

How Do I Feed On God's Word?

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by David Schrock

Yesterday, I [wrote on the importance of feeding on the Word](#). Today, let me add another reflection on that theme—namely, what it looks like to actually feed on the Word of God.

Certainly, if God calls us to live upon every Word that proceeds from his mouth (Matthew 4:4), it should not surprise us that he is not silent on what it looks like to feed on his word. Just as the health professionals have protocols for what consists of healthy vital signs, so does Scripture with respect to how to feed on God's Word.

How do I feed on the Word of God?

In Donald Whitney's book [Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life](#), he takes two chapters to outline "Bible Intake." In his chapters (summarized [here](#)), he includes five ways to feed on God's Word.

1. Hear It (cf. Romans 10:17)
2. Read It (Matthew 19:4)
3. Study It (cf. Ezra 7:10)
4. Memorize It (cf. Psalm 119:11)
5. Meditate On It (cf. Psalm 1:2)

Similarly, but with even more specificity, Psalm 119 gives us at least six ways we can and should feed on the word of God.

1. Store the Word of God in Our Heart

In general, the command to feed on the word is a call to fill the heart and mind with truth. As Paul will say to the Colossians, we are to have hearts richly filled with the Word of God. And so the general instruction for Scripture is to store the word of God in our heart. As Psalm 119:11 says,

¹¹I have **stored up your word** in my heart,
that I might not sin against you.

Whatever it takes, however you do it, whenever you can make time, nothing rewards the Christian like storing the Word of God in our heart.

2. Meditate on the Word of God

Meditation is a word often misunderstood and misapplied. But biblically, it is the idea of filling the mind with the words of truth. It is closely related to memorizing and storing God's Word in the heart, but it takes those stored words and uses them as a means of worshiping, praying,

and praising God. Indeed, Psalm 119 is a 176-verse, 22-stanza, acrostic meditation on God's Word. And not surprisingly, it uses the word repeatedly.

Here are just a few examples:

¹⁵I will **meditate** on your precepts
and fix my eyes on your ways.

¹⁶I will delight in your statutes;
I will **not forget** your word.

²³Even though princes sit plotting against me,
your servant will **meditate** on your statutes. (v. 23)

²⁷Make me understand the way of your precepts,
and I will **meditate** on your wondrous works. (v. 27)

These verses (and others, vv. 48, 78, 93, 97, 99) attest to the importance of remembering, recalling, and ruminating on the Word of God. Indeed, change comes in our lives when the Word renews our minds. And mind renewal only comes when, by the Spirit, the Word is constantly informing, correcting, and changing the way we think and live. And that only comes as we meditate on God's Word.

3. Talk about the Word of God

Storing the word in our heart means we will talk about the word with others. Indeed, one of the ways we see the value of storing the Word in our heart is when we bring the word into conversation, prayer, decision-making, and moments of crisis. Therefore, we should look for ways to speak, write, or proclaim the Word of God in every and all situations. As Psalm 119:43, 46 recount the way lovers of God talk about the Word.

⁴³And take not the word of truth utterly out of my **mouth**,
for my hope is in your rules.

⁴⁶I will also **speak** of your testimonies before kings
and shall not be put to shame,

Few things have strengthened my faith or solidified my understanding like putting the word in my mouth and speaking it to others. Certainly, this speaking the word is not a call to vocational ministry. But it is the vocation of all witnesses (Acts 1:8) to fill themselves with the Word in order to share with others. Accordingly, when we share with others, it has the powerful effect of increasing joy in our hearts ([1 John 1:4](#)).

4. Go to the Place(s) Where God's Word is Faithfully Taught

Great reward is given to those who seek the Lord. In Proverbs 2:1–7 we learn the value of seeking wisdom like treasure. Likewise Psalm 25:14 says that the secrets of the Lord (or the friendship of the Lord) is for those who fear God. Indeed, because fear of the Lord includes sitting at God's feet, learning his word—the Word is even called the "fear of the Lord" in Psalm 19:9—we learn that to experience the fullness of joy, we must abide in his presence (cf. Psalm 16:11).

Today, that means ordering our lives so that we might hear the Word of God. Because, God has given teachers to build up the church (Ephesians 4:11–12), we would be fools to think we can grow in the Word without sitting under faithful teachers. For this reason, we should seek the places where God's word is faithfully taught. As Psalm 119:45, 94 state,

⁴⁵ and I shall walk in a wide place,
for I have **sought** your precepts.

⁹⁴ I am yours; save me,
for I have **sought** your precepts.

The key verb in these two verses is "seek/sought." Indeed, laziness will not be rewarded with spiritual fullness. But those who seek first Christ, his kingdom, his righteousness, and his Word there is a genuine and abiding sense of satisfaction in the Lord.

5. Obey the Word of God

The Bible is not theoretical in its wisdom, and accordingly many truths are not learned without obedience. In fact, some truths are *only* learned in the midst of hard-fought, faith-motivated obedience. As Psalm 119:59, 60, 67 remind us,

⁵⁹ When I think on my ways,
I turn my feet to your testimonies;

⁶⁰ I hasten and do not delay
to keep your commandments.

⁶⁷ Before I was afflicted I went astray,
but now **I keep your word.**

As Jesus' own faithfulness to God teaches us (see Heb 12:2), joy comes on the other side of obedience. This is what it means to carry the cross—doing what God's Word commands, enduring hardship, and even putting the pleasures of sin to death, because we believe that obedience to God is the path to lasting joy.

In this way, a key point of Scripture intake moves beyond head knowledge to heart obedience. And in this we taste and see the goodness of God and the faithfulness and wisdom of God's Word.

6. Set Aside Time to Read the Bible and Pray

Finally, fullness in the Lord will be difficult unless you dedicate time to listen, read, and study the Word of God. In Psalm 119 we see how the Psalmist sets aside time morning and night in order to feed on God's Word (cf. Psalm 55:17).

⁵⁵ I remember your name in the **night**,
O Lord, and keep your law.

⁶² At **midnight** I rise to praise you,
because of your righteous rules.

¹⁴⁷ I rise **before dawn** and cry for help;

I hope in your words.

¹⁴⁸ My eyes are awake before the watches of the night,
that I may meditate on your promise.

¹⁶⁴ **Seven times a day** I praise you for your righteous rules.

All in all, if you want to grow in your walk with the Lord and especially if you want to have the vision to see the lies of Satan and strength to say no to sin, you must feed on God's Word. And no place in Scripture discipless us better in this joyful pursuit than Psalm 119.

So take time to read the Word and start with Psalm 119 as a guide to seeing how to feed on the Word.

Soli Deo Gloria, ds