



# THE EXHORTER

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***“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40***

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. ([prchurchofchrist.org](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

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## Jump Start # 2099

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

Our verse today illustrates the power that is found within the word of God. It is able to do what nothing else can do. Let's take a look at some of these expressions.

First, the word of God is living. God is living, and so is His word. It's not dormant. It's fresh. It is capable of doing things. I cut some dead branches out of a bush the other day. New growth is coming all around the dead branches. However, the dead branches remain dead. They do not have any leaves on them. There are no buds on them. They remain dead and useless. God's word is not like this. As culture changes, God's word remains relevant, practical, vital and useful. God's word is capable of changing us. God's word can turn us, shape us and mold us into what God wants. Don't give up on the Bible. Don't say, "Oh, it's just the Bible." It is the living word of God and when it connects to a heart that is honest and good, you will be amazed at what can happen. God's word has always been the answer. Through tough times, through wars, through depressions, through dark nights, God's word has touched hearts, opened eyes, and filled lives with hope, love and trust.

Second, God's word is active. Here is an interesting word. We miss this in our English Bibles. The Greek word for active is where our word energy comes from. God's word is the power source, the energy that brings about change. In Romans, when Paul said the Gospel is God's power unto salvation, the word for power is where we get dynamite. Energy. Dynamite. Living. Do you get the picture here? What causes a person to change? Why does a person submit to the will of God? It's when God's word works upon our heart. It's the energy that drives a person to change. He becomes obedient to Christ. It's not the pills that counselors provide. It's not self help books. It's not sitting around and sharing our sad story with others. It's believing and obeying the word of God that changes us. This is why the Ephesians were told to let the word of Christ richly dwell within you. It's the energy source to motivate us. It's the power to change our attitudes. It can take a mean ole' cuss and not simply smooth him out, but totally change him. It's the power open his eyes to see as Jesus saw. It's the energy to move those lazy bones and do something for someone else. How can a person read about the holy Jesus and remain unholy? How can a person see the goodness of God and not want to be like that? The active word of God, believed by us, will change us.

(OVER)

Third, God's word pierces. The analogy is to a two-edged sword. Sharp. Cutting. Dividing. As a butcher would cut meat on a block of wood, so, the word of God cuts through us. It cuts out our weak and lame excuses. It cuts out worldliness and sinful thinking. It cuts out our desires to be like the world. Fame, fortune and power are cut out and replaced with righteousness, holiness and godliness. Our focus now is not upon making a name but in praising the Lord. It is in this way that the common man excels the rich and the famous. His value soars as he walks daily with the Lord. His heart reflects a character of kindness and goodness. Who he is to God is much more important than what others think of him. He has redefined words like happiness and success by seeing things God's way. Piercing and cutting and dividing can be painful at times. We have allowed things to be attached to our hearts and minds that shouldn't be there. God's word will change that. Pour that word into our lives and wonderful things will happen.

Fourth, God's word is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. God's word gets down to the reasons, motives and purpose of what we are doing. It has a way of getting all the way through us to the foundation of our decisions, choices and will. Jesus shows us this in the Gospels. The superficial Pharisees made sure they looked good. Image was important to them. Jesus compared them to a dish that was washed on the outside, or a white tombstone. But inside, they were corrupt, immoral and impure. They were not what they appeared to be. They were more interested in what others thought than what God knew. God's word gets down to that level. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus said it's not enough that you do not kill, don't hate. It's not enough that you do not commit adultery, don't lust in your heart. God's word has a way of changing us from the inside out. God's word is able to judge, determine, the thoughts of the heart. It rewires our heart. This is why we sometimes feel guilty. We think, "I shouldn't have said that." God's word has judged the intentions of your heart. We feel bad for not helping when we could have. God's word has judged our hearts. We know. We can hide behind, it's been a busy week, but we know. We can say, "I wanted to," but we really know. God's word works that way. It judges our hearts. There is no hiding the truth. There have been times we went through an entire worship and we not focused. We day dreamed. We planned out the week. We thought about what needs to be done to the house. Our minds were everywhere except with God in Heaven. We smiled and talked to others afterwards. We enjoyed seeing others. But as for truly worshipping God, we know. God's word judges our hearts. What it shows can be brutal, raw and something we don't like to see. But because of this, we change. So many have not only deceived others, but they have deceived themselves. They have mastered looking good on the outside. But what they think. What they whisper under their breath. Not good. Once this living, energetic word gets into a heart that's honest, those things change. Repentance takes place. Honesty takes over.

This may well be what Jesus intended when he said, Blessed are the pure in heart. We tend to think purity means sexually clean. Good and decent thoughts. More so, Jesus has in mind our motives, intentions and plans. Pure, not polluted. Pure, no agenda except God's. Pure, meaning right, holy and singular in nature.

We need to allow God's word to work on us. We need to allow God's word to change us. We need to allow God's word to motivate us, challenge us and move us. It is alive. It is energy. It is cutting. It will judge us.

All of this reminds us that we need to use to the Bible more. We need to know the Bible. We need to lower the nets in our study of God's word. We need to rely less upon external things and more upon this living, energetic, cutting word of God. More good will come from time spent with the Bible than any thing else. We can spend a lot of time reading about the Bible. We can listen to dozens of sermons that are helpful but nothing beats the Bible itself.

Find a version that is readable both in translation, style and print. Become familiar with your Bible. Use it. Wear it out. Put notes in it. Underline things. Circle words. Fill the margins with other passages that come to mind. In so doing, that word will shape you and change you. A better you will come out. A kinder you. A more compassionate you. A stronger you. A more spiritual you. A more optimistic you. A more hopeful you. A more assured you. A more Heaven bound you.

Yes, it's the Bible. But it's more. It's God's way of connecting to you. It's God's way of you getting to know Him. It's God's way of changing you.

Give me the Bible...