

Chapter 9

Christian Life: Founded on the Word of God



How has Word of God Influenced Your Life?

We are familiar with the story of the famous young man from Carthage. He worked hard to overcome his undisciplined ways of life in his youth. His efforts were in vain and he was mentally exhausted. Life became meaningless and sometimes he slipped into depression. Once while walking in the garden, thinking how to save himself from this situation, a soft and firm voice echoed in his ears, "Take it and Read it ". Inspired by this voice he entered the room and opened the Holy Bible that was on the table and read the Word: **"You know what time it is, how it is now the moment**



for you to wake from sleep... The night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay, aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us live

honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires" (Rom 13:11-14).

This Word of God touched the young man. His heart became tender. He repented of his sins and began a new life. He is St. Augustine, who started his holy life by the touch of God's Words and later became an eminent Father of the Church, theologian and an extraordinary person. This is the miraculous effect of the Word of God.

Role of the Word of God

Word of God contributes to the holistic progress of life and moral development. Moreover, it sanctifies man and leads him to repentance and healing.



Find people like St. Augustine whose lives were transformed by the Word of God, and present in the class.

To give
life

To
transform

To
sanctify

To redeem

To make
disciples

To heal

To liberate

1. Life-Giving Word of God

“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light” (Gen1:1-3)

The universe and all the creations came into being by the Word of God. The Word of God is life giving. It awakens human hearts and gives spiritual inspiration. The Word of God which gives soul and life fills us with the Holy Spirit. Hence the Word is life giving.

2. Transforming Word of God

The Word transforms life because “The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joins from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb 4:12). The Word of God that transformed a young man named Saul, a brutal persecutor of the early Christians, into the greatest preacher of the Gospel of Jesus, is a guiding light for all times and all people (Acts 9:4-6). It builds a fort of defence against the attacks of evil. It transforms sinners into saints.

Four Levels of Transformation by Word of God

- **Teaching:** Instructs what to do (good)
- **Reproof:** Instructs what not to do (bad)
- **Correction:** Instructs how to return to goodness in case of committing evil
- **Training in Righteousness:** Instructs how to remain in goodness.

Role of the Word of God

"All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work" (2Tim3:16-17).



Gospel on Five Fingers

St. Mother Theresa presents the beauty of word-filled life like this:

" You did it for me"
(Mt 25:31-46).



3. Sanctifying Word of God

God calls man to be a part of his holiness. The Lord spoke to Moses: “Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: you shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am Holy” (Lev 19:2). Jesus said “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48). Sanctity of man is to reach the perfection that God intended. God, who calls men to his perfection, also wants to sanctify them. “For this is the will of God, your sanctification” (1 Thess 4:3). The Word of God sanctifies each one of us. “You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you.” (Jn 15:3).

4. Salvific Word of God

The Word of God leads us to salvation. Jesus, the word, came into the world to save sinners (1 Tim 1:15). The power of the Word is emphasised by the prophecy of Joel that those who call the name of the Lord will be saved (Joel 2:32).

The sinful women, Zacchaeus and the good thief were saved when they prayed with deep faith. Jesus said to Zacchaeus “Today salvation has come to this house” (Lk 19:9). Jesus promised salvation to the thief on the right “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise” (Lk 23:43).

The Word is a sign of salvation, to be kept in the heart and mind at all times. It is an eternal treasure to be passed on from generation to generation.

5. Word of God That Makes Disciples

Jesus considers those who listen to God’s Word and act according to his commandment as his mother and brothers. When the disciples informed Jesus that his mother and brothers were standing outside to see him, he said, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the Word of God and do it” (Lk 8:21). To encounter Jesus in the Word of God and to live in the Word of God is the ultimate call of the Christian. This is the path to discipleship.

6. Healing Word of God

Life-giving Word of God has the power to heal. We read



(Jn5:24)

(Jn6:63)

(Jn10:10)



Read the Gospel According to Mark, Chapter 5 versus 21 to 43. Here we see how the life-giving Word of God becomes active in a person’s life. By taking inspiration from this prepare and present a life related skit based on current events.



What are the four ways in which God’s Word can bring about transformation in an individual?



