend,
Ever near Thine aid to lend,
Guide us as we search the Word,
Make it both our shield and sword.
—Anon.

Let God's Word explore your inner being.

J C Philpot...February 10 - "For the word of God is quick and powerful." He 4:12 - What is meant by the word of God being "quick?" That it moves with swiftness and velocity? It is certainly said of God's word (Ps 147:15) that "it runs very swiftly;" but that is not the meaning of the word "quick" in the text. It there means "living," and corresponds with the expression (Acts 7:38) "living oracles." It is an old English word signifying "living;" as in the expression, "who shall judge the quick and the dead" (2Ti 4:1), that is, the living and the dead. So we read of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram "going down quick (that is, alive) into the pit" (Nu 16:30). So the Lord is said to have "quickened (that is, made spiritually alive) those who were previously dead in trespasses and sins" (Ep 2:1). The word "quick," then, does not mean moving with velocity, but "living", or rather "communicating life", and thus distinguished from the dead letter.

Truth, as it stands in the naked word of God, is lifeless and dead; and as such, has no power to communicate what it has not in itself, that is, life and power to the hearts of God's people. It stands there in so many letters and syllables, as lifeless as the types by which they were printed. But when the incarnate Word takes of the written word, and speaks it home into the heart and conscience of a vessel of mercy, whether in letter or substance, then he endues it with divine life, and it enters into the soul, communicating to it a life that can never die. As James speaks, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." And also Peter, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever" (1Pe 1:23). Eternal realities are brought into the soul, fixed and fastened by an Almighty hand. The conscience is made alive in the fear of God; and the soul is raised up from a death in sin, or a death in profession, to a life heavenly, new, and supernatural. (J. C. Philpot. Daily Words for Zion's

George Mueller - "The first thing I did after having asked in a few words the Lord's blessings upon His precious Word, was to begin to meditate upon the Word of God, searching into every verse to get a blessing out of it. Not for the sake of public ministry of the Word, not for the sake of preaching on what I had meditated on, but for the sake of obtaining food for my own soul. Now what is food for the inner man? Not prayer, but the Word of God. And, here again, not the simple reading of the Word so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering over it, and applying it to our hearts."

The Bible

On the cover of your Bible and my Bible appear the words "Holy Bible." Do you know why the Bible is called holy? Why should it be called holy when so much lust and hate and greed and war are found in it?

I can tell you why. It is because the Bible tells the truth. It tells the truth about God, about man, and about the devil. The Bible teaches that we exchange the truth of God for the devil's lie about sex, for example; and drugs, and alcohol, and religious hypocrisy. Jesus Christ is the ultimate truth. Furthermore, He told the truth. Jesus said that He was the truth, and the truth would make us free.

Adrian Rogers from sermon [The Word of God see page 111](#)

The Bible is the book that lives...The Bible is alive. The Bible says it is quick. It is zao. It has, it has power. And because it is alive, it presents a living person. Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures; for these are they which testify of me." And when Jesus said that, He was talking about the Old Testament. Don't get the idea that the Old Testament is about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Old Testament is about Jesus

The Bible Is the Book That Labors....the word powerful there is the Greek word energeis, and it's the word we get our word energy. It means it works! This book that pulsates with life is a book that is not a dead book. It is very much alive. It labors. It, it works with the saints, it works with sinners, and it works on Satan. Let me just show you that....It cuts like a sword, convicting people....And not only does the Bible have convicting power; it has converting power....The Word of God has convicting power, it has converting power, it has condemning power....And not only does it work with the saint, and not only does it work with the sinner, but, friend, it works with Satan himself....And it is the lasting Word of God. That's the third thing I want you to see about the Bible. Now look at this passage again here. And it says that it is quick. Now that word quick, I've already told you, means alive, but, and I'll know this'll bless you, it is a present active participle.

The former pastor of this church, Robert G. Lee, said, "Enemy noise has not silenced one of its warnings. The enemies black smoke has not dimmed one bright hope. The enemies stabs have not torn one blemish in the Bible's snow-white vesture. Infidel ink has not diluted one drop of its honey. The enemy has not plucked one petal from the Rose of Sharon, or polluted one breath from the fragrance of its perfume. Omnipotence has felt no strain. Eternity lost not one moment. And God is still on His throne. The Word of God endureth forever."

Spotlight the Scripture

In recent years I have become increasingly aware of the dangerous possibility of making the Word of God sensational. Just as people can watch spellbound a circus artist tumbling through the air in a phosphorized costume, so they can listen to a preacher who uses the Word of God to draw attention to himself. But a sensational preacher stimulates the senses and leaves the spirit untouched. Instead of being the way to God, his "being different" gets in the way. —Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Genesee Diary*. Christianity Today, Vol. 30, no. 5.

See: Jeremiah 23:29; Hebrews 4:12; Matthew 23:23; 1 Samuel 15:22

Play It Again ...

You see or hear something once. You take no particular notice. A second time and you are intrigued for a moment, a third time and you take notice. The Bible works that way. It does not shriek something, it merely repeats it, showing us something again and again until it begins to register. —Herbert O'Driscoll in *And Every Wonder True*. Christianity Today, Vol. 32, no. 6.

See: Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16

Grits Without Salt

For years the Bible was a dead book to me ... like grits without salt. But after I gave my life to Jesus Christ, it became alive. I saw that the Bible was God's way of talking to me. —Steve Bartkowski, quarterback for the Atlanta Falcons, quoted by Jamie

Buckingham in Power for Living. Christianity Today, Vol. 30, no. 11.

See: Deuteronomy 8:3; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 2:2.

The Bible Is Rough Reading

If you are religious, it is easier to read some pious book than the Bible. The Bible treats you like human life does—roughly. —Oswald Chambers, Christianity Today, Vol. 37, no. 11. See: Jeremiah 5:14; Jeremiah 23:29; Hebrews 4:12.

Beholding the Word

... read the Bible as though it were something entirely unfamiliar, as though it had not been set before you ready-made ... Face the book with a new attitude as something new ... Let whatever may happen occur between yourself and it. You do not know which of its sayings and images will overwhelm and mold you ... But hold yourself open. Do not believe anything a priori; do not disbelieve anything a priori. Read aloud the words written in the book in front of you; hear the word you utter and let it reach you. —Martin Buber, twentieth-century theologian, in a 1926 lecture, quoted in The Five Books of Moses. Christianity Today, Vol. 41, no. 9.

See: Jeremiah 23:29; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12.

The Bible Bothers

Most people are bothered by those Scripture passages which they cannot understand. But for me, the passages in Scripture which trouble me most are those which I do understand. —Mark Twain, Christian Reader, Vol. 33, no. 5.

See: Jeremiah 5:14; Jeremiah 23:29; Romans 1:16; Hebrews 4:12.

Incredible Find

In the 1930s in Stavropol, Russia, Stalin ordered that all Bibles be confiscated and Christian believers be sent to prison camps. Ironically, most of the Bibles were not destroyed, yet many Christians died as “enemies of the state.”

With the recent dissolution of the U.S.S.R. a CoMission team arrived in Stavropol in 1994 for ministry. Their request to have Bibles shipped to Moscow was being held up. But someone told them about a warehouse outside of town where confiscated Bibles were still stored. Remarkably, the team was granted permission to distribute them. Hiring several local Russian workers, they began to load their trucks.

One young man, a hostile agnostic, came only for the day’s wages. But not long after they had started, he disappeared. He was found in the corner of the warehouse, weeping, a Bible in his hands. Intending to steal it for himself, he had picked his own grandmother’s off the shelf! Her signature was on the front page. Today, that young Russian is in the process of being transformed by the very Bible that his grandmother was persecuted for, but still held dear. —Ken Taylor, Christian Reader, Vol. 33, no. 5.

See: Jeremiah 23:29; Romans 1:16; Hebrews 4:12.

Good Enough for Jesus

In 1985 I volunteered as a teacher in Virginia’s “No Read/No Release” program for prisoners. Inmates were required to read on at least a sixth-grade reading level to be eligible for parole. Consequently, three evenings a week I went to the prison to tutor a class of 30 men.

From the first day of class, one particular student seemed bent on disrupting us. He would sing, throw paper, drop books, yell, and pound on his desk—anything to make a scene. I couldn’t drop him from the class, so I prayed for a solution.

I realized he always carried a Bible to class. The next class I brought my Bible, too. “Today we are going to read from the King James Version of the Bible,” I announced.

To my surprise, the troublemaker politely raised his hand and said, “If King James English was good enough for Jesus, it’s good enough for me.”

He finished the course as my best student. —Justin Fallin, Christian Reader, Vol. 33, no. 5.

