

## Intimacy with God – Part II

### *The Bible – Our Spiritual Bread*

*“For man does not live by bread alone,  
But by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God...”*

Luke 4:4

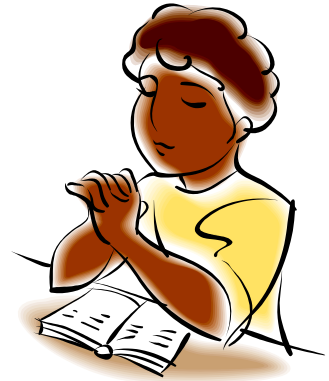
#### **Review - What is an “Appointment with God?”**

*An undistracted time of solitude in God’s presence,  
set apart for prayer and scripture reading.*

This past week were you able to have appointments with God and dedicate some time to fasting? Any testimonies to share?

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***Our Goal*** in this session is to learn how to nourish ourselves with God’s Word!

***Reading the Bible is listening to God***

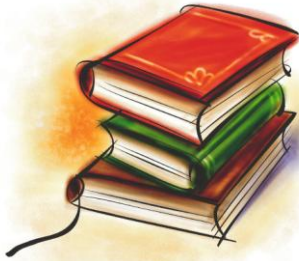
***God is speaking! But are we listening?***

Ever had a friend who talks on and on without letting anyone else get in a word edgewise?

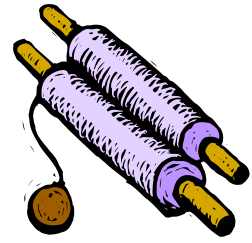
Many of us interact with God in the same way!! We present monologues that do not give Him a chance to get in a word edgewise!! We pray and sing, but we never listen long enough to let God speak back to us!! In any healthy relationship, one should not only speak, but also take time *to listen*. With God as well, we ought to take time to read his Word and reflect on it, allowing the Holy Spirit to speak to our hearts and minds!

***We read the Bible not only to learn, but to live spiritually!!***

***The Bible – much more than a “normal book”  
-- Inspired by God!!***



The Bible is the *spiritual food* for the believer – the very voice of the living God, expressing love from His heart to ours!



***What does it mean that the Bible is “Inspired”?***

***1. The Bible has two authors – Divine and Human!***

*“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God might be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timoteo 3:16-17*

*“...no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. .” 2 Pedro 1:20-21*

Different from any other book in the universe, *the Bible has two authors – human and divine!* The Holy Spirit “inspired” the human writers in the writing process.

***2. The Bible is “God-breathed.”***

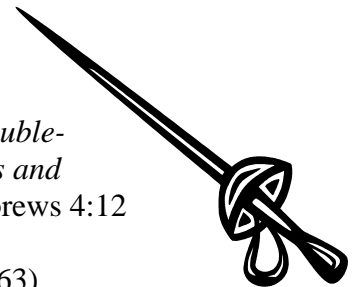
*“Inspire” means “to breathe into” a person or activity*

In other words, the Holy Spirit illuminated the understanding of the human writers, penetrating their mental processes to enable them to express the message with authority and divine power. Therefore, throughout the centuries, Christians have been nourished by these words of the Scripture, and the Bible has provided the absolute foundation for our faith. To add to it or alter its content is to stray from genuine Christianity.

***3. The Bible has Spiritual Power and Life***

*“For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the Heart.” Hebrews 4:12*

*“The Words which I speak are spirit and life... – Jesus, (John 6:63)*



Being inspired, the Bible ushers us into a direct encounter with the Living God. If we receive the word with an open heart, it produces spiritual fruit in our lives. It changes us! *It transforms us!*



## ***We must Receive the Word with an Open Heart***

The Word is like a seed. It contains life within itself and, if sown on receptive soil, it produces plants and fruit. It all depends on us as listeners – How will we receive the word? *Are we good soil?*

### ***Bible Study: Read the Parable of the Seeds and the Sower – Mark 4:1-20***

We observe four types of soil in this parable. What are they?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

The four types of soil correspond to four types of people. What are they?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

How can we be sure that we are the final category of soil – the receptive and fruitful soil?

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## ***The Bible – Our Spiritual Bread***

### ***Jesus in the Desert***

When Jesus fasted in the desert for forty days, Satan tempted him to change stones into bread. Jesus answered with a verse he had memorized from the Old Testament, saying...



*“Man does not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”*

Why do you think that Jesus makes this comparison between *bread* and the *Word of God*?

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### ***Manna in the Desert – Fresh Bread every Morning***

When the Israelites wandered in the desert for forty years, God fed them with bread from heaven which was called, “manna.” Every day this bread appeared as dew on the sand in the morning sunlight. The Israelites gathered this bread every morning and ate it that same day. Any bread stored for the following day, with the exception of the Sabbath, became rotten and moldy. The lesson was clear: God gives fresh bread every day to be gathered and enjoyed! We cannot live on “yesterday’s bread.”



