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# GRASPING GOD'S WORD

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Keys to Unleashing the Promises of God in Your Life



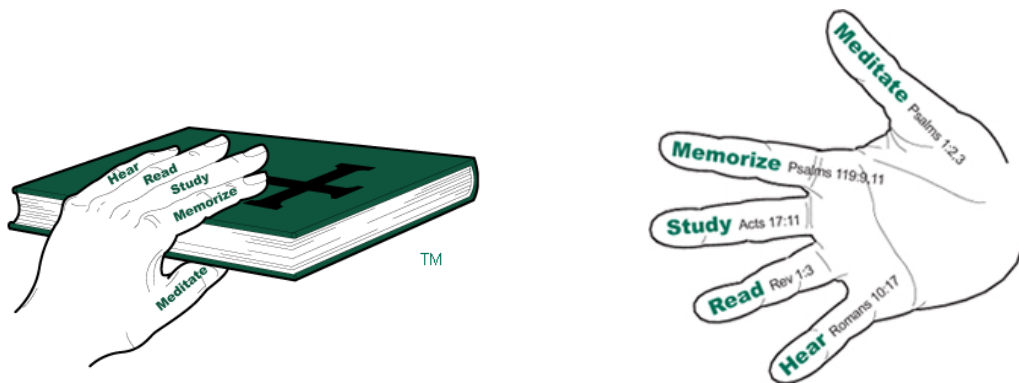
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# Getting a Grasp on God's Word

Merely reading God's Word is not enough for solid spiritual growth - no more than reading a menu at a restaurant will satisfy your physical hunger. To satisfy your physical hunger, you have to eat the food. The same is true of the Word of God – the Bible.

Please humor me as I make a point. Using your index finger alone, please try to pick up your Bible. Impossible, isn't it? Now, try using your index finger and thumb. Possible, but if you have a heavy Bible, it can still be a rather big challenge. Now, use your middle finger, your index finger and your thumb. Now, we're starting to get a grip. Get the point? The more fingers, the better the grip. I don't want God's Word to slip out of your grasp. To grow in this area, I want to offer five things to help you get a firm grasp of God's Word.



## I. HOW TO HEAR GOD'S WORD

"Faith comes from **hearing** the Word of God." --Romans 10:17

### Ways to Hear God's Word

- The Bible on tape
- Church services & studies
- Sermon tapes
- Radio/TV teachers

PROBLEM: We forget 95% of what we hear after 72 hours.

### HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR HEARING

1. Be ready and eager to hear God.

(Jesus) "*He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*" --Luke 8:8

"*How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!*" --Psalm 119:103

2. Deal with attitudes that prevent hearing God (Luke 8:4-15)

"*Consider carefully how you listen ...*" --Luke 8:18

- **A Closed Mind:** Is fear, pride or bitterness preventing me from hearing God?
- **A Superficial Mind:** Am I really serious about wanting to hear God speak?
- **A Preoccupied Mind:** Am I too busy and concerned with other things to concentrate on what God has to say?

3. Confess any sin in your life.

"... **Get rid of** all moral filth and humbly accept the Word..." --James 1:21

4. Take notes on what you hear.

"*We must pay more **careful attention** to what we've heard, so that we do not drift away!*"  
--Hebrews 2:1

**Suggestion**  
Keep a Spiritual Notebook

## 5. Act on what you hear!

*"Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says!**" --James 1:22*

*"Whoever ... does not simply listen and then forget, **but puts it into practice** - that person will be blessed in what he does." --James 1:25 (GN)*

## II. HOW TO READ GOD'S WORD

*"Happy is the one who **reads** this book ... and obeys what is written in it!" --Revelation 1:3 (GN)*

How often should I read God's Word? EVERY DAY (Psalm 1)

*"(The Scriptures) shall be his constant companion. **He must read from it every day of his life** so that he will learn to respect the Lord his God by obeying all of his commands." --Deuteronomy 17:19 (LB)*

### **Suggestions**

Read it systematically.

Bible without notes.

Read it in different translations (Good News, Living Bible, Phillips).

Read it aloud quietly to yourself.

Underline or color code key verses.

Choose a reading plan and stick with it.

### **Did You Know?**

**If you read approximately 15 minutes a day, you can read through the Bible once a year.**

## **A BIBLE READING PLAN THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT IN 30 DAYS**

- |                  |                       |                            |
|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Matthew 1-9   | 11. John 1-7          | 21. 1 Corinthians 10-16    |
| 2. Matthew 10-15 | 12. John 8-13         | 22. 2 Corinthians 1-13     |
| 3. Matthew 16-22 | 13. John 14-22        | 23. Galatians - Ephesians  |
| 4. Matthew 23-28 | 14. Acts 1-7          | 24. Philippians - 2 Thess. |
| 5. Mark 1-8      | 15. Acts 8-14         | 25. 1 Timothy - Philemon   |
| 6. Mark 9-16     | 16. Acts 15-21        | 26. Hebrews                |
| 7. Luke 1-6      | 17. Acts 22-28        | 27. James - 2 Peter        |
| 8. Luke 7-11     | 18. Romans 1-8        | 28. 1 John - 3 John        |
| 9. Luke 12-18    | 19. Romans 9-16       | 29. Revelation 1-11        |
| 10. Luke 19-24   | 20. 1 Corinthians 1-9 | 30. Revelation 12-22       |

### III. HOW TO STUDY GOD'S WORD

"... *They accepted the message eagerly and studied the Scriptures everyday ...*" --Acts 17:11 (Ph)

"*Be a good workman ... Know what His Word says and means.*" --2 Timothy 2:15

The difference between reading and studying the Bible is that you take notes when you study.

