

# Drawing closer to God

**The Joy of Spiritual Disciplines**

**Duncan Watkinson**

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# Drawing closer to God

By Duncan Watkinson

This booklet has been written to help fulfil the Great Commission of making disciples of all nations. We believe that you will benefit from studying this book by yourself, but that you will be blessed even more if you do it in the context of a discipling relationship with another Christian, or together with a small group of believers.

In the process of writing this book, we have drawn from a wide cross section of God's church. We are extremely grateful for the many insights we have received from different sources. Special thanks go to Colin D'Cruz who helped much in gathering material for this study.

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**Breakthrough**

**Making Disciples**

**Starting Well**

**Drinking the Holy Spirit**

**Making Friends**

**Walking in the Light**

**Godly Parenting**

**Maturing Marriage**

**Living by Faith**

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Duncan has also written a full-length book on Spiritual parenthood, entitled 'Where are the Fathers?'

Details on this and the other study booklets can be obtained by visiting [www.irnet.org](http://www.irnet.org) or contacting any of the addresses shown on the back cover of this booklet.

# 1. Getting Started

## A. The assurance of salvation

Read **John 3:16**. Because of his love for the world, God sent his Son Jesus to this earth to die on a cross for the sins of all mankind. Jesus then rose from the dead and is now seated in heaven, exercising authority over the entire universe. From **John 3:16**, answer these questions:

What were the people of the world offered? .....

What did people have to do to receive this? .....

The bible often uses the phrase 'eternal life' to describe the new life of the Christian. **John 17:3** says *this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

Now read **1 John 5:11-12** and answer these questions:

Who gives eternal life? .....

Where is eternal life found? .....

Who possesses eternal life? .....

**Romans 6:23** tells us that eternal life is a gift from God and it is given to any person who acknowledges Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour. Read **Romans 10:9** and write down what a person must do to be saved:

.....

Have you acknowledged Jesus in this way? YES/NO If so, when? .....

When a person believes in Jesus, their life begins to change in a number of ways. This is the effect of eternal life. Tick any of the following which you have begun to experience, since you started believing in Jesus:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in attitudes     | <input type="checkbox"/> Inner peace          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New concern for others   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sense of forgiveness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desire to read the bible | <input type="checkbox"/> New awareness of sin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New love for God         | <input type="checkbox"/> Victory over sin     |

Each of these is an indication that eternal life has begun working in you!

**B. The guarantee of grace**

Read **Ephesians 2:8-9** and answer the following questions:

What are we saved by? .....

What are we not saved by? .....

What is your religious background, if any? .....

In your religious background, what were you told you had to do to please God? .....

Every religion in the world, apart from Christianity, requires us to do certain ‘works’ to gain acceptance from God. The bible says we are not saved by any works, but by grace. Grace comes from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (see Romans 1:7) and Jesus lived a life of grace.

Read John 1:17 and write down what came through Jesus:

.....  
**G-R-A-C-E** can be understood from the acronym, **God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense**. Each aspect of grace described in this study comes to us freely because Jesus was willing to die on the cross. If we know how much we have received from Jesus, we are stirred to love him, worship him and give our lives to serving him. Here are some of these riches:

**1. God’s pardon**

Read **Ephesians 2:1-3** and write down four things which were true of us before we became Christians:

- 1. ....
- 2. ....
- 3. ....
- 4. ....

Read **Ephesians 2:4-6** and write what is true of us, now we are saved:

- 1. ....
- 2. ....
- 3. ....

We deserved God’s wrath because of our sinful ways, but we have become objects of God’s love because Jesus Christ died for our sins.

Read **Ephesians 1:7-8** and write down:

What have we received? .....

Through what have we received these things? .....

What was God's motivation for treating us like this? .....

## 2. Gods Placing

The New Testament frequently refers to us being 'in Christ' and 'in him'.

When we were born again, God placed us in Christ Jesus. Read

**Ephesians 1:3** and write down what God has blessed us with:

.....  
 Notice that this comes because we are 'in Christ' - through God's grace. The more we understand our identity in Christ, the more we will grow in both security and maturity. We need to see ourselves as how God sees us.

Being a Christian is not just a matter of getting something, but of being someone. Look up the section 'Who am I in Christ' on page 39. Choose a few of the statements and say them aloud each day, reminding yourself of who you are in Christ. The more you reaffirm your position in Christ, the more your behaviour will reflect your true identity. It is not what you do as a Christian that determines who you are, it is who you are that determines what you do.

## 3. God's pleasure

Read **Zephaniah 3:17** and write it out: .....

Now shut your eyes and imagine you are sitting on the lap of your heavenly Father. Feel how much he delights in you. Let him assure you of his quieting love, and experience his joy in you as he sings over you. God delights in you and he wants you to feel it! God wants you to know his pleasure in you like the labourer in this story.

*The story is told of an Irish priest who was walking in a country parish. He saw a poor old farm labourer kneeling by the side of the road, praying. The priest was very impressed and said to the man, 'You must be very close to God.' The peasant looked up from his prayers, thought for a moment, and then smiled, 'Yes, he's very fond of me.'*

## 4. God's power

Read **2 Corinthians 12:7-10** Paul had an unknown problem - a 'thorn in the flesh' - but all the Lord offered him was grace to endure it. Paul was

being taught that God’s grace is God’s power to live through weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and difficulties. This is an actual spiritual power which is available to us at all times. Read **Romans 5:17** What do we need to do to *reign in life*?

.....  
**5. God’s purpose**

**Romans 8:29** tells us that God’s plan is that we become like Jesus. He promises to change our character and he uses grace to do it. All we need to do is acknowledge where we fall short of God’s standard, express our desire to be like Jesus and ask him for grace.

**Ephesians 2:10** also says that God prepared good works for us to do. He has purpose, destiny and meaning for each of us. His plans are another expression of his grace towards us.

Each of us should be able to declare like Paul in **1 Corinthians 15:10**:

..... *I am what I am.*

**6. God’s peace**

If we’re enjoying grace we will be at peace. Peace is the direct result of absorbing all the above aspects. If we don’t have peace we are missing out on one of the above. Write out the first half of Colossians 3:15:

*Let the* .....

We need to learn to check whether we are enjoying peace within. If we are not, it means we have to ask Jesus for more of his abundant grace. The only qualification for receiving grace from God is in 1 Peter 5:5.

What is it? .....

The following studies describe disciplines which will help us grow in our relationship with God. Don’t forget that we relate with God only through grace. These disciplines will not make God love us any more than he already does, but they should make us more aware of his continual grace.

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>Assignment</b></p> <p>Review this entire study and thank God for the wonder of His salvation.</p> |
|---|

## 2. Talking with God

### A. *The importance of prayer*

**Acts 9:1-19** tells the story of how Saul met the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus. Read this passage and answer the following questions:

Why was Paul travelling to Damascus? .....

.....

What interrupted his journey? .....

What happened to Saul? .....

After Saul arrived in Damascus, what was he doing? (v11) .....

Jesus sent Ananias to Saul for two reasons. What were they? .....

.....

What did Saul do after recovering his sight? .....

This account is typical of most people who have met Jesus in a personal way - although most were not persecuting the church so vigorously! Note that the first sign of Saul's change of heart was that he was praying.

### B. *An outline for prayer*

Read **Luke 11:1-4**. As far as the bible record shows, this was the first request for teaching which the disciples made to Jesus. What was it?

.....

This reminds us how important it is that we learn to pray. Prayer is simply communicating with God and is something which all Christians do. In this passage, Jesus taught his disciples a simple outline for prayer:

#### 1. **Father, hallowed be your name (v2)**

Prayer should start with recognising that God has become our Father because of Jesus. See John 14:6. He is the all-powerful creator of heaven and earth, and yet he welcomes us as his children. This should lead us to start praising him and telling him how much we appreciate all that he is.

Write down some of the qualities you have begun to notice about God:

.....

