

## How can I do MORE than just get into the Word in 2014?

### (How can I get the Word Into Me?)



Usually when a New Year Kicks off, we are full of promises and resolutions to “get into the Word” or “spend more time in the Word”. Although these kinds of promises to ourselves and to God usually evaporate by the end of January, it’s still a worthwhile goal. Or IS it? As often is the case, the worthwhileness of spending time in God’s Word boils down to our motivation for doing so.

➤ **WRONG motivations for getting into the Word** = to feed our PRIDE [Hendricks, “I’ve been through the Bible 13 times!” “How many times has the Bible been through YOU???”] // and our sense of SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS, that somehow we are MORE ACCEPTABLE to God B/C we spend time in His Word **39**“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; **40**and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life....” Somehow we THINK that

spending time in the Word gives us access and acceptability to God other people are not privy to. A LOT of people who spend untold HOURS the Word do very UNGODLY things / miss the whole point of Scripture [HITLER could QUOTE the SOM; my Bible Proff at RTS...]. CONTACT w/o TRANSFORMATION.

➤ **RIGHT motivations for getting the Word INTO us** = To know GOD better & to know OURSELVES better. When that happens, GOD becomes more desirable, valuable, and beautiful to us. And the more desirable, valuable, and beautiful GOD becomes to US, the LESS we will be attracted to lesser things. It’s also very HUMBLING to see ourselves in the mirror of God’s Word. It shows us as we REALLY are; and it’s HUMBLING. To know the GRACE of God in the GOSPEL... You can’t understand grace without SEEING grace in actions, and the BIBLE is a WINDOW through which you see the grace of God in the GOSPEL of our LJX – from Genesis to Revelation! It’s the ONLY WAY to develop a CHRISTIAN MINDSET / WORLDVIEW. Being SATURATED w/Scripture is the ONLY WAY to develop a RENEWED CHRISTIAN mind [**Romans 12:1-3** . . . ] Also, HOW can you build ANYTHING (including a worldview) w/o LUMBER and MATERIALS? That’s what the BIBLE provides. Also, apart from getting the WORD into us, we become spiritually malnourished / anorexic. To become strong in the Lord and flourish Spiritually (which eventually ties into the emotions, our relationships, and our physical bodies), we need to get the Word into us. Snacking on daily breads wont cut it [some dog bones @ supertime . . . nor will entertainment [parrot in the cage . . . ] Instead we chew on the word until we internalize it and, as Spurgeon would say, “. . . until our blood runs bibline...”

So, b/c of the BENEFITS of getting the WORD into us, HOW do we DO it? 5 commitments guide us.

### **1. We need to commit ourselves to HEARING the Word.**

**Vs 24** describes the hearing of God’s Word. We come to God’s Word -- or we SHOULD come to the Word -- to receive counsel. Ultimately, our belief in JX is tied NOT into going to Xn concerts (nothing WRONG w/Xn Concerts, as far as they go) / NOT tied into being entertained in a church building. No, the FAITH that SAVES us is tied into HEARING God’s Word. **Romans 10:17** “Faith comes by HEARING...” Some observations on HEARING the Word:

**A. *Many ways to hear God's Word.*** Audio tape Bible readings [man in hospital 4 months, "I heard things I never heard before."] Just in hearing, you'll pick up on new information. If you travel, get tapes or audio CD's of Bible reading (Carlton Heston...) & listen to those CD's / tapes. You will be taking in information through the eargate. [Husbands reading to Wives & visa versa, reading to children.] You'll be surprised what you will discover just by HEARING God's Word. Make it a priority for your children to be sitting UNDER the Word.

**B. *When you hear God's Word, you need to pay attention.*** In a SS class, a small group Bible study, a sermon, or WHENEVER you are sitting under the HEARING of God's Word, we need to concentrate on what the Word is saying. Did you know that there's only 1 occasion in a worship service that God speaks directly to you? When God's Word is read. We need to pay careful attention to the reading of God's Word.

**C. *Taking sermon notes helps.*** I take notes. Perhaps you might benefit from taking notes. 1 benefit: Taking notes helps me to concentrate. We think 3-6 times faster than we talk. Add to that fact another fact: TV has conditioned us to have 3 second attention spans... We all have minds that are "...prone to wander, LORD I feel it..." Taking notes helps us to keep our mind on the Word.

Another benefit: Taking notes helps us to remember a sermon longer. Educational reason we remember = more senses involved, more learning...hearing, seeing, & motor skills. Also, "Weakest ink is stronger than the strongest memory." That's why I have a *Daytimer* – some of you palm pilots. Even DIGITAL IMAGES stronger than strongest memory!

