

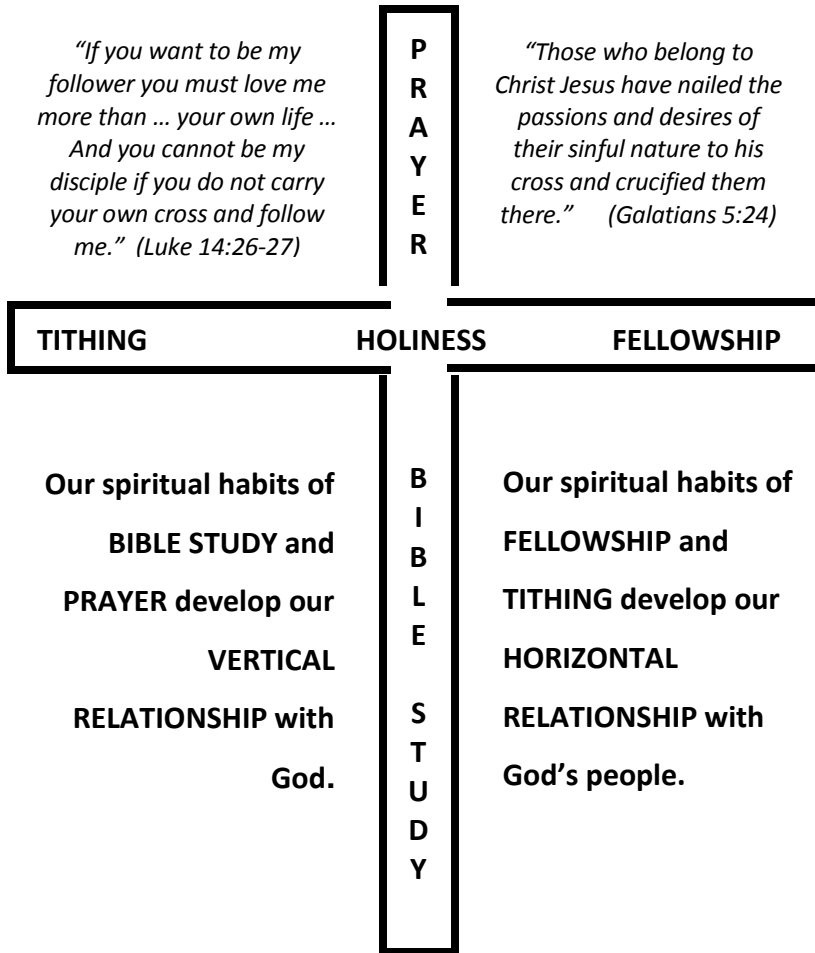
The Disciple's Cross (How to Maintain Good Habits)

(Adapted from a lesson by Raymond Woodward)



To benefit from a habit, you must embrace it voluntarily – it cannot be forced on you!

The Disciple's Cross



Our spiritual habit of HOLINESS is central to BOTH of these relationships, because it GLORIFIES God and

TESTIFIES to man.

*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
(Matthew 5:16)*

"In the past you voluntarily gave your bodies to the service of vice and ... the purposes of evil. So now give yourselves to the service of righteousness - for the purpose of becoming truly good." (Romans 6:19)

If SIN develops in my life through the simple repetition of BAD habits, RIGHTEOUSNESS will develop in my life through the simple repetition of GOOD habits!

HOW TO MAINTAIN GOOD HABITS

1. DESIRE

If you start half-heartedly, you'll never succeed. Whether you think you CAN or you think you CAN'T, you're right!

2. DECISION

Don't procrastinate. It's much easier to break a bad habit today than it will be later! "Tomorrow" just never comes.

"If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done." (*Ecclesiastes 11:4*)

3. DECLARATION

The power of a promise is awesome, particularly if you have a friend hold you accountable to keep it!

"Let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over each other, studying how we may stir up and stimulate each other to ... helpful deeds and noble activities." (*Hebrews 10:24*)

"Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help him up." (*Ecclesiastes 4:9-10*)

4. DETERMINATION

Never be swayed by the devil's temptation to return to your old habits "just this once." The act of yielding to temptation weakens your will and reinforces your lack of self-control. Remember that it takes 3 weeks to become comfortable with a new habit (doing it daily) and another 3 weeks for it to become a permanent part of your life.

