

Brigada Report on "How Do I get Fed"

Thanks so much to all those who pitched in toward this topic of, "How do I get fed", while serving as a missionary cross-culturally. Don't forget, if you'd like to submit other resources, just browse to www.brigada.org and see the "Submission Guidelines" in the text at the top. Thank you for your cooperation! Doug Lucas -- DLucas@TeamExpansion.org

Greetings In the Name of our Lord,

I don't claim to be the most spiritual (sin free) person on this earth, but began my career in missions before the "people need to be fed" mentality appeared on the U.S. scene. I went before it was popular to have pastors to missionaries.

While we are extremely thankful for several missionary pastors that have been available to us, I don't find that they could possibly handle the task of feeding us, unless they happened to live near-by. Books are helpful, but few come close to meeting our needs as readily as the Bible does. I personally don't have time to listen to cassettes and don't care to listen to Christian radio which is available.

We very simply understood that we needed to continue to develop and maintain a relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, primarily through daily and continual Bible study, meditation and prayer. Those have served quite well for the past 23 years. We have had the privilege of meeting weekly with a group of ex-patriots for 1-2 hours of fellowship, Bible study and prayer, and for the past 12 years have had good fellowship with a variety of other Christians, both nationals and ex-pats. Since I teach Bible, I find that I also learn a lot from those students with whom I interact.

Yours in Christ,

Brian

Can I draw attention to our website at www.easyenglish.info

This website is a mass of resources for study of the Scriptures, written especially for the Internet. There are over 100 books online at various levels. The Bible Commentary series in particular is designed for ministers, church leaders and other Christian workers. All our books are theologically checked and evangelical in content.

The English vocabulary and grammar is simple to aid international use.

We know that a number of missionaries are using the site already, and would love it to be a help to many more.

Yours sincerely,

Keith

If I depended upon my sending church, I'd be dead in the water. After over 20 years on the mission field, no one has been to visit me. I don't get as much as a church bulletin from them, though now with the Internet there is a bit more contact.

It's ultimately between God and me, my own time spent alone with him. I get fed by carving out time in the hardened layers of commitments, digging deeper in the well of Scripture, laying out before him the pieces of my heart bit by bit as I'm able to dissect them.

Perhaps because the process is so often a solitary one, the ups and downs are more accentuated, the progress more jagged, the growth slower than I would hope for. And the temptations are sharper, the trials tougher, the tears more bitter. All for that, I plug on, reminding myself as often as I can that my Lord walks with me and keeps me.

I know if I don't feed myself, I'll get fed up and quit.

Anonymous

Dear Doug, As a long term worker in Turkey (since 1979) I consider this question of how to maintain spiritual vitality the MOST important one for workers. Here worker turnover is quite high, and I think this is a major factor. When we came here there was no church to attend, few fellow workers to relate to and a very stressful situation (somewhat like living in Bagdad today), so it was a very live issue for us.

What fed us was our personal quiet times. Perhaps one thing that helped was that before leaving the States we were not so dependent on outside input (sermons, studies, input from others--we enjoyed them but did not look to them as primary sources of spiritual input and growth), having the habit of rich consistent daily personal quiet times. Quiet time must not be done for legalistic reasons or done perfunctorily, but it should be a time of heart connection with God.

There are so many supports for people in the States that they can easily become dependent on others feeding them rather than learning to feed themselves, so when they go overseas are left in a vulnerable position, unequipped. I think these supports should be viewed as the "dessert" of our spiritual intake (whoever tries to live only on desserts in not going to be very strong!), with our quiet times providing the meat and vegetables of our spiritual nourishment.

Let me mention two aspects of my walk with God that have been VERY important in continuing to grow spiritually in demanding, draining situations. First and most important has been the practice of meditation on Scripture, that is, memorizing a passage, personalizing it (using personal pronouns) and praying through it. I find that doing a passage is more effective than just an isolated verse, as it gives the context of what God is saying and keeps us from arriving at incorrect conclusions or applications. Memorizing it helps to transform my thoughts; personalizing it helps to transform my emotions; praying it helps to transform my will. After memorizing the passage, I pray through it each day for at least two weeks, sometimes a month before going on to a new passage. Having done this now for 38 years, I very clearly see this as THE great conduit of faith, grace and change in my life--it is hand in hand cooperation with the Holy Spirit, giving Him permission to deal deeply with us.

It takes discipline, which is probably why so few believers do it, but it is worth all the effort. Just this week I memorized Ps 3 as we were facing an attack by a govt. agency which wanted to fine us \$7,000 for something we didn't do--it was very helpful to have God's perspective ("...but you are shield around me, O Lord....deliverance comes from the Lord."), and He did deliver us. Here are a few passages with titles that have been very helpful to me over the years. I "recycle" them periodically, remembering and mediating on them again: Ps 1 meditation and its' benefits Ps 23 the all purpose passage Ps 34 praising God in the midst of difficulties Ps 37 correct perspective in difficulties Ps 46 dealing with fear Ps 62 finding rest in the correct place Ps 86 balance in life Matt 5, 6 & 7 God's value system Romans 8 understanding our freedom Romans 12 guidance Colossians 3 putting our heart in the right place Hebrews 12:1-17 Difficulties, why they come and how to respond to them.

The second aspect is, as mentioned above, having a consistent, rich quiet time. There are four aspects that have helped in my quiet time: worship, confession, reading the Word and intercession. Worship, as I understand it, is not just thanking God (we should thank Him, but it is only a part of worship, but is that which most worship is in the US), however God-centered worship is primarily praising, exalting, glorifying God for His character without thinking about how this benefits me. This is hard to do because we are always coming down to the benefits (meaning we are self-centered rather than God centered in our worship). I continually read through the Psalms, one each day, using it as a basis for glorifying God.

