

When sincere Christians are defeated—the cause and the remedy

If, as a serious “going on with God” Christian, I experience one or more of the following:

- A continuing circumstance that often overwhelms me
- Acute anxiety over the possibility of certain adverse events in the future
- A habit or addiction that I cannot break which tends to demoralize me
- A memory of something I or someone else did that I cannot get free from
- A promise from God that seems frustratingly never to come to pass
- A relationship that constantly tries the limits of my patience and love
- The current seeming absence of any real purpose and meaning in my life

Then clearly I am not reigning in life through Jesus Christ in the way God intends me to!

What is my problem? Why are the trials of life often getting the better of me?

My problem is simple – either I am not regularly hearing from God, or I am not receiving from God His understanding, in contrast to my own, of what He is saying to me, or, I just do not believe with my whole heart what God has told me – or all three of the above!

Among Christians there is “**a famine of hearing the words of the Lord**” – Amos 8:11

Let’s consider the following scripture, perhaps more deeply than we have done so before:

Rom 5:17 ...**Those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.**

These are God’s words not man’s. Categorically they declare that if I receive an abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness I will reign in life, as in be enabled to overcome life’s difficulties and remain with peace and joy in my heart, walking with God. If this is not happening in my life either this scripture is untrue (but it is true) or, I am not meeting the requirements of the scripture; and yet I could be, for this scripture is for me. Please let’s just accept this truth and let’s not disagree with God as the manner of some is. Instead let’s examine in the light of more of God’s words what those requirements are:

Grace: First of all I am going to have to abandon my babyhood understanding that grace means “unmerited favor” – this understanding probably hasn’t done me much good to this point. It is time for me to know in my heart that “God’s Grace” is “God’s word” yes, that’s right, The Word of God is The Grace of God:

Acts 20:32 **Brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace which is able to build you up** (and make you a strong, overcoming Christian)...

However, Grace is not the word of God as written on the pages of our Bibles, in that form God’s words are law, and if we only see God’s words that way then we will remain under the tyranny and condemnation of the law. No, the word of God becomes the Grace of God when the Spirit of God causes some of God’s written words to come alive to us and speak personally to us. This is why the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Grace:

From the Book "The Power of the spirit" by William Law
First published as "An Affectionate Address to the clergy" in 1761

"The things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God" (1 cor. 2:11). Without the present illumination of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God must remain a dead letter to every man, no matter how intelligent or well-educated he may be. The things of God "are spiritually discerned" (2:14), and therefore "the natural man receiveth them not . . . but God reveals them unto us by his spirit" (2:14,2:10). This is telling us in the plainest terms that it is just as essential for the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth of Scripture to the reader today as it was necessary for Him to inspire the writers thereof in their day. For without the same inspiration and power of the Holy Spirit, it is no more possible for man in any age to experience the reality that is promised in Scripture, than it would have been possible for "holy men of God" to write the Scriptures without being "moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 pet. 1:21)

Jesus Christ, who is the one and only Savior of mankind, said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6) What a delusion, however, for any man to think that he has this life from God and is on this straight and narrow way, simply because he makes a mental assent, to these words or preaches eloquently in their favor. "I know you not" (Matt. 7:23) says Christ to those who have not been born through this seed of the Word being brought to life within them by the Holy Spirit. Since a birth is the beginning of life, the Word of God through which we are begotten becomes the necessary food that nourishes the Christian. Even so the Holy Spirit must continue His work within those who are born of the spirit, illuminating and applying the word to men's hearts for Christian growth.

Heb 10:29 ...**The Spirit of Grace** (is the Spirit of the word).

Abundance: God's word is God's Grace, of which, if I am to reign over life's obstacles, I must receive an abundance – that's the opposite of a little – it means there must be an abundance of God's living words getting access to me, not just the occasional word.

Righteousness: This means that I'm right with God and clean from sin. Without this I will have no authority in the spirit realm and the things listed at the top of this paper will continue to have dominion over me. How do I get it? Like Grace it is the gift of God. Also like Grace righteousness is imparted to me through the word of God. In fact all God's words are righteousness and any one word brought to me by God's Spirit (and thus spoken to me) can make me clean:

Ps 119:172 ...**Your word, For all Your commandments** (words) **are righteousness.**

John 15:3 ...**(Jesus) You are clean** (made righteous) **through the word which I have spoken unto you.** KJV

Receive: We need to notice that none of the immeasurable blessings of Grace and Righteousness which are available exclusively through God's living words become mine until I receive God's words. What does it mean to receive, how do we receive? We receive God's words, and the grace and righteousness that they impart so that we can reign over life's difficulties, when we believe them with our whole heart, and retain them.

Luke 8:13 ...**Who, when they hear, receive the word with joy** (but) **who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.**

If we insert in our original scripture Romans 5:17 the meanings of the key words it contains most of which we have now derived from other scriptures, it would read like this:

Rom 5:17 ...*Only those Christians who constantly hear, understand and believe a daily flow of God's words brought to them by God's Spirit can be built up in strength and kept clean and so enabled always to prevail over every one of life's trials and temptations.*

We can of course disagree, but the above is an unchangeable fact. Someone may say "But I'm spending considerable time either in God's word or in inspired books, devotionals, or truth papers, or listening to CD's, about God's word and I am still suffering frequent defeats, how come?" The answer is clear – while I am spending ample time around the word of God not many of those words, for sure not an abundance, are getting into me and remaining in me – we don't get it by osmosis. I am like a person often entering a room full of food but always leaving empty having not eaten except for the occasional crumb. This means I have much more to learn about how to receive on a regular daily basis God's living words, including unlearning some things, in order for God to make me one of His Christians, of which all are intended to be, who reigns in life.

