

Ever heard the saying, “garbage in, garbage out”? In reality, this principle applies whether in the natural or the spiritual aspects of life. That’s why Jesus said in Mat 15:18-19, “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”

In essence, our hearts harbor what we allow our minds to take in. But, where does it all start? Without a clear and secure source, we can’t expect positive results, the reason Jesus gave us the only pure source of life in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

In all truth, if Christ is our Savior, He must be the focus of our lives and become our Lord. In Mat. 6:33 He added, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” James 1:22 warns us, “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

Therefore, as believers, we must realize the importance on filtering what goes in our hearts, so we follow Christ as Lord, and not starve our spirit by neglecting His Word. Will we feed on God’s Word, or let the trash of the world pollute our hearts and minds?

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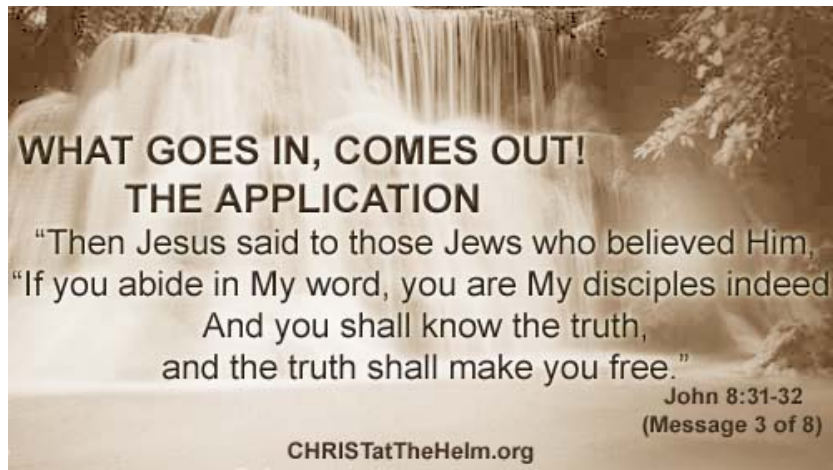
God's Word is without a doubt our only trustworthy spiritual compass to lead us to His Kingdom. While many have tried to discredit the bible, none has ever been able to find any contradiction from the writings of prophets, apostles and men that God so inspired for that purpose.

That's why in 2 Tim 3:16-17 Paul said, "All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." Then Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word *is* a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Scripture, the Word of God, is obviously our only secure guide.

The apostle in 1Peter 2:2-3 said, "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word that you may grow thereby." In essence, we start our spiritual walk with milk, but do need strong spiritual food to grow into mature dedicated believers in Christ. This follows that in feeding consistently on God's Word, the Holy Spirit works through us to accomplish what God desires for our lives.

Another important factor is brought up in Psalm 119:11, "Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You." Is this working for us right now?

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Obviously, believing in Christ involves much more than saying we're saved and going to church on Sundays, right?

To abide in His Word means to strive to learn all principles of the Word of God, and live to apply His teachings to our lives. The reason Jesus said in Mat 7:21, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." We must clearly put our actions, intents and hearts where our mouth is with God.

Paul told us in Eph 5:11, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them." In other words, we are to "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another," as Paul said in Col 3:16. Therefore, as we feed on God's Word and strive to conform our lives to His Word, we must as well encourage, teach and challenge one another in exposing the lies and temptations of the world so we follow the path of righteousness with Christ.

By so applying God's Word to our lives, we receive God's blessings as Jesus said in Luke 11:28, "Blessed *are* those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

Do we strive to learn God's Word and follow His path for our lives?

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We all face daily challenges, temptations, and even sometimes rejection from people on account of our beliefs and stand on the Word of God. That's not only a reality, but the Lord warned us on many occasions that it would happen.

Paul in Eph 6:12 gave us a clear picture of what we have to face in this world: "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly places." In other words, the battle is spiritual against evil spirits headed by Satan himself.

That's why Paul again warned us in Col 2:8, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ." In essence, let's not be fooled by the world, but rather stand on God's Word no matter the circumstances. Let's remember that "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." (1John 4:4)

In all truth, the battle comes down to whether we are determined and steadfast in our commitment to follow Christ, or we will let the world's influences pollute our minds. Will we choose God's truth or the world's lies?

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Jesus always spoke the truth without any deviation, in essence proclaiming God’s Word clearly and powerfully. In light of this, the big question to ask ourselves daily is, “Does my life, actions and thoughts reflect God’s Word and will?”

1John 2:4 drives the message clearly; “He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” James 4:4 adds, “Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

The apostle John gave us this warning: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” (1John 2:15-17)

The expression, “Garbage in, Garbage out”, is a clear image that whatever we allow in our lives will undoubtedly produce a corresponding outcome, whether to our well being or destruction. Let’s not be deceived and believe the world, but rather let’s be committed and walk the only true path of the Lord.

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How can we explain Pr 9:10, "The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One *is* understanding," in light of 2Tim 1:7 in the image? On one hand, we're told God has not given us a spirit of fear, yet we're told that wisdom is to fear God.

Psalms 1:1-3 gives us the answer: "Blessed *is* the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper."

In other words, to fear God is to realize the necessity to dwell in His Word so we can live with the power it brings to live according to His will. Jesus in John 6:51 said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

To the world, money means power. To the believer, Christ is our power so we can say, "I rejoice at Your Word as one who finds great treasure." (Ps 119:162) How empowered are we right now?

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Do we realize that abiding in Christ provides powerful blessings?

Here's what scripture tells us as such: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." (James 1:17)
"When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." (Pr 16:7)

What other blessings can we expect from dwelling in God's Word?

FAITH: "So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom 10:17)

DISCERNMENT: "Solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Heb 5:14)

DIRECTION: "Your word *is* a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Ps 119:105)

PEACE: "The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Philip 4:7)

JOY & STRENGTH: "Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." (Neh 8:10)

James 1:12 adds: "Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

How faithful and steadfast are we to study His Word?

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The featured scripture is oftentimes used by some to claim worldly desires, or whatever their flesh seeks. Yet, it clearly specifies and requires that we must abide in Him and His Word abide in us to receive the promise. Then, if we do, our desires will not hinder our relationship with the Lord, but will rather both honor God and fulfill warranted needs and desires.

Jesus said that His disciples would be recognized by their fruit. Paul in Gal 5:22 defined the fruit of the Spirit this way: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." In other words, if we live as the Word teaches us, we will produce fruit to the glory of God and to encourage both the believers and the lost.

In Rom 15:14 he said, "Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." In Rom 8:6 he added, "For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace."

Through abiding in Christ and His Word abiding in us, we worship God, are blessed and empowered to encourage believers, and shed the light of Christ to a dying world. Will we so commit?

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