

The Letter Kills, The Spirit Give Life:

Why Sons Have Spirit “and” Truth

Original Question: ([Intro video](#))

Lord, help me distinguish between:

- 1) Pedantic, literalists who believe the written word of God (the Bible) is the final & only authority, and
- 2) Sons who get living words in the Council (in sync with Scripture) and bring them to earth as Greater works.

There's a Great Awakening happening in Christianity, and most people don't even know they're in it. The old guard are those who believe the written word of God is the final (and only) authority—period. The new are sons who operate from living words received in the Council. Both claim biblical authority. Both love Scripture. But only one is actually doing what Jesus did.

The irony? Jesus—who IS the Word made flesh—didn't operate from Scripture memory alone. He operated from living words received from Father in real-time Council conversations. If the Living Word Himself needed ongoing conversation with Father, what makes us think we can get by with just reading what He said 2,000 years ago?

I've not met anyone who got saved through an intellectual approach alone. Salvation is a miraculous orchestration in the Spirit of unexplainable events and feelings and heart-felt confirmations. Most of us go through a progression of Spirit and Truth that goes something like this:

- 1) We start in the Spirit, but our maturity limits us to a soulish application of bible verses and biblical principles that become rule-based and misrepresent Jesus who saved us! This is the bible-thumping phase. Hearing from God is having a verse to prove your point.
 - a. **Excesses** can be dogmatic, preachy, legalistic, authoritarian, prone to miss hearts
 - b. **Gal 3:3** - *Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?*
 - c. **2Tim 3:5** - *having a form of godliness but denying its power.*
- 2) The second phase is reading the bible and having verses jump out at us – like the Bible is quickened and it's reading us! This is the charismatic phase of getting prophetic breadcrumbs from Holy Spirit without the context of conversations and Kingdom purpose. Hearing from God and experiencing the joy of encouraging others with what we do get is admittedly fun.
 - a. **Excesses** can be drifting from Scripture, lack of Kingdom Purpose, & ministry addiction.
 - b. **Mt 7:22** – *did we not prophesy in your name... and do many mighty works in your name?*
- 3) The third phase is sonship where we experience ascension to Heaven's Courts and Council and have access to conversations with Father, Jesus, and the 7 Spirits of God (Holy Spirit/Truth, Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Knowledge, and Fear of the Lord). These “conversations” are our source of daily bread from the Council – discussions around our purpose in Father's Reformation. Hearing from God is getting our prophetic purpose in writing and the daily bread/conversations to co-labor with what Father is doing (Jn 5:19-20) *in business* in a way that releases what Father can add (Mt 6:33).
 - a. **Excesses** can be theatrical mysticism instead of putting the Kingdom first. Unhinged from practical Reformation of People, Businesses, Cities, and Nations.
 - b. **Rom 8:19** – For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.
 - c. **Eph 3:20** – Now to *him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us*

These three stages are overly generalized, but all three represent believers going to Heaven. Each phase can take time, so our attitude is to help the people ready to move while loving those who are not ready. Holy Spirit is the one who prepares hearts and minds, not us. We just make the invitations and put out the welcome mats.

The Letter Kills, The Spirit Gives Life

Paul draws the sharpest line in 2 Cor 3:6: *He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

This isn't Paul downplaying Scripture. It's Paul distinguishing between two ways of relating to God's word. The Old Covenant was "*engraved in letters on stone*" (2 Cor 3:7)—external, fixed, written. The New Covenant is "*written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts*" (2 Cor 3:3).

- **The written word approach:** Study the text, memorize the verses, apply the principles, follow the rules of good hermeneutics.
- **The living word approach:** Hear Father's voice, receive living words in the Council, bring heaven's strategies to earth.

One produces religious intellectualism and human reasoning. The other produces greater works.

Jesus Rebukes the Scripture Experts

If anyone should have gotten a pass for knowing their Bibles, it was the Pharisees. They had Scripture memorized. They could quote chapter and verse. They studied diligently. And Jesus rebuked them anyway.

John 5:39-40: "*You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.*"

Then He adds this devastating line in verse 37: "*You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent.*"

Think about that. The religious experts knew Scripture inside and out, but they didn't hear Father's voice. They studied the written word but didn't know the Living Word. They mastered the text but missed the relationship.

