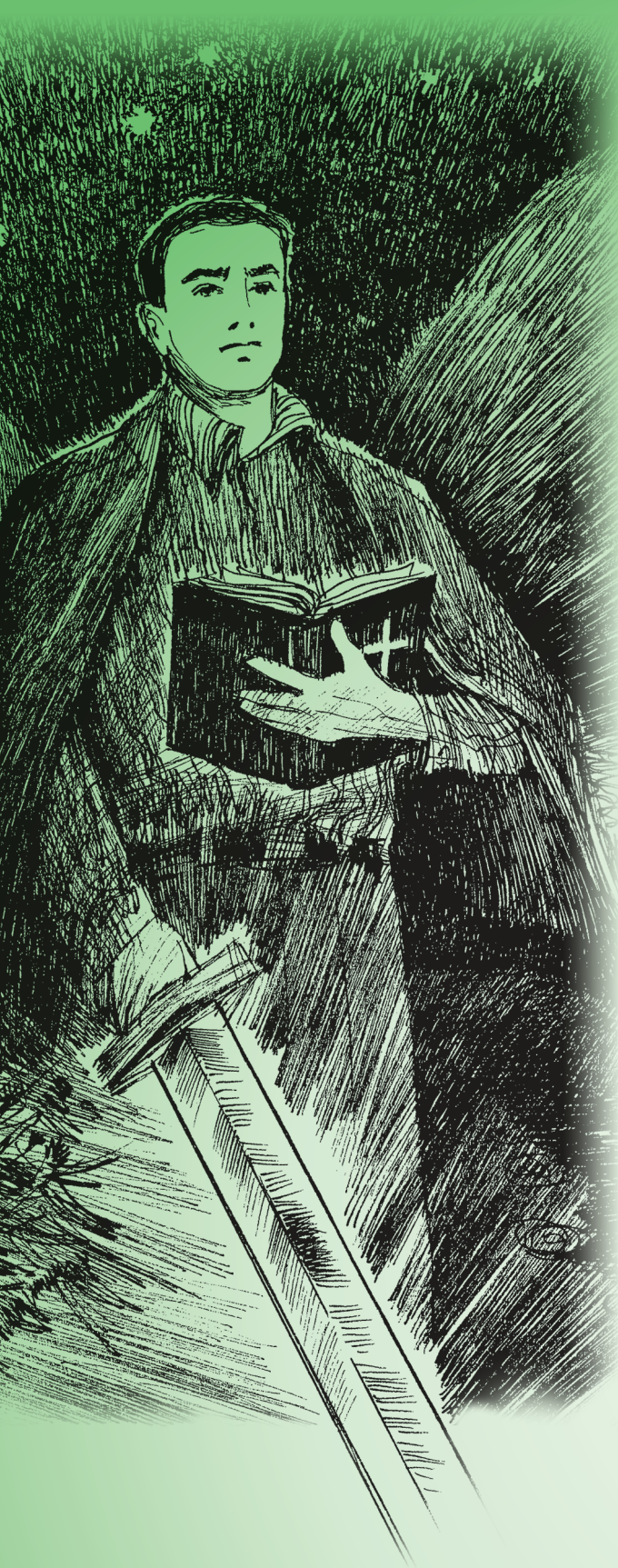


Committed Christian Life

Alive and Powerful — the Word of God



*But grow in the grace and knowledge
of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

2 Peter 3:18

6



CBLT

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Alive and Powerful — the Word of God



In this lesson we want to encourage you to delve into the Word of God on a consistent basis. This is not a course in Bible study methods. Those are covered in the courses *How to Study the Bible* and *Advanced Bible Study Methods*. They teach you how to properly interpret the Word of God and then apply it to your life. However, in this lesson we are going to emphasize the devotional aspect of reading the Bible. This is the daily food that you need to walk close to God and grow spiritually.

This lesson is taken from the course *Committed Christian Life*. Other lessons in this course are:

- 1) “The Goal and Process of the Christian Life”
Do you know what the goal is? Are you struggling to be a “good” Christian? Learn what God wants to do in and through you in this supernatural life we are called to.
- 2) “The Power for the Spiritual Life”
Learn about the ministry of the Holy Spirit to unbelievers and believers and the three commands God’s Word gives us about the Holy Spirit.
- 3) “The War “
We are in a spiritual battle with a determined enemy. Learn about the evil one’s tactics and how to be victorious.
- 4) “Prayer: Worship and Praise”
Prayer is an expression of our relationship to God. Learn a fresh focus as you seek His face before you seek His hand.
- 5) “Prayer: Petition and Intercession”
Now with Almighty God in focus learn the joys of intercession. Included are the basic principles of prayer, hindrances to prayer and the importance of corporate prayer.
- 7) “Walking By Faith”
The foundational principle of Kingdom living is faith. Learn how to deal with the challenges to faith as well as steps to knowing God’s will for your life.
- 8) “Spiritual Transformation”
What God has promised is that He will transform us by the power of His Holy Spirit so that we become like Him. This lesson will begin to answer the question: As a result of my walk with Christ, what changes in my character should take place?

- 9) “Understanding Suffering”
Learn the five purposes of suffering and how our response to suffering will make or break us. We alone decide whether suffering will drive us to bitterness, or to spiritual maturity.
- 10) “Fellowship in the Family”
Learn how to help build unity in the church, our “family”, how to deal with conflict and how to practice fellowship that honors Christ and brings joy to our hearts.
- 11) “Ministering To Your Fellowman”
This lesson which will challenge you as to examine how you can serve others. It will open your eyes to why God has given you gifts from His Holy Spirit, and how important it is for you to minister to those around you.
- 12) “Redeeming The Time”
What does the Bible say about work and how we should use our time? Do you know what your priorities are and do you set goals that reflect that? This lesson will help you redeem the time.
- 13) “Preparing for Revival”
There is much talk about revival, but little evidence of it. Take a look at the history of revivals and the principles we can use to bring revival now, here—in our own lives, in our church, in Ukraine.

Introduction

As you do this lesson, for the greatest benefit to your spiritual journey right now, we recommend three things:

- 1) Keep a spiritual journal, at least while you work your way through this lesson. This should include people and needs you are praying for, answers God gives and where you are reading in your Bible and what God is teaching you.
- 2) Make a goal to have a daily quiet time with the Lord. If you are in a leadership position we would challenge you to set aside an hour a day for one month. However if you do not already have a regular quiet time, start with a daily goal that you are willing to practice for one month.
- 3) Memorize 4 Bible verses. We suggest you choose 4 verses from Hebrews 11—the famous chapter on faith.

Throughout this lesson there are various questions, exercises and assignments that will help you interact with the material and apply it to your own life situation. Note that at the end of this lesson there is an answer key so that you may check your understanding of the material covered.

Use a notebook to write out your answers to the exercises. This is your “thinking” notebook so that you can put down your own answers and thoughts on what you are learning. Our learning is reinforced by writing it down so this is an excellent tool as you pursue growth in your personal life.

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. The Importance of the Word of God
 - A. Benefits
 - B. Priority
- II. Reading the Word
 - A. Having a Plan
 - B. Effective Reading
- III. Devotional Bible Study
 - A. The Characteristics of Devotional Study
 - B. A Devotional Method Explained
 - C. Application from Study
 - D. A Sample Study with Application
- IV. Meditation/Memorization
 - A. The Principle of Meditation
 - B. A Plan for Memorization

Conclusion

LESSON OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson you should be able to:

1. List at least seven benefits of the Word of God for the believer.
2. Personalize a plan for reading the Bible systematically.
3. List the five characteristics of a good devotional Bible study method.
4. List the steps to be followed in applying Scripture to daily life.

5. Use the steps of application with a passage of Scripture and share what you learned with another person.
6. Personalize a plan for meditating and memorizing Scripture with goals for the next six months.

LESSON ASSIGNMENTS

1. Review the Lesson Outline and study the objectives.
2. Read this lesson and do the questions and exercises, referring to the Bible and the assigned readings as requested.
3. The appendices for this lesson will be instructional and informational rather than just reading assignments.
Appendix A “Bible Reading Plans”
Appendix B “The 8x8 Scripture Memory by Meditation System”
4. You will receive new challenges in this lesson to incorporate some different methods of Bible reading and study into your Quiet Time. Make a Quiet Time your highest priority. There is nothing more important in your Christian life than your relationship to God. You might find that you are taking on more tasks than can be accomplished in one hour so you will need to balance your time.
5. In this lesson you will be presented with a new method for memorizing that is based on meditating. We encourage you to use this method and commit yourself to regular memorization and meditation. We recommend you focus on Hebrews 11 and try to memorize at least 4 verses. Develop a six-month personal plan for meditation and memorization of Scripture. (Project)

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Application — the process of taking a truth you have learned and putting it into practice in daily life.

Meditation — serious and prolonged contemplation on a subject.

Memorization — a method of learning that allows a person to recall information word for word.

I. The Importance of the Word of God

Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth. ~John 17:17

The last epistle of Paul was to his spiritual son Timothy. Centering on the subject of how Timothy was to cope in the world in which he was called to minister, one theme permeates the entire train of Paul’s thought: the Word of God. Several times Paul specifically points to the importance of Scripture and its value in facing the challenges of life and ministry.



Exercise 1

Read the following verses in 2 Timothy, and write in your notebook what Paul says about the Word.

- | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| a. 2:9 | c. 3:15 | e. 3:17 |
| b. 2:15 | d. 3:16 | f. 4:2 |

Paul knew that it was impossible to live in a world at enmity with God without adequately feeding on God’s Word. The Bible is the spiritual sustenance of the believer. It is as absolutely essential for you to be diligent in the Word as it was for Timothy and Paul.

The following testimony was given by a new Christian after he had lost and regained a true appreciation for fellowship with God through His Word:

As a young Christian one of the most obvious characteristics of my new life in Christ was my hunger for the Word of God. Rising early in the morning, I would spend a minimum of one hour in Bible study and prayer before going off to my classes at the university. In the evenings I often went to a Bible study or to a church meeting where I could hear more of God's Word. My thirst for the Bible was unquenchable, and I saw that I was growing more and more in my faith.

I also developed a love for communicating to others these wondrous truths. To teach the Bible was my greatest joy. Because I wanted to know more and wanted to be able to teach as best I could, I decided to go to Bible school. The first day on campus, I thought I'd gone to heaven. I couldn't imagine going to class every day and studying the Bible. I jumped into my studies with my whole heart, especially into the study of the Greek language. I worked hard and did well in my classes. My knowledge of the Bible continued to grow.

However, near the end of my first year at Bible school, things began to change. Instead of growing spiritually, I began to notice a certain weakness in my spiritual life. I had trouble with temptations that I thought had been dealt with long before. I was impatient with people. The Bible was dry and dull, and I no longer looked forward to those times when I could be alone with God and His Word. What had happened? Somewhere along the way, the Bible had become an object of my scientific study and my intellectual curiosity, but no longer food for my soul. I could diagram Greek sentences, but I could not hear the voice of God. It was not until I recovered the ability to apply the Bible to my life and to cultivate my fellowship with God in His Word that I was able to get out of the spiritual rut in which I had been caught.

Does this story surprise you? Is it easy for you to drift from spending quality time with the Lord, studying His Word, and communing with Him? No doubt every Christian finds this to be true from time to time. How do we avoid these pitfalls? We begin by being convinced of the value and need for feeding on the Word of God.

A. Benefits

To reinforce our appreciation of the importance of the Word, turn to Psalm 119. In this psalm the author extols the value of God's Word. Perhaps in no other place in Scripture do we see such an extensive catalog of the Bible's richness. Take time to read the entire psalm, noting the different ways in which the Scriptures are valuable.



