

# POWER IN THE WORD \_ of \_

George Faull once wrote fact that “atheists, agnostics, or skeptics will often try to stump us with a question about our God. These skeptics think they are being clever and they take pride in their great intelligence. They will say (for example) “If God is all powerful, can He create a rock so big He cannot lift it?” In other words, if God is all powerful He should be able to create any size rock He wanted, but if He could create a rock that was too big for Him to lift... that would prove He wasn't all powerful. Skeptics love to mock us with these kinds of challenges because they believe it shows the lack of logic in worshipping some supposed God. So George came up with a few responses you might try out if one of these skeptics tries that question on you:

- 1. Why would He want to lift it?** And... do you need a rock like that for something?
- 2. Not right now.** Right now He is seeing if He can make a square circle for another skeptic.
- 3. By definition, a rock is only a small fragment of a larger piece of the same substance.** Therefore, your question is illogical and flawed from conception.
- 4. Well, I assume the rock would need to be created where you could see Him create it and lift it, or you would not believe.** Since He already created the earth and hung it upon nothing with all the other heavenly bodies, your question ought to be “Can God create and hang a planet bigger than any other than I can already see?” The answer to that is “Yes, but I doubt if would do it just so you could believe.”
- 5. Someone told me you were witty and I have concluded they were only half right.**

**Our God is an awesome and powerful God.**

**There is nothing He can't do.  
Nothing He can't create.  
And nothing He can't lift.**

In fact, some people refer to God as the “higher power”

In **Isaiah 55**, God says... **“You got that right!”**

“That's exactly what I am.”

“I AM higher than you not just in My power, but in My ways and in My thoughts.

**“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. **Isaiah 55:8-9****

In fact, even God's **WORDS** have power.

**“... my word that goes out from my mouth... will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” **Isaiah 55:11****

Now just to prove His point, God does something fairly clever here. He slips in a little science lesson that the people of that day wouldn't have understood. Back in those days many people worshiped gods of water and sky and fertility because that ‘god’ controlled the elements of this world that they could not understand. But here in **Isaiah 55** God says: **“I'll help you understand some of those things in this world”**

And in **Isaiah 55:10** God revealed the principles of evaporation, the ecosystem, and the earth's process of conserving its resources that have puzzled people for centuries.

Notice what it says: **“... the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater.”**

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1. In the 1600's Isaac Newton came up with the "**Law Of Conservation**" which said that energy (such as the water cycle) is conserved over time. It can be neither created nor destroyed, but can change form (such as water, vapor, ice)
2. In the late 1700s Antoine Lavoisier discussed "**The Principles Of Evaporation**" in his landmark book, "The Elements of Chemistry."
3. And in the 1930's, scientist Roy Clapham came up with the term "**Ecosystem**" and he showed how the earth's recycling of water was important to the life of plants.

All three of those scientific principles are laid out in this single declaration by God in **Isaiah 55:**

- The rain comes down, and the waters the ground... but it doesn't disappear/ not destroyed. It is "conserved."
- The water "evaporates" and goes back up into the atmosphere to come down as rain again.
- And the rain serves a purpose: it causes plants to grow. It's a vital part of our ecosystem.

You see, no other ancient writing ever told mankind anything of the sort. And that's because no other ancient writing is as scientifically **accurate as the book you hold in your hands.**

**Even though the Bible is not a book about science, it IS a very scientific book. When the Bible speaks of things that have to do with the world in which we live those statements are in absolute agreement with all known scientific facts.**

**Now, the Bible does disagree with certain scientific "theories" (theoretical but unproven assumptions that scientists may believe) such as the "THEORY" of evolution, but where there are indisputable scientific facts, the Bible agrees with science.**

**But, the question still remains:**

**Why would God place this little scientific gem about evaporation/ecosystem right here in the middle of a passage of Scripture saying how powerful His Words are?**

**Well, the answer is very simple:**

**He did that so that you and I would know that we can trust this book.**

**When we read the words of Scripture... we can believe them.  
When we read about God's promises... we can count on them.  
When it tells of how to live our lives and overcome tragedies and hardships we can have confidence that what it says will work --- It WILL work!**

**Paul wrote Timothy and assured him "All Scripture is GOD-BREATHED and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." **2 Timothy 3:16-17****

**Everything we NEED for life is in this book. All the answers you could possible need to know in order to be blessed by God – they're all are in this book.**

**ILLUS:** How many of you have ever watched the TV game show called "Jeopardy"?

Who is the host of that game show? (Alex Trebek).

