

GATE School of Ministry [DC] Bible Study Notes

Reach | Resource | Reform

Module : The Primacy of the Word of God

Session 5 : The Mirror of the Word

Focus : See Yourself in Christ in The Word



Brief Recapitulation of Salient Principles from Previous Sessions:

- ❖ God and His Word are one.
- ❖ God speaks primarily through His Word. What is heard as 'rhema' is spoken from the 'logos'.
- ❖ God is revealed through His Word.
- ❖ His Word, the name of the Lamb, expresses His nature (identity) and function (purpose).
- ❖ God discloses Himself to us through His Word.
- ❖ The processes of accessing (hearing) and obeying God's Word is the methodology by which He unveils Himself to us in ever-increasing progression.
- ❖ Every time we hear accurately and carefully obey, we partake of His Divine nature, thereby becoming who He is and/or expressing substantially the fact "as He is, so are we" (1 John 4:17).
- ❖ The Word of God is an imperishable divine seed, containing the complete DNA code of divine nature and purpose. By it, we are 'brought forth' or born again as sons of God.
- ❖ Consistent obedience to the Word purifies the soul. This Seed (Word) abides in us and so we do not practice sin as a way of life. Sharing in God's divine nature in this way, we escape the deepening corruption in the world.
- ❖ The level of fruitfulness borne by the Word in us is dependent upon the measure of hearing and obedience.
- ❖ We live by every proceeding Word of God.
- ❖ Our commitment to position ourselves to hear and obey His word is based upon our high estimation, honour and respect for His SPEAKING.
- ❖ We are less prone to error and deception when we prioritise the knowledge of God's WAYS above HIS WORKS.
- ❖ As our representation of Him grows, we become Him in our world.
- ❖ All of the Scriptures reveal Christ and bring understanding and clarity to every season in God.
- ❖ The SEED of the Word becomes the SON of the Kingdom. Every principle of God's Word must be embodied in our lives. The Word becomes flesh and dwells among men who see Divine glory or nature manifested.

James 1:14-25

- 14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and **enticed by his own lust**.
- 15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.
- 16 **Do not be deceived**, my beloved brethren.
- 17 Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.
- 18 In the exercise of His will He **brought us forth** by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.
- 19 *This* you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak *and* slow to anger;
- 20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.
- 21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.
- 22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.
- 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror;
- 24 for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.
- 25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and **abides by it**, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

1. HOW YOU HEAR IS IMPORTANT

Jesus was concerned about both WHAT and HOW the people heard or listened.

Mark 4:24a And He was saying to them, "Take care WHAT you listen to"

This stresses the importance of being selective in what teachings you listen to.

Luke 8:18a "So take care HOW you listen;

This highlights the need for personal responsibility and the right attitudes to be present in those who hear an accurate, relevant and present-day Word.

The attitude in which God's Word is received determines its potential fruit or result in your life. How you receive the Word is very important. The following are some important principles that should be present every time we HEAR the Word.

a. HEAR with UNDERSTANDING

Jesus stressed the importance of understanding what you hear.

Mat 15:10 After Jesus called the crowd to Him, He said to them, "**Hear and understand.**"

Mat 13:13 "Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while **hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.**

A failure to understand is the inability to first comprehend intelligibly the principle of the Word being conveyed, and then because of this, a failure to obey it (see Psalm 111:10).

Psalm 111:10 b **A good understanding** have all those who **do** *His commandments*

Heb. 5:11 Concerning him (*i.e. Melchisedek*) we have much to say, and *it is hard to explain*, since you have become **dull of hearing**.

The Hebrew believers could not comprehend certain principles regarding Melchisedek. The reason cited for this was 'dullness of hearing'.

Dull = nothros = sluggish, lazy and slothful

Contextually (read the whole chapter of Hebrews 5), this dullness of hearing was the result of a long period in which there was no deliberate growth and progression toward maturity, especially in the migration from the milk of the Word to the meat of the Word. The people here are also described as 'unskilled in the Word of righteousness' and 'infants'. Paul in 1 Cor. 3:1-3 casts more light on spiritual infancy as those still beset by issues of carnality, envy, jealousy and strife. All these cause a dullness of hearing and prevent understanding. Thus disobedience to the Word can be the only outcome.

