

## The measure of God's Word

As Christians, everything we do in life, and whatever information we receive (or give out), must be measured against God's Word. **1 John 4:1** says, "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits** to see whether they are from God." The Greek word used for "spirit" can also mean "*the impressionable element in man - that by which he perceives, reflects, feels and desires.*"

Therefore, this verse could read, "Dear friends, do not believe everything that makes an impression on you, but test anything that may effect your perceptions, feelings, desires or reasoning to see whether it is from God." We live in a 'fast-track' multimedia world, and powerful messages are constantly being proclaimed (through vivid imagery and enticing broadcasts), and they are affecting many facets of our existence. But how can we test these potentially harmful influences? The answer is simple – by *testing the spirit* exactly the way Jesus did! Turn with me to **Luke 4**...

Notice in verse 6 the devil says to Jesus, "All this **authority** I will give You, and their glory, for this has been delivered to me and I can give it to whoever I wish." The devil wasn't lying when he said this; because when Adam sinned he forfeited all the dominion that God had given him. The world system is now in the devil's hands, and therefore, he can freely exercise his authority at any time. This means he can masquerade as an angel of light – performing counterfeit miracles.

Notice that when Jesus was being tested He quickly retaliated by testing the devil back, He said, "**It is written.**" Making direct reference to the **word of God**. Everything must be measured and compared against the word of God. Therefore, every **spirit** must also be measured and tested against God's infallible word. The truth is, anything that isn't in the word is **not** of God. God and His word are one and the same. Even Jesus, the Living Word, made a point of stressing this undeniable fact – boldly declaring, "**It is written.**"

By appealing to the Word of God, Jesus was able to be triumphant over the very same temptations to which Adam had succumbed in the Garden of Eden. Both Adam and Christ faced three aspects of temptation – (1) "the lusts of the flesh", (2) "the lusts of the eyes", and (3) "the pride of life." However, Jesus emerges as Victor in His repudiation of falsely quoted scripture based upon compromise and power. One thing's for sure, at some time in your Christian walk you too will be tested with the same temptations. And when this happens, you'd better have the **sword of the Spirit** in your hand (Ephesians 6:17). Jesus is our example and God's word our rule.

**Hebrews 4:12** states, "For the Word that God speaks is **alive** and full of **power** [making it active, operative, energising, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analysing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart" (AMP).

Another translation reads, "For the word of God is alive and **active**. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." The Word of God is alive, active and full of power! Implying that it (a) *is continuously at work*, (b) *is given to energising things*, and (c) *has the power to produce*. Let's look at other scriptures that confirm this.

**Isaiah 55:11**, “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall **accomplish** what I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it.” The AMP, “So shall My word be that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return to Me void [without producing any effect, or useless], but it shall accomplish that which I please and purpose, and it shall **prosper** in the thing for which I sent it.”

**Isaiah 40:8**, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will **stand forever**.” **Matthew 24:35**, “Sky and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.” God’s Word endures forever!

**John 15:7**, “If you live in Me [are vitally united to Me] and **My words** remain in you and continue to live in your hearts, ask whatever you will, and it **shall be done** for you.” A literal translation reads, “If you abide in Me, and My words are living and active in you, ask whatever you wish and it will leap into being - it will become **fact**.”

**John 15:3**, “You are **cleansed** already, because of the **word** which I have given you [I have **spoken** to you].” **John 17:17**, “Sanctify them [purify, consecrate, and separate them for Yourself], and make them **holy** by the Truth; Your Word is **Truth**.” Only the word can make you holy and pure.

**Psalms 107:20**, “He sends forth His word and **heals** them and rescues them from the pit and destruction.”

**Matthew 8:8**, “But the centurion replied to Him, Lord, I am not worthy or fit to have You come under my roof; but only **speak the word**, and my servant boy will be cured.”

**Matthew 4:4**, “But He replied, **It has been written**, Man shall not live and be upheld and sustained by bread alone, but by **every word** that comes forth from the mouth of God.” **Jeremiah 15:16**, “Your **words** were found, and **I ate them**; and Your words were to me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart, for I am called by Your name.”

God’s Word is never void of power! It is alive and active; it is a creative force; it saves; it delivers; it sanctifies; and it heals. Therefore, you should be continuously feeding yourself on it. It has many amazing attributes.

It is a spiritual weapon. **Ephesians 6:17**, “And take the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God.” It is a consuming fire - **Jeremiah 5:15**, “Therefore thus says the Lord God of hosts: Because you [the people] have spoken this word, behold, I will make My words **fire in your mouth** [Jeremiah] and this people wood, and it will devour them.” Have you things that need to be ravaged? **Jeremiah 23:29**, “Is not My word like fire [that consumes all that cannot endure the test], says the Lord, and like a hammer that **breaks in pieces** the rock [of most stubborn resistance]?” Many of you need to start speaking the word in order that certain situations are dispersed and consumed by God’s fire.

Unfortunately too many Christians do not believe that the Word of God will work for them. **Ezekiel 12:25** declares, “For I am the Lord; I will **speak**, and the word that I shall speak will be **performed** (come to pass); it shall be no more delayed or prolonged; for in your days I will **speak the word** and will perform it, says the Lord God.” God promises to watch over His word and make it come to pass. However, this is conditional upon the Word abiding in you. If there is no Word alive in you, God will find no word to perform.

