



The
FLOW
Adult CURRICULUM

#20

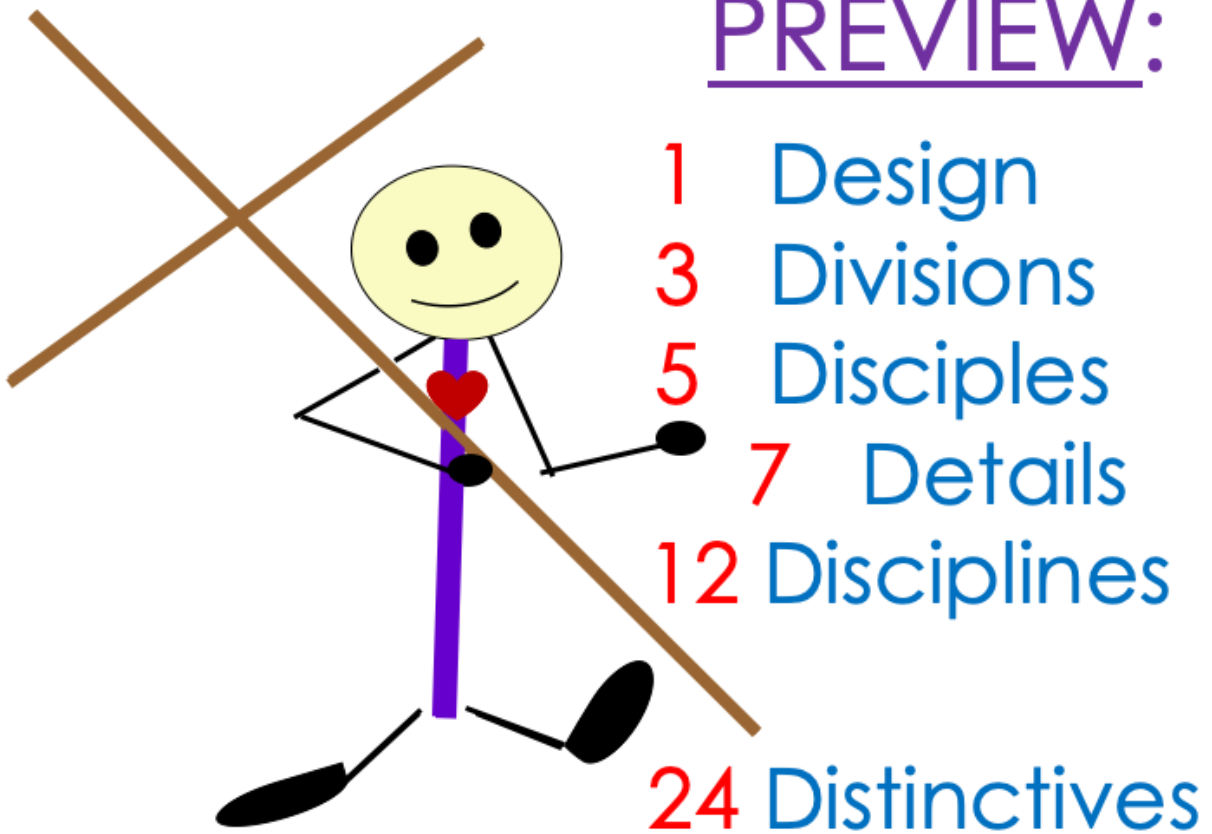
Understudy (of Scripture)

Hebrews 5:11-14

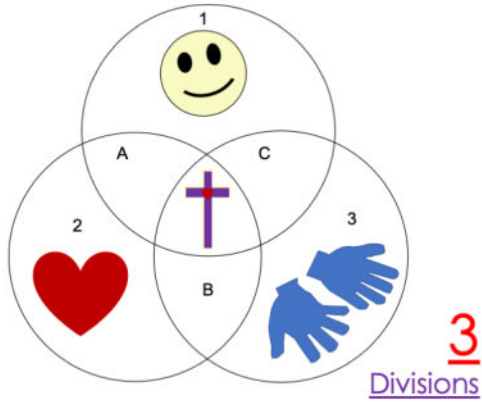
(Come And See Christianity book pages 64-65))

