

HOW DO I DEEPEN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?



HOW DO I DEEPEN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD? (PART TWO)

Fellowship and service are important in deepening our faith, but they should not replace the growth that comes from our personal relationship with God.

Our relationship with God is deepened through 2 pillars: **reading the Bible (The Word) and prayer.**

The Bible is not just the written Word. It is the Living Word of God.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17 (ESV) All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

When the Holy Spirit is our Teacher, the Word of God does its work on us and in us.

WHEN THE SPIRIT IS YOUR PARACLETE:

You encounter not only the written word, but the living Word.

When you're corrected by God's laws, your heart is convicted!

When you're reminded of His promises, your heart becomes confident!

When you're guided by His wisdom, you are enlightened!

When you're instructed by His ways, you are empowered to obey!

When you're fed by the Word of God, you are changed, you are never the same again!

WE BENEFIT FROM THE WORD THROUGH 5 DISCIPLINES:

1. HEARING

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13 (NIV) ... when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

2. READING

Tape recorded readings of the Bible have proven that you can read through the entire Bible in 71 hours which means if you read the Bible for 15 minutes a day, you can read through the Bible in less than a year. (Don Whitney)

SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO BEGIN READING THE ENTIRE BIBLE:

- Read in three places daily starting in Genesis, Job, and Matthew respectively. The three sections are roughly the same in length, so you will finish them all about the same time. The great advantage of such a design is its variety.
- Many who intend to read straight through the Bible becomes confused in Leviticus, discouraged in Numbers, and give up completely by Deuteronomy. But when you are reading in more than one place each day, it's easier to keep up the momentum.



3. STUDYING

Before meditating on a book in the Bible, study its context first.

Who was the author? Who was the audience? Why was this book written?

EZRA 7:10 (NAS) For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Here then, is the real problem of our negligence. We fail in our duty to study God's word not so much because it is difficult to understand, not so much because it is dull and boring, but because it is work. Our problem is not a lack of intelligence. Our problem is that we are lazy.
(R.C. Sproul)

Reading gives us a breath, but study gives us depth. (Jerry Bridges)

4. MEMORIZING

In the midst of a spiritual battle with the forces of the enemy around us, we need to memorize Scriptures because we want to remember God's truth when we need it most.

EPHESIANS 6:17 (NIV) Take the ... sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

PSALM 119:9,11 (NIV) 9 How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. 11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

5. MEDITATING

This is known as our devotional time with God.

EPHESIANS 6:17 (NIV) Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers.

Some people like to read so many chapters every day. I would not dissuade them from the practice, but I would rather lay my soul soaked in half a dozen verses all day than rinse it with several chapters. Oh, to be bathed in a text of scriptures, and to let it be sucked up into your very soul, till it saturates your heart! (Charles Spurgeon)

Making time for and waiting on our Father in heaven is never wasted time.

QUESTIONS FOR HUDDLE DISCUSSION:

1. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. How Has the Word taught, rebuked, corrected, trained, or equipped you this past week?
2. We benefit from the Word through 5 disciplines: hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating. Which of the 5 do you need to work on and why?