The secret of effective Bible study is knowing how to ask the right questions.

#### SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR BIBLE STUDY

"Dynamic Bible Study Methods" By Rick Warren (Victor Books)

##### Study Bibles:

- The Best Personal Study Bible: "**The Life Application Bible**" (Tyndale)
- The Best Topical Study Bible: "**Thompson Chain Reference Bible - NIV**" (Kirkbride)
- The Best Background Study Bible: "**The NIV Study Bible**" (Zondervan)
- The Best Doctrine Study Bible: "**The Disciples Study Bible**" (Holman)

##### Bible Handbooks:

- "**Richard's Complete Handbook**" (Word)
- "**Haley's Bible Handbook**" (Zondervan)
- "**Eerdman's Bible Handbook**" (Eerdmans)

##### Other Important Study Tools:

- As many different translations as you can afford  
(These can be purchased in parallel editions)
- <http://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <http://www.livingwaters.com/witnessingtool/browse.shtml>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- A complete concordance to match your translation
- A Bible on computer program such a "WordSearch" or "PCBible"
- "**The New Bible Dictionary**" (Eerdmans)
- "**The Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible**" (Baker)
- "**The New Bible Commentary**" (Eerdmans)
- "**The Moody Atlas of Bible Lands**" (Moody)

### IV. HOW TO MEMORIZE GOD'S WORD

"*Guard my words as your most precious possession. Write them down, and also keep them deep within your heart.*" --Proverbs 7:2-3 (LB)

## BENEFITS OF MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE

1. It helps me resist temptation.

*"I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you." --Psalm 119:11*

2. It helps me make wise decisions.

*"Your Word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path." --Psalm 119:105*

3. It strengthens me when I'm under stress.

*"... Your promises to me are my hope. They give me strength in all my troubles; how they refresh and revive me!" --Psalm 119:49 (LB)*

4. It comforts me when I'm sad.

*"Your words are what sustain me ... They bring joy to my sorrowing heart and delight me."  
--Jeremiah 15:16 (LB)*

5. It helps me witness to unbelievers.

*"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." --1 Peter 3:15*

## WHEN TO MEMORIZE A VERSE

- During your Quiet Time
- While Exercising
- While Waiting (Spare Moments)
- At Bedtime (Psalm 63:6)

## HOW TO MEMORIZE A VERSE

1. Pick a verse that speaks to you.
2. Say the reference **before and after** the verse.
3. Read the verse aloud many times. Record it!
4. Break the verse into natural phrases.
5. Emphasize key words when quoting the verse.
6. Write down the verse and erase a word one at a time.
7. Write out the verse on a flash card.
8. Carry some cards with you at all times for review.
9. Display your verses in prominent places.
10. Always memorize the verse word perfect.
11. Put the verse to music. Write a song!
12. Get a partner so you can check each other.

**Suggested beginning rate: 1 to 2 new verses a week.**

**THREE KEYS TO MEMORIZING: REVIEW, REVIEW, REVIEW.**

We remember what is important to us.

**"Your teachings are worth more to me than thousands of pieces of gold and silver."**

**--Psalm 119:72 (NCV)**

## SCRIPTURE MEMORY COURSE

The following verses suggest a "balance" in Scripture Memory. The verses selected are key verses in understanding the foundations of the Christian Life and Christian Growth. Do not feel tied-down to this suggested list. This is only a tool to lead you in an understanding of the importance of memorizing "key" verses.

### Live the New Life:

Christ the Center	II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20
Obedience to Christ	Romans 12:1; John 14:21
The Word	II Timothy 3:16; Joshua 1:8
Prayer	John 15:7; Philippians 4:6-7
Fellowship	Matthew 18:20; Hebrews 10:24
Witnessing	Matthew 4:19; Romans 1:16

### Proclaim Christ:

All Have Sinned	Romans 3:23; Isaiah 53:6
Sin's Penalty	Romans 6:23; Hebrews 9:27
Christ Paid the Penalty	Romans 5:8; I Peter 3:18
Salvation Not by Works	Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5
Must Receive Christ	John 1:12; Revelation 3:20
Assurance of Salvation	I John 5:13; John 5:24

### Rely on God's Resources:

His Spirit	1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 2:12
His Strength	Isaiah 41:10; Philippians 4:13
His Faithfulness	Lamentations 3:22; Numbers 23:19
His Peace	Isaiah 26:3; 1 Peter 5:7
His Provision	Romans 8:32; Philippians 4:19
His Help in Temptation	Hebrews 2:18; Psalm 119:9, 11

