

# CLOSER LOOK

A LIFEGROUP STUDY ON THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE



**Not Without Hope  
Dead People**

1 Thessalonians 2:11-14

January 15, 2022

## MAIN POINT

Human words are powerful, but God's Word has authority.

## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.*

**What was the funniest present you received this Christmas, and what was your response?**

**What is the best advice you have ever received and who was it from?**

While good gifts and sound advice is beneficial for our lives, it does not have the same power and impact of God's Word. In today's study, we will look at how the Thessalonians received the Word of God with appreciation (heart), appropriation (mind), and application (will), and what it should look like for us to receive it ourselves.

## UNDERSTANDING

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says about a particular topic.*

*Have a volunteer or volunteers read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and 1 Thessalonians 2:13.*

**What does it mean that the Bible is "inspired by God"? How does this fact impact the way you approach Scripture?**

**According to the 2 Timothy passage, what are the functions of God's Word?**

**Considering the authority of the Bible outlined in 2 Timothy, what do you think it means that the Thessalonians "received the word of God"?**

**Spend some time considering "reproof and correction". How does hearing that the Bible is meant to reprove and correct make you feel? What is the goal of this correction?**

**Why do you think it is important to recognize the authority of scripture in today's culture?**

**What role does the authority of scripture play in your life for doctrine, correction, reproof, and training?**

“And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us.” The word “received” carries a different connotation for the Thessalonians, holding the same meaning as when Paul told the Galatians that the gospel he preached he “received through a revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal 1:12). Received in these passages holds the connotation of “verified” or “authenticated.” The Thessalonians recognized the authority behind the Word of God. To recognize Scripture’s authority is to obey it. Authority and obedience are the opposite sides of the same coin. For example, if a source of authority told you it was going to rain, “receiving” that information would prompt you to pack an umbrella. Recognizing authority should elicit a response. The Lexham Survey of Theology states, “So however difficult it may be in a social environment, the Christian must be bold to obey the Bible, not only in church, but in the workplace, in intellectual life, in science, philosophy, law, politics, the arts, culture, commerce, and entertainment.”

*Have a volunteer or volunteers read Hebrews 4:12, Romans 12:2, and Colossians 3:16.*

**The word “active” in Hebrews 4:12 is “*energes*” in Greek. It is an adjective that means “full of power to achieve results” or “effectual.” How is the word of God effectual in the heart and mind of a believer?**

**What are some ways the Word of God should produce change in believers? How has God’s Word been “effectual” in your life?**

The word of God is not inanimate. It is not stagnant or dormant. It renews our minds, changing us from the inside out. It dwells in us richly producing spiritual songs and hymns of praise. “Energeo” is a word that denotes power. It is a force so powerful it will produce change, and that change will begin to spill out on those around us. This may trigger memories of sixth grade English class, but God’s word planted in the heart and mind of a believer doesn’t stay an adjective, but it turns into an action verb. The word “work” in 1 Thessalonians 2:13 is ALSO the verb “energeo” in Greek.

*Have a volunteer read 1 Thessalonians 2:12-14.*

**Based on the text, what do you think the Word of God produced in the Thessalonians?**

**If Paul encourages us to be “imitators,” what are the three things he does in 1 Thessalonians 2:12?**

**Paul exhorted, encouraged, and charged them to walk in a manner worthy of God. We might think of those three ways of serving as instructing, encouraging, and equipping. How can you imitate Paul in this way with someone in your life this term?**

## **APPLICATION**

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scriptures apply directly to their lives.*

**Authority cannot speak through you if you do not first allow it to speak to you. Discuss ways you incorporate the reading of God's word into your daily schedule.**

**Obedience is a choice, not a feeling. Is there an area of your life that you would like to challenge yourself to be more obedient?**

**Proverbs 19:27 says, "Cease to hear instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge." What are some ways you can incorporate accountability into your spiritual discipline of staying rooted in God's word?**

## **LP PRAYER POINTS**

Family Ministry

\* Please pray for protection for our kids, students, and their families as they head back to school. Please pray for our teachers and administrators. Please ask the Lord to protect them physically as there is much sickness going around. Please pray for spiritual protection as well.

\* Please pray for our Kids, Students, and 1825 Leaders. Please pray for spiritual momentum in their lives, as well as energy, zeal, and encouragement as they faithfully serve and lead. Please pray that they would continue to grow in their walk with the Lord, maturity in Christ, and in their dependence on Him. Please pray for godly wisdom as they pour into young people.

1825

Please pray for our 1825 Winter Conference on January 28. They will be walking through Matthew 28 and have missions partners on site for students/young adults to engage.

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

Take a moment to ask your group if there are any prayer requests.

## **PRAY WITH YOUR GROUP**

Pray over your group's prayer requests, along with the following prayer:

*Dear Lord, thank you for giving us words of life. Thank you for loving us enough to discipline us as your sons and daughters. Develop in us a hunger for your word, and through it, may we thirst for righteousness. May we yield ourselves, our desires, and our agendas to your authority. May you mold us and make us into a church that responds to your word. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## **LP REMINDERS**

- January 22 - Baptisms
- January 29 - Kids Core
- February 12 - Starting Point
- February 12 - Lifepoint Students Super Bowl Party

- February 19 - CORE
- February 26 - Baptisms
- February 26 - Discovering Life
- February 26 - Jumpback Training

## MEMORIZE

*“but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.” (1 Thessalonians 2:4)*

## COMMENTARY

### God’s Word within Us (1 Thes. 2:13 - Wiersbe Commentary)

The church has been founded on the Word of God (1 Thes. 1:6), the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The same Word that brings us salvation also enables us to live for Christ and endure suffering for His sake. Paul was thankful that the saints in Thessalonica had the right spiritual attitudes toward the Word of God. This helped them endure in the hour of suffering.

