

We use the term sustainable progress because there is a possibility to have a similitude of progress, but when significant testing comes, people begin to falter. This is seen in the parable of the sower, the one that was grown among thorns, *Matthew 13:1-23*. We want to be able to advance towards the promised land, just like the people of Israel. For us, the promised lands is the sum total of all that God promised us, *2 Peter 1:4*. The end goal is to be like Christ, *1 John 3:2*.

In this series, we would be looking at two modules:

1. Understanding the Word of God
2. The diligence of the New Testament believer.

Just as the Israelites were led by the rock, *1 Corinthians 10:4*, for us, Christ is leading us all the way and Christ is manifest as the Word of God. You can encounter Jesus in the word of God, with an impact just as if He was physically present. With the understanding of the word of God, there is a diligence required in applying that understanding to enable us work out that progress in our lives.

### **UNDERSTANDING THE WORD OF GOD.**

*John 10:34-35 KJV*

*Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? [35] If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;*

The emphasis is "He called them gods, unto whom the Word of God came". This means the Word of God makes the receiver a god. Who is a god? A god (excluding idols) is an offspring of God, just as the child of a Lion is a lion. A god is a being that has God's DNA and is like God in divine Character, nature and glory. Irrespective of how you may feel, your destiny is to arrive in the likeness of God in God's Character and glory. Hence, the Word of God can make a person into God's divine character, nature and glory. If you are serious about a project, you will think twice when you hear that something can help you achieve your goal.

If this is the case, that the word of God can transform us into the divine nature, What is the Word of God? How is the word of God able to make a person into a god? When you see that the Word of God is

the secret recipe that transforms a man into the likeness of God, our individual strengths are not relevant, *Psalm 19:7*. *John 6:63* gives us some insight into the word of God "*It is the Spirit that quickens, the flesh profits nothing: The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*". Another scripture says you are clean through the words that I have spoken to you, *John 15:3*. How does a word clean a person? It means that there are possible back end operations. The Word of God is a Spirit of Life. *Hebrews 4:12* says the word of God is alive and powerful. In summary, the Word of God is a Spirit of Life that has a power to transform a person into a god (a being that is like God in divine character, nature and glory, after the pattern of the Lord Jesus). This is independent on any criteria on the person. Hence, the result on the people is the same, as long as they are recipient of the word of God. **Why is this important?** It helps us understand the saving power of our God and to avoid self generating power.

We have learned to call the bible texts (scriptures) the Word of God. However, we have been learning that the word of God is actually a Spirit. What then is the relationship between the bible text and Spirit of Life? **The bible texts are a description of the Spirit of Life.** Anybody who was well positioned to receive the Word of life was receiving the impact of the influence of a Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Life, and each idea in the bible text is a description of the dimension of His power to transform you. When a portion of the word of God is spoken in faith, *Romans 10:10*, the Holy Spirit uses His power to accomplish what that portion of the Word of God says (e.g. *Matthew 5:48*, *Isaiah 60:1*). The Lord will have His people profitably advance in the way, so He will look upon the labour of His soul and be satisfied, *Isaiah 53:11*.

*Matthew 5:48* says be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect. This is the text. **However, if all you received was the text, you have received an incomplete transaction.** Many Christians sadly stumble at this verse, because they receive the text. People instinctively say, no body can be perfect. However, Jesus knew what He was saying when He said this Word. The bible says God calls the dead and calls those things which are not as though they are and they come into perfection, *Romans 4:17*. If He the speaker and author of Spiritual realities says be ye perfect, then He is releasing the power of the Holy Spirit to make you perfect. This command is a description of the power of God that can make you Perfect as Christ is perfect. Once you understand this, you will appreciate *John 3:1-3* when John describes the manner of Love God has given to us, that we should be **called** a son of God. Once God says to you, "Thou Son of God", just like He did in *Genesis 1* while creating, He has created the way with power, for you to become a Son of God. You can imagine two believers, once sticks with the text

and they get discouraged. They say, the word of God says this and I try and I cannot get there. Remember you were not invited to try by your own strength. We need to interact with the Word of God.