### ***We must gather the “manna” of God’s Word every day***



As it was for the Israelites who gathered manna every day, so it is with Christians and the Word of God. Every day God has a fresh word for us – a special, relevant message for our lives. Our part is to make an appointment with God and read his word on a daily basis in order to receive this special message He wants to give us. Yesterday’s bread – yesterday’s reading - will not suffice. God wants us to meditate on His word anew and hear his voice *today!*

### ***How do we “eat” the Word of God?***

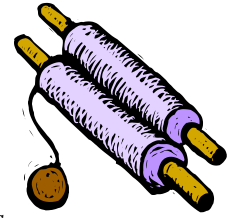
1. ***Read it***
2. ***Study it***
3. ***Memorize it***
4. ***Meditate on it***
5. ***Do it!***



## ***Structure of the Bible – Old and New Testaments***

***More than a single book, the Bible is...***

- *A collection of 66 books,*
- *Written by more than 40 human authors*
- *Over a period of about 1,800 years.*



*“The majority of the writers did not know one another nor read the writings of the others, but in spite of this, we observe an amazing unity among them all which would have been impossible without the intervention of God.” (Humberto Lay, p.43)*

Look at the “Table of Contents” of your Bible to see a list of all the books in order.

### ***Two principal sections – The Old and New Testaments***

Looking at the table of contents, we see that the Bible is divided into two principal sections – the New and Old Testaments

- ***The Old Testament*** (Before Jesus)
  - *Historical Books* – The history of God and humanity. The creation of the world and the relationship between God and Israel.
  - *Poetical Books* – Songs, Prayers, Proverbs, Philosophy and Love Poetry.
  - *Prophetical Books* – Messages from God for His people. Warnings, exhortations, encouragements and predictions of the future.



- ***The New Testament*** (After Jesus)

- *Gospels* – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – Biographies of Jesus.
- *Acts* – The histories of the first Christians.
- *Letters* – Advice and teachings of the first Christian leaders.
- *Revelation* – Prophecy about Jesus’ Second Coming



### ***The Old and New Testaments Complement one another!***

The entire Old Testament prepares the way for the coming of Jesus and connects perfectly to the New Testament.

## ***The Original Languages of the Bible: Greek and Hebrew***

*The Old Testament* – Written originally in *Hebrew* (and some Aramaic)

*The New Testament* – Written originally in *Greek*

## ***Many English translations of the Bible***

- *The King James Version (KJV)* is the most traditional version. Written in beautiful poetry, it is considered a classic of English Literature, but uses antiquated language, such as “thee” and “thou.”
- *The New International Version (NIV)* is a modern translation written in common English. Very accurate and readable.
- *The Living Bible* is the easiest translation to read, but is a general paraphrase of the original, and therefore not as precisely accurate as the other translations.

## **How to Feed ourselves with the Word**

### **1. Read the Bible every day**

#### ***Where to I begin?***



#### ***The Gospels*** (New Testament)



We recommend that a person begin reading in the New Testament. The first four books are called “gospels” and were written by the disciples and close personal friends of Jesus – *Matthew, Mark, Luke and John*. They are narratives of his life and teaching – biographies. They relate the direct accounts of the words and actions of Jesus. We suggest starting with a chapter or two a day, reading in chronological sequence (chapter 1,2,3,4..etc.), as one would read any other story.

#### ***Psalms and Proverbs*** (Old Testament)

*The Psalms* are prayers and beautiful songs, written by King David and many other believers who lived before the time of Christ. They provide exquisite poetry that we can use in our own daily prayer and worship. *The Proverbs* are brief, memorable phrases packed with practical advice for daily life. These Psalms and Proverbs are perfect for daily reading.

## *How should the Bible be read?*

- ***In Sequential Order*** –With the exception of the Psalms and Proverbs, which do not follow a strict sequential pattern, it is important to read the chapters of the Bible in their numerical order. (Matthew 1..2...3...4..etc.) When reading a historical narrative, such as the life of Jesus, it is especially important to follow the story in its logical order.
- ***With Regularity*** – It is not necessary to read the Bible through in a week! To begin, try reading one or two chapters a day.
- ***With Understanding*** – Don't simply read the words! Take time to re-read certain sections in order to understand and retain the meaning of the words.

## **2. Study the Word**

### *Many ways to study the Bible!*

- ***Take a Class*** - Congratulations! You are already doing it!
- ***Ask Questions*** – Write down questions as you read and then ask a more experienced Christian about them.
- ***Attend a Small Group*** – Most small group meetings include Bible Study.
- ***Listen to Sermons*** – A good sermon analyzes and applies a Biblical text. We can hear sermons on the radio or the internet!
- ***Use a “Study-Bible”*** – Almost any good bookstore should have special “Study Bibles” which contain footnotes and added material to help understand the meaning and background of the text. Some include maps and special articles to provide historical and geographical information.
- ***Use a Concordance*** – A concordance is a book which lists every usage of each word in the Bible. Using a concordance, you one can look up every use of the word “joy,” for example, and find each verse which includes that word.
- ***Use Commentaries*** – A Bible Commentary provides background information to help us understand the historical, geographical and theological content of the Bible. Some are better than others. It is important to ask a trusted and mature Christian which commentaries he or she would recommend.