Confession is the natural outcome of worship: as we stand in the light of His presence and the Holy Spirit convicts us of sins, more attitudes and motives than gross obvious sins, but to God they are all serious. This practice of being transparent before God spills over into my relationship with myself, with my spouse and with my fellow workers, solving a lot of problems before they can grow.

Then reading. I continually read through the NT, one chapter each morning so I finish it in about 9 months, and the OT, one chapter each evening taking about 18 months to cycle through. This brings continual refreshing, reminder, conviction and guidance, giving the Holy Spirit opportunity to help us grow. This also brings up passages for memorizing and meditating. And then there is message preparation and study done for ministry, which is also input, if I'm letting the Holy Spirit work on me, not just thinking how others should be applying this.

Then intercession. This often spills over into my day as the quiet time isn't long enough. As an area director, I have a lot of spiritual responsibility for people in several countries and view prayer as the foundation for all ministry. This is reflected in my long prayer list, which takes some time. I must add that I have found that such long prayer times 7 days a week was too much, so now have a 5 day "prayer work week" with shorter times on the weekend. A lot of what I pray is Scripture passages and truths (collected over the years), so I am encouraged, challenged and edified by this prayer time.

Such a healthy, balanced quiet time is going to keep people spiritually growing, humble and strong in the Lord, able to deal with the pressures and problems of being a worker.

Hope that's helpful.

Warmly in Him,

Steve

Greetings Brigada Today,

I am responding to your piece concerning Bible studies/devotional materials, particularly for younger mission workers. I work with WEC International and a couple of years ago WEC Trek - WEC's short-term programme - commissioned me to write a series of booklets that short-termers could take with them when they headed overseas. The result was a set of seven booklets called Trekking Deeper. This is a devotional discipleship course covering such topics as 'Living Faith', 'Dynamic Prayer' and 'God's Guidance'. There are twenty studies in each booklet. The course is designed to take one month, but people can do it at whatever speed they choose. Please go to: http://trek.wec-int.org.uk/trekking_deeper.htm for a full list of titles and further information. The booklets have been very well received and are now being used by the WEC centres in Australia, Canada, Germany, the UK and the US. At this time the studies are only available in booklet form. However, if the demand is there, we would gladly put the studies on the Internet. In addition, I would really like to write more devotional materials. I see this as a crucial, yet sometimes forgotten area. Again, if the demand for studies like these - or even using a different approach - is there, I would enthusiastically give myself to this project. In Christ,

Phil

Note: The remainder of this document was unselfishly shared by the Director of Member Care at the ABWE (mission). We are overwhelmed at his unselfishness in sharing the following materials. As you use them all, please say a kind word about the ABWE and offer up a prayer of thanks for their unselfish spirit.

Here are his materials:

"I lead the training for our missionaries in evangelism and disciple making – I am also continually discipling men here in the states and additionally through correspondence overseas, as many of you do. I have developed materials I use to ground men in the disciplines and to assist couples and families in the disciplines of the word and worship. I look forward to the sites that will be found and shared to apss along. I am attaching just a few of the things I use to disciple. On site peer mentoring-mutual-discipling is so important. Jesus never sent men out alone. Creating sustainable methodologies for personal spiritual development is crucial. The occasional pastoral type visit is rejuvenating, but not sustainable. We must train men and women and young people in the old arts of memorization, meditation, fasting, accountability, mutual confession, intercession, one-anothering in love... it is not being modeled in most churches in the US and so absent from expatriates on the fields. Much love in Jesus and thanks for your wonderful ministry to so many. Adios ,Ron"

WHAT (Observation): What does it say?

Things to look for:

Who? What? When? Where?

Why? How? Repetition

Contrasts

Comparisons

Lists

Cause/effect

Figures of speech

Conjunctions

Verbs

Pronouns

Questions and Answers

Dialogue

Means

Purpose/result

Conditional clause (if/then)

Actions/roles of God

Actions/roles of people

Emotional terms

Tone of passage

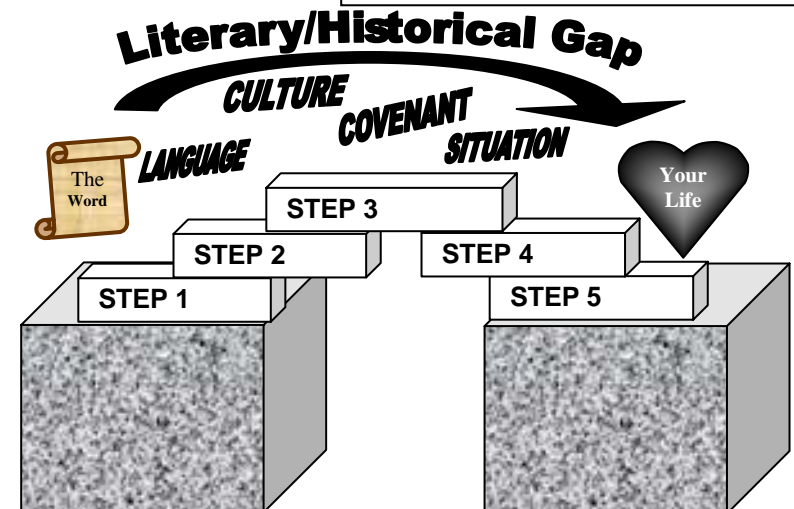
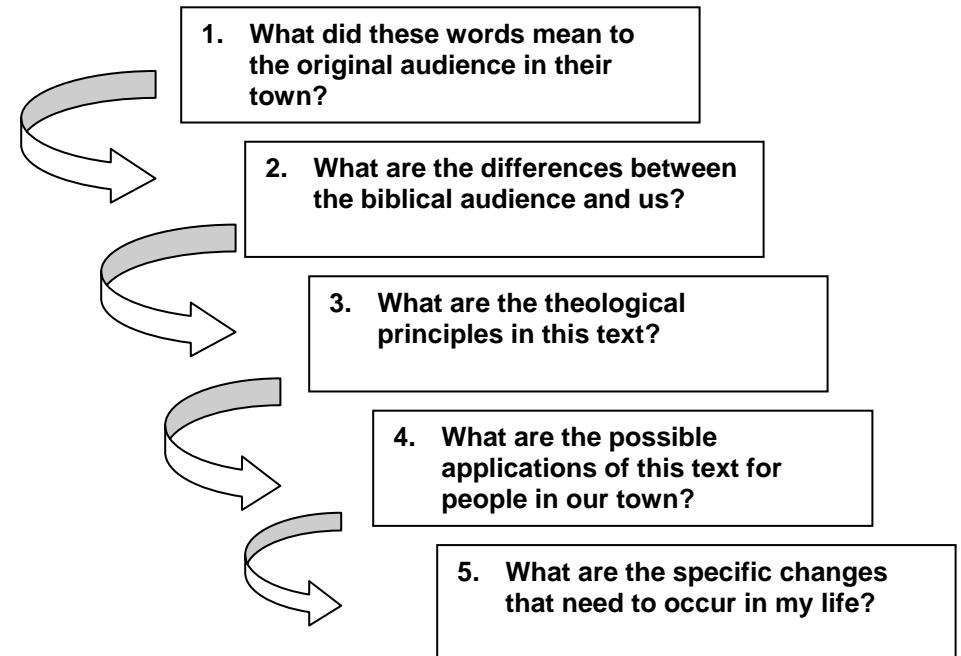
Connections to other passages

