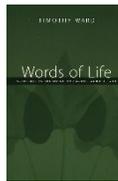


# COMMUNITY

## Part 7

### Community: Confidence in the Words of God

Words of Life by Timothy Ward:



Reading a book in school called Words of Life by Timothy Ward. I am about 2/3rds through this book. It is quickly climbing my list of the most influential books I have ever read. Reason: It is changing my paradigm on how I read the Bible and relate to the Words of God.

I learned many of the concepts and insights I plan to share with you today come from Ward's book, but my primary goal is to use the Scriptures to demonstrate to you the depth and riches of the Word of God:

### Open your Bible to Isaiah 55...

#### God's Words: Isaiah 55

- His Words are like living water for the thirsty (v. 1)
- His Words are like free food that will never leave you unsatisfied (vv.1-2)
- His Words give life to your soul (v. 3)
- His Words invite you into covenant relationship with Him (vv. 3-4)
- His Words are evidenced in His witnesses (vv. 3-4)
- His Words will extend to the nations (v. 5)

#### Isaiah 55:10-11

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven  
and do not return there but water the earth,

making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,

but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

**God's Words will not return void. They will accomplish what He sends them out to do. Why is that?**

*Yes, the easy answer is "because they are God's Words, duh." But WHY are God's Words so powerful like that? What is it about His Words that makes them powerful enough to always accomplish whatever He sends them out to do? Let's look...*

## 1. God backs His Words with action.

Genesis 1:3 – And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

*God's Words will not return void because He backs His Words with action. (speech and action – 2 yet 1)*

**Another Example: God backs His Words with action.**

Genesis 1:6 - And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.”  
7 So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so.

**Repeatedly:** God said, and it was so. God said, and it was so.

Again, when God speaks, He acts. He spoke that the waters should be separated, then he separated them.

Genesis 12:1-2 - The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. 2 “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

Genesis 22:17-18 - I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring[b] all nations on earth will be blessed,[c] because you have obeyed me.”

With these Words, God started a ball rolling that would determine the course of human destiny. Because He backs His Words with action, His Words of promise to Abraham became a binding covenant that God would not break. Eventually, Abraham had a son. His son had two sons. One of those sons was Jacob, whom God called Israel. From Israel, God made a nation from Abraham’s seed. Under Moses and Joshua, God delivered His people from bondage and brought them into the Promised Land. Eventually, from the line of Abraham, Jesus Christ was born – through whom all the nations of the earth are blessed.

*God's Words do not return void because He backs His Words with action.*

## 2. God’s Words are an extension of Himself.

Genesis 1:26 - Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

- Theoretically, God could have just created us without Words. Theologically, God would not have done that... because He didn’t do that. But if you will indulge me for a moment, theoretically, God could have...
  - Created us in His image and likeness
  - Thereby revealing part of who He is through us
  - And not told us – and we would not have know.

**There is more to words than meet the eye, more than just passing some information... our words are an extension of who we are.**

Example: \_\_\_\_\_, I will meet you in the other building at noon. (I don't show. REVELATION!!!)

Yes, I transferred information, but I also entered into an agreement. We do this all the time. Even simple things (I like sports. Our relationship moves forward based on the belief that you did not lie and that you really enjoy some sort of involvement in sports.)

Words are an extension of ourselves. My words are not me, but they are an extension of my character, my habits, my interests – my words reveal who I am and my motives for what I do.

**Luke 6:45 – The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.**

The same is true about God. His Words are an extension of Himself. His Words are not all He is... you cannot master His Words and thereby master God. However, His Words are His revelation of Himself to us. In fact, because God reveals Himself through His Words, we cannot know Him apart from His Words.

*The more we know His Words, the more we know Him. God's Words do not return void because they are an extension of Himself to us – and He is reliable.*

### **3. God's Words call us into relationship with Him.**

How many times have I heard people argue that Christianity is a bunch of rules to be followed? We try to counter this argument by saying, "Yes, there are commands that Jesus has given, but Christianity is about having relationship with God and knowing Him. This makes it unlike any other religion." This is a great claim, but what is the support for this claim? What are we standing on when we make this bold statement? The answer can be found in the power of God's Words.

**Look again at God's call to Abraham:**

Genesis 12:1-2 - The Lord had said to Abram, "***Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.***" 2 "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing (*emphasis added*).

What would have happened if Abram would have ignored God when He called him? He would have forfeited the opportunity to walk in redemption and experience a relationship with God. However, through responding to God's Words, Abram entered into covenant relationship with God. God's Words, God's commandment, was an invitation to Abram to experience His redemption and to enter into relationship with Him.

