
Into Thy Word Bible Study in Hebrews

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Hebrews 4:12-13: *The Piercing Power of God's Word!*

General idea: God's Word is living power! The Word of God, His written, spoken by His Spirit word is living and ever most prevailing, authoritative, and impacting. It is not something that is leftover or in the past, or dead. It is active and penetrating. It is powerful, commanding, and active; it is the force of His will and the gentleness of His rest, and it is open for us to read and adhere to. His Word is the Bible and it is full of power; His Spirit lives in and within its precepts and pages and uses it to use us for Him.

His Word is sharper than the sharpest knife or any instrument of war or cutlery. No tool of man can ever be as penetrating and as useful to open or to divide, display or to mend, to reveal, or to lead as His Word. His written principles will open us up; they will go deep, penetrating us in our innermost areas, revealing all there is and more. God's love, plan, and Word will cut deep into our lives and will. There are no desires, thoughts, plans, or ideas that are not open to God; there are no deeds He does not know about and no place where we can go to hide from His love or His plan. He will expose us, our sin, and who we really are, and let us know what we can be. He is here with His arms of love and rest, with a plan of hope and a life worth living now and forever more. We can't hide from His Word or plan, as we are naked before Him. Thus, allow your will to be surrendered to Him, and choose His Way before your way. Know and cling to Him deeply; allow His touch of love to move and shape you. For one day, our time will be up on this earth and we will have to give an account for what we have done with what He has given, how we have allowed His Tool to cut, form, and shape us. Have we let Him form us or have we lived a life of emptiness, selfishness and thus wasted time living for ourselves and ignoring Him? Are we immersed with the rotten fruit of the flesh or infused with His Fruit to be and live a fruitful life?

Contexts and Background:

This passage is set in the context of rest and obedience, of believing and then trusting in Christ and then obeying His precepts. And thus, the application of verse 11 is to pay serious attention to His instructions and make every effort to know and obey God as Lord. God's Word is to be taken in us and must meet us deeply so we believe, trust and obey Him as revealed by His Word. For His Word has exposed the wickedness of disobedience and pride as exemplified by the faithless of many generations—starting in the desert. God is the One Who penetrates and judges all and He is the One who loves and invites us to be with Him. God has His Person of the Holy Spirit to know and break through our pride and us to lead and manage us. However, he also has His Tool too—His Word the Bible revealing

principles and rules to show us His plan and instructions. He also uses the Word to see us deeply, what our true spiritual condition is, what has damaged us, what needs to be fixed or honed, what is missing, and what is in the way of His Way. He sees it all and allows us to get a glimpse for change and improvement, for our fullness in our spiritual formation, and our usefulness in His Kingdom (Jer. 17:9).

Commentary, Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *Word of God.* This is a dynamic, impacting, powerful word that meant God's "true Truth," as it is active as God and His living power accomplishes His purpose. It also referred to the eternal and incarnate Jesus. This is a word that referred to a Greek philosophical term used by the Jewish philosopher Philo as the universal, divine spark or force, and power of reason and divinity. Here in context, it means God's reason and precepts, first received through Moses for the people of God, the early Israelites, and now for anyone who knows the Lord as Savior and LORD. This is the *logos* that John used to refer to Christ as penetrating the universe. God's Word has been given orally, directly to His Prophets and Apostles, and then written down by the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit. It was also communicated orally, for the most part, prior to the first century. Is this the Bible? Yes and no; when these words were penned, the Bible as we have it, would not exist for another three hundred years. Although the Old Testament was complete, the Gospels and most of the Epistles were penned, but not put together as a cohesive unit. Most Christians were only able to hear the written Word at church and most churches only had a shared copy of a letter and/or a Gospel. Nevertheless, the Bible is the "container" of God's Word; it holds His plan, precepts, and instructions for life and living out the Christian journey. The Bible is His chosen prime instrument to make Himself known and used by the Holy Spirit to do as this passage testifies (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 18: 21-22; 107:20; 119:11; 147:18; Isa. 40:8; 55:11; John 1:1-14; 15:7; 1 Cor. 10:5-13; Gal. 3:8; Eph. 5:26; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 John 5:14-15).
- *Living and active / quick and powerful.* The Greek is *be alive and energetic* meaning God is alive and at work in you! There is no excuse not to know or heed God's Word; it is written partly in our hearts, written fully out in printed form—the Bible, and given by the Spirit. He is the God who cares, communes, and communicates clearly His plan and principles.
- *Sharper.* Meaning God uses His Word as an "all-seeing eye," piercing one's innermost being. It will expose any fault or pride and show the right Way to live, to know God, and to live a fruitful, faithful, productive life. (Psalm 95; Heb. 3:13).
- *Double-edged sword.* On one end, the God Who saves and invites; the other edge is the God who exposes and Judges.
- *Penetrates.* The entirety and depth of our life is fully open to God; there is no privacy, no personal rights before the Most Holy God who made us. He is the

right judge and the One to show us His right instructions and call us to adhere to them. God is also active, showing the deceitfulness of sin and how it destroys when we think it is good. He does not want us to lose out or fall short on what we can have.

