

Hebrews 5.14

Growing Up Is Hard to Do

We have considered this verse for several weeks now and I would like to try and tie it all up for us so that we might have the full picture. The idea that we have been building is that something has to happen in you that allows you to see the world in a manner consistent with the truth. You have to practice that ability to see. You must set yourself to understand and to be shaped by the truth of God's Word so profoundly that the lies which are set against you are plain and the trap is visible beneath the bait. We have considered the discipline of God, the training of a life in a fallen world. We have considered that we must be all in for this, that we cannot just drift along and expect to remain sound in the faith. But more than this, we can actively participate in the process by engaging in our own training, by considering the world around us through the lens of scripture and by being committed to obedience regardless of the cost.

I. ENGAGING IN TRAINING

those who go to basic training don't get to lay in their bunks and talk about the training that others are doing, nor do they get to just show up and watch... they must participate. In his excellent book "Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life" Don Whitney gives us 11 practical and active disciplines in which we can readily engage that will shape our development as Christians and which will grow us both rapidly and healthily. I would like to consider a few of them with you.

a. Bible Intake

Romans 12.1-2

Here is the formulative idea behind why we are so perfectly determined to be a people of the book! We want to know the will of God, the perfect and powerful will of God.

i. Hear it

1. Be in church

2. Listen to good preaching on the radio or internet

ii. Read it

1. Take/make the time
2. Follow a plan
3. Engage your brain

iii. Study it

1. Work at it
2. Write things down - this is the main difference between reading and studying. A pencil and paper. Write down:
 - a. Questions
 - b. Observations
 - c. Cross references follow and create your own
 - d. Use a concordance

iv. Memorize it

1. Why

a. Supplies spiritual power

Psalm 119.11

b. Strengthens faith

Proverbs 22.17-19

c. Empowers witnessing and counseling

d. A powerful means of God's guidance

2. How

a. Have a plan

b. Write out verses

c. Draw picture reminders

d. Demand perfection

e. Accountability

f. Review and meditate daily

v. Meditate upon it - deep thinking about the truths and realities revealed in scripture for the purpose of understanding, application and prayer

1. Select a passage
2. Repeat it different ways
3. Rewrite it in your own words
4. Look for applications
5. Pray through the text
6. Take your time

vi. Apply it

1. Expect to discover an application
2. Understand the text
3. Meditate about it then;

a. Ask application oriented questions of the text

- i. Does it reveal something I should believe about God?
- ii. Does it reveal something I should praise Him or thank Him for?

- iii. Does it reveal something that I should pray about for myself or others
- iv. Does it reveal something I should have a new attitude about?
- v. Does it reveal something I should make a decision about ?
- vi. Does it reveal something I should do for the sake of Christ, others or myself?

b. Respond specifically

vii. OBEY IT!

b. Prayer

c. Worship

d. Evangelism

e. Service

f. Stewardship –

of time, money and gifts/abilities

i. Time

Ephesians 5.15-16

1. It is short
2. It is passing
3. Cannot be regained
4. You are accountable
5. It is easily lost

ii. Thoughts –

Colossians 3:2 (NKJV)

2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

2 Corinthians 10.3-6

iii. Money

1. God owns it all
2. Giving is an act of worship, trust and obedience
3. Motivated by love

4. Characterized by willingness, thankfulness and cheerfulness

g. Fasting

h. Silence and Solitude

i. Observations

1. Without silence and solitude we are shallow, without fellowship we are stagnant
2. Silence and solitude are complementary and paired up
3. Our culture is not friendly to silence

ii. Reasons

1. Follow Jesus's example

Matthew 4.1
Mathew 14.23
Mark 1.35
Luke 4.42

2. To hear the voice of God better
3. To express worship
4. To express faith
5. To seek salvation
6. To be physically and spiritually restored
7. To regain spiritual perspective
8. To seek the will of God
9. To learn to control the tongue

iii. Practice

1. Minute retreats - shut up and be still
2. Make it a goal to be silent some each day
3. Get away for times of silence
4. Special places
5. Trade off daily responsibilities to allow for it

i. Journaling

Record the works and ways of God in your life

i. What does it give us?

1. Help in self-understanding and evaluation
2. Help in meditation
3. Help in expressing feelings and thoughts to the Lord
4. Help in remembering the Lord's works
5. Help in creating and preserving a spiritual heritage
6. Help in clarifying and articulating insights and impressions
7. Help in monitoring goals and priorities
8. Help in maintaining the other disciplines

ii. What does it look like

1. List the verse from your reading you are meditating on, then record your insights, impressions etc.

2. From there add prayers, events and responses, then thoughts, etc.
3. Actively record the works of God and that which He says to you. If the Creator and King of all the universe speaks to you, it makes sense to write it down so that you might remember and reflect on it!

j. Learning

- i. Actively seek to grow,
- ii. read and reflect
- iii. Discuss the things of God and surround yourself with learners

k. Persevering

this will be hard work. But, if you do it, you will gain tremendously! Understand that your heart and mind will not always want to do the work. We are, at the core, often lazy. So, perseverance is a KEY discipline. Don't quit!

II. CONSIDER THE WORLD THROUGH SCRIPTURE'S LENS

a. Again Romans 12.1-2

- i. DO NOT be conformed to this world.
- ii. You Must be active in your understanding of what God says and how insidious the pressure of the world actually is.

b. Consider that Hebrews 5.14 says that Solid Food (ie: the Word in all its fullness) BELONGS to those who are mature. The end of this is about knowing God and understanding His person, will and ways. Remember that God is worth it all. That KNOWING God is worth it all. And the only way to really know Him is to GROW UP!

III. RELENTLESS OBEDIENCE

here is where the rubber meets the road. The world will seek to pressure you into conformity. To make you think and act like them. It will be done subtly when possible, but if you resist it will bring

pressure: legal, social, economic, emotional... you will be forced to make a choice and then make a stand. Do not mistake that order. You must first choose to obey before you will obey.

a. **Acts 4.13-22**

- i. They had already obeyed and done what God had commanded
- ii. They were pressured
- iii. They knew that the world would not agree and were ok with that
- iv. Further, in that acquiescence, they allowed the possibility of judgement and punishment from them
- v. They had already determined to obey God rather than men.

b. **Acts 5.26-32**

- i. They had been arrested, jailed and subsequently freed by Divine Power.

- ii. Then charged by God to speak all the words of life (5.19) {which they knew because they were mature}
- iii. Brought before the council again
- iv. You want to bring this man's blood on us –

cf: **Matthew 27.24-25**

- v. Plainly state the case. We will obey God rather than man when the two are in conflict (which they always will be unless the men are converted)
- vi. Then, even right there, they continue to obey God.
- vii. In verse 40 they are beaten and released
- viii. In Chapter 6 the church is growing by leaps and bounds,
- ix. then in chapter 7 the first martyr is killed.
- x. The church continues to grow in the midst of persecution
- xi. In chapter 12 the first of the Apostles is murdered. (they will all die martyr's deaths except John - who they TRY to kill and cannot...)

c. **2Timothy 4.9-16**

- i. Loved this present age
 - ii. Sided with this present darkness
 - iii. Fled for own safety
 - iv. Notice the reality... if you are not committed in maturity to obey regardless of the cost, you will sit down and stay hidden to preserve your skin.
- d. Maturity is the outworking of God's truth in the life of His children... we are called to grow up, we are expected to grow up and God is faithful to both equip and prepare us in order that we WILL grow up!