The authority of the Bible

*The Bible is the Word of God. The Word is unchangeable and indestructible because it is the eternal Word of God. People have subjected the Word to innumerable attacks. It has been burned, discredited, questioned, and made suspect; yet the Word is still standing. People come and go, but the Word remains forever.*

Let us continue to read the Word, to pray the Word, to believe the Word, to obey the Word, and to live according to the Word. Patrick Henry states that the Bible is worth more than all the books in the world. John Calvin wrote that the Word is the sceptre with which the heavenly King rules the church. A wise man believes in the Bible despite the opinion of others. According to Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, the Word of God is greater than the church (and greater than governments).

*There are a number of important principles with regard to Scripture that we must uphold when dealing with the Word:*  
1. We are to heed what A.W. Tozer said, namely that we are not to edit the Word. We are not allowed to bend the Word to suit our needs. No man may decide of his own accord that something in Scripture is right or wrong, or how it should actually be interpreted. John Newton made the following important statement: “I will put all apparent inconsistencies in the Bible down to my own ignorance.”  
2. It is not our responsibility to evaluate the Word, but to obey it. Too many people express personal opinions about the Word. They evaluate the Word and are not willing to subject themselves to it.  
3. We must bear in mind that the Word was given to mankind on the authority of God. You must make a personal decision to subject yourself to the authority of the Word. There are only two possibilities: either you reject the authority of the Word, or you accept it.  
4. We must understand that the Word is the truth. We must constantly make the choice to accept that this is so.  
5. The Word is not dependent upon our emotions and our intellectual understanding of it. The Word is above emotions and understanding.  
6. Following the Reformation of the sixteenth century, there is the important principle of Sola Scriptura, which means: the Word only. Only the Word sets out the way of salvation: it alone teaches us about God’s will. The Word alone is the guideline for our lives in this world. For truly I tell you, until the sky and earth pass away and perish, not one smallest
letter nor one little hook will pass from the Law until all things are accomplished. Whoever then breaks or does away with or relaxes one of these least important of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least important in the kingdom of heaven, but he who practices them and teaches others to do so shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Mt.5:18-19).

7. We must hold on to the fact that the Word was inspired by the Holy Spirit and that we should uphold the infallibility of the Word. Every Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience, and for training in righteousness (2 Tim.3:16-17). For no prophecy ever originated because some man willed it, but men spoke from God who were moved and impelled by the Holy Spirit (2 Pt.1:21).

These are the principles that have carried the church through all the ages. Do not compromise and discard any single one of these principles. Opinions change. Hold on to the principles of the Word. Live from the Word.

Why pray the Word?

If we accept the authority of the Word and understand the role of the Word in our lives, it becomes clear that we should pray the Word. We should pray the Word for the following reasons:

• God reveals His will in His Word. Therefore, when we pray the Word, we pray His will. And if we pray according to His will, He will hear our prayers (1 Jn.5:14-15).
• Secular books provide knowledge and can bring insight, but it is only when one reads the Word that one can come to faith. Thus, if you pray the Word, faith is sown in your heart (Rm.10:17).
• The Word reveals God’s priorities. If we pray according to the Word, we learn what these priorities are, and then we will be able to align our personal lives according to these priorities.
• The Word has authority. When the Father created the universe, He did so through His Son, the Word. The Word spoke a word and there was light and life and people and heavenly bodies. Today, if we proclaim the Word, we make a declaration in the spiritual realm – the Word still has the same power. It has the power to give life and to recreate, because we call upon the living Word who keeps His word and will fulfil His promises.
• The Word teaches us about God – about His character, His being, power, abilities and characteristics. If we understand God better, we will be able to pray in greater faith. Faith is as strong as the one in whom you believe.