



Ways to Improve Your Bible Reading

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- The Bible is like the fruit-bearing tree in this story. Merely hearing the Word of God is to be like the first brother. You may gather much fruit from the encounter and even bring enough home to feed on for a few days, but in the long run it doesn't compare with having your own tree.
 - Through the Disciplines of reading and studying, we make the tree our own and enjoy its fruit. Among the Spiritual Disciplines we also find the tools of memorization, meditation, and application, which bountifully increase our harvest of fruit from the tree.

Donald Whitney


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- The Christian life, from start to finish, is utterly dependent on the Grace of God.
 - By Grace we are saved – Eph. 2:8-9
 - By Grace we continue on – Acts 13:43
 - By Grace we withstand many trials – 2 Cor. 12:9
 - By Grace we are strengthened daily – 2 Tim.2:1
 - By Grace we grow to greater maturity – 2 Pet. 3: 17-18
 - God’s Grace enables us to make choices and expend effort to seek more of God – 1 Cor. 15:10

Shape Your Life with the Words of Life

- It is a gift that we would have the desire for and take action to avail ourselves of the means of God's grace – his voice (the word) his ear (prayer) and His people (fellowship) with the most basic principle of grace being the immersing of our lives in his word.
Habits of Grace by David Mathis
- God speaks and reveals himself to us. He communicates with us, He gives to us his powerful, authoritative self-expression in the pages of Scripture.
- His self-expression is so deep and rich and full that it is not just personal, but a person.

Preaching to Yourself

- “In our sin, we constantly find our responses to life in our fallen world to be disconnected from the theology that we confess. Anger, fear, panic, discouragement, and impatience stalk our hearts and whisper in our ears a false gospel that will lure our lives away from what we say we believe. The battleground is between our ears”. David Mathis

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- Preaching the gospel to ourselves is a habit of grace that is both proactive and reactive. It's reactive as we encounter temptation and frustration and seek to restock in the moment, or as we reflect back on our sin and circumstances and try to evaluate them with a gospel lens.
 - But it's also proactive. We go on the offensive when we feed our souls in some regular rhythm before the events and tasks and disappointments of daily life begin streaming our way.

Memorizing God's Word

- Supplies Spiritual Power – Ps. 119:11, Col. 2:3
- Strengthens Your Faith – Prov. 22:17-19
- Prepares Us for Witnessing and Counseling – Acts 2
- It is a Means of God's Guidance – Ps. 119:24
- It Stimulates Meditation
- You Can Do It, It just takes Motivation

Memorization – You Need A Plan

- Write out the verse on a separate index card -
- Draw picture reminders -
- Memorize word perfectly -
- Review and meditate every day -
- Find a method of accountability -

Warm Yourself at the Fire of Meditation

- God means for us to not just hear him, not only to read quickly over what he says, but to reflect on what he says and knead it into our hearts.
- Donald Whitney defines meditation as “deep thinking on the truths and spiritual realities revealed in Scripture for the purpose of understanding, application, and prayer.”
- “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” Col. 3:16

- “Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening”...
(Gen. 24:63)
- How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the Law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. (Ps. 1:1-2)
- Meditation dominates Psalm 119 as it celebrates the word of God. The Psalmist says he meditates “on your precepts” verse 15 and 78, “on your statutes” verse 23 and 48, “on your wondrous works” (v.27) “Your testimonies are my meditation” (v.99) “Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day” (v.97)


- Following the death of Moses God himself spoke to Joshua, and three times gives the clear directive, “**Be strong and courageous**” How was he to do this?
- Where will he fill his tank with such strength and courage?
- The answer is Meditation. “This book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night” (Josh 1:8)


Meditation is the Missing Link

- “Begin with reading or hearing. Go on with meditation, end in prayer.” (William Bridges)
- “The word feedeth meditation, and meditation feedeth prayer” (Thomas Manton)
- The reason we come away so cold from reading the word is because we do not warm ourselves at the fire of meditation. (Thomas Watson)
- Meditation bridges the gap between hearing from God and speaking to him.

Application

- A key question we need to answer is what effect should regular Bible intake have on our hearts and lives, and how does it happen?
- Applying God's word to our lives is grounded in the good instinct that the Bible is for our good and growth as believers.
- "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

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- Puritan preacher Thomas Watson advised his church to take every word as spoken to yourselves. When the word thunders against sin, think, “God means my sin” If we intend to profit by the word, we must bring it home to ourselves, a medicine will do no good, unless it is applied.
 - “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.” (James 1:22)

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- And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Rom. 12:2)
 - “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ.” (Phil. 1:9-10)