The FLOW

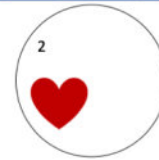
PREVIEW:



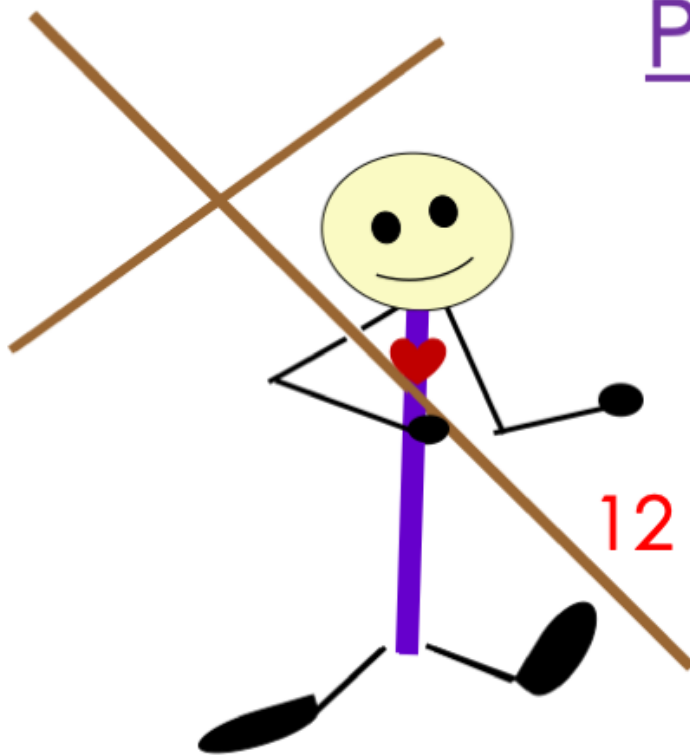
SECTION FIVE: 12 Disciplines



The
HEART



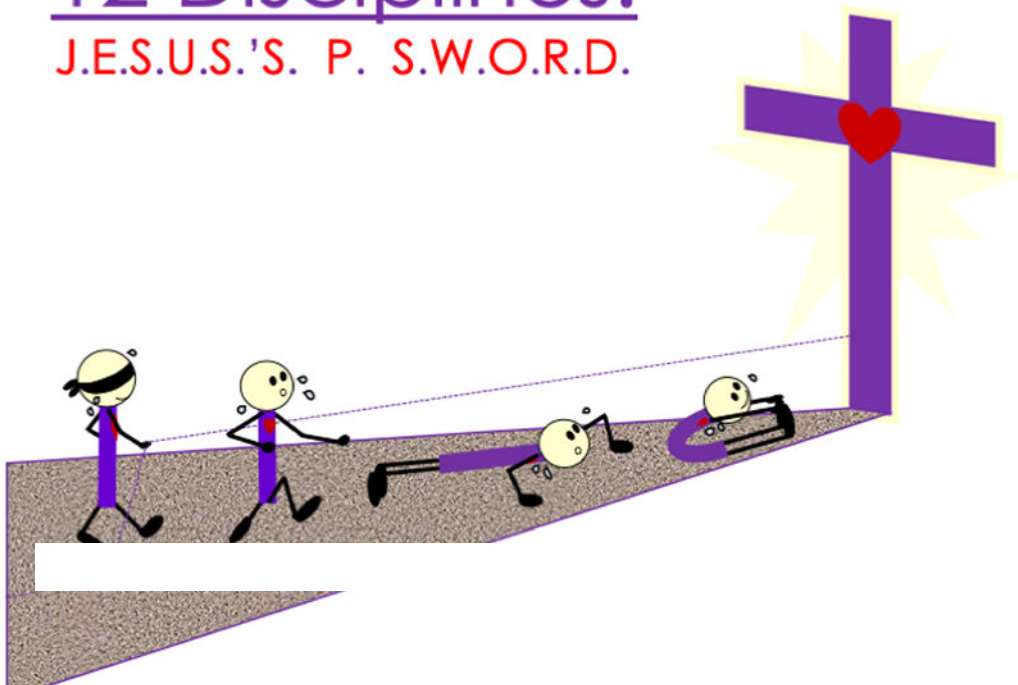
PREVIEW:



12 Disciplines

12 DISCIPLINES: Here are some heart exercises for you... These discipleship “**disciplines**” can help Christians to **strengthen** their **faith** and grow as missional & maturing Christ-followers.

