

## **Feeding On The Word Of God Series**

**September 02, 2020**

**Scripture: Deuteronomy 8:1-15**

**Key verse: Deuteronomy 8:3**

**Summary: God has called us to be constantly fanning the spiritual flames inside us, and it is up to us to train ourselves to make the Spiritual Disciplines part of our routine, or lifestyle.**

**Spiritual Disciplines**

**Feeding on the Word of God**

**“The Purpose of the Spiritual Disciplines is the total transformation of the person. They aim at replacing old destructive habits of thought with new life-giving habits.”**

**Read Romans 12:1-12:21**

**12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship.**

**Now Paul doesn’t just leave it there, he goes on to get very specific. First he talks about our relationship with the Father – one of laying down our desires – then he talks about our relationship with ourselves – to be transformed.**

**But notice that it all starts with this – our relationship with God, our laying down our lives for His service – without that, none of the rest is possible.**

**2. Our Relationship with Ourselves**

**Live a Transformed Life to find Real Purpose**

**2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

**We as living sacrifices should also be changed – no longer conforming but transformed.**

**The world system around us sets a pattern for behavior and demands that we conform to that pattern.**

**Instead, Paul says, we should be changed to a different pattern – how? By the renewing of our minds.**

**That word “renewing” comes from the Greek word for “renovation.”**

**Spiritual Disciplines with “Feeding on the Word of God.”**

**Deuteronomy 8:3 (NIV)**

**He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.**

**Matthew 4:4 (NIV)**

**Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”**

**Now obviously when I say the scriptures feed us, I don't mean they give us the fiber supplement we need in a literal sense, but I mean that these words feed our souls. They supply the nourishment necessary to maintain spiritual growth.**

**I read a statistic a few years ago that was eye opening for me:**

**Percentage of American's who own running shoes but don't run: 87%**

**Source: What Counts: The Complete Harper's Index, edited by Charis Conn**

**What does that have to do with feeding on God's Word?**

**I'm sure if we were to poll the number of Americans that own a bible, but don't read it we'd get a similar result.**

**I'd even go as far to say that we could replace the word "Americans" with "Christians" and get only slightly different results.**

**Reminds me of a story I heard:**

**One day, a teacher was teaching her young class the story of Jesus visiting Mary and Martha. She carefully explained how Mary and Martha had hurried to clean the house and cook a special meal. Then she paused and asked, "What would you do if Jesus was going to visit your house today?" One little girl quickly responded, "I'd put the Bible on the table!"**

**God's Word is vital to our Spiritual Growth. Yet it's something that we can often neglect.**

**I want you to think of God's Word as literally your favorite meal. Let's just say that meal was all you needed to sustain life.**

**Now, knowing this would you miss feeding time? Probably not.**

**Let's say you did forget to eat a meal, would you eat that meal with the current meal also?**

**What if you neglected eating all the time, except on Sunday?**

**What if you kept forgetting to eat to the point of guilt and frustration, would you just call it quits all together?**

**The answer is no, because you would die!**

**Feeding our bodies has priority in our lives.**

**When we neglect to feed our souls through study of God's Word we are dying spiritually.**

**Once again, we are shutting out God's voice.**

## **1. The Value of Study**

**For the sake of discussion tonight, I'd like to replace the word "feed" with the word "study".**

**Understand that these words will be identical this evening, and ultimately point to the importance of God's Word in our lives.**

#### **A. What is study?**

**When we study, we are taking on a detailed investigation and analysis of something.**

**It is more than a passing glance. God's Word should be no different. We are to take a much closer look than a passing glance at his Word if we are going to truly be "fed" by it.**

#### **Deuteronomy 11:18 (NIV)**

**Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.**

**Listen to the instructions given here. They are telling us to direct our mind repeatedly and regularly towards God's Word.**

**Understand this very simple concept:**

**"What we study is the kind of habits that we will form in our own lives." Good in, Good Out. Garbage in, garbage out. Period.**

**That's why Paul emphasizes so strongly here in:**

#### **Philippians 4:8 (NIV)**

**Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.**

**Study of God's Word is not without value. There are definite byproducts of study:**

#### **B. Study Ensures Certainty**

#### **Psalms 119:5-6 (NIV)**

**5. Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees!**

**6. Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands.**

**The psalmist basically declaring that when we live by God's Commands, we will never be left high and dry. We will be able to walk with certainty that God's Word is sure, and steadfast.**

### **C. Study Gives Direction**

#### **2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)**

**All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

**When we study the Word, we have our standard of truth adjusted. We come to God's word to be changed, not just collect head knowledge!**

### **D. Study Gives Wisdom**

#### **Psalm 19:7 (NIV)**

**The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.**

**I love that last bit, because I feel like I fall into that category. Every time I study God's word, I feel like my simple mind is enlightened.**

