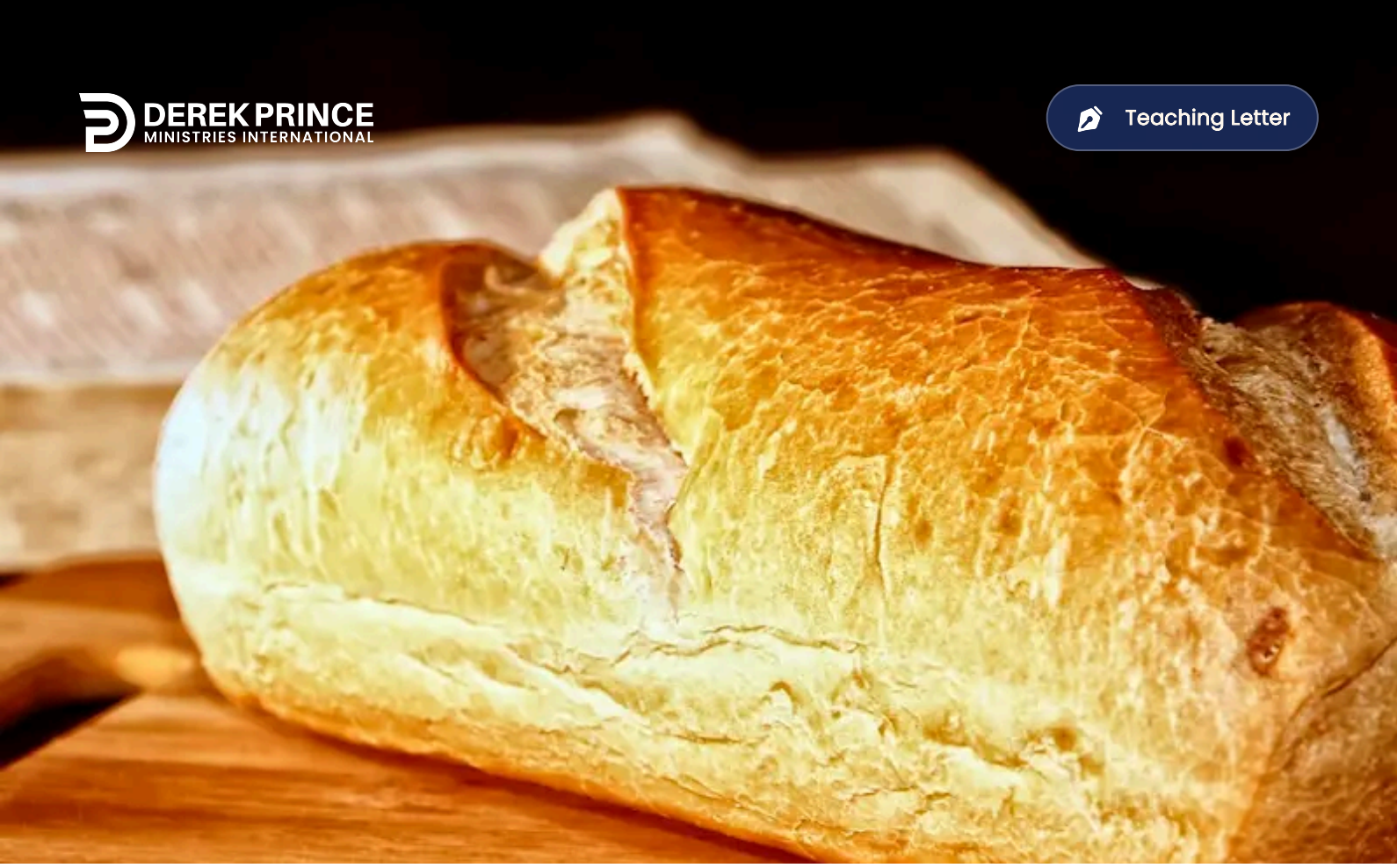


# What God's Word Will Do for You - Part 4



Part 4/6

## What God's Word Will Do for You
## By Derek Prince

In our recent teaching letters, we have been engaged in a six-part series dealing with the topic, *What God's Word Will Do for You.* Each of us could give testimony to the significant impact the Bible has had upon our lives along the lines of the topics we have covered so far: God's Word is Alive; How Faith Comes; and The New Birth.