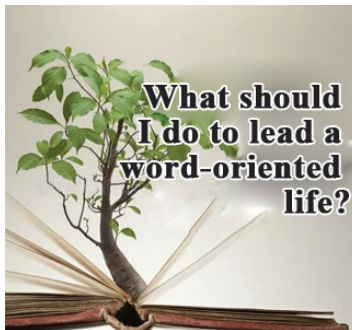
Prepare a brief biographical sketch of a saint in India, who was influenced by God’s Word and attained sanctity like St. Paul.

in the book of Wisdom, “For neither herb nor poultice cured them, but it was your word, O Lord, that heals all people” (Wis 16:12). People flocked to Jesus to hear the healing words of eternal life. Peter said “You have the words of eternal life” (Jn 6:68). Jesus, during his public ministry healed many with his life-giving Word. “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people” (Mt 4:23).

7. Liberating Word of God

God’s Word has the power to liberate and sanctify us from sins, sinful-situations, diseases and bonds of evil. The one who keeps the Word of God in his heart will not succumb to sin. The Psalmist says “I treasure your Word in my heart so that I may not sin against you” (Ps 119:11). The mission of Jesus, the Word incarnate, is the complete liberation of mankind (Lk 4:18). We are strengthened when we abide in God’s Word. “You are strong and the Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one” (1 Jn 2:14).

To Lead a Word-Oriented Life



1. Read the Word of God
2. Listen to the Word of God
3. Comprehend the Word of God
4. Meditate on the Word of God
5. Act according to the Word of God
6. Proclaim the Word of God
7. Pray for the divine power

1. Read the Word of God

The foundation of a life based on the Word of God is to read the Holy Bible. People gathered around Jesus to listen to his words knowing his greatness. Knowledge about Jesus and his words are

Listen, Comprehend and Live the Word of God

- Know the giver of the Word
- Know the Word
- Know the power of the Word

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you”.

(Jer1:5)



The repentance of Zacchaeus is an example of how God’s Word guides individuals and families to salvation.

Read Lk 19:1-10 and find Zacchaeus’ steps to salvation. Then, prepare a note on the steps to advance on the path of salvation in your life. Discuss and present findings in class groups.



What are the purposes of the Word of God?



“You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and fix them as an emblem on your forehead... Teach them to your children” (Deut 11:18-19).

necessary for a Word-oriented life.

Let us devote time in our daily life to read, study and memorise the Word of God.

2. Listen to the Word of God

Listen To the Word:

The Example of Mary

1. Like Mary who sat at his feet stay close to Jesus with a desire to hear him
2. Unlike Martha, put all distractions aside
3. Wait for Jesus' Words in silence
4. Listen to Jesus

The next important step to live a Word-oriented life is to listen to the Word. **"Mary sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying"** (Lk 10:39). Jesus praises Mary who sat by him and listened to the Word: **"Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her"** (Lk 10:42).

We must listen to the Word of God with an open heart like Mary. We must read and listen to the Bible with the realisation and conviction that God is speaking to us even today through the written Word. We need to be constantly trained in hearing the Word (The Joy of the Gospel 174). That is when we can understand God's voice.

3. Comprehend the Meaning of Word of God



Comprehending the meaning of God's Word is as important as listening to the Word. Only through this we will be able to receive the divine message. The disciples were able to comprehend the meaning of the parables when Jesus explained it to them (Mt13:51). Just as Jesus interpreted the Word to his disciples, the Church interprets the Word to us. Likewise, by listening to sermons and classes that provides interpretations of the Word, we can understand the meaning of God's Word and imbibe the message.



The verses **"For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?"** (Mk 8:36) led St. Francis Xavier to repentance. There are verses that transformed the lives of St. Augustine and St. Francis Xavier. Likewise, find a verse from the Holy Bible that inspires and empowers you in your personal life, and share it in the class.

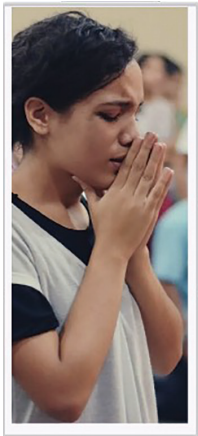


The Samaritan woman is a good example of finding Jesus in the Word and coming to discipleship (Jn 4:1-49). Read and discuss the Samaritan woman's conversion to discipleship and the effect of such conversion. Present your findings in the class.

