

Week Four Daily Training Tips

Eat Right to Get Fit

personal / group study for use with the message on February 6th and 7th, 2010

“As newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the Word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation” (1 Peter 2;1,2).

Introduction.

This week’s Training Tips are excerpts taken from my book, *Transformed by the Renewing of your Mind*. Have fun digging in!

Day 1

Look at the parallelism between Colossians 3:16,17 and Ephesians 5:18-20. These two passages, considered together, will help you understand the relationship between the Spirit-filled life and the Word-filled life.

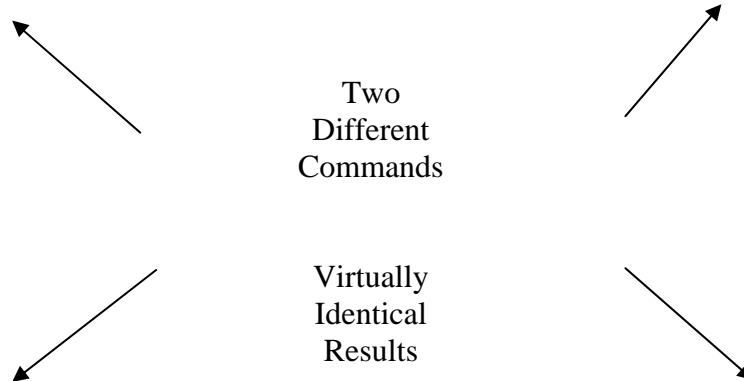
SPIRIT-FILLED / WORD-FILLED: A COMPARISON OF TWO KEY TEXTS

EPHESIANS 5:18-20

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit...

COLOSSIANS 3:16,17

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you...



speaking to one another....

with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another....

in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs....

with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs....

singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord....

singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God....

always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.

And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

To the Ephesians, Paul wrote that they were to be Spirit-filled Christians. To the Colossians, he commanded that they be Word-filled Christians. Clearly, these are two different commands. However, the parallel results show us that Paul had the same basic idea in mind in both commands. (Paul wrote Ephesians and Colossians at the same time, and sent both letters to the same region.) In other words, the rich indwelling of God's Word was closely related to the Spirit-filled life in Paul's theology. You cannot separate the two and talk as if the Spirit-filled life is one thing and the Word-filled life is something completely different. Letting God's Word fill your mind and letting God's Spirit control your heart are companion concepts in Paul's teaching.

So, if you go back to week 2 and think about the importance of the Spirit-filled life, and then link this to week 4 on the Word-filled life, you can see that the Bible is a key tool that the Holy Spirit uses to grow us and change us. Walking in the Spirit and Walking in the Word are companion ideas, and should always be kept together in your understanding of the spiritual growth process.

Read.

Day 2

PSALM 119 – The A to Z of God's Word

The longest chapter in the entire Bible is devoted to an extended description of the value of God's Word for our lives. A coincidence? Or was God trying to tell us something about the importance of His Word? When you read the mammoth Psalm 119, you come away wondering if there is anything the Word of God can't do. If you haven't read it lately, I would strongly encourage you to read through it.

A brief survey of this great psalm will reveal the scope of what God's Word can do in the life of one who studies it diligently. The Word of God will:

1. Stimulate righteousness in your life (1-3).
2. Enable you to avoid sin-traps (9-11).
3. Provide you with reliable counsel (23-24).
4. Revive and strengthen your weary soul (25,28,40,93).
5. Give you a healthy reverence for God (38).
6. Allow you to speak with authority (46).
7. Comfort you in times of distress (50,52,76).
8. Develop your power of discernment (66,104).
9. Enhance your testimony to others (74,79).
10. Make you exceptionally wise (97-100).
11. Give you peace of mind and heart (165).
12. Produce praise toward God (171,172).

My list just scratches the surface of what this Psalm teaches us. This explains why Psalm 119 is so long. There was so much that the writer wanted to say about God's Word and the ability it has to transform our lives that he just kept on writing and writing.

***If you were reading this Psalm in Hebrew, you would find that it is arranged acrostically. Each of its 22 paragraphs begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and every line in each individual paragraph begins with that same letter. Thus, Psalm 119 is a virtual A - Z Psalm, a catalogue of the power of God's Word to change a life. It might interest you to know that a Psalm such as this was arranged acrostically to aid with memorization. Yes, many Jews in ancient times would commit this entire Psalm to memory! They were serious about being Word-filled. No wonder neighboring nations referred to the Jews as the people of the Book. Wouldn't it be great if people referred to the OPC community as the people of the Book?

Day 3

PSALM 19 – God’s Two Great Speeches

Psalm 19 is about God-talk. The point of the whole Psalm is to extol the virtues of God’s speech to us. There are two primary forms in which God’s speech comes to us: the Skies and the Scriptures, or the World and the Word. The first half of the Psalm marvels at how God speaks to us through creation, the world around us. The second half of the Psalm marvels at how God speaks to us through His revealed Word, the Scriptures. Read the whole Psalm through and enjoy it.

Look at just a short section from Psalm 19:7-8. Here, the psalmist delights in the qualities and abilities of God's Word. Consider the following layout of these verses.

