**MAKING THE MOST OF GOD’S RESOURCES FOR YOUR GROWTH**

**Lesson 2: Reading the Bible**

*Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.* (1 Timothy 4:7-8)

***Review:***

When it comes to spiritual growth, is it:

* Disciplined training or restful learning? (1 Timothy 4:7-8; Matthew 11:25-30)
* Our work or God’s work in us? (Philippians 2:12-13; 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16; 3:4-15; 9:23-27)
* Personal and private or public and corporate? (Matthew 6:1-18; Ephesians 4:11-16)

The importance of:

* Keeping the gospel central in our pursuit of spiritual growth (Romans, Ephesians, Colossians 3:1-17)
* Keeping the goal(s) of spiritual growth in mind
* Knowing the obstacles to our spiritual growth
* Utilizing God’s resources for our spiritual growth
* Trusting God for our spiritual growth
* Being careful of how we evaluate our spiritual growth

***Introductory Remarks:***

* Evaluating our spiritual growth
* “Dependent Discipline”
* Saturating your life with God’s Word
* The Bible and Prayer
* God and the Bible (2 Timothy 3:14-17; Psalm 119; Hebrews 4:12-13)

***Helpful verses from Psalm 119 on how we should approach God’s Word:***

*In the ways of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. (v. 14)*

*I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word. (v. 16)*

*My soul is consumed with longing for your rules at all times. (v. 20)*

*Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors. (v. 24)*

*Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it. (v. 35)*

*I will also speak of your testimonies before kings and shall not be put to shame, for I find delight in your commandments, which I love. I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes. (vv. 46-48)*

*Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my sojourning. (v. 54)*

*At midnight I rise to praise you, because of your righteous rules. (v. 62)*

*The insolent smear me with lies, but with my whole heart I keep your precepts; their heart is unfeeling like fat, but I delight in your law. It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes. The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces. (vv. 69-72)*

*If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction. (v. 92)*

*I have seen a limit to all perfection, but your commandment is exceedingly broad. (v. 96)*

*Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts. (vv. 97-100)*

*How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! (v. 103)*

*Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart. I incline my heart to perform your statutes forever, to the end. (vv. 111-112)*

*I hate the double-minded, but I love your law. (v. 113)*

*All of the wicked of the earth you discard like dross, therefore I love your testimonies. My flesh trembles for fear of you, and I am afraid of your judgments. (vv. 119-120)*

*Therefore I love your commandments above gold, above fine gold. Therefore I consider all your precepts to be right; I hate every false way. (vv. 127-128)*

*Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them. The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple. I open my mouth and pant, because I long for your commandments. (vv. 129-131)*

*My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your law. (v. 136)*

*My zeal consumes me, because my foes forget your words. (v. 139)*

*Trouble and anguish have found me out, but your commandments are my delight. Your commandments are righteous forever; give me understanding that I may live. (vv. 143-144)*

*My eyes are awake before the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promise. (v. 148)*

*I look at the faithless with disgust, because they do not keep your commands. Consider how I love your precepts! Give me life according to your steadfast love. The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever. (vv. 158-160)*

*Princes persecute me without cause, but my heart stands in awe of your words. I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil. I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love your law. Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous rules. Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble. (vv. 161-165)*

*My lips will pour forth praise, for you teach me your statutes. My tongue will sing of your word, for all your commandments are right. (vv. 171-172)*

*I long for your salvation, O Lord, and your law is my delight. (v. 174)*

***Other helpful Bible verses for the spiritual discipline of Bible reading:***

* 2 Timothy 3:14-17
* Deuteronomy 6:1-9
* Deuteronomy 17:14-20
* Psalm 1
* Psalm 19
* Psalm 119
* Isaiah 66:1-2
* Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13
* Matthew 5:17-20
* John 1:1-18
* 1 Corinthians 9:23-10:14
* 1 Thessalonians 2:13
* 1 Timothy 4:7-8
* Hebrews 4:11-13
* Hebrews 5:11-14
* James 1:19-27
* 2 Peter 3:18

***Why read through the entire Bible?***

* To treat God as he deserves (to glorify God)
* To truly know God as he has revealed himself (head and heart knowledge)
* To learn from God (to know his will)
* To develop a truly God-centered worldview (gain God’s perfect perspective)
* To think God’s thoughts about everything
* To familiarize ourselves with the “world” of the Bible
* To learn from our past, to live in the present, and to be prepared for the future
* To get the whole picture of God and his plan
* To avoid treating the Bible as a self-help manual
* To listen to the Holy Spirit
* To let God’s truth “wash” over our hearts and minds every day
* To be frequently reminded of what life is all about
* To love and serve others God’s way
* To truly humble ourselves before God and others
* To meditate on God’s Word day and night