Shifts in the story/pivots

**Make at least 10
observations**

THE HERMENEUTIC FIVE STEP BRIDGE

Hermeneutics = the rules, methods, and techniques of interpreting the Bible.

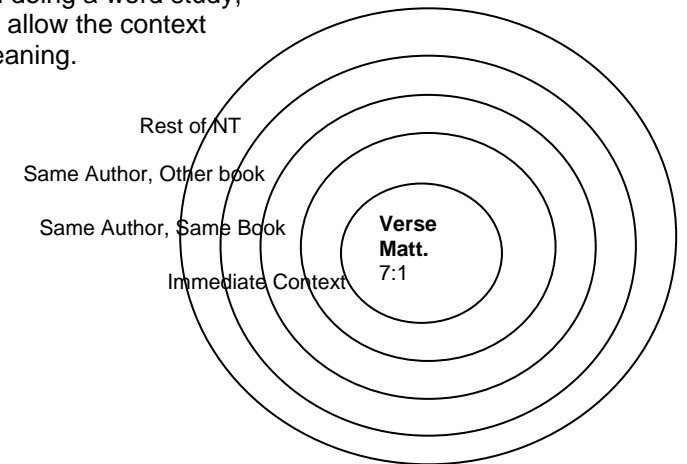


Passage: _____ Memory Verse(s) _____

So WHAT (Interpretation): What does it mean?

The Importance of Understanding Context:

Especially when doing a word study, it is important to allow the context to determine meaning.



It is also very critical to recognize the literary context.

Literary Genre:

Is the passage from wisdom literature, poetic, narrative, law, prophecy, Gospel, letter, apocalyptic? Is it from the Old covenant or the New?

Subgenres: parables, riddles, sermons, proverbs...smaller units of texts within a larger genre (e.g. Gospels contain parables).

You can make the Bible say anything you want when you ignore the surrounding context!

Remember this!

A text without a context is a prooftext for a pretext!

NOW WHAT (Application): What should I do?

Know what the Word says: Application is based on interpretation, so if your interpretation of a passage is erroneous, your application will likely be erroneous.

Interpretation is one; application is many.

Know yourself: Your strengths and weaknesses.

2 Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for...	
TEACHING (what did I learn?)	CORRECTION (Where do I fall short?)
REPROOF (What must change in light of this truth?)	TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS (What specific steps will I take to make this principle a consistent part of my life?)

Four substitutes for Application:

- A. Interpretation for application. This is settling for knowledge rather than experience. To know and not to do is not to know at all. The moment you know God’s truth, the ball is in your court; you are responsible for putting it into action. Remember, “To whom much is given, much is required.” (Matt 13:12; Luke 12:48)
- B. Superficial obedience for substantive life-change. Here we apply biblical truth to areas where we’re already applying it, not to new areas of our life. Result: no noticeable change (see John 13:17).
- C. Rationalization for repentance. The moment truth gets too close, too convicting, an alarm goes off, and we start to defend ourselves. The bottom line here is no change and you feel completely comfortable about it.
- D. An emotional experience for a volitional decision. We study God’s word, we emote under impact – but we make no real change.

Conclusion: James 1:21ff

The Spiritual Disciplines of a Follower of Christ

Prepare for a new way of life!

You will be learning more than doctrinal truth in “Foundations for Your Faith” NIV

It is our intent to guide you into a life-style of spiritual discipline that you will practice for the rest of your life’s journey.

You cannot keep living life the way you have been living it, and add these disciplines to it. They are too demanding and costly. They will cost you your time, energy, honesty, and resources. The materials are inexpensive. The obligation is not.

Christ’s call to His followers is a call to follow and die. I am not being melo-dramatic. Death to the old way of living... “*my life... my time... my money... my needs*”... does not come easily or without pain. *But die we must.* Taking up the cross and following Christ means, among other things, to put His kingdom and call ahead of all other loyalties and priorities. Discipleship is a call to personal discipline... the discipline of managing the time, money and resources He has loaned you for His purposes. You will find your resolve severely tested again and again. ***Your strength to overcome the old life is to be found in the time you spend in the Word of God and in prayer. Don’t rely on other weapons or excuses. Other weapons are impotent. Excuses are unacceptable. Put your hand to the plow and press on.***

Bible Reading – begin reading the scriptures for at least 10 minutes a day. You will expand the time as you grow. Most people can read through the entire Bible in a year using this method. Others read 4 chapters a day. I read a chapter of Proverbs each AM, plus 6 books a month in the evenings. I read a small book in one evening, the larger ones in three or four evenings, underlining as I go. The extra evenings are spent searching truths that stood out to me. This is after 33 years of walking with Christ and preaching through the entire bible many times. Whatever method you use, be consistent. Use a readable translation. If reading is a struggle, get the Bible on CD and listen through the Bible in a year. This is a time to be quiet and concentrate on God’s word. Look for what it says about “the big five”: God, man, sin, promise-principle, and command-choice-consequence.