Exercise 2

List **at least ten** benefits of the Word of God as found in Psalm 119.

Is that how you feel about God's Word? Are you submerged in it, longing for it, listening to it, pricing it above all else?

Hebrews 4:12 states: "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Have you ever picked up your Bible and thought of it as alive? Have you thought of it as a source of power? We have heard repeatedly that we are to obey God, and we understand the importance of God's Word in understanding what He wants. But it is much more dynamic than just a book of laws.

God's Word is essential to a Christian's consistent victory. It is meant to be a vital force in our lives in several different ways.

1. Spiritual Growth

The Word of God is meant to be our daily food.



Question 1 Read the following verses and state what God's Word is compared to in each one.

Matthew 4:4 _____

1 Peter 2:2 _____

Hebrews 5:12-14 _____

All aspects of our Christian life improve as we expose ourselves to the Word of God. It is by saturating ourselves in the Word of God that we can move ahead spiritually. It is meant to penetrate our lives and keep us headed in the right direction.

2. Increase of Faith

We grow in our understanding of who God is and what He does as we read and understand His Word. This is the most critical tool God has given to us to "see" Him, to know Him, and thereby to have faith in Him and what He can do, what He wants to do. We need to actively believe God in our daily challenges, and we can best do that when we are daily and actively in His Word, letting it "act" in us.

3. Direction for our Lives

God's Word is "a lamp to our feet and a light to our path" (Psalm 119:105). If we want to see where we are going, if we want to see the path ahead of us, we need the light of God's Word for direction before anything else. And as we know, understand and apply the truths of God's Word the path becomes clearer. Many people struggle with knowing God's will, and for the majority it is because they spend very little time learning the principles He has already given us.

4. Protection from Falling into Sin

God's Word is a two-edged sword that cuts to our very heart with its truths showing us what is the very intent of our actions, judging our very thoughts. And as we "hide" God's Word in our hearts (Psalm 119:11) it becomes a safeguard against sin. We have both the positive and negative to help us in Scriptures. We are instructed specifically about what is acceptable to God and what is not. And Scriptures are full of examples of what happened when people sinned.



Question 2 Read 1 Corinthians 10:5-12. What are the four areas of sin that are listed in these verses as an example for us?

So you can see that the Old Testament is meant to have personal application for our lives. It is a fascinating history of the Israelites and God's work among them, but it becomes personal as we see their sins and the consequences of them and realize that God has not changed. In regards to sin we always need to have a holy fear of God, and the Scriptures help us to maintain that perspective throughout.

5. Protection from Satan's attacks

This is the dynamic weapon we have to use against Satan as we know from Ephesians 6:17. We must have this Truth ready as did Christ when He was tempted by Satan. Every area you feel you are vulnerable in has a scriptural truth that you need to strengthen in your life. And it is that truth that gives us immunity to the attacks of Satan. He is powerless when we are covered by the truth.

6. Instruction in every major teaching

The Bible is the source of the doctrines on which our hope is based and our lives lived (2 Timothy 3:16). Often people try to go way beyond what the Scriptures teach in building doctrines, but the Scriptures are our source for doctrine, and our only source. The world is full of cults and false religions and we leave ourselves vulnerable to these deceptions if we are not firmly grounded in the Word.

Read Titus 1:9-11. The context is specifically talking about the qualifications of elders.



Question 3 In verse nine what specific qualification is given and what is the purpose?



Question 4 What were the conditions or problems of that time that made this a prerequisite for an elder to serve the church? Do you know of the same problem in this day and age? Give an example.

So we need a solid base of doctrine which must come from the Word of God itself.

7. Success in our Christian Lives

God told Joshua to keep the Word continually on his tongue, meditate on it day and night and live by its commands. "...then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success" (Joshua 1:8). The Word of God has supernatural effects for those who receive it wholeheartedly by faith. When we receive it by reading it, meditating on it, believing it, and applying it, the life of the Word becomes alive in us. The power of this Book becomes powerful in us. The activity of the written Word of God becomes active in us. The effectiveness of the Word becomes effective in us. It invades every part of our being to the marrow of our bones and the motives of our hearts. And through that process God has stated He will make us successful.

Expect great things from God's Word. It is God-breathed—inhale it. Like Jeremiah, "eat" the words of God (Jeremiah 15:16). Receive them like a starved man sitting before a feast. Experience all the benefits God so desperately wants you to have.

B. Priority

When we understand the critical importance the Word of God has in our lives, we also understand that it must have a place of priority. But often we do not know exactly how to give it priority. We will discuss a few of the ways that can help us to make the Bible a priority in our lives.

1. Daily in the Word

We live in an unprecedented time in history. The Bible is available to more people in more languages than ever before. The Bible continues to be a world “best seller”. If you want to receive the ongoing benefits that we have listed, this needs to become a **daily** priority for your life—for the rest of your life. The Bible is not medicine to be taken when there is a problem; it is the preventive of spiritual “disease” taken in daily doses. You need to have time each day to read it, to meditate on it.

2. Personalize it

No matter how simple your method of Bible study or how complicated, it must be personalized. This is not a matter of knowing “about” the Bible, even though there are many interesting things to know. Rather it is a matter of applying it to your own life right now.



Question 5 Read James 1:23-25. What is the warning in this passage?

Do you look in the mirror in the morning? Do you make adjustments according to what you see there? If your only thought when you look in a mirror is, “My, isn’t that interesting?” then you are reaping no benefit from having a mirror.

3. Share it

If God is teaching us, we need to share with others what we are learning. This is part of being in the body of Christ. You do not have to be a preacher to share, it can be one on one, but if we want to receive more, then we should give freely from what we do receive. Even if the other person would not benefit, we have benefited because we have reinforced our learning by telling someone else!

Maybe you are still not convinced of the importance of God’s Word for your life. Do the following exercise, and you may be able to add to the reasons we have already given.



Exercise 3

Read Psalm 19:7-11. In your notebook divide one page into four columns. In column one simply write the number of the verse. In column two write the words describing God’s law. In column three write what effect God’s Word has on a person. In the last column write the phrase from column three in your own words, describing how the Bible can impact your life.

II. Reading the Word

Reading the Bible may seem obvious, but it is surprising how little time the average Christian spends actually reading the Word of God for himself. Many Christians depend on “second hand” information for their whole Christian life, never really exploring the Word of God for themselves. And among those who do read the majority limit themselves almost exclusively to the New Testament.

Everyone is agreed that if you want to get the most benefit from the Bible you need to read systematically. It is nice to have a devotional booklet and read the passage or verses for the day with a devotional thought, or to pick up the Bible from time to time opening it randomly and reading from it. But this is only skimming the surface and will never help you develop in your spiritual life beyond a bit of “milk”. If we compare the Bible to our spiritual sustenance, then for full spiritual health and growth our “diet” must be balanced. It is seldom that a person can thrive by just eating their favorite foods, or only snacking once a day. And in the spiritual life, only reading from a few

favorite portions of Scripture, or just picking out a verse here and there, will not give us the full benefit that the Word of God is intended to have in our lives.

Assuming you have taken *Basic Christian Life* you learned how to read and receive spiritual nourishment from the Bible. This is called devotional reading. To review briefly, you learned to set aside time to read your Bible. Then you learned how to mark your Bible, to record where you were reading and write down something you had learned from your reading of the day. If you have followed this practice then you will already have a healthy habit incorporated into your life. However life interrupts us many times and it is hard to get back on track. Wherever you are in this area of your spiritual life, now is the time to move on. Either use the following material to help you get back on track, or use it to help you move up a step higher.

A. Having a Plan

The most effective way to do Bible reading is to have a plan to follow. This can be a very simple plan, but it is important to read systematically through the whole Bible. We have already discussed the importance of the Word of God, but many people seem to think that much of the Bible is irrelevant to them. However the **whole** Bible was inspired by the Holy Spirit and every word recorded for a specific purpose. So let us examine a few reasons for reading the Bible, not just daily, but systematically and all the way through.

1. Why read the whole Bible?

First of all we need to have the broad view of what Scripture contains. It is like a painting or tapestry. We may look at one section at a time, and we may find great beauty and fascinating details, but we still need to put it into perspective of the whole work of art. We need to step back and appreciate the total effect. The same principle is true of the Bible. Our appreciation and understanding greatly increases as we begin to see the whole picture of Scriptures.

Second, as we commit to a plan for reading the whole Bible it helps to prevent us from going off on our personal tangents or pet peeves. So often we have a favorite area or topic that we concentrate on to the exclusion of anything else. As we read more and examine more it helps to bring balance to our perspective and can prevent us from taking a few Scriptures to extremes creating a spiritual imbalance in our lives, or even leading to false doctrines.

Third, as you read regularly and thoroughly you will have many opportunities to review truths you have already learned, markings that you have already made in your Bible, or notes that you can review. This confirmation will deepen these truths in your own mind and help relate them to the broader picture.

Fourth, it will cleanse your heart and mind as you consistently read and concentrate on the Word of God. We are confronted by every evil under the sun in this day and age. How desperately we need this constant communication with God, with His character, with His purposes. We need to flood our minds with His words so that Satan's lies will be washed away. And as we commit to reading the Bible in its entirety we know that we are not missing anything God has for us.

2. Options for reading

We have included three reading plans in Appendix A. Of course there are limitless approaches as to how to read through the Bible. Those we have included are based on reading through the Bible in one year. However without any special plan you can start in Genesis and read the whole Bible in one year simply by reading 3 chapters a day and 5 on Sunday. All you need to do is make a little checkmark in pencil by each chapter in your Bible when you read it and you will know exactly where you are. You have the option of alternating between the Old Testament and the New Testament, which is a good idea to keep your reading fresh. Basically that is the reason for having a reading plan because

they usually incorporate a variety in what you are reading with a method to keep track of what you have done. Let's look briefly at the options that have been provided for you in the appendix.

Plan A—Daily Reading Plan—Old and New Testament

The first plan has daily readings from both the Old and New Testament every day. This provides variety and helps a person keep from getting overwhelmed in the more tedious Old Testament passages. It starts with the beginning of, so if you want to start at a different time of year you have the option of ignoring the time frame and just marking off daily where you have read. Or you may decide to start on a certain day even though you will not be starting at the beginning of the Bible.

Example

You might decide to start on October 18. In that case you would begin with the book of Jeremiah, but you would already be towards the end of the book of Acts. You would just continue reading until October 17 the following year, when you would have covered every book of the Bible. In this particular version it attempts a partial chronological version. That is why not all of the books of the Bible are taken in order, and often the book of Acts is "interrupted" with some of the epistles.

Plan B--Chronological Bible Reading Plan

This plan is done chronologically throughout the whole Bible, including even the Gospels. There are some differences in where they have placed different passages from Plan A, this one seeking more accuracy. Another difference is that it starts from the beginning and goes through the whole Old Testament without also having a daily reading in the New Testament. And finally this plan just uses "Day" instead of a date, so you can start it whenever you want to and read the whole Bible through within a year.

Plan C—Discipleship Journal Reading Plan

This plan is unique in several ways. First of all you have readings from four different places in the Bible every day—two from the Old Testament and two from the New Testament: from the Gospels; from Acts or the epistles; from the poetical books; and from the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament. This gives great variety in reading. The other key difference is that there are only 25 readings for every month. The principle is that people often miss a day here or there and then get behind in their reading, get discouraged, and eventually just abandon it. With this plan you have a few days "extra" so it is less likely that you will fall behind. And if you are very methodical and keep on schedule, then you have about five days every month to do a short Bible study of your specific interest or something else. This plan does not make any attempt to arrange readings chronologically.