This is the trap of written-word Christianity: You can become a Bible scholar and still be a stranger to Father's voice. You can win theological debates and miss your seat in the Council. You can be textually accurate and relationally bankrupt.

Living Bread vs. Study Notes

Jesus said in **John 6:51**, "*I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever.*"

Notice: He didn't say "Study the bread." He didn't say "Analyze the bread." He said, "**Eat** the bread."

Then He clarifies in **John 6:63**: "*The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life.*" Jesus is talking about what he said, not what is written.

Sons don't just study about bread—they eat living bread. They don't just read about water—they drink living water. The written word points you to the Living Word so you can receive words that are "full of the Spirit and life."

- **Written-word Christians** intellectually analyze the bread from a distance.
- **Living word sons** eat the bread, put it into action, and are sustained by it (purpose).

There's a difference between studying nutrition labels and actually eating dinner.

Man Lives on Every Word That COMES From God's Mouth

Matthew 4:4 is often quoted to defend Scripture's authority: "*Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.*"

But notice the tense: "**comes**"—not "came." Present tense. Ongoing. Continuous.

Jesus is quoting Deut. 8:3, reminding Israel that God fed them with manna—fresh every morning. Yesterday's manna rotted. Tomorrow's manna didn't exist yet. God's provision was daily, relational, and required showing up to receive it.

The written word is essential. But if you think you can survive on words God spoke 2,000 years ago without hearing what He's saying today, you're eating yesterday's manna and wondering why it doesn't sustain you.

Romans 10:17 makes this even clearer: "*Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.*" Faith does something, compared to passive, intellectual assent.

The Greek word here is *rhema*, meaning an utterance or spoken word. While Scripture uses both *rhema* and *logos* interchangeably for God's word (whether written or spoken), this passage emphasizes the proclamation aspect—*faith comes from hearing God's word*, not just reading it silently. The point isn't a technical distinction between two Greek words, but the reality that God's word must be received actively and spoken out loud (via decree or prophecy), not just studied academically.

Jesus Operated From Council Conversations, Not Scripture Memory

If anyone could have gotten away with operating from Scripture knowledge alone, it was Jesus. He was there when it was written. He IS the Word made flesh. Yet even Jesus didn't operate that way.

John 5:19-20: "*Jesus gave them this answer: 'Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does.'*"

Jesus operated from real-time Council conversations. He only did what He SAW Father doing. He only spoke what He HEARD Father saying. He fulfilled the scriptures in general, but he specifically co-labored with what he heard from father.

John 8:28: *I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.*

John 12:49-50: "For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken... *So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.*"

If Jesus—who IS the Word—still needed living words from Father, how much more do we?

This is the model for sons operating from the Council: Ascend into Father's presence. See what He's doing. Hear what He's saying. Bring those living words to earth as greater works that bear practical fruit in business.

Greater Works Come From the Same Source

John 14:12 is one of the most quoted and least practiced verses in Scripture: "Whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.

How do greater works happen? Jesus explains in verse 10: "*The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.*"

- Greater works don't come from memorizing what Jesus said or what is in the Bible. They come from hearing what Father is saying now—the same source Jesus used.

When Jesus went to the Father, He didn't close the door behind Him. He opened it for all sons. **Revelation 4:1** says "*Come up here*"—not to a future generation, but to sons who understand that access opened when the Old Covenant fell.

- The Council isn't a nice metaphor. It's your headquarters, your seat in Heaven. It's where living words are received that become living works when implemented on earth.

Kingdom Scribes Bring New AND Old Treasures

Jesus draws a clear distinction between written-word scribes and Kingdom scribes in Matthew 13:52: *"Every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."*

Written word scribes only have old treasures. They quote what God said. They explain what happened. They study history.

Kingdom scribes bring new treasures (living words from the Council) along with old treasures (written Scripture). They quote what God said AND declare what He's saying. They study history AND make history.

Pharisees reject new treasures as "unbiblical." Sons test new treasures against old treasures and hold fast to what's good (1 Thess 5:21).