See: Jeremiah 5:14; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12.

Armed with Scripture

A simple layman armed with Scripture is to be believed above a pope or a cardinal without it. —Martin Luther, “Martin Luther—The Early Years,” Christian History, no. 34.

See: Jeremiah 5:14; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12.

The Power of God's Word - On Christmas Eve 1968, the *Apollo 8* astronauts—Frank Borman, Jim Lovell, and Bill Anders—became the first humans to enter lunar orbit. As they circled the moon ten times, they shared images of the moon and the Earth. During a live broadcast, they took turns reading from Genesis 1. At the fortieth anniversary celebration, Borman said, “We were told that on Christmas Eve we would have the largest audience that had ever listened to a human voice. And the only instructions that we got from NASA was to do something appropriate.” The Bible verses spoken by the *Apollo 8* astronauts still plant seeds of truth into the listening hearts of people who hear the historical recording.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God says, “Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live” (Isaiah 55:3). Revealing His free offer of salvation, He invites us to turn from our sin and receive His mercy and forgiveness (vv. 6–7). He declares the divine authority of His thoughts and His actions, which are too vast for us to truly understand (vv. 8–9). Still, God gives us opportunity to share His life-transforming words of Scripture, which point to Jesus, and affirm that He is responsible for the spiritual growth of His people (vv. 10–13).

The Holy Spirit helps us share the gospel as the Father fulfills all His promises according to His perfect plan and pace.

Stephen was an up-and-coming comedian, and a prodigal. Raised in a Christian family, he struggled with doubt after his dad and two brothers died in a plane crash. By his early twenties, he'd lost his faith. But he found it one cold night as he walked home. A stranger gave him a pocket New Testament, and Stephen cracked open the pages. An index said those struggling with anxiety should read Matthew 6:27–34, from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

How important is the Bible? It's so vital that people in many countries risk their lives to translate it into their native languages. Often, these are ordinary believers in Jesus who face arrest for translating the words of Scripture into a heart language others can understand.

One female translator from a country hostile to believers in Jesus said, “I must complete this work. I want to see my beloved ones experience salvation in Christ.” And a man who organizes regular citizens to clandestinely translate Scripture explains that the Bible is essential to growing mature believers in local churches: “You can start a church, but . . . [without] the Bible in its heart language, it will typically only last one generation.”

Why are they doing this? Because there's no other book like the Bible. Its preservation through the centuries is unique. Its authenticity and its representation of the human heart is accurate. It's “alive and active . . . [and] judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). And “all Scripture is God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16), inspired by Him. And most important, it reveals the source and reality of “salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (v. 15).

Let's read, cherish, and live by the Scriptures. And as God provides, let's help those around the world receive it and understand it. By: Dave Branon (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

The Power of God's Word - Stephen turned back to God there, and the words kindled a fire in his heart. He recalls, “I was absolutely, immediately lightened. I stood on the street corner in the cold and read the sermon, and my life has never been the same.”

Such is the power of Scripture. The Bible is unlike any other book, for it's alive. We don't just read the Bible. The Bible reads us. “Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit . . . ; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

Scripture presents the most powerful force on the planet, a force that transforms and leads us towards spiritual maturity. Let's open it and read it out loud, asking God to ignite our hearts. He promises that the words He's spoken “will not return to [Him] empty, but will accomplish what [He desires] and achieve the purpose for which [He] sent it” (Isaiah 55:11). Our lives will never be the same.

God's Eye Salve (Hebrews 4:12)

By the aid of that most perfect scientific instrument, the ophthalmoscope, with its condensing mirror and myriad of little lenses, the ophthalmologist can look into a person's eye and not only determine approximately the necessary strength of glass required to give perfect vision, but also the existence of tumors pressing on the brain tissue, the condition of the general nervous system, the presence of disease in various organs, and the richness of the blood current as they are clearly traced on the sensitive plate of nature's camera. What the ophthalmoscope is to the ophthalmologist, revelation from Scripture is to our higher nature—a test and criticism of supreme value. One of the ways by which we can prevent the darkening of our spiritual eyesight is to look daily at the Word of God so that the Word may become the mirror to which we are exposed. “The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and

sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). If we wish to see clearly, we must test and purge our vision. Here is the radical cure for spiritual cataracts and color blindness. To see truly we must see life in God’s light. After the dust and fog and mirage of a day that we have lived in our town or city, it is a wonderful restorative to cleanse the eyes with the eye salve of the Word of God.

- AMG Bible Illustrations

God’s Word Is Hot

When the hot word of God is poured over a cold, cold world, things break, and it is into that brokenness that we are called, into whatever big or small piece we find in front of us, with fire in our bones, to show a frightened world that it is not the heat of fire that we fear, but the chill that lies ahead if the fire goes out. —Barbara Brown Taylor. *Leadership*, Vol. 12, no. 1.

See: Jeremiah 5:14; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12.

Stand Alone on the Word of God

I remain unpersuaded that any theological movement can dramatically affect the course of the world while its own leaders undermine the integrity of its charter documents, or while its spokespersons domestically exhaust all their energies in internal defense of those documents. The Bible stands impressively unshaken by the fury of destructive critics, while the nonbelieving world, itself marked for destruction, urgently needs to hear its singular message of salvation. —Carl F. H. Henry in *The Christian Century* (Nov. 1980). *Christianity Today*, Vol. 32, no. 8.

See: Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 22:18–19; Psalms 119:89

Psychology and the Bible

After many years of studying human behavior at one of the finest universities in the world, Harvard psychiatrist Robert Coles remarked, “Nothing I have discovered about the makeup of human beings contradicts in any way what I have learned from the Hebrew prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Amos, and from the Book of Ecclesiastes, and from Jesus and the lives of those he touched. Anything that I can say as a result of my research into human behavior is a mere footnote to those lives in the Old and New Testaments” —Robert Coles, *Christianity Today*, February 6, 1987, p. 20.

See: Deuteronomy 4:10; Luke 21:33; Romans 15:4; 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

The Reality of Truth

[When] I was younger, I tended to believe that certain principles were true because they were in the Bible. But year by year, as I have read much of the social research, I have come to look at this a new way—that certain principles are in the Bible because they are true. They are true and helpful for all people, regardless of whether they accept or reject the Bible’s central claim. —Tom Minnery in *Focus on the Family Citizen* (June 23, 1997). *Christianity Today*, Vol. 41, no. 11.

See: Deuteronomy 11:19; Romans 15:4; Hebrews 4:12.

The Best Place to Learn

You can learn more about human nature by reading the Bible than by living in New York. —William Lyon Phelps, *Christian Reader*, Vol. 33, no. 2.

See: Isaiah 2:3; Romans 15:4; Hebrews 4:12.

Modern Success Versus the Bible

Modern success models can’t match the effectiveness and self-worth provided by Scripture. —Eugene Peterson, *Leadership*, Vol. 2, no. 1.

See: Deuteronomy 4:10; Psalms 119:130; Isaiah 2:3; Luke 21:33.

Seeing the Reflection in the Bible

It was Helmut Thielicke, the German theologian, who said that in studying these stories of Jesus the viewpoint is everything. To illustrate what he meant, he told of a time when his son was just a babe in arms. He held the youngster up in front of a mirror. The baby moved; the reflection moved. Baby waved; the reflection waved. Suddenly the youngster’s face lit up. He realized, That’s me! Every so often that happens when you’re reading the Bible. You pick it up, and it’s black print on a white page, telling stories about

the long ago and far away. But as you read the text, the print seems to disappear. On the page of Scripture, you see a reflection of yourself. —Haddon Robinson, "A Case Study of a Mugging," Preaching Today, Tape No. 102.

See: Luke 21:33; Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 4:12.

The Mark of Sin (Hebrews 4:12)

"For the Word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). As the powerful chain saw cut its way through the oak tree, it uncovered an object foreign to a tree. There, embedded in the tree was a 22-bullet, once hidden from view, now made visible by the cutting asunder of the tree. From the outside, the point of entry was no longer visible, but on the inside, the path of the bullet had clearly left its mark in the wood. Compared to the size of the tree, it was an extremely small mark, yet by its presence, had caused the area surrounding it to turn black with rot. Had one been present when the bullet entered the tree, it would have been possible not only to see the mark, but to dig the bullet out. However, with the passing of time, the tree grew larger and stronger. The bark had grown thicker and the bullet remained hidden, a part of the tree. Just as the bullet penetrated into the tree, so sin penetrates us. The point of entry may not be visible to anyone else, but the sin becomes embedded in our lives, and unless it is removed, causes a growing spot to rot. - AMG Bible Illustrations

Humor: I Got Scripture an' I Know How to Use It

According to one of those passed-along stories on the Internet:

An elderly woman had just returned to her home from a church service when she was startled to find an intruder in the act of robbing her home of its valuables.