In **James 1:14-25** quoted above, James implores us to depart from all forms of lust, which if entertained leads to sin, which results in spiritual death (v.15). In the same context he warns of the deceptive nature of lust and sin (v.16). He then proceeds to remind us that we have been 'brought forth' by the WORD OF TRUTH (v.18) – the seed of divine nature is within us.

Having established this, James beckons us to be slow to speak, quick to hear and slow to anger, and then instructs us to put aside all filthiness (*i.e. immoral behaviour*) and what 'remains' – *i.e. any remnant or residue of wickedness (i.e. malignity, malice, ill-will, desire to injure).*

He then casts light on further principles highlighting **how one should receive the WORD OF GOD.**

b. Receive the WORD with HUMILITY.

James 1:21 : "... in **humility** receive the **word implanted**, which is able to **save your souls**.

Humility ('prautes') is "mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit, meekness". Humility is opposite to pride and anger.

Psalm 25:8-9

- 8 Good and upright is the LORD; Therefore He instructs sinners in the way.
- 9 He leads the humble in justice, And He teaches **the humble** His way.

James 4:6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

c. Receive the word with FEAR, REVERENCE AND HIGH ESTEEM

Psalm 25:12-14

- 12 Who is the man **who fears the LORD**? He will instruct him in the way he should choose.
- 13 His soul will abide in prosperity, And his descendants will inherit the land.
- 14 The secret of the LORD is for **those who fear Him**, And He will make them **know His covenant**.

Isaiah 66:1-2

- 1 Thus says the LORD, "Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest?
- 2 "For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being," declares the LORD. "But **to this one I will look**, To him who is **humble and contrite of spirit**, and **who TREMBLES at My word**.

Heb. 12:25 See to it that you **do not refuse Him who is speaking**.

Refuse = paraiteomai = decline, avoid, shun, reject

d. Receive the Word as the 'WORD OF GOD' expressed through MEN

If your view of the Word of God coming to you is simply the opinion of a man, then the Word of God will not have its intended effect. As a spiritual father over the church at Thessalonica, Paul constantly thanked them for receiving him and the word he carried as being sent by God. For the Thessalonians, Paul's word was equated to the Word of God. Also in receiving the Word of God, they also embraced him as the carrier and communicator of that Word. Both the Word and the one

who speaks the Word must be well received. But the imperative is to always receive the Word dispensed through a human vessel but regard it as God Himself speaking to you.

1 Thess. 2:9-13

- 9 For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.
- 10 You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers;
- 11 just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children,
- 12 so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.
- 13 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

Here is what the Greek words translated 'received' and 'accepted' in verse 13 imply:

Received	=	paralambano	=	To take near, with, or to oneself.
Accepted	=	dechomai	=	To accept an offer deliberately and readily.
			=	To take to oneself what is presented or brought by another, to receive.
			=	Metaphorically to receive, admit with the mind and heart, i.e., by implication to approve, embrace, follow

Thus the Thessalonians did not merely receive only the Word from Paul, i.e. they were not only in close proximity to him or in the same vicinity as him and received what he said, without favourably receiving him also. Rather, they not only received Him and His words, but they also ACCEPTED Him and his words. And the word 'accepted' implies that they, in their hearts and minds, wholeheartedly approved and thus embraced him and his message. Paul and his message were one. The messenger had become the message, and so embracing the message meant embracing the messenger also. But embracing the messenger presupposes that one has an accurate perception of him as a 'sent one' – as a representative of God Himself.

Haggai 1:13 Then spake Haggai the **LORD'S messenger in the LORD'S message** unto the people, saying, I *am* with you, saith the LORD (**KJV**)

e. Receive the Word with EAGERNESS and COMMIT TO A PROCESS OF PERSONAL ENQUIRY

Acts 17:1-13

- 1 Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to **Thessalonica**, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.
- 2 And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths **reasoned with them from the Scriptures**,
- 3 **explaining and giving evidence that the Christ** had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and *saying*, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ."
- 4 And **some of them were persuaded** and joined Paul and Silas, along with a **large number of the God-fearing Greeks** and a **number of the leading women**.
- 5 But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and attacking the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people.
- 6 When they did not find them, they *began* dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have upset the world have come here also;
- 7 and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus."
- 8 They stirred up the crowd and the city authorities who heard these things.
- 9 And when they had received a pledge from Jason and the others, they released them.
- 10 The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.
- 11 Now these were more **noble-minded than those in Thessalonica**, for they **received the word with great eagerness**, **examining the Scriptures daily** to see whether these things were so.
- 12 Therefore many of them believed, along with a **number of prominent Greek women** and **men**.
- 13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica found out that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Berea also, they came there as well, agitating and stirring up the crowds.

