

Hebrews 4:12-13

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INTRODUCTION

The last two weeks we have been considering the “rest” of God that refers to the sanctification of our Christian lives as we grow deeper in Christ. This “rest” is our becoming more and more like Jesus day by day as we submit and surrender our lives to Him. In today’s passage we learn the first of two primary means by which this process occurs: through the penetrating Word of God. In part 2 of this lesson we will learn the second of the two key: our free access to God in prayer.

That the Bible and prayer are critical to our spiritual growth is a basic concept to the believer. But the author of Hebrews takes this consideration to a deeper level of understanding, worthy of our careful ponderings and implementation. This indeed is our path to the believer’s “rest” of growing in Christ-likeness. Here is more “meat” for our soul, so let us indulge.

***Hebrews 4:12-16** 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. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*

*Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Simple, yes? Read the Word and pray to God. But there is oh so much more here. Today we will focus on verses 12-13, which speak of the penetrating power of the Word.

**GOD’S WORD, THE BIBLE (v. 12-13)**

**Vs. 12**

That this verse begins with “for” lets us know that here is a way to enter the rest of which the previous verse speaks. Specifically, we must be diligent to unleash the power of the Word.

The word of God is referring to the Bible – Old and New Testaments – for God has spoken through both the prophets and through Jesus (Hebrews 1:1), and then the apostles expounded on the teachings of Jesus in their letters to the early churches.

Outline: the Bible is:

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|-----------------------|--------------|
| <b>1. Relevant</b>    | (“active”)   |
| <b>2. Powerful</b>    | (“sharper”)  |
| <b>3. Penetrating</b> | (“piercing”) |
| <b>4. Discerning</b>  | (“judge”)    |

Oh how many consider the Bible to be an ancient manuscript with little impact for their life today. But how wrong they are. The follower of Christ discovers that the Bible is ever in the present tense – relevant for my life TODAY, and powerful to make me a better person. Just like the manna given in the wilderness would only last for a day and needed to be gathered again the next day, so the Bible is fresh EVERY DAY and should be ingested spiritually each day. Entering our spiritual rest is a day by day trusting in the changing power of the Word of God as we read it, study it and meditate upon it.

Remember: **Romans 10:17** teaches that faith, or trust, comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. This means that our trust in God grows as we spend time in God’s Word. This

also means that our trust in God fades, or stagnates, as we fail to spend time in His Word.

Just like a sharp sword can quickly and powerfully change the appearance of our body, so the sharp power of the Word of God can change our spiritual self – and always for the better, as we allow it to do its work. The TRUTH of the Word will set you free.

Psalm 119 is the longest psalm in our Bible, and each verse speaks of the spiritually altering power of the Word of God. Let me read you just small sample of its teachings.

Ps. 119:9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word.  
Ps. 119:11 Your word I have treasured in my heart that I may not sin against You.  
Ps. 119:24 Your testimonies also are my delight; they are my counselors.  
Ps. 119:38 Establish Your word to Your servant, as that which produces reverence for You.  
Ps. 119:50 This is my comfort in my affliction, that Your word has revived me.  
Ps. 119:66 Teach me good discernment and knowledge, for I believe in Your commandments.  
Ps. 119:97 Oh how I love Your law! It is my mediation all the day.  
Ps. 119:98 Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever mine.  
Ps. 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.  
Ps. 119:160 The sum of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.

Not only is the Word **RELEVANT TODAY** and **POWERFUL** in changing us, it is also **PENETRATING** – getting deep into our being. Notice the poetic and descriptive way in which this is conveyed: “piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow”. The meaning is that just as a razor-sharp double-edged sword would easily divide joints from marrow in the physical realm, so the penetrating Word of God will just as easily and effectively get past our physical exterior and get down to our inner being of soul (the mind and heart, like with animals) and even to our spirit (our longing for the supernatural and eternity, unique only to mankind).

The Bible, which having elements of history, is primary about how God relates to man and man to God in the our innermost being. In reading it, we delve deep into our inner self. This is meant to be a **cleansing** (sanctifying) process and **conforming** process (of making us more like Jesus).

And then lastly from this verse, the Word is **DISCERNING**. It reveals, or judges, the deepest thoughts (feelings) and intentions (motives) of our heart. The first word (“thoughts”) speaks of our emotions – what we feel about things. And the second word (“intentions”) speaks of the intellect – what we think about things. The Word causes us to deal with our true motives and if we allow, conform them to God’s perfect motives.

So, bottom line, time spent in the Bible makes us more like Jesus, and we enter into the spiritual “rest” that is our spiritual inheritance in Christ.

## Verse 13

### a. THE ALL-SEEING GOD

Here we have the doctrine of the omniscience of God – that he sees, and therefore knows all. This is one of the characteristics that make God divine, for only God can know all. That God can see “all things” implies that he can see our thoughts and motives as well as our actions. He is in every room, yes every closet. You cannot hide from God. Just as we saw in the last verse that the written Word of God “sees all” about us, judging the thoughts and intentions of the heart – so now we see that God sees all. This can either be a very scary thought, if we want to hide from God (and can’t). Or it can be a very reassuring thought, that God knows our heart for Him, despite our weakness.

Psalm 139 gives us a similar thought. David wrote:

**Psalm 139:7-10** *Where can I go from Your Spirit? OR where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right hand will lay hold of me.*

**b. Our naked self**

Then Hebrews 4:13 goes on to say that “all things are open and laid bare.” This is to say that I am as naked to God, with nothing that I can hide. No sin, no sorrow, no anger, no doubt – nothing. My masks are removed and my excuses are dismissed. And yet – God still loves me. He still calls me His own. I am precious in His sight. Amazing! How dare we try to hide from God. Adam and Even tried it in the garden and it didn’t work. And it won’t work for us as well.

**c. The eyes of God on me**

Here we see all things are seen “by the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” This means that we must face God in regard to every thought and action. IN context of the previous verse it means that through our reading and study of the Bible, we look into the very heart, soul and “eyes” of God, and He looks into ours. No inconsistency with His holiness can be hidden, so sin covered. All is laid bare or “naked.” No pretense, no excuses, no argument.

Again, this is part of the marvelous divine process of CLEANSING and CONFORMITY, if we will allow the word of God to do it in us.

This reference to God’s eyes upon us reminds me of **1 John 3:2** where John speaks of that moment in heaven when we will look into Jesus’ face and eyes and become “like him.”

**1 John 3:2** *Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when he appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.*

Seeing Jesus face to face in heaven will transform us perfectly. In a similar way, seeing Jesus face to face now, through His Word, will transform us in part into His likeness.

**So – READ IT, STUDY IT, MEDITATE ON IT, ALLOW THE BIBLE TO BE A KEY TO YOUR SPIRITUAL “REST” AND TRANSFORMATION INTO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST.**

It is **RELEVANT, POWERFUL, PENETRATING** and **DISCERNING**. People of Oaks Bible Church, I urge you to be people of God’s Word – continually and consistently!