**2. Your kingdom come (v2)**

This is a prayer for God’s concerns in the world. Many things which happen around us are not God’s will or desire but are the results of man’s sinfulness. God’s desire is for righteousness, peace and joy to be established in my life, my family, my church, my community, my nation and throughout the world. Write down some of the things which you believe God would want you to pray about:

.....  
.....

**3. Give us each day our daily bread (v3)**

Write out the following scriptures on prayer.

**Ephesians 6:18:** .....

**Colossians 4:2:** .....

Jesus tells us to ask God for daily bread - our basic needs. Right now, are there any personal needs which you have? If so, write them down here:

.....

You can now pray to God and ask him to meet these needs. As we have seen, Jesus prayed whilst on earth, and he is praying for us in heaven.

Write out **Hebrews 7:25:** .....

Jesus is always interceding and asking his Father to help us and meet our needs. It shows how important it is for us to pray.

**4. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. (v4)**

This part of the prayer reminds us of two vital aspects of the Christian life - receiving and giving forgiveness.

*a) We constantly need to ask God for forgiveness of our sins.*

This is because all of us fall short of God’s standard in life. Write out

**1 John 1:9:** .....

This wonderful promise of Scripture tells us that every sin we confess is freely forgiven, because Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins.

**b) We constantly need to forgive everyone who sins against us**

None of us is perfect. Neither are the people around us. They will offend us, hurt us, let us down or, even, betray us. However the bible teaches us that we must forgive others as completely and whole-heartedly as God has forgiven us. (See **Colossians 3:13**) Read **Matthew 6:14-15** and complete the statements: *For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will*

..... *But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will* .....

If I forgive a person, it means:

I desire not to bring the person’s sin to my mind and deliberately choose not to think about how I’ve been wronged. (**Isaiah 43:25**)

I hold nothing against them - neither resentment, nor a desire for revenge, nor an urge to gossip about them.

I release them from any obligation towards me, whether it is a debt they owe me or an apology I feel I deserve.

**5. And lead us not into temptation. (v4)**

This request reminds us that we still have the potential to sin, even though we are born again Christians. This prayer is for protection from our flesh, from the world and from the devil. We can ask God to keep us safe and righteous in all situations. The above outline should help us to pray. **1 John 5:14-15** assures us that God hears all our prayers and that he will answer everything we ask according to his will. Look up these verses and fill in the blanks:

*This is the ..... we have in approaching God: that if we anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us— ..... we ask--we know that we have what we of him.*

**C. The discipline of prayer**

One of the joys of being a Christian is that we can talk to the Lord at any time. Read **Nehemiah 2:4** and see how Nehemiah put in a ‘flying’ prayer in the midst of his conversation with the King. We can all do that in any situation and for any reason.

However, we also need to learn the discipline of spending regular times communicating with God in prayer. Time spent alone with God nourishes our souls, refreshes our spirits and prepares us for the day ahead. There are many examples in the bible and throughout church history of men and women who have done this and have been mightily used by God.

Write out these verses:

(David) **Psalm 5:3:** .....

.....

(Jesus) **Mark 1:35:** .....

.....

Both David and Jesus spent time alone with God before they faced the challenges of each day. Write down when and where Jesus met with his Father, according to **Mark 1:35:**

The time :..... The place :.....

We also need a definite time and place when we will not usually be distracted or disturbed. This is likely to be early in the morning. To help you be regular, write down the time and place for your time with God.

The time: ..... The place : .....

- ❖ If you want to get up early, don't go to bed late! The battle for getting up early begins the previous night.
- ❖ If we don't spend time with the Lord each day, it's because we do not realise how dependent we are on him.
- ❖ Don't be put off by one or two mornings when you don't get up. As you persevere, you will see increasing Christ likeness in your life.

**Assignment:**

1. Memorise at least one verse mentioned in this lesson.
2. Spend time communicating with the Lord in prayer.

### 3. Reading the bible

God has given us the bible because it nourishes our souls in the same way as food strengthens our bodies. It helps us in many ways.

#### A. Why should we read the bible?

##### 1. To know God

**Hebrews 1:2** tells us that ‘ in these last days’ God has spoken to us through Jesus Christ What does **Hebrews 1:3a** say about him?

.....  
.....

Read **John 5:39**. Whom do the scriptures testify about? .....

As we read the bible and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us, we will meet with Jesus and see his image on every page.

##### 2. For Spiritual growth

From the first study, we know that we have received eternal life through believing in Jesus. We are now born again, and have been made alive to God. According to **1 Peter 1:23** what have we been born again through?

.....  
The word of God worked in us to bring us to new birth and it is also essential to keep us growing in our Christian life. Read **Matthew 4:4** and write out what is necessary for life:

.....

##### 3. To re-shape our thinking

The world we live in is in direct contrast to the ways of God. Each day we are bombarded with thoughts, ideas, values, desires, etc., that are totally opposed to the bible. Although our spirit is born again, our minds need to be renewed. Read **Hebrews 4:12** and write down two things the word of God is able to do in us:

.....  
.....

The word of God goes deep into our minds and inner attitudes to expose what is wrong in them and to change them so that we think like Jesus. Write down some ways in which the word of God has already changed your way of thinking:

.....  
.....

**4. To grow in faith**

All of us need faith to live a life which pleases God - see **Hebrews 11:6**. But how do we get that faith? **Romans 10:17** tells us that faith comes

.....

The bible is the source of faith. Faith arises in our hearts when we read the word, believe what it says and act on it.

**5. To be equipped to serve God**

Write down **2 Timothy 3:16-17**: .....

.....

We need to expose ourselves to each of these activities so that we can become the man or woman God intends us to be. Which of these four have you already experienced? .....

How did you respond? .....

Which of these do you think you would like the least? .....

Why? .....

**6. To give us wisdom to obey**

In the Sermon on the Mount in **Matthew 5-7**, Jesus taught amazing wisdom to his disciples - wisdom which could transform their lives and the whole of society. Read the ending of this great sermon in **Matthew 7:24-27** and answer these questions:

Where did the wise man build his house? .....

Where did the foolish man build his house? .....

What happened to the wise man's house during the storm? .....

What happened to the foolish man's house during the storm? .....

Whom does Jesus say the wise man is like? .....

This story shows that ultimately it is not hearing, reading or studying the bible which matters, but our willingness to put it into practice. Are you willing to hear the word of God and put it into practice?

YES  NO

## ***B. How should we read the bible?***

### **1. How long does it take?**

The entire bible can be heard on tape in 71 hours. If you read the bible for 15 minutes a day you can read it in less than a year. In 5 minutes a day, you can read the bible in under 3 years. Yet many Christians have not read the whole of the bible even once in their lives.

Every Christian who desires to grow in their relationship with God should aim to read the bible every day, as well as to read through the whole of the bible a number of times in their life.

### **2. Steps for bible reading success**

#### ***a) Set aside a specific time each day.***

Set aside a regular time each day to read the word. It's better to spend 15 minutes each morning or evening than to spend 2 hours once a week.

D.L. Moody said, 'The bible will keep you from sin and sin will keep you from the bible.'

#### ***b) Have a bible reading plan.***

The thought of reading the bible with all its pages can be so daunting that you may feel you could never do it. People involved in large construction and engineering projects break them down into small manageable parts. Similarly if your regular bible reading is split into bite-sized portions you will be able to read it all.

On page 42 a few sample bible reading plans have been outlined. Select one for yourself, which you feel you have faith to follow. Once you have set your target, ask God for grace to keep going.

Also included on pages 43-44 is a Personal Reading Record to help you keep track of your progress. If you keep marking what you have read, you'll be surprised at how quickly you make progress through the bible.

