

CHAPTER 4

GOD'S WORD - GRASPING THE BIBLE

ASSIGNMENTS:

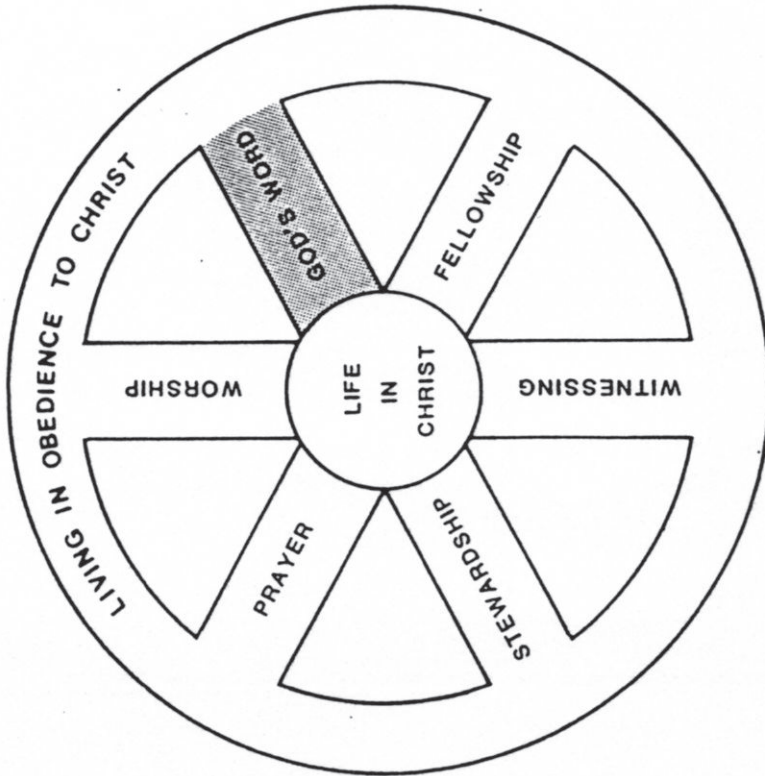
1. Scripture Reading - John 8-14
Read one chapter each day.
2. Prayer - Use the prayer list page to record your requests and answers.
3. Memorize - Psalm 119:9,11
Additional verse - 2 Timothy 3:16
4. Study and complete the material in the chapter.
5. Outline the pastor's Sunday sermon.

Outline your daily progress below:

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

CHAPTER 4

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The Word of God is the foundation for all other disciplines. In practice, this spoke of the wheel illustration is perhaps the most critical element in a balanced Christian life. As God speaks to us through the Scriptures, we can see His principles for our life and ministry, learn how to obey Him, and see Christ as worthy of our total allegiance. When Christians have a vital personal intake of the Word of God, they are healthy and growing.

It is important to understand that the Bible is God's written Word to us. He has inspired it through the pens of men as words that were relevant and timely for the people of Biblical times as well as for us today.

"All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the faith and correcting error, for resetting the direction of man's life, and training him in good living. The Scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the man of God, and fit him fully for all branches of his work" (2 Timothy 3:16,17 Phillips).

"But know this first of all, that no prophesy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophesy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:20, 21 NASB).

The Bible is God's written revelation of His will to us. Its central theme is salvation through Jesus Christ.

The Bible contains 66 books and was written over a period of approximately 1600 years by 40 different authors from all walks of life - from kings to fishermen, and physicians to prisoners.

The Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew with a few short passages in Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Greek. Our modern English Bibles are a translation from these original languages.

The word *Bible* comes from the Greek word *biblos* which means book. The word *testament* means covenant or agreement. The Old Testament is the covenant God made with mankind about salvation before Christ came. The New Testament is the agreement God made with people about salvation after Christ came.

God's Word

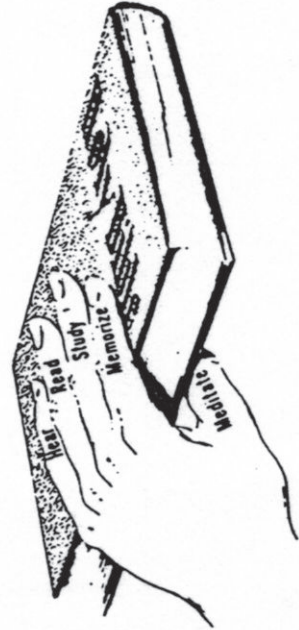
In the Old Testament we find the covenant of law. In the New Testament we find the covenant of grace which came through Jesus Christ. One leads into the other (Galatians 3:17-25).

- The Old commences what the New completes.
- The Old centers around what happened at Mt. Sinai (the Law).
- The New focuses on what happened at Calvary (grace).
- The Old is associated with Moses.
- The New reveals Christ (John 1:17).

HOW TO KNOW THE BIBLE

The "how" of learning and applying the Scriptures to life is something all Christians should know. The following covers five ways to make the Bible more relevant to our lives.

Compare these five methods of learning the Bible to the five fingers of your hand. If you hold the Bible with only one or two fingers, it is easy to lose your grip. But as you use more fingers, your grasp of the Bible becomes stronger.