In the previous segment, we learned how God's Word can produce in each of us the greatest miracle any human being can ever experience—the new birth.

In that teaching, I explained how God's Word is like a seed. When we receive this imperishable seed into our hearts by faith, the Holy Spirit brings forth out of that seed a completely new kind of life. The attributes of that new kind of life are exactly like the seed from which it springs forth: a life that is imperishable, eternal and divine. This life which comes from the seed is, in fact, the very life and nature of Jesus Himself—Who is the living Word of God.

### The Word As Food

The conclusions we draw from this truth—that the Word is a seed which produces life—naturally lead us to consider the next main effect of God's Word upon us. What is that next result? The Word of God will provide us with suitable spiritual nourishment to sustain and strengthen the new life we have received through the new birth.

When a living creature is born into the world, one of its first and most urgent needs is sustenance—through proper nourishment. Consider the example of a human baby. A baby may come into the world as a beautiful, healthy being—perfect in every respect. However, if that beautiful baby doesn't quickly receive suitable nourishment, not only will it not grow—but it will actually die. Furthermore, the kind of nourishment for the baby depends on what stage of development it is in. When a baby is first born, it needs milk—a very basic type of nourishment. At each successive stage of life, the food a baby can handle continues to change until it reaches the stage where it needs solid foods.

The Word of God is like the food a baby needs. It is the nourishment God has provided to sustain and strengthen the new life that comes into us when we are born again.

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Consider how wonderful God's Word is! Not only is it the seed that produces the new birth—but it is also the food that nourishes the life that springs forth in us through the new birth. The food God has provided through His Word is just like the food a human baby needs. It is ideally suited to each successive stage of our spiritual growth.

## First Milk

As we pointed out, for a baby, the first kind of nourishment needed is milk. This is exactly what God's Word provides. In our last study, speaking about the new birth, I quoted 1 Peter 1:23:

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

Just a couple of verses later—in the beginning of the next chapter—Peter goes on to deal with this question of nourishment:

> Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. (1 Peter 2:1–3, nasb1995)

I appreciate the fact that Peter uses the word "taste" here when referring to the way God comes to us. When we taste something, we take it into us; it becomes part of us. Think of it. We can see, touch, or hear something without it necessarily becoming part of us. However, when we taste something, it becomes part of us.

That is the way God wants to come into our lives. He does not want to remain on the outside as something external. Instead, He wants to come right into us. He wants to become a part of us. And this He does through His Word.

So for the initial stage of our spiritual growth, the Word of God contains the pure milk that will enable us to grow. However, we also need to bear in mind the warning given us in verse 1 of 1 Peter 2. As we all know, milk curdles very easily. The wrong kind of circumstances can cause such curdling. For example, if there are germs in the baby's milk bottle, the milk will not do the baby any good.

Peter warns us about the factors that will curdle the milk of God's Word, rendering it useless to us. He says we have to put aside five activities: malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. As you turn to God's Word for the milk needed to make you strong and healthy, remember not to harbor in your heart any of the elements that will make the milk of the Word curdle. Put aside malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander.

## Moving On To Bread

What comes next after we have been feeding on milk? We go on to bread or cereals. Amazingly, God's Word also provides that kind of nourishment. 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." (nasb1995)

Just as bread is nourishing to us in the natural setting, we see that the Word of God is nourishing to us in a spiritual setting. Jesus tells us that we are to live on that bread of God's Word.

In the original Greek, this passage says "every word as it proceeds out of the mouth of God." In its essence, this wording implies a continuing, ongoing relationship with God. It speaks of a situation where we are in such close contact with Him that—as the Word comes out of His mouth—we receive it. Let's also bear in mind that Jesus says "every word" in this verse. That includes all Scripture. We cannot just live on little tidbits of Scripture here and there. We must 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 ... (nasb1995)

So bear in mind that if you are going to grow, you must get acquainted with your whole Bible—not just the four Gospels or one or two passages in the Psalms. You need to become familiar with wonderful books like Zechariah, Ezekiel, and Malachi. Find out where these books are and study what they say. Remember that in them you will find the nourishment and strength you need to transform you into the kind of Christian you ought to be.