### 3. Select one word or phrase to ponder on and to apply

- ❖ Sometimes people read the bible but seem to receive nothing. Before reading your bible, ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you. Ask Him to give you one key verse or thought to focus on. He usually does this by ‘highlighting’ the verse or by insistently drawing you back to it. However much you read the bible, look for one key verse.
- ❖ Try to match that key verse to one of the categories listed below.

| Category                     | Examples in scripture     |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. a prayer to use           | <b>Colossians 1:9-12</b>  |
| 2. an example to follow      | <b>Acts 5:41</b>          |
| 3. a command to obey         | <b>Ephesians 4:29</b>     |
| 4. new light to rejoice in   | <b>Cololosians 1:16</b>   |
| 5. a warning to heed         | <b>Galatians 6:1</b>      |
| 6. a promise to take hold of | <b>Colossians 3:23-24</b> |

- ❖ Ask yourself
  - What did the verse mean to the original readers?
  - How does it apply to me?
- ❖ Be as specific as you can when considering how to apply the verse. Turn what you have received into prayer, thanksgiving and action. This last step is crucial to us. Bible reading must result in a changed life. When that happens we know we have fed on the word.
- ❖ Beware of the danger of trying to apply too much at one time. It is better to apply one thing than to attempt ten and achieve none

#### Assignment

1. Decide on a bible reading plan for the next 12 months.
2. Decide how much time you are going to set aside each morning to meet God in bible reading. Duration ..... When? .....
3. Maintain a ‘journal’ - a simple notebook - in which you record what the Lord speaks to you each day. Copy out the verse that you are focussing on and write down the application. When you have applied it in your life, return to your journal and tick it.
4. Read **Psalm 139** and ask God to speak to you from there. Select a key verse and note down what God is saying to you. Memorize that verse.
5. Share what you have received with someone in your small group.

# 4. Enjoying God's presence

## A. Why should we spend time alone with God?

### 1. To fellowship with God

If we love someone, it is natural that we will want to communicate and spend time with them. As a child of God, you have a deep desire to talk to God and be with him. God's love for us remains constant even if we do not return it, but our love for him will diminish and grow stale unless we nourish our relationship with him through spending time with him.

*It may not appear to some that the quarter of an hour in the morning spent in looking into the face of God, with ecstatic joy, can fill us with strength; but we know, from blessed experience, that there is no strength like it.*

C.H.Spurgeon in 'Only a Prayer meeting'

Read **James 4:8** and fill in the blanks:

*Come ..... to ..... and he will come ..... to .....*

This is a wonderful promise from God! One way of drawing close to him is through praise and adoration as mentioned on page 7. As we come near to him we begin to feel his closeness and his love. We experience his presence in a real way. Have you experienced this? YES/NO/NOT SURE

This intimate relationship begins when we are alone with the Lord and should continue throughout the day. Now read Matthew 6:6 and answer these questions about spending time with God:

Where should we go to pray? .....

Why do you think Jesus asked us to shut the door? .....

.....

Whom do we pray to? .....

What is the result of this 'secret' prayer? .....

As we spend time alone with our Father, he rewards us by changing us within and giving us supernatural anointing to impact lives for Jesus.

**2. To get to know the Holy Spirit**

Read **2 Corinthians 13:14** and write down the three things which Paul wanted the members of the Corinthian church to enjoy:

.....  
Earlier studies looked at the grace of Jesus and the love of God, but now we will look briefly at the Holy Spirit. God wants us to enjoy fellowship with him and to build a strong relationship with him.

Write out **John 14:16**: .....

.....  
Before he left his disciples, Jesus promised them another Counsellor - one who would be just like Jesus. The Holy Spirit is a person with the same character and qualities as Jesus. He is not an impersonal force - even though he may come like a rushing wind or a dove. A force cannot hear a cry for help - the Holy Spirit does!

Read **John 7:37-39** and answer these questions:

Whom did Jesus appeal to in his invitation? .....

What did he ask them to do? .....

What did he promise them? .....

What was he referring to? .....

Jesus invites us to come and drink of him and he will fill us to overflowing with the Holy Spirit. Turn now to **Ephesians 5:18** and write it out: .....

The contrast with drunkenness may seem surprising, but read how Luke describes the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit fell. What did some people think was the problem (**v13**) .....

What was Peter's explanation of what was happening? (**vv15-18**)  
.....

.....  
When the Holy Spirit touches us, we may feel 'something' and people may notice 'something' too. When we fellowship with the Holy Spirit, we should expect things to happen!

**1 Corinthians 12:7-11** describes some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, all of which are important for building up the church. However, the gift of

tongues is especially useful as it helps us fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Read **1 Corinthians 14:2-5** and answer these questions:

When a person speaks in a tongue, whom is he speaking to? (**v2**) .....

What does speaking in tongues do to the person? (**v4**) .....

How many Christians did Paul expect to speak in tongues? (**v5**) .....

### 3. To bear Spiritual fruit

One result of spending time with the Holy Spirit is that we begin to produce Spiritual fruit. Read **Galatians 5:22-23** and write down the different fruit which the Spirit produces in our lives:

.....

Now read **Galatians 5:25** and fill in the blanks: *Since we* .....

*by the Spirit, let us* ..... *with the Spirit* .

Christians should respond to the Holy Spirit in two ways:

1. We live by him - we expect him to provide the life and power which we need. That is why we should keep on being filled.
2. We need to keep in step with the Spirit. This means we have to obey his promptings. Jesus said that the Spirit would guide us into all truth (**John 16:13**). The next section shows some of the ways he does this.

### 4. To receive guidance and direction

All of us need God's guidance and wisdom to handle decisions - not just big things such as our job, education, marriage, etc, but also in everyday matters. Read **Psalms 23:1-2** and fill in the missing words:

**v2** *He* ..... *me beside quiet waters...*

**v3** *He* ..... *me in paths of righteousness*

Our Lord is the good Shepherd and is committed to guiding us in every area of life. One of the key requirements for receiving guidance is also

found in **v2**: *He makes* ..... *in green pastures*

Before we can receive guidance we have to 'get into neutral' so that we have no will or desires of our own in regard to the decision. We need to come to a place where we only want to do God's will, however costly or difficult that may be.

It is usually wise to ask the Lord to confirm his guidance in more than one way. Some of the ways the Holy Spirit guides us are:

#### a) *The bible*

Our daily readings and specific verses, spoken or brought to mind by the Holy Spirit, will often guide us clearly. We should expect to receive specific guidance from God's word each day.

***b) Prophecy***

Sometimes a prophetic word will bring a clear message to us. It is more trustworthy if the person who prophesies knows nothing of our situation, and is not actively involved in our lives. **1 Corinthians 14:29** teaches that all prophecy must be weighed, so do not be foolish in accepting prophecy but weigh it and ask mature Christians to weigh it too.

***c) Human authority***

God expects us to have a submitted heart to church leaders. He may confirm guidance to us through them. We should always be ready to heed the advice and direction which our leaders bring.

***d) Dreams and Visions***

We should be open to hearing the Lord speak in this way, although we must interpret them with integrity and check our interpretation with a person who has authority over our lives.

***e) An inner voice***

The Lord gives a distinct impression within us about what is right, and, on fairly rare occasions, he will speak in an audible voice.

***f) Circumstances***

These are helpful in confirming guidance, but are not sufficient for major steps such as marriage.

***g) Inner peace***

There should always be a deep inner peace when the Lord guides. A troubled spirit when in the presence of God is a warning to us.

Describe a situation in which you believe the Lord guided you:

.....

**Assignment**

1. Spend time with the Lord on a regular basis, expecting to enjoy his presence and to fellowship with the Holy Spirit.
2. Pray and expect specific guidance about a matter on your mind.

## 5. Fasting

All over the world, religious people fast. This means that they deprive themselves of food, drink or other desirables for religious purposes. Read **Matthew 9:14-15** and note how John's disciples seemed to resent the fact that they and the Pharisees had to fast whereas Jesus' disciples seemed to get away without fasting. Although the bible does not teach much about fasting, Jesus' reply in v15 shows that he assumed that sometimes his disciples would fast. When would that time be?

.....

Now read **Matthew 6:16-18**. Jesus did not say 'If you fast' but 'When you fast'! He expected all his followers to fast at times. What did Jesus promise to those who fasted in the way he taught?

.....