Journaling – this is simply taking your own notes on what you are reading. A sample will follow. Bring your journal to each group session so you can share with others your discoveries. Don’t be embarrassed. We all need to start somewhere. You will learn from others and others will learn from you.

Bible Study – answer the questions for each lesson from your own study of the Bible. Don’t read commentaries or study Bible helps until after you have done the work yourself. You may need to get an unmarked NIV or NASB Bible for your study time to force yourself to come to your own conclusions.

Bible Memorization – you will be asked to memorize a verse a week. You should make your own memory-cards and keep them with you for review. Three minutes a day will usually be sufficient to learn and review your verses. It will get easier with time. You will discover that Bible memory will be life-changing! Use whatever translation you like. You will review your verses with others by trading verse-cards in our group sessions.

Prayer – Pray your discoveries from your Bible reading and study into your life. You will begin to learn how to do this in our group time together. You will begin making prayer lists in your journal to assist your memory as you spend time in personal prayer, praise, intercession and supplication. You will learn more about each aspect of prayer as we move along in our studies.

Group Time – we will meet for about 90 minutes each week to review our verses, last week’s quiz, this week’s lesson and time in prayer together. The things you are learning you will soon begin passing along to others. God intends to mold you today to make you a model for someone else to follow tomorrow. Your attendance in the worship services at church is important. We are commanded to gather to worship God and to encourage one another in obedience to Christ. Our small group time is not a substitute for church attendance and involvement.

Bible Reading and Journaling

Please, do not substitute a “devotional book” for Bible reading. There are many wonderful “devotional books and magazines”. ***But it is foolish to think we can read two verses of scripture and two pages of men’s ideas, and become spiritually strong. You will fall in love with the Word of God by spending time in it! If you want to read a devotional book, do it in addition to your Bible reading, not as a substitute for it.***

Get into the habit of reading your Bible with a pen in hand. Writing down your observations will help you retain what you’ve read. The following page is an example of how I journal in my daily Bible reading. It is not the only way. It is suggested as a simple way to begin. If you find a better method, use it.

Don’t worry about how much or how little you write. This isn’t an essay. It is to help you remember some important truth that the Holy Spirit impresses upon you as you read God’s word; and apply it personally in your life. Bible reading without application is like chewing food without swallowing!

Bible Reading Journal Sample

Passage_____ **Today’s Memory Verse**_____

WHAT: what does it say?

God Man Sin Promise/Principle Command/Choice/Consequence

SO WHAT: what does it mean? (Paraphrase or summary of main truth you see today)

NOW WHAT: what should I do now to be obedient (Know, feel, do)

“Lord, thank You...

“Lord, please...

Bible Reading Journal Sample

Passage: 1 John 1:1-10

WHAT: what does it say?

God – Christ is eternal, and revealed to us

Man – is a sinner, often self deceived, in need of forgiveness

Sin – I may talk a good line, but my life is the real deal – If I think I do not sin I am only deceiving myself. I cannot be forgiven unless I repent and admit my need for forgiveness.

Promise/Principle – Christ came to bring me life, joy and forgiveness. I can only experience that if I come to Him and confess my sin and claim His forgiveness. God promises to forgive me if I confess my sin, repent and ask His forgiveness. God is righteous to forgive me based on Christ's death for me – see first 2 verses of next chapter.

Command/Choice/Consequence – I can choose to harden my heart and refuse to admit my sin and I will remain without joy or forgiveness. I can choose to repent and confess my sin and receive the cleansing and joy that Christ gives. It is really stupid to be self-deceived, self-righteous, and self-willed.

SO WHAT: what does it mean? (Paraphrase or summary of main point)

Christ, the eternal God-man, has come to bring me forgiveness. He gives it freely to those who admit they need it. Those who refuse to admit their need are only trying to deceive themselves.

NOW WHAT: what should I do about it? (Know, feel, do)

I should ask God to search my heart and show me my sins so I can confess them and be forgiven. I must beware of pride and self-righteousness. God knows my heart. I need to know my heart!

Pray it into my life:

Lord, thank You for coming to bring me forgiveness as so high a cost. You are so full of grace. I am amazed that you would become human, to die for my forgiveness.

Lord, please show me my sin. I don't want to live a life of self-deception. I am so thankful for Your cleansing blood. I admit my pride, my lustful thoughts, my critical spirit, my selfishness. Forgive and cleanse me through Your blood shed for me. Let me see Your holiness so I can see myself as I should. I long to see You, touch You, hear Your voice. I thank You that I soon will behold You as you are.

Prayer Lists

E-20 To Win D-10 To Disciple Family Friends Missionaries Ministries

Some of these you will want to put on a daily list, others you will remember once a week. You may want to select several missionaries to pray for daily, and leave room to record specific prayer requests they give in their letters. Record specific personal requests and family requests as well. You may want to put the prayer list on the last several pages of your journal. I use a spiral bound notebook. My wife uses a small three ring binder type. Whatever you use, you will update it periodically. It is a tool to help you remember what you do not want to forget. You will want to share two “to win” and two “to disciple” names with your group to pray with you. This way you can assist your group by mutual prayer. And as God answers, you will be mutually encouraged. This helps us avoid the “lone ranger” syndrome. We are interdependent on the body of Christ. We demonstrate that truth by praying together.