12 Disciplines:
J.E.S.U.S.'S P. S.W.O.R.D.





Understudy of Scripture

UNDERSTUDY: While Scripture "in-take" is essential, the deeper, ongoing **understudy** of the Scriptures leads to long-term, sustainable health & growth.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

INTRO:

Welcome to another major transition point in your discipleship journey and our Come And See Christianity curriculum. By way of review, thus far, we have gone through Section One's single lesson on God's divine DESIGN, then Section Two's three unifying and introductory lessons on every human's 3 DIVISIONS (our HEAD, HEART, and HANDS); we then followed up with the universally inclusive definitions and descriptions of humanity's 5 types of people, also known as biblical DISCIPLES (the LOST, LOVER, LEARNER, LEADER, and LIFER), each having received their own lesson. Next came what we just completed, Section Four's 7 lessons on Christianity's fundamental, knowledge-based truths, also known as The DETAILS (FOUNDATIONS, FRAMEWORK, FACTS, FIGHT, FAITH, FAMILY, and FOREVER).

Now, in the same way that Sections 1-4 (and their 16 compiled lessons) all concentrated on aspects of "The HEAD" and the truth of God's Word, Section 5 will contain 12 complementary lessons (**J.E.S.U.S.'S. P.S.W.O.R.D.**) that focus on HEART exercises, also known as spiritual DISCIPLINES, that can help to grow and strengthen the Christian's truth-filled, loving, and faithfully obedient HEART...

12 HEART Strengthening DISCIPLINES:

1. *Journaling*
2. *Eat-nothing (Fasting)*
3. *Scripture intake*
4. *Understudy of Scripture*
5. *Solitude*
6. *Stewardship*
7. *Prayer*
8. *Serving*
9. *Worship*
10. *Outreach*
11. *Relationships*
12. *Development*

PRAYER:

LORD, we seek to bless You with all that is within us. Help us here, we pray, to be that blessing as we come to better understand You and Your eternal truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Help us to see with Your eyes and love with Your love, all that You would reveal to us through Your Word, Your will, and Your ways. May we grow in our grasp of Your realities, Your means of restoration, and Your mission of reproduction. In the holy name of Jesus, we pray. Amen and Amen

CONTEXT:

Macro

Spiritual Disciplines

(The content herein is predominantly derived and expanded upon from Dr. Don Whitney's *Spiritual Disciplines* & Dr. Chuck Lawless' *Disciplined Warriors*.)

I. SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES ... FOR THE PURPOSE OF GODLINESS

*Ours is an undisciplined age. The old disciplines are breaking down.
... We **need** the rugged strength of Christian **character**
that can come only from discipline.*

- V. Raymond Edman

Discipline without direction is drudgery!

The Bible says of God's elect, "*For those whom He foreknew He also predestined **to be conformed** to the image of His Son*"
(Romans 8:29)

Although God will grant Christlikeness to us when Jesus returns, until then He intends for us to grow toward it.

We aren't merely to wait for holiness; we're to pursue it.

All who come to God trusting in the person and work of Jesus to make them right with God are given the Holy Spirit (see Ephesians 1:13-14). The presence of the Holy Spirit causes all those in whom He resides to have new holy hungers they didn't have before.

Hebrews 12:14 is clear:
anyone who is not striving for holiness will not see the Lord!

The urgent question every Christian should ask is, *“How then shall I pursue holiness... How can I become more like Christ?”* God’s Word offers a clear answer in...

1 Timothy 4:7
“Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness”

The only road to Christian maturity and godliness (a.k.a. Christlikeness & holiness) passes through the practice of the Spiritual Disciplines.

Godliness is the goal of the Disciplines... remember this and the ***Spiritual Disciplines become delights vs drudgery.***

II. WHAT ARE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES?

Spiritual Disciplines are those practices found in Scripture (and in application) that promote spiritual growth among believers in The Gospel.

Spiritual Disciplines are the **habits of devotion** and **experiential Christianity** that have been **practiced** by the people of God since biblical times.