**Matthew 4:1-2** tells us how Jesus himself fasted. Notice that it was the Holy Spirit who led Jesus into the desert to fast. This was not his own idea nor a desire to impress people or win favour. He fasted because the Holy Spirit directed him. The Holy Spirit may direct us into certain disciplines of fasting but we must avoid legalistic and self imposed rules.

### A. Wrong motives for fasting

Because fasting is so connected to religious duty, Jesus began his short teaching on fasting with a warning. In your own words, what did he warn against in **Matthew 6:16-18**?

.....

Now read **Luke 18:12**. What do you think motivated the Pharisee *to fast twice a week*?

.....

**Acts 23:12-15** describes how the *Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink...* What motivated their fast?

.....

These examples show that fasting may be used for wrong reasons, so do not assume that a person who is fasting is necessarily more spiritual. In fact, if they let you know in a proud way that they are fasting, Jesus makes it clear that their only reward will be that you know about it! However, the bible does show us the benefits of proper fasting

## ***B. Biblical reasons for fasting***

Look up the following bible references to godly fasting. In the first column, write down why the people fasted; in the second column, write down how many days they fasted for. If you are not sure, put a ‘?’.

| <u>Bibles verses</u>       | <u>Reason</u> | <u>Days</u> |
|----------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| <b>Judges 20:24-26</b>     |               |             |
| <b>1 Samuel 7:6</b>        |               |             |
| <b>2 Samuel 1:11-12</b>    |               |             |
| <b>2 Samuel 12:15-18</b>   |               |             |
| <b>1 Kings 21:21-27</b>    |               |             |
| <b>2 Chronicles 20:2-4</b> |               |             |
| <b>Ezra 8:21</b>           |               |             |
| <b>Nehemiah 1:3-4</b>      |               |             |
| <b>Nehemiah 9:1-2</b>      |               |             |
| <b>Esther 4:15-16</b>      |               |             |
| <b>Psalm 35:13</b>         |               |             |

|                     |  |  |
|---------------------|--|--|
| <b>Daniel 9:1-3</b> |  |  |
| <b>Jonah 3:5</b>    |  |  |
| <b>Matthew 4:2</b>  |  |  |
| <b>Acts 9:5-9</b>   |  |  |
| <b>Acts 13:2</b>    |  |  |
| <b>Acts 14:23</b>   |  |  |

### ***C. Some practical conclusions***

- 1) As you will have seen, people fast at various times, to:
  - a) Confess sin and demonstrate genuine repentance
  - b) Seek God's intervention in an extremely difficult situation
  - c) Obtain guidance or direction from the Lord
  - d) Grieve over someone's death

Whatever the situation, fasting expresses an earnestness in seeking God. It reveals our desperate, passionate desire for him and his ways.
- 2) The scripture references show that the most common fast is a one day fast, or at least abstaining from food 'until the sun sets'. Other fasts were longer and Daniel ate only light food for 21 days. (See **Daniel 10:2-3**) Jesus (**Matthew 4:2**), Moses (**Exodus 34:28**) and Elijah (**1 Kings 19:8**) went without food and water for forty days. Such a fast requires the God's supernatural intervention because the body cannot survive without water for such a long time. Nobody should embark on an extended fast unless he or she is certain it is the Lord's leading.
- 3) You may also have noticed that the leaders of Israel sometimes called for a fast. Corporate fasting can be very powerful in its effects so it is wise to be ready to respond to such a call.

- 4) It may have surprised you that perhaps the most-quoted verses on fasting are not mentioned here. The reason is that **Matthew 17:21** is not in the earliest manuscripts and the phrase ‘and fasting’ in **Mark 9:28** was also added later on in church history. In the 2nd century, the church became monastic and the dear monks wrote in these extra words to give fasting more importance.
- 5) This reminds us that we face two dangers with our bodies:
  - a) Treating our bodies harshly because we believe they cause our spiritual problems. This is like the ascetics of Hinduism.
  - b) Indulging our fleshly desires because we are ‘under grace’ so that we do not learn self control. See **Philippians: 3-18-19** A godly approach to fasting avoids these extremes.

**D. A final passage**

Please read **Isaiah 58:3-9**. This word of the Lord criticised the people who were fasting because their lives did not match his standards. Write down some of the things these people were doing wrong:

.....

.....

.....

This passage teaches that fasting will not gain us any favours with God if we continue to practise ungodliness. We must aim to live in a way which will please God and also be ruthless in putting to death whatever belongs to our earthly nature. (See **Colossians 3:5**) If we do this and fast, we will find that our heavenly Father rewards our godly fasting by helping us to:

- a) grow in our love for the Lord
- b) turn away from sin
- c) receive answers to our prayers and petitions

**Assignment**

1. Consider this lesson and ask the Lord to show you how he wants you to respond to it. Be open to his leading. He may want you to set aside one day a week to fast, or take a few days off to seek him in prayer and fasting, or.....??
2. Start doing what the Lord tells you to do.

## 6. Sharing Jesus with others

### A. Some reasons for sharing the Good News

#### 1. God has commanded us to

Write down **Matthew 28:19** .....

.....

After Jesus rose from the dead, he commanded his disciples to go and make more disciples, which obviously included preaching the gospel. This Great Commission still stands for all who claim to follow Jesus.

#### 2. The Holy Spirit was given so that we could

Read **Acts 1:8** and write down why the Holy Spirit was given:

.....

After being baptised in the Holy Spirit, the fearful disciples went boldly into the streets of Jerusalem and proclaimed the message of salvation.

#### 3. Jesus promised to make his first disciples ‘fishers of men’

Write out **Mark 1:17** .....

.....

Jesus will teach us to fish for men through giving us simple instructions for us to obey.

#### 4. Those without Jesus are in a terrible state

Read **Matthew 9:36** and note down how Jesus felt about the crowds.

.....

Do you feel for those who do not know Jesus as their Saviour? Read **Revelation 20:11-15** and ask God to open your eyes so that you may feel love and concern for people without Jesus. Pray to him right now.

*The greatest thing that can ever happen to you is to know for certain that you have eternal life. The greatest thing that you can ever do for a lost person is to lead him to trust in Jesus Christ for eternal life. The greatest thing you can do for another believer is to equip him in personal soulwinning.*

Evangelism Explosion

### **B. Sharing how you met Jesus (Personal Testimony)**

When we tell people our own experience of meeting Jesus, the Lord will often open the door for us to share the gospel message. Few people argue with you when you say ‘My life was a mess, but since I met Jesus I’m a new person.’ People who knew you before you met Jesus will want to know what caused the transformation. In **Mark 5:19**, what did Jesus tell the man whose life he had just transformed to do?

.....  
.....

#### **1. Writing your personal testimony**

Luke wrote three accounts of Paul’s conversion (See **Acts 9, 22** and **26**). As **Acts 26** shows, there are three sections to a personal testimony:

- a) **What life was like before you met Jesus?**  
Your desires or goals. Typical actions and behaviour. How God started to work in your life.
- b) **What actually happened when you believed in Jesus**  
How did you feel? When? Where? Why did you put your faith in Jesus.
- c) **What difference have you or others noticed after meeting Jesus**  
What has changed in your life? Some typical actions. New desires/goals.

Include an interesting beginning and a conclusion which will challenge the reader to a place of believing. **Romans 1:16** reminds us that the gospel is power to those who believe. Try to avoid religious jargon and offensive language. Keep focussing on the wonder of what God has done.

#### **2. Sharing the gospel message**

The following **ABCD** acronym includes the basic gospel message.

*Admit you are a sinner.*

Write out **Romans 3:23** .....

Try to get the person you’re sharing the gospel with to understand and admit that he is a sinner. Begin by talking generally about sin in the world and then make the general statement of **Romans 3:23** ‘All have sinned.’ Share some sins you have committed, then ask the person if has committed any sins. (E.g. lying, bad thoughts, anger, etc). From **Romans 6:23a** share the consequences of sin - physical and spiritual death (hell).