One-year plans are a middle-of-the-road goal for most Christians. Obviously with some extra commitment time-wise you can read the Bible through much more quickly. On the other side, if it is too intimidating, or seems too fast it can be read through in two years. There is nothing extra spiritual in choosing to read it through in one year. However, it is a realistic goal for most people, and setting goals helps us to accomplish things that often would not happen without that incentive.

Because reading the Bible all the way through is focused on getting the big picture you should use a current translation or paraphrase. Having to struggle through "old" language will make it harder to grasp and to stay committed. When you are doing a deeper Bible study you need to be careful what translation you are using, but this broader scope is focused on the whole rather than precise scholarly interpretation.

Psalms and Proverbs

Another alternative—or addition—depending on your personal goals, is to read the book of Psalms and the book of Proverbs through every month. These two books of the Old Testament hold a great wealth. Psalms is full of prayer and praise and help in developing our relationship with God. And Proverbs is the practical book of how to live out your Christian life successfully. To read

Psalms through in a month requires reading five chapters a day. When a month has 31 days many people re-read Psalm 119. Because Proverbs has 31 chapters you can read the chapter in Proverbs that coincides with the date. Of course if you do not read on certain days you will miss some chapters, but it is a methodical way of exposing yourself to this wisdom. The 31st chapter will only be read 4 times a year unless you add extra emphasis to reading it.



Question 6 What are four benefits of having a plan to read through the whole Bible systematically?

B. Effective Reading

We can approach reading the Bible in many different ways. Once we have set a goal, sometimes that goal becomes so important that we lose the value in what we are doing. Do you think you can read the Bible through in a year and have a bad attitude towards God? Actually, you can. And obviously your Bible reading will have much less benefit in your life. On the other hand it is not totally without benefit because these are still the words of God and He can use them to speak to our hearts even when we are resisting Him. But, how can we read most effectively?

1. Concentration

It is very important that we focus our attention carefully on what we read. It is easy to rush through it, mark it off, and at the end of the month not even remember where you were reading from. So focus your attention on your Bible reading. If you have read a couple chapters and absolutely do not remember anything immediately after your reading, take the time to go back and read it again.

The most basic issue, which can never be emphasized enough, is to have a regular time and place in your life for this. Try to do it in a quiet place, and at the same time every day. Making this a regular priority with a specific time will help you when life's circumstances change because it will be a habit which will urge you in your heart to persist.

One help in concentrating is to choose a topic or word to mark as you read. You can read your Bible year after year and always find something new to focus your attention on. Topics that are found through Scripture include prayer, praise, the Holy Spirit, character traits of God, and many more. Or you may want to pick a bigger challenge such as trying to mark all of the promises that you see.

Another help is to have a partner using the same reading plan. Each of you can think of questions to ask the other person when you talk, whether that is daily or weekly, to help you stay on your toes. And of course writing down one verse that stood out to you and a spiritual thought with it is always a good exercise and will give you a notebook full of what you have learned. This will also help with the following.

2. Comprehension

Some of these previous ideas to help you concentrate can also be useful in helping you to comprehend what you are reading. In addition in your notebook you may want to write down questions that you have about what you have read so that you can follow up on them at another time. Reading chronologically often increases comprehension as readings are put into a better time perspective so that you can connect names and events more closely. It will also greatly increase your com-

prehension to take Old and New Testament Survey courses. Look for resources such as a Bible dictionary which can help you increase your understanding.

Read the Bible actively. Read it out loud if you can. Ask “Do I really believe these words? And if I do, how does it show? Are there ways I might be able to act on the truth of these words today? How do these words apply to my present challenges and petitions today?—Ask Him to take those words and sow them deep into your heart and your subconscious mind” (see Luke 24:45). This is your food, your strength and, according to God’s promise, your path to success. It is worth your time to understand as you read.

3. Reflection

This third point probably has the greatest impact and is the least done. We need to take time to savor what we have read, to let it turn around in our minds, fill our hearts, and ultimately change our daily attitudes and actions. Joshua 1:8 says, “Meditate on it day and night.” It is the process of digesting what we have read, letting it actually perform the task of nourishment in our lives. That is one of the reasons for reading the Bible in the morning, so that we have all day to let it soak into our lives.

Let the Word of God dwell in you richly (Colossians 3:16). Believe God to accomplish something eternal and intentional through your interaction with the Scriptures every day. Grow in confidence that every word abiding in you is having powerful effects. The reason it can is the Holy Spirit. He is in us and is the Spirit of Truth.

4. Praying Scripture

Sometimes we seem to dissociate our Bible reading from the fact that this is a primary way God speaks to us. As you read, think of God speaking these words to you and interact with Him. If you don’t understand a verse or passage, tell Him about it. Personalize some of the passages and pray them back to Him. Pray about what you have just read and how that should affect your life.



Exercise 4

Challenge yourself. Now it is time to think about what kind of challenge and further commitment you want for your life in this area of Bible reading. What is your approach to Bible reading? Is it based on reading here or there, or do you have a plan to be consistent and balanced? Have you read the Bible all the way through? Are you ready to pick up that challenge now? Write in your notebook what plan you are going to start using, or the one you are using now if that is the case. What is your goal? How are you going to meet it? How will you make your Bible reading time effective?

III. Devotional Bible Study

You may have already taken a course on how to study the Bible. It does not matter what Bible study method you use, the three basic steps to any Bible study are: observation, interpretation, and application. Of course your first step in Bible study must be to actually read a Bible passage. But when you do a study, you go beyond this initial step in an organized fashion.

So, what is the purpose of “devotional” study? Devotional Bible study focuses on a passage of Scripture and looks at the specifics of that passage, not in a technical sense, but rather seeking to gain the whole meaning so as to apply it to our personal lives. It entails a bit more structure and a deeper probing of a passage than what we have in regular Bible reading. And the focus is on finding what applies to our lives. This is not a fact-finding study, even though the facts help us find the meaning.

Bible study, however simple, should force us to think about a passage and to ask, What difference does this make to my life? This is the specific purpose of devotional Bible study: a changed life as a result of interacting with the Scripture.

A. The Characteristics of Devotional Study

With this understanding of our purpose in mind, we now want to look at the characteristics of a good devotional method. Many devotional methods are in use in the Christian world. What, then, makes up a good method? Five characteristics that are important aspects for a devotional Bible study method are listed here for you:

1. It should be **SIMPLE**. This is not meant to be Bible study on a scholastic level. It should have a minimum of easy understandable steps to work through. Otherwise you can be overwhelmed with unrealistic expectations and tempted to give up before you have even started.

What good is a method if people never use it? It is wrong to put forth a belief that one must attain to a certain level of skill or knowledge in order to feed meaningfully on the truths of God's Word. Through His Spirit, God can reveal Himself to anyone who truly seeks Him. The best method is one that is simple enough for **any** believer to use.

2. It should be **TECHNICAL** enough to produce real insight into the passage and accurate interpretation. Some methods are too simple and some are too subjective. One pitfall which can occur is not looking at a passage in enough detail to accurately understand it. This often results in poor interpretation and poor application. It is very easy for people to see in a passage what they want to see, rather than what the Word really says. A good method will ask the right kinds of questions, making it difficult to use the Scripture to confirm one's own prejudices. In the next section you will find a Bible study that includes a list of pertinent questions to ask about the text.
3. It should be **APPLICABLE** in its orientation. The goal is to understand what the Bible says and obey it. James 1:23 warns, "Anyone who hears the word but does not do what it says..." This is what makes the Bible come alive for us and for those to whom we minister. When we understand God's ways and follow them we see that they really work. When we understand God's promises and claim them, we find out that He is truly faithful. We cannot all be Bible scholars, but we can **all** understand the Bible well enough to apply it to our lives. God is far more pleased with the simple workman who understands only a little but who practices what he understands, than He is with the sophisticated scholar who knows the Bible thoroughly and yet practices very little of it.
4. It should take a **MINIMUM AMOUNT OF TIME**. People generally will not use a method of study that requires more than thirty minutes to complete. Most people are busy, and even though Bible study should be a priority for them, they have difficulty finding time for it. If we are honest, we will admit that often **WE** have difficulty finding time for it. Any method that we expect ourselves and others to use must be short enough so that we have time to **consistently** use it. As a general rule, our method should be easily accomplished in thirty minutes.
5. It should be **TRANSFERABLE**. Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing." We should be able to teach it to others. One of the most practical ways we can help people grow is to show them how to study the Bible for themselves. The best method for teaching is one that we have known and used ourselves, one we can recommend from personal experience. A good devotional method should be capable of being passed on in such a way that people can use it without our help.

B. A Devotional Method Explained

In this section we will introduce you to one possible approach to devotional Bible study. This particular approach is designed to make you dig into the Word of God and encourage you to think through the implications of Scripture for your life. It is meant as a guide, not a fixed pattern from which you never deviate. Examine it and familiarize yourself with the basic format because you will be asked to apply it to a selected passage at the end of the lesson.

Please note that this same guide can be effectively used, and has been used, in Bible study groups. It helps people look into the Bible for themselves and participate in a group setting sharing what they have learned, receiving both confirmation and guidance in their study of Scripture.

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

OBSERVATION: What are the facts in this passage?

1. **Who** do we see here?
2. **Where** does it take place?
3. **When** does it take place?
4. **What** is the main idea/what happens?

INTERPRETATION: What are the teachings in this passage?

1. Are there warnings to heed?
2. Are there promises to claim?
3. Are there examples to follow or not to follow?
4. Are there commands to obey?
5. Are there sins to avoid or confess?
6. Are there any encouragements?
7. Are there lessons about God?
8. Are there lessons about man?
9. Are there praises to echo?
10. Are there things I do not understand? Where will I find answers?

APPLICATION: As a result of this study, I will

What?
Who?
When?
How?

These are very simple questions to use in application. From one of the teachings that you have discovered in the passage, you can decide “what” you will do to act on it, “whom” it will affect (relationship), “when” you will do it, and exactly “how”. We are going to give you a much fuller way to approach application in the next step, but these basic principles are the same, and easy to remember on a daily basis as you seek to practice the Word of God.

C. Application from Study

To make the devotional method work, an adequate understanding of how to apply Scripture is essential. Jesus made His attitude toward the subject clear when He said, “If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them” (John 13:17). Similarly, James notes, “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves” (James 1:22). The goal of Bible study is maturity (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17), but this does not come automatically. Bible study will not produce maturity without our practicing what we learn. It is not how much we know that counts but how

much we do. We are going to go into more detail about application now, simply so that you are conscious of how the Bible can have impact on your daily life and how it can be put into practice.

1. Begin with a **TRUTH**. A truth might be defined as **a short factual statement from the Bible that serves as a guide for faith and conduct**. We glean these as we read our Bibles. Possible examples:
 - a. We love God by obeying Him.
 - b. We are accepted by God through the blood of Jesus Christ.
 - c. Spiritual gifts are to be used to help build up fellow believers (the church).
 - d. We are not to be ruled by our bodies' desires.
2. The challenge of application is to translate a **general** truth into a **specific** action. How should this general truth of Scripture affect the specifics of my life or the lives of others? Here are some suggestions to help you move from the general truth to specific applications.

