

“TRAIN YOURSELF FOR GODLINESS” PRACTICING THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Session Two – Cultivating a Fruitful Life in the Word

Introductory Comments

Today’s Basic Point: We **NEED** God’s Word.

*“The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers. And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but **man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.**” (Deuteronomy 8:1-3)*

God’s Word is powerful in our lives. God intended it to be so. It’s designed to get stuff done. It’s a very *active* thing!

- 1. Four Convictions Necessary for a Fruitful Life in the Word**
(i.e., things you *really* need to believe about the Bible)

A. The “God-breathedness” of Scripture –

B. The “Understandableness” of Scripture –

C. The Usefulness of Scripture –

D. The Efficacy of Scripture -

Consider all the things God’s Word claims it can do:

- initiates faith – Romans 10:17
- gives new spiritual life – I Peter 1:23; James 1:18

- helps us grow – I Peter 2:2; I Thessalonians 2:13; Acts 20:32
- sanctifies – John 17:17; Eph. 5:26
- searches and convicts – Heb. 4:12
- liberates – John 8:31-32
- refreshes and renews (and all sorts of other things) – Psalm 119

A closer look at a Scriptural gem - Psalm 19:7-11

Simply put, it is God's *intention* to nurture us by his Word. In fact, Scripture is the primary means which God has given to feed us, to nourish us and to cause us to flourish. Our responsibility is to create opportunities for the Word to exercise this intended effect.

2. The Appropriate Posture Toward God's Word - Humility

“Take every word as spoken to yourselves. When the word thunders against sin, think thus: ‘God means my sins;’ when it presseth any duty, ‘God intends me in this.’ Many put off Scripture from themselves, as if it only concerned those who lived in the time when it was written; but if you intend to profit by the word, bring it home to yourselves: a medicine will do no good, unless it be applied.” (From a sermon by Thomas Watson entitled “How We May Read the Scriptures with Most Spiritual Profit”)

3. How? – A Simple Recommendation for Daily Time in God’s Word

Step One – Briefly pray for God’s help as you read His Word. Humbly acknowledge your need for this help. **Ask God to feed you with His Word.** This small act of humility will position you for God’s grace. Remember, “*God opposes the proud, but he gives grace to the humble.*”

Some sample prayers:

- God, as I read your Word, would you please make yourself known to me. Amen.
- God, as I come to your Word, would you please form your mind and your heart in me. I want to think about things the way you think about things. I want to feel about things the way you feel about things. And I want to respond to things the way you would have me respond to things. So God, I ask for your help now through your Word. Amen.
- God, as I read your Word, please “open my eyes, that I may see wonderful things out of your law.” (Ps. 119:18)
- God, my heart is not inclined to your Word this morning. Oh, God please “incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain.” (Ps. 119:36)
- “Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.” (Ps. 25:4-5)
- God, “please show me now your ways, that I may know you.” (Ex. 33:13)
- “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me, and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” (Ps. 139:23-24)
- Oh Father, would you out of the riches of your glory strengthen me with power by your Spirit in my inner man so that, as I read your Word, Christ might dwell in my heart by faith and I might be rooted and grounded in his love, and, in fact, know His love for me today. (cf. Eph. 3:16-19)
- Oh God, “satisfy me again this morning with your steadfast love, that I may rejoice and be glad all day long.” (Ps. 90:14)

Step Two – In an unhurried way, read through a pre-selected portion of Scripture. What you are seeking for is **prayerful meditation** on God’s Word. You are seeking to let God feed you with His Word.

Three Key Ingredients to Prayerful Meditation:

- Some Time –

- A Plan –

- A Method –

“Meditating is thinking about, reflecting upon, considering, taking to heart, reading slowly and carefully, prayerfully taking in, and humbly receiving into mind, heart and will that which God has revealed.” (Peter Toon in *Meditating as a Christian*)

“Turn the Bible into prayer. Thus, if you were reading the First Psalm, spread the Bible on the chair before you, and kneel and pray, ‘O Lord, give me the blessedness of this man’; ‘let me not stand in the counsel of the ungodly.’ This is the best way of knowing the meaning of the Bible and of learning to pray.” (Robert Murray M’Cheyne)

Step Three – Let your meditation on Scripture lead you into a time of more intercessory prayer according to your own life situation, needs and responsibilities.