

YOU

Sermon Series: Spiritual Disciplines: Becoming More Like Jesus

To be used with: Knowing God

Sermon Title Possibilities: Growing through His Precepts

Scripture: Psalm 119:17-24

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study “*Spiritual Disciplines: Becoming More Like Jesus*,” this sermon from Psalm 119:17-24 explains that Christians grow through their engagement with the Word of God. All the spiritual disciplines revolve around the Word of God.

Introduction: If the 119th Psalm can be called a chapter—it’s the longest chapter in the Bible. It is literally a one-hundred-seventy-six verse tribute to the Word of God. It shows us that the Bible is the Book for “Any-Time” (119:89), the Book for “All-Times” (Ps.119:20), the Book for “Awful Times” (Ps.119:114,143), and the Book for “Ancient Times” (Ps.119:160).

This psalm is comprised of 22 sections (or strophes), and in this 3rd section the unmentioned author shows us that believers are strengthened by the Word. According to this text, we are strengthened by the Word of God: ***for operation, by illumination, and through meditation.***

1. Strengthened by the Word for OPERATION. (v. 17)

The psalmist prays to the Lord “Deal generously with your servant so that I may live; then I will keep your Word.” This verse attests to the fact that the Lord who give us a hunger and thirst for righteousness. And, His righteousness is revealed in His revelation. Just as we were saved by grace through faith, we also grow by grace through faith.

Friend, the believer’s faith is manifested through his function. His faith and function is molded and modified through the Word. When we get in the Word, the Spirit gets the Word in us. We in turn are transformed to live according to what is in the Word. In other words, we are strengthened by the Word for operation.

2. Strengthened by the Word by ILLUMINATION. (v. 18-22)

In these verses, the psalmist asks the Lord to open his eyes to the Word of God. This passage shows us that the Holy Spirit is the One who communicates and clarifies the truth of Scripture to the believer. Jesus taught His disciples that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things (John 14:26), and guide them into all truth (John 16:13). The Apostle John taught his audience that the Holy Ghost is the One who really teaches the believer the Word of God (I. John 2:27). This is technically called “illumination.” The Spirit of God touches the mind of the child of God, so he or she can understand, obey, and be strengthened by the Word of God.

When you set out to read, study, memorize, and meditate on the Word of God, you ought to ask the Spirit of God to open your eyes that you may understand what He is saying in the Word—and understand how to apply that Word to your life.

3. Strengthened by the Word through MEDITATION. (v. 23-24)

In these last two verses, the psalmist is essentially saying, “while I can’t determine what happens outside of me, I will determine what’s happening inside of me.” He says that while persons speak against me, “your servant will think about your statutes.” That’s meditation. To meditate means to intentionally and constantly turn-over something in your mind. It means to mutter, moan, and memorize the Word of God intentionally.

Friend, as we develop the habit (or practice the discipline) of meditating on the Word (of turning over the Word in our minds), the Spirit of God uses that Word to increase our faith, our fervor, and our fortitude. We are literally strengthened by the Word through meditation.

Conclusion: Perhaps, every one of us are familiar with checking accounts. With a checking account you can make deposits, transfers, and withdrawals. The funny thing is you cannot make transfers nor withdrawals unless you first make the proper or sufficient deposits. Our spiritual life is like that. Christ promised that the Holy Spirit would not only teach us all things, but also bring all things to our remembrance (John 14:26). If you deposit the Word in you, when it is time to witness, teach, counsel, or encourage someone else—you can make a transfer. Likewise, when you need strength, encouragement, or counsel for yourself, you make a withdrawal. But you cannot transfer nor withdraw what you haven’t already deposited. Determine today to engage with Scripture daily.

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