Ask yourself what areas of your life are affected by this truth. Areas to consider are:

- a. Relationship to God
- b. Relationship with wife or husband
- c. Relationship with children
- d. Relationship with Christian brothers and sisters
- e. Relationship with non-Christian friends or associates
- f. Attitude toward the government
- g. Business practices
- h. Leisure activities
- i. Priorities and goals for the future
- j. Use of time
- k. Use of money/possessions
- l. Use of talents/abilities

Having identified relevant areas, it is important to determine specifically how these areas are affected and what action we will consequently take. Ask yourself the questions: **What, who, when, and how** will I do something about this truth? This will force you to be specific. It may also be helpful to write down specific actions on your calendar and check to see if you have completed them. Another key to applying scriptural principles is accountability (cf. Heb. 10:24). Share your goals of application with someone and have them hold you accountable by asking periodically about your progress.

A WORD OF CAUTION: The more specific we get in determining areas of application, the greater the danger of legalism. What is a valid application for us may not be a valid application for others. Two people may agree completely on a spiritual truth and apply it to their lives in two entirely different and yet valid ways.

D. A Sample Study with Application

The following is an example of how you might apply the devotional method to a passage of Scripture. It will not usually be possible to answer every question given in the "Bible Study Guide" listing. When no answer is possible, move on to the next question, as illustrated below.

PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 6:4-9

OBSERVATIONS: Often a specific passage will not give you all the basic factual information. So you will have to see what the context of the passage is if you want to fill in some of the details.

1. **Who?** You would have to read the context to know that this is Moses talking to the people of Israel (Deut. 5:1).
2. **Where?** Again you will have to read previous to this passage to find this information. East of the Jordan in the valley opposite Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon, king of the Amorites (Deut. 4:46).
3. **When?** You have to go even further back in Deuteronomy to find this information. Two pieces of information are given in chapter 1. It was in the fortieth year and the first day of the eleventh month (vs. 3) and it was after Moses had defeated the kings Sihon and Og (vs. 4).
4. **What is the main idea/what happens?** Moses is telling the Israelites of the Law that he had received from God.

INTERPRETATION

1. **Are there warnings to heed?**
2. **Are there promises to claim?**
3. **Are there examples to follow or not to follow?**
4. **Are there commands to obey?**
I am to love God with my whole heart and teach my children the ways of God.
5. **Are there sins to avoid or confess?**
6. **Is there encouragement for me or others?**
7. **Are there lessons about God?**
God is one. There is only one true God.
8. **Are there lessons about man?**
Man's response to God is absolute devotion to God.
9. **Are there praises to echo?**
10. **Are there things I do not understand? Where will I find answers?**
What do the frontals on the forehead refer to? I will look in my Bible dictionary.

(Notice that several questions have no answer. This will be true of many passages that you study. A passage usually will have only one or two specific emphases.)

APPLICATION: As a result of this study, I will

Here is a summary of how you might apply these verses:

1. Note that we are commanded to teach our children the ways of God. If we neglect this duty, we will see the same tragic results that Israel saw when parents neglected to teach their children the Law of the Lord.
2. What areas of my life are affected by this principle?
Relationship with my children: they must be taught God's ways.
3. What specific actions can I take to apply this principle to these areas?
 - a. I will set aside thirty minutes per week for family devotions. WHEN? On Saturday mornings from 9:00 to 9:30.
 - b. I will try to share what God is doing in my life with my wife and children so they can see that I desire to follow God's ways. WHEN? At our devotion times. At dinner time.

As in this example, you should seek to find one or two applications on which you can work. It is more important to find one application and do it, than to find many and fail to do any of them.

Recording your applications will help you to reinforce your goals. It will be an encouragement as you see the progress you make.

Even though you should limit yourself to only one or two applications, if you have the time to study further, you will see that there are many ways to put scriptural principles into action. For example, read through the following applications that were also drawn from Deuteronomy 6:6-9.

1. I will ask my children what they are learning in Sunday School and try to help them apply this to their lives. WHEN? On Sundays after church.
2. I will be available to teach in Sunday School if needed.
3. I will find good Christian children's books that I can read with my children. WHEN? This week. I will read with them on Monday and Wednesday nights before bed.
4. I will pray with my children or have my wife pray with them each night before they go to bed.
6. As a family we will memorize a passage of Scripture each month.
7. I will make a point of getting to know the parents of the children with whom my children play so that I can know what kind of values they are teaching their children and what kind of values the children will pass on to each other.
8. I will talk with my children about what they are learning in school and help them see what is in accordance with God's principles and what is not. WHEN? Each day when I come home from work, I will ask them how school went and what they are learning.

These examples demonstrate the different ways that one passage can be applied. You will not be able to do such extensive application of scriptural principles every day. Remember, it is important to think through **at least one** application as you have your devotional times with the Lord each day. But when a Biblical truth affects a great many areas of your life, such as the passage in the example, do not be afraid to seek out as many areas of application as possible and return to that passage regularly for reinforcement.



Exercise 5

Using the devotional study method. We would like you to use the above method on a short passage of Scripture—Mark 2:1-12. Please work through all the steps, recording them in your notebook. Share what you have discovered with one other person and then be prepared to share at in your group.

IV. Meditation/Memorization

The habit of meditating on God's Word helps to induce the quiet heart and devout spirit which realizes the Lord's presence. The Bible is like the garden in which the Lord God walked in the cool of the day; read it much and prayerfully, and you will meet Him in its glades.¹

We are going to cover one more area of interacting with the Word of God. It is a sad fact that few believers read their Bibles regularly, even fewer spend time studying their Bibles, and when we come to regular memorization of the Word of God, the numbers drop even further. Each one is a deeper step of commitment, and each one can play a critical role in our spiritual development.

¹ F.B Meyer, "March 27", *Our Daily Walk*, http://www.preceptaustin.org/our_daily_walk_by_f_b_meyer_-_mar.htm. Accessed Sept. 30, 2009.

You will notice that we have used meditation and memorization together in the title of this section. That is because the principle is meditation, and the result of that is memorization. Memorization without meditation has only minimal effect in our lives. But meditation that leads to memorization is the source of God's success in our lives.

A. The Principle of Meditation

As we introduced the topic of the importance of the Word of God, we looked at God's promise to give Joshua success. Read Joshua 1:7-8.



Question 7 What was to give Joshua success?



Question 8 What was Joshua to do so that he would do the right thing?

Psalm 1 is another passage that gives us a picture of how to achieve success. Read that psalm now. Here is a man who finds his delight in God's Word. He meditates on it constantly.



Question 9 What is the result in this mans' life?

Meditation is something you do in your mind and in your heart. Actually any time you are alone with your thoughts, you are meditating on something. This happens at all points in the day, sometimes only for a few moments and sometimes for longer periods of time. We can legitimately think about all sorts of things, and of course, it does not always have to be "spiritual". It is the process of turning something over and over in one's mind. However, the things we meditate on, that is the things you spend time thinking about, are not always constructive, and can even be destructive. Worry is something that can fit this category of destructive. It uses our emotional energy and time, and there is no benefit. Instead what the Bible instructs in Philippians 4:8 is: "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things."

Most of the mental problems, failure, and conflicts in our lives are the results of faulty beliefs. Meditation on Scripture exchanges these lies and their resulting actions for God's truth and His resulting actions. Romans 12:2 challenges us: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

When we meditate deeply on Scripture, it will lead to memorization. You can also memorize without meditation. This is usually what children do. They can quickly learn to repeat something by rote, whether they have any understanding of what they just memorized or not. And often they can forget it as quickly as they memorized, unless there is another motivation to retain it, or the repetition is for an extended period of time.

Many people are intimidated by the thought of memorizing Scripture. School days are long past, and the incentive to memorize is gone. However the possibility is still there for almost everybody—despite age, intelligence, or position in life. True, for most people it is no longer the automatic process enjoyed in childhood. It does take more effort, but the benefits are great. And if we are committed to carrying our meditation through to the process of memorization we can build a wealth within us that the Holy Spirit can prompt us with at any moment in any circumstance. We are not caught trying to find some vague reference in the Bible in a time of need. It will be within us to overflow.

B. A Plan for Memorization



Read Appendix B now to see an example of a very aggressive meditation/memorization program, then answer the following questions.



Question 10 According to this appendix what is the primary goal of meditation?



Question 11 What is the most effective Scripture memory principle which is highlighted in Psalm 119?



Question 12 Why is this plan called the “8x8” system?



Question 13 What do the terms “sessions” and “blocks” mean in the 8x8 system?



Question 14 What are the three levels of intensity for the program and what do they mean?



Question 15 How long would it take to memorize the entire New Testament on the post-graduate level of the 8x8 system?



Question 16 Within the 8x8 system what are three ways through which memorization occurs?



Question 17 What is a “starter phrase”?



Question 18 What is the purpose of the starter phrases?



Question 19 What does it mean “to test out”?



Question 20 What is the purpose of testing out?

It does not take much time to see that this is a very disciplined approach to meditation and memorization, but following it virtually guarantees success!



Exercise 6

Using the 8x8 system. Over the next 18 days we would like you to take a portion of Hebrews 11 and use this method. It is a method that demands both discipline and accountability, so be ready to share in your group how you are doing in using this particular method. In order to do so, make out your own chart, using the example, for two sessions in your notebook, putting in Hebrews 11. Do not use more than 8 verses per session. You may choose to use only four. At the end of each day write in your notebook whether you were successful in reading the verses 8 times. This is crucial to knowing whether the plan actually works or not. If you do not use it as presented, it is easy to say it did not work for you, when the fact of the matter may be, that you did not do the work!

Meditation with a view to memorization helps us think straight in a crooked world. How can we think on what is pure when we are confronted daily with impurity? By purposefully meditating on God’s Word. We can’t read the Bible all day, but we can always meditate on passages of Scripture—if we have memorized them.

Conclusion

The Word of God is the source of the believer’s daily spiritual sustenance. In it we encounter the living God and learn of Him and His ways. As mentioned earlier, it is not a magic pill that makes us holy without any effort on our part. Expose yourself to the Word, immerse yourself in it and then allow it to influence and change your life.

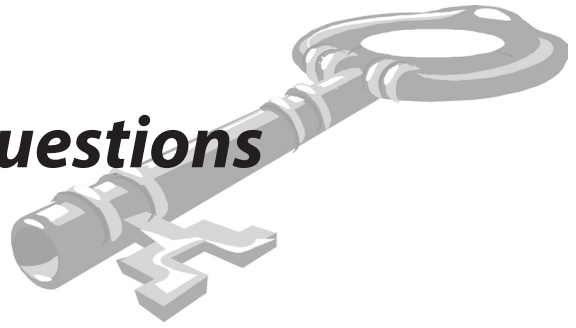
Using a good plan for reading through the entire Bible ensures that you are getting the whole spectrum of spiritual truth. While the devotional method suggested in this lesson is a very good one, this is not the only legitimate type of format useful in your daily devotions. Sometimes you may simply want to read systematically. Definitely you will want to vary what you do during your quiet time to meet the particular need you have in your life at that time. There are no set rules for growing in Christian knowledge and grace; you need merely to expose yourself regularly to the Scriptures and apply them to your life. Just as our physical bodies need food each day, our souls need to be nourished by the Word. As with any other skill, our ability to understand and apply Scripture will increase with practice.

Meditation is something little spoken of in our fast-paced world, but mentioned frequently in Scripture. What a difference in our lives if we spent time just soaking in the Word of God, savoring it. And what a joy to have God's words stored up in our hearts, a ready tool for the Holy Spirit to use in us.

**PROJECT: Memorization and Meditation**

Develop a meditation and memorization plan of your own. Even though we are assigning this project now, you cannot write out your own plan for three weeks. You must finish Exercise 6 so that you have some practical experience to guide you. You will want to include things like: How often a day? How will you remember to do it? What will you memorize? will be prepared to share your plans and ideas in your group so that you can gain ideas and input from each other, as well as encouragement.