Lesson	Subject	Scripture Memory
1.	Justification by faith, not works	Romans 3:19
2.	Imputation of Christ's righteousness	2 Corinthians 5:21
3.	Inspiration & authority of scripture	2 Timothy 3:16-17
4.	How to study the Bible	Hebrews 4:12
5.	Prayer – the Lord's model	Matthew 6:9-15
6.	Prayer – kinds of prayer	1 Timothy 2:1
7.	Forgiveness – personal fellowship with God	1 John 1:9
8.	The New Testament church	Acts 2:41-42
9.	Personal evangelism	1 Peter 3:15
10.	The process and goal of evangelism	Acts 16:14b and 31
11.	God's sovereignty, plan and pleasure	Ephesians 1:11
12.	God's sovereignty, plan and pleasure pt. 2	Deut 29:29
13.	The Trinity, attributes of God	1 Timothy 1:17
14.	Biblical faith	Hebrews 11:6
15.	Deity of Christ	John 1:1, 14
16.	The temptation of Christ	Hebrews 4:15
17.	The kenosis of Christ	Philippians 2:5
18.	Pneumatology	John 16:8
19.	Angelology, Satanology	1 Peter 5:8
20.	The fall of man	Ephesians 2:1
21.	The nature of man (Trichotomy)	1 Thessalonians 5:23
22.	Regeneration (total depravity) (Creeds & Terms)	Titus 3:5
23.	Heaven, hell and hades	Luke 23:43
24.	Ecclesiology & spiritual gifts (Hermeneutics)	Ephesians 4:11-12
25.	Eschatology	1 Thessalonians 4:17

Family Devotions: Suggestions for creating sustainable Family Worship Times

- Start with your infant children – hold your child and read scripture and pray daily with them. The evening Bible story and prayer time is a delightful experience for little ones
- Keep a regular time and place – keep it habitual; change time as family changes
- Keep it focused - 10 minutes more or less
- Keep it simple, uncluttered - reading, responding, praying
- Keep it positive and God focused
- Don't make it "lecture time"... make it "worship time", filled with gratitude
- Include everyone – share the opportunity to read when feasible
- Include your family guests and visitors in your regular family altar
- Be honest; be transparent about your own growing pains spiritually
- Use multiple tools (mix it up with hymn books & stories, bible story books, missionary biographies, classics like Pilgrim's Progress and Chronicles of Narnia) but always include Bible reading and spiritual application of what you read
- Pray with your kids at bedtime – make sure everything is settled and the sun isn't going down on unresolved issues, anger or tensions.
- Pray with your wife at bedtime out loud, together, briefly. I strongly urge you to work on going to bed at the same time. This may not always be possible. But it is best.
- Find a daily time (at least 3 times a week) for extra intercession times with your wife – not at bedtime! Take a lunch break, arrange your schedule so you can include a half hour prayer time with her regularly.
- Family Altar is not a substitute for Personal Devotions. Help your wife and children develop their own personal worship time. Assist your wife by taking charge of the kids, kitchen clean-up, or whatever is needed to give her that break, that alone time with God she needs. As the family leader, you are responsible to care for your wife and children in this way.
- Make Sunday meals, holidays, and family gatherings an additional time for sharing and worship... "what has God been teaching you lately" "favorite choruses" "verses"
- Plan Sabbath opportunities into your calendar – times to get away for solitude, and renewal – Christian Summer Camps, Conferences, Vacations with a purpose
- Use "Car Time" as an opportunity for more lengthy Family Altar time – let the kids take turns leading, choosing songs, delegating who will pray, who will give an exhortation, who will give a testimony, etc... This is a great opportunity to let them develop leadership and learn to follow each other's direction.
- Use "Car Time" with your wife for seasons of prayer and Bible reading

Biblical examples of spiritual family leaders – Job, Abraham, Elkannah, Boaz, Joseph
Biblical examples of spiritual failures as family leaders – Lot, Eli, Samuel,

Suggested Books for your own spiritual progress

Disciplines of a Godly Man – R. Kent Hughes

On being a Servant of God – W Wiersbe

Screwtape Letters, The Great Divorce – C S Lewis

21 Indisp. Qualities of a Leader – Maxwell

Grace & Duty of Being Spiritually Minded – J Owens

Measure of a Man – Gene Getz

The Godly Man – Gene Warr

The Power of Integrity – MacArthur

Daws – Skinner (Biography Dawson Trotman)

Best of A W Tozer – Edited by W Wiersbe

Growing a Godly Family - Biblical guidelines for family growth in godliness A Four-Week Lesson Series Outline for Family Living

Week 1 - a survey of the biblical priorities for family life

God, church, world
Worshippers, workers, witnesses

BALANCE - understanding the priorities

Proverbs 30:11 a godless generation...the cause and the cure

Holiness, humility, harmony versus godlessness, arrogance, rebellion

What is your family goal? *What matters to you will matter to them!*

To please and glorify God - worship - personal, family

Deut 6:1-25 Whole life involvement Every day life instruction - sitting, rising, walking

Personal stories - when they ask "why"...tell them your stories (the difference He made)

Special times of worship - Example of Job, Annual feasts, Sabbath readings, Synagogue

Special times of reflection - Thanksgiving reflections - feast of booths

Family - relationships - as a married couple, as parents, parent to child, child to child

Psalm 15, Proverbs 31

The power of a loving example at home -your marriage witness

The power of stability - consistency, harmony

The power of praise, gratitude, recognition of God's goodness

Church - a place to learn the Word, grow in godliness, serve with giftedness

What matters to you will matter to them

Involvement, excitement, interest, time, relationships

World - a place to reach out - a hospital in a battle zone - a place of need, a place of danger

An outreach focus - prayer for the lost, efforts to share the gospel

What hinders family unity?