Paul, reasoning from the Scriptures, was able to prove to the Thessalonian Jews that Jesus was the Christ who had to die and rise again.

Reasoned = **dialogomai** = To speak back and forth or alternately, to converse with,
Reason, present intelligent discourse.
To say thoroughly, that is, discuss

Some of these Jews believed along with some Greeks and prominent women in the city. The large majority of the Thessalonian Jews however, possessed by jealousy, vehemently opposed the Word that Paul brought and stirred the city into mob reaction against Paul. The city authorities were also persuaded against Paul. Paul had to leave the city and proceeded to Berea.

The Berean Jews were of greater nobility than the Thessalonian Jews. As the Greek term 'eugenes' (translated 'more noble') suggests, they were of higher rank and class or their noble-mindedness set them apart as 'more noble'. What really distinguished them as noble or noble-minded was their response to Paul's teaching.

Firstly, they received the Word with EAGERNESS:

Eagerness = **prothumia** = zeal, spirit, readiness of mind, alacrity

Eagerness includes a willingness to receive as true that which you hear. The Thessalonian Jews rebelled and were antagonistic to the Word. The Berean Jews eagerly and joyfully received the Word. Eagerness incorporates cheerfulness, enthusiasm, fervour, willingness, zeal. The opposite would be disinclination, apathy, aversion, indifference, slowness, etc.

Secondly, they forensically examined or enquired of the Scriptures on a daily basis to validate the truth of what Paul was teaching.

Examining = **anakrinō** = *scrutinize, that is, (by implication) investigate, interrogate, determine:*

We too must have these two characteristic features every time we hear the Word of God. The EAGER and EXAMINING dispositions must be ours. We must be both ready and willing to embrace the Word on the one hand, and on the other, engage a personal process of daily searching of the Scriptures to test what we have heard.

The result was that MANY BELIEVED – a large number of Jews and prominent Greek women and men. In the present season we will start to see a large number of people bound in religion and obsolete 'Christian' religious tradition migrate and believe the present proceeding Word of God, proclaimed through authentic apostles and prophets. Also, prominent, highly intellectual (as indicated by 'Greeks'), influential and wealthy people will begin to embrace the current apostolic emphasis through the Word of the Lord.

IMPORTANT :

- James 1:21 indicates that when the Word of God is received with meekness, it is **ABLE TO SAVE THE SOUL**. The saving ability of God's Word relative to the on-going process of renewing the mind (Rom.12:1,2) is only released dependent upon whether it is received in humility. Humility also includes a divesting of yourself of your own opinions and preconceived ideas about the Word and the one who brings that Word to you.

1 Thess. 2:13a Therefore, we never stop thanking God that when you received His message from us, you didn't think of our words as mere human ideas. (NLT)

- 1 Thess. 2:13 indicates that when the Word is received as the Word of God, and not the word of man, then only is its power to “performs its work in you who believe” activated.

Performs = energoeo = to be active, efficient, effectual (fervent),
be mighty in; to be operative, be at work, put forth power

2. HAVING HEARD, YOU MUST NOW OBEY

James 1:22-25

- 22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.
- 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror;
- 24 for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.
- 25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.



James likens God's Word to a mirror. A mirror reflects your exact external state and condition. It truly reflects your outward appearance as it is - nothing more - nothing less. Once you have examined yourself in a mirror, you make the necessary adjustments to anything that is not to your satisfaction - in your desire to look your best. The natural mirror does two things, viz. it reveals our true state and also affords us the opportunity to bring correction to it. God's Word does the same thing!

While natural mirrors reveal our external appearance, the Word of God exposes our internal state of heart and mind.

Heb. 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.