Improving how I hear, understand and believe God's words (receive abundance of grace)

First of all I need to be established in my heart on something very basic. What's that? As

one Minister of the Gospel put it “God does the Bible – nothing else”. A paraphrase for:

Jer 1:12 ...**The LORD said... “I am ready to perform My word”**.

God performs His word, He does the Bible when He can find someone who has His word, a part of the Bible, in their hearts, then, He performs it. If I grasp this it will motivate me to learn how to let God get more of His words in me – so He can perform them and bring them to pass both in my life and in the lives of others. I must recognize though that God performs “His” exact word – not my or someone else’s convenient summary or synopsis of His words, especially when that summary resides, as is often the case, in my head.

As with all things good there is a downside, a consequence, if I reject what is good:

Pro 29:18 **Where there is no revelation** (no ongoing unveiling of God and His will to me through His word), **the people cast off restraint...** And one of the first restraints that I will throw off is the constraint of not complaining about my situation and not wallowing in self-pity when troubles arise in my life. When I do this I am effectively declaring that God hasn’t been good to me, He’s not taking care of me – only a continuing and fresh intake of God’s living words into my heart will keep me from releasing this restraint on my flesh.

Improving how I hear from God: This is the single most important thing in the Christian’s life. If my born again spirit does not get constantly fed it will wither and eventually die, for which then there can never be salvation. If I don’t know how to receive living words directly from God to feed my spirit, and if I’m going to make it as a Christian, I should attend every gathering of the Church, listen to Bible teaching and inspired music CD’s constantly and meet often with a mature Christian to disciple me.

Heb 2:3 **How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation...**

When I have grown sufficiently in my spirit I will have developed a way where I expect to hear from God every day, and sometimes several times a day. I know that God will speak to me personally through part or all of a Bible verse. I will allocate sufficient time for God to speak to me each day, and, whenever I’m in doubt. I may use a devotional, a scripture calendar, a promise box, a truth paper or reading a chapter or passage from the Bible, either in sequence or at the specific direction of God’s Spirit, as potential sources for God to use to bring me His words. I read slowly, reflectively and never speed read. Faithfully I do it at least once and often more times each day knowing if I neglect the One who loves me and on Whom I am wholly dependant, my enemies will gain an immediate advantage over me. I understand that the dead letter of the word will only kill me but the words made alive to me by the Holy Spirit are the very life of God to me, when they enter my heart.

Ps 51:6 **Behold, You desire truth** (Your Word) **in the inward parts** (my heart), **And in the hidden part** (my spirit) **You will make me to know wisdom** (Your Word).

Pro 1:23 **Surely I will pour out my Spirit on you I will make my words known to you**

If I truly want to know God better and be of more use to Him I discover a hunger to spend quality time with Him later in the day to study His word and the teachings He brings me.

Improving my understanding of words God speaks to me: I am willing to cease from my own wisdom and to not lean on my own understanding to interpret what God is saying to me. I recognize my dependency on God's Spirit to give me His understanding of what He says and I'm prepared to wait on God, before ending my quiet time with Him, until I know that I have received His understanding. I never try to get God to speak to me through a word of my choosing-the words He speaks through are solely His choice and may consist of an entire verse or just a small portion of a verse and rarely will it exceed two verses. While God's purpose is to engraft His words onto my heart and I cooperate by being still and silent before Him and shutting down all other extraneous thoughts – nonetheless I keep a written record of the words He has spoken and the understanding He has given.

Prov 3:5 ...**Do not lean on your own understanding** .

Prov 4:5 **Get wisdom ! Get (My) understanding ! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth.**

Ps 27:14 **Wait on the Lord...and He will strengthen your heart...(with His words)**

Improving my trust and confidence in God and in the words He speaks to me: I have learned that doubt is a crippling enemy (and watching secular TV is watching a doubt box). My Father often forestalls doubt by the words He speaks to me in the morning quiet time which always inspire faith. God intends for me to live throughout the day in a happy state of trust in Him. However when I have allowed doubts to access my thoughts with an inevitable weakening of my heart – I have learned to go quickly back to my Father who is the source of my faith and not leave until He has, through His words, restored my heart to a place of trust in Him. If I have stumbled into sin, which always weakens me and opens the door to doubt, I confidently rely on His mercy, for Christ's sake, and I believe I am forgiven, regardless of my feelings. He knows, and I don't, exactly what words I need to hear to restore me – I simply feed on His faithfulness and His unchanging love. As with all the words He speaks, I continue to think about them later as I remember them, as God's Spirit reminds me of them or as I refer to my record of them, and they strengthen my heart with each remembrance, and often I see deeper truths that they contain.

Ps 31:10 ...**My strength fails because of my iniquity**

Ps 119:50 ...**Your word has given me life.**

I fully intend to live by and to conform my actions and speech to what I have heard God say. I am willing to take the word of my Father above circumstances and the words of others. I recognize that I have an adversary and a carnal mind that will tempt me to quickly abandon God's words, but I know God will deliver me from every such temptation.

Ps 9:10 **And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.**

In summary: 2 Cor 9:8 **And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.**