

Holy Habits 1 3-12-00

Word/Study/Meditation/Memorization/Review

We have seen in the past few weeks the great need to be hungering and thirsting for righteousness. We know the life of Christ expressing Himself through us is the only way to live. We also know our soul will not readily yield the Spirit within us. Paul told Timothy to train himself to be godly. 1Tim 4:7,8

Train – *gunmazo* – to exercise vigorously – present active imperative. Something we must do! These training exercises are things that as OC says, “Keep our soul fit” in other words, it keeps our soul in submission to our spirit.

Remember the goal is not some ritual of life style but tools to keep us in submission to the Spirit. Paul told the Romans that the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. 8:6 The best way to bring the mind in submission to the Spirit is to wash it with the Word. Eph 5:26 The Word is powerful and able to separate between the soul and spirit. Heb 4:12 It will help us see what is of the spirit where the life of Christ is in us and what is of the soul.

So we begin with the covenant we made at the beginning of the year to be in the Word daily. Bonnie helped us take a look at methods of examining the word more carefully, inductive study. It takes time, usually a set time each day to take a passage and really let the Lord speak to us through it. Start by asking the Lord to speak to you through His Word. Expect Him to meet you there. Get a quiet time when you will be undisturbed and focus on a passage. It is great to read an entire letter or book of Scripture, to put in a cassette of the Bible while driving, but for daily feeding of the soul I would recommend a short passage with at least a half an hour to examine it. Look up cross-references and other passages that come to mind.

Part of personal examination of the Word is meditation. Once we have determined the principle in that passage we should take some time to think about it. Some people have a problem with the word meditation but it is quite different from Eastern type of meditation where the mind is emptied. That can be dangerous. Scripture meditation is to fill your mind with the Word and consider the applications in all areas of your life. Psalm 1:2 says the blessed man meditates in the Word day and night. It is not something you only do during that set aside time, but what you take with you from that time through the day. Verse three says if you do that you will flourish and be prosperous. That does not mean necessarily that you will be wealthy or materially prosperous, but it does mean what ever your physical condition you will be spiritually prosperous – the victorious overcoming life. Josh 1:8 also tells us to meditate day and night on the word and promises prosperity to those who do.

If you are not flourishing spiritually it may be because you are not meditating on God's word. This is a principle that is always true. Meditate on the Word and you will prosper spiritually. Too often we rush through our word time and take nothing with us through the day. Meditation is chewing on the meat so that it is clear in our mind what is being said or taught. If someone asks us about what we read, it is right there. We are meditating on it day and night. What happens is that our worldly thought

patterns are replaced by Godly truths and principles. The Holy Spirit has access to that Scripture to remind you when you need it to check your behavior and help you turn to the life of Christ.

Memorization is another holy habit. When we hide the Word in our heart we empower our soul not to sin against God. Ps 119:11 Jesus confronted Satan with the memorized Word of God. He quoted Scripture in answer to questions. He quoted Scripture as He taught. Jesus was overflowing with the Word all the time. The Apostle Paul's writings too, are filled with OT Scripture that came from his memory.

As with all holy habits it looks like an impossible task but a regular consistent effort produces big results in time. Working on only a verse or two a week you can memorize numerous chapters. You don't need a great long term memory, just consistency. Exercise trainers will tell you the key to fitness is not the routine or the style but consistency. If we will commit to doing it regularly we will see improvement. Soon you will have many Scriptures in the treasury of your mind to apply to life's situations.

I use to have – still do – 3x5 cards that had individual verses on them for review. That works for some people. Eventually the box got so stuffed I wasn't consistently reviewing them all. So I switched to working on chapters. I asked the Lord to lead me to the ones I really would be the most blessed by and most useful for instruction. As I read the Word each morning they became obvious to me and I would write them down for future memory work. Now when I review I can review a couple chapters each morning and do all my review on a weekly basis. Nearly every Bible study or Sunday message has a verse or the influence of one from my memory list. The word is regenerating my mind. It will do the same for you, if you will be consistent.

Some of you will remember several weeks ago when at the end of the Bible study the Lord brought to mind a verse I had memorized years earlier. I could no longer quote it word for word but I knew where it was and could look it up. 1Sam 3:21 God revealed Himself to Samuel through his Word. Even those verses you have lost to perfectly quoting are there deep in your mind and the HS can pull them up and remind you of them.

Why do we need to go to all this effort to get in the Word and the Word in us? Ps 33:4 'The word of God is right and true, he is faithful in all he does.' The word of God is our plumb line. The world is into this thing of no absolute truths and no standards for all people in all times and all places. Excuse me, but we do have absolute truth and it is the Word of God. But if we don't know the Word and accept it as the standard then all we have the chaos of the world.

We are suppose to worship in spirit and truth. If we do not know the word – truth – how can we worship in truth? We worship God for who He is and that is revealed in the Word by the Spirit. Too often we depend on our fluctuating feelings or familiar past experiences and lessons. I have confronted people with the clear-cut word of God and had them walk away saying, "we don't want to go there." What does that mean?

If the word is truth and they are saying "NO" to it, then is Christ Lord in their life? I'm not talking about controversial doctrine but clear-cut right and wrong in the Word.

Once we determine that we will not accept the authority of the Word we become our own standard. We place ourselves above the Lord's word. And He has exalted above all things his word and his name. Ps 138:2 Rev 19:13 Don't forget Jesus is the Word of God. If we say no to the word we say no to Him.

There is a famine today for the Word. So many are in church all their life and don't know fundamental Scripture knowledge. They have ideas that have developed in church but have no basis in Scripture, yet they are sure it is truth. The way to know the truth is to have a relationship with the Truth – study, meditation, memorization. These are disciplines many would rather not do. One of the chief reasons is we will be convicted and know our need for change. But some of the Christian world is desperate for change, for a closer walk, to hear the voice of the Shepherd. Take this as the second challenge in this series. The first is to be accountable – How are you doing there? The second is to be people of the word. There are more to come but I think these first two are the essential and make the others possible.

Just for your consideration, all the armor comes from the word. Helmet – salvation, we are born again through the Word of God. Breastplate – Righteousness, He is our righteousness and His name is the Word of God. Shield of faith, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. The belt of truth – Thy word is truth. On the feet is the preparation to share the gospel of peace, the good news is in the Word of God. We get prepared to share it by being in it to let it change us into instruments fit for the Master's use.

Once again we must worship in spirit and truth - If we only have the Word without the Spirit, we have communion lacking the wine, the flesh without the blood. The spirit or blood is what gives life to the Word. But neither can you have the spirit without the truth. They are meant to be an inseparable pair.