### **The same is true with Adam and Eve...**

Genesis 2:16 - And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

God gave Adam and Eve an invitation to walk in right relationship with Him. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they chose to reject meaningful relationship with God. They bought a lie that cost them big time. God's Words in this command were backed by action - the day Adam and Eve sinned, each experienced death in their spirit and, as a result, death in their relationship with God.

### **The same is true for us!**

God's Words call us into relationship with Him! How did you come to know Jesus and what He has done for you? Was it not through His Words? How would we know our sinful condition and what God has done to redeem us apart from His Words? The answer: We would not. God has chosen to reveal Himself through His Words. His Words are reliable and they will not return void...

*God's Words do not return void because they are an effective means of calling us into relationship with Him.*

*Review...*

### **God's Words do not return void because:**

1. God backs His Words with action.
2. God's Words are an extension of Himself.
3. God's Words call us into relationship with Him.

### **Who is like the Lord our God?**

- We can speak empty words, vain words, untrue words that destroy our relationships.
- In this history of all eternity, and in every context of His speech, God has never spoken ONE empty or vain word. He ALWAYS invests Himself into His Words, and His Words accomplish what He intends for them to do. His Words always breathe life.

God has both the ability and the character to keep every Word He speaks! How many lies have you told? How many times have you failed in a commitment you made? How many times have you missed an appointment? Empty words. Yet God has never spoken ONE.

### **God's Words ARE ABLE:**

1. God backs His Words with action.
2. God's Words are an extension of Himself.
3. God's Words call us into relationship with Him.

When we understand this truth about God's Words, our respect and desire for His Word begins to grow inside us!

## At the sound of His Words...

- The earth was flooded, but Noah and his family were spared.
- The nation of Israel was delivered from the hands of Egypt through mighty acts of God.
- The law of the Lord was given at Sinai.
- The nation of Israel repeatedly experienced the blessings of walking in righteousness and the curses of their wickedness.
- Kings were appointed and overthrown.
- Nations have risen and fallen.
- Prophets spoke of a future Messiah that would rescue and redeem.
- Jesus Christ was born.

*We now cross the threshold into the life of Jesus Christ...*

## Jesus - The Word of God made flesh:

John 1:1-5 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Jesus Christ is the Word of God made visible to us! All that God is and has said is found in the person of Jesus Christ. The Words of God are an extension of God to us. Through Jesus, the Word of God was made visible to us:

Colossians 1:15 - The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

John 12:49 - For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken.

Through Jesus, the Word of God – an extension of God Himself – was made visible to us! Not only could we know God through hearing His Word, but we are now able to see the Word of God lived out perfectly through a human being.

## The Words of Jesus = The Words of God:

1. Jesus backed His Words with actions
  - *Mark 2 - "your sins are forgiven... rise and walk"*
2. Jesus' Words were an extension of Himself
  - *John 14:6 - "I am the way, the truth, and the life..."*
3. Jesus used His Words to draw people into relationship with Him
  - *Matt. 4:19 - "follow me and I will make you fishers of men"*
  - *John 14:5 - "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."*

### **A Change in Perspective:**

When you begin to understand God's Words, you realize that His Words are empowering and life giving, not burdensome!

1 John 5:2-3 – By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

This is why we can say that we do follow Jesus' commandments, but it is not about law but about love. Through His Words, God has called us into loving relationship with Him, and He is calling us still deeper.

### **It has been said that conflict is the price we pay for deeper relationships.**

- Will you experience conflict over the Words of God? At times, yes.
- Are His Words always easy when the battle of your flesh is raging strong? No.
- Do His Words always bring life and deeper relationship with God? Absolutely.

His Words are not burdensome. Not because they are always easy live out in our flesh, but because they always lead us to freedom in Christ through God's Spirit at work in us.

Now, with this in mind, what has God been trying to speak to you from His Word that you need to stop rejecting and receive by faith today? In other words...

### **What does God want to accomplish through His Words in you today?**

- Believing who God says you are instead of living in the shadow of condemnation?
- Forgiving someone for a past offense?
- Walking in obedience by submitting yourself to do what God has called you to do?
- Get in the game and be a disciple who makes disciples through team discipleship? (aka group)

The next time you walk into your group, a discipleship meeting, or a place where the Word is going to be preached, I pray you walk in with a heightened sense of excitement and wonder as you anticipate what God wants to accomplish through His Spirit, His Word, and His Church (the people).

When you join your group and you engage in God's Word this week, I pray that His Word would come alive to you and to your team as you trust more deeply in the reliability of His Word.

*Are you a vessel ready to receive His Words? Are you thirsty for living water?*

**Isaiah 55:10-11**

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven  
and do not return there but water the earth,  
    making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
    11     so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
    but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Conclude with corporate prayer, then invite people forward to receive prayer for any needs – including the opportunity to receive prayer based on something God may be speaking to you through the message today.