The Spirit Interprets Spirit

Here's why written-word-only Christianity ultimately fails: spiritual realities can't be understood through intellectual analysis and human wisdom alone. We worship in Spirit and in Truth (Jn 4:24) because our God is a Spirit.

1 Cor 2:13-14: *"This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, because they are discerned only through the Spirit."*

You can study Greek and Hebrew. You can master systematic theology. You can memorize entire books of the Bible. But if you're operating from the letter without the Spirit, you'll miss what Father is actually saying.

→ The Spirit must teach you. Not just about Scripture, but through Scripture into living encounters.

Jesus didn't say he was sending us a bible, He promised, and delivered on, sending us the Spirit of Truth.

Jn 14:16 – *And I will ask the Father,*

and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—

17) *the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him.*

But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

18) *I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.* (Part of the [Preterist understanding](#))

Food for thought. On four occasions the Bible refers to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Jesus.

- "but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them" – Acts 16:7
- "through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" – Philippians 1:19
- "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" – Romans 8:9
- "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" – Galatians 4:6

Scripture: The Foundation, Not the Ceiling

Here's what written word Christians miss: The written word isn't opposed to the living word. It's the foundation for it.

Scripture is the standard for discerning living words. Living words are the supply for implementing Scripture.

- **Scripture without Spirit** = Written word only (information without transformation)
- **Spirit without Scripture** = unanchored experience (subjective feelings without objective truth)
- **Scripture + Spirit** = sons operating from the Council with prophetic authority via Living Words

The Bereans in **Acts 17:11** get held up as the model: *"They received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true."*

But notice: **They tested Paul's living words** against Scripture. They didn't reject prophetic words because they came through a person. They used Scripture to confirm the living words, not replace them.

This is the proper relationship:

- Scripture validates living words
- Living words activate the application of Scripture
- Both together produce greater works

Don't Quench the Spirit to Stay "Safe"

Here's the fear that drives written-word-only Christianity: "If we let people claim to hear from God, they'll go off the rails. Better to stick with Scripture alone where it's safe."

But Paul directly contradicts this: "*Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good*" (1 Thess 5:19-21).

Notice Paul doesn't say "Avoid prophecy to be safe." He says "Test prophecy and hold onto what's good."

→ The solution to bad prophecy isn't no prophecy. It's prophecy discerned by Spirit and Truth.

Sons who operate from the Council aren't reckless. They're discerning. They write down what they hear. They test it against Scripture. They submit it to others. They watch for fruit. They hold themselves accountable for results (what Father adds when we put the Kingdom first, Mt 6:33).

But they don't quench the Spirit out of fear of getting it wrong.

The Word Is Alive and Active—Not Archived

Hebrews 4:12 says "*For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword...*"

Alive. Active. Present tense.

Hebrews 1:1-2 adds: "*In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.*"

The Son who spoke then is still speaking now. The word that was alive then is still alive now. God didn't retire after the canon closed.

- **Written word Christians** treat the word like it's archived—They study what God said, apply what God did, wait for what God will do. They turn the Bible into a rule book, an academic treatise for intellectual analysis.
- **Living-word sons** treat the word like it's active—hear what God is saying, do what God is doing, co-labor with what God is creating. Sons are in sync with their Father's purpose, NOW! The Word of God is the Bible, but it's even more true to say *Jesus is the Living Word of God*. The two are seamless.

Sons are not adding chapters to the Bible, but we are writing living epistles via those we disciple; putting treasures in Heaven, into their heavenly seats – Sons and Daughters who bring heaven to earth in a Reformation of People, Businesses, Cities, and Nations, Ps 2:8.

2Cor 3:2 – *You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone.*

- 3) *You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.*

The Bottom Line: Information vs. Intimacy

The awakening's fresh wind boils down to this:

- **Written-Word-Only Christianity** prioritizes information over intimacy. Know the right doctrine. Defend the right theology. Quote the right verses. Stay intellectually pure.
- **Living-word sonship** prioritizes intimacy that produces information and action. Hear Father's voice. Receive His strategies. Implement His living words. Stay relationally connected with people and spiritually connected with Father, yet still in sync with Scripture.