[See also **Psalm 19:7-14** and **Psalm 139:23-24**]

The Word of God contains the standard of Divine character and nature for us. Every time we hear it, it presents to us the Divine standard to which we should ascribe. When we discover that we are far from the nature of Christ that we read/see of in the Scriptures, we should repent and seek to imbibe into our life and behaviour that which we have seen of Christ through the Word.



As taught in a previous session, through the process of hearing and obeying, we purify our souls and become partakers of God's divine nature, thereby escaping the corruption of the world. James teaches something similar here.

Every time your sight of God enlarges, it allows you to see where you are, relative to that aspect of God you have insight to. When Isaiah saw the Lord 'high and lifted' in Isaiah chapter 6, this view of God caused him to see his own depraved state. He exclaimed, 'Woe is me for I am undone'. As your concept of God grows to greater accuracy, what you see of His nature casts light on areas of darkness in your own life – and so you adjust to be compatible with what you see.

God literally unveils Himself through the Scriptures to you in order to allow you to assess where you are in reference to His nature. God will show you yourself by showing you Himself. You came from Him and were chosen in Him before time. Thus, in truth, when you read or hear the Word, you see yourself perfected in God and complete in Him. You may have to realign to this position as you discern deviation in your life from what God predestined for you to be in Him.

Psalm 40:7-8 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the **volume of the book** *it is* written of me. **I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.**

As you hear/study the Word of God, the God of the Word reads and studies you.

As you read/hear the Word of the Lord, do not superimpose your own sense of rightness upon what you read/hear. You have to allow the Scriptures to bring adjustment to your perception on all matters, even those you think you are completely correct about. Be open to change.

Proverbs 21:2 Every way of a man is **right in his own eyes**, but the **LORD weighs the heart**.

- **FAILURE TO OBEY = FORGETTING = INDIFFERENCE OR NEGLECT**

To hear and not obey God's Word is likened unto a man, who after seeing himself in a mirror, FORGETS what he looks like.

Forgets = epilanthanomai = neglecting, no longer caring for, given over to
oblivion, i.e. uncared for

As can be seen, the word 'forget' does not so much indicate a failure to remember as much as it implies that one is really not too concerned as to what one has seen of oneself in the mirror of God's Word. This refers to one who, after his engagement with the Word of God which presents to him the nature of God, and knowing he falls short of what he sees of God, still walks away indifferently and with no concern, care or inclination at all to change. Failure to obey indicates indifference and reluctance to want to attain to

the divine standards of God. God is 'forgotten' when His principles are no longer adhered to:

Deut. 8:11a "Beware that you **do not forget** the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments

- **FAILURE TO OBEY = SELF-DECEPTION**

Those who hear and do not obey have 'deluded themselves' – James 1:22

Deluded = paralogizomai = to reason falsely or incorrectly – to mislead or deceive.

3. IN THE PROCESS OF OBEDIENCE YOU SHARE IN HIS DIVINE NATURE

2 Cor. 3:17-18

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty.

18 But we all, with unveiled face, **beholding as in a mirror** the glory of the Lord, are being **transformed into the same image** from **glory to glory**, just as from the Lord, **the Spirit**.

The glory of God refers to the exact representation of God's nature and character (including His person and power). God's Word is our mirror. As we read and look into this mirror, we see aspects of the glory God – His nature, character, person, power, etc. This verse teaches that as we BEHOLD this glory, we become TRANSFORMED by what we see! Christ is led out from the Scriptures every time we hear or read it. His nature and purpose becomes unveiled to us. As we behold what He reveals of Himself, the very act of BEHOLDING or SEEING what is revealed to us has, in and of itself, a transformative power and capacity. The key is that as you see what He shows you, OBEY the implied or overt requirement of the Lord – and in the process of obedience you begin to engage the transforming power of His word within us – through the Holy Spirit.

Transformed = metamorphoo = to change into another form, to transform, to transfigure

The English word, **metamorphosis**, is derived from the Greek, **metamorphoo**. It means to undergo a **drastic change in internal constitution** and in **external form** (as when a caterpillar transforms into a butterfly) so that one's entire form, function and capacities are greatly enhanced. Such is the power of obedience to the Word.

John 14: 21 "He who **HAS My commandments and KEEPS them** is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by **My Father, and I will love him** and will **disclose Myself** to him."