They appreciated the Word. They did not receive it as the word of men; they received it as the Word of God. We must never treat the Bible as any other book, for the Bible is different in origin, character, content, and cost. The Bible is the Word of God. It was inspired by the Spirit of God (2 Tim. 3:16) and written by men of God who were used by the Spirit (2 Peter 1:20–21). God’s Word is holy, pure, and perfect (Ps. 19:7–9). The Bible was written at great cost, not only to the writers, but to Jesus Christ who became Man that the Word of God might be given to us.

The way a Christian treats his Bible shows how he regards Jesus Christ. He is the living Word (John 1:1, 14), and the Bible is the written Word; but in essence they are the same. Both are bread (Matt. 4:4; John 6:48), light (Ps. 119:105; John 8:12), and truth (John 14:6; 17:17). The Holy Spirit gave birth to Jesus Christ through a holy woman (Luke 1:35), and He gave birth to the Bible through holy men of God (2 Peter 1:20–21). Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God forever (Rom. 1:25), and the Word of God will live forever (Ps. 119:89; 1 Peter 1:23, 25).

It may be a personal prejudice, but I dislike seeing a Bible on the floor or at the bottom of a stack of books. If I am carrying several books with my Bible, I try to remember to put the Bible on the top. If we appreciate the Bible as the inspired Word of God, then we will reveal this appreciation in our treatment of the Bible.

Would you rather have your Bible than food? Job said, “I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23:12). God’s Word is bread (Matt. 4:4), milk and meat (Heb. 5:11–14), and even honey (Ps. 119:103). Mary chose the Word, but her sister Martha got involved in making a meal (Luke 10:38–42). Mary got the blessing while Martha lost the victory. Would you rather have God’s Word than money? The believer who wrote Psalm 119 made it clear that God’s Word meant more to him than “all riches” (Ps. 119:14), “thousands of gold and silver” (Ps. 119:72), “fine gold” (Ps. 119:127), and even “great spoil” (Ps. 119:162). I recall a young couple I sought to help in one of my churches. They had a lovely little son, but they were very careless about attending church and Sunday School. The little boy was not getting the Christian training he needed. A visit to the home told me why: the father wanted more money and so he worked on Sundays to make double time. He did not have to work on the Lord’s Day, but he wanted the money rather than God’s Word. He earned more money, but he was never able to keep it. The little son became ill and the extra money went to doctors.

Would you rather have God's Word than sleep? "My eyes anticipate the night watches, that I may meditate on Thy Word" (Ps. 119:148, nasb). The Jews had three night watches: sunset to 10, 10 to 2, and 2 until dawn. The psalmist gave up sleep three times each night that he might spend time with the Word. But some Christians cannot get out of bed on Sunday morning to study the Word. If we are going to be victorious in suffering, we must appreciate the Word. But there is a second attitude we must show toward the Bible.

They appropriated the Word. Paul used two different words for "received": the first means simply "to accept from another," while the second means "to welcome." One means "the hearing of the ear," while the other means "the hearing of the heart." The believers at Thessalonica did not only hear the Word; they took it into their inner man and made it a part of their lives.

The Lord Jesus repeatedly warned people about the wrong kind of hearing, and His warnings are still needed. "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 13:9). In other words, "Take heed that you hear." Use every opportunity you have to hear the Word of God. But He gave another warning in Mark 4:24: "Take heed what ye hear." How often believers hear the Word of God in Sunday School and church, and then get in their cars, turn on the radio, and listen to programs that help erase the impressions made by the Word. When we visited church congregations in Great Britain, my wife and I were impressed with their practice of sitting down after the benediction. They meditated on the Word and allowed the Spirit to minister to them. This is far better than rushing out of church and joking with friends.

Our Lord's third warning is in Luke 8:18: "Take heed therefore how ye hear." Many people are careless hearers and cannot apply themselves to listen to the teaching of God's Word. These people have "itching ears" and want religious entertainment (2 Tim. 4:3). Some of them are "dull of hearing" (Heb. 5:11), too lazy to apply themselves and pay attention. One of these days our churches will be hungry because of a famine "for hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11). Too many churches have substituted entertainment for the preaching of God's Word, and many people no longer welcome the Word of God.

How do we appropriate the Word? By understanding it and receiving it into our hearts, and by meditating on it so that it becomes part of the inner man. Meditation is to the spiritual life what digestion is to the physical life. If you did not digest your food, you would die. It takes time to meditate, but it is the only way to appropriate the Word and grow.

They applied the Word. They obeyed the Word by faith, and the Word went to work in their lives. It is not enough to appreciate the Bible, or even to appropriate the Bible. We must apply the Word in our lives and be hearers and doers of the Word (James 1:19–25). The Word of God has in it the power to accomplish the will of God. "For nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37, niv). It has well been said, "God's commandments are God's enablements." Jesus commanded the crippled man to stretch out his hand—the very thing the man could not do. Yet that word of command gave him the power to obey. He trusted the word, obeyed, and was made whole (Mark 3:1–5). When we believe God's Word and obey, He releases power—divine energy—that works in our lives to fulfill His purposes. The Word of God within us is a great source of power in times of testing and suffering. If we appreciate the Word (the heart), appropriate the Word (the mind), and apply the Word (the will), then the whole person will be controlled by God's Word and He will give us the victory.