

Sword and Scalpel

HEBREWS 4:12-13

THE LIVING WORD OF GOD has characteristics and abilities that make it unlike any mere piece of literature.

First, *God's Word is alive*. The poetry of the finest poets is not alive in the same way that God's Word is living and active. It is never dead. It's like radioactive material, spiritually speaking.

More than just being alive, *God's Word is powerful*. It is constantly active. It does things to us that nothing else can do. It touches us where nothing else can reach. God's Word has within itself sufficient energy and the motivational force to effect spiritual action when it is brought to the attention of God's people.

In addition, *God's Word is sharp*, described metaphorically as being able to cut like a sword. The Greek word translated here as "cutting between" is often translated "piercing." God's Word slices right through our barriers. We have knives and razors sharp enough to pierce many materials. With hardly any effort at all we can cut a piece of paper. There are missiles that can pierce steel plates and concrete walls. But only this Book, God's truth, is able to pierce into the spiritual life of an individual where not even a surgeon's sharp scalpel can go.

No surgeon can do work on your soul. There is no medical procedure that will correct a bad attitude or open a closed mind. There is no surgical operation that will fix a lustful heart or change a rebellious spirit or remedy hypocrisy or greed or hatred or a lack of forgiveness. Those are spiritual things, matters of the soul. When God's Word comes alive in an individual's life, it pierces right through sinful attitudes and bad habits and wrong thinking.

Next, the writer tells us that *God's Word exposes our innermost thoughts and desires*, evaluating the true condition of our hearts. How true this is, and how necessary for us! We have all at times read the Scriptures and thought, *Wow! That describes exactly where I am!* There have been times when I have preached the Scriptures and have had people I didn't know walk up to me afterward and say, "My wife talked to you this week, didn't she?" Some of them have even given me their names and asked again whether their wives had called to talk about an issue they were having. Each time I've had to say, "No, she didn't call, and I'm unaware of your situation." Because God's Word cut to the heart of these people's lives, they were convinced that I was using their situations as examples in my messages.

What really happened? The Spirit of God took the truth and drove it into their hearts, even deeper than where a surgeon's scalpel can touch. Similarly, no matter how brilliant neurologists may be and how much they know about the brain and the nervous system and the spine, they cannot touch the spirit. That's God's realm. That is where we desperately need the work of God's Word in the power of the Spirit.

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