



READ, STUDY, MEMORIZE THE WORD

“Meditating on God’s words shapes our soul.”

- David Mathis

PREP

Check out the video for this session from Pastor Tim:
www.templebiblechurch.org/disciplines

Overview

As we seek to live out the spiritual disciplines in our lives, we have a source of instruction. God’s Word was given to us that we might know him and learn of his grace and of his will for us. The Grand Narrative story reveals his redemptive plan to save us from ourselves and shows us how we are to live our lives as his people

Passages

Psalm 1:1-3 | Psalm 119:9-11, 105, 113-114
2 Timothy 3:14-17 | Hebrews 4:12 | 2 Timothy 2:15

Terms

Study

A specific kind of experience in which through careful attention to reality the mind is enabled to move in a certain direction. (Mathis)

Memorize

When Scripture is stored in your mind, it is available for the Holy Spirit to bring to your attention when you need it most. (Whitney)

Opening Question

- o Share a verse you have committed to memory? Why have you memorized that verse? How does it help you?*
- o How often are you in the Word of God outside of church gatherings? How does it help you?*

READING

by David Richardson

I grew up in a Christian home and came to faith when I was 8 years old. We were in church every time the doors were open, which for a Baptist in the 70's and 80's was at least Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. I learned Bible stories and key biblical passages in Sunday school, youth group, and summer VBS (where I memorized many verses in KJV which are still with me). By the time I left home, I had even read through the entire Bible multiple times.

College began a period where I drifted from God and from the church. Though I never abandoned my faith, I certainly put it on the back burner as I pursued education and a career. Circumstances eventually took me to Midland, Texas in my mid 20's where I returned to the church for social reasons more than spiritual ones. As I engaged with people there and became a part of the community of young single adults, God began to work in me to draw me back to himself. The people I was hanging out with truly believed in and loved the Savior. That was convicting to me. As I struggled in my relationship with God, he dealt with me through these fellow believers and through books. I remember that *More Than A Carpenter* was particularly impactful in my life as I grappled with God and which of us was going to control my life. It brought me to a decision point. If I truly believed the claims of Christ, then there were huge implications for my life.

As God continued to draw me back, I remember searching for the next spiritual book I would read. As I walked around a huge Christian book store (back when those kinds of things were common), I felt God calling me to seek him in his Word. I knew I needed to begin to learn his Word more than I needed to read another book. Despite all the Bible reading from my youth, I really did not know it well at all.

That decision began a lifetime journey that truly changed my relationship with both our God and his Word. Instead of just reading the Bible casually or devotionally as I had done in the past, I began to read to truly know God and know Scripture. I would read and reread passages as I worked through the books of the Bible. I researched the historical setting and background. I looked carefully at the context. I read and listened to what pastors and teachers had to say about the text. I strove to understand what the author was saying and why. I grew to love the Word and the God revealed there. I remember more than once turning down opportunities to do something with friends because of the excitement of beginning the study of a new book of the Bible. Slowly, the understanding of our faith, our Father, and our Savior that I had inherited from my Christian background and upbringing began to be replaced with my own convictions. Sometimes things I had believed became more certain, other times they were replaced as a result of my study. Who God was, his character and purposes, and the unfolding of his redemptive plan in Christ all became more clear.

But it was not just an intellectual exercise. My relationship with the Father grew closer as he revealed himself in his Word. The Spirit used the Word to convict me of sin, change the way I looked at the world, and change what was important to me. My will and my desires conformed more and more to his. My journey has not been without struggle by any means. I am fallen and have always battled to fully surrender to Christ and die to my own desires and self. But as we learn in the Scriptures, the Word of God is "living and active" and the Spirit will continually use it to expose our shortcomings and help our minds "not be conformed to this world but transformed" as we are shaped into the people God intends for us to be.

DISCUSSION

Reading, studying, and memorizing the Word of God are some of the most fundamental aspects of the Christian life. The sovereign, creator God has chosen to reveal himself and his purpose to us most clearly through the Bible. It is through his Word that he reveals to us who he is and tells us how he intends for us to live. It is evidence of his love for us and his desire for us to know him.