*Believe in Jesus for eternal life*

**1 Corinthians 15:3-4** tells us what we have to believe about Jesus. Write it out: .....

.....  
Everybody will die one day (See **Hebrews 9:27**) but only Jesus Christ died for our sins. After being buried, he rose from the dead and appeared to many. He is still alive today, at work in the lives of people. According to **Romans 10:9**, what must we do to be saved?

.....  
When we believe in Jesus and ask him to forgive us our sins, he pardons us and gives us the gift of eternal life. To believe means to trust completely with my mind, my heart and through my actions.

*Confess your sins.*

In **Acts 2:37**, the crowd in Jerusalem were convicted by Peter’s preaching and asked a question. What was Peter’s answer? (**v38**)

.....  
To repent means to turn away from my wrong ways of thinking about God and sin, and to desire to live a life which pleases God.

*Decide to follow Jesus only*

Write out **John 14:6** .....

.....  
Jesus makes an exclusive claim on our lives. The only way to God the Father is through Jesus Christ. There is no other way of salvation.

Here is a typical prayer to use with a person who accepts each of the above points and decides to follow Jesus. Don’t make it a formula - let the person express their heart and feelings to God.

*Father, thank you for the free gift of eternal life. I know I am a sinner and that I have done wrong things. I need your forgiveness. I am sorry for my past sins, and I ask you to forgive me.*

*Jesus, I believe you died on the cross and shed your blood to take the punishment for my sins. I realize that there is nothing I can do to earn forgiveness, and I place my complete trust in you alone for eternal life. I*

*believe you rose triumphant from the dead and I now receive you as my Lord and Saviour. I choose to follow you completely and to obey your commands. Thank you, Lord, for hearing my prayer and accepting me.*

### **C. Friendship evangelism**

The gospel is about relationships - first between God and man, and then between people. It is vital that our message demonstrates this. Here are five steps to help you find people to reach out to:

#### **1. Make contact**

A friendly smile, a warm greeting, and a strong handshake go a long way in expressing friendliness.

#### **2. Build trust**

Serve the person and allow them to serve you. Offer and receive hospitality. Do 'non-religious' things together to find common ground.

#### **3. Pray and share your testimony**

Take every opportunity to pray for him. Be prepared to share how Jesus has made a difference in your life.

#### **4. Share the gospel**

The Holy Spirit will show you when to share the gospel. After sharing, boldly ask him to commit his life to Jesus and rejoice when he does.

#### **5. Follow up**

You are now a spiritual parent. Make sure you offer or arrange for adequate care until this new Christian is able to stand on his own. Ask another Christian to nurture the new believer if they are of the opposite sex or if you cannot care for them for some other reason.

#### **Assignment**

1. Write out your personal testimony in the format given. Practise saying your testimony in about 3 minutes.
2. Pray for an opportunity to share your testimony with a non-Christian.
3. Pray for and take steps to make contact with an unbeliever.

# 7. Memorizing the word

## A. Why should we memorize scripture?

### 1. God commands it.

Write out the first half of **Deuteronomy 11:18**: .....

.....

Read **Job 22:21-22** and fill in the blanks: *Submit to ..... and be .....*

*..... with him; in this way prosperity will come to you. Accept*

*instruction from his mouth and lay up his ..... in your .....*

God expects us to store his word in our hearts and our minds.

### 2. It supplies spiritual power

Having memorized scripture, the Holy Spirit can bring it to our attention, especially when we face temptation. **Ephesians 6:17** tells us that the word of God is the sword of the Holy Spirit and a powerful weapon in his hands. Read **Matthew 4:1-11**. How did Jesus fight temptation? See verses **4, 7, and 10**:

.....

Jesus used the power of the word to fight temptation. How much more do we need the same power to overcome the enemy!

### 3. It helps in counseling and witnessing

A new Christian may tell you that he's worried about his future. It helps him if you know how to answer him. The best counsel is the word of God. If you have memorized scripture you will be able to share promises from the word that are relevant to him. Can you think of any verses which would help him? If so, write down their bible references:

.....

Many find witnessing difficult because they don't know where verses relating to the gospel are found. If we know references and verses word perfectly, we will be able to share God's word with confidence and authority. Instead of 'I think the bible says ...', you can now boldly say 'The bible says ....'.

**4. It allows us to meditate at different times and places**

When you have memorized a verse of scripture you can meditate on it anywhere and anytime - whilst travelling, waiting for a bus or an appointment, in the shower or in bed before you sleep. You can use time that would otherwise have been wasted. Write out when the people focussed on God’s word in these verses:

**Deuteronomy 6:7** .....

**Psalms 119:97** .....

**Psalms 119:148** .....

**B. What we need to know to memorize scripture**

**1. Our memories are surprisingly good!**

You may not realise it, but your memory is fantastic. You know your address and phone number; you remember hundreds of people’s names; you know the names of many objects and animals. You do have a good memory! The mind is like a muscle and the more we exercise it the stronger it becomes. As you begin memorizing verses, it may be slow to start with, but as you persevere, you will find it becomes steadily easier.

**2. Our attitude makes the difference!**

How would you feel if you were offered several banknotes for each verse you memorized this week? How many verses do you think you could memorize in seven days? According to **Matthew 24:35**, how long will the words of Jesus last? .....

According to **Matthew 6:19**, what happens to earthly treasures?  
.....

No financial gain can compare with accumulating God’s word in your mind.

*Dawson Trotman was an ordinary truck driver. He resolved in his early Christian life to memorize one verse each day. So, as he drove his truck, he reviewed and meditated on the verse he had memorized that morning. In his first three years of his Christian life he had memorized 1000 verses! He then went on to form a great discipling movement - The Navigators - which impacted hundreds of thousands of people.*

### C. *How should we memorize scripture?*

#### 1. **Have a plan**

- a) Either use the Navigators Topical Memory System (See page 45) or select a verse from what God is working on in your life right now. If you are struggling with controlling your speech and are sinning with your tongue, you could memorize verses like the following: **Proverbs 10:19; 11:12, 12:18, Ephesians 4:29.**
- b) Memorize a larger portion of scripture like a full psalm, or a chapter or a book. E.g. Psalm 23, 1 Corinthians 13, Philemon, 3 John. It is wise to start small and then move to bigger things. Better to start with Psalm 23 than with Psalm 119!
- c) Set aside a time each day when you are relatively undisturbed and can concentrate on memorizing scripture. Early in the morning or just before going to bed at night are good times.

#### 2. **Memorize the topic and verse reference**

Often we are familiar with verses, but find it difficult to locate references. An effective way of remembering verses is to classify them under different topics. E.g. ‘Salvation’, ‘Sin’, ‘The Tongue’. Along with a topic, memorize the reference such as **John 3:16, Romans 3:23** as well. Each time you memorize or review a verse, say the topic and the reference before you quote the verse and say the reference again after saying it.

E.g. Salvation, **John 3:16** ‘For God so loved the world .....’ **John 3:16**  
 Note that the reference is spoken out at both the beginning and the end.

#### 3. **Memorize word perfectly**

When learning or reviewing a passage of the bible always quote it word perfectly. Don’t settle for getting close or getting the ‘main idea’. Learn it the first time without mistakes. This will make your review easier and give you greater confidence in using the verses.

#### 4. **Find a method of accountability**

Many people have memorized scripture alone. However, memorizing with another person or a small group often provides the needed stimulus and discipline for success. Write out the verses below.

**Proverbs 27:17** .....

.....

**Ecclesiastes 4:9-10:** .....

Get together with a friend so that you can help each other memorize verses. Encourage and be accountable to one another.

*As a pastor, teacher and counsellor, I have repeatedly seen the transformation of inner and outer life that comes simply from memorization and meditation upon scripture.* Dallas Willard

**5. Review and meditate daily**

Review is a vital principle of scripture memory. Without proper review, you will forget most of what you memorize. Once a verse is learned, you can review it in a fraction of the time that it takes to speak it. And when you know a verse very well, you only need to review it once a week or once a month.

A great time to review verses is during your time with the Lord each morning or before going to sleep. You can also review verses while waiting for a bus, train, while travelling, etc.

