

Doing The Word

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By Dave Butts

There is a great deal of confusion concerning the Word of God today. The confusion is not among those who doubt the authority or authenticity of the Bible. Instead, it is happening virtually every week among conservative, Bible believing Christians. It comes from blurring the distinction between hearing and doing the Word of God, and is, unfortunately, an easy trap for so many of us to fall into.

It may begin like this: We go to church on Sunday and hear a powerful sermon based on Scripture. We may leave the church building saying, "What a great sermon!" And how do we feel inside as a result? We feel good. That's the beginning of deception. We feel good because we heard and agreed with God's Word; however, we have yet to do anything in response.

When it comes right down to it, our church structure sometimes encourages us to become hearers of the Word rather than doers. In many churches we can hear one passage of Scripture taught in Sunday School, and then another one in the worship service. There may be an additional passage taught on Sunday night or Wednesday evening, and perhaps even another teaching during a small group. In a very real sense, we can be trained to merely *hear* the Word rather than to *do* it, by being overwhelmed with too many different teachings in a short amount of time.

James is the one who gives us the clearest Biblical teaching on this matter.

“Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the Word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:22-25).

Hebrews gives us another warning about not merely being hearers, using the nation of Israel during its forty years of wandering in the wilderness as a negative example. Most of the third chapter of Hebrews warns us of the danger of not believing God as Israel in the wilderness failed to do. *“So, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert’” (Hebrews 3:7-8).* In Hebrews 4:2 we read, *“For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.”*

Let’s go back to the book of James again. He warns us, *“In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (James 2:17).* That’s what happened to Israel. They heard the Word of God from Moses time and time again. Eventually, hearing the Word and not doing it led to hardening of their hearts.

What a warning for the Church today! Could it be that hearing a sermon Sunday after Sunday might be dangerous for us? Yes...if we repeatedly fail to act upon it. Scripture warns us that we can begin to experience a hardening of the heart. Spiritual matters can begin to become unimportant. There fails to be a stirring within us as we hear the Bible expounded upon because we are not committed to doing what we hear.

James gives us a wonderful encouragement to do the Word as he

writes, *"The man...not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it – he will be blessed in what he does"* (James 1:25). What a marvelous gift is offered to us! We will be blessed in what we do, because we are paying attention to the Word of God and doing what it says. In case you are wondering what sort of blessings God has in store for the one who does His Word, the Psalmist gives us the answer in Psalm 112:

"Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in His commands.

(Here the blessings are enumerated for us):

His children will be mighty in the land.

Each generation of the upright will be blessed.

Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever.

Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man.

Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice.

Surely he will never be shaken; a righteous man will be remembered forever.

He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord.

His heart is secure, he will have no fear; and in the end he will look in triumph on his foes.

He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor, His righteousness endures forever;

His horn will be lifted high in honor."

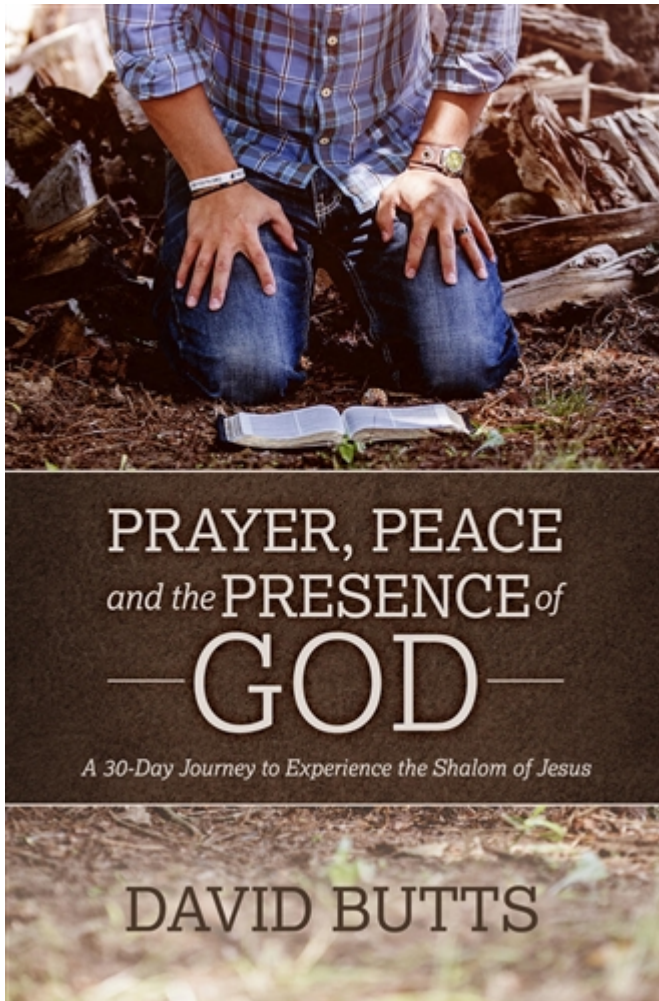
I don't know about you, but those are the blessings I would

like to receive from God. They come from being a people who not only *hear*, but also *do* the Word of God.

One of the simplest ways to stay on course as a doer of the Word is to pray as we hear or read the Scriptures. Always ask, "Lord, what is there in this passage for me? Is there a sin to repent of? Should I stop and thank You, Lord, for something You have done for me? Is there a relationship I need to begin to repair? Lord, how does what You have said here change the way I spend my time or money today? Father, teach me today from Your Word what I am to do. Give me ears to hear."

The third verse of the old hymn, *Break Thou the Bread of Life*, says it well:

"O send Thy Spirit, Lord, Now unto me,
That He may touch my eyes, and make me see:
Show me the truth concealed Within Thy Word,
And in Thy Book revealed I see the Lord."



PRAYER, PEACE, and the PRESENCE of GOD by David Butts

As believers, we are supposed to walk in the peace of Christ, yet we all have stressful issues and circumstances that rob us of this peace. Subtitled “A 30-Day Journey to Experience the Shalom of Jesus,” *Prayer, Peace and the Presence of God* powerfully encourages the reader on how to hold onto that peace in any circumstance.

The author, David Butts (1953-2022), started writing this book and 10 days into it he got word that he was in stage 4 with a rare form of lymphoma. God allowed him to live in a greater way for five additional years of full-strength ministry. Dave has challenged readers in *Prayer, Peace and the Presence of God* to seek after His best life, no matter what it holds.

His 30-day devotional will encourage, inspire and challenge you that you, too, can experience and walk in the peace of Jesus no matter what circumstances you are walking through.

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