

to Ephesians 4, **“tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14)**, listening to the divine truth that is God’s Word will cause us to **“grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” (Eph 4:15)** who **“makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love” (Eph 4:16)**. God’s Word in its truth and fullness will make you strong, confident, and bold, not flimsy and easily led astray.

God’s Word is sufficient. It’s not only OK, but good to have convictions when they are normed by God’s Word. In a recent Issues, Etc. podcast, Joe Dallas of Genesis Counseling was talking about an interview with a pastor of some non-biblical Christian confession who had condoned same sex marriage. The interviewing journalist, who was bearing the burden of that unrepentant lifestyle said, “It was so reassuring to hear the pastor say this.” Joe Dallas’ point on Issues, Etc. was, “The Christian does not need someone else’s opinion to reassure them.” He’s right. All we *need* is Scripture. The Word of God is our assurance. Christ is our confidence. That is enough. If we are looking for assurance outside the Bible and what it teaches, we are seeking something other than truth.

Thus when Solomon says, “Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life”, he, in the great wisdom given to him by God is charging his sons by flesh and now you, his sons and daughters in faith to hang onto God’s Word as if your life depended on it. Solomon encourages you to **“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from (my words) flows the springs of life” (Prv 4:23)**.

The Psalmist says, **“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps 119:105)**. The Word of God enlightens our earthly sojourn and leads it. The Word of God is always the “safe” option. Paul says as much in his letter to the Philippians: **“To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you” (Phil 3:1)**. The word “safe” here has an interesting root. Without boring you with grammar subtleties, the Greek language will often stick a letter “a” in front of a word to negate the meaning. Think of words like a-theist. A theist believes in God; an a-theist believes there is no God. The word safe is a negation of a word meaning “to totter or fall”. Hence, “safety” in Paul’s letter to the Philippians is to be firm, solidly standing. God’s Word is safe. Abiding in God’s Word is firm or solid ground. **“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Ps 46:1)**.

Both Law and Gospel work this way! **Psalm 119, “Uphold me according to your promise, that I may live, and let me not be put to shame in my hope! ¹¹⁷ Hold me up, that I may be safe and have regard for your statutes continually” (vv. 116-117)!** Promise; statutes. Gospel; Law. Life; safety. God’s Word will not put you to shame and will always keep you safe. You cannot find true security from anything or anyone else. No prince or power can give you the true security God’s Word does! Hang onto God’s Word as if your life depended on it. You may have temporal, fleeting safety and peace, but all earthly comforts will draw to a close and we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So hang onto God’s Word as if your life depended on it. Hang onto the Word and let it have its way with you. Let the Law convict you and when it does, repent. And when you repent, let the Gospel have its way with you and give you the assurance of the forgiveness of sins you have in Christ. Then let the Word instruct you how to live in a way that pleases God and benefits your neighbor. Solomon writes, **“The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day” (Prv 4:18)**.

The way of the righteous will appear scary at first because it is the road less travelled. When the Holy Spirit leads us off the path of the wicked we lose those worldly comforts. That’s scary; like a child giving up his security blanket. The flesh still wants to do the desires of the flesh – **“sexual immorality... idolatry... jealousy... divisions... envy... drunkenness... and things like these”** to name a few from our Epistle reading (**Gal 5:19-21**). But the longer we stay on the path of the 10 Commandments, the more we will come to realize how much better, how much safer a path it is. If you’re doubting or fearing, stop. Trust God’s Word. Hang on to it. It not only is the safe and righteous path, it also as Solomon writes, brings **“healing to all... flesh” (Prv 4:22)**. For where the forgiveness of sins is preached in Jesus’ name, there is healing of both body and soul. Hanging onto God’s Word is not merely knowing or understanding the Scriptures, but trusting them! So by faith, hold onto the Word of God. It is that which gives you your life! You can know God’s Word better than anyone else in the world, but if you don’t trust its message – that it is for you for the forgiveness of sins – it is all in vain; all for naught. By faith the Word is your life. Trust it and receive eternal life! In Jesus’ name, Amen.