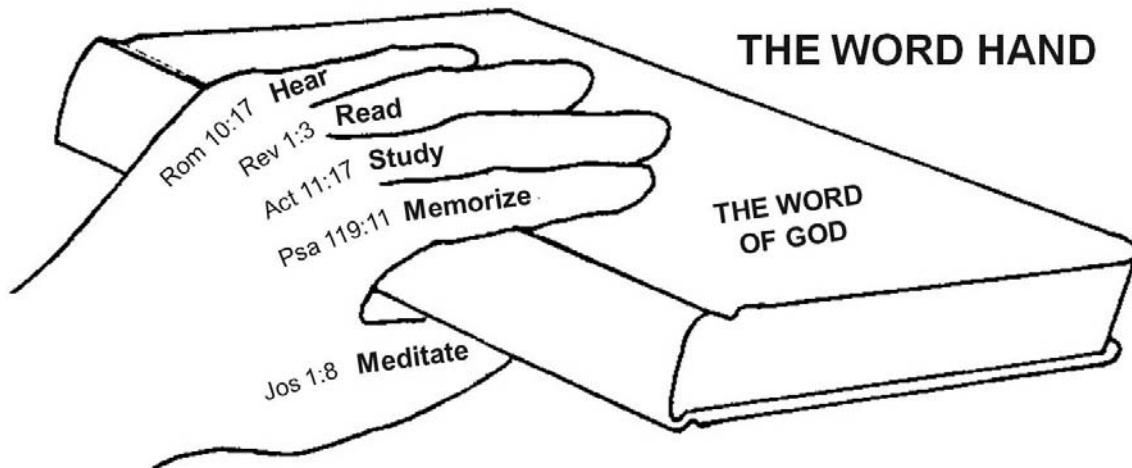


THE WORD HAND

(Ways to intake the Word of God into your life)



The Word of God is very important for a Christian. It is often referred to as food for us. Job said he treasured the Word of God more than his daily bread¹. Jeremiah said that he found God's words and ate them and they were his joy and heart's delight². Jesus said that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of God's mouth³.

The Bible is like nourishment for the believer. We need to consume the Bible if we are going to grow as a disciple of Christ.

The Word Hand is an easy way to remember ways of in taking the Word of God into our lives. They are as follows.

HEAR THE WORD

Romans 10:17 tells us that faith comes from hearing the Word of Christ. Hearing the Word from godly pastors and teachers provides insight into others' study of the Scriptures as well as stimulating your own appetite to know the Word.

Hearing is probably the most popular and most familiar method of Biblical intake for most people. Today, in this technological age, hearing the Word is made easy by radio, TV, mp3 players, smart phones, etc. I do not need to concentrate too much when I am listening to the Word. However, it is also the least effective. Hearing is like water skiing. It's a lot of fun, but you don't go very deep.

¹ Job 23:12

² Jeremiah 15:16

³ Matthew 4:4

READ THE WORD

Revelation 1:3 says that those who read the word is blessed, especially those who take it to heart.

Deuteronomy 17:19 explains that reading the Word enables us to learn to revere the Lord and to follow carefully His laws and decrees.

Reading the Bible gives an overall picture of God's Word. Many people find it helpful to use a daily reading program which takes them systematically through the Bible.

Although you can read the Bible like any other book, but you can expect to hear the voice of God. Reading gives a person the broad perspective on the thoughts of God. You can read a lot of God's thoughts in a short period of time. Do not get stuck when you do not understand, just read on. You may want to make a note of what you do not understand and one day come back to study it.

If hearing is like water skiing, then reading is like snorkelling. I go a little deeper and see what is under the surface.

*A man in Kansas City was severely injured in an explosion. Evangelist Robert L. Sumner tells about him in his book *The Wonder of the Word of God*. The victim's face was badly disfigured, and he lost his eyesight as well as both hands. He was just a new Christian, and one of his greatest disappointments was that he could no longer read the Bible.*

Then he heard about a lady in England who read Braille with her lips. Hoping to do the same, he sent for some books of the Bible in Braille. Much to his dismay, however, he discovered that the nerve endings in his lips had been destroyed by the explosion. One day, as he brought one of the Braille pages to his lips, his tongue happened to touch a few of the raised characters and he could feel them. Like a flash he thought, I can read the Bible using my tongue. At the time Robert Sumner wrote his book, the man had "read" through the entire Bible four times.

