

Experiencing God's Word First

2 Peter 1:16-21

Introduction

God doesn't want us to *only* read His Word or even know His Word well. He wants us to *experience Him through* the Word. Matthew 17:1-8 and Luke 9:28-36 record the transfiguration – the event where Jesus was transformed into His glorious deity in the presence of the “inner circle” of his disciples: Peter, James and John. The disciples not only witnessed Jesus in a new way, but they also heard the voice of God the Father while looking upon Jesus' glory and majesty. Both the voice of God *and* seeing Christ fully allowed them to experience God's reality in a powerful way. This is the purpose of reading God's Word – to experience Him fully.

God promises that we will experience Him when we are faithful to heed His Word and apply it to our hearts. In 2 Peter 1:19, we are told to follow God's Word until the Daystar, Jesus Christ, rises in our hearts. He promises that when we read His Word and follow what it says, His reality will become our experience.

So how does this process work? In the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit spoke to men who then recorded the Word. The same Holy Spirit who recorded the Word illuminates the Word in us! Jesus the Son, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit are all involved in bringing us into an experience with the Word. We can know that if we are committed to being in the Word, the Trinity will give us revelation that will illuminate and bring light to our souls.

It is not enough to learn the Word without experiencing God. It is also not enough to rest on experience without knowing God's Word. In order to fully experience God and have Him living and active in our lives, we must have both. Your experience of God will move to a new level when the Living Word and the written Word come together.

Getting Started

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate your understanding of the Bible when you read it for yourself (as opposed to hearing the Word preached on Sunday morning)?
2. Are you satisfied with your personal experience of God? Why or why not?

Let's Get Personal

1. What does your Bible reading/study time look like? How consistent (or inconsistent) are you?
2. Information alone does not lead to transformation. How has experiencing God's Word transformed your life?
3. Do you approach the Word looking for an experience with God or are you doing it because you are supposed to?
4. After hearing today's message, how do you need to change your mindset about experiencing God through His Word?

Take the Next Step

1. We don't experience God fully if we do not choose to heed, follow, and obey the Word that we read. How has God convicted you recently? What does heeding, following, or obeying God need to look like in your life right now?
2. Want to read more about experiencing God? Look at John 15:1-11, Luke 24:28-32, and 1 Corinthians 2:10-16.
3. The Holy Spirit will help the Word to come alive as you read and study. Spend some time in prayer and asking the Holy Spirit to do just that as you seek to read and study His Word this week.

Renew Your Mind

So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. 2 Peter 1:19