**Study Series: Spiritual Disciplines**

Author: Donald S. Whitney

**Lesson Title: “Biblical Intake…for the Purpose of Godliness” (pp. 80 - 91)**

January 17, 2021 Session 06

**The main point of this lesson is:** No Spiritual Discipline is more important than the intake of God’s Word.

Focus on this goal: To help adults learn various means of taking in God’s Word.

Key Bible Passages: 2 Timothy 3:16; James 1:22-25

To the Leader: **Keep** the spiritual disciplines poster you created for Session 6, Step 1 (p. 78) **displayed** throughout this entire study.

Before the Session

**Enlist volunteers** to be prepared to read Matthew 12:3; Matthew 12:5; Matthew 19:4; Matthew 22:31; Mark 12:10; and Mark 12:26. (Step 3)

During the Session

**Step 1. Introduction / Discussion Starter**

**Ask:** What disciplines would you exercise if you wanted to run a half-marathon?

**Explain** running coaches recommend a training regimen of regular shorter runs, a once-weekly longer run, rest, and cross-training.

**Ask:**

1. What if you trained exactly as suggested, but ate little nutritious food, would you be ready to complete that half-marathon? Why?
2. How is a healthy diet just as important to spiritual training?

**Draw attention** to the spiritual disciplines poster and the first spiritual discipline, Biblical Intake.

**Step 2. Day One – Hearing God’s Word**

**Invite adults** **to state** why they agree or disagree with the first Day One sentence (p. 80).

**Discuss** Day One, activity 1 (pp. 80-81).

**Declare** there are numerous ways to take in God’s Word. This session guides us from the least to most difficult subdisciplines of biblical intake.

**Write** Hearing at the bottom of a marker board.

**Ask:** How might hearing be the easiest, yet still difficult, way to take in God’s Word?

**Urge adults to really listen** as you read Luke 11:28; Romans 10:17; and 1 Timothy 4:13.

**Ask** what learners gained from hearing those verses.

**Explore** how adults can cultivate the discipline of hearing God’s Word (urge prayerful discernment in listening to Bible podcasts and radio/TV preachers).

**Step 3. Day Two – Reading God’s Word**

**Request** the pre-enlisted volunteers read their assigned verses.

**Ask** what phrase is common to every verse.

**Determine** what Jesus assumed of God’s people.

**Write** Reading just above “Hearing” on the board.

**Ask:** According to Matthew 4:4 (p. 82), what part of Scripture did Jesus say God’s people should read?

**Discuss** Day Two, activity 1 (p. 82).

**Relate** the author’s first two practical suggestions for consistent success in Bible reading (p. 83).

**Invite responses** to the first part of Day Two, activity 2 (p. 83).

**Inquire:** How can we assure that we take in what we read, rather than just skimming and forgetting it?

**Relate** the third suggestion (p. 83).

**Step 4. Day Three – Studying God’s Word**

**Note:** Just as training for a half-marathon may start with thirty-minute runs and increase to more challenging runs, so training for godliness through biblical intake will increase in difficulty. We won’t go far if we don’t discipline ourselves to go deeper.

**Read or summarize** the first paragraph of Day Three (p. 84).

**Write** Studying above “Reading” on the marker board.

**Relate** from Day Three the three examples of hearts committed to study God’s Word (pp. 84-85).

**Discuss** Day Three, activity 1 (p. 85; it would be helpful to **read** 2 Timothy 2:15 in **several translations**, including the Amplified Bible).

**Discuss** the Day Three margin/pull quote (p. 85).

**Invite volunteers** who completed Day Three, activity 2 (p. 85) to share what they gained from their personal study. (**OPTION:** **Organize** into teams. **Request** teams complete Day Three, activity 2 together. **Ask** teams to share what they learned with the whole group.)

**Step 5. Day Four – Memorizing God’s Word**

**Write** Memorizing above “Studying” on the board.

**Consider** why many believers might want to stop with studying and not move on to memorizing.

**Use** Day Four remarks and activity 1 (pp. 86-87) **to** **examine** reasons believers must discipline themselves to memorize Scripture.

**Invite** testimonies of how memorizing Scripture has provided the benefits discussed in Day Four.

**Brainstorm** plans that can help adults memorize Scripture.

**Note** the challenge in Day Four, activity 2 (p. 88).

**Step 6. Day Five – Meditating on and Applying God’s Word**

**Write** Meditating above “Memorizing” on the board.

**Contrast** worldly and biblical meditation (pp. 88-89).

**Invite volunteers to read** Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:1-3.

**Explore** the benefits of biblical meditation.

**Examine** how to meditate on Scripture, **using** the first set of Day Five bullet points (p. 90) **to add** to the discussion.

**Write** Applying at the very top of the marker board.

**Ask:** Why is application the overarching subdiscipline of biblical intake?

**As a group, work** Day Five, activity 2 (p. 91).

**Determine** ways believers can apply the Scriptures they hear, read, study, memorize, and meditate upon, **using** the second set of Day Five bullet points (p. 91) **to add** to the discussion.

**Step 7. Live Out the Lesson**

**Ask:** How could this study be a little overwhelming?

**Assure** adults that God knows moving toward Christlikeness is a process; He won’t remove His approval from us if we don’t engage in every biblical intake discipline every day. However, “an encounter with God through His Word should result in at least one specific response” (p. 91).

**Encourage** adults to silently reflect on Day Five, activity 3 (p. 91).

**Urge** them to take in Scripture in some way every day this week and make at least one specific response to God’s Word.

**Close in prayer.**