God's Word

This is also true spiritually. When we *hear, read, study, memorize, and meditate* on the Word, our grasp of the Bible becomes firm and part of our lives. As the thumb is needed in combination with any finger to complete our hold, so meditating combined with hearing, reading, studying, and memorizing is essential for a full grasp of God's Word.

1. Hear It - "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17 NASB).
 - A. What kind of heart will best hear and use the Word? (Luke 8:15) (Under line correct answer.)
 - a. An honest and good heart.
 - b. An alert and cautious heart.
 - c. An open but indifferent heart.
 - d. A well-trained, scholarly heart.
 - B. In proclaiming the Word, what can pastors and teachers do? (Nehemiah 8:8)

Most Christians hear the Word of God preached, but only a few learn the profit of conserving what they hear. To retain what we hear, it helps to take notes on the Scriptures used and on the main points of the sermon.

- C. Whom did Jesus say would be blessed? (Luke 11:28)
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2. Read It - "Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it ..." (Revelation 1:3)

A. List reasons for daily reading of the Bible (Deuteronomy 17:19)

B. Write out Revelation 1:3 in your own words.

A daily reading program that will take us systematically through the Bible is something many Christians use as a regular part of their daily devotional time.

Dr. Harry Ironside, when 14, was concerned over not having read through the Bible as many times as he was years old. By the time he was 21 he had caught up. Later in life he was far ahead.

3. Study It - "Now these were more noble minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11 NASB).

A. How does Proverbs 2:4 indicate we should study the Word?

B. What should be our goal in studying the Bible? (2 Timothy 2:15)

Study is more than just careful reading. It requires writing down what we discover. Reading is faster than study and gives us the overall picture. But study helps us think and remember.

C. Suggested basic Bible study tools:

1. English Dictionary
2. Halley's Bible Handbook, (Zondervan)
3. Unger's Bible Dictionary, (Moody Press)
4. The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, (Moody Press)
5. Strong's Concordance, (Abingdon Publishers) or Young's Concordance, (Eerdmans Press)

4. Memorize It - "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to Your Word. I have hidden Your Word in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Psalm 119:9,11).

A. In your own words, state what God wants us to do about His Word.

1. Deuteronomy 11:18a:

2. Proverbs 7:2,3:

B. In Matthew 4:4,7,10:

1. How did Jesus three times overcome Satan's temptations?

2. Do you see any way you might apply this example to your own situation?

C. In Colossians 3:16, what do you think, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly" means?

D. Write out Psalm 40:8 in your own words.

I know of no form of intake of the Word which pays greater dividends for the time invested than Scripture memory.
- Dawson Trotman

After 24 hours we may accurately remember:

5% of what we hear,

15% of what we read,

35% of what we study,

but we remember 100% of what we memorize.

E. In order to be successful in Scripture memory, we need to have a plan and follow it. We remember an idea best if we express it. In fact, learning is improved as more senses are involved. Expression makes impression.

1. Repeat it.

2. Explain it.

3. Put it in your own words.

4. Discuss and understand its meaning.

5. Review - silently and aloud, over and over, looking for correct emphasis and pertinent meaning.

6. Review with another person.

5. Meditate On It - "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 is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers" (Psalm 1:1-3).

Meditation is prayerful reflection with a view to understanding and application - giving prayerful thought to God's Word and to our lives, with the goal of conforming our lives to His will.

God's Word

Asking these two questions will help structure our meditation:

What is the meaning of this verse based on its context? (There is only one true interpretation.)

How should this verse affect us? (There are many applications)

- a new or wondrous thought about God
- a promise to claim
- a command to obey
- an example to follow
- a sin to confess and turn from
- an error to avoid

This kind of meditation on God's Word can be done

- as we *hear* the Word preached,
- as we *read* the Bible in our daily devotional time;
- as we *pray* and reflect on what we are *studying*;
- as we go over verses we have *memorized*.

A. What promises are made to the person who continually meditates on the Word of God?

1. Psalm 1:2,3

2. Joshua 1:8

God's Word

B. Consider Luke 6:45. How does meditating on God's Word affect our speech and actions? Give an example.

C. Besides being diligent in learning God's Word, what else should we do in order to understand it? (Psalm 119:18, 73, 125)

Quotes on the importance of knowing the Bible:

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

"The Scriptures were not given to increase our knowledge but to change our lives."
-- Dwight L. Moody

"I thoroughly believe in a university education for both men and women; but ... a knowledge of the Bible without a college education is more valuable than a college education without the Bible. Everyone who has a thorough knowledge of the Bible may truly be called educated, and no other learning ... no matter how extensive ... can form a proper substitute."
--- William Lyon Phelps

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. What is the Bible?

2. Who wrote the Bible?

3. Why is it so important to know the Bible?

4. Explain the "hand" illustration.

5. Why is meditation so important?

6. Why should you invest time each day to look into the Bible?

7. What does the phrase, "get into the Bible, and the Bible will get into you", seem to suggest?"

8. This chart is to help you analyze your habits for making the Bible yours. As you fill it in, pray about setting any new goals.

God's Word

Method of Intake	My Present Weekly Program	New Goals and Plans
Hearing the Word		
Reading the Word		
Studying the Word		
Memorizing the Word		

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

How to Study the Bible Yourself , Tim LaHaye

Meditation , Jim Downing

What the Bible Is All About , Henrietta Mears

Evidence That Demands A Verdict , Josh McDowell,
(Volumes I & II)