**Assignment**

1. Find a time when your mind is free from outside distractions.
2. Select a verse which you would like to memorise from the bible. This helps you understand the verse in its setting.
  - \* Include the topic and reference as part of the verse by saying both at the beginning of the verse and repeating the reference at the end.
  - \* Read the verse through several times thoughtfully, aloud, or in a whisper. This will help you grasp the verse as a whole.
  - \* Break the passage into natural phrases. Learn the topic, reference and first phrase. Then repeat the topic, reference, first and second phrases. Continue adding phrases until the whole verse is memorized. \* Write out the verse as part of the process of learning to insure the strongest impression on your mind.
  - \* Review the verse immediately, and frequently throughout the first couple of days after learning. This is crucial to getting the verse firmly fixed in your mind.
3. Plan to meditate and memorize two verses weekly.

## 8. Enjoying God's family

Read **Acts 2:42-47** and write down the four things which the new Christians devoted themselves to:

1. .... 2. ....  
3. .... 4. ....

An important part of their new-found life in Christ was fellowship. The Greek word for fellowship - *koinonia* - signifies close relationships, loving concern, and 'togetherness'.

When we are born again, God becomes our Father and believers become our brothers and sisters. We now belong to the family of God. Paul wrote to the Galatian Christians in Galatians 3:26: You are all sons of God

*through* ..... *in* .....

In **Luke 8:19-21** Jesus ignored his natural family and specified who his new family was. What was the qualification for being brothers?

.....  
Fellowship is an act of faith, but also a demonstration of our obedience to God. Christianity is firstly about loving God, but it is also about loving our neighbours. (See **Matthew 22:36-40**) We are called to be a family of brothers and sisters who love one another. Read **John 13:34-35** and fill in the blanks: *A new command I give you: ..... As I have ..... you, so you must ..... one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you ..... one another. Write down the names of 3 or 4 believers who you now recognise are part of your new family. ....*  
.....

### A. What is the love of Jesus like?

#### 1. It is unconditional

God loves us completely. He demonstrated his love by sending Jesus to die for us while we were his enemies (See **Romans 5:8**). He wants us to imitate his kind of love. Our brothers may not have many good qualities, but we love them because they have also been purchased with the blood of Jesus.

**2. It is sacrificial**

Christian love is about laying down your life. Read **John 15:12, 13**. What is the greatest demonstration of love?

.....  
We can lay down our lives through our minds (what we think), wills (what we want) and emotions (what we feel) - not just by dying. These three questions need honest answers. How would you answer them?

- ❖ if your friend denies doing what you strongly think he did, would you be willing to give him the benefit of the doubt?
- ❖ if your friend wants to go to a different place for the picnic you are planning together, would you be willing to go where he wants to go?
- ❖ if your friend has upset you, are you willing to forgive him and put the matter behind you?

**3. It is always dependable**

In **Hebrews 13:5** God tells us, *'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'* and that sets his standard on dependability. We must learn to be available and dependable. Read **Proverbs 17:17** and write down when a friend should be loving: .....

**4. It is action based**

Christian love is not some vague, sentimental feeling. It is a love that is tangibly expressed in deeds. Read **1 John 3:18** and fill in the blanks:  
*Dear children, let us not love with ..... or .....  
but with ..... and in .....*

Love is something you do. It is expressed in practical acts of kindness which range from hospitality and visiting, to doing odd jobs. It may involve giving our time and our money, offering meals, giving lifts, meeting needs, etc. Ask a church leader how you could show love and serve the church in the coming week and offer your services.

**B. Why should we meet with other Christians?**

**1. It is commanded in the bible**

Write out **Hebrews 10:24-25** .....  
.....  
.....

Christians are instructed to meet together to encourage and motivate each other. These meetings include worship services, church prayer times and small group meetings, but should not be restricted to them. Playing games, celebrating a birthday, studying the bible, praying with another believer, chatting on the phone, sharing your needs and eating together are all opportunities for deepening fellowship.

**2. Jesus promises us his presence.**

Write out **Matthew 18:20** .....

When we gather together his presence is with us in a greater measure. Aim to be at church meetings. Also take every available opportunity to join other believers for times to share, pray, study and have fun. As you gather together for such activities, expect the presence of Jesus.

**3. We grow spiritually.**

The following verse gives another good reason for meeting together:

**Proverbs 13:20** .....

As we befriend and spend time with Christians who are spiritually ahead of us, we will grow spiritually. More is 'caught' than 'taught'! Also, when we relate with other Christians, we are likely to rub one another up the wrong way. When these conflicts and hurts are resolved in openness and love, the result is spiritual growth.

**4. It is a testimony to the world around us**

We have already looked at **John 13: 34-35**. What demonstrates to the world that we are disciples of Jesus?

***C. How should we love other Christians?***

**1. Encourage and build up one another**

Write out **Hebrews 3:13** .....

**2. Share our joys, sorrows, hopes, feelings - our lives**

Write out **1Thessalonians 2:8** .....

.....  
.....

**3. Share our weaknesses and shortcomings and pray together**

Write out **James 5:16a** .....

.....  
.....

**4. Teach and admonish one another**

Write out **Colossians 3:16** .....

.....  
.....

**5. Handle differences and disagreements**

Write out **Matthew 5:23-24:** .....

.....  
.....

.....  
.....

**6. Serve sacrificially**

Write out the last part of **Galatians 5:13** .....

.....  
.....

**7. Being one in spirit and purpose (unity)**

God desires unity amongst his people. Read **Psalm 133** and write down what God commands for brothers who live together in unity: .....

|  |
|--|
| <p><b>Assignment</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask the Lord to put love in your heart for your new family</li> <li>2. Think about how you could put into practice the above 7 points with the believers you mentioned on page 27, and make some clear decisions as to what you intend doing.</li> <li>3. Now, go and put these decisions into practice!</li> </ol> |
|--|

# 9. Meditating on the word

Write down the first nine words of **Colossians 3:16**:

.....  
A highly effective way of getting the word into us is through meditation. The bible mentions this especially in the book of Psalms. Read the following verses and write down what the psalmists meditated on:

- Psalm 48:9** .....
- Psalm 119:15** .....
- Psalm 119:23** .....
- Psalm 119:27** .....
- Psalm 119:148** .....
- Psalm 143:5** .....

In Biblical meditation, we think deeply about the truths of scripture so that we can understand, pray and apply bible truth. We chew it over in the same way as a cow chews the cud. It is totally different from other forms of meditation in that we do not try to empty our minds. On the contrary, in Biblical meditation we fill our minds with good things.

Read **Philippians 4:8** and write down what we are to fill our minds with.

.....  
Read **Psalm 119:11** and answer these questions:

- Where did the psalmist hide God's word? .....
- Why did he hide it? .....

## ***A. The benefits of meditation***

### **1. Prosperity and success**

Read **Joshua 1:8** and write down in your own words what is required for prosperity and success.

- 1. ....
- 2. ....
- 3. ....

All over the world, people are looking for the secret to success and prosperity. This verse told Joshua exactly what he had to do to gain them.

**2. Wisdom, insight, understanding**

Read **Psalms 119:97-100**. What were the results of meditation?

**v98** .....

**v99** .....

**v100** .....

Meditation clearly had a far-reaching effect on the psalmist! As we meditate on the word instead of just reading it or hearing it, we will get more insight and understanding. It is a wonderful feeling to meditate on a familiar scripture and to receive something new and fresh from God.

Write down **Psalms 39:3**: .....

Many times when we only read the word, we feel cold and untouched. David discovered that when he meditated, his heart grew hot. As we meditate, we will become passionate about what we have read and thought about. We will desire to obey and apply truth to our lives and share it with others too.

**3. Absorption**

According to experts, 95% of what we hear on a Sunday is forgotten within 72 hours. In Mumbai, it sometimes rains heavily for 20 minutes on a hot day. But soon after the shower, the tar road is dry - all the rainwater has flowed into the gutter - 'Down the drain!' But 20 minutes of heavy rain on a ploughed and broken field will have a totally different effect, as the field will absorb much of the rainwater. Similarly, we can encounter a torrential amount of God's word, but if we do not absorb it, we get very little benefit from it.

