

Theme: God feeds and forms His people as the Spirit works through the Word — in the worship of the gathered church and in personal daily devotion — so that their hearts flourish in ever-deepening delight in Christ.

I. Intro - The Importance of the Word of God

- A. “The Bible is the most valuable thing this world affords. Here is Wisdom; this is the royal Law; these are the lively Oracles of God.” - moderator of Church of Scotland says this as he hands a Bible to the new monarch in the coronation service in the UK
- B. As a young believer, I immediately started hungering for the Word - I read and studied it constantly.
- C. How do I become devoted to the Word of God - and through it to Jesus?

II. Devoted to the Word of God (Church)

- A. The worship of the gathered church is formed and filled by the Word of God
And **they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching** and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Acts 2:42
 - 1. Again, this is first about the church in gathered worship - the apostles' teaching
 - 2. Luke is showing that the early church was built upon the apostolic teaching of the Word of God.
- B. A Church devoted to the Word of God
 - 1. Jesus has given men to study and teach God's Word to His people to equip them for life.
And he gave **the apostles**, the prophets, the evangelists, **the shepherds and teachers**,¹² to **equip the saints** for the work of ministry, for **building up the body of Christ**,¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to

mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,¹⁴ so that we may **no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine**, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Ephesians 4:11-14

- a. Jesus gave the apostles to do these things, as Luke records in Acts 2:42 (and throughout Acts).
 - b. They also committed this teaching to writing - the New Testament!
 - c. He also gave shepherd-teachers to do this task
 - d. They are to equip believers so that they mature and are not susceptible to false teaching/doctrine
- 2. The elders of the church are to teach apostolic doctrine to the church
He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. Titus 1:9
 - a. Elders must hold to the Word as taught (διδασκῆ - same word as Acts 2:42)
 - b. The apostle's teaching is contained in the New Testament, and elders must faithfully hold to and teach this Word! (Also see 2 Timothy 2:1-2)
 - 3. This includes the Word read, sung, and taught
Until I come, **devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.** 1 Tim. 4:13

Let **the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching** and admonishing one another in all wisdom, **singing** psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Colossians 3:16

- a. Timothy was to build the church on the Word - read and taught!

b. The Word is to dwell richly in a church, not only through reading and teaching, but in songs that teach the Word of God!

4. A critical part of a healthy life that delights in God is regularly gathering in a local church that is devoted to having the Word 'dwell richly' in its worship.

III. Devoted to the Word of God (Personal)

A. The call to personal devotion to the Word of God

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but **his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.**
Psalm 1:1-2

1. The blessed life delights in the Word of God!
2. The blessed person meditates on Scripture constantly - not just during Sunday worship!
3. This is to be a lifelong devotion and passion, and I will give practical aids to help in this journey.

B. The benefits of devotion to the Word of God (BRIEF)

1. It is our food (Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3; Jeremiah 15:16)
2. It defends us from Satan and temptation (Psalm 119:9-11; Ephesians 6:17; Matthew 4:1-11)
3. It protects us from false teachings and ideas (Acts 17:11; Isaiah 8:20)
4. It forms our hearts to love and delight in God (Deuteronomy 6:5-6; Psalm 19:7-11)
5. It causes us to prosper in all of life (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1; Psalm 112)

C. Building a Life Devoted to the Word (Hand Illustration & Practical Tips To Learn the Word of God)

1. Hear the Word (Romans 10:17)

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17

- a. This includes listening to someone teach Scripture, as in Acts 2:42
- b. It also includes hearing the Word read by someone, as in 1 Timothy 4:13.
- c. This requires the least of us, but can give a broad base on which to build if we listen actively.
- d. Listen to the teaching again by podcast, or listen to an audio Bible on an app or podcast.

2. Read the Word (Revelation 1:3)

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.
Revelation 1:3

- a. It mentions both reading and hearing the Word
- b. Reading requires more of us because we must give all of our attention to Scripture.
- c. This usually refers to reading larger sections of Scripture - a chapter or more at a time.
- d. Pick a book or section of Scripture, or use a reading plan to start reading Scripture each day.

3. Study the Word (Acts 17:11)

Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Acts 17:11

- a. This refers to carefully studying or examining a few verses or a single topic across Scripture.

- b. This requires far more attention than either hearing or reading, but also pays far greater dividends!
- c. This usually includes using cross-references or a concordance to dig deeper to understand at a deeper level
- d. You can do this by studying one or more of the verses or areas in “The Benefits of Devotion to the Word of God”, in this hand illustration, or a passage or topic of particular interest to you.

4. Memorize the Word of God (Psalm 119:11)

I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. Psalm 119:11

- a. This is when we take time to write out and then memorize a verse or passage of Scripture.
- b. This requires more than even studying, but also pays very high dividends for the effort!
- c. This really allows the Word to penetrate deep into our hearts and minds.
- d. I have often concluded studying a verse, passage, or topic by memorizing one or more verses to cement the fruits of my study into my life.
- e. You can do this by memorizing one or more of the verses in “The Benefits of Devotion to the Word of God” or in this hand illustration.

5. Meditate on the Word of God (Psalm 1:2-3)

but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. Psalm 1:2-3

- a. This is the thumb - it enables a firm grasp on the Scripture we have heard, read, studied, and memorized.

- b. This is what makes the study of God’s Word personal - where I ask the Spirit to apply it to my life.
- c. This is when I mull over the Scripture, taking a lot of time to think through what it means and how it applies to me.
- d. Note that meditation is done “day and night” - over and over again until the truth opens up to us.
- e. Deep meditation can only be done with a few words or verses, and often will require thinking through them for days or weeks to marinate in the truth contained in them.
- f. Pick one verse or topic in “The Benefits of Devotion to the Word of God” or in this hand illustration and spend the next week just thinking about what it teaches and how you can apply it in your life.

IV. Applying the Word of God

A. Am I devoted to the Word of God?

1. THIS IS NOT ABOUT CONDEMNATION OR GUILT!
2. Everyone can grow in this - and the Spirit will empower us!
3. But growth begins with an honest assessment!
4. Do I give evidence of true devotion to God’s Word?
5. Is it part of my daily life, feeding my soul, renewing my mind, forming my heart?

B. Which area is the Spirit calling me to grow in now?

1. Devotion to the Word of God in corporate worship?
2. Devotion to hearing the Word of God?
3. Devotion to reading the Word of God?

4. Devotion to studying the Word of God?
5. Devotion to memorizing the Word of God?
6. Devotion to meditating upon the Word of God?

C. Fed by Word and Sacrament

1. Luke 24:13-35 - Road to Emmaus
2. Jesus opened the Scriptures to feed them
3. Jesus took, blessed, broke, and gave (v30)
4. v31 - their eyes were opened, they recognized Him
5. v32 - burning hearts as He opened the Scripture
6. Worship is centered around Word and Sacrament
7. We have been fed by God's Word; now come and be fed by the Sacrament at His Table

Devoted - The Word of God

Acts 2:42

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Communion

Numbers 6:24-26

Teaching keywords: Means of Grace; Word of God; Christian Life; Baptism and Filling with the Spirit

The LORD bless you and keep you; ²⁵ the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; ²⁶ the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26