She yelled, "Stop! Acts 2:38!" (which reads, "turn from your sin").

The burglar stopped dead in his tracks. The woman calmly called the police and explained what she'd done.

As the officer cuffed the man, he asked the burglar, "Why did you just stand there? All the old lady did was yell a Scripture at you."

"Scripture?" replied the burglar. "She said she had an ax and two 0.38's!"

Adrian Rogers - The word "quick" in the verse above is the same word from which we get our word "zoo" and "zoology." It means the Word of God is alive, that it pulsates with life and power.

The word "powerful" is the Greek word *energes*, the word we get "energy" from. Truly, there is life and energy in the Bible. We read other books, but this Book reads us.

It is incredible! It is saving to the sinner and continually refreshing to the saved. I have used this Book many, many times to lead people to Christ and have seen them transformed by it.

Kierkegaard said that most of us read the Bible the way a mouse tries to remove the cheese from the trap without getting caught. Some of us have mastered that. We read the story as though it were about someone else a long time ago; that way we don't get caught. But if we see the Bible as the story of the triumph of God's grace, the story of God searching for us, then look out. The story will come alive. God will find us and we will know that we are found. —Maxie Dunnam

Gipsy Smith told of a man who said he had received no inspiration from the Bible although he had "gone through it several times." "Let it go through you once," replied Smith, "then you will tell a different story!"

The new minister was asked to teach a boys' class in the absence of the regular teacher. He decided to see what they knew, so he asked who knocked down the walls of Jericho. All the boys denied having done it, and the preacher was appalled by their ignorance. At the next deacons' meeting he told about the experience. "Not one of them knows who knocked down the walls of Jericho," he lamented. The group was silent until finally one seasoned veteran of disputes spoke up. "Preacher, this appears to be bothering you a lot. But I've known all those boys since they were born and they're good boys. If they said they didn't know, I believe them. Let's just take some money out of the repair and maintenance fund, fix the walls, and let it go at that."

It is said that when the famous missionary, Dr. David Livingstone, started his trek across Africa he had 73 books in 3 packs, weighing 180 pounds. After the party had gone 300 miles, Livingstone was obliged to throw away some of the books because of the fatigue of those carrying his baggage. As he continued on his journey his library grew less and less, until he had but one book left--his Bible.

Today in the Word, April, 1989, p. 28.

Anatoli Shcharansky, a dissident Soviet Jew, kissed his wife goodbye as she left Russia for freedom in Israel. His parting words to

her were, "I'll see you soon in Jerusalem." But Anatoli was detained and finally imprisoned. Their reunion in Jerusalem would not only be postponed, it might never occur. During long years in Russian prisons and work camps Anatoli was stripped of his personal belongings. His only possession was a miniature copy of the Psalms. Once during his imprisonment, his refusal to release the book to the authorities cost him 130 days in solitary confinement. Finally, twelve years after parting with his wife, he was offered freedom. In February 1986, as the world watched, Shcharansky was allowed to walk away from Russian guards toward those who would take him to Jerusalem. But in the final moments of captivity, the guards tried again to confiscate the Psalms book. Anatoli threw himself face down in the snow and refused to walk on to freedom without it. Those words had kept him alive during imprisonment. He would not go on to freedom without them.

Discipleship Journal, Issue #43 (1988), p. 24.

A professional boxer was converted to Christ. He felt it was wrong to continue hitting people but only knew boxing as a profession. So he sought counsel of the deacons. One responded, "Don't see why you can't continue. Bible says that it's better to give than to receive."

The story has been told about several famous preachers, but it actually happened to Joseph Parker, minister of the City Temple in London. An old lady waited on Parker in his vestry after a service to thank him for the help she received from his sermons. "You do throw such wonderful light on the Bible, doctor," she said. "Do you know that until this morning, I had always thought that Sodom and Gomorrah were man and wife?"

A recent Barna Research Group survey conducted among a random probability sample of 641 adults demonstrated that many Americans have a woeful knowledge of the Bible. Among Christians in the survey, 22% thought there actually is a Book of Thomas in the Bible, and 13% said they did not know whether Thomas is a book of the Bible or not. 65% correctly stated that Thomas is not a book of the Bible. 61% knew that Jonah is a book of the Bible, while 27% said it is not, and 12% had no idea. Among non-Christians, only 29% knew that the Book of Jonah could be found in the Bible, while 27% said it could not, and 34% were not sure. Three quarters of the Christians surveyed knew that the Book of Isaiah is located in the O.T., while 11% thought it is in the N.T., and 13% did not know where Isaiah could be found. Half of the non-Christians knew that Isaiah is located in the O.T.

61% of all Americans named Bethlehem as the city where Jesus Christ was born. Among non-Christians, 55% knew Christ was born in Bethlehem. Seven out of 10 Christians answered this question correctly, while 16% named Jerusalem as Jesus' birthplace, 8% said it was Nazareth, and 6% did not hazard a guess.

The question that gave the most people trouble was "Is the expression 'God helps those who help themselves' in the Bible?" Only 38% of all Christians correctly stated that that phrase cannot be found anywhere in the Scriptures. Forty-two percent thought that this was a Biblical quotation, and 20% had no idea. Among non-Christians surveyed, 40% said that axiom was part of the Word, 26% knew it was not, and 34% were not sure.

Why is there so much ignorance about the Bible? Most likely, it comes from a lack of Bible readership. Half of all Americans do not read the Bible. The majority of all born-again Christians read the Bible once or twice a week, or not at all. The survey found that only 18% of all Christians said they read the Word every day, while another 18% read the Bible between three and six days a week, 37% read it once or twice a week, and 23% said they do not read the Bible at all. Among non-Christians, 70% do not read the Bible. Is this because many people do not own a Bible? No. Our research has shown that 93% of all American own at least one Bible, and most own more than one.

Which of the following aren't in the Bible?

Cleanliness is next to godliness

God helps those who help themselves

Confession is good for the soul

We are as prone to sin as sparks fly upward

Money is the root of all evil

Honesty is the best policy

None of the are!

He was one of the greatest rulers in African history and the creator of modern Ethiopia. Born in 1844, he was captured during an enemy raid and held prisoner for 10 years. Escaping, Menelik II declared himself head of the province of Shewa. He began conquering neighboring kingdoms and developed them into modern Ethiopia with himself as emperor. When Italy tried to take over

Ethiopia Menekil's army met and crushed the Italians at the Battle of Aduwa. This victory, as well as his efforts to modernize Ethiopia (schools, telephones, railroads), make Menekil world-famous. The emperor had one little known eccentricity. Whenever he was feeling ill, he would eat a few pages of the Bible, insisting that this always restored his health. One day in December, 1913, recovering from a stroke and feeling extremely ill, he had the entire book of Kings torn from an Egyptian edition of the Bible, ate every page of it--and died.

BIBLE, contradictions within

No Illustrations yet.

When the preacher's car broke down on a country road, he walked to a nearby roadhouse to use the phone. After calling for a tow truck, he spotted his old friend, Frank, drunk and shabbily dressed at the bar. "What happened to you, Frank?" asked the good reverend. "You used to be rich." Frank told a sad tale of bad investments that had led to his downfall. "Go home," the preacher said. "Open your Bible at random, stick your finger on the page and there will be God's answer."

Some time later, the preacher bumped into Frank, who was wearing a Gucci suit, sporting a Rolex watch and had just stepped out of a Mercedes. "Frank," said the preacher, "I am glad to see things really turned around for you." "Yes, preacher, and I owe it all to you," said Frank. "I opened my Bible, put my finger down on the page and there was the answer -- Chapter 11."

You can't quote the Bible indiscriminately. I remember the story of two lawyers during a trial. One thought he would make a great impression on the jury by quoting from the Bible. So he said concerning his opponent's client, "We have it on the highest authority that it has been said, 'All that a man has will he give for his skin.'" But the other lawyer knew the Bible better. He said, "I am very much impressed by the fact that my distinguished colleague here regards as the highest authority the one who said, 'All that a man has will he give for his skin.' You will find that this saying comes from the Book of Job, and the one who utters it is the devil. And that is whom he regards as the highest authority!"

Ray Stedman.

CAMELS BIBLE In 1832 an edition had Rebekah leaving her tent to meet Isaac with a group of - not damsels - but camels.

WIFE-HATER BIBLE An 1810 version read, "If any man come to me, and hate not . . . his own wife (instead of :life"), he cannot be my disciple."