Answers to questions



Question 1

Matthew 4:4 bread
1 Peter 2:2 milk
Hebrews 5:12-14 milk and solid food (meat)

Question 2

The four areas listed are

- (1) that we would not crave evil things like they did;
- (2) acting immorally;
- (3) trying the Lord;
- (4) grumbling.

Question 3

He is to hold tightly to the word so that he can instruct in sound doctrine and also so that he can correct those who contradict it.

Question 4

The problem were a lot of men who were rebellious and were deceiving others with empty talk—nonsense. They were upsetting whole families with their false teaching, and for the shameful purpose of making money.

Your answer.

Question 5

Don't just be a hearer of God's Word, but act on it—do it.

Question 6

We need to see the whole picture of the Bible.

It prevents us from going on tangents or pet peeves.

It confirms truths we have learned and sets them in context.

It cleanses our hearts and minds with truth.

Question 7

He was to follow all of God's commands without deviating from it.

Question 8

He was to meditate day and night on God's commands. In other words he was to fill his life and mind and heart with God's Word.

Question 9

His life is deeply rooted, solid, a fruitful person who stays strong—and prospers.

Question 10

It is not memorization. Rather it is so that the teachings and commandments of God will be written on the tablets of our hearts.

Question 11

The most effective Scripture memory principle is to meditate on Scripture day and night in order to remember it.

Question 12

The principle of this system is to meditate on the same passage of Scripture 8 times a day for 8 days. Therefore you have “8x8”.

Question 13

A session is a period of 8 days followed by a day off.

Blocks refers to portions of scripture which consist of not more than 32 verses.

Question 14

Under-graduate—those who learn 8 verses every session

Graduate—Those who memorize 16 verses every session

Post-Graduate — The highest intensity learning a whole chapter (up to 32 verses) in each session.

Question 15

7-10 years.

Question 16

- 1) Through meaning. Studying each passage in order to gain a thorough understanding of the text.
- 2) Through context. Having the verses in the context of the surrounding verses helps us to understand more of the author’s intended meaning and provides a point of reference for remembering each verse.
- 3) Visually. Learning how the verses look in relation to each other.

Question 17

It is the first three or four words of a verse.

Question 18

- 1) To help the student remember the logical progression of the passage.
- 2) To serve as markers for recalling specific Scripture references.

Question 19

On the ninth day of each session the student is to recite the passage he has been working on to a friend or accountability partner. He needs to do this successfully to continue to the next session.

Question 20

It helps you to remain accountable for the time you are spending in meditation and memorization, and it puts some pressure on you to actually memorize.

Answers to exercises



Exercise 1

Paul says the following about the Word in 2 Timothy:

- a. 2:9 - The Word of God is not imprisoned
- b. 2:15 - We are to handle the word of truth accurately
- c. 3:15 - The Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation
- d. 3:16 - Scripture is inspired and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness
- e. 3:17 - The Scriptures equip the man of God so that he can do every good work
- f. 4:2 - We are to always be ready to preach the Word

Exercise 2

Psalms 119 contains **at least** the following ten benefits of the Word of God:

- a. It helps us to live blamelessly
- b. It helps us to be pure
- c. It gives us strength for living
- d. It gives understanding
- e. It shows us the way of salvation
- f. It gives answers for those who attack us
- g. It sets us free
- h. It gives comfort
- i. It gives guidance
- j. It satisfies the longing of our soul for God

Exercise 3

You probably will need more space for the last column.

| Vs | Description | Effect | My own words |
|----|--|--|--------------|
| 7 | Perfect sure | Restoring the soul Making wise the simple | Your answer |
| 8 | Right pure | Rejoicing the heart Enlightening the eyes | Your answer |
| 9 | Clean True, righteous | Enduring forever | Your answer |
| 10 | More desirable than gold Sweeter than honey | | Your answer |
| 11 | | Warned In keeping them is great reward | Your answer |

Exercise 4

Your answer. Don't write goals to impress your fellow students. Make it realistic according to your present lifestyle. We hope that you have taken the challenge to have an hour a day of quiet time. If you take on one of the yearly plans they take about 20 minutes a day. Not a large amount of time, but large enough that it will take discipline to maintain a steady schedule of reading.

Exercise 5

Your answer. Please note that when you share your study with someone else your focus will actually be in the application—what you have learned as applicable for your own life. In your group you need to share a bit more broadly, as well as telling about your experience in sharing with another person.

Exercise 6

Meditation and memorization — no written response required, but you should share your success (or lack of it) in your group.

Bible Reading Plans

APPENDIX



On the following pages you will find 3 different Bible Reading Plans. As you use them check the boxes to record what you have read. These plans are all based upon reading the whole Bible through in one year. If you get behind in your reading you have several options. One of them is just to take longer than a year to read the Bible through. Otherwise you can double your readings for several days until you get caught up. But do remember that the purpose is not to be able to say you read the Bible through in a year. Rather it is actually to read it through meaningfully, both enjoying it and gleaning truth from it.

You will most likely want to photocopy one of these plans and just insert it into your Bible so that you can easily record progress.

PLAN A

DAILY BIBLE READING PLAN -- OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

| | | | | | | | |
|--|------|-----------------|----------------|--|------|-------------------|----------------|
| | 1/1 | Gen. 1, 2, 3 | Matt. 1 | | 2/5 | Gen. 46, 47, 48 | Matt. 23:1–22 |
| | 1/2 | Gen. 4, 5, 6 | Matt. 2 | | 2/6 | Gen. 49, 50 | Matt. 23:23–29 |
| | 1/3 | Gen. 7, 8, 9 | Matt. 3 | | 2/7 | Ex. 1, 2, 3 | Matt. 24:1–28 |
| | 1/4 | Gen. 10, 11, 12 | Matt. 4 | | 2/8 | Ex. 4, 5, 6 | Matt. 24:29–51 |
| | 1/5 | Gen. 13, 14, 15 | Matt. 5:1–26 | | 2/9 | Ex. 7, 8 | Matt. 25:1–30 |
| | 1/6 | Gen. 16, 17 | Matt. 5:27–48 | | 2/10 | Ex. 9, 10, 11 | Matt. 25:31–46 |
| | 1/7 | Gen. 18, 19 | Matt. 6:1–18 | | 2/11 | Ex. 12, 13 | Matt. 26:1–35 |
| | 1/8 | Gen. 20, 21, 22 | Matt. 6:19–34 | | 2/12 | Ex. 14, 15 | Matt. 26:36–75 |
| | 1/9 | Job 1, 2 | Matt. 7 | | 2/13 | Ex. 16, 17, 18 | Matt. 27:1–26 |
| | 1/10 | Job 3, 4 | Matt. 8:1–17 | | 2/14 | Ex. 19, 20 | Matt. 27:27–50 |
| | 1/11 | Job 5, 6, 7 | Matt. 8:18–34 | | 2/15 | Ex. 21, 22 | Matt. 27:51–66 |
| | 1/12 | Job 8, 9, 10 | Matt. 9:1–17 | | 2/16 | Ex. 23, 24 | Matt. 28 |
| | 1/13 | Job 11, 12, 13 | Matt. 9:18–38 | | 2/17 | Ex. 25, 26 | Mark 1:1–22 |
| | 1/14 | Job 14, 15, 16 | Matt. 10:1–20 | | 2/18 | Ex. 27, 28 | Mark 1:23–45 |
| | 1/15 | Job 17, 18, 19 | Matt. 10:21–42 | | 2/19 | Ex. 29, 30 | Mark 2 |
| | 1/16 | Job 20, 21 | Matt. 11 | | 2/20 | Ex. 31, 32, 33 | Mark 3:1–19 |
| | 1/17 | Job 22, 23, 24 | Matt. 12:1–23 | | 2/21 | Ex. 34, 35 | Mark 3:20–35 |
| | 1/18 | Job 25, 26, 27 | Matt. 12:24–50 | | 2/22 | Ex. 36, 37, 38 | Mark 4:1–20 |
| | 1/19 | Job 28, 29 | Matt. 13:1–30 | | 2/23 | Ex. 39, 40 | Mark 4:21–41 |
| | 1/20 | Job 30, 31 | Matt. 13:31–58 | | 2/24 | Ps. 90; Lev. 1, 2 | Mark 5:1–20 |
| | 1/21 | Job 32, 33 | Matt. 14:1–21 | | 2/25 | Lev. 3, 4, 5 | Mark 5:21–43 |
| | 1/22 | Job 34, 35 | Matt. 14:22–36 | | 2/26 | Lev. 6, 7 | Mark 6:1–29 |
| | 1/23 | Job 36, 37 | Matt. 15:1–20 | | 2/27 | Lev. 8, 9, 10 | Mark 6:30–56 |
| | 1/24 | Job 38, 39, 40 | Matt. 15:21–39 | | 2/28 | Lev. 11, 12 | Mark 7:1–13 |
| | 1/25 | Job 41, 42 | Matt. 16 | | 3/1 | Lev. 13 | Mark 7:14–37 |
| | 1/26 | Gen. 23, 24 | Matt. 17 | | 3/2 | Lev. 14 | Mark 8:1–21 |
| | 1/27 | Gen. 25, 26 | Matt. 18:1–20 | | 3/3 | Lev. 15, 16 | Mark 8:22–38 |
| | 1/28 | Gen. 27, 28 | Matt. 18:21–35 | | 3/4 | Lev. 17, 18 | Mark 9:1–29 |
| | 1/29 | Gen. 29, 30 | Matt. 19 | | 3/5 | Lev. 19, 20 | Mark 9:30–50 |
| | 1/30 | Gen. 31, 32 | Matt. 20:1–16 | | 3/6 | Lev. 21, 22 | Mark 10:1–31 |
| | 1/31 | Gen. 33, 34, 35 | Matt. 20:17–34 | | 3/7 | Lev. 23, 24 | Mark 10:32–52 |
| | 2/1 | Gen. 36, 37, 38 | Matt. 21:1–22 | | 3/8 | Lev. 25 | Mark 11:1–18 |
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PLAN B

