

FOUR SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES THAT NEED CONSTANT REFRESHING

“A BIBLE STUDY TO REFRESH THE INNER MAN AND SUPPRESS THE FLESH!”

INTRODUCTION

Every Christian is encouraged to study God’s Word for the edification of our spirit-man.

But it is important to know that unlike other books of knowledge, the Bible must be read over and over again if it is to continually transform and renew us.

God designed His plan of salvation like a bridge, to take us from one degree of grace to another.

In our Savior’s earthly ministry, He laid the groundwork for our Christian walk. S. D. Gordon said, *“Jesus is God spelling Himself out in language that man can understand.”*

Yet, as easy as Jesus is to understand, God’s penetrating power can only be felt when we keep our daily focus on the Word.

There are four spiritual principles we cannot ignore. We must allow God to continuously reinforce them within us.

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE #1 - DON’T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU THINK

We all have a mental illness. It’s called sin.

This means we can’t trust what we ourselves even think.

We like to think we have mental telepathy, and we can figure out another person better than he can understand himself. But the truth is that the only one you really know that well is **YOU**.

And even that’s sometimes questionable.

The Word says that “*The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?*” (Jeremiah 17:9).

We have an amazing ability to lie to ourselves. We see it in our judgment of others, and our lack of judgment of ourselves. 1 John 1:8 says, “*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*”

Every NEXT generation places great value on authenticity. They go through a season of rejection, convinced they know more about life than their senior counterparts.

But you’re not authentic or REAL until you can publicly admit how inauthentic you are most of the time.

Here are just a few reasons why we can’t trust ourselves:

- We all have blind spots.
- We don’t stop to really think.
- We fail to notice important details.
- We have background biases.
- We jump to conclusions.
- We get trapped by categories.
- We miss the big picture.
- We see what we want to see.

Our thought process is clouded by our sin nature and the external influences Satan throws at us in an attempt to separate us from God.

If you want to be real for God, it’s a good idea to think **TWICE** before you speak **ONCE**. Give God a chance to form your opinions before you open your mouth.

Question: How can we become less judgmental and more forgiving of others?

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE #2 - GUARD YOUR MINDS AGAINST GARBAGE

Proverbs 15:14 says, *“A wise person is hungry for truth, while the fool feeds on trash.”* (NLT)

Nutritionists will tell you that there are three kinds of food: brain food, junk food, and toxic food.

The same is true of what you see and hear. God wants us to fill our minds with the right things.

Psalm 101:3 says, *“I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless.”*

Gossip, pornography, X-rated movies and music,...these are just some of the tools Satan uses to take our focus off God and fill us with the trash of Satan’s realm.

So how do you guard your mind against garbage? Philippians 4:6-8 gives us two ways:

- **CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER** (“pray about everything”)
- **CONCENTRATED FOCUSING** (“fix your thoughts”)

It’s useless to worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done, is doing, and is going to do.

If you do this you will experience God’s peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand.

His peace will guard your hearts and minds *as* you live in Christ Jesus...

Fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

The key to overcoming temptation is not to resist it, but instead to replace it. It’s the expulsion power of a new affection that helps you overcome temptation.

Exercise: Write down the things you need to REPLACE in your life. What will you replace them with?

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE #3 - NEVER STOP LEARNING

Growing churches require growing saints. Proverbs 18:15 says, “*The mind of a smart person is eager to acquire knowledge. A wise person listens in order to learn more.*”

We learn by listening. Too many Christians concentrate on finding ways to be HEARD rather than on LISTENING. But Proverbs 10:14 says, “*Wise men store up knowledge ...*”

One of the ways you can store up knowledge is to start a Christian family library and leave it as a legacy to your next generation.

A good place to begin building your Bible knowledge library is to have at least three translations of the Scriptures, two commentaries, several self-help books in areas of your choosing (be sure they are Scripturally based), and an Exhaustive Bible Dictionary.

Of course, you will never acquire knowledge of their contents unless you READ them. Choose a time in the day when you have little interruption, and read for at least one-half hour.

Allow the Spirit of God to penetrate your heart, your mind, and your soul, as you seek to comprehend the depth of His wisdom. Proverbs 19:8 says, “*Those who get wisdom do themselves a favor, and those who love learning will succeed.*”

There are five levels of learning:

- **KNOWLEDGE** - *“My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.”* (Hosea 4:6)
- **PERSPECTIVE (WISDOM)** - *“I don’t think the way you think, and the way you work isn’t the way I work.”* (Isaiah 55:8)
- **CONVICTION** - *“Our Gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.”* (1 Thessalonians 1:5).
- **CHARACTER** - *“As the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like Him and reflect His glory even more.”* (2 Corinthians 3:18)
- **SKILL** - *“If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed. But skill will bring success.”* (Ecclesiastes 10:10)

We say we believe the WHOLE BIBLE. But a person only believes the part that he is willing to emulate or copy.

In other words, you believe what you actually DO. We’re supposed to be doers of the word and not hearers only.

It is okay to diligently study the Word, but our knowledge is useless if we do not take the same amount of time to practice what we have learned.

Jesus said, *“...It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”* (Matthew 4:4).

People need more than bread for their life; they must feed on every Word of God.

As God’s ambassadors, we are called to keep ourselves well prepared to be kingdom builders. Isaiah said, *“Thou will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in Thee!”* (Isaiah 26:3).

Exercise: Choose one verse of Scripture that you have difficulty applying to your spiritual walk. How will you overcome your resistance to God’s instruction?

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE #4 - LET GOD STRETCH YOUR IMAGINATION

Nothing ever happens until somebody starts dreaming. What we need today are great dreamers for the Kingdom. Proverbs 29:8 says, *“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”*

As Christians, we often get stuck in the same habitual understanding and belief we see and hear exhibited in other Christians...whether right or wrong.

We often see this staleness demonstrated in our worship, our teaching methods, and in our evangelism outreach.

And what's worse, we fight against those who imagine or try to apply a more liberal grace.

God needs explorers...Christians who are willing to think outside of the box...Christians who are not afraid to venture out into His infinite realm of understanding.

We must never change the Word and its meaning. But our methods of delivery ought to be creative and culturally appropriate.

You cannot grow the Kingdom of God where you are, if you speak a foreign language. Let God use you to break down the barriers that deter unbelievers.

In the last days, God says, *“I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams”* (Acts 2:17).

What is your dream for your next ten years? For your church? Your family?

Innovators see what everyone else sees but they ask questions that no one else asks.

Why do we do this? We do it for the glory of God.

Exercise: Read Ephesians 3:20-21. Describe how God applies His master plan of salvation throughout the ages.

CONCLUSION

Some Christians are naturally great thinkers. Some are naturally great doers.

If you are a thinker for God, THINK...and share what you are thinking.

If you are a doer...WORK...work effectively and willing with others who share the same calling.

The growth of God's Kingdom depends upon us all. You can't win this race for God unless you are in it.

Let's covenant together that we will allow God to work in us and through us, to mold us and shape us according to His desires and His power.

If we are willing vessels, God will make us great missionaries for Christ.