

# **TREK 101**

# **Christian**

# **Discipleship**

**SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

**By Donald S. Whitney**

## **LESSON 2 BIBLE STUDY**

**“Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.” Philippians 2:12b  
(NLT)**

**A Ministry of Rockpointe Church**

# Lesson 2

## BIBLE Reading and Study

### BIBLE INTAKE

(This Lesson Adapted From Donald Whitney's *Spiritual Disciplines For The Christian Life*)

"No Spiritual Discipline is more important than the intake of God's Word. Nothing can substitute for it. There simply is no healthy Christian life apart from the diet of the milk and meat of Scripture." Don Whitney

**Read aloud: 2 Tim 3:16-17** *"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living,<sup>17</sup> so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed."* 2 Timothy 3:16–17 (GNB)

1. How does this passage support the author's statements above?
2. The word inspired literally means "God Breathed". What does that suggest about the authority and truthfulness of Scripture?
3. The Scripture are useful for 4 things. What are they?
4. How does Scripture help us to please God?

Since Scripture is that important, let's learn how we can feed ourselves on the Bible and grasp its truth. There are 6 ways of Bible intake.

**On the back of this page or separate page, trace your hand.** On the little finger, write the word "hear". On the next finger, write the word "read". On the third finger, write "study". On the index finger, write "memorize". On the thumb, write "meditate". Now down the middle of your palm, write the word "apply". These are 6 ways we can get a grasp on the Scriptures moving from the easiest (hearing) to the most difficult (applying).

#### A. HEARING GOD'S WORD

1. **Read aloud: Romans 10:17** *"Consequently faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the preached word of Christ."* Romans 10:17 (NET)
  - 1) What is one value of just hearing God's Word?
  - 2) How does this verse help us when we are looking for a church home?
2. Discuss various ways to hear the Bible?
  - 1) Many people hear the Bible week after week in church but don't really grow. One reason might be that we forget 95% of what we hear within 72 hours.

3. Ways to improve our “hearing”
  - 1) Pray to be eager to hear. James 1:19. Pastor Ron invites us almost every week before his sermon to pray “Jesus speak to me”
  - 2) Have a ready mind to hear versus closed and cluttered
  - 3) Confess any sin that might be a barrier. James 1:21
  - 4) Take notes on what you hear
  - 5) Apply something that you heard. James 1:22-25
4. **APPLICATION:** Pick out one of the ways to improve hearing that you are not currently doing and do it.

## B. READING GOD’S WORD

1. **Read aloud: Luke 11:28** *“He (Jesus) replied, ‘Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.’”* Luke 11:28 (NIV84)
  - 1) What’s the promise just for hearing?
  - 2) Should a follower of Christ be satisfied with only hearing?
2. How often do you read the Bible? (silent reflection)
  - 1) In a recent survey (Mar,2013) 90% of churchgoers said they “desired to please and honor Jesus in all they do” but only 19% reported reading the Bible every day.
  - 2) What connection is there between the time you spend reading the Bible and your knowledge of God and His power?
3. Ways to increase reading of God’s word
  - 1) Discipline yourself to find a **SPECIFIC** time each day.
    - a) If you read the Bible 15 minutes per day you can read it in ONE year.
    - b) If you read the Bible 5 minutes per day you can read it in THREE years.
  - 2) Choose a systematic reading plan
    - a) Check your Bible for a plan
    - b) “One Year Bible” comes in various translations; available at most book stores
    - c) <http://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-reading-plan/> lists 16 different reading plans
  - 3) Use a readable translation
  - 4) Think about what you’ve read by meditating on a word, phrase or verse
4. **Application:** Discuss some ways that Bible intake can become a Discipline of joy versus a chore.

