Exercise 6: God, Change Me!

Quick recap as to where we are in creating a craving for God's Word:

Exercise 1: A look at the enduring, everlasting, and transformational nature of God's Word.

Exercise 2: A dive into how God's Word asks to be ingested for maximum impact.

Exercise 3: An introduction to how learning styles can enhance our experience with God's Word.

Exercise 4: *God, Show Me!* (Observation) The FIRST of three requests that lead to life-change in God's Word.

Exercise 5: *God, Teach Me!* (Interpretation) The SECOND of three requests that lead to life-change in God's Word.

Exercise 6: YOU ARE HERE! God, Change Me! (Application) The THIRD of three requests that lead to life-change in God's Word.

Throughout Scripture we see a definitive rhythm: hear and do. We see it in Deuteronomy. We see it in the psalms. We see it in the prophets. We see it in Jesus' teachings. We see it in the apostles' letters. Hear God's Word (understand it, hold fast to it, hide it in your heart) and do God's Word (heed it, keep it, put it into practice). The first two steps of inductive Bible study (observation, interpretation) represent the "hear" part of "hear and do." The third step (application) is the "do" component. You cannot effectively have one without the other.

God's people have always been a people of Holy Writ. God's Word has been transmitted for us in order to not only know God, but to reflect His light in a dark world. We best reflect God by imitating His traits and obeying His precepts, all of which are specifically and tenderly communicated to us in Scripture.

Thank you for journeying along!

Barry

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God, Change Me! (Application)

To soften your heart for change by what you see and learn from God's Word, read the passages below and note what happens when we obey what we see and learn in God's Word. To notice the detail, you may want to print out these pages and use a pen or highlighter to highlight the specific things that happen when we observe and obey God's Word.

Deuteronomy 4:5-8

5 See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the Lord my God commanded me, so that you may
follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. 6 Observe them carefully, for this
will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees
and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." 7 What other nation is so
great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to
him? 8 And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body
of laws I am setting before you today?

Psalm 19:9-11

9 …The decrees of the Lord are firm, and all of them are righteous. 10 They are more precious than
gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. 11 By
them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

Matthew 7:24-25 (Jesus speaking)
[24] "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. [25] The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock."

John 13:34-35 (Jesus speaking)
[34] "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. [35] By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Titus 2:9-10
[9] Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, [10] and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

Hopefully the act of seeing the results in Scripture that come from our application of God's Word is enough motivation to want to do what we hear. But let's go one step further. Below are passages that elevate the importance of obedience and in many cases, tell us of special blessings that come from obedience.

Deuteronomy 26:16
[16] The Lord your God commands you this day to follow these decrees and laws; carefully observe them with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deuteronomy 32:44-47
[44] Moses came with Joshua son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people. [45] When Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, [46] he said to them, "Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. [47] They are not just idle words for you—they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."

Matthew 5:19
[19] Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 7:24
[24] "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."

Luke 8:21
[21] He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice."

John 13:17
[17] Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

John 14:21 (Jesus speaking)
[21] "Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

1 Corinthians 8:1-3
[1] Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that "We all possess knowledge." But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. [2] Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know. [3] But whoever loves God is known by God.

Romans 8:29
[29] For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

Philippians 4:9
[9] Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

2 Timothy 3:14-17
[14] But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, [15] and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. [16] All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, [17] so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1 John 2:17
[17] The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

Types of Application

As we experience our "Holy Wow" moments in our exploration of Scripture, we will find varying types of application. Below are just a few that can serve as a cross section of the various ways to apply.

Applying a Truth: At times you may run across a truth in Scripture that may not have an immediate practical application. An example (John 1:4): *In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.* But as you let that truth settle into your heart, you eventually sense how it can change your picture of Jesus or affect your relationship with Him.

Applying an Instruction: If you were to compile all the instructions in Scripture into one giant to-do list, you'd probably never again have to wonder about God's will for your life. Give a cup of cold water to a child. Take care of orphans and widows in distress. Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. Keep a tight reign on your tongue. Instructions give us immediate application.

Applying a Promise: Promises in Scripture may be the hardest truths to apply, chiefly because application requires that we remember them! Throughout the Bible, God emphasized the need for physical reminders that would jog our sluggish memories and keep us walking in light of His promises (think rainbow and altars). We should do the same thing: create physical reminders of God's promises.

Applying an Example: Observing people in Scripture as they reacted to their circumstances gives us a vast array of examples to follow. Think about Joseph (in Genesis), John the Baptist, Peter, Paul and many more. It's very easy to find parallels between the situations Bible people faced with the situations in our lives.

Acts 4:1-13 Exercise

This exercise builds on the hands-on sample study in Exercise 4 (God, Show Me!) and Exercise 5 (God, Teach Me!). If you have not yet done these two exercises, you will want to do them before moving to this exercise. If you have done these exercises, look back over the observations you made in Acts 4:1-13 when you asked God to show you what He wants you to see (Exercise 4). Then, look over your notes and questions when you asked God to teach you what He wants you to learn (Exercise 5).

Now for the money question with application of your observations and learning from Acts 4:1-13:

What do I need to do?

Let that question bounce around in your mind and in your heart for a few minutes. Let impressions and ideas come to mind and write those things down. Allow yourself to get hyper-practical. After you've made some notes and feel you have a handle on how you are to apply Acts 4:1-13 to your life, then feel free to read through the Application Direction below.

Application Direction

If we have any hope in imitating the courage and boldness of the apostles, it comes down to two practical points of application from Acts 4:1-13:

1) spending time with Jesus;
2) trusting the presence of the Holy Spirit.

1. Spending Time with Jesus

A few specific questions:

- *What do I need to change in order to spend courage-generating time with Jesus?*
- *Is my time with Jesus quality time? Is it the kind of time in which I gain courage and conviction to beat back those things that are antagonistic to my faith?*

Practical commitments:

- *Set up a daily appointment for the next 10 days with Jesus.*
- *After the 10th day, evaluate my efforts and make plans for the next 10 days.*

2. Trusting the Holy Spirit

A few specific questions:

- *Do I count on the presence of God's Spirit in my life?*
- *Do I trust His Spirit to guide me in truth, when I'm under pressure or overwhelmed?*
- *What changes do I need to make to enable the Spirit to be more powerfully present in my life?*

And there you have it. You've spent lingering time with 13 verses of God's Word. You've observed it. Interpreted it. Applied it. Hopefully God has shown you what He's wanted you to see, taught you what He's wanted you to learn, and you've allowed Him to change you the way He wants you to change.

My prayer is that you would continue to seek God in spirit and truth, that God's Word would metabolize in your heart, in your spirit and be a gentle, refining tool that God can use to conform you to the image of His Son.

Prayers,

Barry

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