

**"The Word Is Discerning"**

The final word used to describe God's word is "Discerning". It's the Greek word KRITIKOS from which we get our English word "Critic". It also means "Judge". A critic, whether for movies, music, wine, restaurants, consumer products, or whatever, is someone who is supposed to see things more deeply than the average person. They have more experience with more versions, and can tell you why something is empirically good or bad – and why. We depend on critics so that we don't waste our time and money on worthless things, or so that we can set our expectations to the right level before we go somewhere. God's word is the ultimate and perfect critic. Because the Word of God is living, active, sharp and piercing, God uses it to "discern the thoughts and intentions of our heart." God sees it, and the Bible shows it to us. Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?". But the solution is that God does know our hearts, and that He gives us His word as a roadmap to our hearts.



James 1:22-25 describes the Word of God as being a mirror, "Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the

one who looks into the perfect law, the law of perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing." That's a warning to us who read God's Word because it will show us who we are. When you start to pray, and you open the Word, and He shows you your own intentions. He shows you what you were really thinking when you did this or that, why you really did it, and all the reasons behind it – that no one else really knew. He holds up a mirror to your very soul. In this way He is softening your conscience and teaching you about yourself. He's giving you a roadmap of your heart, a picture of who you really are. And it draws you closer to Him because you realize that you need Him to help you, save you, forgive you, change you, open you up and clean what is inside.

**"Where Can I Run?"**

Hebrews 4:13 reminds us that "...no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account." It is my prayer that you would run to God, that you would allow Him to open you up every day, to do surgery on your heart every day, to bring you more and more healing every day – by reading and prayerfully interacting with His Word.



According to Hebrews 4:12, "The Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." The "Word of God" here is the written or spoken Word. The description of the Bible as

"Living" means that it has a vital power characteristic to itself. The emphasis in this passage is on the fact that a two-edged sword is sharp. In comparison, God's Word is even sharper because it can divide or make a distinction between things we generally think of as being closely related or indistinguishable. For example, what is the difference between a soul and a spirit? The soul is our intellect, emotions and will. It is the part of us that interacts with the intellectual realm. The spirit is the inner man. It is the part that interacts with the Spirit of God. While the soul is the seat of emotion and intellect, the Spirit is the seat of the fruit of the Spirit, such as faith, hope and love. All that we hear from God comes from the Spirit.

**"The Word Is Living"**

The Bible is being described here is not the way we would describe words in a book, but as a living, breathing, personal being. These aren't merely words on a page, but the active, alive, person of God – the very presence of Jesus. Our interaction with the text is an interaction with God. As we read the words, it is not merely coming through our eyes and into our mind, but is the voice of God being spoken into our soul, our spirit, and our hearts. It is as though God is reading them to us. It's as though Jesus was standing next to us, speaking in our ear the words we need to hear, reminding us of what He's all about, what His plans are, how He sees you, and what His promises are. He's sowing seeds as we read... will they take root in our souls. This is why we talked about having desperation for His voice and presence. Do we care that He's standing there, speaking the words of life? Are we thirsty for him? Do we realize that the Words we are reading are Living Words?

**"The Word Is Active"**



There's "potential energy" which describes something that has yet to move, but can. All it needs is something to convert the potential energy into some other form. The Bible is full of potential energy for anyone who would read it.

And the moment we open it and read it with receptive hearts, that energy is converted into "Kinetic energy" – moving us closer to God and making us active in God's will. It's converted into "Thermal Energy" – heating up our lukewarm hearts and making us lights unto the world. Just as God is Living and Active, able to make things happen, so God's Word is Living and Active, full of Energy to make us alive and calm the storms in our heart.

**"The Word Is Sharp"**



The next word used to describe the word of God is "Sharp". It is "sharper than any two edged sword." A sharp sword is a dangerous weapon, but this word describes something even more dangerous. This is the word "TOMOS" which doesn't describe a cut from a sword blade, but the precise incision

of a scalpel. It's not the swing of a sword, or the stab of a dagger, but the keen and direct cut of a surgeon. You see the word TOMOS at the end of surgical words like "appendectomy" (the removal of the appendix). This is what the Bible does. It slices us open. In the context we see that this whole section is about the scriptures being "sharp", "piercing" inside of us, and splitting us open so that the very "thoughts and intentions of our heart" can be seen. God's Word is able to penetrate to the heart of a person and cause a change, and unlike a physical scalpel it leaves no external scar. The Word of God reaches the "heart," the very center of action, and lays open the motives and feelings of those it touches. That is why you find those hearing Peter's message responding, "Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart" (Acts 2:37).

**"The Story Of King Josiah"**



Think of the story of King Josiah reading the book of the Law after it had been lost for so many years, and then discovered when they were rebuilding the Temple. It says, **"When the king heard the words of the Book of**

**the Law, he tore his clothes. And the king commanded... saying, 'Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.'" (2 Kings 22:11-13)** After reading the word of God, King Josiah was taken apart and terrified by the judgment of God. It had revealed his disobedience and how far the people of God had fallen away from what God wanted.

And it had revealed how God would punish. But it had also revealed how God would forgive His people when they turned back to Him so he calls to the priests, the government officials and the servants to get right with God! This could be one reason that a lot of people avoid reading the Bible. For the same reason they don't visit the doctor, or refuse to have an operation that could help them. They are afraid or they want to live in denial – and pretend they don't have the problem. Whenever they read the scriptures they feel the keen sting of God's scalpel starting to cut open their chest to expose their hearts, and before God can go too deep, they close the book and tell God to go away. Sure, God's going in there to cut out the cancer, to repair their heart, to remove the stones inside them, to cut out the dead flesh and restore life – but it hurts. Jesus said it this way in John 15, "I Am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser ("Gardener"). Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit." (John 15:1-2) God's Word is sharp, like a scalpel, like a pair of pruning shears...

**"The Word Is Piercing"**



The next word takes God's surgery a little deeper. It says that the word of God is "Piercing". **"Piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow"**. The root of the Greek word is the word DIA which simply means to go "through" something, to penetrate it, to reach through

something. We all know what a piercing is. It's when people put metal through parts of their body. God is so exact in His cutting that He is able to exposes the very core of our being – He pierces through us. It says it is able to divide the separation of "joints and marrow". Literally meaning the joint where the bones connect and the marrow inside the bones. God's surgery doesn't make mistakes. There's no accidental cutting. His Word hits the mark every time. How does this work? Someone hears God's Word read or preached (or they read it themselves) and it hits them exactly where they needed to be hit. It exposes their sin, their hypocrisy, their depravity and the evil in their hearts. And they are forced to contend with it. To repent and accept forgiveness, or to harden their hearts and turn away. Or, in the positive sense, God's Word is read or preached and it speaks exactly the words of comfort they needed to hear. They find the answer their soul has been looking for. the healing which they so desperately have desired. That's the power of God's Word, and I believe with all my being that when we are in the Word every day, prayerfully reading and interacting with God through the text, that He pierces and divides us, speaks to the core of who we are, shows us our exact intentions, doesn't sugar coat things – but tells us exactly what we need to hear that day. And He can do it with only a few Words because those words are sharp as a scalpel.