### C. STUDYING GOD'S WORD

1. **Read Aloud: 2 Timothy 2:15** *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”* 2 Timothy 2:15 (NIV84)
  - 1) What if we give less than our best effort in our service to God?
  - 2) What does it mean to you to “correctly handle” the word of truth?
  - 3) How do we accomplish that?
2. What's the difference between reading God's word and studying it?
  - 1) Reading the Bible is like cruising over a lake in a speedboat while studying the Bible is slowly crossing the lake in a glass-bottomed boat.
  - 2) The basic difference between reading and studying the Bible is pencil and paper.
    - a) Make notes on what we study
    - b) Ask questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?
  - 3) Jerry Bridges says: “reading gives us breadth but study gives us depth”.
3. Read the following examples of a heart to study the Bible.
  - 1) Ezra 7:10. Note the sequence
  - 2) Acts 17:11 -12. Note the result of examination of Scripture.
4. Ideas to improve Bible study
  - 1) Write down observations
  - 2) If your Bible has cross-references, look up the ones that relate to the verse/passage you are studying
  - 3) Find a key word. Look it up in a Bible dictionary. Use a concordance to find where this word is used in other Scripture.
  - 4) Outline a paragraph, chapter and book.
  - 5) Can do word, character, or topical studies
5. See appendix A for ideas and resources for Bible Study.
6. **Application. What one thing can you do to improve your study of God's Word?**

### D. MEMORIZING GOD'S WORD

1. **Read Aloud: Psalm 119:11** *“I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”* Psalm 119:11 (NIV84)
  - 1) What does the Psalmist say about the power of Scripture?
  - 2) What do you think is the correlation between the amount of sin we commit and the amount of Bible we intake and/or memorize?
2. What are some common reasons given why memorizing Scripture is not done or

considered not possible?

### 3. Benefits of Memorization:

- 1) Supplies spiritual power to resist temptation. Matt 4:1-11
  - a) We can experience more spiritual victories as Jesus did through memorized Scripture available to the Holy Spirit to take and ignite within us as needed
- 2) Strengthens faith. Proverbs 22:17-19
  - a) Memorized Scripture strengthens our faith because it repeatedly reinforces the truth often at the very time when we need to hear it again.
- 3) Helps us in expected and unexpected witnessing or counseling opportunity. 1 Pet 3:15
- 4) Means of God's guidance. Psalm 119:24.
- 5) Stimulates meditation. Psalm 119:97.
  - a) No matter where we are or what we are doing we can benefit by thinking intently/meditating on Scripture that the Holy Spirit brings to mind

### 4. **We CAN memorize Scripture but how??**

The following are some ideas. Since we have different ways of learning, not all may apply.

- 1) Have a plan
  - a) Set a goal. For example, 1 verse per week.
  - b) Use a prepackaged memory plan
  - c) OR learn verses that are applicable to your life situation at the moment. If you worry, memorize verses on God's faithfulness
- 2) Write each verse on index card with topic and reference.
- 3) Read it aloud or write out depending on your learning style.
- 4) Memorize verses word perfect.
- 5) Have some method of accountability. May be family member or small group member
- 6) Remember the 3 keys to effective Scripture Memory: REVIEW. REVIEW. REVIEW.

5. See Appendix B for helps and ideas.

6. **Application.** Since you can memorize Scripture, will you? When will you start?

## E. MEDITATING ON GOD'S WORD

1. **Read aloud Joshua 1:8** *"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; 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."* Joshua 1:8 (NIV84)

- 1) Why meditate?
- 2) What is the result?