"SIN ON" BIBLE. The first English-language Bible to be printed in Ireland, in 1716, encouraged its readers to "sin on more" rather than "sin no more." A similar error in 1653 had declared: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall inherit the kingdom of God?"

THE WICKED BIBLE of 1631 reported the Seventh Commandment as "Thou shalt commit adultery," a mistake that infuriated King Charles. He ordered all copies destroyed and fined all printers whose hands had touched the edition.

MURDER'S BIBLE. This 19th-century faux pas had Mark 7:27 as "Let the children be killed" instead of "filled."

PLACEMAKER BIBLE. a 16th Century printer had Jesus blessing the "place-makers" instead of "peacemakers." An American printer later substituted the "Parable of the Vinegar" for the "Vineyard."

PRINTERS Bible. Perhaps King David was on target in a 1702 edition, which quoted him as saying "Printers (instead of "princes") have persecuted me without cause.

George Muller, who was known for his strong faith, confided. "The first 3 years after conversion, I neglected the Word of God. Since I began to search it diligently, the blessing has been wonderful. I have read the Bible through one hundred times and always with increasing delight!" John Bunyan, who wrote Pilgrim's Progress, testified, "Read the Bible, and read it again, and do not despair of help to understand something of the will and mind of God, though you think they are fast locked up from you. Neither trouble yourself, though you may not have commentaries and expositions; pray and read, and read and pray; for a little from God is better than a great deal from man."

When the Word Criticizes Us

We live in a day when man is criticizing God's Word. Modernism is emasculating it, modern cults are perverting it, and the world is neglecting it. Dr. W. H. Griffith Thomas once said that the word "discerner" in the Greek of Hebrews 4:12, R. V., should be translated "critic"—"a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart," and he added, "It is the only place in the Bible where the word 'critic' is

found, and you notice that it is the Word criticizing us, and if we allowed the Word of God to criticize us a little more, we would criticize it a great deal less." —Sunday School Times

A former park ranger at Yellowstone National Park tells the story of a ranger leading a group of hikers to a fire lookout. The ranger was so intent on telling the hikers about the flowers and animals that he considered the messages on his two-way radio distracting, so he switched it off. Nearing the tower, the ranger was met by a nearly breathless lookout, who asked why he hadn't responded to the messages on his radio. A grizzly bear had been seen stalking the group, and the authorities were trying to warn them of the danger.

Any time we turn out the messages God has sent us, we put at peril not only ourselves, but also those around us. How important it is that we never turn off God's saving communication! --Harold M. Wiest, *Power for Living*, p. 109.

Revelation

God gradually revealed his truth, like a flower unfolding. God's revelation is not like the night-blooming cereus that opens only in darkness and is seen by few. It is not like the morning glory that opens at dawn and is shut by noonday. God's revelation unfolded gradually, but it is now open for any and all to see. You may read it when you need guidance, or comfort, or strength, or inspiration.

Sword of the Spirit

If we hope to lead people to Christ, it is vital that we learn to rely upon the "Sword of the Spirit."

Dr. Broadus, a Southern Baptist professor and preacher, was asked on one occasion by a fine student, not a Christian however, to write in his autograph book. Dr. Broadus wrote in it three Greek words which mean: "One thing thou lackest."

Years later Dr. Broadus received a letter from a distinguished medical doctor in Texas. In the letter the doctor stated that he had never been able to forget that one sentence in his album and trusted that now he had the one thing that formerly he lacked.

Word for the Living

In the face of death, live humanly. In the middle of chaos, celebrate the Word. Amidst Babel, speak the truth. Confront the noise and verbiage and falsehood of death with the truth and potency and the efficacy of the Word of God. Know the Word, teach the Word, nurture the Word, preach the Word, defend the Word, incarnate the Word, do the Word, live the Word.

God's Word Is Life

Because we live so close to the biblical text, we often fail to note its power to summon and evoke new life. The Bible is our firm guarantee that prophetic construals of another world are still possible, still worth doing, still longingly received by those living at the edge of despair, resignation, and conformity.*

Why Memorize Scripture

Why is the expenditure of time and energy so worth the effort entailed in memorizing Scripture? Because our life is lived in our mind. More than 10,000 thoughts a day pass through that gray matter neatly tucked between our ears. Theologian A.W. Tozer once said, "Our thoughts not only reveal what we are, they predict what we will become. We will soon be the sum total of our thoughts." The Holy Spirit feeds on the spiritual nourishment of the Word to rewire our mental computer, thereby effectively changing our attitudes and actions.*

Related Resources:

- [Scripture Memory](#)
-

It Is You Who Is on Trial

Some people come to the Bible or to any work of great literature without the capacity to understand what is in it. They are like a person who comes to a well for a drink of water, only to find that there is no bucket to draw the water out of the well. When people say, "I didn't get anything out of the Bible" or out of the lesson or out of the sermon, it is quite possible that they came without the necessary equipment.

A man once walked through a great art gallery, looking scornfully at the paintings on the wall. "Are these the masterpieces?" he asked. "I don't think much of them."

The attendant standing by responded, "These pictures are not on trial. Their worth has been proved long ago. It is you who is on trial."*

How True Is the Bible?

Several years ago, Time magazine had an important article entitled "How True Is the Bible?" wherein they discussed the condition of the Bible after two hundred years of attacks by critics. They stated:

The breadth, sophistication and diversity of all this biblical investigation are impressive, but it begs a question: Has it made the Bible more credible or less? After more than two centuries of facing the heaviest scientific guns that could be brought to bear, the Bible has survived and is, perhaps, better for the siege. Even on the critics' own terms, in historical fact the Scriptures seem more acceptable now than they did when the rationalists began the attack.*

Mary Exemplifies Openness to Word See: Luke 1:38, 46–55; Hebrews 4:12–13

Mary's story ... tell[s] us that if the Scriptures don't sometimes pierce us like a sword, we're not paying close enough attention.*

Superiority of the Bible

A Christian university student shared a room with a Muslim. As they became friends, their conversation turned to their beliefs. The believer asked the Muslim if he'd ever read the Bible. He answered no, but then asked if the Christian had ever read the Koran. The believer responded, "No, I haven't, but I'm sure it would be interesting. Why don't we read both together, once a week, alternating books?" The young man accepted the challenge, their friendship deepened, and during the second term he became a believer in Jesus.

One evening, late in the term, he burst into the room and shouted at the long-time believer, "You deceived me!"

"What are you talking about?" the believer asked.

The new believer opened his Bible and said, "I've been reading it through, like you told me, and just read that the Word is living and active!" He grinned. "You knew all along that the Bible contained God's power and that the Koran is a book like any other. I never had a chance!"

"And now you'll hate me for life?" queried the believer.

"No," he answered, "but it was an unfair contest."*

The Bible

The Bible is not in a class. It constitutes a class by itself. (Emile Cailliet).

What the brush is to the artist in painting a picture, what the hammer is to the carpenter in driving a nail, what water is to the laundress in washing clothes, so the Bible is to God in saving souls. (Donald Grey Barnhouse).

Why will people go astray when they have this blessed Book to guide them? (Michael Faraday).

The Bible—has had more written about it—than has been written about the twenty greatest classics of world literature combined. (Wilbur Smith).

William Carey

William Carey and his associates in India translated the Bible into several score of tongues, and put it within the reach of 300,000,000 people. Whenever a volume was completed, they laid it on the communion table and dedicated it to Christ.*

Word for the Living

In the face of death, live humanly. In the middle of chaos, celebrate the Word. Amidst Babel, speak the truth. Confront the noise and verbiage and falsehood of death with the truth and potency and the efficacy of the Word of God. Know the Word, teach the Word, nurture the Word, preach the Word, defend the Word, incarnate the Word, do the Word, live the Word. —Stringfellow, William

James Smith - THE WORD OF GOD.

The "burning-glass" is so formed as to concentrate the sun's rays to a focus, so that their burning power is intensified. The Word of God is both a fire and a glass, it is in fact a burning-glass, it is divine truth concentrated. When it falls, focused on the heart of man, it is irresistible in its influence, it is as a fire in the bones. "The Word of God is quick and powerful" (Heb. 4:12), piercing, withering, reviving, consuming.

The voice of God is still in His Word, because His Word is the breathings of the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:21). The Scriptures are always living and active (see Heb. 4:12, R.V.). To turn away from His revealed will is to close our ears to the voice of God. Be not deceived, God knows when His voice is obeyed. He is personally interested in every individual child of His. How often have we complained of our failures? May not the cause be here: "Ye have not obeyed My voice?"