Calculate how many hours you spend listening to messages each year - Sunday sermons, Special Meetings, Camps, Conferences/Seminars, Small Group meetings, Audio and video tapes, Other.

Put down an approximate figure here: ..... hours

Do you think you have absorbed (understood, prayed and applied) all that bible input?

**YES/NO**

Many Christians absorb very little of what they hear. **James 1:22** issues a solemn warning to those who do not apply the word. What happens to

Christians who only hear the word? .....

Meditation helps to bridge the gap between receiving biblical truth and applying it. It opens the soil of the soul and lets the water of God's word sink in.

Meditation allows the word to become a living reality in our lives as we put it into practice. It leads to fruitfulness and spiritual maturity.

## **B. How to meditate on the bible**

This outline for meditation has been worked out, step by step, for **Ephesians 4:29** so that you can learn one way of meditating. As you follow it through, do not be in a hurry to finish but be open to personal conviction for yourself. Page 46 is a sheet for you to use for personal meditation on a verse of your choice.

### **1. Pick out a verse.**

After reading a portion of scripture select one verse to meditate upon and write down the reference and the full verse.

|   |
|---|
| Reference: <b>Ephesians 4:29</b>  |
| <i>Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only</i>        |
| <i>what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it</i> |
| <i>may benefit those who listen.</i>  |

### **2. Ponder/Think about the verse.**

Emphasize each word as you say it to yourself several times. Pick out two or three key words/phrases from the passage that represent God's message for your heart. Write them below.

|  |
|--|
| 1. <i>Unwholesome talk - does that include silly jokes, sarcasm etc?</i>   |
| 2. <i>Helpful for building - do people find me encouraging, I wonder?</i>  |
| 3. <i>Benefit those who listen - am I really a blessing by what I say?</i> |

### **3. Paraphrase it.**

Toss and turn the verse over in your mind. Write it in your own words.

|  |
|--|
| <i>Do not speak anything harmful/ damaging/ hurtful/ destructive. Speak</i>      |
| <i>only what is useful/ beneficial/ profitable/ helpful to strengthen people</i> |
| <i>and to enable them to grow. Your words must assist/ serve/</i>                |
| <i>enrich/bless your hearers.</i>  |

### **4. Practical**

#### **a) What does this passage say to me?**

|  |
|--|
| <i>I need to be careful with the words that come out of my mouth. I must</i> |
| <i>ensure that they are pleasing to God and helpful to my hearers.</i>       |

**b) Where am I falling short? Give specific examples.**

|   |
|---|
| <i>I often lose my temper when people make mistakes at work. I make</i> |
| <i>rude comments.</i>   |

**c) What am I going to do about it. (Be specific).**

|  |
|--|
| <i>I will be careful not to be rude in my speech.</i>                        |
| <i>I will encourage Shailesh daily.</i>                                      |
| <i>I will store scripture in my heart by memorizing because it is out of</i> |
| <i>the overflow of the heart that the mouth speaks.</i>                      |

**5. Pray the application.**

Meditation without application is like chewing without swallowing. Write down your prayer, asking the Lord to help you apply truth.

|  |
|--|
| <i>Lord Jesus, set a guard over my lips. May the words of my mouth be</i>  |
| <i>pleasing in your sight. Purify my words that they may encourage and</i> |
| <i>build people up.</i>  |

**6. Parallel Passages.**

Look up other bible verses (cross references) that teach the same truth

| <b>Verse Reference</b> | <b>Main thought</b>         |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Proverbs 15:28</b>  | Think before speaking       |
| <b>Proverbs 16:24</b>  | Pleasant words are soothing |

Take time meditating. It is better to read a small amount and meditate on it than to read an extensive portion of scripture without meditation.

**Assignment**

1. Read **Psalm 1:2-3**. Write down in your notebook the results of meditating on God's word.
2. Copy the headings of the meditation format into your own journal for easy reference - or photocopy page 46.
3. Meditate on the following verses using this format:

**1 Corinthians 10:13**

**Colossians 3:12**

# Appendix

## A. Appendix 1 - Who am I in Christ?

- Matthew 5:13 I am the salt of the earth  
5:14 I am the light of the world
- Mark 16:17 I am able in Jesus name to drive out demons, heal the sick, speak in new tongues
- Luke 17:21 I am in the Kingdom of God
- John 1:12 I am a child of God  
3:8 I am born of the Spirit  
3:16-17 I am not under condemnation, but I have eternal life  
6:47 I have everlasting life  
7:38 I have streams of living water flowing out from within me  
8:32 I am set free by the knowledge of the truth  
10:10 I have abundant life  
10:28 I am safe in Jesus hands  
14:3 I am going to be with Jesus  
14:12 I am able to do great things in Jesus  
16:13 I am guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit  
17:16 I am not of this world although I am in it
- Romans 1:7 I am a saint  
1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel  
3:24 I am justified freely by the grace of God  
5:1 I have peace with God  
6:11 I am dead to sin, but alive to God  
6:18 I am set free from sin and am now a slave to righteousness  
8:1 I am no longer under condemnation  
8:27 I am helped in my weakness by the Holy Spirit  
8:37 I am more than a conqueror through Christ  
8:39 I cannot be separated from God's love in Christ  
12:5 I am a member of the body of Christ
- 1 Cor 2:16 I have the mind of Christ

- 3:16 I am a temple of God's Holy Spirit  
7:22 I am Christ's slave  
10:13 I am kept from unbearable temptation by God  
15:10 I am what I am by the grace of God
- 2 Cor 2:15 I am to God the aroma of Christ  
3:12 I am very bold because I have an everlasting hope in Jesus  
3:18 I am being transformed into Christ's likeness  
5:7 I am living by faith, not by sight  
5:17 I am a new creation  
5:18 I am reconciled to God  
5:20 I am an ambassador for Christ  
5:21 I am God's righteousness in Christ Jesus
- Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ  
3:13 I am redeemed from the curse of the law  
3:26 I am a son of God  
4:6 I am able to call God 'Father'
- Ephesians 1:3 I am blessed in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing  
1:4 I am chosen in him before the creation of the world  
1:5 I am predestined to be adopted as God's son  
1:7 I am redeemed from my sins  
1:14 I am sealed with the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of my inheritance  
2:6 I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms  
2:8 I am saved by grace through faith  
2:10 I am God's workmanship  
2:19 I am a member of God's household
- Philipp 1:29 I have been granted to suffer for Christ  
3:20 I am a citizen from heaven
- Col. 1:13 I am rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought in the Kingdom of Jesus  
1:27 I have Christ in me, the hope of glory  
2:10 I am given fullness in Christ  
2:12 I am buried with Christ and raised with him through faith in God's power  
3:12 I am chosen by God, holy and dearly loved  
3:24 I am serving the Lord Jesus as I work



## ***B. Appendix2 - Bible-reading programme***

To enable you to set a goal for reading through the bible, we have included a few bible-reading plans below. They will help you to read through the bible at your own pace.

To bring variety into your bible reading, it is preferable to read daily from the Old Testament and the New Testament. Otherwise those who try to read the Bible straight through may become confused in Leviticus, discouraged in Numbers and give up completely by Deuteronomy.

| PLAN     | READ  | RESULT  |
|----------|---|---|
| Plan I   | 3 chapters daily and 5 chapters on a Sunday             | Read through the Bible once in a year.        |
| Plan II  | 1 chapter from the OT and 1 chapter. from the NT daily. | Read through the Bible in 2 years.            |
| Plan III | 1 chapter a day   | Read through the Bible in 3 years & 3 months. |

For your information, there are 929 chapters in the Old Testament and 260 chapters in the New Testament - a total of 1189 chapters. You may want to work out your own reading plan.

On the next page is a Personal Reading Record which will help you to keep track of your bible-reading. After reading a chapter, mark it off on your Personal Reading Record. This way you can be encouraged with your progress. You could also make a photocopy of the Personal Reading Record and keep it in your bible.