## 2. What is Christian meditation?

- 1) Christians have resisted/uncomfortable with it often because of its association with yoga, New Age, transcendental meditation
- 2) Is designed to fill our mind with God and truth not empty our mind
- 3) Is active mental activity not mental passivity
- 4) Can be defined as Deep thinking about a bible verse/passage in order to discover how we can apply its truth to our understanding and application to our lives.
  - a) Ruminant is the process where a cow chews its cud, swallows it, regurgitates it, chews it again, and swallows it. Repeated several times. That's meditation.
  - b) Our expression: "chew on it"

## 3. Why should we meditate?

- 1) Successful living. Joshua 1:8
- 2) Spiritual fruitfulness. Psalm 1:1-3
- 3) Key to becoming like Jesus. Phil 4:8

## 4. How to meditate?

(This section is adapted from CLASS 201, Discovering Spiritual Maturity, Rick Warren)

- 1) Picture it. Visualize the scene and write down your thoughts.
- 2) Pronounce it. Say the verse out loud emphasizing a different word each time.
- 3) Paraphrase it. Rewrite it in your own words.
- 4) Personalize it. Replace the pronouns or people in the verse with your own name.
- 5) Pray it. Turn the verse into a prayer and pray it back to God.
- 6) Probe it. **Use S.P.A.C.E.P.E.T.S** to probe by the following questions.
  - a) S – sin to confess?
  - b) P – promise to claim
  - c) A –attitude to change
  - d) C –command to obey
  - e) E –example to follow
  - f) P –prayer to pray
  - g) E – error to avoid
  - h) T –truth to believe
  - i) S –something to thank God for

5. **Application.** How will you cultivate the Discipline of meditation?**F. APPLYING GOD'S WORD**

The first 5 ways are to get the Bible into our lives. Now is perhaps the most difficult part -- Applying it to everyday living such as decision-making, parenting, vocationally, financially, relationships

1. **Read aloud James 1:22-25** *"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive*

*yourselves. Do what it says.* <sup>23</sup> *Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror* <sup>24</sup> *and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.* <sup>25</sup> *But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.” James 1:22–25 (NIV84)*

- 1) What does James tell us about a delusion in hearing God’s word?
  - 2) What might James say to a person who says “I know what the Bible says but...?”
  - 3) Compare James’ promise of blessings with those found in Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:1-3 (in # 3 of the above section).
2. How to apply the Bible to everyday living
- 1) Expect to discover an application.
    - a) Go back and review our discussion of 2 Tim 3:16-17 at the beginning of this study.
    - b) What were the 4 useful things we discovered about the Bible?
    - c) The Bible is just as practical for us today as when it was written
  - 2) Understand the text. Misunderstanding leads to misapplication. To understand the text we have to bridge the gap between “what did it mean then?” to “What does it mean now?” Two skills help bridge that gap so we discover some underlying timeless principles that apply to our lives:
    - a) Observation – What does the passage say? As you read a passage, look for/observe:
      - a. Background and context. Who is the human author? To whom written?
      - b. Unfamiliar words. Use Webster’s or a Bible dictionary to find out the meaning
      - c. Who are the people mentioned? What do we know about them?
      - d. Words that are repeated or related
      - e. Purpose words such as: for, so that, in order that
    - b) Interpretation – What does the passage mean?
      - a. Content – this is what you discovered under observation
      - b. Context – what is said before and after the passage? What is happening in history?
      - c. Comparison – Cross reference with other Scripture using a concordance or study Bible
      - d. Consult – Use commentaries or notes in a study Bible to give more understanding
  - 3) Ask application-oriented questions
    - a) Sin to confess?
    - b) Promise to claim?
    - c) Attitude to change?
    - d) Command to obey?

- e) Example to follow?
  - f) Prayer to pray?
  - g) Error to avoid?
  - h) Truth to believe?
- 4) Respond Specifically
- a) Perhaps based on the answers to the above questions
  - b) Our response or lack thereof is the difference between growing in knowledge of the Bible and growing in Christlikeness.
3. **Application.** Which one of the 4 ways to apply Biblical truth could you emphasize more than you are doing now?

