CRAVE SESSION 2: The Word on Engagement

In Session 1 we discovered what God's Word is and does. In this session we will discover how to *experience* all that God's Word is and does. Tucked into the nooks and crannies of the Bible are clues on how to actually engage the Bible. As we discover these clues, it becomes apparent that God breathed His Word to us in a way that asks for a posture of expectancy, an anticipation that the next word, or phrase, or paragraph, might just change our lives. God does not want us to miss a drop. At that point, we probably shouldn't read Scripture like we read a news article, a Facebook post, or a Substack newsletter. The word "read" is actually too thin. It connotes a posture of Bible time on-the-run-to-the-next-thing, rather than Bible time on-our-tip-toes-peering-in, expecting to find something. As you'll see in Session 2 here, there is a level of interaction that God asks for when we interact with His Word.

The passages below are a sampling of verses that speak into how we are asked to interact with Scripture. To help ensure you don't miss a drop, consider these prompts:

1. FIND A SPOT

Print off these pages if it's convenient. You may want a couple of colors of pens or pencils. Find a quiet place, and allow yourself a big, satisfying sigh.

2. OBSERVE

As you experience these verses, make it a big deal when you see a word or phrase that gives you a clue about how to interact with or use God's Word. When you see an action related to Scripture (which can be described as commandments, Law, word(s), decrees, etc.) do something to help your mind be aware of what you're seeing: circle the action like crazy or highlight it to the point it bleeds through the backside of the sheet.

3. PROCESS

Take a couple minutes to do one of the repeated words you likely just observed: *meditate*. Look at each action you have circled like crazy or highlighted until it bled through the back of the page. Breathe a prayer along these lines: *God, what are you saying? What are you asking me to do? What do these actions look like in my life?*

4. TAKE AWAY

If you were to make a list of all the action words related to God's Word (which is actually a great exercise), you would notice that interaction with God's Word isn't to be casual or haphazard. It's to have intentionality, diligence, and intensity—an expectant posture that reflects the fact that our lives depend on what we are comprehending . It is to be, if you will, like a 5-year-old building a Lego project: the anticipation of the finished project helps create an air of intentionality and enjoyment in the process.

FURTHER TAKEAWAY

After you've completed this exercise, use this experience to develop a framework for personal Bible study. To borrow an idea from Step 4 above, make a list of the action words or phrases related to God's Word and circle the five or six that most resonate with you. Then ask yourself how each of these actions can be represented in your personal Bible time. To get hyper-practical, sketch out a 40-minute Bible time that reflects those five or six actions. You'll see an example on the worksheet included.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NIV)

[4] Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. [5] Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. [6] These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. [7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. [8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. [9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 32:44-47 (NIV)

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.”

Joshua 1:8-9 (NIV)

8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Ezra 7:10 (NIV)

10 For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.

Psalm 119: various verses (NIV)

[You’ll also see some great prayers here to breathe when engaging in Scripture.]

11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.
12 Praise be to you, Lord; teach me your decrees.

15 I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.
16 I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

20 My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times.

27 Cause me to understand the way of your precepts, that I may meditate on your wonderful deeds.

48 I reach out for your commands, which I love, that I may meditate on your decrees.

97 Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.

99 I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes.

130 The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

176 I have strayed like a lost sheep. Seek your servant, for I have not forgotten your commands.

Proverbs 2:1-11 (NIV)

[1] My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you,
[2] turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding—
[3] indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding,
[4] and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure,
[5] then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.
[6] For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.
[7] He holds success in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,
[8] for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.
[9] Then you will understand what is right and just and fair—every good path.
[10] For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.
[11] Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you.

Ezekiel 3:1-3 (NIV)

[1] And he said to me, "Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the people of Israel." [2] So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. [3] Then he said to me, "Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it." So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.

Matthew 13:23 (NIV)

[23] "But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

Acts 2:42-43 (NIV)

[42] They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. [43] Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)

[6] And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Revelation 1:3 (NIV)

[3] Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

A FINAL THOUGHT

Follow this link to an excerpt from the book *Unleashing God's Word in Youth Ministry,* authored by InWord director Barry Shafer. The excerpt (entitled "Where in the Word are You?") gives a quick overview of each book of the Bible along with ideas for how to engage each book with purpose and intentionality. You can also copy/paste this URL into your browser: https://inword.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Excerpt-Unleashing-Where-In-Word-Are-We-2020.pdf

We don't recommend putting time limits on engagement in God's Word. But to give clarity to this example, and because our lives are run by time, you'll see time segments assigned to the steps. And 40 minutes is a good nod to 40 days of rain, 40 years in the wilderness, and 40 days of fasting in the desert. So, using the steps of inductive Bible study (observe, interpret, apply—and more on that in Sessions 4-6) as a framework, this is a sample Bible time that reflects the level of interaction God appears to be asking of us when we experience His Word. The *phrases in italics* are the phrases from Scripture you explored in this exercise, describing interaction with God's Word.

:05 APPROACH

If you accept my words | My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times.

Some of these actions related to Scripture don't occur when you have your Bible in front of you, but are descriptions of the position we give Scripture in our mind and heart. Psalm 119:20 says "My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times." How can we be "consumed with longing" for God's Word? Sheer discipline will help, but will not last. Gratitude for our salvation experience will drive our longing. And experiences in God's Word will drive our gratitude. It's a nice perpetual cycle. While the mindset is a lifestyle, start your Bible time breathing a prayer of gratitude for what God is doing in your life.

:20 OBSERVE

Earnestly Seek | Look as if looking for silver or treasure

Have an intentional plan. Choose a segment of Scripture to explore, such as:

- a book of the Bible (one you are curious about but maybe not familiar with)
- a Bible theme (i.e., grace, love, redemption, forgiveness)
- a Bible character

Commit to more than a devotional moment. Observe the information: look for detail you've not seen before, engage as many of your senses as you can (highlight with colors/symbols, read aloud, pause and take a walk while pondering).
Pray this request: **God, show me what You want me to see!**

:10 PROCESS

Hear and Understand | Call out for insight

Process the information: write down questions, look up cross-references, use a Bible dictionary or other reference tool. Meditate on things that are not initially clear.
Pray this request: **God, teach me what You want me to learn!**

:05 APPLY

Take to heart all the words | Devote to observing

Close your time meditating on what God has shown you and taught you. What internal adjustments need to be made? What external acts need to be stopped, or started?
Pray this request: **God, change me the way You want me to change!**