One produces Pharisees who quote Scripture but don't hear Father's voice; often wonder if they have favor. The other produces sons who do greater works because they operate from the same source Jesus did.

You can be:

- Textually accurate and relationally bankrupt
- Doctrinally pure and spiritually tone deaf
- Biblically literate and Council-illiterate
- Right about Scripture and wrong about Father's heart

Or you can be:

- A son who brings new treasures from the Council confirmed with old treasures from Scripture
- Someone who hears what Father is saying AND tests it against what Father has said
- Operating from living words that produce greater works
- Intimately connected to Living Words and where they come from (Heaven)

The Question

Do you want to be a Pharisee who knows the text but doesn't acknowledge the Father's voice?

Or do you want to be a son who operates from the Council, receives living words, and does the greater works Jesus promised?

The written word is essential. Master it. Memorize it. Let it test everything you hear.

But don't stop there. The written word is meant to bring you into the Council where the Living Word is speaking. Scripture is the foundation, not the ceiling. The letter points you to the Spirit. The old treasures prepare you for the new.

Sons who do greater works don't choose between Scripture and Council. They operate from both—written word as standard, living words as life; the living water that flows out of our belly.

The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. And life comes from hearing what Father is saying now, not just studying what He said then.

The Council is open. The Living Word is speaking. The question is: Are you just studying about Him, or are you eating the living bread?

Acts 18:24 – *Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus.*

He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.

25) *He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John.*

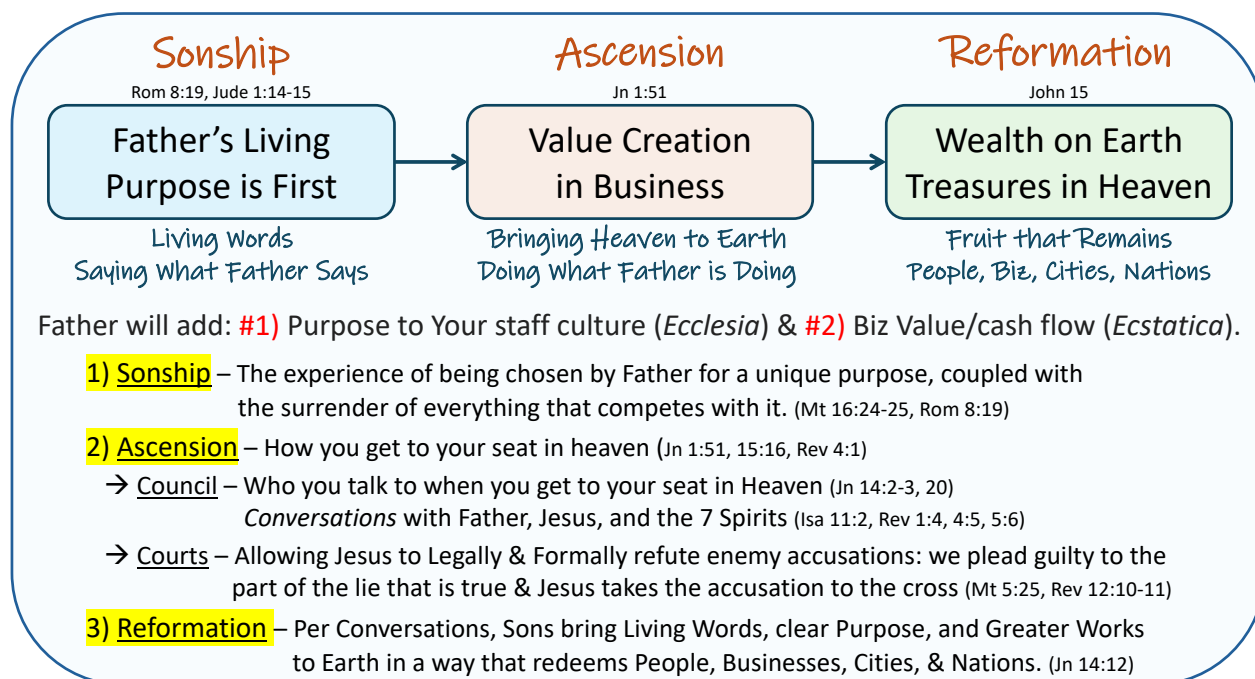
26) *He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.*

Acts 19:2 – *Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"*

They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.