### G. AXIOMS OF BIBLE INTAKE

1. There simply is no healthy Christian life apart from the diet of the milk and meat of Scripture. 2 Tim 3:16-17.
2. As you practice the Discipline of Bible Intake, especially applying God's word, expect spiritual opposition. Read the parable of the Sower. Mark 4:1-20

As we continue through this study on Spiritual disciplines remember that spiritual transformation to be like Christ is not a matter of trying harder but of training wisely. There is a big difference between training to do something and trying to do something. We train for a marathon not try a marathon. Spiritual Disciplines are about training our souls to place ourselves in the path of Christ and receive from Him whatever He chooses to give.

Also keep in mind these Spiritual Disciplines are not a means to earn God's favor. Remember the goal is Godliness, Christlikeness. Discipleship is a TREK, a journey, a life-long journey. In our physical growth process there are periods of rapid growth, other times very slow growth and sometimes, particularly to that teen who wants to be taller than his mom or dad, no growth (stagnant). The same is often true in our spiritual journey. These Spiritual Disciplines help us provide fertile ground for God to produce Christlikeness in us.



## APPENDIX A – RESOURCES FOR BIBLE STUDY

The following are ideas and resources that will allow you to deeper into the Discipline of Bible study.

### A. Preparation for study.

The following will help you get started and form some beneficial lasting habits for study.

1. Schedule your study time. Set aside a specific amount of time for a specific day of the week. While you hopefully read your Bible daily, in-depth study might be one to two times a week for one to two hours at a time. If you don't schedule it, it probably won't happen.
2. Keep a notebook to write down all your observations, interpretations and applications.
3. Gather your tools.
4. Pray before you start. Ask God to cleanse you of known sin and ask the Holy Spirit to teach you, to open you mind to understand. You might pray this Psalm as you start: "Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law." Psalm 119:18 (NIV84)
5. Choose what to study. Ways to study the Bible include:
  - 1)A verse by verse study of a Bible book.
  - 2)A Bible character such as Moses, Abraham or Peter. Use a concordance to find all the verses where they are mentioned.
  - 3)A topical study such as prayers of the Bible, promises of the Bible
  - 4)A word study such a grace, repent, love
  - 5)A theme such a anger, finances, disciple

### B. How to Books

Some books that give much good detail about How to study the Bible are:

1. Bible Study Methods by Rick Warren
2. How to study your Bible by Kay Arthur
3. How to study the Bible for yourself by Tim LaHaye

### C. Basic tools.

Basic tools needed for effective study include:

1. Study Bible such as the New International Version (NIV) or English Standard Version (ESV)
2. Several translations for comparison for broader understanding: New American Standard Bible (NASB), New Living Translation (NLT).
3. Concordance. Lists where every word is found in the Bible.
4. Bible dictionary. Defines terms specifically related to the Bible.
5. Bible Atlas. Shows ancient cities, countries and how they relate to modern geography
6. Commentary. Bible Knowledge Commentary is a very good 2 volume commentary.

### D. Computer Software programs. <http://www.e-sword.net/index.html>

1. I know many people have bibles on their smartphones but most don't have such a bible study program as this that will enrich their bible study.

2. E-Sword is considered one of the best FREE bible software. It is installed on your computer and used any time. After downloading at the above address, you do not have to be connected to the internet to use.
3. Has many bible versions including Greek and Hebrew such as ESV, GNB, The Word are free. Versions such as NIV (\$25) and New Living (\$15) can be added for the cost in ()
4. Includes many commentaries, bible dictionaries, maps, reference books such as Anti-Nicene fathers, history of the Church, Institutes of Religion

**E. Biblestudytools.com**

1. This web site is a great tool for study and has all the above tools
2. Access only on-line; no downloading

**F. On-line FREE seminary level sources for those who want to study on their own**

All the courses listed below have similar features: lectures are audio; outlines and note takers are downloadable (usually pdf files). Some of the programs offer certificates and will cost. Otherwise all are free. The courses are either lectures taped from the classroom or from seminars, etc.