Notes or not, if you would get the Word into you, you must commit yourself to HEARING the Word of God. When you HEAR the Word, you will begin to INTERNALIZE the Word, and you will you get stronger in the Faith.

## **2. We need to commit ourselves to READING the Word.**

***In Vs 18***, the Psalmist is praying. He is asking God to do 1 thing. What's the simple request? & Why? For what purpose? "***...open...***" = to uncover, remove, take away. In other words, LORD, take away from me whatever it is that may be coming between me & my READING & UNDERSTANDING of Your Word.

Sometimes we come to the Bible w/a mind filled w/fog, especially in the AM [Early AM = DENSE fog!]. Or you read the Bible in the PM when your mind is crammed full w/the events & the worries of the day. In the AM, in the PM, ANYtime you open the Word, you need to pray this prayer . . . I urge you to MEMORIZE Vs 18 & pray that prayer every time you approach the Word. Ask God to take away those blind spots that keep you from seeing what's really there in the Bible. Ask the LORD to keep you from being preoccupied w/other concerns.

Let me ask you: Are you setting aside time every day to READ your Bible. [a # of reading plans: navs, McChayne, some study Bibles, Gospel coalition, or just dive into a book of the Bible (cf Joe Carter article <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2014/01/01/how-to-change-your-mind/>) Genesis, John, & Romans. P-31 plan...] Of course, reading takes more effort than just hearing. Still, you need to READ the Bible. & as you read, remember that as soon as you commit yourself to daily Bible reading, the devil will unleash the very powers of hell against you.

[Moody, “Satan will do anything to keep you out of the Word, even if it means just getting up to adjust a lampshade.”] When you sit down to read the Word, the devil will throw every distraction he can your way. You need to resist the devil [note pad...]. Remember: Satan wants you to be ignorant of the Bible, so he will throw everything AND the kitchen sink @ you in an effort to keep you in the dark about what the Word is saying.

But friends, if we would become strong Christians – if we would exercise our “Reformational Responsibilities” – if we would hear Jesus speak to us dia his word, we need to take in the word dia the EYEGATE . . . we need to commit ourselves to READING the Bible. **1. HEARING; 2. READING** . . .

### **3. We need to commit ourselves to STUDYING the Word.**

[Acts 17:10-11 = a classic case of people who didn’t just rely on the Apostle Paul . . . ] ***Psm 119:33-34...*** Psalmist makes 2 requests of the LORD: \*teach me your Word \*\*give me understanding/insight. In other words, LORD, I want to understand your word.

HOW? Well, the difference between reading the Bible & studying the Bible is the simple matter of **a notebook, a pen/pencil, & a couple of Bible study tools.** [tools you can have apps for] Please allow me to offer you **3 steps** that lead to a meaningful & life-changing time in God’s Word.

**A. *Observation: What does this passage SAY?*** Fog thicker than the LA fog. Read over 7 times until what the passage is clear. Read in different translations (or amplified) What is it talking about? Write down a 1 or 2 word summary of the SUBJECT of the Vs or Vv.

**B. *Interpretation: What does this passage MEAN?*** What is this Vs or Vv saying about the subject? To answer, it may be time to consult a Bible dictionary. Often times, there are key words in a Bible Vs that unlock the key of meaning.

**C. *Correlation: What does the Bible say elsewhere?*** Trace Parallel passages [N.A.S.V. translators linguistically brilliant + read EVERY VERSE of the Bible 7-10 times! & WE can enjoy the fruit of their labor!!] Use NAVE’s topical Bible. Use word search engines on the internet. Since the Bible has only 1 Ultimate Author, you’ll discover that

the Bible is *consistent* in its teaching. If your interpretation of a Vs is the correct interpretation, you will find plenty of other Vv in the Bible that say the same thing.

A word of warning here: If you trace a thought to only 1 Vs, you are going to run into trouble. You cannot hang a belief on the thread of 1 verse. [Mt. 21:22, “& ALL THINGS you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.”...implications...] Problem: subject of prayer is much broader than Mt. 21:22. Friends, God doesn’t contradict Himself; so compare Scripture w/Scripture & you will get a full & accurate picture of what God is telling you through His Word.

I want to share w/you a great benefit of studying the Word: You will actually feel stronger inside b/c you will be INTERNALIZING God’s Word. By the way, if you’re going to STUDY the Word, don’t get in a hurry. There’s no “instant” Bible Study. There no short cut. Study takes T-I-M-E; but it’s worth the time.