4. Meditate on the Word of God

Another important step to lead a Word-oriented life is to meditate on the Word that we listened to. Meditation is seeking insight, guided by the grace of the Holy Spirit, to discover what God is asking me through his Word. The Psalmist prays:

"I will meditate on your precepts, and fix my eyes on your ways" (Ps 119:15).



Lord, what is your will for my actions?

"Their delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law they meditate day and night" (Ps 1:2).

Holy mother treasured the word in her heart (Lk 2:51). Let us take care to preserve the Word inscribed in our hearts and meditate on it.

5. Act According to the Word of God

When Mary heard God's Word, she said, **"Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your Word"** (Lk1:38).

St. Joseph listened to the Word of God given to him through the angel and acted accordingly (Mt 1:24). Jesus calls the

Words bear fruits by actions

one who obeys the Word of God as wise. He can overcome any crisis in life. Jesus said, **"Blessed**

are those who hear the Word of God and obey it" (Lk 11:28). The Word of God will bear fruit in us only when we listen and act according to it.

6. Proclaim the Word of God

Jesus, the Son of God, is truly the Saviour of the world (Jn 4:42). We read in the Acts of the Apostles, **"God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Saviour that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins"** (Acts 5:31). We should be aware of the primary service that the Church can render to every individual and to all



My dear young friends, I urge you to become familiar with the Bible, and to have it at hand so that it can be your compass pointing out the road to follow.

(Pope Benedict XVI, To the youth of the world on Palm Sunday, 9 April 2006)

**"Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ!"
(St. Jerome)**



Josh 1:8

Two Ways of Reading the Word

Lectio Divina

(Divine Reading)

Reading to pray.

Lectio Continua

(Continuous Reading)

Reading to learn.

The Word should be read in both these ways.

Evangelisation is the mission of the Church. Evangelisation is my duty.

humanity in the modern world” (Preach Gospel, 1, Pope Francis). Evangelisation is the mission of the Church, evangelisation is my duty. Through Jesus’ final commandment to his disciples, the Church has been entrusted with the task of proclaiming the Gospel to all nations. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Mt 28:19-20). All the baptised are obliged to perform this task. By doing so we become persons who lead Word-oriented life.

7. Pray For the Divine Power

We need divine power to hear, understand, and act according to the Word. Jesus said unless we receive the power from God the Father, we cannot hear, understand or act according to the Word. The risen Jesus said to the disciples, “stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from

Divine power must be obtained through sacraments and prayer.

on high” (Lk 24:49). Therefore, we should attain divine power through sacraments and

prayer. Only then we can live a Word-oriented life.

In today’s challenging life, we must be alert to listen, understand and live according to the Word of God. Then our lives become holy and equipped to withstand any adversities.



What does the example of Mary, the sister of Lazarus teach us about the way of listening to the Word of God? Describe.



Everyone should always carry a small Bible, pocket edition of the Gospels, and should find at least a few minutes every day to read the Word of God
(Pope Francis To the Youth, 15 February, 2023).



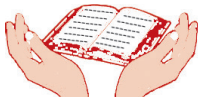
What are the things we should pay attention to lead a Word-oriented life? Describe.

"Meditation is above all a quest. The mind seeks to understand the why and how of the Christian life, in order to adhere and respond to what the Lord is asking"
(CCC 2705).



My Convictions

1. The Word of God is not just words; it is the Word of God, God Himself.
2. The holy Word can transform, sanctify and redeem me.
3. Through the Word of God, I can move forward purposefully in life and overcome difficulties.



Let Us Read the Word of God

The Gospel According to
Luke Chapters 6-10



Let Us Illumine Our Hearts

I treasure your word in my heart,
so that I may not sin against you"
(Psalms 119:11).



My Resolution

I will memorize at least one verse every week
and put it into practice in life.

To meditate on what we read helps us to make it our own by confronting it with ourselves. Here, another book is opened: the book of life. We pass from thoughts to reality (CCC 2706).



Jas (2:14-17) clearly says how to live according to the Word. After reading this passage, discuss in groups an action plan to shape our way of life and present it to the class as a digital presentation.