



Spiritual Disciplines Toolbox

01 Bible Reading

“Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth.”
— Jesus Christ, John 17:17

What are Spiritual Disciplines?

At some point we all get stale, stuck, or start searching for more. Most often all we need is the right tool to break through in our relationship with God. Spiritual disciplines are the biblical tools Christians have been using for centuries to draw closer to God. We use the disciplines because we need help, not because we are so holy. Experiment with the tools to find out what helps you connect with God the best.

What is Bible Reading all about?

“The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you.

It is the traveler’s map, the pilgrim’s staff, the pilot’s compass, the soldier’s sword, and the Christian’s charter. Here Paradise is restored, Heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed.

Christ is its grand subject, our good the design, and the glory of God its end.

It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened at the judgment, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.” – From a Gideon Bible

Where do I start?

Make a Plan. It has been said, “Failing to plan is planning to fail.” Good intentions are not good enough. So decide on a time, place, and pace before you start. Pick a time without competition, a place without distraction, and a pace that is free of frustration. We recommend choosing a Bible reading plan that allows for missed days each month to leave room for life.

What other ways can I use this tool?

Start Where You Are. You don’t train for a marathon by running 26.2 miles on the first day. The smart thing to do is to start where you are and let your strength grow. The same is true when developing the regular rhythm of reading the Bible. If you have never read the Bible, start by reading one chapter of Proverbs a day for 31 days.

Get the AppNotes. Parker Hill provides five daily readings to help you develop the habit of Bible reading. These application notes tie into the week’s message and help you live it out in your life. You can request to get the AppNotes emailed to your inbox, read them on Facebook, or pick up a print copy each week.

Go Wide. Pick up a Bible reading plan that allows you to read through the whole Bible in a year. The Bible takes approximately 78 hours to read from cover to cover. That’s less than fifteen minutes a day. Reading the entire Bible will give you a whole new appreciation for the big picture of God’s redemptive plan.

Go Deep. Spend some time studying God’s Word. The goal is to camp out on a portion of Scripture until you understand it like never before. Read along with a helper like Dr. Constable (his free commentaries are at soniclight.org) or by using the notes in a study Bible. Write down questions, answers, insights, and observations as you read.

Summarize. Jot down a quick summary of what you just read. Do not underestimate the power of summarizing the text in your own words. Take the time to write a brief synopsis no matter how obvious. For many, you get it when you write it.

Draw a Picture. You will be surprised how helpful it is to engage the creative side of your brain when you read God’s Word. Capturing the scene artistically brings out deep insights and makes the truth stick. Just try it!

“It’s impossible to know God apart from His word.”

— Dr. Howard Hendricks