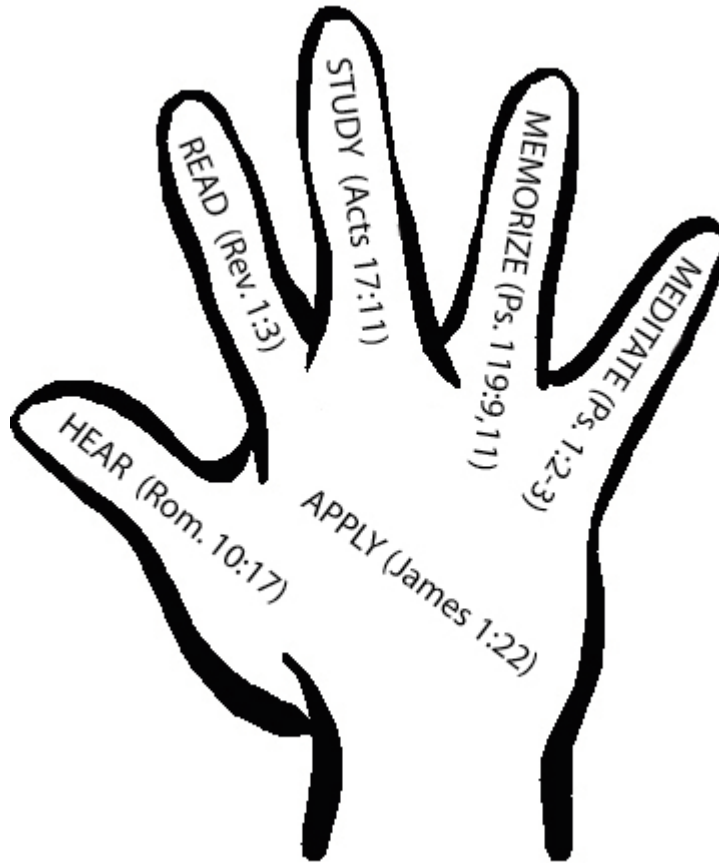
5. DEPENDENCE ON GOD

Rely on God's power to help you establish your new habits. Satan will do all he can to tempt you, cause you to slip, or discourage you. Pray for God's help!

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline." (*2 Timothy 1:7*)

"For it is God who is at work within you, giving you the will and the power to achieve his purpose." (*Philippians 2:13*)

The Habit Of Bible Study



SIX WAYS TO GET A GRASP ON YOUR BIBLE

"The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

HOW TO HEAR GOD'S WORD

"Faith comes from hearing the Word of God." (Romans 10:17)



The problem is that we forget 95% of what we hear after 72 hours. We have to work on it!

1. Deal with attitudes that prevent you from hearing God. (see the Parable of the Sower in Luke 8:4-15)

"Consider carefully how you listen ..." (Luke 8:18)

- ✓ **A Closed Mind:** Could fear, pride or bitterness be preventing me from hearing God speak?

- ✓ **A Superficial Mind:** Am I only casually listening, or really serious in wanting to hear God speak?
- ✓ **A Preoccupied Mind:** Am I too busy, inattentive or concerned with other things to concentrate on what God has to say?
- ✓ **A Ready Mind:** I really want to hear from God!

2. Take notes on what you hear.

"We must pay more careful attention to what we've heard, so that we do not drift away!"
(*Hebrews 2:1*)

3. Act on what you hear!

"Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says!" (*James 1:22*)

"Whoever ... does not simply listen and then forget, but puts it into practice - that person will be blessed in what he does." (*James 1:25*)

4. Read God's Word DAILY!

"(The Bible) shall be his constant companion. He must read from it every day of his life so that he will learn to respect the Lord his God by obeying all of his commands."
(*Deuteronomy 17:19*)



If I read approximately 15 minutes a day, I can read through the Bible once a year.

SUGGESTIONS:

- ✓ Read the Bible **systematically**, not haphazardly.
- ✓ Use a Bible without notes so **GOD** can speak to you.
- ✓ Read from different translations for **understanding**.
- ✓ Read the Bible aloud (quietly to yourself) for **focus**.
- ✓ Underline or highlight key verses for **emphasis**.
- ✓ Choose a reading plan and **stick with it!**



One idea is to use the KING JAMES VERSION for its accuracy, the NEW LIVING TRANSLATION for its readability, and other versions occasionally for CLARITY.

