

Spiritual Disciplines - Part 3

Devoted to God in the Word

Listen to the Word

- We must remember that for many generations the Bible was passed down orally.
 - *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” - Deut. 6:4*
- The Bible affirms the benefits of hearing the Word, but reminds us that hearing is not the end goal.
 - *“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” - James 1:22*
- It is good for us to listen to the Word together as a body.
 - *“Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.” - 1 Tim. 4:13*
- Take advantage of technology that allows you to listen to the Word. Make sure you don't only listen to the Word when multitasking.
 - *“First, when you come to hear the Word, if you would sanctify God's name, you must possess your souls with what it is you are going to hear, that what you are going to hear is the Word of God.” - Jeremiah Burroughs*
 - *“And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.” - 1 Thess. 2:13*
 - Most Bible apps have the option to listen to the Bible.
 - Dwell is a paid app that has a larger variety of voices and other features for listening to the Word.

Read the Word

- Jesus assumed that those who had the ability would have read God's Word.
 - *“He answered, “Have you not read...” - Matt. 19:4*
 - *“Have you not read this Scripture...” - Mark 12:10*
- Donald Whitney's Practical Suggestions
 - Find the time. Start with 5 minutes, and seek to work your way to at least 15 minutes each day.
 - Have a plan. Use a Bible reading plan or simply commit to reading a number of chapters a day.
 - Meditate on one word, phrase, or verse.

- John Piper's Reading Suggestions
 - Read for the author's meaning, not your own.
 - Ask questions to unlock the riches of the Bible.
 - At every page, pray and ask for God's help.
- Don't read the Bible to finish. Read the Bible to be changed!

Meditate on the Word

- "Meditation - deep thinking on the truths and spiritual realities revealed in Scripture, or upon life from a scriptural perspective, for the purposes of understanding, application, and prayer." - Donald Whitney
 - *"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night."*
- Psalm 1:1-2
- In Scripture, meditating on the Word is closely connected with applying the Word.
 - *"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."* - Joshua 1:8
- Steps for Meditating on Scripture - from *The Life You've Always Wanted*
 1. Ask God to Meet You in Scripture
 2. Read the Bible in a Repentant Spirit
 3. Meditate on a Fairly Brief Passage or Narrative
 4. Take One Thought or Verse with You Through the Day
 5. Allow This Thought to Become Part of Your Memory

Memorize the Word

- Memorizing Scripture allows us to have the Word of God always at our disposal.
 - Jesus quoted Scripture when tempted in the wilderness.
 - *"I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."* - Psalm 119:11
 - *"Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my knowledge, for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, if all of them are ready on your lips."* - Proverbs 22:17-18
- Practical Steps
 - Have a plan. Select certain verses or use a guide (there's apps for that).
 - Reinforce in various ways. Have motions, draw pictures, and/or write out the verse.
 - Memorize with others for encouragement and accountability.