### 3. Memorize the Word

#### *Why memorize the Word?*

When we memorize verses we sow spiritual seeds in our hearts. This practice allows the verse to penetrate our psyche and stay with us throughout the day.

- *To “treasure” it in our hearts.*
- *To avoid temptation* -- *“I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you...”* (Psalm 119:11)
- *To fight against Satan*
  - Not for nothing the word is called the *“Sword of the Spirit.”* Ef. 6:17
  - Jesus used the word against Satan in the desert. When the devil tempted Jesus, he responded by saying, *“It is written...”* If he had not had the word memorized, he would not have been able to use it.

#### *How can we memorize the Word?*

- *No excuses* – You can do it!
- *Start small* – *“I can do everything through Christ who strengthens me.”*  
Philippians 4:13
- *Repeat it out loud* - until it “sticks.”
- *Write it out again and again*
- *Use little cards* with the verse written on it so that you can refer to it in casual moments during the day.

### 4. Meditate on the Word

*God commanded Joshua to meditate on the word in order to have success*

*“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

*The First Psalm calls us to “Delight” in the Word of God*

*“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,  
Or stand in the way of sinners  
Or sit in the seat of mockers.  
But his delight is in the Law of the Lord,  
And on His law he meditates day and night.  
He will be like a tree planted by streams of water,  
Which yields its fruit in season,  
Whose leaf does not wither.  
Whatever he does, prospers.”* Psalm 1:1-3



Based on these verses above, list out some of the promised benefits for those who meditate on the Word of God.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### ***What does it mean to “meditate” on the Word?***

- Take time to “concentrate deeply” on the words of the verse.
- Use the verse to pray to God
- Personalize the words of the verse
- Listen to the Holy Spirit apply the words to our lives.

### ***How to meditate on the Word?***

- Choose a short verse from your daily reading

Example— “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.” Psalm 23:1



- ***Concentrate*** on the verse for two or three minutes, repeating it over and over and thinking about the meaning of each word.
- ***Personalize and Pray the verse – giving thanks to God***

Example – “The Lord isn’t just any shepherd – He is **my shepherd!** He knows me by name. Thank you Lord, that I’m not alone in life. Thank you for being my shepherd today and forever. I ask you to guide me and provide for my needs today. I trust you!! ...etc.”



## 5. Do the Word!

### *Don't be a "Pharisee"!*

In the time of Jesus there were certain super-strict religious leaders called Pharisees. Some were sincere in their faith, but many were hypocrites. They memorized entire sections of the Bible and fasted two or three times a week, yet they lacked one thing – *they did not put the Word into practice!* For all their knowledge and “spirituality,” they were proud, dishonest, and violent. Some even had Jesus put to death!

### *If we read the word without living it, we end up worse than we started!*

Reading the Bible without putting it into practice is downright dangerous.

*“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” James 1:22-25*

### *How do we apply the word to daily life?*

We ought always to ask ourselves the following question:

*How should my life change in order to live out this message which I am reading?*

### **Assignment – Try applying this verse to your life!!**

***“Do everything without grumbling and complaining...”*** (Philippians 2:14)

Mention three times this week when you complained about doing something.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Thanksgiving – The opposite of complaining!!*

Now choose one of those moments/situations in which you had “grumbled.” Write a brief expression of thanksgiving related to that moment instead!

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### ***Review Questions – The Bible: Our Spiritual Food***

What do we mean by saying that the Bible is “*inspired*”? (p.29)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Mention five ways we can “eat” the word of God. (p.31)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

How many books are in the Bible \_\_\_\_\_ (p.32)

What is the difference between the Old and New Testaments? (p.32)

\_\_\_\_\_.

What are the three different types of books in the Old Testament? (p.32)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What are the four different types of books in the New Testament? (p.32)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

The Old Testament was written originally in \_\_\_\_\_ (p.33)

The New Testament was written originally in \_\_\_\_\_ (p.33)

Mention three different English Translations of the Bible. (p.33)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Where should we begin reading the New Testament? Why? (p.33)

\_\_\_\_\_.

Where should we begin reading the Old Testament? (p.33)

\_\_\_\_\_.

Is it “ok” to flip open the Bible randomly and read the first thing we see? Why not?  
(p.34)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

What is a “*Study Bible*”? (p.34)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

What is a “*Bible Commentary*”? (p.34)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

What is a “*Concordance*”? (p.34)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Why is it so important to memorize verses of the Bible? (p.35)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Mention three strategies for memorizing verses of the Bible. (p.35)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Mention three steps in the process of *meditating* on a verse. (p.36)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Write a simple prayer (one sentence), *personalizing* this verse. (p.36)

*“The robber comes only to steal, kill and destroy, but I have come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly.”* Jesús – Juan 10:10

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Who were the “*Pharisees*?” (p.37)

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How can we avoid becoming like them? (p.37)

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