He's been on there forever!

What you may not know is that they generally tape two of those shows at the same time with the same TV audience, though with different contestants. And while they're preparing for the 2nd show, there's a time where Trebek comes out and talks with the audience.

And the audience is allowed to ask him any question they like.

One of the most common questions the audience asks is this:

**"How many of the answers do you know?"**

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And do you know how Trebek answers that question? (Pause)  
That's right: **"All of them,"** he says, **"because I have them in front of me."**

All the answers you could possibly need to know are right here in this book.

They're right in front of you.

All you need to do is read the book.

And if you read the book you'll KNOW how to live a successful life for God.

And that's just the way God intended it.

In 1 Samuel we're told that **"The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel THROUGH HIS WORD."** **1 Samuel 3:21**

In Deuteronomy God told Israel **"Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?"**

**No, THE WORD IS VERY NEAR YOU; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it."** **Deuteronomy 30:11-14**

We know **WHO** God is and **WHAT** He wants of us... through the Bible.

The book you hold in your hands is has power and life within it.

In **Isaiah 55** God declares: **"my word that goes out from my mouth... will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."** **Isaiah 55:11**

Or, as **Hebrews 4** says **"The word of God is living 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."** **Hebrews 4:12**

Now, not everybody believes that it's a **"living"** and **"active"** book.

**ILLUS:** Now I generally don't name other church denominations from the pulpit, but I can't avoid it in this case, because the Catholic church is so "in your face" about their feelings about the Bible. The Catholic church teaches that the Bible is a **"DEAD"** book.

Here are the comments of various authorities in Catholicism:

- "... (The Bible is) A dead and speechless book." [Bertrand L. Conway, Question Box]
- "We confess that the Holy Scripture is imperfect, and a dead letter, until it is explained by the Supreme Pontiff, and allowed by him to be read by the laity." [Roman Catholic Confessions for Protestants Oath, Article XXI]
- "It is the (Catholic) Church, the holder of Tradition, that gives life to the dead letter of Scripture." [A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture edited by Dom Bernard Orchard]

In other words, the Catholic church does not believe the Bible has the power to transform lives. They teach that unless they "interpret" it for you, unless they "explain it", it has no power to change people for the better.

But that's bogus.

That's just NOT true. It's a lie. It's heresy.

Can I get any plainer about that?

The Bible DOES have the power to change lives. It IS a living and active book, able to transform others... all without any intervention

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by the catholic church... or anyone else for that matter. Let me share a couple of historical stories to prove that point:

**ILLUS:** In 1945, a newsman Clarence W. Hall was attached to the American forces in Okinawa. While he was there, he and his jeep driver visited various communities on the island. And one of those villages was distinctively different than the others.

Hall wrote, "We had seen other Okinawan villages... down at the heels and despairing; by contrast, this one shone like a diamond in a dung heap. Everywhere we were greeted by smiles and dignified bows. Proudly the old men showed us their spotless homes, their terraced fields their storehouses and granaries, their prized sugar mill."

**Hall said he saw no jails and no drunkenness, and that divorce was unknown in this village.** So he began to ask around trying to discover why this village was different than others.

He was told that an American missionary had come there some 30 years earlier. While the missionary was in the village, he had led two elderly townspeople to Christ and he left them with a Japanese Bible.

These new believers studied the Scriptures and started leading their fellow villagers to Jesus. The newsman's driver said he was amazed at the difference between this village and the others around it. He remarked, "So this is what comes out of ONLY A BIBLE and a couple of old guys who wanted to live like Jesus."

**ILLUS:** Then there's the story of the Mutiny on the Bounty. It was a true story. The H.M.S. Bounty was a British ship commanded by Captain Bligh and their mission was to plant various trees (fruit bearing and food bearing) on islands in the Pacific so that other ships would be able to resupply themselves while sailing through that area.

They spent 6 months on Tahiti, and while they were there, the sailors got very friendly with the native population... particularly the women of the island. So, when the time came that Captain Bligh was ready to leave, the crew wasn't.

The crew staged a mutiny and put Captain Bligh adrift in a lifeboat. He was miraculously rescued and returned with more British ships which captured 14 of the mutineers. But they never captured the nine sailors who'd set sail to Pitcairn Island along with several native Tahitian men and women.

