

It is important to hear God's word reverently and obediently

Words are powerful things. Because words convey ideas and ideas influence our thinking, words can move us toward being what God wants us to be, or they can pull us away from that. For better or worse, our basic character right now is mainly the result of all the words that have influenced us over our lifetime.

Satan does his deadly work, of course, by means of deceitful words. His lies lead us to disobey God, and when we follow that lead, we die spiritually and are lost. Untruth is at the bottom of all that the devil does. Words that come from him are malicious and destructive in their falsehood. Concerning the devil, Jesus said, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (Jn. 8:44).

In bold contrast, God's words are infallibly true — they give light and life. The writer of Hebrews went so far as to say, "it is impossible for God to lie" (Hb. 6:18). The power of God to salvation from sin is in the totally truthful gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16). Jesus said it plainly: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (Jn. 8:32). It is by words of truth that God breaks the power of the devil's deceit.

We need to have a deep, abiding respect for God's truth. No matter how powerful it is, the truth will not do us any good if we do not receive it properly. Since Jesus is "the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him" (Hb. 5:9), we must choose to listen and respond to God's word in an honest manner. And not only must we hear honestly, but we must be "doers of the word" (Jas. 1:22). As Jesus said, "Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand" (Mt. 7:26).

It is important to hear God's word reverently and obediently. It will be good if we make the coming week a week of growth in the quality of our hearing. Jesus warned, "Take care then how you hear" (Lk. 8:18), and that's a warning we need to pay frequent attention to.

Monday: Romans 1:16,17

Key Idea: The word of the gospel is God's power to salvation.

Questions for Family Growth: Of what did Paul say he was not ashamed? Why was he not ashamed of it? In what ways might we sometimes show that we have little faith in the power of God's word? According to v.17, what is revealed in the gospel?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 18:22.

Tuesday: 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Key Idea: God's word is able to make us "wise for salvation."

Questions for Family Growth: What was Timothy told to continue in? What did Paul say Timothy had known since childhood? What does "wise for salvation" mean? How do the Scriptures produce "faith in Christ Jesus"?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 18:23.**

Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Key Idea: The power and wisdom of God's word may seem weak and foolish to the world.

Questions for Family Growth: Why do "those who are perishing" hear something different in the gospel than those "who are being saved"? How does God save us "through the foolishness of the message preached" (NKJV)?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 18:24.**

Thursday: James 1:19-25

Key Idea: God's word will save us only if we obey it.

Questions for Family Growth: How do we "receive with meekness the implanted word"? In **v.22**, what are we commanded to do? What does **Hb. 5:9** say about the source of our salvation? Are we saved by faith only?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 19:1.**

Friday: Luke 8:18

Key Idea: We need to take heed how we hear God's word.

Questions for Family Growth: What does it mean when we say that different people "hear" God's word differently? Can a person be lost for not hearing God's word accurately? What does it mean to "take heed" or "take care" how we hear?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 19:2.**

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