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| | 17 | 18:18–30 | 4 | 13:13–25 | 11 | | 6 | 2:1–11 | 3:1–12 | 4 | 12–13 |
| | | | Titus | | | | 7 | 2:12–25 | 3:13–18 | 5 | 14–15 |
| | 18 | 18:31–43 | 1:1–9 | 14:1–18 | 12 | | 8 | 3:1–15 | 4:1–10 | 6 | 16–18 |
| | 19 | 19:1–10 | 1:10–16 | 14:19–35 | 13 | | 9 | 3:16–21 | 4:11–17 | 7:1–14 | 19–22 |
| | | | | | Esth. | | 10 | 3:22–36 | 5:1–6 | 7:15–29 | 23–25 |
| | 20 | 19:11–27 | 2:1–10 | 15:1–17 | 1 | | 11 | 4:1–14 | 5:7–12 | 8 | 26–29 |
| | 21 | 19:28–38 | 2:11–15 | 15:18–33 | 2 | | 12 | 4:15–26 | 5:13–20 | 9 | 30–31 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|----|-------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|----|-------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| | | | 1 Pet. | | | | | | Jude | | |
| | 13 | 4:27–42 | 1:1–9 | 10 | 32–34 | | 23 | 13:12–17 | 1–7 | 21:1–21 | 7–8 |
| | 14 | 4:43–54 | 1:10–16 | 11 | 35–38 | | 24 | 13:18–30 | 8–16 | 21:22–34 | 9 |
| | 15 | 5:1–15 | 1:17–25 | 12 | 39–43 | | 25 | 13:31–38 | 17–25 | 22 | 10–12 |
| | | | | Song | | DECEMBER | | | | | |
| | 16 | 5:16–30 | 2:1–8 | 1 | 44–46 | | | John | Rev. | Job | Hos. |
| | 17 | 5:31–47 | 2:9–17 | 2 | 47–48 | | 1 | 14:1–14 | 1:1–8 | 23 | 1–3 |
| | 18 | 6:1–15 | 2:18–25 | 3 | 49 | | 2 | 14:15–21 | 1:9–20 | 24 | 4–6 |
| | 19 | 6:16–24 | 3:1–7 | 4:1–7 | 50 | | 3 | 14:22–31 | 2:1–17 | 25–26 | 7–8 |
| | 20 | 6:25–40 | 3:8–12 | 4:8–16 | 51 | | 4 | 15:1–8 | 2:18–29 | 27 | 9–12 |
| | 21 | 6:41–59 | 3:13–22 | 5 | 52 | | 5 | 15:9–17 | 3:1–13 | 28 | 13–14 |
| | | | | | Lam. | | | | | | Joel |
| | 22 | 6:60–71 | 4:1–11 | 6 | 1 | | 6 | 15:18–27 | 3:14–22 | 29 | 1 |
| | 23 | 7:1–13 | 4:12–19 | 7 | 2 | | 7 | 16:1–11 | 4 | 30 | 2–3 |
| | 24 | 7:14–24 | 5:1–7 | 8:1–7 | 3 | | | | | | Amos |
| | 25 | 7:25–36 | 5:8–14 | 8:8–14 | 4–5 | | 8 | 16:12–24 | 5 | 31:1–23 | 1–2 |
| NOVEMBER | | | | | | | 9 | 16:25–33 | 6 | 31:24–40 | 3–4 |
| | | John | 2 Pet. | Job | Ezek. | | 10 | 17:1–5 | 7 | 32 | 5–6 |
| | 1 | 7:37–44 | 1:1–11 | 1 | 1–3 | | 11 | 17:6–19 | 8 | 33:1–11 | 7–9 |
| | 2 | 7:45–53 | 1:12–21 | 2 | 4–8 | | | | | | Obad. |
| | 3 | 8:1–11 | 2:1–9 | 3 | 9–12 | | 12 | 17:20–26 | 9 | 33:12–33 | 1–21 |
| | 4 | 8:12–20 | 2:10–16 | 4 | 13–15 | | | | | | Jon. |
| | 5 | 8:21–30 | 2:17–22 | 5 | 16 | | 13 | 18:1–18 | 10 | 34:1–20 | 1–4 |
| | 6 | 8:31–47 | 3:1–9 | 6 | 17–19 | | | | | | Mic. |
| | 7 | 8:48–59 | 3:10–18 | 7 | 20–21 | | 14 | 18:19–27 | 11 | 34:21–37 | 1–3 |
| | | | 1 John | | | | 15 | 18:28–40 | 12 | 35 | 4–5 |
| | 8 | 9:1–12 | 1:1–4 | 8 | 22–23 | | 16 | 19:1–16 | 13 | 36:1–15 | 6–7 |
| | 9 | 9:13–25 | 1:5–10 | 9:1–20 | 24–26 | | | | | | Nah. |
| | 10 | 9:26–41 | 2:1–11 | 9:21–35 | 27–28 | | 17 | 19:17–27 | 14 | 36:16–33 | 1–3 |
| | 11 | 10:1–10 | 2:12–17 | 10 | 29–30 | | | | | | Hab. |
| | 12 | 10:11–21 | 2:18–23 | 11 | 31–32 | | 18 | 19:28–37 | 15 | 37 | 1–3 |
| | 13 | 10:22–42 | 2:24–29 | 12 | 33–34 | | | | | | Zeph. |
| | 14 | 11:1–16 | 3:1–10 | 13 | 35–37 | | 19 | 19:38–42 | 16 | 38:1–21 | 1–2 |
| | 15 | 11:17–37 | 3:11–18 | 14 | 38–39 | | 20 | 20:1–9 | 17 | 38:22–41 | 3 |
| | 16 | 11:38–44 | 3:19–24 | 15:1–16 | 40–41 | | | | | | Hag. |
| | 17 | 11:45–57 | 4:1–6 | 15:17–35 | 42–44 | | 21 | 20:10–18 | 18 | 39 | 1–2 |
| | 18 | 12:1–11 | 4:7–21 | 16 | 45–47 | | | | | | Zech. |
| | 19 | 12:12–19 | 5:1–12 | 17 | 48 | | 22 | 20:19–23 | 19 | 40 | 1–5 |
| | | | | | Dan. | | 23 | 20:24–31 | 20 | 41:1–11 | 6–9 |
| | 20 | 12:20–36 | 5:13–21 | 18 | 1–2 | | 24 | 21:1–14 | 21 | 41:12–34 | 10–14 |
| | | | 2 John | | | | | | | | Mal. |
| | 21 | 12:37–50 | 1–13 | 19 | 3–4 | | 25 | 21:15–25 | 22 | 42 | 1–4 |
| | | | 3 John | | | | | | | | |
| | 22 | 13:1–11 | 1–14 | 20 | 5–6 | | | | | | |

The 8x8 Scripture Memory by Meditation System

Developed and written by Rush Witt and Tanner Turley

Introduction

While serving in Hong Kong, China in 2001, we had the great joy of meeting a missionary named Scott Smith. Scott was the strategy coordinator for a group of missionaries working to reach the “Grass Roots” people of Kowloon, China. While visiting with Scott, we could not help but notice that he was continually speaking of Scripture and how it applied to his work. Scott was virtually a human Bible. Whether we were sharing Jesus with Buddhists in the temple or helping clean a tiny apartment, many events throughout the day reminded Scott of Scripture. Toward the end of our trip, we were compelled to ask Scott how he came to know so much of God’s word by heart. Over the next few minutes, Scott inspired us with a testimony we have never forgotten. With bashful humility, Scott described how he became committed to Scripture memory during his early twenties when he began memorizing one verse per day. During the last few years of college, Scott memorized over 1,000 verses! In addition, Scott had also read through the Bible every year since 1973 and was, while we were there, working his way through a Cantonese version. Scott’s incredible testimony inspired us to follow in his footsteps by working to memorize one verse every day. Though skeptical at first, we soon agreed that such an undertaking was not unrealistic. In fact, as we started holding one another accountable to the commitment, we began to see the Spirit of God dynamically working with us to write these verses upon our hearts and minds. What a wonderful blessing the discipline of Scripture memory became to us!

Over the following years, while continuing to memorize Scripture, we began to see improvement in our evangelistic zeal, personal devotions, and passion for knowing Christ. We grew increasingly interested in making improvements to our approach and establishing a highly effective method. After much trial, error, more trial, and now success, we are excited to share with you “The 8x8 Scripture Memory System”. We believe the 8x8 system is an invaluable tool you can use to improve your walk with Christ for years to come! The following pages will provide you with the entire system free of charge. Please feel free to reproduce and distribute any of this material. Our desire is that many Christians, around the world, will begin to memorize Scripture like never before. Therefore, it is our joy to present to you the complete guidelines for using “The 8x8 Scripture Memory by Meditation System”. Please be sure to read all of the material before beginning because each page contains vital information for your Scripture memory success. With that said, let’s begin!

Meditation

“The 8x8 Scripture Memory by Meditation System” is based upon principles found within Psalm 119. Throughout these 176 verses, the Psalmist sets forth the concept of meditating upon Scripture. He says, “I will meditate on Your precepts, and regard Your ways. I shall delight in Your statutes; I shall not forget Your word” (Psalm 119:15-16). The natural result of Biblical meditation is remembering God’s precepts. However, it is important to note that the overarching goal is not to memorize text, but instead for the teachings and commandments of God to be written on the tablets of our hearts (Proverbs 7:2-3). This will bring about a life dedicated to knowing God personally rather than merely knowing about Him. We must not aspire to become intelligent rule-followers, but rather obedient Christ-lovers.

Also, the 8x8 System is not a magical formula. It is a system of disciplines. It is not enough to merely follow the basic guidelines. Instead, one must make disciplined and consistent application of his energy and effort. The disciplines begin with meditation...

Meditate Day and Night

This discipline of the “8x8 System” is geared toward encouraging believers to meditate upon God’s word throughout the day and night. Many Christians consistently spend time with God each day in prayer and Scripture reading. However, it seems that very few take time to follow the Biblical example of day and night meditation upon the person of God and His word. For many, this is also true of Scripture memorization.

As young Christians, we desired to memorize Scripture, but struggled to find a truly successful method. Typically, we began each day with a personal quiet-time followed by about 20-25 minutes of exercising our Scripture memory. However, our struggle was due to committing two mistakes. First, we only gave time to Scripture memory over a short period of each morning. The main problem with this was that by lunchtime, the passages we had worked to memorize were drowning in a sea of daily responsibilities. Only a few hours after we had committed a verse to memory, it was forgotten. The second mistake we made was that we worked only to memorize key verses. Now, please don’t misunderstand. Memorizing key verses is a great benefit to our walking closely with Christ. For instance, think of the countless times someone has shared John 3:16 with an unbeliever or the encouragement a downcast Christian has received by reminding himself “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). Without doubt, these prominent key verses should hold a special place in our practice of Scripture memory. However, pulling specific verses from the surrounding text makes remembering them more difficult and can lead to misinterpretation. If you have any experience in buying and selling property, you probably know that the three most important words in realty are location, location, location. Much like realty, in the arena of Scripture memory and hermeneutics (interpreting Scripture), the three most important words are context, context, context. Truly, context is king. Therefore, the 8x8 system seeks to use context to our advantage.

With this in mind, let’s discuss the most effective Scripture memory principle which is highlighted throughout Psalm 119. Obsessed with the word of God, the Psalmist urges believers to meditate upon Scripture **day and night** in order to remember it. The Psalmist writes, “O how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97). The 8x8 Scripture Memory by Meditation System is designed to help you do just that. By reading and meditating upon Scripture throughout the day and night, you will have a greater capacity to memorize and apply God’s word! Here is how the 8x8 system works.

Students choose a book of the Bible and meditate upon one chapter every hour for at least 8 hours per day. This may sound overwhelming at first, but I assure you, it is not. Earlier we mentioned that we used to begin each day with 20-25 minutes of Scripture memory work. Well, the 8x8 system uti-

lizes the same amount of time. The difference is that these 20-25 minutes are used throughout the day rather than all at once. This is possible by taking 3 minutes, at the top of each hour, to read the chapter thoughtfully and slowly. You may be thinking, “Every hour for 8 hours every day? I don’t have time for that! I’m too busy!” Well, you may not realize it, but reading one chapter of the Bible usually only takes about 3 minutes. Therefore, taking a few minutes during 8 of your 15 waking hours equals only 20-25 minutes per day. Therefore, instead of working harder, you are working smarter. To make things clear, let’s consider a typical day. Perhaps your alarm sounds at 7:00 am and your day begins. Before rising from bed, take the very first 3 minutes of your day and meditatively read the current chapter. What better way to start your day than with the word of God? Then, after you dress and finish breakfast, the time is 8:00 am. Here is another chance to meditate upon the same chapter again. After this, you probably head to work or school. Around 9:00 am, you can take a few minutes to focus upon the same chapter again. So far, the day is going very well. However, remember that if you happen to miss a couple of hours, there are many hours left in order to reach a total of 8. With this in mind, perhaps you have a meeting at 11:00 am or you simply forget about your plan. It’s okay because lunch will be around 1:00 pm, allowing an opportunity to meditate for the 4th time today! Just think, it is only 1:00 pm and you are already halfway through your 8 hour plan! Obviously, this pattern continues throughout the day until you have meditatively reviewed the chapter each hour for no less than 8 hours. It is especially helpful to take time for meditation right after you wake up in the morning and right before you go to sleep at night.