1. HEAR; 2. READ; 3. STUDY

#### **4. We need to commit ourselves to MEMORIZING the Word.**

There’s 1 major payoff you will receive IF you memorize God’s Word, **Vs 9-11**. Friends, memorized Scripture is the Sword you need to use if you would do battle against temptation. Mtt 4, Jesus checkmated every move of the devil. How did He DO it? (& from Deuteronomy!!!) Or to change the image, the WORD MEMORIZED is the HANDFUL of ROCKS you throw @ the barking dog of temptation. [Jerry White, *Honesty, Morality, and Conscience . . .*] So let me ask you, what kind of sword are you carrying w/you? Is it a little knife, or a big sword? Is it 1 pebble, or a handful of ROCKS?

[cf Diary of Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navs...] Can we do that? Answer: YES. [Clarence McCartney, “How in the world did you learn all those Bible Vv?” “1 @ a time, my friend.”]

I read a book on how to improve your memory. I don’t remember who wrote the book!!; but I DO remember what the book said about the *elements* involved in effective memorization

- A. *Interest* [youth & music lyrics; cars; baseball; football] As you read & study, Find Vv that interest you -- Vv you NEED to know.
- B. *Concentration*. Need to pay attention. Stay focused. Read the Word like you would a love letter from your girlfriend / boyfriend / spouse. Think it through.
- C. *Perseverance*. Keep on keeping on. [Winston Churchill during WW2, to a High School academy: “Never give up! Never! Never! Never! Never! Nothing is difficult to those who have the will to do it!”]

We need to memorize the Word. Friends, memorized Vv of Scripture are the stones the LORD gives you to throw @ the barking dog of temptation.

1. HEAR; 2. READ; 3. STUDY; 4. MEMORIZE

## **5. We need to commit ourselves to APPLYING the Word.**

Vv 44, 45... Now friends, this commitment is CRUCIAL. If you could compare living the Christian life to driving a car, steps 1-4 would be like filling the tank w/gasoline, checking the oil, checking the tires, and checking the batteries. Everything is ready to go EXCEPT...w/o this commitment, there are NO SPARK PLUGS in the engine; so the car will not move 1 inch. Application is to the Christian life what spark plugs are to a car engine. W/o APPLICATION of the Scripture to your life, you will not travel 1 inch down the highway of Christian growth!

What is application? *Application is making adjustments & changes in your life because of what the Bible says.* HOW do you apply the Bible? Well, let me give you a Word to remember that will help: **SPECTS** = an acronym.

*S = sin.* Is there a SIN God is telling me to forsake? A SIN that only JESUS can forgive?

*P = promise.* Is there a PROMISE to claim? A PROMISE that causes us to PRAISE the PROMISE KEEPER and the GREATEST PROMISE He's kept, Jesus?

*E = example.* Is there an EXAMPLE I need to consider? The Bible is full of both good AND bad examples / ultimately, we follow the example of Jesus.

*C = command.* Is there a COMMAND to obey? God's COMMANDS or our DELIGHT b/c they reveal the CHARACTER of God. Also, b/c Jesus perfectly obeyed God's commands for us, out of gratitude to Christ, we strive to treasure God's commands as Christ did.

*T = Truth.* Is there a TRUTH I need to know so that I may know God better and know what CHRIST has done for me? ALL Scripture ultimately points to Christ!

*S = Stumbling blocks.* Is there a WARNING I need to avoid? “The essence of insanity is doing the same wrong thing and expecting different results.” Think of the wrecks we’d avoid on life’s highway IF we read the warning signs!

As you hear, read, study, and memorize Scripture, ask those questions. Then, adjust your life to what the Bible is telling you to do, cf James 1:22-24. [Schaeffer: “KNOWLEDGE W/O APPLICATION = ABORTION” Hendricks: “In the Bible, to KNOW & not to DO is not to know @ all. ...re: salvation / knowing *about* Jesus vs knowing Jesus].

Let’s go over the commitments 1 more time: HEAR READ STUDY MEMORIZE APPLY. That is how you get the Word into you so that you will become a strong Christian. Let me leave you w/this: HEAR = in the kitchen; READ = @ the table w/the plate in front of you; STUDY = Put the food in your mouth & begin chewing; MEMORIZE = chew it up real good; APPLY = you swallow. All 5 steps are needed if you are going to be nourished & strengthened in the Word. May God give you the appetite you need to feed yourself on the Word!!