

# "Make It Plain" Newsletter

*"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."*



*"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword...is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

## Welcome!

Welcome to our Living Word Church Newsletter entitled "Make It Plain". The purpose of this newsletter is to provide knowledge and insight for God's people. It also promotes spiritual growth by addressing a wide variety of Christian topics. We hope and pray that this newsletter will bless you spiritually.

## Do We Believe?

The word believe is defined as having confidence in the truth, the existence, or the reliability of something, although without absolute proof that one is right in doing so. On the contrary unbelief is defined as the state or quality of not believing; skepticism; questioning with the intent to disobey; a hardened heart. With these definitions in mind, we must ask ourselves do we really believe? Or do we have unbelief?

When we believe in God, we put our lives in God's hands and rely on His word because it is true. We trust and have confidence in God's promises good or bad. When we live in unbelief, we continually fail to press towards the mark that has been set before us. In Philippians 3:13-14, Paul spoke of pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; *"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* God has set the mark with the commandments given to us and Jesus gave us a blueprint to living a holy lifestyle by adhering to the commandments during His earthly ministry. Therefore, if we do not follow God's instructions for us, as laid out in the

Bible, we are operating in unbelief. The Holy Spirit knows our hearts and can discern when we have truly decided to rely totally on God.

We struggle with believing in God because it goes against our natural way of thinking. In our daily lives, we operate in a system of cause and effect. For example, we believe that we deserve compensation for work performed, we believe our utilities work because we paid the bills, we believe others will treat us the way we treat them, etc... Whereas God's goodness and mercy is obtained solely by total belief upon His Son and His word. We obtain God's goodness and mercy by accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. None of our accomplishments or works grants us access, only total reliance on God. This truth goes against our natural way of thinking (that we receive things based on what we put out).

As Christians, we have to let go all unbelief and totally rely, trust and believe on God. God has shown Himself mighty time and time again, so why doubt Him? We have to drop the human limitations that we place on our Holy and Omnipotent (all-powerful) God. It is only when we place full faith and reliance upon God that we can say that we believe in HIM.

**Scriptural References: Philippians 3:13-14, Hebrews 3, Numbers 14, Hebrews 4:12**

## Upcoming special events for Living Word

- May 21<sup>st</sup> - @ 2 p.m. Christian Education Ministries & Training Programs presents the Class of 2011 Commencement Ceremony @ Sweet Union Baptist Church (1536 N. 59<sup>th</sup> street. 19151)
- The official installation of Pastor Seward Johnson and eldership ordinations will be at our church-wide conference in June. All payments for the conference are due no later than June 12<sup>th</sup>.



***"When we believe in God, we put our lives in God's hands and rely on His word because it is true. "***

## DON'T LOOK BACK



***"God has delivered us from our situations and requires us to NOT LOOK BACK, for looking back is like glorifying our past lives, which shows a lack of gratitude for what God has done for us."***

Many Christians have been delivered from bad habits, strongholds, lifestyles, situations, etc... God has delivered many of us without any remnants of what we were involved in previously. God has delivered us from our situations, and requires us to not look back, for looking back is like glorifying our past lives, which shows a lack of gratitude for what God has done for us. When God saves us and we become members of the Body of Christ, we are to become new creatures. II Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Jesus also told us not go back to our old lifestyles. In John 8:11, there was a woman who was about to be stoned for the adulterous sins she committed, but Jesus stepped in and instructed her to "Go, and sin no more". Similarly, when we commit sins and are exposed, God steps in (after we repent), forgives us and tells us to sin no more.

God gave a similar instruction to Lot and his family in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, which is found mainly in Genesis in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> chapters. Isaiah 3:9 and Jude 7 also reference the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. In this story, the angels gave Lot the instructions of telling his people to not look back while fleeing the condemned city, Lot's wife looked back and turned into a

pillar of salt. There are many opinions shared as to why she became a pillar of salt after looking back at the condemned city. The most common opinion is that she disobeyed the law that was given to Lot from the angels. The act of looking back upon Sodom and Gomorrah showed that Lot's wife missed the lifestyle that blatantly disobeyed God and all the people of that city that desired that lifestyle, who were condemned with that land. God made a way for Lot and his family to escape condemnation. God just required them to press forward and do not look back. Similarly, God has given us that same instruction. When God delivers us, we must not look back or glorify our past lives. Once God forgives us and washes us clean from our sins, we must thank HIM and walk in the manner that He desires us to walk.

There is liberty in being a Christian! When God delivers us (notice I said when) we must fight to stay on God's path and never look back, because looking back shows ingratitude for what God has done for us. Looking back also show that we still desire the very thing that God has delivered us from. Returning to or desiring what God has delivered us from can be likened to a dog desiring to eat its own vomit. Once God delivers us, we must fight to stay free from the bondage of sin.