Each chapter should be given individual attention for 8 straight days. This provides in an opportunity to meditate upon each chapter no less than 64 times by the end of the 8-day period. You will be amazed at how much more you are learning and how much better you know the text than when you began. This daily meditation is designed to saturate your heart with the word of God, keeping it fresh upon your mind as you walk through life seeking and serving Christ. At this point, it is helpful to note that the primary goal of the system is not memorization, but meditation. You see, memorization is the by-product of meditating day and night.

To help you understand what to do each day, we have provided an example schedule at the end of this appendix. Before reading further, take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the different aspects of the schedule. By the way, you will see some items in the chart about which you have not yet learned. They will be explained shortly. The chart shows what should happen each day if you decide to use the 8x8 system to memorize the book of Philippians. First, you will notice that the schedule does not refer to the seven days of the week. When memorizing Scripture according to a weekly schedule, it is easy to miss a day and then feel compelled to wait until the next week in order to pick up where you left off. To prevent this, the 8x8 system does not run Monday through Friday. Instead, the days are listed as 1 through 8. Therefore, if you happen to miss a day, you may continue on without hesitation. Until you become conscious of the times at which you should meditate, you will need to find a way to remind yourself of your 8x8 hourly schedule. You may want to tie a string around your wrist, wear a watch that beeps on the hour, or schedule hourly appointments into your computer, PDA, or day planner.

First, notice that the example schedule breaks each day into three sections, A.M., DAYTIME, and P.M. Mornings and evenings (A.M. and P.M.) are used for reciting recently memorized chapters. This is a great help in retaining what you have memorized and in preparing to test out when the time comes. Second, the DAYTIME portion of the Schedule consists of an 8 hour meditation plan which is described above. Finally, you will also notice that every 8th day is followed by a day off. This day should be considered a reward for your hard work throughout the previous 8 days. However, each day off should be used to test out of the material you recently memorized and may provide a great opportunity to brush up on previously memorized Scripture. (You will read more about testing out a little bit later.)

At this point, let us introduce 2 important terms within the system; sessions and blocks. A session is a period of 8 days followed by a day off. Therefore, within the example schedule, there are 4 sessions plus a final retention session. Blocks of Scripture consists of no more than 32 verses and are memorized one at a time. Within the schedules, we have divided each book of the Bible into blocks of Scripture. If a chapter contains more than 32 verses, you can divide it in half until a block of 32 verses or less is created. Each block is important because it contains verses which have been put together for the purpose of effective meditation and memorization.

The last order of business before moving on is to let you know about the three levels of intensity within the 8x8 system. Since not everyone is willing and able to memorize as fast as others, we have created three levels of intensity; under-graduate, graduate, and post-graduate. (The names we have chosen for each level are not important. They merely reflect the fact that we are desiring to live as students of God's word.) Regardless of your personal and professional schedule, you should be able to find a pace which fits your level of commitment and ability. The under-graduate level will lead you to memorize 8 verses every session and the graduate level will push you to memorize 16 verses every session. The post-graduate level is the highest intensity and will assign an entire block (up to 32 verses) to each session. Though the undergraduate and graduate levels may appeal to you because they are less intense, don't count out the post-graduate level. You do not have to be a spiritual genius or giant to memorize an entire block of Scripture every 8 days. In fact, it is easier than you think and will allow you to memorize Scripture at a faster pace. Remember that committing to use the post-graduate level, will put you in position to memorize the entire New Testament in 7-10 years. With all that said, let's move on to cover the second 8x8 discipline, memorization.

Memorization

While the primary goal of the 8x8 System is meditation, the system is at heart a tool for memorization. Within this system, memorization occurs in 3 ways. First and foremost, students memorize through meaning. This happens by reading Scripture according to the schedule, and by studying each passage in order to gain a thorough understanding of text. More about memorization through meaning is available in the next section, Disciplined Study. Second, students who use the 8x8 system memorize through context. Context refers to the text which surrounds a specific verse. Memorizing verses within their context helps us understand more about the intended meaning of the author and provides a point of reference for remembering each verse. Finally, students memorize Scripture visually. In other words, memorization is also encouraged by learning how the verses look in relation to each other. These 3 aspects to successful memorization led us to develop the next discipline of the 8x8 system, Italicized Starter Phrases.

Starter Phrases

This discipline of the 8x8 System involves creating a list of Starter Phrases. A starter phrase consists of the first three or four words of a verse. An example list of starter phrases is available at the end of this appendix. These phrases will help the student to do two things: First, learning the order of these phrases will enable one to remember the logical progression of the passage. Second, these phrases also serve as markers for recalling specific Scripture references. There are 2 kinds of starter phrases. Primary Markers every eight verses (1, 9, 17, 25, 33, etc...) and Secondary Markers include each reference in between (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, etc...) For instance, if you need to recall Philippians 4:19, you can use the starter phrases to help you. Beginning with the closest primary marker, you should think to yourself, "I know that 4:17 is 'Not that I seek the gift itself.'" Then, you will be able to work your way through the secondary markers from 17 to 19; "and my God will supply all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Once you recall the

verse's starter phrase, the rest of the verse will flow naturally. The Starter Phrases for each chapter should be reviewed along with the assigned text for each 8-day period. A thorough understanding of the Primary Markers allows the student to be no more than 4 verses away from recalling a specific Scripture reference. Then, knowledge of the secondary Markers can lead him directly to the desired verse. We created the starter phrase concept as a memorization tool. Often when memorizing Scripture, the reference numbers of a verse are used to remember the text of the verse. In many cases, these reference numbers are a great help. For instance, when you see 3:16 you probably think of God's love as it is described in John 3:16. However, once you have memorized Romans 3:16 or 1 John 3:16, it becomes far more difficult to remember which verse is which. The struggle to recall these verses lies in the fact that every book uses the same reference numbers. Therefore, it is logical to create a system that gives every verse its own identity. Here lies the purpose of using starter phrases. In other words, memorization in the 8x8 System does not rely only upon the reference numbers, but also upon the text. As we have found, the use of such starter phrases is essential in memorizing multiple books of the Bible and recalling specific verses within each book.

We have also provided a suggested format to use while meditating upon each passage. Looking at the examples provided at the end of the appendix, notice first that the Scripture page is divided into two columns with the verses indented for clarity. This format will help you to see verses individually while still seeing the entire context of the passage. This is what we mean by using your vision to memorize text. When the time comes, you will be amazed by your ability not only to recall specific verses, but also to see the location of verses in your mind. Since vision is such a great memorization tool, this format is extremely helpful. Again, the purpose of these phrases is to assist in memorization and recall.

Therefore, they are very important! Use them to your advantage.

Disciplined Study

Our desire for the 8x8 System is that many Christians will begin to use it to delight themselves in Scripture. However, what exactly does it mean to delight in God's word? On July 26, 2004, Rush enjoyed the birth of his first child, Hannah. He and his wife began changing countless diapers, purchasing baby food, and sleeping less because of the new addition to their family. Truly, a baby changes everything! However, after Hannah's birth, they began to notice a very special change in their lives. They found each other smiling uncontrollably at the mere thought of their baby girl. Returning home from work or school held new significance because of the tiny smiling face that was waiting behind the door. Simply put, this intense joy was the product of delighting themselves in Hannah. They were treasuring every moment with her and when away, they longed to be near her again. This is what we must learn to do concerning the word of God. We must learn to delight ourselves in it; to treasure every morsel of truth so that we long for its nourishment more and more. We can learn to delight ourselves in the law of God through disciplined study.

While the first two points are foundational, a disciplined study of the Scripture will empower your Scripture memory. This can be accomplished by using devotional time and spare time during each 8-day session to do a personal Bible study on the text, read commentaries or other helps and to research historical and cultural contexts. Again, the desired result is not memorization of a text, but gaining a thorough and applicable understanding of God's word. Let us suggest some ways to study and some resources to help you meditate, memorize, and study Scripture.

First, if you are not currently in the practice of having a personal daily "quiet-time," we encourage you to begin. Basically, a quiet-time consists of setting aside time every day, usually first thing in the morning, to read Scripture, praise God, and pray for others. An excellent way to incorporate

the 8x8 System into your quiet-time is to use a Scripture commentary or devotional to learn more about the material you are memorizing. Commentaries can be useful because they contain a collection of information from a number of sources.

Second, since the 8x8 System assigns a block of Scripture to each 8-day session, you may want to focus your quiet-time on a few verses of the block you are currently memorizing. To do this, simply break up the block across the 8-day period. For instance, if you are beginning to memorize Philippians 1 tomorrow, use tomorrow's quiet-time to study and pray through the first 3 or 4 verses of the chapter. The next day, use your quiet-time to study the next 3 or 4 verses. You will be amazed at how much a strategic quiet-time will assist your meditation upon and memorization of Scripture. The more you can hear and read about a specific passage, the easier it will be to memorize.

Testing Out

Though the 8x8 System utilizes personal discipline, it also demands accountability. The shortest road to failure in the race of Scripture memory is lack of accountability. Therefore, it is essential that you find someone with whom to share this practice of Scripture memory. The best accountability partner is someone who is willing to encourage you to work hard and work hard himself. We have found that those who work to memorize Scripture without such a partner, struggle greatly. We suggest that you encourage a Christian friend, co-worker, spouse, or relative to join you in your Scripture memory journey. This person will be a great encouragement and help to you in using the 8x8 system; especially when it comes time to test out.

The day after each 8-day session (Day 9) should be used as a break from the normal 8-hour schedule. Sometime during the day off, the student should recite the most recently completed block(s) from memory to a friend or accountability partner. This is known as testing out. Once this is accomplished successfully, the student should resume the normal 8-day schedule by memorizing the next scheduled block. In order to memorize Scripture in manageable chunks, the 8x8 system only requires memorizing 4 or 5 blocks before testing out. Since the retention plan requires multiple verses to be recited during A.M. and P.M., 4 blocks is a reasonable amount. The only time 5 blocks are scheduled together is to prevent having to memorize 1 block by itself out of context. Once an entire book is memorized, the participant should test out of the schedule by reciting all of the blocks to his accountability partner.

Testing out is important because it will help you to remain accountable for the time you are spending in meditation and memorization. It also puts a bit of pressure on you to really memorize Scripture rather than merely becoming familiar with it. It is not necessary for your partner to test out on the same day. Feel free to take an extra day before testing out even if your partner is ready. Also, it is not necessary for your partner to memorize the same material as you. You may be memorizing Colossians while your partner is memorizing 1 John.

A Word about Retention

Within the 8x8 system, one of the most crucial aspects is retention. To retain something means to hold it in. Obviously, in this case, we are speaking of holding in Scripture. Regular effort toward retaining what you have memorized is essential. Without such effort, over time, what was once fresh and vibrant will become stale and stagnant. If you are going to dedicate yourself to memorize Scripture, it is only logical to put in a little extra effort in order to retain what you have learned. Therefore, the 8x8 System includes guidelines for retention.

After reading this, take one more look at the provided example schedule (50). Within the chart, the clear spaces with Scripture in italics is when retention work should be done. You will notice

that the retention work occurs in the A.M., P.M., and during the last 8 days of each schedule. It includes reciting previously memorized material to yourself. For instance, after completing session one on the Philippians schedule, you would recite from memory Philippians 1 every morning and every night during the second 8-day session. Likewise, during the third 8-day session, after having memorized the first two chapters, you would recite Philippians 1 and 2 every morning and every night. The final 8 days are dedicated to reciting all of the blocks on that schedule each morning and each night. **Note, the final 8 days are crucial because they allow for one final opportunity to drive the material home before moving on to another schedule.**

In addition, the scheduled days off (indicated as Day 9), which are only used for testing out, provide an excellent opportunity to review previously memorized Scripture and starter phrases.