The Word of God is either grace that saves, or a sword that severs.

Food from the Bible

An old man once said, "For a long period, I puzzled myself about the difficulties of Scripture, until at last I came to the resolution, that reading the Bible was like eating fish. When I find a difficulty, I lay it aside, and call it a bone. Why should I choke over the bone when there is so much nutritious meat for me? Some day, perhaps, I may find that even the bone may afford me nourishment."

Until the Bible begins to talk to us, we really have not been reading it. A. W. TOZER

Once you begin to study every passage of Scripture with Tozer's attitude in the front of your thoughts, you will never read the Bible in the same way again. Once you begin to examine God's Word through the lens of asking yourself: "Why did the writer choose that particular phrase? Why did he select that story to tell? Why does he emphasize that single word over and over?" you will begin to peel back the centuries-old layers of cultural and historical overlay and come to see the Bible as alive and speaking personally to you today . . . and every day. [Inspired by Tozer: 59 Artists, Writers and Leaders](#)

[NIV, Once-A-Day: Walk with Jesus: 365 Days in the New Testament](#)

Aspiring politicians dread the thought of skeletons in the closet coming to light. But even the most anonymous John or Jane Doe will one day stand before the light of God's judgment. And then no secrets will be safe.

"Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account" (Hebrews 4:13). The God who knows even the thoughts and intentions of the heart will one day judge all.

Donald Barnhouse advises the Christian how to live in the light of that knowledge.

WALK WITH DONALD BARNHOUSE

"We must understand that 'what he sows' (Galatians 6:7) must be taken in its widest meaning, and that every thought and intent of the heart will come under the scrutiny of our Lord at his coming.

"We can be sure that at the judgment seat of Christ there will be a marked difference between the Christian who has lived his life before the Lord, clearly discerning what was for the glory of God, and another Christian who was saved in a rescue mission at the tag end of a depraved and vicious life, or a nominal Christian saved on his deathbed after a life of self-pride, self-righteousness, self-love, and self-sufficiency.

"All will be in heaven, but the differences will be eternal. We may be sure that the consequences of our character will survive the grave and that we shall face those consequences at the judgment seat of Christ."

God is everywhere. However, He does not want you to reach out for Him everywhere but only in the Word. Reach out for it and you will grasp Him aright. Otherwise you are tempting God and setting up idolatry. That is why He has established a certain method for us. This teaches us how and where we are to look for Him and find Him, namely, in the Word. Martin Luther.

In 1915, A Russian Armenian was reading his Bible when he was beheaded. I saw the Bible--large, thick, and well used. Inside was a reddish stain that permeated most of the book. The stain was the blood of this man, one of more than a million casualties of a religious and ethnic holocaust. About 70 years later a large shipment of bibles entered Romania from the West, and Ceausescu's (dictator of Romania) lieutenants confiscated them, shredded them, and turned them into pulp. Then they had the pulp reconstituted into toilet paper and sold to the West. -- Robert A Seiple, president, World Vision, June-July, 1990.

The Bible is like a telescope. If a man looks through his telescope he sees worlds beyond; but if he looks at his telescope, he does not see anything but that. The Bible is a thing to be looked through to see that which is beyond; but most people only look at it and so they see only the dead letter. -Phillip Brooks.

The Bible is a window in this prison-world, through which we may look into eternity. -- Timothy Dwight.

POWER OF THE WORD - One of the most dramatic examples of the Bible's divine ability to transform men and women involved the famous mutiny on the "Bounty." Following their rebellion against the notorious Captain Bligh, nine mutineers, along with the Tahitian men and women who accompanied them, found their way to Pitcairn Island, a tiny dot in the South Pacific only two miles long and a mile wide. Ten years later, drink and fighting had left only one man alive--John Adams. Eleven women and 23 children made up the rest of the Island's population. So far this is the familiar story made famous in the book and motion picture. But the rest of the story is even more remarkable. About this time, Adams came across the "Bounty's" Bible in the bottom of an old chest. He began to read it, and the divine power of God's Word reached into the heart of that hardened murderer on a tiny volcanic speck in the vast Pacific Ocean--and changed his life forever. The peace and love that Adams found in the Bible entirely replaced the old life of quarreling, brawling, and liquor. He began to teach the children from the Bible until every person on the island had experienced the same amazing change that he had found. Today, with a population of slightly less than 100, nearly every person on Pitcairn Island is a Christian. -- From Signs of the Times, August, 1988, p. 5.

When their son left for his freshman year at Duke University, his parents gave him a Bible, assuring him it would be a great help. Later, as he began sending them letters asking for money, they would write back telling him to read his Bible, citing chapter and verse. He would reply that he was reading the Bible--but he still needed money. When he came home for a semester break, his parents told him they knew he had not been reading his Bible. How? They had tucked \$10 and \$20 bills by the verses they had cited in their letters. John T. Spach, in Reader's Digest.

POWER OF THE WORD - Many years ago in a Moscow theater, matinee idol Alexander Rostovzev was converted while playing the role of Jesus in a sacrilegious play entitled Christ in a Tuxedo. He was supposed to read two verses from the Sermon on the Mount, remove his gown, and cry out, "Give me my tuxedo and top hat!" But as he read the words, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted," he began to tremble. Instead of following the script, he kept reading from Matthew 5, ignoring the coughs, calls, and foot-stamping of his fellow actors. Finally, recalling a verse he had learned in his childhood in a Russian Orthodox church, he cried, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom!" (Luke 23:42). Before the curtain could be lowered, Rostovzev had trusted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. - J.K. Johnston, Why Christians Sin, Discovery House, 1992, p. 121.

[Joel Gilbert](#) - I will always remember hearing the testimony of how someone I know became a believer. They did not grow up in a Christian home and certainly did not grow up reading the Bible. If I remember the story right, a friend convinced him to read the Bible even though he was a total skeptic about anything religious. He had read about other religions and had studied some religious thinkers and had basically rejected all things religious. But he had never read the Bible so he decided to just give it a try--mostly so he could say that he had tried it and could check it off his list. His friend told him to read the Gospel of John.

But something happened in a moment in time, something swift and sudden and more than a little scary. He said that as he was reading he started to get the sense that the book was reading him. He read about Jesus and the disciples and a miracle where Jesus supposedly turned water into wine. He read something about needing to be born again. He read something he had heard somewhere before about God so loving the world that he sent his Son into the world so that people could be saved and have eternal life and not perish. But then a few verses later he read about those who do not believe, but reject Jesus. It says that they are condemned and will be judged. Then he came to these three verses:

And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.--

He said that he closed the book and quickly put it down. Here was something he had not told anyone. He knew that the life he was living was not good. As long as he felt like he was the judge of religions, things were fine because he was the one holding the searchlight. But this book turned the searchlight on him and he did not want that because he wanted what he was doing to stay hidden--to not be part of the discussion.

He didn't read anymore that day, but as time went on he kept coming back to this strange book that had read him while he was reading it. Eventually, God broke through, and he came to see Jesus as not just true, but irresistibly beautiful and glorious. And he came to Jesus--he came into the light. And his darkness (his dirty laundry) was brought into the light, not simply to be exposed, but to be washed whiter than snow.

The testimony you just heard is in story form. Here is how I would state the

Main Point: The Bible is a book like no other. We not only read it; it reads us.

Charles Stanley - Some Assembly Required [On Holy Ground - Page 369](#)

SCRIPTURE READING: Hebrews 4:1–10

KEY VERSE: Hebrews 4:12

Have you ever bought something with these words on the box: Some assembly required? You have to rely on the enclosed directions to make sure that slot A fits into tab A, and so forth. Even with careful instructions and diagrams, putting it together can be a challenge, so you know how hard it would be without any help from the manufacturer.

When someone tries to live without the direction of God's Word, essentially he is attempting to put together the complex pieces of his life minus the benefit of the Lord's perfect and wise guidance. Nothing else is a substitute.

Why? We learn the answer from Hebrews 4:12 (NASB): "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

God knows exactly how you are put together. He made you and knows what you need to function properly. In one sense, the Bible is the ultimate Manufacturer's Guide, one that does not lie, never beats around the bush, and cannot fail to fashion you as God intends. Best of all, the wisdom of Scripture is available at all times, no restrictions applied. Are you a reader of life's Instruction Book?

Master, thank You for Your Instruction Book for life. Your Word is living and active in me. You made me and know what I need to function properly. I praise You that my life is in the process of being assembled in perfect, divine order.

Tony Evans - Focus on God's Word **HEBREWS 4:12** [A Moment for Your Soul: Devotions to Lift You Up](#)

In order to overcome during a time of trial and temptation, we must focus our attention not only on our Savior but also on God's Word.