### **THE DILIGENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVER**

As we have been reading, we may be asking ourselves, if this is true, what do I do? How do I interact with the word of God? We will consider that in this module. Anytime we hear the word of God, it is inappropriate to see it as text alone. We need to focus on the Spirit of life. *1 timothy 6:12* shows that our posture in diligence is to fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life. How does this relate to the identity of the Word of God? What is eternal life? *John 17:3* says Eternal life is to know Jesus. This is not a mental accumulation of knowledge. Knowing God here is an interaction of a Spirit. As you interact with this Spirit, it has a life effect upon you. You fight until you can have a solid comprehension of the knowledge of God and experience it. We need to wrestle with the Spirit of the Word of God to obtain the blessing.

A major example of this diligent fight is *Genesis 32:24-30*. We see Jacob who wrestled with God and obtained a name change from Jacob (Supplanter, a dubious person) to Israel (A prince with God). Jacob had duped his brother of His birthright and He was coming to face the consequence of his past. For us, this might be our appetites and the consequence of our sin nature. He began to make the journey and sent his family ahead. He was alone and wrestled with an emissary of God. This wrestling is what is described as fighting the good fight of faith. This is an encounter with the Spirit of the Word. This describes how you can be transformed from our sinful nature to our prince hood. The blessing he sought is a benediction (an utterance) that causes you to advance Spiritually; it is a revelation and understanding of the Word that will transform your life. We can just read the word for the sake of checking off a list. We can also see a scripture and hold on to Him until you receive the blessing. We need not wait for one day when the word finally clicks, you can lay hold on the Spirit and wrestle with the Spirit of the Word. This does not mean you have a fighting face. You could be at work, school, etc, but your mind is focused on that topic, such that God will know that this Child is not letting me go on this issue.

Once we get the blessing, what do we do? For us in the new testament, what do you do? Declare (confess) the Word with understanding and faith to experience the dimensions of the saving power

of the Holy Spirit described by the Word of God ( *Psalm 2:7, Romans 10:10, Hebrews 11:3, Romans 4:17*). You declare the decree" Even as it is written of me in the volume of the books, I am perfect as My Father in heaven is perfect".

How did Jesus come to the place where He said I come to do thy will Oh God, as seen in *Hebrews 10:7-8, Psalm 40:7-9*? Recall that Jesus came as a man and learned righteousness, *Hebrews 5:8*. He must have declared the decree. The first thing is that we need to believe and even if we don't have the faith initially (spiritual understanding) Pray, "Lord I know this is not just a word, bless me with the understanding. I believe but help my unbelief". When Jacob received the blessing, he moved forward with this might and obtained the victory. For us, once we get this understanding, we declare the decree and begin to witness the change in our life. Not that any man will glory, because Christ has been made unto us all things.

*Romans 1:16* calls the gospel the power of God unto Salvation. An information on its own cannot just be enough to save someone. It has to be mixed with faith to access the power behind the word. We speak about the finished work of Christ but look at our lives and not see that. Hence, we must wrestle and not let go until we receive the blessing. As a result, we will sing we rejoice in His salvation, *1 Samuel 2:1*.

The new testament believer is to advance towards Christ through the strength of the Spirit of the Word, just as Peter walked towards Jesus by the upholding power of the Spirit of the Word "come". The Spirit of that word upheld Him. Sadly, he lost focus. The temptation of accusation is to make you look at yourself and take your eyes off Jesus. This would be seen as the waves in the example of Peter; hence He sank, *Matthew 14:22-33*. However, we must understand that the Lord on high is mightier than the sound of many waters, *Psalm 93:4*. If you find that you are shaking in faith, it means you need to wrestle some more and come into the understanding.

*For He said, Surely they are My people, children that will not lie: so He was their Saviour.*

*Isaiah 63:8*