One of the sailors began distilling alcohol and the little colony deteriorated into one long party. In time, disease and murder all the mutineers died... except one: John Adams (also known as Alexander Smith). Not that he was any better than the rest of them. But now Adams found himself alone with a bunch of women and children and with nothing to do. He began searching through the footlockers of the other sailors and came across a Bible. The Book was new to him. He had never read it before. So, he sat down and began to read.

He was so excited by what he read, that he began to teach the women and children from his Bible. It was 20 years before another ship – the USS Topaz - found that island. And what the crew of the Topaz found was literally a miniature Utopia. The people were living in decency, prosperity, harmony and peace. There was nothing of crime, disease, immorality, insanity, or illiteracy.

How was it accomplished?

Somebody read, and believed, and lived by the Word of God.

The Bible is NOT a “**dead letter.**”

It's a powerful and life transforming book.

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It doesn't need a church, or a preacher to give it power. That power already lies within its pages.

As God had declared - my word that goes out from my mouth... will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." **Isaiah 55:11**

But there is a problem here.

The Bible is a great book.

It's filled with powerful stories and undeniable historic fact. It's loaded with encouraging promises. And it has commands from God on how we should live our lives.

But there are plenty of religious books from plenty of world religions that have many good things inside of them.

**ILLUS:** I recently talked with a young lady who said that the Bible was just like all the other religious books. They are all filled with rules. And I admitted – yes, every world religion has rules that it expects its followers will obey. And these rules are often designed to make them better people and to help them live better, more satisfying lives.

But Christianity is different than all these other world religions because of **ONE** significant truth.

You see, God KNEW that even a book filled with historical accuracy, scientific truth and helpful rules would never be enough to change our lives. Even a book filled with the power to reach into our lives and convict us of sin; even a book that would tell us all we needed to know about Him would never be quite enough.

And that's why the Bible was **NEVER** just about rules and

regulations.

All the way through the Old Testament there was a constant drumbeat of statements and prophecies declaring: someday, somebody would come who would heal the brokenness of our lives.

Notice the intriguing way God said what He said in **Isaiah 55**  
“...my word that goes out from my mouth... will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” **Isaiah 55:10**

My **WORD!**

Notice He didn't say “My **BOOK**”

or “**MY SCROLLS**”

or “**MY WILL AND WAY**”

No – God said “**MY WORD**”

Now, that's interesting, because the Gospel of John begins with this statement:

**“In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.”** **John 1:1-4**

Then a few verses later John makes this dynamic statement:

**“And the WORD became Flesh and dwelt amongst us.”** **John 1:14**

The Word that God sent... was His son.

The Word was Jesus

And Jesus did not return to the Father “empty”, but He accomplished everything the Father sent Him to do.



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As I explained to that young lady... the thing that sets Christianity apart from all other world religions is that the Bible tells us that

- o God stepped down out of heaven.
- o He lived among us and taught and healed and prayed with people.
- o That He died on the cross for our sins.
- o And that He rose from the grave and conquered death so that we would know that the grave could no longer hold us.

**Without that truth... we have nothing to offer.**

Without Jesus, our Bible is just an empty book filled with rules and regulations... just like everybody else. But because of Jesus, we have something the world and all its world religions can NOT offer. We have the story of a God who loved us so deeply He gave us His only begotten Son that whosoever should believe in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life.

**CLOSE:** John Stott had this to say about the power of simply being religious vs. the power of Jesus. He wrote:

I have entered many Buddhist temples in different Asian countries and stood respectfully before the statue of the Buddha, his legs crossed, arms folded, eyes closed, the ghost of a smile playing around his mouth, a remote look on his face, detached from the agonies of the world.

But each time, after a while I have had to look away.

And in imagination I have turned instead to the lonely, twisted, tortured figure on the cross, nails through hands and feet, back lacerated, limbs wrenched, brow bleeding from thorn-pricks, mouth dry and intolerably thirsty, plunged in god forsaken darkness. That is the God for me!

He laid aside his immunity to pain.

He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death.

He suffered for us.

OUR sufferings become more manageable in the light of HIS. There is still a question mark against human suffering, but over it boldly stamp another mark - the cross which symbolizes" ... God's love for us and His willingness to sacrifice to save us. (These last few words – after the three dots - were not Stott's, but mine. My apologies for taking that liberty).

In **Matthew 1:21** the angel told Mary "... you are to give him the name Jesus (meaning Savior), because he will save his people from their sins."

That is the Word that makes all the difference.

Jesus.

**The Word that saves us from our sins.**