### Be Christ's Disciple:

Put Christ First	Matthew 6:33; Luke 9:23
Separate from the World	1 John 2:15-16; Romans 12:2
Be Steadfast	1 Corinthians 15:58; Hebrews 12:3
Serve Others	Mark 10:45; 2 Corinthians 4:5
Give Generously	Proverbs 3:9-10; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7
Develop World Vision	Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19-20

### Grow in Christ likeness:

Love	John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:18
Humility	Philippians 2:3-4; 1 Peter 5:5-6
Purity	Ephesians 5:3; 1 Peter 2:11
Honesty	Leviticus 19:11; Acts 24:16
Faith	Hebrews 11:6; Romans 4:20-21
Good Works	Galatians 6:9-10; Matthew 5:16



## V. HOW TO MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORD

*"(Those) who are always **meditating** on His Laws ... are like trees along a river bank bearing fruit ... they never wither and whatever they do prospers." --Psalm 1:2-3 (LB)*

Meditation is focused thinking about a Bible verse in order to discover how I can apply its truth to my own life.

### WHY MEDITATE ON SCRIPTURE?

1. It is the key to becoming like Christ.

*" ... Your life is shaped by your thoughts." --Proverbs 4:23 (GN)*

*" ... Be transformed by the **renewing** of your mind." --Romans 12:2*

*"As we ... **contemplate** the Lord's glory, we are being transformed into His likeness ..."*  
--1 Corinthians 3:18

2. It is the key to answered prayer.

*"If you live your life in Me, and my words live in your hearts, **you can ask for whatever you like, and it will come true for you.**" --John 15:7 (Ph)*

3. It is the key to successful living.

*" ... Meditate on (the Word) day and night, so you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." --Joshua 1:8*

### SIX WAYS TO MEDITATE ON A VERSE

- 1. Picture it!** Visualize the scene in your mind.
- 2. Pronounce it!** Say the verse aloud, each time emphasizing a different word.
- 3. Paraphrase it!** Rewrite the verse in your own words.
- 4. Personalize it!** Replace the pronouns or people in the verse with your own name.
- 5. Pray it!** Turn the verse into a prayer and say it back to God.
- 6. Probe it!** Ask the following nine questions: (SPACEPETS)

## S.P.A.C.E.P.E.T.S. Questions

Is there any ...

**SIN TO CONFESS?**

**PROMISE TO CLAIM?**

**ATTITUDE TO CHANGE?**

**COMMAND TO KEEP?**

**EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW?**

**PRAYER TO PRAY?**

**ERROR TO AVOID?**

**TRUTH TO BELIEVE?**

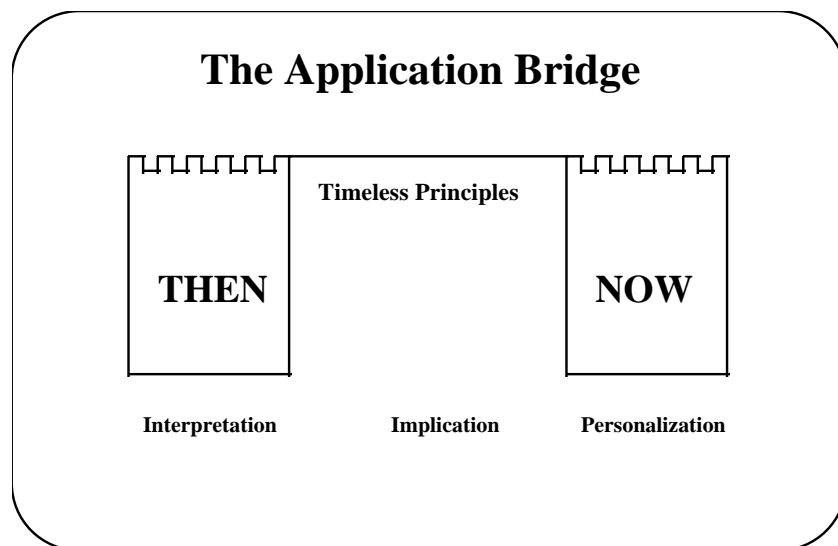
**SOMETHING TO THANK GOD FOR?**

## VI. HOW TO APPLY GOD'S WORD

*"Do not fool yourselves by just listening to the Word. Instead, put it into practice." --James 1:22*

*"... Whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."  
--Matthew 5:19*

## HOW TO APPLY SCRIPTURE



**1st ask: What did it mean to the original hearers?**

**2nd ask: What is the underlying timeless principle?**

**3rd ask: Where or how could I practice that principle?**

**Suggestion:**

Write out a sentence that describes a project or action you will take to apply the truth.

4 Marks of A Good Application Project

1. It's PERSONAL
2. It's PRACTICAL
3. It's POSSIBLE
4. It's PROVABLE

*"Now that you know these things - **do them!** That is the path of blessing!"*  
--John 13:17 (LB)



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