

BIBLE 101

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Bible 101- How to Engage the Bible
July 9, 2023 - Pastor Rafael Aristy

The Bible is about **who God is, what He has done** and **what He will do**. The main theme of the Bible is redemption: **the action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil.**

How do we engage the Bible?

To **engage** is to: "participate or become involved in; to establish a meaningful contact or connection with."

Our goal as disciples of Jesus is to engage the Bible, to become involved with it, and to establish a meaningful connection with it.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

The word of God is alive and active!

Active – In the Greek, *energés*: at work, energized, full of energy.

The word of God is at work. When we read it, it does work in us.

- Sharper than a two-edged sword, the word of God goes **deep**. Remember, **nobody likes getting cut!**
- It **separates** your soul (will & emotions) and your spirit.
- It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.
- The New Living Translation states: "*it EXPOSES our innermost thoughts and desires.*" It helps us bring to light emotions, thoughts, motivations, and desires that we may not want to accept or may want to keep covered up.
- **This is why we don't only read the Bible; we engage the Bible!**

How do we engage the Bible?

Psalms 119:9-16

9 "How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word.

10 I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.

11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

12 Praise be to you, Lord; teach me your decrees.

13 With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth.

14 I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

15 I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.

16 I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word."

I seek you with all my heart.

I have hidden your Word.

*With **my** lips I recount all the laws.*

I rejoice in following your statute.

I meditate.

I consider your ways.

I delight in your decrees.

I will not neglect your word.

-There are multiple "I" statements that sound like declarations. **This means we have a responsibility to them.** We begin engaging the Bible by seeking the Lord with all our heart.

Deuteronomy 4:29 "But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul."

Luke 11:9 "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

11 "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

Imagine if you had something of incredible value. Without a bank, a safe, or anything of the sort, you would hide it.

- That's the connotation of this verse. You would hide something **so valuable** so that it could not be stolen, but you knew where it was and could retrieve it when needed.
- Hiding God's Word in our hearts ensures no one can steal it and we can retrieve it whenever we are tempted to sin against the Lord.

- *What is something very valuable to you? What do you do with it?*

- *How does this example pertain to the word of God?*

- *Could our lack of valuing scripture and God's truth be why we fall into temptations?*

Both the gospel of Matthew and Luke tell us how Jesus overcame Satan's attempts to get him to sin against the Father.

- Jesus quoted God's Word every time the enemy tempted Him. He always responded with "It is written..." and used Scripture to fight off the temptations and accusations.

Matthew 4:1-11

Luke 4:1-13

If Jesus engaged the written word of God to defeat Satan, we would be wise to do the same.

13 "With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth."

We move from treasuring the word in our hearts to giving an account with our lips of what God has said.

14 "I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches."

It's not enough to hide the word in our heart and declaring it with our lips, **we must follow what it says!**

- It doesn't do you any good to know what to do but not do it.

James 1:22 "But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says.

Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves."

How do we engage the Bible? By DOING what it says!

15 "I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways."

Meditate - Hebrew: to muse, to be absorbed in thought, to say to oneself in a thoughtful manner.

Some may see the word meditation as negative because of the use of meditation by false religions, **but it is biblical.**

After the death of Moses, God was talking to Joshua and told him to meditate on the book of the law. (Torah)

Joshua 1:8 "Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."

God instructions to Joshua as he sets out to lead the Israelites into the land He promised were to be strong and courageous, meditate on the word, and then do what it says.

16 "I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word."

Neglect - fail to care for properly: not pay proper attention to; disregard.
Don't fail to pay proper attention to the Word of God, refuse to disregard it.

We must engage the Bible as a way of life. We must engage it in order to reap the benefits Paul talked about in his second letter to Timothy.

2 Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right."

ALL scripture, not just some scripture. Make a commitment to engage all scripture, not just parts of the Bible. When we read the Bible as merely a recipe book for what we need, we miss the beauty of God's eternal plan for humanity and miss the revelation of His character.

- *Why do we struggle do what the Bible instructs? Or live according to its commands?*
- *What is an example of something you learned in God's word for how He wants you to live that you have been able to apply to your life?*
- *Have you ever ignored the Bible's instruction? How did that go?*
- *How do we reach a place where we rejoice over obeying the Bible? Have you reached this place?*

"This is God's story, the story of his unfathomable love and grace, mercy and forgiveness—and that is how it also becomes *our* story. The story tells us that we deserve nothing but get everything; that we deserve hell but get heaven; that we deserve to be wiped out, obliterated, but we get his tender embrace; that we deserve rejection and judgment but get to become his children, to bear his likeness, to call him Father. This is the story of the Bible, *God's story*, which at the same time is also our own."

- *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*

Begin by taking small steps, consistently to grow in your love and knowledge of the Bible.

You don't have to pursue huge changes or actions, but small and consistent ones over time.

- It is a marathon, not a sprint.
- You don't lose 100 pounds in a day, a week, or a month. You start by doing the small things consistently.
 - Read a devotional every day.
 - Begin reading the One Year Bible.
 - Start reading one of the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John).
 - Read the book of Acts.
 - Check out the [Good News Resources page](#) for Bible Study tools.
 - Join a [discipleship group](#).

What's the best translation for you to read? **The one that you can understand the best...the one you'll actually read consistently.**

"Small, consistent actions or changes over time, lead to significant and exponential results."

-The Compound Effect

- *What small step can I take in to spend more time in God's Word?*
- *Am I thinking from a biblical perspective (engaging and applying the Bible in my everyday life)? If not, what can I do to change that?*
- *How am I going to make reading the Bible and doing what it says a discipline in my life?*