- o *If the Bible truly is God's purposeful revelation of himself to us, how should we feel about that and respond?*

Psalm 1:1-3

- o *How does the Psalmist feel about the Word of God (Law of the LORD)?*
- o *Would you say you "delight" in the Word of God? Why or why not?*
- o *What does it mean to meditate on the law of the Lord day and night?*
- o *Do you have regular time in the Word? What does that look like?*
- o *Do you devote yourself to memorization of Scripture? Why or why not?*

Psalm 119:9-11, 105, 113-114

- o *Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible and is all about the Word of God. What do these verses emphasize about our attitude towards God and the purpose of knowing his Word?*

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION

by Skeeta Jenkins

My mantra is if God were to ever take away my speech, I want to know his Word so well that I could write it out as a testimony of his goodness.

Since 1998 I have been intentional about making God's Word part of my everyday living, with the goal of making his Word my foundation from which everything else flows. I've failed at it often over the years but it hasn't stopped me from being intentional about memorizing his Word. To me, Scripture memory should be the essence of who we are.

DISCUSSION

2 Timothy 3:14-17, Hebrews 4:12

These are two of the most important passages for understanding the nature of Scripture. We learn here that it is unique in its ultimate origin and also in its ability to impact and shape us.

- o ***How have you learn most of what you know about the Bible in your life?***
- o ***What do we learn about the nature and use of Scripture in this passage?***
- o ***What does “breathed out by God” mean? What are the implications of that?***
- o ***What does it mean that it is “living and active”?***

2 Timothy 2:15

As we mature in Christ, we are also growing in our ability to properly handle the Word of God. Having the Word “in us” as well as being able to correctly understand and apply it is important. God brings us to maturity in different ways, but there are many common elements.

- o ***Do you feel like you have a good understanding of the Bible? Why or why not?***
- o ***How would you describe the difference between “devotional/quiet time”, Bible reading, and Bible study?***
- o ***Would you describe your time in the Word as reading, devotional, or study? Is there one of these areas to which you need to purposefully increase your attention?***

In 2022, my wife got really sick to the point of death and knowing God’s Word and standing on the Word was the catalyst of me having peace in the midst of the six month storm we endured as a family.

My friends, when memorizing God’s Word becomes part of who you are, it provides you with the peace, understanding, and guidance needed for life. You will continue to face tough times but standing on his Word will make you better able to deal with life circumstances.

CHALLENGE

This week, take on one or more of these challenges. This is not meant to be a finalized list of what it means to live out read, studying, and memorizing the Word. This list is to give you opportunities for practice. Find ways to practice the disciplines in order to make them habits. Spend some time reading through the challenges and commit to the one(s) the Holy Spirit draws you to.

- o If you are not practicing a daily devotional or quiet time, begin that this week. (There are many resources to help including Our Daily Bread devotional guide which are available at the Welcome Desk in the TBC lobby.)**
- o Begin a deep personal study of a book of the Bible like Philippians or 1 Peter. (If you would like help learning how to do this, contact David Richardson at davidr@tbcweb.org to arrange a meeting with a staff or elder to help you get started.)**
- o If you are married, pick a book of the Bible to start reading daily or weekly with your spouse. You will see how Scripture will not just speak to you, but to your family as you grow together.**
- o Do you know a general overview of the Bible? Find a summary of the Bible and commit yourself to understanding how to paraphrase the Grand Narrative of Scripture. (If you cannot find one, contact TJ Greeson at tgreeson@tbcweb.org.)**
- o Delete entertainment apps and just have a Bible app on your phone. When you're in a time of wanting to be on your phone, read the Word.**
- o Begin a Scripture memory program like one of the ones listed in the resources.**

RESOURCES

Devotionals:

Our Daily Bread

New Morning Mercies

Paul David Tripp

How to's:

How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth

Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart

Reading the Bible with Heart and Mind

Tremper Longman

Commentary:

Expositors Bible Commentary

Kenneth L. Barker

Reading Plan:

One Year Bible

Memory:

"Memorize Scripture with Me"

Sean McDowell

"Topical Memory System"

Navigators

TIPS FROM SKEETA JENKINS

- o Purchase note cards to have wherever you go
- o Go over scripture daily
- o Pray the scripture you are memorizing
- o Pick a set time in the day to devote to memorizing
- o Seek to understand and apply the scripture to your life as you memorize

