

How Does God's Word Help Us Persevere in Faith?

[Hebrews 4:11-13](#)

Hebrews, Day 14

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

- Hebrews 4:11-13, ESV

I have read magazine articles on how to play golf, but I cannot play golf. I have read about hunting, but I do not hunt. I enjoy reading magazines about cars I will probably never drive much less own. Why? Because sometimes reading is a good diversion, a fun bit of intellectual stimulation, pleasurable education and not much more. But the Bible is something different entirely!

Sadly, many people do approach the Bible the way I approach magazines about golf, hunting and cars. They find it a fun read, get some stimulation, and then nothing more. Current trends to encourage people to read the Bible like a novel are probably not helpful in this regard. The Bible is not mere information, stimulating education or just a great story - although it certainly does have information, is educational, and does tell the greatest story of all time!

No, Hebrews 4:12 tells us the word of God is living and active. The Bible works differently than other writings, because it penetrates deeply and cuts us to the core. The Spirit takes the Word and uses it to expose us before the eyes of God and to show us ourselves. This is not always a pleasant experience. I'm preparing to preach Psalm 120 this week. It would be a pleasant task to preach about the lying tongues of others, but the Spirit is dealing with me and my lying tongue. Ouch!

Yet the cutting, exposing work of the Spirit-empowered word is what deeply sanctifies and strengthens us. Jesus prayed, "*Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth!*" (John 17:17) Sinful unbelief lies in our souls like pockets of cancer in our bodies. We need the Holy Spirit to take the scalpel of the word and cut us open to expose and remove these areas of deadly disease.

Even as this process is painful at times, it is also deeply encouraging, because we can know this: If the word of God truly convicts us, we have no better sign that we are God's children. Jesus said, "*My sheep hear My voice.*" (John 10:27) We hear the voice of the Good Shepherd in His Word, and if we're hearing His voice, we must be His sheep.

The Spirit also uses the word to heal and bind up those places He has cut open. His law cuts and His Gospel heals. His commandments convict and His promises reassure. This is the pattern of the Spirit's work in our lives, and for His work we should be truly grateful. He works in us because He loves us, and He will not stop working until He brings us all the way home, to rest in the presence of God forever!