HOW TO STUDY GOD'S WORD

"... they accepted the message eagerly and studied the Scriptures every day ..."
(*Acts 17:11*)

"Be a good workman ... know what His Word says and means." (2 Timothy 2:15)

The difference between reading and studying the Bible is simply that you **MAKE NOTES** when you study. The two secrets of effective Bible study are: (1) comparing other Scripture verses on the same subject, and (2) using additional study helps to answer background questions.

- Study Bible – helps find other Scriptures on same subject
- Parallel Bible – compares two or more Bible translations
- Application Bible – relates the Scriptures to modern life
- Bible Dictionary – gives detailed background information
- Concordance – helps find certain words in the Bible
- Commentary – offers inspirational background material



Be sure to let your BIBLE speak to you FIRST, before referring to these resources.

HOW TO MEMORIZE GOD'S WORD

"Guard my words as your most precious possession. Write them down, and also keep them deep within your heart." (Proverbs 7:2-3)

1. Pick a verse that speaks to you.
2. Say the reference before and after the verse.
3. Read the verse aloud many times, or record it!
4. Break the verse into natural phrases.
5. Emphasize key words when quoting the verse.
6. Write down the verse and erase one word at a time.
7. Write out the verse on a flash card.
8. Carry some cards with you at all times for review.
9. Display your verses in prominent places.
10. Always memorize the verse perfectly.
11. Put the verse to music – write a song!
12. Get a partner so you can check each other.

BENEFITS OF MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE:

1. It helps me resist temptations.

"I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you." (Psalm 119:11)

2. It helps me make wise decisions.

"Your Word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path." (Psalm 119:105)

3. It strengthens me when I'm under stress.

"... Your promises to me are my hope. They give me strength in all my troubles; how they refresh and revive me!" (*Psalms 119:49*)

4. It comforts me when I'm sad.

"Your words are what sustain me ... They bring joy to my sorrowing heart and delight me." (*Jeremiah 15:16*)

5. It helps me witness to unbelievers.

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." (*1 Peter 3:15*)

"Your teachings are worth more to me than thousands of pieces of gold and silver." (*Psalms 119:72*)



The key to memorizing Scripture (or anything else) is REVIEW! Everyone makes a CHOICE to remember things that are important to them.

HOW TO MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORD

"(Those) who are always meditating on His Laws ... are like trees along a river bank bearing fruit ... they never wither and whatever they do prospers." (*Psalms 1:2-3*)



Meditation is FOCUSED THINKING about a Bible verse in order to discover how I can apply its truth to my own life.

1. **Picture it!** Imagine the scene in your mind.
2. **Pronounce it!** Say the verse aloud, each time emphasizing a different word.
3. **Paraphrase it!** Rewrite the verse 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 say it back to God.
6. **Probe it!** Ask questions like these: **IS THERE A ...**

- S IN TO CONFESS?**
- P ROMISE TO CLAIM?**
- A TTITUDE TO CHANGE?**
- C OMMAND TO KEEP?**
- E XAMPLE TO FOLLOW?**
- P RAYER TO PRAY?**
- E RROR TO AVOID?**
- T RUTH TO BELIEVE?**
- S PECIAL BLESSING TO THANK GOD FOR?**

BENEFITS OF MEDITATING ON SCRIPTURE:

1. **It is the key to becoming like Christ.**

" ... Your life is shaped by your thoughts." (*Proverbs 4:23*)

"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (*Romans 12:2*)

"As we ... contemplate the Lord's glory, we are being transformed into His likeness ..." (*2 Corinthians 3:18*)

2. It is the key to answered prayer.

"If you live your life in Me, and my words live in your hearts, you can ask for whatever you like, and it will come true for you." (*John 15:7*)

3. It is the key to successful living.

" ... Meditate on (the Word) day and night, so you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." (*Joshua 1:8*)

