

Hebrews 4:12 From Strength to Strength: The Word of God

This series of ten messages is collectively titled, “From Strength to Strength” based upon **Psalms 84:7**: “**They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion.**” This fourth message deals with the necessity of the Word of God in relation to our daily strength.

Hebrews 4:12: “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.”

- Grammatical Usage: “**living**” or in the Greek, “zaó” meaning, “operational; effective”; “**sharper**” or “**tomos**” meaning, “keenly incisive”; “**piercing**” or “**diikneomai**” meaning, “penetrating”; “**discerning**” or “**kritikos**” meaning, “critique; judge”.
- Literal Interpretation: Because the Word of God is always operational and effective, keenly incisive over any two-edged sword, penetrating unto a division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, (it is) an objective critic of rationalizations and heartfelt intentions.
- Contextual/Comparison: God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. **Hebrews 4:12** perfectly and accurately describes the written Word, and in this one verse we are told five important things about it.

1. It is DIVINE in its ORIGIN

Where does this “Word”, our Bible (written by about forty different writers over a period of approximately 1600 years) come from? It certainly came from the hands of the various writers, but they were only the human instruments, for God is the Author of the Book. It is the Word of God. In many respects it is like any other book: printed on paper, divided into chapters and verses for easy reference, and available in many languages. But from **Genesis 1** to **Revelation 22** the Bible is the Word of God, by which we mean that the whole of it was recorded by divine authority and under divine supervision. We do not mean that God spoke all the words contained in it, but that He overruled in all the words recorded in it, whether they were spoken by Himself, by men, angels or demons. Thus, the Word of God is of supernatural origin, and therefore it is unique (**2 Timothy 3:16**; **2 Peter 1:21**).

2. It is LIVING in its NATURE

It is spoken of as being “quick”, or literally, “living” or “full of life”. How did this Book become a living book? A comparison of **Genesis 1:26** and **2 Timothy 3:16** tells us. Just as God breathed into man the breath of life and man became a living soul, so He has breathed into this Book so that it has become a living book. The word “inspiration” in **2 Timothy 3:16** literally means “God-breathed”. In what way is the Word of God living?

A. It is living in itself. Compare **John 6:63** with **Proverbs 6:22**.

B. It is life-giving, that is, it imparts life (**James 1:18**; **1 Peter 1:23**). Seeds do not appear to contain life, any more than Bibles do! But seeds do contain life - and so

does the Word of God, and wherever the Word of God (the incorruptible seed) is sown it brings forth a harvest (**Isaiah 55:11; Matthew 13:23**).

C. It is out-living, that is, it outlives all other books and this is one of the greatest wonders of the Word of God. Men have burned it and the Devil has tried to exterminate it, but it is still the most widely read book. **1 Peter 1:23-25** testifies about the durability of the Word of God, as did Jesus in **Matthew 24:35**. How important it is to give heed to this Word!

3. It is POWERFUL in its OPERATION

“Quick and powerful” - it is effectual, it does things (**Ecclesiastes 8:4**). How does the power of God’s Word operate? How is it seen and felt?

A. It cuts like a double-edged sword. One old writer said, “It is edge all over!” Have we not often experienced its sharpness to convict us of sin? (**Acts 2:37**).

B. It pierces to the inward parts (**Psalms 51:6**). God must have reality, sincerity, and the instrument He uses to penetrate to the inward parts of our nature is the Word of God. How piercing it is! (**Acts 7:54, Revelation 19:15**).

C. It discriminates between soul and spirit. Man is a tri-partite being (**1 Thessalonians 5:23**), but who can divide between spirit, soul and body? Every Christian has two natures - the old Adamic nature and the new nature (**Galatians 5:17**) - but who can discern between them and can discern that which is merely “soulish” and that which is really spiritual? Well, the Word of God can do it, and it is the only instrument which can effectively do it. We cannot accurately discriminate between the desires of the flesh and those of the spirit, but if we allow the Holy Spirit to apply the Word of God to our lives, then (and only then) will this correct diagnosis and precise discrimination be made.

4. It is FINAL in its JUDGMENT

The Word of God “**judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.**” This is very significant, for it teaches us that we are not to criticize it; rather are we to let it criticize us. A judge is one who passes judgment upon a subject or person, and God’s Word passes judgment upon man, and because it is divine in its origin and is therefore infallible, the judgment it passes upon us is final and true. We are surrounded by two kinds of critics - destructive and constructive. God’s Word always gives constructive criticism. We may not always like it, but if we will take it, it will always be for our good. For example, look up **Jeremiah 17:9** and **Mark 7:21**. Do we like that? Yet it is true, and we can only profit by admitting it and believing it.

5. It is CLEAR in its DEMAND

Notice the first word in our key verse: “**For the word of God...**” This links us to the previous verses and indicates the demand that this Word makes upon us, namely, a two-fold demand: (1) faith, or trust - as indicated by **v. 12**; (2) obedience - as indicated by **v. 11**.

- Conclusion: The way to be happy, holy, useful and to glorify God is to read the Word of God: believe it...trust it...obey it!