1. <http://www.biblicaltraining.org/>. Provides 2 tracts of study: discipleship and leadership. Both are very comprehensive. The leadership study looks like a 3-year seminary study program. Many different teachers from variety of seminaries.
  - 1) Discipleship
    - I. Topics from theology, worship, ethics, how to study the bible, spiritual formation, spiritual warfare
    - II. Includes about 30 courses
  - 2) Leadership
    - I. Courses in Ministry skills to biblical content to spiritual formation to biblical theology
    - II. Includes about 35 courses
2. <http://my.gordonconwell.edu/dimensions/>
  - 1) Provided by Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.
  - 2) Offers 10 courses in such subjects as interpretation, OT/NT survey, Church History, Theology and World missions
3. <http://www.covenantseminary.edu/>
  - 1) Provided by Covenant Theological Seminary. Interestingly about 20% of the contributors of the English Standard Version (ESV) come from this school
  - 2) Offers 28 courses from ethics, individual biblical books, missions, worship
4. <http://rbc.christiancourses.com/>
  - 1) Developed by the Radio Bible Class that produces the devotional "Our Daily Bread"
  - 2) Includes many individual Bible books in both the Old and New Testaments, Apologetics, Church History, How to study the Bible

## APPENDIX B – MEMORIZING GOD’S WORD

### A. Prepackaged Programs

1. Probably the most common is called Topical Memory System developed by The Navigators. Can be purchased from Amazon.com or Christianbooks.com for around \$12. Includes a workbook, 60 verses using 4 different translations and a vinyl case for the verse cards.
2. Topical Memory System verses are listed below if you want to make your own cards and being memorizing. As you see, they are organized by topic.

#### Live the new life

Christ the Center	2 Corinthians 5:17	Galatians 2:20
Obedience to Christ	Romans 12:1	John 14:21
The Word	2 Timothy 3:16	Joshua 1:8
Prayer	John 15:7	Philippians 4:6,7
Fellowship	Matthew 18:20	Hebrews 10:24,25
Witnessing	Matthew 4:19	Romans 1:16

#### Proclaim Christ

All Have Sinned	Romans 3:23	Isaiah 53:6
Sin's Penalty	Romans 6:23	Hebrews 9:27
Christ Paid the Penalty	Romans 5:8	1 Peter 3:18
Salvation is not by Works	Ephesians 2:8,9	Titus 3:5
Must Receive Christ	John 1:12	Revelation 3:20
Assurance of Salvation	1 John 5:13	John 5:24

#### Rely on God's resources

His Spirit	1 Corinthians 3:16	1 Corinthians 2:12
His Strength	Isaiah 41:10	Philippians 4:13
His Faithfulness	Lamentations 3:22,23	Numbers 23:19
His Peace	Isaiah 26:3	1 Peter 5:7
His Provision	Romans 8:32	Philippians 4:19
His Help in Temptation	Hebrews 2:18	Psalms 119:9,11

#### Be Christ's disciple

Put Christ First	Matthew 6:33	Luke 9:23
Separate From the World	1 John 2:15,16	Romans 12:2
Be Steadfast	1 Corinthians 15:58	Hebrews 12:3
Serve Others	Mark 10:45	2 Corinthians 4:5

Give Generously	Proverbs 3:9,10	2 Corinthians 9:6,7
Develop World Vision	Acts 1:8	Matthew 28:19,20
<b>Grow in Christlikeness</b>		
Love	John 13:34,35	1 John 3:18
Humility	Philippians 2:3,4	1 Peter 5:5,6
Purity	Ephesians 5:3	1 Peter 2:11
Honesty	Leviticus 19:11	Acts 24:16
Faith	Hebrews 11:6	Romans 4:20,21
Good Works	Galatians 6:9,10	Matthew 5:16

### **B. Smartphone Apps**

1. Simply Google bible memory apps and you'll find several for your particular phone

### **C. On-Line tools**

1. Google "bible memory" and you'll find on-line tools to use
2. You'll also find many other verses that you can add to your list such as the top 50 or to 100 verses to learn