- *Dividing soul.* Meaning the power of God to enter us ever so deeply, into what we may think is unknown or impenetrable. No manner of will, plan, or pride can hold God back; but He may, as a judgment, allow you to do as you please, thinking you are OK, but missing out on so much wondrous, precious provision the mind could never fathom (Psalm 139: 23).
- *Spirit, joints and marrow.* Means God searches us out in great detail and knows both our rational and irrational thoughts and will. This is not about dividing the parts of a body, or a division of who we are or how we are mapped out; it refers to His or omniscience, “omni knowledge” or “all knowing” as in to know everything infinitely. This passage is not giving support of a “tracheotomy” of our human being, divided as body, soul, and mind or any other such division, true or not. The point is that God’s power and purpose will cut through anything. He looks deep in us and nothing can stop what He finds.
- *Attitudes of the heart.* The Word searches our inner life and heart and what lies deep within us. God knows it, but wants us to tell Him about it. In so doing, we can know Him more and be open to correction and change. If we refuse, we will be faithless and the faithfulness that makes Fruit, character, and maturity, as well as strength for living, will be absent. Consider this: He already knows every detail and thread. He is the One who searches it all out and thus, nothing we do is not already known by Him, so allow His contact and correction.
- *Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight.* Through His Word, God is living and active. We are not alone; we have a God who lives in and beside us!
- *Everything is uncovered / naked.* God lays us bare; He knows it all; just as the ancestors to the recipients of this letter failed in the desert, so today we fail many times. Their misdeeds were exposed and used as an example for countless people, including us today, to know what not to do (Heb. 4:2).
- *Laid bare / opened.* Meaning God opens all things of our motivations of thought and deed. Our good deeds and contradictions will be uncovered and exposed, so we might as well fess up and repent and get right with God. He knows it all anyway. Own up to your faults and take responsibility for your actions and live a life that pleases Him. If your life is marked by failure, seek out the reason and receive what you can from Him to recover, move on, and be faithful and productive in the kingdom. If you need encouragement, He has it for you.
- *Give account.* This is both sobering and comforting. We will be held responsible for our thoughts and actions. We all will one day stand and be judged, be held

accountable and receive our reward and then enter His eternal rest. The Israelites laid waste their promise and reward; let us not be found guilty of doing the same. Here is the motivation to better watch out and better live right, for we will be judged. But keep in mind: He is gracious and merciful and we have no excuse; we have all we need, His Word, Spirit, and the Work of Christ, and His personal empowerment to make life work (Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:11-14; 2 Cor. 5:10)!

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

His Word will look into the deepest recesses of our being and lay us open to His examination. We will be exposed; we will be open for inspection to see where we have been, where we are, and where we can go in our Fruit, spiritual growth, relationships, and maturity. What will he find in you and your church? Life here on earth is not about what we want and where we want to go, or our ideas, desires, wants, or needs. These are the shadows of disappointment and ruin. Life is all about our Lord Creator and sustainer. His Way is far better than anything we can ever imagine of have for ourselves. Allow His power and His living precepts to examine, sharpen, and shape us for now and eternity.

His Word pierces us; and as it does, it may inflict the pain of our will being striped and our desires being trampled as we are being convicted of sin and misplaced agendas. Such working through one's hurts brings up more hurts, but this pain is good. It is like the pain of exercising; as our muscles strain, we are fit and healthier for doing so. As it is with true discipleship and spiritual growth, growth hurts us deeply. But keep in mind: sin dulls our senses and blinds our minds that lead us to a life of dysfunction and strife, while God seeks to unravel truth for us to partake and live a more triumphant life. A real Christian will be transformed and renewed and live a life of Fruit as well as seeking to rid one's self of sin. If you are out of phase with God and His precepts, you should hurt; if not, sin has dulled you to the point you may not return until you smash the sin and surrender all to Him as Lord! Do you feel God working in you? If not, what is in the way of His piercing Way?

His Word is the key, and His precepts are the engine to life, relationships, growth, and maturity that leads to joy and contentment and a life worth living—happy and purposeful, a life that will impact others because He has first impacted us—you and me. The point is that God wants us to spend time in and with Him. His Word, the Bible, is the primary platform for us to know and grow in Him. It lays out His institutions and gives us hope; it shows us where to go so we can grow. When we read and meditate in His Word, we gain so much. When we forsake our responsibilities and refuse to know Him or obey Him, we gain the consequences and lost opportunities for ourselves. Life without Him leaves a life of want and waste that is never satisfied or at peace. It leaves a life that is not content and a life that is stressed and overwhelmed because He is just on the outside looking in. We need Him to not only look us over but to give of Himself; Jesus Christ has done this and

He will continue to do so. The key is to not just know, but to also apply and do His precepts to the best for His glory. You just need to allow His force and power upon you, learn from Him, and be in Him. One day you will give an answer directly to God for your life, it is best to hear *well done*...

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. What happens when someone reveals a sin or a problem or an opportunity to you? How do you react? How should you?
2. How has God's Word been a living power for you? How would you describe the Bible in light of this passage?
3. How do you feel about Israel's rebellion? What does this have to do with you and your church today? Why is there no excuse to not know or heed God's Word?
4. How has the Bible been powerful, commanding, and active in your life? How can it be more so?
5. Why do you suppose that no tool of man can ever be as penetrating and as useful to know and reveal truth as His Word?
6. How has God used His written principles to open you up? How do you feel that you will be held responsible for your thoughts and actions? How can this be a comfort and a blessing?
7. How do you feel that God will go deep and penetrate you in the most innermost areas of your mind and life? Does he have the right to do so? Why would someone say He does not?

8. Why is it important that we take responsibility for our actions? How does this help you live a life that pleases Christ?
9. What do you think God will find when His Word cuts deep into your life? What will you do as a response?
10. How do you feel that God is here now with His arms of love and rest, with a plan of hope and a life worth living now and forever more? What will you do about it?
11. When you face failures or disappointments, how can you seek *why*? What can you do to recover and move? How does this help you be faithful and productive in the kingdom? If you need encouragement, He has it for you.
12. Are you immersed with the rotten fruit of the flesh or infused with His Fruit? What does this have to do with being willing and able to live a fruitful life?

Remember that God is alive and at work in you!

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