Sometimes we don't understand the importance of the Word and the fact that it is alive and active. We view Scripture like we view the Queen of England: She holds the top position in the country, but she doesn't really have any power. Similarly, many of us hold God's Word in high esteem, but it has no power in our lives. The Bible wasn't meant to decorate your coffee table or be held under your arm at church. The Word of God was written because of what it can do in our lives. James 1:18 explains that we were brought forth by the word of truth. It gave us spiritual life.

When the devil tempted Christ in the wilderness, he told Christ, "Command that these stones become bread" (Matthew 4:3). He offered a physical temptation to meet a physical desire for food. But Jesus resisted the temptation by calling on the Word of God, directly quoting from Deuteronomy 8. Jesus knew the Scripture so well that He could employ it to resist the temptation the devil was throwing at Him. He trusted in God and stood on the authority of His Word.

You must do the same. When you look to your Savior Jesus Christ and lean on the Word of God, the victory is yours.

Russell Spray - P-O-W-E-R of God's Word" (Heb. 4:12).

I. P-enetrating Power

"The word of God ... piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit ..." (Heb. 4:12).

- A. God's Word penetrates the heart of sinners. It brings forgiveness to those who repent and believe.
- B. God's Word penetrates the hearts of his people who are loaded down with burdens. It provides comfort to his trusting children (see Ps. 119:165).

II. O-vercoming Power

"And Jesus answered ... Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written ..." (Luke 4:8).

- A. When Jesus was tempted forty days in the wilderness, he overcame through the power of God's Word.
- B. We must depend on God's Word to overcome the onslaught of the enemy also. Like Paul, we can be "more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

III. W-onderworking Power

"Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net" (Luke 5:5).

- A. Peter obeyed Christ's Word and the miracle happened. The overflow broke the fishing net. Two ships were filled with fish.
- B. The power of God's Word is the same today. Jesus said, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done" (John 15:7).

IV. E-verlasting Power

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

A. In today's society few things are lasting. Temporal possessions deteriorate.

B. The power of God's Word endures. Guns, tanks, not even nuclear power, can destroy it. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Ps. 119:89).

V. R-evealing Power

"The word of God ... is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

A. God's Word reveals his will for humankind. It reveals his love and offers the promise of salvation to those who repent and believe on Jesus Christ.

B. It reveals the Holy Spirit who cleanses, empowers, and directs totally committed Christians. "He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

C H Spurgeon Sermon Notes on Hebrews 4:12

The Word of God is a name for Christ as well as for the Scriptures.

The Scriptures are meant in this place, but the Lord Jesus is never dissevered therefrom: indeed, he is the substance of the written Word.

Scripture is what it is because the Lord Jesus embodies himself in it.

Let us consider from this text—

I. THE QUALITIES OF THE WORD.

1. It is divine. It is the word of God.

2. It is living. "The word of God is quick."

In contrast to our words, which pass away, God's word lives on.

It has life in itself. It is "the living and incorruptible seed."

It creates life where it comes.

It can never be destroyed and exterminated

3. It is effectual. "Quick, and powerful."

It carries conviction and conversion.

It works comfort and confirmation.

It has power to raise us to great heights of holiness and happiness.

4. It is cutting. "Sharper than any two-edged sword."

It cuts all over. It is all edge. It is sharpness itself.

It wounds more or less all who touch it.

It kills self-righteousness, sin, unbelief, &c.

5. It is piercing. "Even to the dividing asunder."

It forces its way into the hard heart.

It penetrates the smallest opening, like the arrow which entered between the joints of the harness.

6. It is discriminating. "To the dividing asunder of soul and spirit."

It separates things much alike: natural and spiritual religion.

It divides the outer from the inner: external and internal religion, "joints and marrow."

It does this by its own penetrating and discerning qualities.

7. It is revealing. "A discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

It cleaves the man as the butcher cleaves a carcass, and opens up the secret faculties and tendencies of the soul.

Laying bare thoughts, and intents, and inner workings.

Criticizing them, and putting a right estimate on them.

Tracing their windings, and showing their dubious character.

Approving that which is good, and condemning the evil.

All this we have seen in the preaching of the Word of God.

Have you not felt it to be so?

II. THE LESSONS WHICH WE SHOULD LEARN THEREFROM.

That we do greatly reverence the Word, as truly spoken of God.

That we come to it for quickening for our own souls.

That we come to it for power when fighting the battles of truth.

That we come to it for cutting force to kill our own sins and to help us in destroying the evils of the day.

That we come to it for piercing force when men's consciences and hearts are hard to reach.

That we use it to the most obstinate, to arouse their consciences and convict them of sin.

That we discriminate by its means between truth and falsehood.

That we let it criticize us, and our opinions, and projects, and acts, and all about us.

Let us keep to this Sword of the Lord, for none other is living and powerful as this is.

Let us grasp its hilt with firmer grip than ever.

SHARPENERS

All the great conquests which Christ and his saints achieve in this world are got with this sword; when Christ comes forth against his enemies this sword is girded on his thigh (Ps. 45:3): "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty"; and his victory over them is ascribed to it (verse 4), "And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth"; that is, the word of truth.

We read of Apollos (Acts 18:28), that he "mightily convinced the Jews"; he did, as it were, knock them down with the weight of his reasoning. And out of what armoury fetched he the sword with which he so prevailed? See the same verse, "Showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ"; and he therefore is said to be "mighty in the Scriptures" (ver. 24).

Bless God for the efficacy of the word upon thy soul. Did ever its point prick thy heart, its edge fetch blood of thy lusts? Bless God for it; you would do as much to a surgeon for lancing a sore, and severing a putrified part from thy body, though he put thee to exquisite torture in the doing of it. And I hope thou thinkest God hath done thee a greater kindness.... There is not another sword like this in all the world, that can cure with cutting; not another arm could use this sword, to have done thus with it, besides the Spirit of God. None could do such feats with Scanderberg's as himself.

The word of God is too sacred a thing, and preaching too solemn a work, to be toyed and played with, as is the usage of some, who make a sermon but matter of wit and fine oratory. If we mean to do good, we must come unto men's hearts, not in word only, but with power. Satan moves not for a thousand squibs and wit-cracks of rhetoric. Draw, therefore, this sword out of your scabbard, and strike with its naked edge; this you will find the only way to pierce your people's consciences, and fetch blood of their sins.—William Gurnall.

When the heathen saw the converts reading the book which had produced the change, they enquired if they talked to it. "No," they answered, "it talks to us; for it is the Word of God." "What then!" replied the strangers, "does it speak?" "Yes," rejoined the Christians, "it speaks to the heart."—Life of Moffat.

Miss Whateley says, "To rouse the torpid and unexercised mind of a Moslem woman is wonderful, for they are sunk in ignorance and degradation; but while I was reading to one of them a few weeks ago, she exclaimed, 'Why, it is just as if I were out in the dark, and you held a lamp to me, that I might see my way.' "

The Rev. James Wall, of Rome, relates the following instances of conversion through the reading of the Scriptures:—One of the converts, when first presented with a New Testament, said, "Very well; it is the very size for me to make my cigarettes," and so he began to smoke it away. He smoked away all the Evangelists, till he was at the Tenth Chapter of John, when it struck him that he must read a bit of it, for if he didn't, there would soon be no more left to read. The first word struck home, and the man read himself into Christ.

A secret society of political conspirators, who sought to achieve their purposes by assassination, were in the habit of placing a Bible (as a blind) on the table of the room where they met for deliberation; and one night, when there happened to be little business to transact, and they were all rather sleepy, a member of the society opened the Bible, and saw a verse that went right to his heart. He soon returned to the book, and read more of it; and now he was a very earnest follower of the Lord Jesus.—Missionary Herald.

The Word of God and Its Edge F B Meyer

WE all have to do with God. "Him with whom we have to do." You cannot break the connection. You must do with him as a rebel, if not as a friend; on the ground of works, if not on the ground of grace; at the great white throne, if not in the fleeting days of time. You cannot do without God. You cannot do as you would if there were no God. You cannot avoid having to do with him; for even though you were to say there was no God, doing violence to the clearest instincts of your being, yet still you would breathe his air, eat his provender, occupy his world, and stand at last before his bar. And, if you will pardon the materialism of the reference, I will follow the suggestion of my text, and say that the God with whom we have to do has eyes. "The eyes of him with whom we have to do." "Thou art a God that seest" was the startled exclamation of an Egyptian slave girl whose

childhood had been spent amid the vast statues of gods who had eyes with far-away stony stare, but saw not. And she was right.

