

Spiritual Nourishment



What God's Word Will Do for You (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again today, sharing with you the wonderful secrets of "What God's Word Will Do for You" if you will open your heart to it and receive it in the way that God requires.

Yesterday I shared with you how God's Word can produce in you the greatest miracle that any human being can ever experience—the new birth. I explained how God's Word is like a seed. When we receive this imperishable seed by faith into our hearts, the Holy Spirit brings forth out of that seed a completely new kind of life, a life that is like the seed out of which it comes—imperishable, eternal, divine—in fact, the very life and nature of Jesus Himself, who is the living Word of God.

This leads us naturally to consider the next main effect which God's Word will produce in us. It will provide us with suitable spiritual nourishment, to sustain and strengthen the new life that has come within us through the new birth.

Wherever a living creature is born into the world, its first and most urgent need is suitable nourishment. Take the example of a human baby. That baby may come into life into the world just beautiful, perfect in every respect, a healthy baby. But, if it doesn't quickly receive suitable nourishment, not merely will it not grow, it will actually die. And the kind of nourishment that a baby needs has to be suited to its stage of development. It starts with one kind of nourishment then moves on to another. And finally all the way up to solid foods.

Well, the Word of God is like that. It is the nourishment that God has provided to sustain and strengthen the new life that comes in us through the new birth.

Think how wonderful God's Word is in that respect. Not merely is it the seed that produces the new birth, but it is also the food that nourishes the life that comes through the new birth. And the food that God has provided through His Word is just like the kind of food a human baby needs. It's suited to each successive stage of our spiritual growth.

Of course, the first stage with a baby is milk. And this God's Word provides. Yesterday, in speaking about the new birth, I quoted 1 Peter 1:23, where Peter says:

> "For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God." (NAS)

Just a couple of verses further on in the beginning of the next chapter, 1 Peter 2:1–3, Peter goes on to deal with this question of nourishment that this new life requires. This is what he says:

> "Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word [notice that phrase, 'long for the pure milk of the word'], that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord." (NAS)

I'm so glad that Peter uses the word "taste" thee about God coming to us. Because when we taste something we take it into us, it becomes part of us. We can see it, we can touch it, we can hear it and it wouldn't become part of us. But when we taste something, it becomes part of us. That's the way God wants to come into our lives. He doesn't want to remain external, just on the outside. He wants to come right into us, and become a part of us. And this He does through His Word.

And so, you see, for the initial stage of our spiritual growth there is in the Word of God the pure milk that will enable us to grow. However, we need to also bear in mind the warning that Peter gives us because, as you know, milk is very easily curdled. The wrong kind of things in the milk bottle or even in the stomach will curdle the mild and it won't do us good. And Peter warns us about the things that will curdle the milk of God's Word and make it of no real effect or benefit to us. He says we've got to put aside five things: malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. So, as you turn to God's Word for the milk that you need to make you strong and healthy, remember don't retain in your heart the things that make the milk curdle. Put aside malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, and slander.

Then from milk, of course, we go on to bread or cereals. and God's Word also provides that. In Matthew 4:4, Jesus said,

> "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" (NAS)

So what bread is in the natural, the Word of God is in the spiritual and we are to lie on that bread of God's Word.

In the original Greek it says "every word as it proceeds out of the mouth of God." In other words, it implies a continuing, on-going relationship with God, where we are in such close on-going contact with Him that as the Word comes out of His mouth, we receive it. Bear in mind also that it says "every word." That includes all Scripture. We don't live on just little tidbits of Scripture here and there, we've got to get acquainted with the whole Bible.

Second Timothy 3:16 says:

> "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness..." (NAS)

So bear that in mind—if you are going to grow, you've got to get acquainted with your whole Bible. Not just the four gospels or one or two passages in the psalms. You've got to get to fine books like Zechariah and Ezekiel and Malachi. Find out where they are and find out what they say. And remember that in them is something that you need to make you the kind of Christian that you ought to be, to nourish you and strengthen you.

