



Persistence in the Word Brings Healing, Hope and Joy

God's Word accomplishes what He desires, sometimes in unexpected ways.

When James [pseudonym] started attending a CBS Bible study in Galway, Ireland, he thought that he could just sit back, listen, and take notes. However, James discovered on the very first night that he was expected to do "homework."

Not typically a reader, James initially found the Bible difficult to understand. He opened it ... then closed it ... opened it ... then closed it. Yet sensing something compelling in the content, he purchased the Scriptures on audio CDs and began to listen to the Word of God. He found listening very good.

Even though he felt welcomed and cared for, James still wanted to stay an observer rather than an active participant in his CBS study. After a while though, he concluded he was wasting his time by not doing the personal, in-depth study, and he committed to do the homework.

Since the personal study required him to engage the scripture passages repeatedly to answer the home study questions, he determined to actually *read* the Bible, instead of just listening to the recordings. He did not want the study to be a burden, so James asked God to give him a love for the Scriptures, in addition to helping him understand them.

James found the best time to open the Bible was early in the morning. For a while he continued to find it difficult to grasp, yet he stayed with it. As time went by, God answered his prayer, and he began to enjoy his morning interaction with God and His Word.



James developed a special attraction to the writings of Paul. He was amazed at the spiritual strength of the apostle, especially his unwavering joy even while in prison. **James could barely believe anyone could be so joyful under those circumstances.**

Eventually, the CBS study lesson brought James to Philippians 3:13-14—particularly to the teaching about forgetting the past:

Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Overwhelmed, tears came to his eyes as he read and reflected about how Paul could leave his sinful, and at times highly painful, past behind and move on. Paul's story spoke to his own. You see, James found it hard to leave the past due to something deeply terrible that happened to him as a child. But James was greatly encouraged in reading how Paul could leave behind his own ugly past and focus on the future. He drew strength and hope from Paul's story.

In years past, James had asked for hands to be laid on him with prayer for emotional and spiritual healing. He experienced some comfort and temporary relief from his grief, but it didn't compare to Paul's example.

Then one morning, as he reflected and prayed over the passages in Philippians, James shared that it was as if the very hand of Jesus reached out from the pages and touched him on the head.

He shares that it is really difficult to explain to others, but somehow James sensed a deep and profound healing. **He had often heard people say how they were healed through Scripture, but in that holy moment he experienced it himself.** He concluded that the Lord — in the way only He can — was trying to show James how Scripture can speak to and heal each of us. Just as he had for Paul, God replaced pain, bitterness, and the ugly memories of the past with encouragement, hope ... and joy!

Even though James shares that he needs to be more consistent, he says he now has a great desire and hunger for the Scriptures. James expresses deep gratitude to the Lord for guiding him into CBS, where he has learned about God's Word. He praises God for the great work that has been accomplished in his life.

Isaiah 55:11 says, *"So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."*

It doesn't matter what language it's being read in, or in what country, God's Word changes lives.

Around the world, Community Bible Study is helping people make life-changing heart connections with God and His Word. May we ask you to pray for us and with us? And would you pray about making a generous donation to reach more people like James in Europe and across the globe?



Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

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