

We are looking at areas of growth and maturity for a Jesus Follower.

Today, look at this piece of the puzzle:

A growing desire to study and apply the Scriptures in such a way that transforms beliefs, values, and behaviors

People try many ways to improve their lives. God's word is the best way to transform every aspect of your life. Just reading or hearing God's word is not where the true power is—putting His word into practice and obeying what the Bible teaches is where the real power is located. Understanding and applying God's word to our lives can change us from the inside out—not only our behavior but our motives. Biblical discipleship teaches people how to understand God's word but more importantly how to practically apply it to their everyday life.

In this day and age, many temptations are out there to draw us off the right path. With the explosion of technology, there has also been an explosion of opportunities to disobey God's principles. We are faced with more ways to sin than ever before. The culture we live in embraces sinful behavior as the norm. Things that used to be frowned upon, even by non-Christians, are now tolerated and applauded—even in some churches. God's word needs to remain our anchor. As we hide His word in our hearts and apply it to our lives, we can live an upright life in this wicked and perverse generation.

Psalm 119:9;11 *How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word... I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

We often hear John 8:32 quoted, "you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" without it being put in the proper context. Freedom comes as we obey God's word, and then we know the truth, and the truth will set us free. Just hearing or "knowing" the truth does nothing more than give you head knowledge.

John 8:31,32 *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

As God's word takes up residence in us, we are then able to reach out to others and practically help them. Without a proper foundation and continually refilled reservoir of His word we can't help others with the powerful wisdom of His principles.

Colossians 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*

It is our responsibility to press in and learn God's word. Not just learn the facts and information of His word but how to handle His word in a way that we can apply it as we build our lives. This doesn't just happen by going to church or hearing sermons and teachings on the Bible. We must take the initiative and take steps to accomplish this through personal study of the Scripture.

2 Timothy 2:15 *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

The Bible is God's word for mankind. It's not just a book of beautiful prose and inspirational ideas. As we learn His word and apply it to our lives, it will prepare us for everything we will face in life. There is not an area of life that God's word will not help us deal with in a way that will allow us to make the best decisions, according to His plan and purpose for our lives.

2 Timothy 3:16,17 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

The real power of God's word is released when we obey what it says. If we think that hearing His word without putting into practice what we hear is going to help us become the people that He desires, we are only deceiving ourselves.

James 1:22 *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*

As we obey God's word, it literally will purify us from the inside out. The most effective changes in our lives come from within. When our motives and attitudes are transformed by God's word, we find that the outward actions and behavior begins to reflect the inward change.

1 Peter 1:22 *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.*

Hale Pule Question:

Today's question has multiple parts-

1) What are some intentional and practical ways that you can grow in your understanding of what the Scriptures are teaching us?

2) What are some everyday ways you can apply the teachings and truth of the Scriptures to your life?

3) What are some ways you can begin to memorize Scripture on a regular basis?