## Meaty Solid Food

So far, we have talked about the fact that God's Word provides both milk and bread. But we recognize, of course, that bread and milk alone do not make up a balanced diet. Those two foods by themselves do not constitute a total diet. The type of food we will now examine is solid food. We will see what Scripture tells us about the role of solid food in our total diet. Let's begin with a passage found in Hebrews 5:12–14 (nasb1995):

> 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 an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

Please notice that it is possible to be like these Christians whom the writer of Hebrews is addressing. Essentially, he is telling them, "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 take in a few little passages of Scriptures here and there. You have never really matured."

In speaking about this spiritual condition, the author of Hebrews describes an essential step for all Christians who want to become mature. When he says "solid food is for the mature," he follows it with this phrase: "... who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil." (v. 14, nasb1995) Growing up requires practice. You have to train your spiritual senses. You have to become perceptive. You have to be able to recognize the difference between good and evil.

There are some Christians who will say "Amen" to any preacher who shouts loud enough. Some people consider such histrionics to be a sign of spirituality. For myself, I do not say "Amen" unless I agree with what the preacher is saying. No matter the volume he is using, I only say "Amen" if his words are in line with the Word of God. I have done my best to train my senses. I have practiced. I have lived in God's Word for many, many years. So I am not so easily fooled.

By the grace of God, I can testify that I have gone beyond living on milk or even on bread. I am able to handle the solid food of God's Word—not because I am somebody special, but because I have met God's requirements. I have practiced. I have trained my senses. I have lived in the Bible, and walked in the Bible. I have studied it, prayed over it, and shared it with others. God's Word has become solid food in me.

## Arrested Development

Having discovered this pathway to maturity, I have to point out—sadly—that there is an alternative. Alas, it is a very tragic alternative. When a little baby is born into the world, we say, "How cute! How sweet!" We love its infant ways. We love its little coos and gurgles. We do not expect it to be able to speak or to make intelligent decisions or to handle life's issues.

Because it is an infant—and because it is so cute and lovable—we accept its baby behavior. But suppose that little infant were to continue in that condition year after year. What was cute and lovable when the baby was an infant becomes tragic if the baby continues in that state. We would call that arrested or retarded development.

Unfortunately, we see this problem of arrested development in the lives of many Christians. They have been Christians for years, but they still live on milk. They are still babies. They are incapable of discerning between good and evil. They have not trained their senses. As a result of this lack of disciplined behavior, they are easy prey for deceivers. They are easily misled by people who come along using high-sounding theological language, or by preachers who shout from the platform, but whose message is really not in accord with Scripture.

I want you to get a picture in your mind of that kind of infant—and I want you to understand how tragic that picture is. We see the antidote to that tragic picture in Ephesians 4:14. Prior to that verse, Paul has been talking about our need to come under the discipline of God's Word and of God's ministers. He has been pointing out the necessity for us to become a functioning part of the body of Christ. Paul says that if we will meet these conditions, we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves. We will no longer be blown here and there by every wind of teaching, nor by the cunning and craftiness of men and their deceitful scheming.

In conclusion, if you don't want to stay an infant—tossed to and fro, always open to deception, and never achieving stability or maturity—you must live on the food of God's Word. You start with the milk and move on to the bread. But

please make sure that in the end, you progress to taking in the solid food of the Word of God.

Do you recognize your personal need to move ahead in this process? If so, why not express that desire with the following prayer as we end this segment?

Lord, I want to be a mature follower of You and Your Word. Help me to move from milk and bread to the solid food provided for me in Your Word. Spiritual maturity is what I desire, and I know that Your Word will nourish me and help me grow. By Your grace, I commit myself now to that pursuit. Amen.

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