

# Valley Bible Church Growth Studies

## Spiritual Growth and Christian Character

### Lesson 3 – Spending Time with God Through His Word

**Introduction** – Remember that the goal of this class is to stir up our minds by way of reminder (2 Pet 3:1) that we would be diligent to be found by Jesus in peace, spotless and blameless. (2 Pet 3:14)

Sanctification means . . . a life of discipline such as nine out of every ten of us will have nothing to do with. Oswald Chambers

We Protestants are an undisciplined people. Therein lies the reason for much of the dearth of spiritual insights and serious lack of moral power. Abert Edward Day

Q: But what is God's command in this area?

<sup>7</sup>But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, **discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness**; <sup>8</sup>for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and *also* for the *life* to come. 1 Tim. 4:7-8 (NASB)

Today we are going to talk about the discipline of being in the Scriptures.

All things desirable to men are contained in the Bible. Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865)

A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education. Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919)

A man who loves his wife will love her letters and her photographs because they speak to him of her. So if we love the Lord Jesus, we shall love the Bible because it speaks to us of him. John R. W. Stott (1921– )

Other books were given for our information, the Bible was given for our transformation.

### The Bible transforms us

1 Pet. 2:1-3

2 Tim 3:16-17

Heb 4:12

Psalm 119:9, 11

Q: What are some other ways that people may try to bring about transformation?

Counseling / Therapy

Personal Experience

Organizations

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All other things that do not focus on Jesus and the Word of God are destined to failure. It is only the Word that has the power to transform us as the Spirit of God applies it to our hearts and minds.

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; Col. 2:8-10 (NASB)

We understand that the Scriptures bring about transformation in our lives. We understand that we need to long for the pure milk of the Word. ...BUT...

As quoted in *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald S. Whitney: a 1991 USA Today poll showed that 11% of people read the Bible daily and less than 50% read the Bible one time per month or never at all. Similarly a 1990 Barna Research Group survey of "born again" Christians showed that only 18% read the Bible daily and 23% say they NEVER read the Bible.

What are some excuses that we use as to why we are not in the Word? And note that these are primarily excuses and not reasons. If we love our Lord Jesus and desire to live our lives for Him then there is no reason that we should not be in the Word. Two popular excuses are that we do not have time and do not know where to start.

To address the "no time" excuse look at the table below. It takes approximately 71 hours to read the Bible from cover to cover. Reading nonstop that would be three days straight. Unless you are really committed that would be almost impossible. And even then how much would really be retained? To read the Bible from Genesis through Revelation in five years takes as little as 2.5 minutes per day. To read the Bible in one month would take a little less than two and one-half hours per day. How much TV watching and recreating do you do?

71 hours Entire Bible (from taped Bible)

2 hours 20 min/day One Month Plan

24 min/day Six Month Plan

12 min/day One Year Plan

17 min/day One Year Plan – Weekdays only

6 min/day Two Year Plan

1 Chapter/day Three Year and Three month Plan

2.5 min/day Five Year Plan

If you do not know where to start you could easily look in your study Bible, on a good Christian web site, or Bible study software. If you like to design your own things you could try a plan below. Take the number of chapters for the Bible or the Old and New Testaments or for various sections of the Bible and simply design your own reading plan. Some examples are below:

Entire Bible = 1189 Chapters (OT = 929 and NT = 260)

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Genesis – Deut 187 Chapters

Joshua – Esther 249 Chapters

Job - Song of Solomon 243 Chapters

Isaiah – Malachi 250 Chapters

New Testament 260 Chapters

Genesis – Esther 436 Chapters

Job – Malachi 493 Chapters

New Testament 260 Chapters

Read 3 chapters Monday – Saturday and 5 chapters on Sunday = one year

Read 3 chapters in the OT and 3 chapters in the NT = OT one time and NT four times in one year

Read 5 chapters everyday starting in (will finish in about 9 months):

1. Genesis (Law) [187 Chapters]
2. Joshua (History) [249 Chapters]
4. Job (Poetry) [243 Chapters]
5. Isaiah (Prophecy) [250 Chapters]
6. Matt (NT) [260 Chapters]

Read 3 places everyday starting in (will have to double up chapters to complete in one year):

1. Genesis [436 Chapters]
2. Job [493 Chapters]
3. Matt (NT) [260 Chapters]

Read 9 chapters in the NT everyday = NT in one month

Read 5 Psalms and 1 chapter in Proverbs everyday = Psalms and Proverbs in one month

Conclusion: If we want to grow and mature we need to be spending time with God through reading His Word. It should not be that big of a chore. If we love Jesus then we should want to spend time with Him!

### **Homework**

Read Matthew 8-14

Try and track how you spend your recreational time this week then evaluate that against the time you spend reading God's Word.