STUDY THE WORD

Acts 17:11 gives the example of the Bereans, who being of noble character, examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. They authenticated what they heard by their own study of the Scriptures.

Studying the Scriptures leads to personal discoveries of God's truths. Writing down these discoveries helps you organize and remember them.

Bible study is examining the Bible for yourself. Reading a popular Christian book and discussing it, is not Bible study. Reading a book about the Bible and discussing it, is not Bible study. Listening to a teacher lecture, is not Bible study. Bible study is you doing some original and personal investigation into what the Bible says. It is more than reading. It requires some time figuring out what the Bible says. It requires some time figuring out what the Bible means.

Hearing is water skiing, reading is snorkeling, and study is like scuba diving. I go much deeper and I look at things more closely. I just can't cover as much territory.

MEMORIZE THE WORD

Psalm 119:11 says that having God's word in our heart will prevent us to go against His will and sin against Him. Memorizing God's Word enables the use of the Sword of the Spirit to overcome Satan and temptations.

Colossians 3:16 commands us to allow God's Word to dwell in us richly. To dwell means that our thoughts are continually directed toward the Word. Memorizing Scripture provides us with the tool to accomplish that goal.

Memorization means an exact word-for-word recall of a Bible passage. Memorized passages are available for the Holy Spirit to use in your life – day and night. They are also available for you to use when helping other people.

Scripture memory has been the single most important spiritual resource for living the Christian life for many strong leaders. A leader says, "Without scripture memory I would not be who I am today. I doubt I would be walking with God, let alone trying to help others."

"The verses I have memorized are the foundation for the Bible studies I create, the workshops I deliver, and the messages I give. They provide direction for the men and women I mentor. If I had to pick only one method of consuming the Bible, it would be scripture memory."

A man was out walking in the desert when a voice said to him, "Pick up some pebbles and put them in your pocket, and tomorrow you will be both sorry and glad."

The man obeyed. He stooped down and picked up a handful of pebbles and put them in his pocket. The next morning he reached into his pocket and found diamonds and rubies and emeralds. And he was both glad and sorry. Glad that he had taken some -- sorry that he hadn't taken more.

And so it is with God's word.

MEDITATE ON THE WORD

Joshua 1:8 explains that the result of meditation is application. Only as we apply God's Word in our daily lives will we experience God's prosperity and success. Just as the wrist provides the source of strength and power for the hand, so also application provides for God's strength and power in our lives.

Psalms 1:2-3 tells us that the one who delights in God's Word meditates on it. Meditation is the key to producing stability, effectiveness and propriety in our walk with God. Just as the thumb touches all four fingers of the hand, so we must meditate on what we hear, read, study and memorize.

Meditation is the thumb of the Word Hand, for it is used in conjunction with each of the other methods. If I use my thumb with any other finger, I can hold something. If I use my thumb with all of the other fingers, I can get a good grip on something. If I use the four methods with meditation, I can get a good grip on the Bible. It does little good if God's Word goes in one ear and out the other. We need to let it sink down into our hearts through meditation. Only as you meditate on God's Word – thinking of its meaning and application in your life – will you discover its transforming power at work within you.

CONCLUSION

You'll notice that, in the illustration, the bigger the finger, the harder its corresponding activity is. It's easier to listen than to read, easier to read than study, etc. However, it's also true that the bigger the finger, the more effective the activity is. Experts tell us that after a 24-hour period, we can recall only about 5 percent of what we hear, 15 percent of what we read, 35 percent of what we study, and 100 percent of what we memorize. Since this is true, we would be wise to give special attention to the more effective activities.

The power of the Bible comes from when I apply it to my life. John 14:21 says that "whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me." When I apply what I learn from God, I am obeying. When I am obeying, I am loving God. And who doesn't want to show God love?