Favoritism, inconsistency, double standards, selfishness, misinterpretation of others motives, critical spirit, being a fault-finder, hypocrisy

We must admonish and train our kids

Physical discipline for wrong actions

Spiritual instruction for wrong thinking

Correction of wrong attitudes – attitudes are key! Phil 2

Respect is foundational. Modeling respect, honesty, commitment, acceptance and forgiveness lays the foundation for raising a new generation of godly servants of Christ

Week 2 - Family Worship – Becoming worshippers

The power of your example - what matters to you, will matter to them

Genesis 18:19 God's knowledge of Abraham's commitment
2 Tim 1:5; 3:15 Timothy's home life - even though it was a divided home
Job 1 A worshiping individual, a worshipping couple, a worshipping family
Bible reading, bible study, prayer, witness, service

The elements of family worship - The Word and Prayer

Reading the Word - family involvement, understandable translation, methods, options
Applying the Word - talking about it, making plans because of it

The power of habit - consistency is more important than you realize

Choosing the time - nighttime, breakfast time
Bedtime prayers

Praying the Word into your lives - seeking to avoid mindless phrases

Nurture = compassionate embracing (Nursing mother)
Admonition = stern warning (Rebuking father)

The importance of special events in the yearly calendar (OT example)

Holiday outreaches - using natural opportunities to share Christ with others
Family vacations - Christian camps, etc - A time to renew
Special trips - to hear gifted expositors, to serve God
Travel time - singing in the car, favorite verses, favorite songs

Week 3 - Family and the Church

Understanding my relationship - this is the family of God, my spiritual family

1 Corinthians 12; Romans 14 (One another commands are lived out in the church)
A place to learn - regular and in-depth participation

What matters to you will matter to them

Worship, preaching services, teaching services, prayer meetings, missions' conference
What you participate in, what you talk about, what you are excited about... will be caught

A place to love - developing friendships within the church family

Friendships: The power of godly relationships within the church family
Hospitality: spending time with other godly families & servants of God

Additional role models, inter-generational connections

A place to serve - developing my gifts and using them in active service
A place to give - teaching the principles of generosity and stewardship

The power of serving the church family with your time & abilities
The power of your praise - negativity breeds negativity, joy breeds joy
Moving from being an observer to being a participant

What you spend your time on matters to you; and what matters to you will matter to them

Week 4 - Family and the World

1 Peter 5:6-11

Hospital in a battle zone - dealing with the danger, the need, and our responsibility to our mission

The reality of influences - negative and positive

Recognizing the influences of the world (Lord of the rings...seductive nature of sin)

Examining the influences of the world - not being naïve, silent, or accepting of sin

Evaluating the influences of peers - who is leading who?

Leading as an influencer - the example of outreach - proactive (versus fortress mentality)
What matters to you will matter to them

Involvement in our children's interests – examples and suggestions

Involvement in our children's education – examples and suggestions

Involvement in reaching out to our neighbors in need – examples and suggestions

We are soldier medics –

Involvement in a dangerous battle; filled with compassion but not naive

The #1 Most Frequently Repeated Command in the Bible is.... "Listen"

Key to progress in any relationship is learning to listen! Prov 1:5,7,8

Every step in our spiritual transformation begins with listening! Prov 6:20-23

LISTEN!

Hear	Hear, hearken, listen, heed, hearing, give ear... related forms 1,072 times
Deut 6:4	The National Verse of Israel – "Hear O Israel.... Shema = hear, obey
Proverbs	Hear 1:8;
Matt 17	Hear Him – the Father's command from heaven – Listen to Him!
James 1	Let every man be swift to hear....
Rom. 10:17	Faith is created by it – faith comes by hearing....
Gospels	Parables Jesus commanded – He that has ears...let him hear...
Rev. 2-3	Letters to 7 churches all included this final call...if you've got ears....listen
John 10:12	The evidence of true believers... My sheep hear my voice...
John 10:16	I have other sheep ...they will hear my voice

Hebrews 11:7-19

Faith listens (to the WORD OF GOD) – This is the foundation of faith

I can only be certain of what God has said!

Noah being *warned*.... built – not feelings, but God's clear word of warning

Abraham was *called*....went out – not a feeling, but a direct command

Sarah judged Him faithful who had *promised*...conceived...clear *promise*

Abraham....received the *promises*....offered – clear command, not an impulse

Faith looks (at the ONE WHO PROMISED) – Heb. 12:1-2 – This is the focus of faith

The word is only as certain as the character of the One who said it

She judged *Him faithful* Who promised....Heb. 11:11

Accounting that *God was able*....11:19

As seeing *HIM* Who is invisible...11:27

Looking unto *Jesus*....12:2

I know *Whom* I have believed....2 Tim. 1:12

Faith lives (out the WILL OF GOD) – This is the function of faith

Faith is not the means by which I get God to do my will – presumption

Faith is the means by which God enables me to do His will

Faith doesn't listen for answers, but for orders – faith works!

Faith asks "what now"....not "what if"...or "why me"

Faith is not "believing in spite of the evidence", but "obeying in spite of the consequence"

Faith grows, develops... it isn't static or unchanging – look at Abraham's faith journey

Faltering – 12 lied in Egypt, Frustrated - 16 listened to Sarah

Faltering - 17 laughed at promise, Failing 20 lied again

Chapter 22 – He gets it – he has listened, he has learned, he triumphs!

Every step of transformation in Christ-likeness begins with LISTENING! 2 Tim.4:3-4

(See Mentoring Guide) Read – a chapter in Proverbs every day, One chapter in OT, One chapter in NT

Underline at least one verse in each chapter Memorize at least one verse a week

Look for truths about... God, Man, Sin, Promise/Principle, Command/Choice/Consequence

What, So What, Now What Pray it into your life, obey it, and share it with someone else.