The Disciplines could be described in several ways:

- “First, the Bible prescribes both **personal** and **interpersonal** Spiritual Disciplines.”
- **Spiritual Disciplines are activities, NOT attitudes.**
 - Disciplines are practices... NOT character qualities, graces, or “fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22-23).
 - **Disciplines are things you do!**

The goal of practicing a given Discipline, is not about “DOing” as much as it is about “BEing,” that is, BEing like Jesus. But the biblical way to grow in BEing more like Jesus is through the rightly motivated doing of the biblical Spiritual Disciplines.

- We do specific practices *sometimes* that cultivate being more like Jesus *all the time*.
- Spiritual Disciplines are practices taught or modeled in the Bible. (Without this limitation, we might call anything we fancy a Spiritual Discipline.)
- Spiritual Disciplines found in Scripture are sufficient for knowing & experiencing God & growing in Christlikeness.
 - See 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - See 2 Peter 1:3 & Philippians 4:13
- Spiritual Disciplines are practices derived from the gospel, NOT divorced from the gospel.
- ***Spiritual Disciplines are means, not ends.***

Godliness is both closeness to Christ and conformity to Christ.

CAUTION: *While we cannot be godly without the practice of the Disciplines, we can practice the Disciplines without being godly...*

So, the Spiritual Disciplines are those personal and interpersonal activities given by God in the Bible as the sufficient means believers in Jesus Christ are to use in the Spirit-filled, gospel-driven pursuit of godliness, that is, closeness to Christ and conformity to Christ.

III. SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES... AS MEANS TO GODLINESS

Godliness comes through discipline.

- God uses **three primary catalysts for changing us** and conforming us into Christlikeness, but only one is largely under our control.

#1: God uses people to change people.

- *“Iron sharpens iron,” says Proverbs 27:17*
- *Sometimes God uses our friends to sharpen us into more Christlike living, and sometimes He uses our enemies to file away our rough, ungodly edges.*

#2: God uses circumstance(s) as His catalyst for change.

#3: God uses spiritual disciplines to change His people.

*God uses spiritual disciplines
to work on His people from the inside out.*

Colossians 1:29 illustrates how **the efforts of a Christian & the work of God—can occur simultaneously** in a person indwelt by the Holy Spirit.” (cf. Philippians 2:13)

See here divine grace AND human responsibility...

*As physical disciplines promote bodily strength, so
the Spiritual Disciplines promote godliness.*

- Think of the Spiritual Disciplines as ways by which we can spiritually place ourselves in the path of God’s grace and seek Him, much **like Zacchaeus** placed himself physically in Jesus’ path and sought Him. The Lord, by His Spirit, still travels down certain paths that He has ordained and revealed in Scripture. We call these paths the Spiritual Disciplines...

*If we will place ourselves on these paths and look
for Him there by faith, we can expect
to encounter Him.*

IV. SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES... GOD’S WILL FOR CHRISTIANS

*“Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness”
makes it plain that **this is a command of God**, not merely a suggestion.*

- **Holiness is not an option for those who claim to be children of the Holy One** (see 1 Peter 1:15-16), so neither are the means of holiness—that is, the Spiritual Disciplines—an option.
- Jesus is the model of discipline in & for godliness.
- Many professing Christians are spiritually undisciplined and seem to have little Christlike fruit and power in their lives. Yet, many of them are remarkably disciplined in other areas of their lives.
- Too many Christians trivialize their effectiveness for the kingdom of God through a lack of discipline.

- The danger of neglecting the Spiritual Disciplines is the danger of bearing little spiritual fruit—your life counting little for the sake of the kingdom.

“I’m not afraid of failure. I’m afraid of succeeding at things that don’t matter.”

- William Carey

“Freedom and discipline have come to be regarded as mutually exclusive, when in fact freedom is not at all the opposite, but rather the final reward, of discipline.”

Elisabeth Elliot

If your picture of a disciplined Christian is one of a grim, tight-lipped, joyless half-robot, then you’ve missed the point.