"The Lord looks from heaven; his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men." (Ps 33:13)

Those eyes miss no one. "There is not any creature not manifest in his sight." The truest goodness is least obtrusive of itself. It steals unnoticed through the world, filling up its days with deeds and words of gentle kindness, which are known only to heaven; and herein it finds its sufficient reward. It prays behind closed doors; it exercises a vigorous self-denial in secret; it does its work of mercy by stealth. Thus the great blatant world of men, with its trumpets and heralds and newspaper notices, knows little of it, and cannot find the nooks where God's wild flowers bloom in inaccessible heights, for his eye alone. But the Father seeth in secret. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous. His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is perfect toward him. Do you want guidance? Look up! those eyes wait to guide by a glance. Are you in sorrow? they will fill with tears. Are you going astray? they shall beckon you back, and break your heart, as Peter's. You will come to find your heaven in the light radiated by the eye of God, when once you have learned to meet it, clad in the righteousness of Jesus.

Unconverted reader, remember there is no screen from the eye of God. His eyes are as a flame of fire; and our strongest screens crackle up as thinnest gauze before the touch of that holy flame. Even rocks and hills are inadequate to hide from the face of him that sits upon the throne. "Whither shall I go from thy presence?" That question is unanswered, and unanswerable. It has stood upon the page of Scripture for three thousand years, and no one yet of all the myriads that have read it has been able to devise a reply. Heaven says, Not here. Hell says, Not here. It is not among angels, or the lost, or in the vast silent spaces of eternity. There is no creature anywhere not manifest to his sight. He who made vultures, able from immense heights to discern the least morsel on the desert waste, has eyes as good as they. And think how terrible are the eyes of God! When Egypt's chivalry had pursued Israel into the depths of the sea, they suddenly turned to flee. Why? Not because of thunder or lightning or voice; but because of a look. "The Lord looked out of the cloud, and troubled the Egyptians." Ah, sinner, how terrible will it be for thee to abide under the frown of God! "With the froward he will show himself froward."

Those eyes miss nothing. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." It is said of the Lord Jesus, on one occasion, that he entered into Jerusalem, and into the Temple; and when he had looked round about on all things, he went out. It was his last, long, farewell look. But note its comprehensiveness. Nothing escaped it. We look only on parts of things, and often look without seeing. But the Lord sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. "Naked and opened." This is a sacrificial phrase, indicating the priestly act of throwing the victim on its back before him, so that it lay, exposed to his gaze, helpless to recover itself, ready for the knife. Ah, how eagerly we try to hide and cloak our sin! We dare not pen a truthful diary; we dread the illness which would unlock our tongues in wholesale chatterings; we shrink from the loving gaze of our dearest. We deceive man, and sometimes ourselves; but not our great High-Priest. He sees all, that secret sin; that lurking enmity; that closed chamber; that hidden burglar; that masked assassin; that stowaway; that declension of heart; that little rift within the lute; that speck of decay in the luscious fruit. And thus it is that men are kept out of the Canaan of God's rest, because he sees the evil heart of unbelief which departs from himself; and on account of which he swears now, as of old, "they shall not enter into my rest."

Is it not a marvel that he who knows so much about us should love us still? It were indeed an inexplicable mystery, save for the truth of the words which so sweetly follow: "Seeing, then, that we have a great High-Priest." He has a priest's heart. His scrutiny is not one of morbid or idle curiosity, but of a surgeon, who intently examines the source of disease with pity and tenderness, and resolves to extirpate it as quickly and as painlessly as possible. Is it not frequently the case that fuller knowledge will beget love, which once seemed impossible? There are some people whose faces are so hard, and their eyes so cold, that we are instantly repelled; but if we knew all, how they have been pierced and wounded, and disappointed, we should begin to pity them, and pity is close kinsman to love. The Saviour has known us from all eternity, our downittings and uprisings, our secret possibilities of evil, our unfathomed depths of waywardness and depravity; and yet he loves us, and will love us. "He knows all, But loves us better than he knows." And out of this love, which wells up perennially in the heart of Jesus, unfrozen by the winter of our neglect, Unstanch'd by the demands of our fickleness, there comes the stern discipline of which this passage proceeds to speak. In majestic phrase, the Apocalyptic seer tells how he beheld the Word of God ride forth on his snow-white steed, arrayed in crimson robes, whilst the many crowns of empire flashed upon his brow. Two features are specially noted in his

appearance. His eyes were as a flame of fire; this characteristic looks back over the words we have considered. Out of his mouth comes a sharp two-edged sword; this looks forward to the words which now invite us. We must never divorce these two. The eyes and the sword. Not the eyes only; for of what use would it be to see and not strike? Not the sword only; for to strike without seeing would give needless pain, this would be surgery blindfolded. But the searching tender vision, followed by the swift and decisive flash of the sword of amputation and deliverance. Oh, who will now submit to that stroke, wielded by the gentle hand that often carried healing and blessing, and was nailed to the cross; guided by unerring wisdom, and nerved by Almighty strength? Not death, but life and fruitfulness, freedom and benediction, are all awaiting that one blow of emancipation. That sword is the Word of God.

I. THE WORD OF GOD IS LIVING

The words he speaks are spirit and life (John 6:63). Wherever they fall, though into dull and lifeless soil, they begin to breed life, and produce results like themselves. They come into the heart of an abandoned woman; and straightway there follow compunction for the past, vows of amendment, and the hasty rush to become an evangelist to others. They come into the heart of a dying robber; and immediately he refrains from blasphemy, and rebukes his fellow, and announces the Messiahship, the blamelessness, the approaching glory, of the dying Saviour. They come into hearts worn out with the wild excesses of the great pagan ages, and ill-content, though enriched with the spoils of art and refinement and philosophy in the very zenith of their development; and lo! the moral waste begins to sprout with harvests of holiness, and to blossom with the roses of heaven. If only those words, spoken from the lips of Christ, be allowed to work in the conscience, there will be forthwith the stir of life.

II. THE WORD OF GOD IS ACTIVE

I.e., energetic. Beneath its spell the blind see, the deaf hear, the paralyzed are nerved with new energy, the dead stir in their graves and come forth. There are few things more energetic than life. Put a seed into the fissure of a rock, and it will split it in twain from top to bottom. Though walls and rocks and ruins impede the course of the seedling, yet it will force its way to the light and air and rain. And when the Word of God enters the heart, it is not as a piece of furniture or lumber. It asserts itself and strives for mastery, and compels men to give up sin; to make up long standing feuds; to restore ill-gotten gains; to strive to enter into the strait gate. "Now ye are pruned," said our Lord, "through the word that I have spoken to you." The words of Christ are his winnowing-fan, with which he is wont to purge his flour, whether in the heart or the world. We are not, therefore, surprised that a leading tradesman in a thriving commercial center said that the visit of two evangelists, who did little else than reiterate the Word of God, was as good as a revival of trade, because it led so many people to pay up debts which were reckoned as lost.

III. THE WORD OF GOD IS SHARP

Its sharpness is threefold.

(1) It is sharp to pierce.

On the day of Pentecost, as Peter wielded the sword of the Spirit, it pierced three thousand to the heart; and they fell wounded to the death before him, crying, "What shall we do?" Often since have strong men been smitten to the dust under the effect of that same sword, skillfully used. And this is the kind of preaching we need. Men are urged to accept of the gift of God, and many seem to comply with the invitation; but in the process of time they fall away. Is not the cause in this, that they have never been wounded to the death of their self-esteem, their heart has never been pierced to the letting of the blood of their own life, they have never been brought into the dust of death? Oh for Boanerges! able to pierce the armor of excuses of vain hopes, behind which men shield themselves, that many may cry with Ahab, pierced between the joints of the harness "Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the battle, for I am wounded!"

(2) It is sharp to divide.

With his sharp knife the priest was accustomed to dissect the joints of the animal, and to open to view even the marrow of the bones. Every hair was searched, every limb examined; and thus the sacred gift was passed, and permitted to be offered in worship. And God's scrutiny is not satisfied with the external appearance and profession. It goes far deeper. It enters into those mysterious regions of the nature where soul and spirit, purpose, intention, motive, and impulse, hold their secret court, and carry on the hidden machinery of human life. Who can tread the mysterious confines where soul and spirit touch? What is the line of demarkation? Where does the one end, and the other begin? We cannot tell; but that mystic Word of God could cut the one

from the other, as easily as the selvage is divided from the cloth. It is at home in distinctions which are too fine drawn and minute for human apprehension. It assumes an office like that which Jesus refused when he said, "Who made me a judge and divider over you?"

(3) It is sharp to criticize and judge.

"Quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." Christ is eager about these. Because what a man thinks and intends in his heart, that he will be sooner or later in life. We must expect to have our most secret thoughts, relations, and purposes questioned, criticized, and measured by the Word of God. No court of inquiry was ever presided over by a more exact inquisitor than this. The corpses of the dead past are exhumed; the old lumber-rooms with their padlocked boxes are explored; the accounts of bygone years are audited and taxed. God is critic of all the secrets of the heart. As each thought or intention passes to and fro, he searches it. He is constantly weighing in the balance our thoughts and aims, though they be light as air. On one occasion, when Saul had spared the spoils of a doomed city, together with its monarch, the latter came to Samuel, not as a criminal, but delicately, as a pampered friend. And Samuel said, "As thy sword has made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord." Thus it is that we have spared too many of our sins, at the risk of our irreparable rejection from the throne of true manhood and righteousness. How much better to let Christ do his work of amputation and excision! If we do not know ourselves, let us ask him to search us. If we cannot cut off the offending member, let us look to him to rid us of it. Do not fear him; close after these terrible words, as the peal of bells after the crash of the storm on the organ at Freiburg, we are told that "he was tempted in all points like as we are," and that "we have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." "Does she sing well?" asked the trainer of a new operatic singer. "Splendidly," was the reply; "but if I had to bring her out, I would first break her heart." He meant that one who had not been broken by sorrow could not touch the deepest chords of human life. Ah! there is no need for this with our Lord Jesus; reproach broke his heart. He understands broken hearts, and is able to soothe and save all who come unto God by him. (From F. B. Meyer. The Way Into the Holiest)

HEART SEARCHING WORD OF GOD Hebrews 4:12, 13 Andrew Murray

THEY have been earnest words with which the writer has been warning the Hebrews against unbelief and disobedience, hardening the heart and departing from God, and coming short of the promised rest. The solemn words of God's oath in Ps. 95. I have sworn in My wrath, they shall not enter into My rest, have been repeated more than once to urge all to give diligence lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. He is about to close his warning. He does so by reminding them of the power of the word of God as the word of the omniscient One, of Him with whom we have to do, before whose eyes all things, our hearts and lives too, are naked and open. Let each student of the Epistle make a very personal application of the words. Let us take the oath of God concerning His rest, and the command to labour that we may enter in, home to our heart, and say whether we have indeed entered in. And if not, let us all the more yield ourselves to the word to search and try us: it will without fail do its blessed work in us, and prepare us for following with profit the further teaching concerning our Lord Jesus.

For the word of God is living and active. At times it may appear as if the word effects so little. The word is like seed: everything depends on the treatment it receives. Some receive the word with the understanding: there it cannot be quickened. The word is meant for the heart, the will, the affections. The word must be submitted to, must be lived, must be acted out. When this is done it will manifest its living, quickening power. It is not we who have to make the word alive. When, in faith in the life and power there is in the word, the heart yields itself in humble submission and honest desire to its action, it will prove itself to be life and power.

And sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow. The first action of God's word is to wound, to cut, to divide. In the soul the natural life has its seat; in the spirit the spiritual and divine. Sin has brought confusion and disorder; the spirit is under the mastery of the soul, the natural life. God's word divides and separates; wakens the spirit to a sense of its destiny as the faculty for the unseen and eternal; brings the soul to a knowledge of itself as a captive to the power of sin. It cuts deep and sure, discovering the deep corruption of sin. As the knife of the surgeon, who seeks to heal, pierces even to the dividing of the joints and marrow, where it is needed, so the word penetrates all; there is no part of the inner being to which it does not pass.

And quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. It is specially with the heart that God's word deals. In Hebrews 3. we read of the hardened heart, the evil heart of unbelief, the erring heart. When the word heart occurs later in the Epistle we shall find everything changed; we shall read of a heart in which God's law is written, of a true heart, a heart sprinkled with the blood, a heart established by grace (Hebrews 8:10, 10:22, 13:9). We have here the transition from the one to the other. God's appeal was, To-day, if ye hear His voice, harden not your heart. The heart that will but yield itself to be searched by God's word, to have its secret thoughts and intents discerned and judged by it, will be freed from its erring and unbelief, and quickened and cleansed, and made a living table on which the word is written by God Himself. Oh, to know how needful it is, but also how blessed, to yield our hearts to the judgment of the word.

And there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight. God's word bears the character of God Himself. He is the all-knowing and all-pervading: nothing can hide itself from the judgment of His word. If we will not have it judge us now, it will condemn us hereafter. For all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Yes, the God with whom we have to do is He of whom we later read: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." And again: "Our God is a consuming fire." It is this God who now pleads with us to enter into His rest.

Let each of us gladly yield ourselves to have to do with Him. If perhaps there be a secret consciousness that all is not right, that we are not giving diligence to enter into the rest, oh, let us beware of setting such thoughts aside. It is the first swelling of the living seed of the word within us. Do not regard that thought as coming from thyself, or from man who brings thee God's word; it is God waking thee out of sleep. Have to do with Him. Be willing that the word should show thee what is wrong. Be not afraid of its discovering to thee thy sin and wretchedness. The knife of the physician wounds to heal. The light that shows thee thy sin and wrong will surely lead thee out. The word is living and will give thee life.

1. God has spoken to us in His Son. This is the keynote of the Epistle. To-day, if you hear His voice, harden not your heart: this is the keynote of this long and solemn warning. Let us hearken, let us yield to the word. As we deal with the word, so we deal with God And so will God deal with us.
2. Judge of thy life not by what thy heart says, or the Church, or the so-called Christian world--but by what the word says. Let it have its way with thee: It will greatly bless thee.
3. All things are naked before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Why, then, through indifference or discouragement, shut thine eyes to them? Oh, lay everything open before God, the God with whom we have to do, whether we will or not.
4. The word is living and active. Have great faith in its power. Be sure that the Holy Spirit, that the living Word, that God Himself works in it. The word ever points to the living God, who is present in it and makes it a living word in the heart that is seeking for life and for God. (Andrew Murray. The Holiest of All)

SERMONS ON HEBREWS 4:12

Characteristics of the Sacred Scriptures	W. Jones	Hebrews 4:12
Characteristics of the Word of God	D. Young	Hebrews 4:12
Success	J.S. Bright	Hebrews 4:11-13
An All-Seeing God	J. Wesley.	Hebrews 4:12-13
Conviction by the Word	D. Livingstone.	Hebrews 4:12-13
Effects of the Bible	Pasteur Hirsch.	Hebrews 4:12-13
God a Person	J. C. Miller, D. D.	Hebrews 4:12-13
God is Present	K. Arvine.	Hebrews 4:12-13
God Knows All	Gold Dust.	Hebrews 4:12-13
God Over All	H. Stowell, M. A.	Hebrews 4:12-13
God Seeing All Things	W. Burnet.	Hebrews 4:12-13
God Sees All		Hebrews 4:12-13

God with Us	Baxendale's Anecdotes	Hebrews 4:12-13
God's Word to Us, and Our Word to God	Dean Vaughan.	Hebrews 4:12-13
It Finds Me		Hebrews 4:12-13
Omniscience Illustrated	Preacher's Promptuary of Anecdote	Hebrews 4:12-13
Our Relation to God	A. S. Patterson.	Hebrews 4:12-13
Quick and Powerful	G. Lawson.	Hebrews 4:12-13
The Cry of the Human Heart for a Personal God	C. Stanford, D. D.	Hebrews 4:12-13
The Divine Word	A. Saphir.	Hebrews 4:12-13
The Mighty Power of the Word	W. Jones, D. D.	Hebrews 4:12-13
The Power of the Divine Word	F. A. Cox, D. D.	Hebrews 4:12-13
The Power of the Word of God	L. O. Thompson.	Hebrews 4:12-13
The Self-Evidencing Power of the Bible	H. Melvill, B. D.	Hebrews 4:12-13
The Sword of the Lord	C. H. Spurgeon.	Hebrews 4:12-13
The Word a Sword	C. H. Spurgeon.	Hebrews 4:12-13
The Word of God	J. Slade, M. A.	Hebrews 4:12-13
The Word of God	William Gurnall.	Hebrews 4:12-13
The Word of God Likened to a Sword	F. Rendall, M. A.	Hebrews 4:12-13
The Word Self-Revealing	M. Henry.	Hebrews 4:12-13
The Living Word of God	T. C. Edwards, D. D.	Hebrews 4:12-13
Watched by God	C. Hewitt.	Hebrews 4:12-13
The Word of God Discovering	C. New	Hebrews 4:12-16