



## HIGHEST PRAISE APOSTOLIC CHURCH FALL CURRICULUM

# SERIES: PRACTICING THE LIFE OF JESUS

### SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

## LESSON: BIBLE INTAKE

CONCEPTS OF THIS LESSON ARE DERIVED FROM DONALD WHITNEY'S BOOK, *SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE*

**SERIES FOCUS:** This series focuses on studying the life of Jesus Christ and finding practical applications for the life of every believer. How can I, as a follower of Christ, imitate Christ? How can we put into practice the life of Jesus, into our everyday lives?

**LESSON FOCUS:** This lesson focuses on the spiritual discipline of learning from God's Word. We draw life and inspiration from God's Word. Every day, we need His Word.

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome, everyone, to our Bible study on spiritual discipline. Today, we're diving into the vital topic of Bible intake, drawing inspiration from the word of God. As Christians, we emphasize the importance of God's Word in our lives. Let's begin by opening in prayer:

*"Dear Heavenly Father, we come before you with open hearts, eager to learn and grow through your Word. We ask for your guidance and illumination as we study together today. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."*

## UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLE INTAKE

### What do we mean by “bible intake”?

Bible intake means making an effort to read, study, listen to, remember, and think about the Bible regularly. It's like feeding your soul with the wisdom and teachings from God's Word to grow in your faith and connection with God.

The simple reality is that the Bible is the primary tool that shapes our faith and sets the trajectory for our spiritual growth. Yes, spiritual disciplines like prayer and fasting are vital. But the truth is that if they are not accompanied by the truth of the word of God then they are vulnerable to misdirection. The more that we can consume the God's word, the more we will reflect the character of God in this life.

## UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLE INTAKE

### What are some ways we can go about bible intake?

#### A. Hearing:

*Read and discuss Romans 10:16-17 (ESV):*

- ⇒ “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”

How does hearing the Word impact our faith?

- ⇒ It teaches us what faith is and confirms our inward experience of it.

#### B. Reading:

*Share some personal insights on the benefits of regular Bible reading.*

It is important to distinguish between reading and studying. Practicing the spiritual discipline of reading the Bible can be best understood as one word, **exposure**.

As believers, we want to daily expose ourselves to the scriptures. This can be accomplished in different ways. Here are a few:

- ⇒ Start a bible reading plan
- ⇒ Read through the whole Bible starting at the beginning of the year.
- ⇒ Download a phone app (ex. the Bible app) and read the daily verse.

What examples can you come up with?

**Remember:** *The point of our reading is to expose our ears and hearts to the word. Not in-depth study.*

Daily reading creates subtle transformation in Christlikeness.

### **C. Studying:**

*Explore the difference between reading and studying Scripture.*

Learning to study the Bible can seem a bit overwhelming at times. It is important to distinguish what studying the Bible is not. It is not listening to a sermon; it is not hearing a worship song.

These wonderful practices enhance our spiritual life, but they do not replace the discipline of studying the word of God. They should be looked at as separate from study.

#### **So how can we begin fruitful study of the word of God?**

This question can be an entire lesson in and of itself, but here are a few helpful starting points:

- ⇒ Study a theme in the Bible (grace, worship, love, law, etc.) Highlight all of the scriptures you can find in a particular color.
- ⇒ In the same color, highlight all of the New Testament quotations of Old Testament verses. This really helps show the connection of the Old and New Testaments.
- ⇒ Study an interesting theological topic like eschatology or oneness theology. Make a list of passages on this topic.

### **D. Memorizing:**

**Psalm 119:11 (ESV):** “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”

*Discuss the importance of hiding God's Word in our hearts.*

This is one of the most overlooked spiritual disciplines. We often don't think scripture memorization to be of much importance, but this is a lie! We defeat

the temptations of the enemy by the truth of the word of God. It takes memorization to recall scripture when we need it most.

*Tip: Memorization is a developed skill, the more you practice it, the better you will become at it.*

### **E. Meditating:**

*Reflect on the value of meditating on Scripture day and night.*

**Psalm 1:2 (ESV):** "...but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night."

The concept of meditation has been largely influenced by pagan practices like Yoga and Buddhism. This is not at all what we mean by meditation. The difference with biblical meditation is that we are not waiting for an internal source of truth to enlighten us. **The truth is NOT inside ourselves.**

We are not calming our breathing until we are enlightened with some subjective truth. No, biblical meditation is exactly the opposite.

Biblical meditation is all about reading scripture and pondering on it for an extended, undistracted period of time. Often times, when we read the word of God we do so in a hurry. Meditation demands that we sit in the truths of God's word. This practice allows the Holy Spirit to minister to us on a deeper level.

## **PRACTICAL STEPS FOR BIBLE INTAKE**

- A. Establish a Routine:** *Share tips for creating a consistent Bible intake routine.*
- B. Choose a Translation:** *Discuss various Bible translations and their suitability for different purposes.*
- C. Journaling:** *Explore the benefits of keeping a spiritual journal for Bible study.*
- D. Accountability:** *Encourage group members to find an accountability partner for Bible intake.*

## **CONCLUSION**

In closing, remember that Bible intake is not about quantity but about quality. As we immerse ourselves in God's Word, we grow closer to Him and become more Christlike.

Let's commit to regular Bible intake, using the methods discussed today, and watch how God transforms our lives.

**Closing Prayer:**

*“Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time of study and fellowship. May your Word take root in our hearts and bear fruit in our lives. Guide us as we seek to grow in our relationship with you. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.”*

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. *Share a personal experience of how Bible intake has impacted your faith.*
2. *What are some good habits, or practices, of Bible intake that you enjoy?*
3. *How can we apply God's Word to our lives daily?*

**OPTIONAL HOMEWORK**

⇒ Read a chapter from Donald Whitney's "Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life" related to Bible intake.

a. Amazon Link: <https://a.co/d/3jTEoIQ>

⇒ Start or continue a Bible reading plan and share your insights with the group next week.