



## ReSync: Spiritual Fitness 101

Text: 1 Corinthians 9:19; 24-27

Care and Bridging Pastor Dan Slagle

1. When was a time that you felt spiritually “fit”? What were the practices that helped you develop spiritual disciplines? What circumstances typically lead you to become spiritually lazy?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. According to Pastor Dan, what does Paul claim is the key to combating spiritual laziness?
  - a. How do you become intentional about developing spiritual disciplines?
  - b. What does the analogy of an athlete training and running a race have to teach us about how to go about our spiritual lives?
3. Dallas Willard said, “Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning. Earning is an attitude. Effort is an action.”
  - a. Describe in your own words the difference between engaging in spiritual practices (or disciplines) to earn God’s love and putting forth effort to “resync” and grow in our relationship with God?
  - b. How does grace actually fuel or motivate effort in the Christian life?
4. Spiritual discipline requires self-control. In short, it will mean choosing to engage in certain activities and choosing to avoid others.
  - a. What are activities, practices, or disciplines that you have found to be helpful in your spiritual life?
  - b. Are there any areas of your life where you have been struggling to submit to the lordship of Jesus? How might that be hindering your walk with Jesus?

- c. What are non-sinful things that you have found hinder your walk with Jesus, even though they are not morally wrong? (e.g. Sleeping in late, too much social media or Netflix time, etc.)
  - d. What changes do you need to make? What do you need to add more of into your life? What do you need to cut back on or eliminate?
5. One specific practice that Dan recommended was Bible reading, using the SOAP method. See <http://faithbridge.org/news/news-feed/soap-journaling//>.
- a. What has your Bible reading time looked like in this season? What changes can you make to either be more consistent with that time or to make it more fruitful?
  - b. Remember that Dan said, being serious about our “spiritual training” will involve saying “no” to some things so that we can say “yes” to better and more important things that will help us in our faith. What specifically do you need to say “no” (or at least, “less”) to in order to improve your Bible reading?
  - c. Dan recommended starting with the Gospel of John, taking one chapter a day. Let’s start right now! Read John 1 and then work through the SOAP method. Share what the Lord showed you and taught you with your group!

Challenge: Read Galatians 5:22-23. A good way to measure spiritual health is to examine the fruit of the Spirit in your life. A key thing to remember when it comes to growing the fruit of the Spirit: intentionality. What fruit of the Spirit would you like to see grow in your own life.? How can your Grow Group help develop the fruit of the Spirit in your life?

Prayer: Dear God, please help me to have more self-control. Train me Lord, like an athlete to be strong and determined. Feed me with your truth in the scriptures to make me healthy. May I exercise muscles of forgiveness, patience and peacemaking. Lord, help me to evaluate my schedule, my priorities, the things that often make me spiritually lazy, and be disciplined in my spiritual fitness. Holy Spirit, work in me showing me where to grow and helping me to bear fruit. Make me more like Jesus, Amen.

## STUDY DEEPER

### **The Gospel and the Discipline of Bible Intake**

Surely no one reading this article needs to be convinced of the importance of feeding upon the Word of God. As Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). It is through the regular, personal intake of the Bible that we come to know God better, understand His will for our lives, experience God’s transforming presence, and much more.

But have you considered the significance of the daily saturation in Scripture for developing a more gospel-centered, Christ-focused life?

## Preach the Gospel to Yourself Every Day

Martin Luther encouraged Christians: "preach the gospel to yourself every day." So, there are times in every day when we need the reminder that what we are doing, saying, or thinking is sinful and needs to be taken by repentance to the cross of Jesus for forgiveness. Also, there are moments each day when we require a fresh awareness that a Christian lives in the freedom of God's forgiveness and the righteousness of Christ because of the person and work of Jesus. We need to transform our daily Bible reading time into a stimulus to this kind of biblical thinking.

Regardless of how much or how little Scripture you read on a given day, close by going back to something from your reading and ask: "How does this relate to the gospel and to Jesus?" Perhaps you will choose one verse or part of a verse. Maybe you will select a single word, a character in the narrative, or the main idea of the passage. From it you may see something that shows our need for the gospel, or an example that points to something Jesus is or something Jesus did in an even greater way, or an illustration of one of the gospel's effects on those who believe.

## Meditation: The Absorption of Scripture

Choosing a few words from your reading and asking such questions is one way to meditate on Scripture. Some of the most remarkable promises in the Bible are associated with the practice of meditation on Scripture (e.g., Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:3; James 1:25). Despite these, I am convinced that the greatest devotional need for most believers - even those committed to daily Bible reading - is to meditate on Scripture.

It seems a common experience for people to read the Bible and then, as soon as they close it, forget everything they've read. People are seldom changed by what they immediately forget. Why can't we remember? Do most people lack the mental equipment necessary to remember something they just read? I think the forgetfulness occurs mostly because people spend two or three seconds reading one verse, then two or three seconds with the next verse, and so on until they are finished. How much does anyone remember of thoughts they consider for just two seconds?

Reading the Bible was never intended to be the primary means of absorbing the Bible. Reading is the exposure to Scripture – and that's the starting place. Meditation is the absorption of Scripture. And it is this that leads to the experiences with God and the changes in our lives we seek when we come to the Bible.

Most Christians read the Bible. Few meditate on it. As a result, so many sense little spiritual impact from the time they invest in Scripture intake. So the main reason more Christians don't find their daily time in the Scriptures more profitable has little to do with the strength of their memory, the level of their education, or their IQ. Rather, the problem is very simple: a lack of meditation on Scripture.

## Biblical Meditation: Simple and Doable

Biblical meditation has to be simple if it is to be doable, for God has children around the world with incredible diversity. Accordingly, there are many ways to meditate on the text of Scripture, such as repeating the verse or phrase with emphasis on a different word each time, rewriting the verse or phrase in your own words, looking for applications of the text, formulating a principle from it, asking what question is answered or problem is solved by it, and praying through the text. Another simple method is what I have suggested here – to select something from your reading and ask: "How does this relate to the gospel and to Jesus?"

If you spend just 60 seconds meditating on a verse of Scripture, do you realize that may be ten to twenty times as long as you would normally consider that verse? Reserve at least a minute in your Bible reading time today, choose a verse and ask: "How does this relate to the gospel and to Jesus?"

<https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/spiritual-disciplines-gospel-bible-intake-reading-scripture-time-word>