Look INTENTLY !

James 1:25 But one who looks INTENTLY at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

Looks Intently = **parakuptō** = to *bend beside*, that is, *lean over* so as to *peer within*;
To look into, to stoop to a thing in order to look at it
Metaphorically to look carefully into, inspect curiously

The more intently you look into the Word of the Lord, the more profound will the revelation of the nature of Christ from the Scriptures be, and as you obey, you are not only transformed into that which you have seen, but will also experience the blessing of God in all you do.

John 13:17 "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

Joshua 1:8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

4. THE CLEANSING AND ENLIGHTENING EFFECTS OF GOD'S WORD

When he built the tabernacle, Moses took the metal looking glasses of the women and from them made the laver. These looking glasses were polished brass. The laver was a huge basin that stood between the brazen altar of sacrifice and the holy place. (See Exod. 30:17-21 for details.) The basin was filled with water, and the priests washed their hands and feet at the laver before they entered the holy place to minister. The polished brass had the effect of a mirror.



The mirror exposed the uncleanness of the priest, and then with the water, he would cleanse himself (hands and feet).

The mirror of God's word not only exposes our sin and error, but cleanses us from it. Water is symbolic of the Word of God.

John 15:3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

Eph. 5:25-27

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,
26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,
27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

John 17:17 "Sanctify them in the truth; **Your word** is truth.

CLEAN HANDS :

Hands in Scripture are symbolic of the ability to execute or actually carry out God's purposes. Hands perform Divine work. 'Hands' also indicate the capacity to 'rightly divide the Word of Truth' with skill, precision and SINCERITY.

2 Cor 4:2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor **handling the word of God deceitfully**, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God

CLEAN FEET :

Feet allude to our walk in Christ – i.e. the entirety of our behaviour and thought life. Also it refers to progression and forward movement and development in God's ways and purposes.

Col 1:10 so that you will **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord**, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

WASH YOURSELF IN APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE

It is vital for you to be exposed to relevant apostolic doctrine from an authentic and sincere apostolic fathering grace. The apostolic is focussed on bringing back the church to accurate biblical order. Read the account in **John 9** of how a man born blind received his sight after obeying Jesus' instruction to wash his eyes in the pool of Siloam. Not only does the Word of God cleanse us from sin, but as we consistently wash our eyes in apostolic doctrine (as pictured in the Pool of Siloam which means 'sent' – symbolising the apostolic), our spiritual sight and understanding is greatly enlightened and enhanced to then begin to see the fullness of Christ as manifested in His Word.

It is interesting to note that before James comments on how to receive the implanted Word of God with humility and so activate its saving effects, he calls for us to first "**put aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness**". He then proceeds to discuss the analogy of the Word of God as a mirror, etc. Filthiness refers to 'immoral behaviour' and wickedness refers to 'malignity, malice, ill-will, desire to injure'. These prevent spiritual sight. The Word can cleanse these – but it demands conscious obedience to PUT ASIDE these things. Once the issue of cleansing of one's life is dealt with, the capacity for penetrative sight into God's nature and purpose will be greatly amplified. And so – as you continue to obey what you see of the nature and requirement of God in His Word, you are transformed to be like Him in ever increasing degrees of glory – from 'glory to glory' by the Spirit of the Lord.

If ultimately, we are to become the Word of God – the epistles of Christ, read and known by all men (2 Cor.3:1-3), then with our growth into the fullness of Christ-like maturity, our very lives become the mirror of the Word to others. Thus, all the principles relative to the Word as a mirror, are then applicable to US! You are the mirror of God's Word to men in the world. As you demonstrate His nature before

men, they too, if they obey, become transformed by what they see of Christ within you. All of creation is groaning for this very reality – ‘the manifestation of the sons of God’ (Rom. 8:19).

QUESTIONS AND ISSUES FOR PERSONAL REVIEW AND GROUP DISCUSSION

1. The internal condition of one’s heart and mind in HEARING the Word of God is critically important. Discuss this statement
2. Highlight and elaborate on four dispositions essential to RECEIVING the Word of God as it is taught to you, so that the maximum result or intended effect could be experienced.
3. The Word of God is likened unto a mirror. What are some of the principles you can glean from this analogy?

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