

Biblical Theology
Our Need For God's Word
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I Man was made to be dependent on God's word

Gen 1:26–28: “Then God said, “Let us make man^[h] in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

- God *spoke* to Adam and Eve!
- Why?
- Man was made to know God:
 1. Man, being made in the image of God, was made with the ability to have a personal relationship with God.
- Man was created as a “revelation receiver.”¹
 1. After creating Adam and Eve, God spoke to them: “And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” (Gen 1:28)
 - i. The rest of the creatures were able to glorify God by just existing. But Adam and Eve needed God to tell them their purpose.

¹ From Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 39–49.

- ii. Tripp: “The oak tree brings glory to God simply by raising its limbs toward heaven. Its presence and form bring glory to its Creator. But human beings need God’s words to live fully for his glory.”²
 - iii. God made Adam and Eve “upright” (Ecc 7:29) and without any imperfection, but they were not able to live life on their own.
 - iv. They were made with the need “to hear, understand, and apply God’s word to their lives.”³
 - v. Man was made to be dependent on God’s word—even before the fall!
- 2. We see this again when God placed Adam in the garden and told him, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen 2:16–17)
 - i. There was nothing inherent to the tree that would have indicated to Adam that eating it would produce death (after all, it was part of God’s “very good” creation (Gen 1:31)).
 - ii. Adam needed God to tell him that he was to glorify God by eating from all the trees in the garden except for this one.
- Man cannot interpret reality rightly apart from God’s word.
 - 1. Man cannot figure out how to live apart from God’s word.
 - 2. We need God to tell us who we are, why we exist, and how we are to live.
 - 3. This means that we all stand in desperate need of God’s word.

² Ibid., 40.

³ Ibid., 40.

4. Without it, we don't know who we are, why we exist, or how we are to live.
- Therefore, God's word is essential for life.
 1. Cf. Deut 8:3 "Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD."

Summary: Part of what it means to be human is to need God to communicate to us. We need to learn from God himself. We need him to define for us our identity, instruct us about our purpose, and explain to us how to interpret reality. We do not have the ability to live on our own. God's word is essential for life.

II The folly of trying to live autonomously

Gen 3:1–7 "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" ² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths."

- Between verses 5 and 6, something happens in Eve's heart that can only be described as the epitome of foolishness—she considers that there can be truth apart from God.
 - Eve knows that God said, "in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die," but she considers that reality might be different: "you will not surely die...when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing God and evil."

- Genesis 1–2 revealed that all of reality has been formed and defined by God’s word, yet Eve considers that reality might be different from what God has said.
- Worse than that, she believes that she has the ability to decide what is good and what is not!
 - Throughout Genesis 1, God defines what is good: “And God saw that it was good” (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31).
 - But in Genesis 3:6, Eve takes God’s place: “The woman saw that the tree was good for food.”
- She thinks she can interpret reality *autonomously*—on her own, apart from God.
 - Having set aside God’s word, Eve’s interpretation of reality was that she could obtain a blessing and wisdom by her own means, *apart from God*.
 - V. 6: “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.”
 - And we do the very same thing every time we sin.
- Man in his quest for wisdom apart from God, has become a fool
 - Rom 1:21–23 “For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.”
 - “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov 1:7)
 - Man thinks he can live independently from God, but “In him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28)
 - Thus, the mind of the person who tries to live autonomously is characterized as “futile” and ignorant.”

- i. Eph 4:17–18 “Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

III We are dependent on god’s word for all things in the Christian life

- For Regeneration
 1. 1 Pe 1:23: “You have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God... And this word is the good news that was preached to you”
 2. James 1:18: “Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth”
- For Salvation
 1. Rom 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes”
- For Sanctification
 1. John 17:17 “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”
 2. Col 3:9–10 “Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”
 3. Rom 12:1–2 “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”
- For the Sustenance of Spiritual Life
 1. Matt 4:4 (quoting Deut 8:3): “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”
 2. 1 Pe 2:2: “Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation”
- For Fighting Sin and Satan

1. Eph 6:12–13 “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore ...take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”
 2. Ps 119:9 “How can a young man keep his way pure?
By guarding it according to your word”
- For Spiritual Maturity
 1. Eph 4:14–15: “that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.”
 - For Personal Equipping
 1. 2 Tim 3:16–17: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”
 - For Corporate Equipping
 1. Eph 4:11–13: “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers [*whose job is to preach the Word!*] ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”
 - For evangelism, counseling, making disciples, being a Christian in the workplace, being a godly spouse, father, mother, etc!

IV How, then, should we respond to God’s word?

- **With trust**
 - Prov 3:5–6: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”
- **With humility**
 - Prov 14:12: “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”
- **With a deep sense of need**
 - Job 23:12 “I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food.”
- **With an earnest desire to understand and obey it**
 - Ps 119:33–37 “Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart. Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it. Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.”
 - Ps 119:8” “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”
- **With an eagerness to obey:**
 - Ps 119:59 “When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimonies; I hasten and do not delay to keep your commandments.”
- **As your wisest counselor**
 - Ps 119:24: “Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors.”
 - Ps 119:98–100: “Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts.”
- **Consider it greater than any earthly treasure**
 - Ps 119:72: “The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.”

- **With joy**
 - Ps 119:162: “I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil.”
- **With praise**
 - Ps 119:62: “At midnight I rise to praise you, because of your righteous rules.”