Examples

The following pages are examples for you to study and use as models. There are examples of the schedule, the starter phrases, and the Scripture page. The first set of examples are for learning the Book of Philippians on the Post-Graduate level. The second example is for Hebrews 11, just one chapter, on the Under-Graduate level.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR MEDITATION

| Session 1 | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Morning | | | | | | | | | <i>Phil. 1</i> |
| Day | Phil. 1 | Phil. 1 | Phil. 1 | Phil. 1 | Phil. 1 | Phil. 1 | Phil. 1 | Phil. 1 | |
| Evening | | | | | | | | | |
| Session 2 | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
| Morning | <i>Phil. 1</i> | <i>Phil. 1</i> | <i>Phil. 1</i> | <i>Phil. 1</i> | <i>Phil. 1</i> | <i>Phil. 1</i> | <i>Phil. 1</i> | <i>Phil. 1</i> | <i>Phil. 2</i> |
| Day | Phil. 2 | Phil. 2 | Phil. 2 | Phil. 2 | Phil. 2 | Phil. 2 | Phil. 2 | Phil. 2 | |
| Evening | <i>Phil. 1</i> | <i>Phil. 1</i> | <i>Phil. 1</i> | <i>Phil. 1</i> | <i>Phil. 1</i> | <i>Phil. 1</i> | <i>Phil. 1</i> | <i>Phil. 1</i> | |
| Session 3 | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
| Morning | <i>Phil. 1, 2</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2</i> | <i>Phil. 3</i> |
| Day | Phil. 3 | Phil. 3 | Phil. 3 | Phil. 3 | Phil. 3 | Phil. 3 | Phil. 3 | Phil. 3 | |
| Evening | <i>Phil. 1, 2</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2</i> | |
| Session 4 | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
| Morning | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3</i> | <i>Phil. 4</i> |
| Day | Phil. 4 | Phil. 4 | Phil. 4 | Phil. 4 | Phil. 4 | Phil. 4 | Phil. 4 | Phil. 4 | |
| Evening | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3</i> | |
| Session 5 | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
| Morning | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3, 4</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3, 4</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3, 4</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3, 4</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3, 4</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3, 4</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3, 4</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3, 4</i> | |
| Day | | | | | | | | | |
| Evening | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3, 4</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3, 4</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3, 4</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3, 4</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3, 4</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3, 4</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3, 4</i> | <i>Phil. 1, 2, 3, 4</i> | |

EXAMPLE STARTER PHRASE PAGE

Suggested Format for Scripture and Starter Phrases Philippians 1

1 Paul and Timothy

2 Grace to you

3 I thank my God

4 always offering prayer

5 in view of your participation

6 For I am confident

7 For it is only right

8 For God is my witness

9 And this I pray

10 so that you may approve

11 having been filled

12 Now I want you to know

13 so that my imprisonment

14 and that most of the brethren

15 Some, to be sure,

16 the latter do it out of love

17 the former proclaim Christ

18 What then?

19 for I know

20 according to my earnest expectation

21 For to me

22 But if I am to live on

23 But I am hard-pressed

24 yet to remain

25 Convinced of this

26 so that your proud confidence

27 Only conduct yourselves

28 in no way alarmed

29 For to you

30 experiencing the same conflict

Primary Markers

1 Paul and Timothy

9 And this I pray

17 the former proclaim Christ

25 Convinced of this

A printed copy of the Starter Phrase Page and the Scripture Study Page may be cut down and folded into a convenient size for use throughout the day.

EXAMPLE SCRIPTURE STUDY PAGE

Suggested Format for Study of Scripture — Philippians 1

- 1 **Paul and Timothy**, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:
- 2 *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- 3 *I thank my God* in all my remembrance of you,
- 4 *always offering prayer* with joy in my every prayer for you all,
- 5 *in view of your participation* in the gospel from the first day until now.
- 6 *For I am confident* of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
- 7 *For it is only right* for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.
- 8 *For God is my witness*, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.
- 9 **And this I pray**, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,
- 10 *so that you may approve* the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;
- 11 *having been filled* with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.
- 12 *Now I want you to know*, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,
- 13 *so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ* has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,
- 14 *and that most of the brethren*, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.
- 15 *Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ* even from envy and strife, but some also from good will;
- 16 *the latter do it out of love*, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel;
- 17 **the former proclaim Christ** out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.
- 18 *What then?* Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,
- 19 *for I know* that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,
- 20 *according to my earnest expectation* and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but *that* with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.
- 21 *For to me*, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
- 22 *But if I am to live on in the flesh*, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose.
- 23 *But I am hard-pressed from both directions*, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *that* is very much better;
- 24 *yet to remain on in the flesh* is more necessary for your sake.
- 25 **Convinced of this**, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith,
- 26 *so that your proud confidence* in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.
- 27 *Only conduct yourselves* in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so *that* whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;
- 28 *in no way alarmed by your opponents*--which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.
- 29 *For to you* it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in *Him*, but also to suffer for His sake,
- 30 *experiencing the same conflict* which you saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me

SCHEDULE FOR MEDITATION ON HEBREWS 11

| Session 1 | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
|-----------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Morning | | | | | | | | | Heb. 11:1–8 |
| Day | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | |
| Evening | | | | | | | | | |
| Session 2 | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
| Morning | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:9–16 |
| Day | Heb. 11:9–16 | Heb. 11:9–16 | Heb. 11:9–16 | Heb. 11:9–16 | Heb. 11:9–16 | Heb. 11:9–16 | Heb. 11:9–16 | Heb. 11:9–16 | |
| Evening | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | Heb. 11:1–8 | |
| Session 3 | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
| Morning | Heb. 11:1–16 | Heb. 11:1–16 | Heb. 11:1–16 | Heb. 11:1–16 | Heb. 11:1–16 | Heb. 11:1–16 | Heb. 11:1–16 | Heb. 11:1–16 | Heb. 11:17–24 |
| Day | Heb. 11:17–24 | Heb. 11:17–24 | Heb. 11:17–24 | Heb. 11:17–24 | Heb. 11:17–24 | Heb. 11:17–24 | Heb. 11:17–24 | Heb. 11:17–24 | |
| Evening | Heb. 11:1–16 | Heb. 11:1–16 | Heb. 11:1–16 | Heb. 11:1–16 | Heb. 11:1–16 | Heb. 11:1–16 | Heb. 11:1–16 | Heb. 11:1–16 | |
| Session 4 | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
| Morning | Heb. 11:1–24 | Heb. 11:1–24 | Heb. 11:1–24 | Heb. 11:1–24 | Heb. 11:1–24 | Heb. 11:1–24 | Heb. 11:1–24 | Heb. 11:1–24 | Heb. 11:25–32 |
| Day | Heb. 11:25–32 | Heb. 11:25–32 | Heb. 11:25–32 | Heb. 11:25–32 | Heb. 11:25–32 | Heb. 11:25–32 | Heb. 11:25–32 | Heb. 11:25–32 | |
| Evening | Heb. 11:1–24 | Heb. 11:1–24 | Heb. 11:1–24 | Heb. 11:1–24 | Heb. 11:1–24 | Heb. 11:1–24 | Heb. 11:1–24 | Heb. 11:1–24 | |
| Session 5 | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
| Morning | Heb. 11:1–32 | Heb. 11:1–32 | Heb. 11:1–32 | Heb. 11:1–32 | Heb. 11:1–32 | Heb. 11:1–32 | Heb. 11:1–32 | Heb. 11:1–32 | Heb. 11:33–40 |
| Day | Heb. 11:33–40 | Heb. 11:33–40 | Heb. 11:33–40 | Heb. 11:33–40 | Heb. 11:33–40 | Heb. 11:33–40 | Heb. 11:33–40 | Heb. 11:33–40 | |
| Evening | Heb. 11:1–32 | Heb. 11:1–32 | Heb. 11:1–32 | Heb. 11:1–32 | Heb. 11:1–32 | Heb. 11:1–32 | Heb. 11:1–32 | Heb. 11:1–32 | |
| Session 6 | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
| Morning | Heb. 11:1–40 | Heb. 11:1–40 | Heb. 11:1–40 | Heb. 11:1–40 | Heb. 11:1–40 | Heb. 11:1–40 | Heb. 11:1–40 | Heb. 11:1–40 | |
| Day | | | | | | | | | |
| Evening | Heb. 11:1–40 | Heb. 11:1–40 | Heb. 11:1–40 | Heb. 11:1–40 | Heb. 11:1–40 | Heb. 11:1–40 | Heb. 11:1–40 | Heb. 11:1–40 | |

HEBREWS 11 STARTER PHRASES

1 Now faith

2 For by it

3 By faith we understand t

4 By faith Abel

5 By faith Enoch

6 And without faith

7 By faith Noah,

8 By faith Abraham,

9 By faith he lived

10 for he was looking

11 By faith even Sarah

12 Therefore there was born

13 All these died in faith,

14 For those who say

15 And indeed

16 But as it is

17 By faith Abraham

18 it was he

19 He considered

20 By faith Isaac

21 By faith Jacob

22 By faith Joseph

23 By faith Moses

24 By faith Moses

25 choosing rather to endure

26 considering the reproach

27 By faith he left Egypt

28 By faith he kept

29 By faith they passed

30 By faith the walls of Jericho

31 By faith Rahab

32 And what more

33 who by faith

34 quenched the power of fire

35 Women received back

36 and others experienced

37 They were stoned

38 (men of whom the world

39 And all these

40 because God

Primary Markers

1 Now faith

9 By faith he lived

17 By faith Abraham

25 choosing rather to endure

32 And what more

40 because God

HEBREWS 11 STUDY PAGE

- 1 **Now faith** is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
- 2 *For by it* the men of old gained approval.
- 3 *By faith* we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.
- 4 *By faith* Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.
- 5 *By faith* Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.
- 6 *And without faith* it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.
- 7 *By faith* Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.
- 8 *By faith* Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.
- 9 **By faith he lived** as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign *land*, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;
- 10 *for he was looking* for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.
- 11 *By faith even Sarah* herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.
- 12 *Therefore there was born* even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, *as many descendants* AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN
- IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.
- 13 *All these died in faith*, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.
- 14 *For those who say such things* make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.
- 15 *And indeed* if they had been thinking of that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.
- 16 *But as it is*, they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.
- 17 **By faith Abraham**, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;
- 18 *it was he* to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED."
- 19 *He considered* that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.
- 20 *By faith* Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.
- 21 *By faith* Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, *leaning* on the top of his staff.
- 22 *By faith* Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.
- 23 *By faith* Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.
- 24 *By faith* Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,
- 25 **choosing rather to endure** ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

26 *considering the reproach* of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

27 *By faith he left Egypt*, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.

28 *By faith he kept the Passover* and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them.

29 *By faith they passed through* the Red Sea as though *they were passing* through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.

30 *By faith the walls of Jericho* fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.

31 *By faith Rahab* the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

32 *And what more* shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets,

33 *who by faith* conquered kingdoms, performed *acts of righteousness*, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,

34 *quenched the power of fire*, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

35 *Women received back their dead* by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;

36 *and others experienced* mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.

37 *They were stoned*, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

38 (*men of whom the world was not worthy*), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

39 *And all these*, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

40 *because God* had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.