Jesus said to the Sadducees in **Matthew 22**, “You are in error because you do not **know** the scriptures or the power of God.” In other words, they did not have the scriptures abiding in them. In **Hosea 4:6** the Lord

states, “My people are destroyed [ruined] for **lack of knowledge**; because you have rejected knowledge, I will also **reject** you.” Rejecting or having no knowledge of God’s word has very serious consequences. It could even bring about your destruction. And some of you may be enduring unnecessary hardship simply because you have no scripture to stand on. Knowledge of the Word is something we should all crave – like newborn babies crave milk (1 Peter 2:2). Job said, “I treasure God’s word more than my daily bread.” It was life to him

Furthermore, having knowledge of every **promise** of God will not only sustain and protect you but it will cause you to prosper in all matters of life. **1 Kings 8:56** says, “Blessed be the Lord, Who has given rest to His people, according to all that **He promised**. Not one word has failed of all His good promises.” Notice, it’s impossible for any of God’s promises to fail. Many times they don’t manifest because you are not really operating in faith. True faith does not function in order that you may acquire “all things.” This implies that every promise of God is yours automatically, because all you need to do is *believe*.

Such a presumptuous approach won’t necessary work for you, as there are often conditions attached to a promise from God. And these conditions must be met before the promise is realised. Also, “faith” doesn’t originate in you, or even in the Bible, it originates in God and in the Word that He speaks. Therefore, faith is not believing God for whatever you want, but believing God for whatever He **says!** Notice, you may fail in the handling of God’s promises, but the **promises of God** can never fail you. He works with you to confirm His **word** with the signs that accompany it (Mark 16:20).

Your attitude in life must be to **measure everything** against the Word of God. You should never listen to any teaching that excludes scripture, or anyone who does not refer directly to scripture. Unless you hear clearly, “**It is written,**” you cannot trust the spirit behind it. Realise that any neglect in this area may have very serious consequences. So choose life – choose God’s word!

## **PLEASING GOD**

Hebrews 11:5, “It was by faith that Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying – ‘he disappeared, because God took him.’ For before he was taken up, he was known as a person **who pleased God.**”

Enoch is one of the least spectacular and yet one of the most fascinating men in the Old Testament. Indeed very little is known about this man, and yet what we do know about him is sufficient to set him apart from all others in his own generation. Here’s what we know about Enoch:

- His father’s name was Jared.
- His father outlived him.
- His son was Methuselah, the oldest man in the Bible.
- He disappeared suddenly in middle age.

However, none of this information is striking enough to warrant the greatness that has been awarded to Enoch. So let’s take a closer look... Most believe that it was his sudden disappearance that set him apart from the rest of his generation, and yet there was something that lay behind that disappearance in which his real secret can be found: “Enoch pleased God.” Enoch walked with God and pleased Him. The Bible tells us to ‘*do what is right and **pleasing** in the Lord’s sight, so that it may go well with us*’.

Yet surely this man Enoch was not the man who would be voted by his contemporaries as the man most likely to be remembered in history! Are you aware that there was another Enoch who could easily have become more famous because he had better credentials? Yes, there was another Enoch who was a contemporary of our Enoch, and he was the son of Cain (the eldest son of Adam). And without doubt, Enoch the son of Cain was more spectacular by contemporary standards. After all, the first city mentioned in the Bible was named after him! How many of us have had a city built in our name? Or a city named after us?

If you had been living in Enoch's day and you were asked to predict which Enoch would become best known in history, I'm sure you would have confidently picked the man after whom a city was named. And the chances are that you would not have even been aware that the other Enoch existed. But such is life with the Living God – when you **please Him** the odds change dramatically. True greatness can be birthed out of ordinary people.

Notice, our Enoch did not have a city named after him; he did not have a notable heritage; he was not blessed with great gifts; there is no hint that he has great speaker or that he had a great personality; much less that he was a charismatic leader. No trace of greatness could be seen in him. In fact, we do not read that he had any fame at all in his own day. He was probably not noticed until he went missing! So what was his personal genius? What made him stand out from the crowd and what got his name mentioned among the great heroes of faith? Quite simply, **he pleased God**.

Consider all the famous people you read so much about today, those celebrities you see on television. Consider the movie stars and sportsmen, the best-selling authors, the most influential politicians, leaders and businessmen. The big question is this, how many of them will still be remembered in a thousand, a hundred or even twenty years time? Will their descendants ever recall them? It is very likely that Enoch whom the city was named after, and not the Enoch who walked with God, was the talk of his generation. Yet, in the big picture, he is just a blip.

I encourage every one of you who may feel unnoticed and unappreciated, to **draw near to God**. We all know the pressure of wanting to be accepted. We know the feeling of wanting to be liked; not merely to be popular, but also to be liked. I know and have experienced personally the concern that comes from being different. I know what it is to be ignored because you refuse to be one of the crowd. But I can assure you, if you set your heart on pleasing God and not those around you, you will have an altogether different perspective on life.

What may be occupying much of your attention today will fade into forgetfulness. Pleasing the crowd will become totally unnecessary and meaningless. Enoch was not a spectacular man. But he walked with God and pleased Him! We are not told that Enoch pleased his friends, for as you probably know, this is near impossible. We are not told that Enoch pleased his family, for that is sometimes very hard to do. We are told clearly that he **pleased God**, and that is something any of you can do.

You may ask: What did Enoch believe? What did God say to him? What made his relationship with God so strong that God would not allow him to see death? The same simple answer applies - Enoch walked with God and **pleased Him**! By applying simple faith you too can please God; you too can secure your future for eternity. The Bible says that God loves you so much He sent Jesus to the cross to die for you, and if you

**believe** in Him you will not perish but have eternal life. Just like Enoch, you will avoid the sting of death and live in God's presence forever.

**Believing** that Jesus died for you, and that He is risen from the dead **pleases God** more than anything else you can say or do! Give God access to your life and not only will you receive the gift of eternal life, you will receive the seeds of true greatness.