*By means of the Disciplines,
let the truths of The Gospel restore your soul.*

Micro

“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 a diet of the milk and meat of Scripture. The reasons for this are obvious. In the Bible God tells us about Himself, and especially about Jesus Christ, the incarnation of God. The Bible unfolds the Law of God to us and shows us how we’ve all broken it. There we learn how Christ died as a sinless, willing Substitute for breakers of God’s Law and how we must repent and believe in Him to be right with God. In the Bible we learn the ways and will of the Lord. We find in Scripture how God wants us to live, and what brings the most joy and satisfaction in life. None of this eternally essential information can be found anywhere else except the Bible. Therefore, if we would know God and be godly, we must know the Word of God—intimately.”

– Donald S. Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life

Message

Believers have a moral responsibility to know and understand Scripture. We often act as if our biblical ignorance is merely a matter of God hiding or withholding knowledge from us. Yet Scripture teaches us that our ignorance of God's Word is a moral problem, not an intellectual one. When we deliberately ignore God's Word for whatever reason, we sin against the Lord.

- Dr. Albert Mohler

BIG IDEA: **The deeper, ongoing study of Scripture can lead to the long term, sustainable health and spiritual growth of Christian disciples.**

PREVIEW:

1. Scripture's MILK
2. Scripture's MEAT
3. Scripture's MISSION

TEXT:

Hebrews 5:11-14

***11**About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. **12**For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, **13**for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. **14**But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.*

"Be prepared or prepare to be blindsided."

— Frank Sonnenberg

1. Scripture's MILK

Illustration:

Biblical Christianity is all about missional, God-honoring relationships!

With that thought in mind, consider the fact that there are few relationships in life more fundamental or foundational than the bond between babies and milk. Perhaps this explains why God and His Word use the metaphor of milk throughout the Scriptures. Think about it... life sustaining milk is, by definition, essential for life. That same milk is also a loving grace gift to the baby. Note as well that unlike man-made formula, a mother's milk is a divinely designed, natural byproduct of her own body.

In Christianity, **milk can be miraculous and missional!** Whether looking at the physical or metaphorical relationship between milk and babies, it is one of the most beautiful portraits of God's sovereign plan and provision. At the same time, we must acknowledge that while milk makes for a baby Christian's healthy start in life (both physiologically and spiritually), there would be cause for great concern if adolescents and/or adults (both spiritually and physically) remained suckling and dependent on mother's milk in their advanced years (Hebrews 5:13 and 1 Corinthians 3:2ff).

Explanation:

A. Truth

Biblical milk is supernaturally infused with the divine nutrients of eternal truth, unmatched love, and holy vision. Unlike any other source of spiritual sustenance, **the milk of God's Word is packed full of perfect purity!** Like the Promised Land which was promised to be overflowing with "milk" and honey, God's trustworthy Word is overflowing with ageless promise and piercing power (Hebrews 4:12).

To be sure, when one believes, obeys, and abides in the "truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15) of God's pure missional milk, an imperfect but inspired, faithful, purposed, passionate, and empowered Christian life will be on display for all the world to witness and emulate.

- a. Purity TRUSTED (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- b. Purity REALIZED (John 1:1)
- c. Purity PURPOSED (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- d. Purity DESIRED (1 Peter 2:2)
- e. Purity AUTHORIZED (Matthew 28:18-20)

B. Love

Truth defines love and love validates truth!

- a. God is love. – 1 John 4:8 and 1 John 4:16
- b. God is truth. – John 14:6
- c. God is Truth and Truth is Love! - John 14:6 and 1 John 4:8/16

C. Vision

Proverbs 29:18

Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law.

- a. God's Word embodies and explains God's Vision.
- b. God's will is the blueprint and bullseye of God's Vision.
- c. God's Ways exemplify and exercise God's Vision.

Application:

In a spiritual to physical parallel illustration...a small child will stick almost anything into his mouth, touch anything he can reach, go anywhere he can manage to crawl—with no concept of what is good for him and what is bad, what is helpful and what is dangerous. The mature adult, on the other hand, has developed considerable discernment. He is careful about what he eats, what he does, and where he goes.

