

for this reason that many folks avoid the word of God. If they take the time to look into the mirror, they may see something they do not like. This new knowledge may obligate them to change something they are not willing to change or to face realities they are trying to deny.

But it is not only these folks who avoid the mirror of God's word, there are others who will not take a long hard look because they think they are OK and really don't need improvement. They are prideful, and self-sufficient, believing they don't need God to face the demands of the day. These are they that seek God when trouble comes, but avoid Him when things are good.

It is true that you can perform your duties at work or at home without spending time in God's word, but it is also true that you cannot perform your duties at work or at home *while pleasing God* if you are not doing so while submitted to Him and his Word.

📖 John 15:5. **Q.** What did Jesus say we could do without Him?

Q. What did Jesus say he that abides in him would bring forth?

The point here is that we cannot grow, bring forth spiritual fruit, or please God, without his presence in our lives. If our concern is simply to make it through our day, we may succeed without a sincere time in God's word. But if our desire is to live for Him, to please Him, and to grow more like Him, than we must read his word daily with the right spirit.

Conclusion

An essential part to Christian growth is the proper reading of God's word. It must become a daily part of our lives. In James 1:21, James called the Bible the *engrafted word*, that is, the word is to become engrafted into our lives, it should become an inseparable part of who we are, ultimately changing the type of fruit that we bear.

This process of grafting his word does not stop with our daily Bible reading, but it continues as we *meditate* and *memorize* throughout the day. To meditate means to contemplate, to think on or to ruminate. It is taking a portion of scripture and turning it over and over in our minds, seeking to better understand it's truths. When we get up from our daily quiet time we should take some truth with us and think on it throughout the day. Memorization is taking a portion of scripture and attempting to commit it to memory. Psalm 119:11 indicates that memorizing scripture helps to keep us from sin.

Try this week to make the word of God an integral part of your day!

How to Approach the Word of God

This weeks study will serve as a continuation of last weeks "*How to Develop a Daily Quiet Time*". Last week we dealt briefly with the two main elements of our daily quiet time – Bible reading and prayer. Now we will look a little deeper into this subject: *How to Approach the Word of God*.

The Word of God is an essential element to Christian growth. For this reason it is often compared figuratively to food.

📖 1 Peter 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, _____.

Without the basic nourishment of milk, a newborn baby cannot grow or survive. His very existence is dependent on his supply of milk. This is how God has chosen to illustrate the Christian's utter dependence on the Bible.

📖 Matthew 4:4 But he [Jesus] answered and said, It is written, Man _____ by bread alone, but by _____ that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

📖 Job 23:12. **Q.** How did Job "esteem" the words of God?

The Christian's spiritual well being rests on his intake of the Word of God. If we *desire* His word, and if we are *dependent* on his word, than it only makes sense that we will spend time in His word on a *daily* basis. It is unlikely that real Christian growth will take place apart from the daily reading of God's word. We must read his word daily, and we must approach it with the right heart. For the remainder of this study we will look at how to properly approach the word of God during our daily quiet time.

📖 **Read** James 1:21-25, where we see God's instructions on how to receive His word.

First, ***we must approach the word of God with a repentant spirit.*** Notice the first part of verse 21,

📖 James 1:21 Wherefore lay apart all _____ and superfluity of _____.

Before we open our Bibles to read we must ensure that there is no unconfessed sin in our lives. The *superfluity of naughtiness* spoken of here refers to the excess sinful tendencies that we have carried over from our old life. Many

folks do not grow while reading the Bible because they do not approach it with a clean heart. We must search our hearts and confess any known sin before we open God's word. One can develop a habit or routine of Bible reading without truly desiring God to speak to them through his word. If your desire is for God to speak to you, than you must approach his word with a pure heart.

Next, once we have confessed any known sin, ***we must approach the word of God with a receptive spirit.***

Q. How does James 1:21 say we should receive God's word?

To receive God's word with meekness means to read it as if we are submitted to it. It is one thing to read the Bible as a literary work much like any other book, but it is quite different to read it and to receive it with meekness. To receive His word with meekness means that we are not standing in judgment of what we read, but we are standing *ready to be judged* by what we read!

The growing Christian reads God's word with a desire for it to change them. He is looking for new truths to learn, new commands to obey, new promises to claim and for sins to confess.

📖 Eph 5:25,26. **Q.** How does Christ desire to *cleanse* his church?

📖 Psalms 119:9. **Q.** How can the young man *cleanse* his way?

The power of God's word to clean our minds and our lives rests entirely on our willingness to submit to it. When we take this approach to God's word it is unlikely that we will walk away from his word the same as we were when we came to it. This was the way in which the Psalmist approached God's word in 📖 Psalm 119:34.

Q. What did this man ask God to give Him? _____

Q. What did this man say he would do with this understanding?

Our daily Bible reading should not become ritualistic. We are not reading his Word to meet a quota, we are reading it with a willing heart, sincerely seeking God's will for our lives.

Thirdly ***we are to approach God's word with a responsive spirit.***

📖 James 1:22 But be ye _____, and not _____, deceiving your own selves.

Q. What has the person who reads God's word but does not obey, done to themselves?

How many Christian's are going through the motions of Bible reading, skimming and skipping through God's word without the intention of obeying it? If these Christians believe they are pleasing God, or are growing Christians, they are simply deceiving themselves.

📖 Matt 7:26. **Q.** How did Jesus describe the man that hears his word but does not obey it?

📖 Luke 11:28. **Q.** Who did Jesus say was *blessed*?

Have you ever felt that God did not seem real to you? Or that he was distant from you? Jesus gave us a promise regarding his presence, it is found in 📖 John 14:21.

Q. Who did Jesus say *loves* Him? _____.

Q. What two things did Jesus promise he would do for the man that keeps his commandments?

Our love for Christ is displayed by our obedience to His word. When we obey Him he promised that he would *manifest* himself to us. Obedience is the key to experiencing the presence of God, and daily Bible reading is the key to learning how he would like us to obey!

Lastly, ***we must approach God's word with a reflective spirit.***

📖 James 1:23-25. **Q.** What did James compare the Bible to in veres 23?

Have you ever woken up late and had to rush out the door? Perhaps you took a quick glance in the mirror before you left your house, only to later discover you missed a spot shaving, or as a lady, your makeup was smudged. James here is using the illustration of two men looking into the mirror of God's word. One glances quickly and goes his way, not considering what he saw. The other takes a good hard look and changes those things that don't quite look right.

When we read God's word, we not only learn who God is, but we also learn who *we are*. The Bible describes human nature perfectly, and it's not a pretty picture! A serious reading of the Bible will reveal things about ourselves that we never saw before. We will learn how sinful we really are and how holy God is. Many of our faults and failures will be exposed. It is