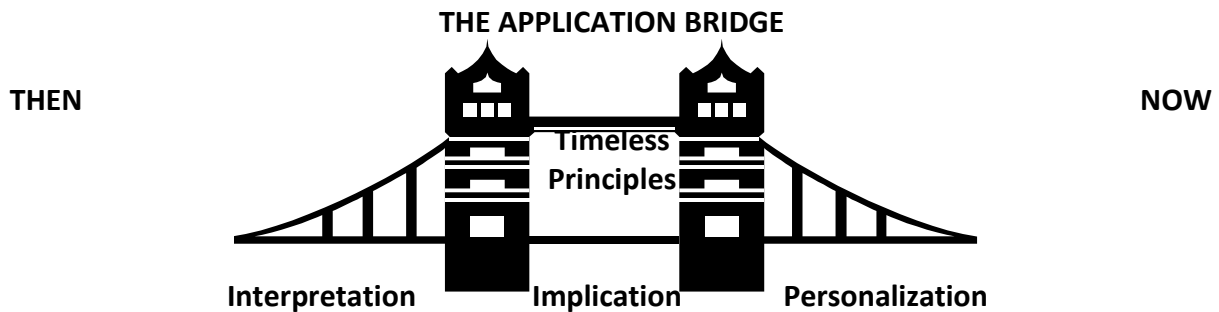


WORRY is simply negative meditation. If you can worry, you already know how to meditate!

HOW TO APPLY GOD'S WORD

"Do not fool yourselves by just listening to the Word. Instead, put it into practice." (*James 1:22*)

" ... Whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (*Matthew 5:19*)



QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. What did this mean to the original hearers?
2. What is the underlying timeless principle?
3. Where or how could I apply that principle?

AN EXAMPLE:

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Interpretation: The Apostle Paul requested that the Corinthian Christians not eat meat offered to idols so as not to offend weaker believers recently delivered

from idol worship, even though they knew the idols had no power.

Implication:

Don't do anything that offends a fellow Christian, even if the activity is not sinful in and of itself.

Personalization:

I will not patronize businesses where there are bars, even though drinking alcohol might not be a temptation for me, because my presence could influence a weaker member in our church to go there and fall into sin.

"Now that you know these things - do them! That is the path of blessing!" (*John 13:17*)

Study Questions

1. List the spiritual habits that develop our relationship with God. _____

2. List the spiritual habits that develop our relationship with God's people. _____

3. What spiritual habit is central to both of the above relationships? Why? _____

4. Write out (with Scripture reference) a verse that supports the above question and answer. _____

5. If _____ develops in my life through the simple repetition of _____ habits, _____ will develop in my life through the simple repetition of _____ habits.

6. List and briefly explain five (5) ways to maintain good habits. Support your answers with Scripture where possible.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

7. List (with Scripture reference) the six (6) ways to get a grasp on Bible study.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

8. List and briefly explain three attitudes that prevent you from hearing God.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

9. Write out one verse of Scripture, with reference (from the Old Testament) that commands us to read God's Word daily. _____

10. If I read approximately 15 _____ a _____, I can read through the _____ once a _____.

11. The difference between _____ and _____ the Bible is simply that you make _____ when you _____.

12. List the two (2) secrets of effective Bible study:

1) _____

2) _____

13. Given the following different study helps, explain what each of them assists you with in Bible study.

- 1) Study Bible _____
- 2) Parallel Bible _____
- 3) Application Bible _____
- 4) Bible Dictionary _____
- 5) Concordance _____
- 6) Commentary _____

14. Be sure to let your _____ speak to you FIRST, before _____ to these _____.

15. List twelve (12) suggestions of ways to memorize God’s Word.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____
- 11) _____
- 12) _____

16. List five (5) benefits (with Scripture reference) of memorizing Scripture.

- 1) _____
- _____
- 2) _____
- _____
- 3) _____
- _____
- 4) _____
- _____
- 5) _____
- _____

17. The key to _____ Scripture (or anything else) is _____!
Everyone makes a _____ to _____ things that are _____ to them.

18. Define meditation. _____

19. List and briefly explain six (6) ways to meditate on God's Word.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

20. List three (3) benefits (with Scripture reference) of meditating on Scripture.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

21. _____ is simply negative _____. If you can _____, you already know how to _____.

22. List the three (3) timeless principles of application.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

23. List the three (3) questions you should ask to apply any verse from the past to your life now.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15, *KJV*)