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

**2 Timothy 3:16**



|                      |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| <i>Psalms</i>        | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  |
|                      | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  | 25  | 26  | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  | 31  | 32  | 33  | 34  | 35  | 36  | 37  | 38  | 39  | 40  |
|                      | 41  | 42  | 43  | 44  | 45  | 46  | 47  | 48  | 49  | 50  | 51  | 52  | 53  | 54  | 55  | 56  | 57  | 58  | 59  | 60  |
|                      | 61  | 62  | 63  | 64  | 65  | 66  | 67  | 68  | 69  | 70  | 71  | 72  | 73  | 74  | 75  | 76  | 77  | 78  | 79  | 80  |
|                      | 81  | 82  | 83  | 84  | 85  | 86  | 87  | 88  | 89  | 90  | 91  | 92  | 93  | 94  | 95  | 96  | 97  | 98  | 99  | 100 |
|                      | 101 | 102 | 103 | 104 | 105 | 106 | 107 | 108 | 109 | 110 | 111 | 112 | 113 | 114 | 115 | 116 | 117 | 118 | 119 | 120 |
|                      | 121 | 122 | 123 | 124 | 125 | 126 | 127 | 128 | 129 | 130 | 131 | 132 | 133 | 134 | 135 | 136 | 137 | 138 | 139 | 140 |
|                      | 141 | 142 | 143 | 144 | 145 | 146 | 147 | 148 | 149 | 150 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Proverbs</i>      | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  |
|                      | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  | 25  | 26  | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  | 31  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Ecclesiastes</i>  | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Song of Songs</i> | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Isaiah</i>        | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  |
|                      | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  | 25  | 26  | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  | 31  | 32  | 33  | 34  | 35  | 36  | 37  | 38  | 39  | 40  |
|                      | 41  | 42  | 43  | 44  | 45  | 46  | 47  | 48  | 49  | 50  | 51  | 52  | 53  | 54  | 55  | 56  | 57  | 58  | 59  | 60  |
|                      | 61  | 62  | 63  | 64  | 65  | 66  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Jeremiah</i>      | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  |
|                      | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  | 25  | 26  | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  | 31  | 32  | 33  | 34  | 35  | 36  | 37  | 38  | 39  | 40  |
|                      | 41  | 42  | 43  | 44  | 45  | 46  | 47  | 48  | 49  | 50  | 51  | 52  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Lamentation</i>   | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Ezekiel</i>       | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  |
|                      | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  | 25  | 26  | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  | 31  | 32  | 33  | 34  | 35  | 36  | 37  | 38  | 39  | 40  |
|                      | 41  | 42  | 43  | 44  | 45  | 46  | 47  | 48  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Daniel</i>        | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Hosea</i>         | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Joel</i>          | 1   | 2   | 3   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Amos</i>          | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Obadiah</i>       | 1   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Jonah</i>         | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Micah</i>         | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Nahum</i>         | 1   | 2   | 3   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Habakkuk</i>      | 1   | 2   | 3   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Zephaniah</i>     | 1   | 2   | 3   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Haggai</i>        | 1   | 2   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Zechariah</i>     | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Malachi</i>       | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |

‘Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.’ - **Acts 20:32**

## 2. New Testament

|                    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|--------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| <i>Matthew</i>     | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| <i>Mark</i>        | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |    |    |    |    |
| <i>Luke</i>        | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
|                    | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>John</i>        | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
|                    | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 |
| <i>Acts</i>        | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
|                    | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>Romans</i>      | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |    |    |    |    |
| <i>1 Cor</i>       | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |    |    |    |    |
| <i>2 Cor</i>       | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>Galatians</i>   | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>Ephesians</i>   | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>Phillipians</i> | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>Colossians</i>  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>1 Thess</i>     | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>2 Thess</i>     | 1  | 2  | 3  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>1 Timothy</i>   | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>2 Timothy</i>   | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>Titus</i>       | 1  | 2  | 3  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>Philemon</i>    | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>Hebrews</i>     | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>James</i>       | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>1 Peter</i>     | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>2 Peter</i>     | 1  | 2  | 3  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>1 John</i>      | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>2 John</i>      | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>3 John</i>      | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>Jude</i>        | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <i>Revelation</i>  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
|                    | 21 | 22 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

## D. Appendix 4 - New Topical Memory System

|           |                                |                 |                   |
|-----------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <b>A.</b> | <b>Live the New Life</b>       |                 |                   |
|           | Christ the Centre              | 2 Cor. 5:17     | Gal 2:20          |
|           | Obedience to Christ            | Romans 12:1     | John 14:21        |
|           | The Word                       | 2 Tim 3:16      | Joshua 1:8        |
|           | Prayer                         | John 15:7       | Phil. 4:6,7       |
|           | Fellowship                     | Matthew 18:20   | Hebrews 10 :24,25 |
|           | Witnessing                     | Matthew 4:19    | Romans 1:16       |
| <b>B.</b> | <b>Proclaim Christ</b>         |                 |                   |
|           | All Have Sinned                | Romans 3:23     | Isaiah 53:6       |
|           | Sin's Penalty                  | Romans 6:23     | Hebrews 9:27      |
|           | Christ Paid the Penalty        | Romans 5:8 1    | Peter 3:18        |
|           | Salvation not by Works         | Eph. 2:8,9      | Titus 3:5         |
|           | Must Receive Christ            | John 1:12       | Revelation 3:20   |
|           | Assurance of Salvation         | 1 John 5:13     | John 5:24         |
| <b>C.</b> | <b>Rely on God's Resources</b> |                 |                   |
|           | His Spirit                     | 1 Cor. 3:16     | 1 Cor 2:12        |
|           | His Strength                   | Isaiah 41:10    | Phil 4:13         |
|           | His Faithfulness               | Lam 3:22,23     | Numbers 23:19     |
|           | His Peace                      | Isaiah 26:3     | 1 Peter 5:7       |
|           | His Provision                  | Romans 8:32     | Phil. 4:19        |
|           | His Help in Temptation         | Hebrews 2:18    | Psalm 119:9,11    |
| <b>D.</b> | <b>Be Christ's Disciple</b>    |                 |                   |
|           | Put Christ First               | Matthew 6:33    | Luke 9:23         |
|           | Separate from the World        | 1 John, 2:15,16 | Romans 12:2       |
|           | Be Steadfast                   | 1 Cor. 15:58    | Hebrews. 12:3     |
|           | Serve Others                   | Mark 10:45      | 2 Cor. 4:5        |
|           | Give Generously                | Proverbs 3:9,10 | 2 Cor. 9:6,7      |
|           | Develop World Vision           | Acts 1:8        | Matthew 28:19,20  |
| <b>E.</b> | <b>Grow in Christlikeness</b>  |                 |                   |
|           | Love                           | John 13:34,35   | 1 John 3:18       |
|           | Humility                       | Phil. 2:3,4     | 1 Peter 5:5,6     |
|           | Purity                         | Eph. 5:3        | 1 Peter 2:11      |
|           | Honesty                        | Lev. 19:11      | Acts 24:16        |
|           | Faith                          | Hebrews 11:6    | Romans 4:20,21    |
|           | Good Works                     | Gal. 6:9,10     | Matthew 5:16      |

## E. Appendix 5 - Bible meditation

|  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| <p>1. Pick out a verse.</p>  | <p>Reference .....</p> |
| <p>2. Ponder/Think about the verse.</p>                            |                        |
| <p>3. Paraphrase the verse. Write it in your own words.</p>        |                        |
| <p>4. Practical</p>  |                        |
| <p><i>a) What does this passage say to me?</i></p>                 |                        |
| <p><i>b) Where am I falling short? Give specific examples.</i></p> |                        |
| <p><i>c) What am I going to do about it. (Be specific).</i></p>    |                        |
| <p>5. Pray the application. (write out your prayer)</p>            |                        |
| <p>6. Parallel Passages. Verse reference and main thought</p>      |                        |