I've spoken to you about God's Word as it provides both milk and bread. But, of course, that's not a total diet. Now I want to go on to what Scripture tells us about the total diet—about solid food. We find this in Hebrews 15:12–14:

> "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil." (NAS)

Notice that it's possible to be like these Christians to whom the writer of Hebrews was speaking. And He said, "You ought to have grown up by now. You ought to be able to handle solid food. But the truth of the matter is, you're still living just like babies. You can only just take a few little passages of Scriptures here and there. You've never really matured." And, in speaking about this, he describes the qualifications for maturing. He says "solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil." To grow up requires practice. You've got to train your spiritual senses. You've got to become perceptive. You've got to be able to recognize the difference between good and evil.

There are some Christians that will say “Amen” to any preacher who shouts loud enough. Some people consider that spirituality. But I don’t say “Amen” unless I agree with what the preacher is saying, unless it agrees with the Word of God. I’ve done my best to train my senses. I’ve practiced. I’ve lived in the Word of God for many, many years. So I’m not so easily fooled. I can say, by the grace of God, I don’t just go on living on milk or even on bread. But I’m able to handle the solid food of God’s Word. Not because I’m somebody special, but because I’ve met God’s requirements. I’ve practiced. I’ve trained my senses. I’ve lived in the Scripture and walked in the Scripture and studied it and prayed over it and shared it with others. And it has become solid food in me.

Now there’s an alternative. Alas, it’s a very tragic alternative. Sometimes a little baby is born into the world and we say, “How beautiful. How pretty.” We love its infant ways. We love its little coos and gurgles. We don’t expect it to speak or to make intelligent decisions or to handle life’s issues. Nevertheless, because it is a little infant, it is beautiful, it’s lovable. But suppose that little infant continues in that condition year after year. What was beautiful and lovable when it first came becomes tragic if it continues that way. We call that arrested or retarded development.

Now, alas, I have to tell you that in the lives of many Christians we have the problem of arrested or retarded development. They’ve been Christians years and they still live on milk. They’re still babies. They’re incapable of discerning between good and evil. They haven’t trained their senses. And they are an easy prey to deceive us. And to people who come along and use maybe high-sounding theological language or shout from the platform but really are not saying what’s in accord with Scripture.

I want you to see a picture of that kind of infant—see how tragic it is. In Ephesians 4:14, Paul has been talking about the need to come under the discipline of God’s Word and of God’s ministers and to become a functioning part of the body of Christ. He says if we will meet these conditions then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves. Blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men and their deceitful scheming.

So if you don’t want to be an infant, tossed to and fro, always open to deception, never achieving stability or maturity, you’ve got to live on the food of God’s Words. Start with the milk and move on to the bread, but move up to the solid food.

Now our time is up for today. I’ll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. I’ll be continuing with this theme of “What God’s Word Will Do for You.” I’ll be explaining one of the most important effects of God’s Word: how through it you may receive physical healing.

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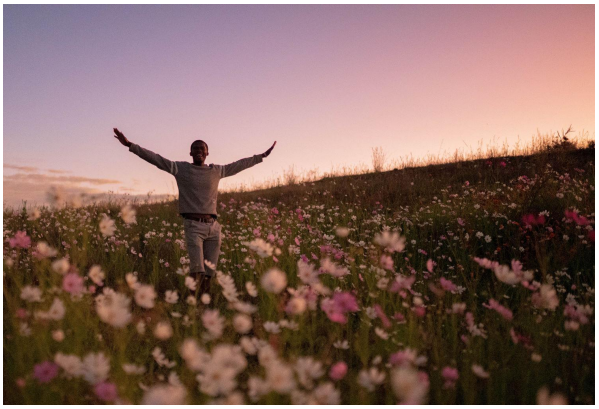

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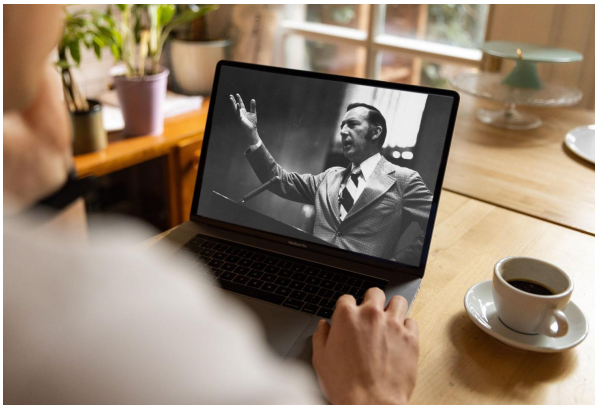

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