– MacArthur

Another way of thinking about biblical milk and the Christian life is to see them through the lens and context of a sermon... Imagine a pastor digging deep into God's Word, plumbing much of its riches, and then sharing the treasured "milk" of his processed work in a well prepared sermon. In its proper context, that is a beautiful and God-honoring scenario. Sadly, however, in far too many cases, unhealthy Christ-followers become overly satisfied, sluggishly comfortable, and sinfully complacent with the pastor's sermon... never learning and/or growing to the point of passionately engaging in their own UNDERSTUDY of God's Word... and becoming their own living sermon. *May we take in all the milk we need, and then move on to God's missional meat!*

2. Scripture's MEAT

Illustration:

A word of caution is due here. With all the previous talk of “milk,” and now a shifting focus to “meat,” it is important to note that these meal-time terms are merely metaphors designed to help us see the simple, yet profound and essential relationships between God’s Word and God’s people.

Romans 14:17

“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit...”

Explanation:

When Christianity speaks of biblical, metaphorical “meat,” the overarching message is one of God-honoring progression, theological depth, personal challenge, collective equipping, and ultimately, a divine witness to God’s ever-stretching expectations for continual spiritual growth within His people, as exemplified in His Great Commandments and Great Commission.

In short, while all Christians need to begin with God’s inspired milk, in a similar and principled way, all Christians should also supernaturally and perpetually mature... intentionally growing into biblical meat eaters. To this end, **one of the beautiful aspects of “truth in love” is, to God’s glory, the more we abide in God’s Word, will, and ways, the more refined, empowered, and impassioned we become...**

In other words...

Healthy Christ-followers, those faithfully and righteously living within the FULL context guardrails of God’s Word, will, and ways, while simultaneously being guided by His biblically authenticated Holy Spirit, will continually grow in their ever-deepening desire to selflessly apply, missionally obey, and inspirationally abide in whatever has come out of their personally-humbling, God-honoring UNDERSTUDY of Scripture.

Herein, we come to see and realize, in part, how the Lord’s amazing grace is applied and multiplied through the sanctifying work of God’s Spirit in God’s people, as we commit to *UNDERSTUDYING the Scriptures*.

Application:

5 Reasons To Study God's Word

First, the Word of God is infallible. *There is no error in God's Word. The law of the Lord is perfect concerning our soul. The testimony of the Lord is not only infallible it is inerrant. [Proverbs 30:5-6](#), "Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, Lest He **rebuke** you, and you be found a liar." The purity of His words does not need anything added to it. God warns us not to misrepresent His scripture.*

Second, the Word of God is complete. *The Bible does not need any new chapters or verses. It is all given to us already. Many cults add their own books or commentaries to the Bible. All you need is God's Word because it is the holy Word of God. It is complete. In [Revelation 22:18-19](#), God gives us a warning, "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."*

Third, the Word of God is totally authoritative. [Psalms 119:89](#) says "Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven." The Word of God is the only source for absolute divine authority. This divine authority is for you and me as servants of Jesus Christ. When some say, "I have a word from the Lord for you," write it down and as you study God's word, see if the Lord speaks to you thru His Scriptures. Only then will you know if the Lord is truly speaking to you.

Fourth, God's Word is totally sufficient for all of our needs. *We don't need anything else. In [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#) it reads "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." We Christians can be totally secure in the Lord by studying the Bible because it is God's plan for our life.*

And fifth, the Word of God will accomplish what it promises. *If God told you something will happen, and you wait, it will happen. In [Isaiah 55:11](#) it says, "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." God sent His word to accomplish His perfect will in our lives. If God makes a promise to you, He will fulfill it in His own time. There are so many promises given to us in the Bible. These promises reassure us and bring comfort to our lives in our times of trial. I challenge you to take time to study the Word of God. The Lord will show you wonderful things that will change your life.*

- [BibleStudyTools.com](#)

3. Scripture's MISSION

Illustration:

*In our prayers, we talk to God, in our Bible study, God talks to us,
and we had better let God do most of the talking.
Dwight L. Moody*

Explanation:

God wants and even commands His people to learn, love, and live His Word, will, and ways so well that their supernatural unity and defining worship, walk, work, warfare, and witness will bring Him missional glory. With that ultimate end in mind, authentic Christianity calls for a personal commitment of UNDERSTUDYING the holy Scriptures, not as a condition FOR salvation, but rather, as biblical fruit and evidence OF salvation.

