

TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP**JOIN A SERVE TEAM****NEW HERE?****CONNECTION CARD****STAY UP TO DATE****SUBSCRIBE TO DIGITAL BULLETIN****Series: The Living Word****Title: Living and Active****Text: Hebrews 4:12**

Words matter. Every day, we experience the power of words. Words can communicate hope, direction, encouragement, love, and peace into our lives. However, words can also be damaging through communicating shame, rejection, deceit, criticism, and anger. Our words are not just sounds. Words do something, and they carry meaning. Our words can create and influence people.

God created humanity with the ability to speak because humanity was made in his image (Genesis 1:26-27). One of the most basic ways that humanity reflects the image of God is in our ability to communicate through speech. If our words have power and reflect God's image, how much more power does the word of God have when God communicated with humanity?

God still speaks today. While he may guide us in many ways, he has given us one authoritative, trustworthy, and life-giving source for hearing his voice: his Word, the Bible. Throughout this summer series, we'll explore the images Scripture uses to describe itself and discover how God speaks through the Bible to guide, nourish, shape, and transform his people.

Today, we'll examine two descriptions of the word of God as living and powerful in Hebrews 4:12, a foundational passage explaining the word of God:

For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.

The Word of God is Living

- In the grammar of the original Greek text, this adjective is the first word in the sentence, emphasizing this description of the word of God.
- In the context of the book of Hebrews, the phrase "word of God" refers to God's verbal communication to his people in the past and his communication through the written word of God in the present.
- Throughout Hebrews, God is described as a living God (Hebrews 3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 12:22). A living God speaks living words. God's words are alive as they create reality and carry life.
- The preacher of Hebrews argues that God's living word cannot be ignored. Instead, the people of God either respond with obedience or with hardening their hearts.

The Word of God is Active

- Various translations translate this second adjective differently to describe the word of God: active (NIV, ESV), powerful (NLT, KJV), effective (CSB). The Greek word translated is *energēs*, the word from which

we get our English word “energy.” This description of the word of God conveys the dynamic energy of the spoken and written word to God to accomplish a purpose. God’s word does something.

- Isaiah 55:10-11 illustrates this well. God says that his word is sent out, *“and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it.”*

When Hebrews 4:12 describes God’s Word as living and active it means that God’s Word carries the life of God and accomplishes the work of God. Throughout the Scripture, we see how God’s Word is living and active. Specifically, today we’ll examine four ways God’s Word is living and active.

The Living Word Transforms Lives: 1 Peter 1:23-25

- Peter connects eternal life with the word of God. He also describes the word of God as eternal and living, citing Isaiah 40:6-8.
- Peter is writing to those who have been born again, who have received eternal life through Jesus, by the Good News that was preached to them.
- The living and active Word of God brings salvation and eternal life to those who believe and experience life transformation through Jesus.

The Living Word Speaks through Jesus: John 6:63-69

- In the context of John 6, Jesus has offended people with his teachings about eating in body and drinking his blood. Many people walk away from Jesus.
- In John 6:63, Jesus describes his own words as *“spirit and life.”* Jesus knew his words were full of life, even if they were confusing to some people.
- Jesus questioned if his disciples would leave him, too. In John 6:68, Peter responded to Jesus, *“Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life.”*

The Living Word Works for Our Spiritual Formation: 1 Thessalonians 2:13

- Paul says that the words he preached to the Thessalonians about Jesus were the very words of God, not the words of a human.
- The adjective from Hebrews 4:12 is used as a verb to describe the energizing power of the word of God, which presently works in the lives of believers.

The Living Word Speaks Personally to Us: 1 Samuel 3:1-11

- The young boy, Samuel, thought that Eli, the High Priest, was calling his name in the middle of the night. After it happened twice, Eli instructed Samuel to respond to the voice of the Lord, because the Lord was personally speaking to him.
- God continues to speak through his written words to our current situations in personal ways that bring truth, guidance, and growth.

Summer Reading Plan



Join us in reading one chapter each day through the Gospels using BibleProject’s Gospel Reading Plan on the Bible App. Together, we are asking the Holy Spirit to speak through God’s Word so that we are confronted by the life and teachings of Jesus and challenged to follow him in obedience. As we read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, our prayer is that we would hear God’s voice, grow in faith, and become more faithful disciples of Christ.