

DISCIPLINES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

April 25, 2021

Week 2: Study

Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:6a, 3:14–17; Romans 12:1–2

When we discipline our heart, soul, and mind, we grow in God's grace. This transformational process takes practice. When we work at these spiritual disciplines, we can experience peace, joy, and freedom. This week, Lead Pastor Christian Andrews focused on the discipline of study.

Definition of Study

Study is the work of understanding a thing in itself. It is a process with intentional, cognitive steps aimed at knowing something truly on its own terms in the way its unique qualities invite understanding. Whenever you engage in genuine study, whatever the subject, your spirit expands. You are changed for the better, and you grow no matter what you study because God is the creator of all things.

Introduction Questions

1. Silly Question: If animals could talk, which would be the rudest? Which would have the best sense of humor?
2. Follow-up from last week: What came from practicing the discipline of prayer this week?
3. If someone asked to be your apprentice and learn all that you know, what would you teach them? In other words, what are you an expert in? If you aren't an expert, what subject do you enjoy learning about or studying?
4. What does your personal study of scripture look like?

Personal Reflection

1. In 2 Timothy 1:6, Paul encourages Timothy to "rekindle" the gift of God that is within him. Does your fire need to be stoked or rekindled? What snuffed it out? When have you felt the most on fire or kindled?
2. Is genuine study different from listening to a podcast, documentary, social media post, or reading an article on the internet? Why or why not?
3. Where do you tend to turn first when wanting to learn more about a subject? Why is this?
4. Have you ever studied one book of the Bible in depth? If yes, what was surprising to you as you studied? Who was your teacher?
5. Read Romans 12:1–2. Paul encourages the church in Rome to "be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God..." What do you think transformation by renewing our minds looks like? Why might this be necessary to discern the will of God?
6. What do you want to study? Why?

Steps to Study Scripture

1. **Understanding** — What is the author saying? This takes focused attention and work in comprehension, without judgement or reaction. Keep an open mind to receive the content as it is. Put aside your past understandings of the text.
2. **Interpretation** — What does it mean? Read what comes before and after. Ask who wrote it and to whom and why they wrote it. What's the context and culture? Interpretation must come after understanding. You may need to find an experienced and educated teacher to help you. He or she will help you clarify obscure concepts.
3. **Evaluation** — What do I think of this? Do I agree? Do I accept it or reject it? (This one comes last after step one and two.) Oftentimes this is where we start, but it's not helpful. Most of what we read on the internet starts with evaluation. To grow, we need to do the long and steady work of understanding and interpreting before we evaluate.

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Challenge

Choose a book of the New Testament or a Psalm or chapter of Proverbs and study it this week. Try out the three steps of study. Next week, share what you learned about study.

Close in Prayer

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

Below are some curated resources from the Renaissance Church staff that have been helpful in our journey through studying and growing in spiritual disciplines. These are just a few of the resources out there! To find more, check the bibliography and endnotes of each resource. That is where the true gold is found!

Prayer:

- *Discovering How to Pray*, by Hope MacDonald
https://www.amazon.com/Discovering-How-Pray-Hope-MacDonald/dp/0310283612/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=discovering+how+to+pray&qid=1619113517&sr=8-3
- *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, by Richard J. Foster
https://www.amazon.com/Prayer-Finding-Hearts-True-Home/dp/0060628464/ref=sr_1_1?crid=IACEK0ONUP64&dchild=1&keywords=prayer+by+richard+j+foster&qid=1619113559&srefix=prayer+by+Richard%2Caps%2C291&sr=8-1

Study:

- *Celebration of Discipline*, by Richard J. Foster
https://www.amazon.com/s?k=celebration+of+discipline+by+richard+foster&crid=1ENSL3N5WF3D9&srefix=Celebration+of+Disciple%2Caps%2C319&ref=nb_sb_ss_ts-doa-p_1_22
- *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart
https://www.amazon.com/How-Read-Bible-All-Worth/dp/0310517826/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=How+to+read+the+Bible+for+all+it%27s+worth&qid=1619113307&sr=8-1
- *How to Read the Bible Book-by-Book*, by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart
https://www.amazon.com/How-Read-Bible-Book-Guided/dp/0310518083/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=How+to+read+the+Bible+for+all+it%27s+worth&qid=1619113307&sr=8-3
- The BibleProject: This has great scripture study resources and is produced by a great scholar and pastor in Portland, OR. Helpful for setting the context, diving into specific passages, and providing personal encouragement.
bibleproject.com