**Scripture references: II Corinthians 5:17, Genesis 18 and 19, Jude 7, Isaiah 3:9, John 8:11**

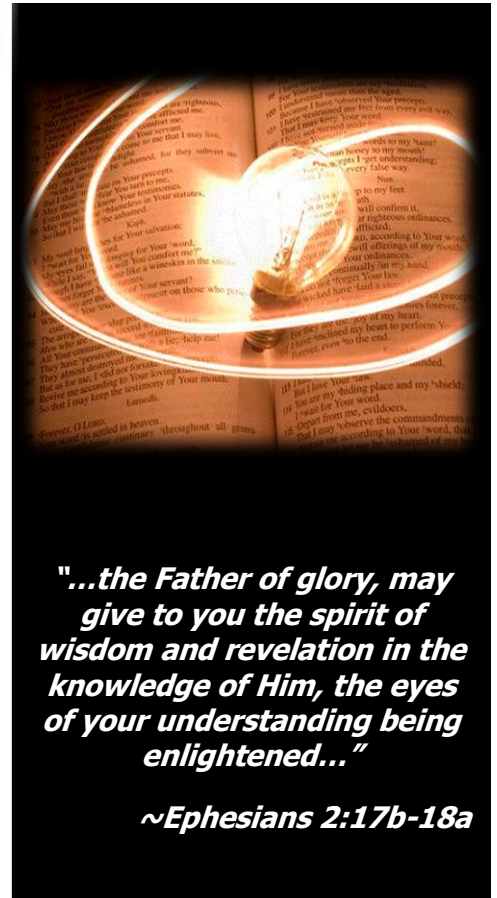


## Make It Plain Practical Tips: How to Study the Bible?



**Study** (verb): <sup>1</sup>. Devote time and attention to acquiring knowledge; <sup>2</sup>. a detailed examination and analysis of a subject; <sup>3</sup>. diligence (the persistent application of knowledge); <sup>4</sup>. to think deeply, reflect, or consider; <sup>5</sup>. zealous (seek and desire eagerly)

1. Devote time
  - ❖ Establish a set aside time to studying. Designate time in your day to acquiring the knowledge contained in God's word.
2. Pray
  - ❖ Seek God before you begin to study. Ask HIM to lead, guide and direct you during your study time. Pray for the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to understand as you read God's word. Also, ask Jesus to reveal through the Holy Spirit what He desires for you to know, what He desires for you to be and to do so that you would remain in the center of HIS will.
3. Find your issue
  - ❖ The answers to your issues are in the Bible. Find where the test of your life is... the issues of your situation. Set your mind and thoughts on that issue or test in your life and go to God's word concerning it. For example, if you are struggling with being unmarried, go to the Bible and study all of the scriptures that relate to being unmarried so that you know how God wants you to live while you are unmarried. If your test in life relates to your health challenges, study the scriptures that relate to healing and health. When studying, you want to "show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth." Therefore, you need to study based on the issues of your life so that you are not ashamed before God.



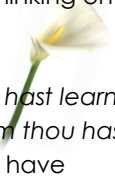
***"...the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened..."***

***~Ephesians 2:17b-18a***

***"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned [them]"***

***~ II Timothy 3:14***

4. Follow up
  - ❖ Study the taught messages by re-reading the notes that you take during Sunday service and Pastoral teaching. Read the scripture references that are used during the messages. Then allow God to show you the areas in your life where the message can be applied.
5. Meditate
  - ❖ "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." (I Timothy 4:15). That means to dwell on and be diligent in thinking on what you have read in God's word.
6. Repeat until you have learned it
  - ❖ "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned [them]" (II Timothy 3:14). Once you have learned and studied how to deal with a particular area in your life, walk in what you now know.
7. BE COMMITTED
  - ❖ "...He which hath begun a good work in you will perform (complete) it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). If God is committed to finishing the work that He started in you, you have to be committed to studying His word.





## Man's Extremities is God's Opportunities

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**"We Do What Is  
Right Because It Is  
Right."**

When we examine our lives, we see the many situations that we have faced and overcome with God's grace and mercy. God has continually showed up mightily in our lives, yet we tend to face situations with a sense of hopelessness or doubt. God desires for His people to trust Him in all our ways. God shows forth grace and mercy in man's extremities. The Bible speaks on many circumstances in which man faced dire circumstances, but in a moment, God saw the opportunity to show Himself mighty. In Daniel 3, the Bible speaks of the three Hebrew boys and King Nebuchadnezzar. In this story the king instructed his people to bow to a 90 ft. tall 9 ft. wide gold idol. The king threatened his people telling them if they did not bow to the golden idol, they would be thrown into a fiery furnace. There were three Hebrew boys among the king's people who refused to bow to the idol. King Nebuchadnezzar became angry and ordered his men to throw the Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace. The Hebrew boys told the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." The king's men began carrying out the orders of the king. The furnace was turned up 7 times hotter than usual, as demanded by the king. His strongest men bound the Hebrew boys together and threw the Hebrew boys into the furnace. The Bible's account of the story tells us that the fire was so hot, that the men who

attempted to put the Hebrew boys in the furnace, were consumed by the fire without even stepping in the furnace. As the Hebrew boys were in the furnace, the king looked in the furnace and saw four people, not three people, walking around in the furnace. The king immediately ordered the Hebrew boys to be released from the furnace and told his people that they will worship the God of the Hebrew boys.

This showed how man's extremity was God's opportunity to show Himself mighty. The Hebrew boys obeyed God, by declining the order to worship another god. They were then faced with a grim situation, but in a glimpse of the eye, God not only delivered them from a situation, but He first got into the situation with them. HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD!!! The Hebrew boys' extremity was an opportunity for God to show Himself mighty to them and to the king who did not believe in God before this altercation.

When we look over our lives, we will see how God showed up every time. Even when things did not necessarily work in our favor, God still made it good for us because we are still here. Even if the adversity leads to death, we get to spend eternity with Him. God has a plan for us and we have an expected end with Him. God desires for us to trust and rely on Him for any and all things. Just imagine what God will do when we put total reliance on Him. "Eyes hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him".

**Scripture References: Daniel 3, 1 Corinthians 2:9**



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**Living Word Church of Open Heart's  
Foundational Scripture:**

**"But be ye doers of the word, and not  
hearers only, deceiving your own selves."**

**~ James 1:22**