

RHYTHMS OF A DISCIPLE

#1: Reading Scripture

“... And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” (Lk 2:52)

Proverbs 3:4 says to remember the law of God, “So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man.”

Jesus proved Solomon’s words to be true. He filled Himself with truths of scripture, and as a result. He grew, not only in height, but in wisdom. He had to put God’s word inside Himself the old fashioned way— by reading it. In other words, by studying, meditating and memorizing.

Scholars have counted 78 instances where Jesus quoted scripture, including quotes from 24 OT books. That is a broad intake of scripture. If we want to be His disciples, we too must see scripture as our primary source of spiritual insight and strength. We must make be intentional about reading the Bible.

3 Ways of Interacting with Scripture

1) Studying The Bible

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Tim 2:15)

“If it is God’s word, then nothing can be more important than understanding it.” Robertson Mcquilkin

In studying the bible, we are aiming to put the scriptures in their proper context so we can understand them. Therefore, we read paragraphs and chapters, not just verses. And we are looking for the objective truth, not subjective, so we should not ask, “What does this scripture mean to me?” Instead, we should ask “what does this scripture mean?”

Some basic tips for developing a bible study routine:

- Get on a good *paper* bible. Phones are too distracting.
- Choose a single book to study, or else find a reading plan.
 - If you’re new to scripture, consider starting with the book of John first
- You will have questions. Lots and lots of them. That’s okay. Don’t rush. Instead, begin adding in resources as necessary.
- Add resources as needed (maps, commentaries, concordances, encyclopedias, etc)

2) Memorizing Scripture

Joshua 1:8 “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 success.”

Psalms 119:93 “I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have given me life.”

Memorization is an integral part of “being transformed by the renewing of our mind.”

Romans 12:2 states: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” How can we have our mind renewed? By allowing the scriptures to shape and inform what we believe as well as the way we think.

Why should we bother memorizing scripture?

- It renews our mind (“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind. (Romans 12:1-2)

How can we have our mind renewed? By allowing the scriptures to shape and inform what we believe as well as the way we think.

- Protect ourselves from temptation (see Luke 4:1-13)

Remember each time the enemy came to tempt Jesus in the desert, Jesus answered, “it is written...” He answered with scripture. It was always with Him and inside of Him.

- It is simple and portable, available in all situations!

Getting Started

1. Write out a scripture on a 3x5 card or a piece of paper.
2. Write a Title according to topic or Draw a picture next to the verse. (This will help to make it visual and can serve to help you remember. For instance you could draw a loaf of bread for John 4:4 “Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.”
3. Begin to read the scripture out loud, starting with the Book name and verse. Speak one phrase at time and repeat the phrase until you know it. Once you know the first phrase keep repeating it while then adding the next phrase to it. Do this with each phrase until you have committed the whole verse to memory. For example you would say: “John 4:4, “Man does not live by bread alone..” and repeat it over and over until you have it committed to memory. Now add the second Phrase: “John 4:4 “Man does not live by bread alone but by every word of God.” Continue to repeat until you are able to quote it correctly.
4. Review each verse you have committed to memory often so you will have them easily available to our heart and mind and don't forget them. (I like to review them in my quality time with God in the mornings before I start learning new ones and then later as I fall asleep in bed at night.)

3) Meditating on Scripture

Meditate: “To dwell on any thing in thought; to contemplate; to study; to turn or revolve any subject in the mind” (Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary)

“How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path 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.”

(Psalm 1:1-2)

We are taught in the scriptures to meditate. This is a lost art for many of us. Yet it is in this place of meditation that we will often find the peace, wisdom, and intimacy we are looking for with the Lord.

Psalm 46:10 tells us in the NIV:

He says, “Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.”

I love the language in the NASB:

"Cease striving and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

Psalms 119:27 says "Make me understand the way of Your precepts, So I will meditate on Your wonders."

Wow! What an amazing invitation, we get to ask God to help us understand His precepts, (His principles and promises) and to meditate on His wonders.

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." (John 6:63)

This scripture speaks to the fact that the words Jesus speaks are Spirit and Life. Now, engage your mind with what it means to meditate according to the definition above on these words of "Spirit and Life" found in Scripture.

You are now Contemplating: turning and revolving the precepts, testimonies and promises of Scripture over and over in your mind. You are looking at it again and again as if you are turning a beautiful gem in the light, observing the way the light reflects off of the different facets of this precious stone and seeing the beauty and value found in its brilliance.

Here is a great way to get started meditating:

1. Choose a passage of Scripture.
2. Read the passage out loud emphasizing the first word.
3. Think about the meaning of the passage, wait a few seconds and let it resonate within you. What does this mean? Why is He saying this? How does this effect Mankind? How does this effect me?
4. Read it again out loud and emphasize the second word. Think about the meaning of the passage, wait a few seconds and let it resonate within you. What does this mean? Why is He saying this? How does this effect Mankind? How does this effect me?
5. Continue this with each word until you have emphasized every word in the passage.
6. End with thanksgiving and prayer in any way that Holy Spirit Directs. (Often times this will be after a time of silence in contemplation having entered into a quiet state of reflection with the Lord.)