Come and See Christianity **KNOW, GROW, and GO!**

1. In short, God wants Christians to **KNOW** His Word well enough to recognize it, feed on it, defend it, explain it, spread it, and build with it.

1 Timothy 4:16

*Keep a close watch on yourself and on your teaching/doctrine.
Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both
yourself and your hearers.*

*“Knowledge of the Bible never comes by intuition. It can only be
obtained by diligent, regular, daily, attentive reading.”*

J.C. Ryle

*“The vigor of our spiritual lives will be in exact proportion to the
place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts.”*

- George Muller

2. The LORD expects His disciples, as born-again believers (John 3:3), to **GROW** in and through His Gospel... all by His grace and ALL for His glory!

John 15:8

“My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”

“Reading the Bible is not where your engagement with the Bible ends. It’s where it begins.”

Anonymous

Ninety-nine Christians in every hundred are merely playing at Bible study; and therefore, ninety-nine Christians in every hundred are mere weaklings, when they might be giants, both in their Christian life and in their service.

R. A. Torrey

“The reason we come away so cold from reading the word is because we do not warm ourselves at the fire of meditation.”

– Donald S. Whitney

Hebrews teaches all Christians two important lessons about our responsibility to mature in the faith....

1). It is an individual believer’s responsibility to grow....

2). It is the church’s responsibility to teach and equip each individual believer.

- Mohler

3. Any miraculously transformed (2 Corinthians 5:17-21) student of God’s Word, will, and ways will quickly realize that they have been saved to submit, serve, and perhaps even suffer... all while living sent, locally, regionally, and globally (Acts 1:8). Consequently, healthy Christ-followers live and love with a **“GO!”** mandate (Mark 16:15). Stated differently, Christians seek to emulate their Creator and King by loving and obeying Him, as evidenced in part, by GO-ing and making disciples, who will make disciples, who will make disciples (2 Timothy 2:2).

Hebrews 5:11-14

11 About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. **12** For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, **13** for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. **14** But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

Application:

*The Spirit is not given to make Bible study needless,
but to make it effective.*
J. I. Packer

*“The text of the Bible means what God inspired it to mean,
not “what it means to me.”*
— **Donald S. Whitney, Praying the Bible**

*“We must study the Bible more. We must not only lay it up within us, but
transfuse it through the whole texture of the soul.”*
Horatius Bonar

CLOSE:

*I cannot too greatly emphasize the importance and value of Bible study - more
important than ever before in these days of uncertainties, when men and woman are
apt to decide questions from the standpoint of expediency rather than the eternal
principles laid down by God, Himself.*
John Wanamaker

For What?

*“The study of God’s Word for the purpose of discovering God’s will is the secret
discipline which has formed the greatest characters.”*
James W. Alexander

*Underlying the preaching of the Puritans are three basic axioms: 1. The unique
place of preaching is to convert, feed and sustain, 2. The life of the preacher
must radiate the reality of what he preaches, 3. Prayer and solid Bible study are
basic to effective preaching.*
J. I. Packer

So What?

Nothing dulls disciples more than false teaching, deceitfully divisive, & distracting detractors.

I remember walking into the Bible study. I had a knot in my stomach. In my mind, only weirdoes and zealots went to Bible studies. I don't remember what was said that day. All I know is that when I left, everything had changed. I'll never forget standing outside that apartment on the Upper East Side and saying to myself, "It's true. It's completely true." The world looked entirely different, like a veil had been lifted off it. I had not an iota of doubt.

I was filled with indescribable joy.

Kirsten Powers

Now What?

Bible study is the metal that forges a Christian.

Charles Spurgeon

You are the only Bible some unbelievers will ever read.

John MacArthur

"If you don't get in your Bible your enemy will get in your business."

Anonymous

PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, thank You so much for the Truth and Love of Your Word, will, and ways. Please help us to absorb and apply ALL that You have shared and commanded in the Bible. May our heads be infilled with Your defining Scriptures, for the express purpose of informing, inspecting, and inspiring our sanctified hearts and serving hands.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen and Amen

Support Sermon:

"Dealing With The Dulling Deceivers"

Hebrews 5:11-14

September 30, 2018

Sermon Series: Hold On!