

**Part I:
What is “The Word”?
(Definition)**

When we speak of “The Word,” we’re speaking of the Bible as the written Word of God. Read Matthew 4:1-11 and discuss what this passage tells us about Jesus’ perspective on the Word of God and the place it should have in our lives.

1. “It is written” (vs. 4, 7, 10) – The Bible is our **authority** . The Bible alone has the final say in what we believe and how we conduct ourselves. (*See Gal. 4:30a*)
2. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (v.4) – The Bible is **necessary for life** . Taking in the truth of God’s word is every bit as essential to life as eating! (Jesus makes no distinction between physical life and spiritual life). When wondering how often we should spend time in the Word we need to consider how often do we eat?
3. “...proceeds out of the mouth of God” (v.4) – The Bible is **God’s Word** . Don’t let the familiarity with that term rob you of its significance! The almighty, the one and only God of the universe, has revealed Himself to His creation in a written document!
 - a. **Inspired** – The Holy Spirit guided human authors so that the words they wrote were the very words and ideas God wanted to communicate, yet without losing their individual styles and personalities. (**See 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 1:20-21**)
 - b. **Inerrant** – The Bible is without error in the things it affirms to be true. (Qualifications – In the original manuscripts, when accurately translated, when accurately interpreted, when allowance is made for figurative expressions)

Other Observations:

Discuss the significance of other biblical metaphors describing the Word of God:

- Matthew 7:24 – 27 – **Foundation** – Gives us something to build on; something solid to stand on.
- Psalm 119:105 – **Lamp/Light** – Helps us see where we’re going. (e.g. ’s of being in dark?)
- Jeremiah 23:29 – **Fire & Hammer** – Fire often represents God’s presence in Scripture, i.e. it’s where we encounter God. Also represents purification/judgment. Hammer breaks down resistance. *General – Source of Energy & Useful Tool.*
- Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12 – **Sword/Weapon**

How essential are each one of these things to life? How essential is the Word of God to spiritual life? The Word of God is indispensable! Consistent, focused time in the Word is a must for looking up toward God and following Jesus Christ! *What does that look like?*

Part 2 What Does Time in the Word Look Like? (Forms)

In the following passages, Jesus uses several different words in connection with interacting with Scripture. Examine these passages and discuss what they tell us about the different forms our times in the Word can take.

1. Luke 11:28 – **Hear** (General & Passive)
 - a. Word Study – **akouo** – Physical ability to **hear, listen, and distinguish sounds**. Implies to **understand** what is heard.
 - b. How – Public Bible reading, sermons, radio, videos, podcasts, etc.

2. Matthew 12:3 – **Read** (Active)
 - a. Word Study – **anaginosko** – **know or recognize again**. Used of reading in the sense of knowing, recognizing, and comprehending written language.
 - b. How – **Repeated reading** in order to know and become familiar with.

3. John 5:39 – **Search or Study** (Active and more effort)
 - a. Word Study – **ereunao** – **To sniff out!** (TDNT); **Investigate**. (as a crime – *CSI shows, intensity of looking for clues, evidence, etc*); to test or examine in the sense of academic, scientific, or philosophical inquiry. **Getting beyond casual reading!**
 - b. How – **Bible study skills!** Find opportunity to learn basic principles, methods and tools of Bible study, e.g. BSF, PRECEPTS, BIBS

4. Luke 24:27 – **Explain** (exposition or exegesis)
 - a. Word Study – **diermeneuo** - **Unfold the meaning or Translate** (into native language). Demonstrate relevance to others.
 - b. How – (Twofold) **Share what you learn & Learn from others**.
Note: A very important step in in-depth Bible study is to check your conclusions against the conclusions of others, e.g. commentaries, etc.

5. John 8:31 – **Continue or Hold**
 - a. Word Study – **meno** – **Remain, Abide**. Concept is that of making a permanent dwelling place. (See “Abide in Me...” John 15:4)
 - b. How – **Make it a habit!**

6. Luke 11:28 – **Obey!**
 - a. Word Study – **phulasso** – **Guard, Keep, Watch**. Something to be valued. Jesus’ teaching as something to be kept or preserved as a way of life by abiding by it!
 - b. How – **Live it!**

Thoughts from Psalm 119

Psalm 119 is not only the longest of the Psalms with 176 verses, but almost every verse makes reference to God's word in one way or another. Read the verses 11 and 97 from this Psalm and fill in the blanks below with two more forms our time in the Word can take:

Memorization & Meditation

Note – We don't have to do all of these every time we spend time in the Word, but one or more of these forms should be a part of our daily experience. Taking advantage of the many different ways we can approach Scripture can make our time more interesting and motivate us to do more.

Part 3: Where Do We Begin? (Practice)

1. **DO IT! Get started!** - Set aside a specific time to “consciously enter God's presence by getting into His Word!
2. **Have a Plan!** – Random approaches to Bible reading are seldom effective and make it difficult to develop consistency. Find and use a “Bible Reading Plan,” e.g. online, etc.
3. **Keep a Balance!** – Keep your reading balanced between the major divisions of the Bible:
 - History – Genesis through Esther
 - Poetry – Job through Song of Solomon
 - Prophets – Isaiah through Malachi
 - Gospels – Matthew through John
 - Acts & Epistles – Acts through Revelation

Read James 1:22-24. Along with Luke 11:28, this passage stresses the importance of applying what we learn as we spend time looking up toward God in His Word. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 provides a good foundation for applying Scripture to our lives.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (NASB)

These verses give us 4 specific things that Scripture is profitable or useful for. In the “Bible Exposition Commentary,” Warren Wiersbe gives the following simple definitions of each of these:

1. **Teaching** – The Bible tells us what is **Right** .
2. **Reproof** – The Bible tells us what is **Not Right** .
3. **Correction** – The Bible tells us how to **Get Right** .
4. **Training** – The Bible tells us how to **Stay Right** .

Making it Personal

When applying Scripture to your life, prayerfully consider the following questions, asking the Holy Spirit to enable you to answer accurately and honestly, allowing the Word of God to do its transforming work:

1. What **doctrine** , **truth** , or **underlying principle** is communicated in this passage? (Doctrine = A major theme developed throughout Scripture; Underlying principle = fundamental belief, rule of conduct, general guideline, e.g. “Sermon of the Mount.”) See also P.U.P. p.28
2. Has this passage exposed anything wrong in my **beliefs** , **attitudes** , or **actions** ?
3. Does this passage give any **specific action** to take to **correct** what is **wrong**?
See Philippians 4:6, e.g.
4. What **practical instruction** or **discipline** does this passage provide for continuing to do what is **right** ?
5. What **specific step** am I going to take to apply this passage to my **life** and **circumstances** ?