The context of Apollos transformation was the Holy Spirit. Acts is full of references to Baptism in water and in the Holy Spirit.

[Sonship, Ascension, and Reformation](#) is a biblical pattern, but even more importantly it's daily bread; a contemporary experience with Father, Jesus, and the 7 Spirits in God's Council that allow us to bring Heaven to Earth (Father's grand purpose).



<https://releasingkings.com/2025-11-21-the-story-of-sonship/>

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- Jesus redeems the rocky **Story** of my life into meaning
- Holy Spirit unveils the revelation of my **Purpose**

Ascension – Sons Hear Living Words (Strategy, Tactics, Heritage)

- Wisdom shows me Father's **Strategy** to implement purpose
- Understanding shows me how, the business **Tactics** on Earth
- Counsel pulls the curtain back on my **Heritage**, where it leads.

Reformation – Heaven on Earth (Courage, Clarity, Culture)

- Might shows me resurrection from defeat – **Courage**
- Knowledge shows me the way – **Clarity** on my direction
- Fear of the Lord connects me to the vine – **Culture**, my Tribe

[Who is Jesus?](#)

Emmanuel, God with us
I am your Redeemer
I am the bread

I am the Light

I am the Door

The Good Shepherd

The Res. & the Life

I am the Way

I am the Vine



Cutting Room Floor

John,

Thanks for sharing this. I believe I understand your primary heart and concern—that a dry, academic knowledge of Scripture, apart from the Spirit and a lived relationship with Christ made manifest among us, is not genuine Christianity. On that, I agree. Scripture itself affirms this repeatedly.

That said, I'd like to offer a few reflections, not as a dismissal of your point, but as a refinement of the language and framework you're using—because I think some of what you're aiming at could be missed or misunderstood as written.

First, the pairing of your initial statements gives the impression that “way of life” or lived experience functions as an equal or even higher authority than Scripture itself—particularly where Scripture is described as having a “ceiling” while lived experience does not. That implication gives me pause, not because lived obedience and Spirit-led life are unimportant, but because Scripture has historically functioned as the normative authority by which all experiences are tested.

Second, the use of binaries such as “dead-letter Christians” versus “sons,” or similar either/or framings, is difficult for me. I don't find those categories particularly helpful, and I worry they obscure rather than clarify your intent. There are more than two faithful ways Christians understand “hearing from God,” and I think your heart in this message could be overlooked or misread because of those contrasts.

Third, I think 2 Corinthians 3:6 is being taken out of its immediate context. Paul's contrast there is between the Mosaic Law under the old covenant and life in the Spirit under the new covenant—not between Scripture in general and living revelation. The problem with the Pharisees, as Jesus describes it, was not literal interpretation of Scripture itself, but their rejection of Christ to whom the Scriptures pointed.

Finally—and this is more personal—I've seen real harm come from both sides of this binary. I've known people who pursued God passionately, sought purity of heart, and claimed alignment with Scripture, yet treated their own impressions, interpretations, or perceived words from God as functionally equal to Scripture itself. In those environments, lives—including my own—were damaged. I've suffered under pastoral authority where “hearing from God” meant obedience to their interpretation as though it were God's word to me. And, candidly, I later found myself doing the same to others.

I share that not as an accusation, but as a caution born of experience.

If this is helpful, I'm happy to continue the conversation. If not, no worries at all. I appreciate you sharing your thoughts.

Eric,

Excellent points Eric.

Not sure how to communicate this without contrasting the 2 views (binary)... open to suggestions.

Re 2Cor 3:6, I get your point. What I'm seeing is the parallel spirit between legalism and the pharisees. It feels like this analytical, intellection approach to the “Bible only” really does misrepresent Jesus. I think it's a serious miss, even if it's not malicious. It's still that pharisaic, self-righteous, soulish spirit that totally misrepresents the Spirit of Truth (Jesus and Holy Spirit).

I also think its space we've all come from and it's a maturity issue we should be patient with. Most are much more combative than Apollos! Perhaps adding this thought would help?

John