

Sword Work

2:13 And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

REVIEW: PAUL DESCRIBES A FUNCTIONAL CHURCH: WHAT A CHURCH that works DOES:

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|--------------|-----|--|--------------------|
| a) | 1:8 | It “sounds forth” the word of the Lord <i>with boldness and love</i> | |
| (Evangelism) | | | |
| b) | 1:8 | It lives out its “faith in God” <i>with boldness and love</i> | (Exemplary living) |

The group of people who got this letter, this church, was an example of these things to other churches!

BIG CHANGES!

Believed in Jesus. Trusted and obeyed God.

Loved one another with Christlike love.

Hoped steadfastly in Christ... And they HAD been worshipping idols! Now look at them!

Someone who had been out of town for a while might have asked,

“What happened here?”

TWO WAYS OF ANSWERING!

There’s the “people story”:

→ Paul the apostle came to town, He preached.
He persuaded. People “went for it”... “faith, love, hope”

There’s the “God story”:

→ **1:2,3** *Their faith, love, hope: things to thank God for!*

AND NOW WE COME TO **2:13** And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

NOTE: A second thing to thank God for! But it’s really the same thing! *Faith, love, hope: by the Word at work in them.*
e.g.

Romans 15:4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

AGAIN, someone who had been out of town for a while might have asked, *“What happened here?”*

There’s the “people story”:

→ **When we heard the word of God we accepted it as such...**

But Paul saw it as a “God story”

There’s the “God story”:

→ **We thank God that when you heard the word of God, you accepted it as such**

Two sides of the same story: **God’s sovereignty; our responsibility:** good theology + good living ↻

Two sides of the story for two practical purposes: To know who to thank / to know what to do

So then...
believers”

WHAT TO DO WITH THE WORD OF GOD → *“the word of God, which is at work in you*

(re: What we have been given to do: evangelism and being an example: getting the gospel out/ the gospel in.)

An analogy would help!

This work that the word of God carries out is compared in the Bible to **the work of a sword.**

Ephesians 6:17 and take ... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God... (Written ten years after 1 Thes. 5:8)

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, **piercing** to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and **discerning** the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

→ *“the word of God, which is at work in you*

believers”

Revelation 1:16 ... from his mouth came **a sharp two-edged sword**, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

In the days of warfare by sword, the help that a sword could give depended on **THREE THINGS THAT WERE REQUIRED**

1) You must have possession of it! ==> ☐ (Photo: Frodo)

John 14:21 Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

Ephesians 6:17 and take ... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...

Accept the word of God as what it is: a sword!

For two purposes: **evangelising** (*Speak it!*) and **exemplifying**. (Be personally worked on by it)

2) You must learn how to use it A word to the pacifists. "The word is **ALSO** a lamp" **No Step #2.**
(Not much to learn about using a lamp!)

But a sword requires skill!

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, **piercing** to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and **discerning** the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Learn how to use the word of God as what it is: the **piercing, discerning** instrument of God!

For two purposes: **evangelising** (*Speak it!*) and **exemplifying**. (Be personally worked on by it!)

e.g. **1 Thessalonians 5:11** Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

→ And trust God to use it, and to teach you how to use it!

Ephesians 6:18 ...praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. → **1 Thes. 2:13**

BECAUSE the truth doesn't work "automatically."

We often see how the Bible confuses and provokes people

Matthew 7:6 Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

3) And you must actually use it! "Take it with you!" Don't just stand there.
Say something biblical! *Draw your sword!*
(*Hold up the lamp!*)
(Pray and then) say Bible things!

Ephesians 6:17 and take ...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...

THE CHALLENGE: This week/month! Don't just show up and stand there: **Say something biblical, and trust God to use it!**