### **E. Study Keeps Us Pure**

#### **Psalm 119:9-11 (NIV)**

**How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. 10. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.**

**11. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.**

**The word of God is something of a Spotlight in our hearts isn't it?**

**It reveals the dark corners we've hidden away, and guides us back to righteousness.**

## **F. God's Word is Our Shield of Faith**

**Isaiah 40:8 (NLT)**

**The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever.**

**Look at the picture of steadfastness painted here. God's Word is something we can always stand firm on. When we study it deeper, our faith is grown and strengthened.**

**Our faith becomes a security in the face of the world's uncertainty.**

**When we recognize this, God's Word becomes more than a duty, but a privilege!**

### **2. Steps to Effective Study**

**Jeremiah 15:16 (NLT)**

**When I discovered your words, I devoured them. They are my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God of Heaven's Armies.**

**This verse gives us a strong vision of what it means to effectively study (feed on) God's Word. Because here we see a person who has not merely "read" God's Word, but has "discovered" the values we've just sighted, and wants more!**

**When we study God's Word, do we have this kind of passion for it? I Understand that there are many ways to read God's Word, (Reading Plans, Studies, etc.) but in order to effectively "discover" God's word, there are 4 key steps that must be taken.**

#### **A. Repetition**

**The act of repeating something channels our mind in a specific direction, and eventually leads to creating habit of thought.**

**It is scientifically proven, that if we repeat something enough (even if we do not believe or understand it) we will train our mind to the point of changing behavior to respond according to what we've learned through repetition.**

**Think of how powerful, and dangerous that is! (What you put in...)**

**In the same regard, do not read over God's Word once and leave it. Sometimes repetition in reading will help us see something we didn't before.**

**Just the other day I had to read a passage three times before God's Word truly jumped out to me. But when it did, it was incredibly profound. That's why we continue to read daily, because God's Word speaks to us to exactly where we are at today, and may speak differently to us tomorrow!**

## **B. Concentration**

**Concentration centers the mind, and focuses all attention to what is being studied. This is not new concept, but it is one that is not valued highly in our society today. We are a world filled with Multi-taskers!**

**The method of bible study that we teach here (LIFE Journaling) takes this step very seriously. It basically takes study down to a much focused point by teaching the individual to choose one verse or passage, and then journal the observation.**

**That may seem tedious, but remember that we are Spiritually Disciplining ourselves and are going out of our way to "feed our souls" with God's word.**

**It's hard to concentrate, but turns the purpose of study from getting through the scriptures to getting the scriptures through you!**

## **C. Comprehension**

**These two steps both lead to the third step of Comprehension. Do we understand what we are reading?**

**I would say that if we are not taking the previous steps seriously, we will not fully understand what God's Word is saying, and our "study" will be in vain. Comprehension is a very important step.**

**John 8:32 (NLT)**

**And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**

**Jesus reminds us here that it's not just the truth, but the knowledge of the truth that sets us free!**

**When we finally understand God's Word the transformation begins. We now have the ability to move forward in faith.**

#### **D. Reflection**

**The fourth step is the one that is often overlooked. God's word is not simply meant to be "known". It does not matter how much head knowledge of the bible I have, or how many scriptures I have memorized. I must be willing to allow God's Word to transform me.**

**"Study simply cannot happen until we are willing to be subject to the subject matter."**

**- Richard Foster**

**This is where I believe the separation from spiritual growth can creep in. We reach a point where:**

- We think we already know it**
- We've read it before**
- We don't think this applies to us**
- We start thinking it applies to someone else**

**I read a quote from a celebrity recently that said they believed in the bible, but added, "You can't always take it literally and be happy."**

**Source: C. Colson, The Body, p. 124.**

**If I'm not ready to personally reflect on God's Word and what it is speaking to my life right now, we're studying to collect information. That is not knowing God's Word! That's having knowledge of, not truly KNOWING God's Word.**

**John 17:3 (NLT)**



**And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.**

**When we come to Study God’s Word we must come ready to concentrate, comprehend and reflect; and ready to repeat until we do!**

**F. Don’t stop reading!**

**In his book, Living the Spirit Formed Life, Jack Hayford tells the story of a friend of His mothers who was frustrated with reading the bible.**

**He said, “I feel so stupid when I study the word of God. I just don’t seem to remember anything.”**

**His mother replied, “Well, do you remember what you ate for breakfast on Tuesday, three weeks ago?”**

**“Well, no I don’t,” he said.**

**His mother went on, “It still supported and nourished you didn’t it?”**

**Never stop studying the bible! You may not remember everything, but the Word is flowing into your spirit. It is becoming a part of your heart and mind, and it is transforming you bit by bit!**

**Proverbs 2:3-6 (NLT)**

**Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding.**

**4 Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures.**

**5 Then you will understand what it means to fear the Lord, and you will gain knowledge of God.**

**6 For the Lord grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.**

**“Man does not live on bread alone,” and God’s Word needs to be our Daily Bread. When we do, we can expect strength and sustenance not only from today’s reading, but from what we read weeks ago!**