Write out your E&D goals for this week, next week and the month ahead

Hear the voice

LISTEN OT 1072 x Deut 82x Law 222x Joshua 26x 1&2 Samuel 88x
Proverbs 30x Josh - 2 Chron 291x
Deut. 6:4; 18:15 Mark 12:29 Matt 17:1-5 Judges 2:2,17,20
(The Gospels, Acts and Revelation use it most)

God's command to hear (shema) His voice is constant – it begins in the Garden...
Creation in Gen 1, God creates by His voice
Command in Gen 2 God directs, restricts and warns by His voice
Curse in Gen 3. *The fall was a result of Adam and Eve listening to the wrong voice.*
It was "the voice" they heard in the garden, the voice they heard but did not listen to!
Adam was condemned because he listened to the wrong voice; Eve's, not God's voice.
This theme is carried through the scripture....

Today, if you will hear His voice... do not harden your heart.

To gladly receive the voice of God is the essence of true spirituality.

VOICE 436 x in OT 189x in Gen – 2 Chron

Shema the voice 139x in OT Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel – it is a major theme

There is the voice of God and the other voice – the voice of Satan, the Flesh, the Fool

"I must choose carefully the voice I will listen to, for the voice I listen to will determine my decisions, my direction and ultimately my destiny. "

Resolved: I will daily seek His voice in His Word.

Resolved: I will listen to no other voices until I have listened to His voice

Resolved: I will be aware of, recognize and refuse "the other voices" that come to me

Resolved: I will not harden my heart against His Voice, but will readily respond, repent, and receive His voice continually

Spiritual Growth Plan

Name: _____ Date: _____

Bible Reading and Study

When

Where

What passages or plan:

Bible Memorization

I will memorize _____ verses a week

What verses

How will you do it?

Prayer

When

Where

Plan: (Journal, lists, etc)

I will daily invest _____ minutes in focused prayer

Journaling

Plan:

Christian Reading

When

What (Books, authors, subjects)

Stewardship

I will give at least _____% of my present income to God's work

My present investment of spiritual gifts will be _____

Evangelism

E-20 list

Top 3 _____

Efforts to build relationships with unbelievers

Training to become confident in evangelism

Disciple-making

D-10 list

Top 2 _____

Efforts to disciple others

Training to become confident in disciple-making

Spiritual Disciplines Inventory

While there exists a danger of legalism, equating spirituality with list keeping or measuring ourselves by others, yet, we must make personal self-judgments regarding our pursuit of God. We must become men of God, men of the Word, men of prayer, men of discipline, growing, sharing our faith and helping others grow. We must become the spiritual leaders of our homes. We must know where we are as well as where we need to go.

Give a completely honest evaluation of your present practices (not plans or past history). Tell us what your present practice of the spiritual disciplines is really like.

1. Present practice of reading and studying God's word (when, where, how long, how regularly)
2. Present practice of memorizing God's Word (when, how, what verses in the last 3 months)
3. Present prayer life (when, where, how long, with whom, major prayer requests)
4. Present practice of using a spiritual journal (how often, method)
5. Present practice of leading family worship (if married)
6. Present practice of reading Christian books & magazines (when, how often, examples)
7. Present practice of giving to the Lord's work (church, para-church, percentages)
8. Present practice sharing your faith (witness, tracts, home bible study – last month, year)
9. Making disciples (helping someone else grow intentionally)

Rate yourself regarding your current practice as a follower of Jesus Christ

(low) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (high)

Accountability Questions

1. Have you fulfilled your weekly growth plan objectives this week?
2. Have you taken time to minister to your family (wife, kids) this week?
3. Have you been with someone this week that could be considered inappropriate by anyone, or could have looked like you were using poor judgment this week?
4. Have you exposed yourself or been exposed to any explicit material this week?
5. Have you dwelled on thoughts that were not Phil. 4:8-9 thoughts this week?
6. Have you been completely above reproach in all of your financial dealings?
7. How have you handled temptations in the last week?
8. How can you be more Christ-like in your workplace?
9. How have you shared your faith with an unbeliever in the last week?
10. Have you just lied to us?

Scripture Memory Plan

The Story

Genesis 1:1-3, 26-28
Genesis 2:7-9
Genesis 3:1-24
Genesis 6:5-8
Genesis 12:1-8
Genesis 15:1-6
Genesis 22:1-18
Exodus 12:1-8, 11-13
Exodus 20:1-17
Exodus 33:13-23
Exodus 34:1-9
Numbers 21:4-9
Deuteronomy 6:1-18
2 Samuel 7:12-16
Psalm 22
Isaiah 53
John 1:1-18, 29
John 3:1-18, 36
John 14:1-6, 15-18
John 19:23-24, 28-30
John 20:1, 18-21

The Gospel John 8:32

God Hebrews 11:6

Hebrews 4:12-13
Psalm 19:1
Romans 1:19-20
Proverbs 14:12

Man Genesis 2:7, 15-17

Matthew 10:28
Philippians 1:21
1 Thessalonians 5:23

Sin Romans 3:23

Romans 3:19-23
Romans 5:12-21
Romans 1:18-32

Death Hebrews 9:27

Romans 6:23
Ephesians 2:1-3
Revelation 20:11-15

Christ John 14:6

John 1:1-4
Philippians 2:5-10
1 Timothy 2:5-6

Cross 1 Peter 2:24

2 Corinthians 5:14-21
Hebrews 10:10-14
Isaiah 53:1-12

Faith Ephesians 2:8-10

Romans 4:19-25
James 2:19
Romans 5:1-11
Hebrews 11:1-19

Life John 11:25-26

1 John 5:11-13
Mark 8:35-38
John 3:36
Romans 8:1

Spiritual Growth

1 Corinthians 6:19-20
Romans 12:1-3
Hebrews 12:1-15
Philippians 2:1-13
Philippians 3:1-15
Romans 14:1-14
Matthew 18:15-22
Matthew 5-7
Matthew 28:18-20
Mark 16:15
Luke 24:47-48
John 20:21
Acts 1:8
2 Timothy 2:1-9
Ephesians 4:1-16
Romans 8

Entire Books

Ephesians
1 John
2 Timothy

Notes or Prayer Requests

My Time



With God

Relationships require time. Every relationship that will last requires an investment of time. It requires time to talk, to listen, to discover and to learn. Your relationship with God requires time as well.

