

Greater Pleasant Branch baptist Church

Connect Learn Grow

Wednesday Bible Study- Theme: Practicing Spiritual Disciplines

Lesson # 2- Bible Intake ( Part 1) -For The Purpose Of Godliness

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October 27, 2021

I. Central Idea

No other Spiritual Discipline rivals the importance of the intake of God's Word. No other Spiritual Discipline can compensate for the lack of it. Without feasting on the food of Scripture, no one will enjoy a growing, healthy Christlike life.

Bible intake is not only the most important Spiritual Discipline, it is also the most broad. It actually consists of several sub disciplines. It's much like a university comprised of many colleges, each specializing in a different discipline, yet all united under the general name of the university. The first three colleges of Bible intake are hearing, reading, and studying God's Word.

II. The Importance of Bible intake

No other Spiritual Discipline is more important than the intake of God's Word. Nothing can substitute for it. There is simply no healthy Christian life apart from a diet of the milk and meat of Scripture. The reasons are obvious:

1. In the Bible God tells us about Himself, especially about Jesus Christ, the incarnation of God.
2. The Bible unfolds the Law of God to us and shows us how we have all broken it. There we learn how Christ died as a sinless, willing Substitute for breakers of God's Law and how we must repent and believe in Him to be right with God.
3. In the Bible we learn the ways and will of the Lord. We find in Scripture how God wants us to live, and what brings the most joy and satisfaction in life.
4. None of this eternally essential information can be found anywhere else except in the Bible. Therefore if we would know God and be godly, we must know the Word of God-intimately.
5. We must remember that the most transforming practice available to us is the disciplined intake of Scripture.

## A. Hearing God's Word

1. The easiest of the Disciplines related to the intake of God's Word is simply hearing it. Why consider this a Discipline? Because if we don't discipline ourselves to hear God's Word regularly, we may only hear it accidentally, just when we feel like it, or never hear it at all.

2. Jesus once said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the Word of God and keep it."- Luke 11:28. Merely listening to God-inspired words is not the point. The purpose of all methods of Bible intake is to keep it, that is to do what God says and thereby develop in Christlikeness.

3. So hearing the Word of God is not merely passive listening; it is a Discipline to be cultivated.

## B. Reading God's Word

1. Because all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness-2Timothy 3:16, shouldn't we read it ?

2. Jesus often asked questions about people's understanding of the Scriptures, sometimes beginning with the words, "have you not read ?"-Matthew 19: 14 and Mark 12:10. Jesus assumed that those claiming to be the people of God would have read the Word of God

3. Three practical suggestions for consistent success in Bible reading:

\*\*\* First, find the time. Discipline yourself to find the time. Try to make it the same time each day.

\*\*\* Second, find a Bible reading plan. Having a plan will improve success in Bible reading. Bible reading plans abound on the internet and many study Bibles contain a reading schedule.

\*\*\* Third, find at least one word, phrase, or verse to meditate on each time you read it. Take at least one thing you have read and think deeply about it for a few moments. Your insight into Scripture will deepen and you will better understand how it applies to your life.

## C. Studying God's Word

1. If reading the Bible can be compared to cruising the width of a clear, sparkling lake in a motorboat, studying the Bible is slowly crossing that same lake in a glass-bottomed boat. The motorboat crossing provides an overview of the lake and a swift, passing view of its depth. The glass-bottomed boat of study, however, takes you beneath the surface of Scripture for an unhurried look of clarity and detail that's normally missed by those who simply read the text.

2. The basic difference between Bible reading and Bible study is simply a pen and paper or some other means of preserving your thoughts.

3. Believers can discipline themselves for godliness by committing to at least one way of improving their intake of God's Word by hearing, by reading, or by studying.

### III. Questions and Applications

1. Why is knowing the Bible intimately such a vital part of knowing God and being godly ?
2. Read Luke 11:28. Why do you think Jesus emphasizes this point ?
3. What do the following verses say about hearing God's Word ? -Romans 10:17 and I Timothy 4:13
4. Why is it important not to be a passive listener of God's Word ? How can you cultivate the ability to be an intentional listener ? Be specific.
5. Read I Timothy 4: 7 and 2 Timothy 3:16. How much time, on the average , do you spend reading the Bible each day ?
6. In the past have you seen a connection between the time you spend in Bible intake and your knowledge of God and His power ? Describe your experience.
7. Consider Ezra 7:10. To which three key areas of study did Ezra devote himself ? And what did he do before teaching God's Word to the people ?
8. What are the differences between hearing, reading and studying God's Word ?
9. What can you do to improve your intake of God's Word in the areas of hearing, reading and studying ?
10. How does Philippians 3:13 apply to the failure many have experienced in daily Bible intake ?
11. Consider how the following might enhance your study of Scripture:
  - \*\* Writing down observations about what you read.
  - \*\* Looking up cross references.
  - \*\* Finding key words and seeing how they are used in other Scriptures.
  - \*\* Outlining chapters,one chapter at a time.
  - \*\* Doing book studies, character studies, topical studies, and word studies.