The Hebrew poet arranged these lines in beautiful couplets so as to attract our attention to the alternating qualities and abilities of the Word of God. Because the Word has certain divine qualities, it is able to accomplish things in our lives that nothing else can accomplish.

THE QUALITIES AND ABILITIES OF GOD’S WORD PSALM 19:7-8

Qualities of the Word

Abilities of the Word

The law of the Lord is perfect	↔	restoring the soul
The testimony of the Lord is sure	↔	making wise the simple
The precepts of the Lord are right	↔	rejoicing the heart
The commandment of the Lord is pure	↔	enlightening the eyes

What do I stand to gain from dedicated devotion to the Word of God? Well, go back to what the text says, line by line:

Line 1: If my soul has lost its harmony with God, the Word of God is perfectly designed to restore my soul to proper fellowship with Him. I must spend regular time in the Word to have soul-restoration.

Line 2: In a world of uncertainty, the Word of God is a sure thing. His Word is reliable and trustworthy. It can build deep convictions in my life and transform my simple mind into the mind of a wise man. I need to feed on His Word so that I can become wise and sure of what I believe in a world of shifting values.

Line 3: The world spins the lie to make it look like truth. God’s Word is right and true. As I listen to His Word, and apply it to my life, this will result in a deep and abiding happiness, a rejoicing of the heart that I long for. I need to hear and heed the Word so that I can have a foundation for heartfelt joy.

Line 4: God's Word is pure, unblemished, spotless and perfect. It enlightens my eyes to His perfect ways, and it allows me to see the darkness of any other path. I must fill my eyes with the pure light of God's Word so that I can see clearly in this dark world.

According to Psalm 19, the whole man benefits from God's Word. The mind is made wise. The heart is made happy. The eyes are filled with light. The soul is restored. That is the simple, yet profound message of these short couplets. The skies show us the glory of God from a distance, but the Scriptures bring the transforming glory of God into our very being. David, the sweet psalmist of Israel was a man who spent many a night gazing at the skies wondering about the majesty of the Creator, yet he also spent many a day gazing at the Scriptures experiencing the soul-transforming power of the Word of God.

Day 4

PSALM 1 – The Blessed Life

Look at the little Psalm that stands as the gatekeeper to the entire book of Psalms.

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners,
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in its season,
And its leaf does not wither;
And in whatever he does, he prospers (Psalm 1:1-3).

Psalm 1 is basically an invitation to enter into the book of Psalms and to delight in God's Word. The blessed man does not walk in the counsel of the wicked; he does not stand in the path of sinners; he will not sit in the seat of scoffers. Instead, the blessed man has made the decision to delight in God's Word and to meditate on His Word day and night.

To meditate means to ponder deeply and reflectively. The blessed man is one who has begun to devote himself in a serious way to the study of God's Word. You don't get the feeling here of a man or woman with some 'hurry-up' daily Bible study habit, or a 'one-minute Bible' kind of approach. This is a person who is learning to meditate on God's Word all throughout the day.

Notice the results in this blessed man's life (or woman, of course). He is firm like a tree rooted deeply by streams of life-giving water. That speaks of strength. He is productive like a tree which bears its fruit in season. That speaks of fruitfulness. He is vital like a tree which has no withering leaves. That speaks of health. And, in summary, the blessed man, the man of the Word, prospers in whatever he does. God's hand of blessing is on this man's life because this man's hand is on the Word of God. This is the picture of the blessed man with which the entire Psalter opens. It is the invitation to enter in and read.


Day 5 - Read 2Timothy all the way through today. It's one of Bob's favorite books. It's Paul's last letter before he died, a very personal charge to his young disciple, Timothy. Paul's heart oozes from every line of this letter.

Fail to plan, plan to fail. Following are some basic tips for getting started with a more serious personal Bible study habit.


1. Acquire a good quality Study Bible. You are more apt to spend time with a book that facilitates your study, rather than one that hinders you. Get yourself a Bible that you really like. I suggest the NIV translation – a good balance between literalness and readability.
2. Set aside a specific time and place to meet with God in personal Bible study. (Same with prayer.) Make this a priority in your schedule. Be consistent for two or three weeks, and you will be on your way to forming a successful habit. Give it your best shot. I would say that 15 minutes a day is a minimum for true cardio development. If you can stay in God's Word longer, that's great.
3. Look for a Bible buddy. This is someone who also wants to study God's Word like you do. You can study the same book simultaneously and encourage one another in the process. "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up" (Ecclesiastes 4:9,10). You might want to join some sort of a group that is studying the Bible together. Check with our Small Groups coordinators for more info.
4. Begin with one book of the bible. Take a little book, like Philippians, James, or 2Timothy. Read it for a month, and then buy a study guide and look into the details for another month. You'll be amazed at how much you learn. The Christian book store will have study guides on every book of the Bible. They will also be able to show you 'commentaries,' which are detailed explanations of each book of the bible. You can purchase a one volume commentary on the whole Bible, or a multiple volume commentary on the whole Bible . . . or, an individual

commentary on the specific book of the Bible you are studying. Ask one of our Trainers for more specific advice if you need it.

**All scripture taken from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noted.*



5. Don't forget to check out our new Lifepath options. There is a place in this process for everyone to grow! See the tables in the atrium next weekend.



Oak Pointe Church
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