Communication is a two way street.
We talk to God through prayer.
God talks with us through His written Word, the Bible.

Prayer

We come to God in prayer to communicate our heart's deepest concerns. We express our love to God in words of worship. We ask God for wisdom and strength to do His will. But in order to know and do His will, we must study His Word.

Bible Study

It is important for us to develop **a disciplined habit** of daily Bible reading and study. Your knowledge of God will grow rapidly as you spend time with Him in prayer and Bible study.

Select a time of day that you can read your Bible and stay consistent with. Write down your appointment time with God: _____

Select a location where you can read and write and not be distracted. Write down where you will keep your appointment with God: _____

Read one chapter a day.

Begin with **1st John**

Read slowly and carefully.

Your goal is to understand what you're reading.

Put a question mark next to verses you don't understand.

Ask your discipler about them when you meet.

Prayer List

Names of God

Attributes of God

God's blessings to thank Him for

Sins to confess

Family members & needs

Fellow-believers & needs

E 20

1	11
2	12
3	13
4	14
5	15
6	16
7	17
8	18
9	19
10	20

Day 5 _____ Memory Verse(s) _____

Chapter: _____

COMMAND, CHOICE, CONSEQUENCE

Ask yourself....

WHAT? *What does it say? Put it in your own words. Summarize it.*

SO WHAT? *What does it mean? What's the main point?*

NOW WHAT? *What do I do about it? How do I need to change what I believe, what I am doing or not doing or how I am living?*

Look for the following as you read, and write them down in your journal.

- 1) **God** – Who He is, what He is like, what He does
- 2) **Man** – Who we are, what we are like, what we do
- 3) **Sin** – What does God not want us to do
- 4) **Promise/Principle** – what promises does God make; to whom; and what do we learn from God's promises
- 5) **Command/Choice/Consequence** – what commands does God give us; what choices are we faced with; what consequences will result from those choices

Pray it back to God: write out two short prayers based on what you've discovered.

Lord, thank You...

(for whatever you've discovered that is important to you)

Lord, please help me...

(ask Him to help you obey what you've learned)

The following sample from 1 John chapter 1 is provided. Be patient with yourself. We all learn at different levels and speeds. God will teach you if you humbly ask Him and patiently learn to read and obey His Word.

Lord, thank you

Lord, please

Bible Reading Journal Sample

Passage: 1 John 1:1-10 Memory Verse: 1 John 1:5
(What? So What? Now What?)

God – Christ is eternal, and revealed to us in flesh & blood

Man – I am a sinner; self deceived; in need of forgiveness

Sin – I may say I follow God, but my life is the real test – If I think I do not sin, I am only deceiving myself. I cannot be forgiven unless I repent and admit my sin to God.

Promise/Principle – Christ came to bring me life, joy and forgiveness. I can only experience that if I come to Him and confess my sin and claim His forgiveness. God promises to forgive me if I confess my sin, repent and ask His forgiveness. God is still righteous in forgiving me based on Christ's death in my place.

Command/Choice/Consequence – I can choose to harden my heart and refuse to admit my sin. But I will remain without joy or forgiveness. I can choose to repent and confess my sin and receive the cleansing and joy that Christ gives. It is really stupid to be self-deceived, self-righteous, and self-willed.

Lord, thank You for coming to bring me forgiveness at so high a cost. You are so full of grace. I am amazed that you would become human, to die for my forgiveness. I praise You!

Lord, please show me my sin. I don't want to live a life of self-deception. I am so thankful for Your cleansing blood. I admit my pride, my lustful thoughts, my critical spirit, my selfishness. Forgive and cleanse me through Your blood shed for me. Let me see Your holiness so I can see myself as I should. I long to see You, touch You, hear Your voice. I thank You that I soon will behold You as you are.

Day 4 _____ Memory Verse(s) _____

Chapter : _____

PROMISE, PRINCIPLE

Lord, thank you

Lord, please

Day 3 _____ Memory Verse(s) _____

Chapter : _____

SIN:

Lord, thank you

Lord, please

Our Plan for the next 5 weeks

Book – 1 John

Memorization goal – 1 John 1:5-2:2 (1 or 2 verses/week)

Week 1 – First John chapter 1 all week

Read 1 John chapter 1 each week day (Mon-Fri).

Day 1: Pray; humble your heart in confession, asking God to open your understand of His Word and to teach You by His Spirit. Then read 1 John chapter 1 slowly out loud. Then, starting with verse 1, write in your journal everything you see about God. Write down any thoughts on what you've discovered. Finally, write out two prayers: One of praise or thanksgiving and one of intercession or supplication.

Day 2: Pray; use the same method again in chapter 1, searching and writing down your discoveries about man (yourself). Write down additional thoughts and two prayers.

Day 3-5

Same method for Wed. Observations on Sin.

Same method for Thurs. Promise/Principle.

Same method for Fri Command/Choice/Consequence.

Weekend

Sometime either Sat or Sun, sit down and read the entire book of 1 John at one sitting. You do not need to journal on the weekend, although you certainly can if you want to.

Next Monday, repeat the same process all week with 1 John chapter 2.

We begin the small group with scripture memory review, opening prayer, scripture discovery as we look over our journals together, share God-sightings, accountability questions, and look for ways to grow in the coming week.

Day 1 _____ Memory Verse(s) _____

Chapter : _____

GOD:

Day 2 _____ Memory Verse(s) _____

Chapter : _____

MAN:

Lord, thank you

Lord, please

Lord, thank you

Lord, please