



moms monthly

support encourage share grow

scripture

How comfortable are you with reading the Bible and studying it on your own?

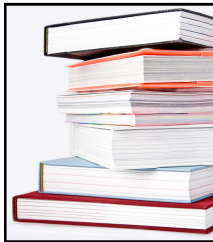
Why do you think the Scriptures are so central to our Spiritual awareness and growth?

Why does it seem so challenging to read the Bible on a regular basis?

In what ways have you been able to expose your children to God's Word?

At the bottom of the pile...

I have a stack seven books deep on my bedside table, a common phenomenon in my room. The categories tend to breakdown as follows: a novel, a book on parenting, a few spiritual "self-helps", a dieting strategy and my Bible.



Of course my Bible is at the bottom because it is the only book big enough to support the weight of the others. Okay, okay, perhaps that is a lame excuse for its placement. The truth is, I love to read and yet I still find it challenging to regularly feed on God's Word. I know in my head that it is important but I seem to find all sorts of other texts to reach for

first. I find myself asking why something so accessible and so central to my faith still manages to find it's way to the bottom of the pile?

I'm sure it is a combination of factors not the least of which is the idea that if I read it I will be compelled to obey (John 13:17). I would expect to be jolted out of my complacency or sin into a life of repentance and renewal. And even though a transformed life is appealing, sometimes it is easier to remain in my comfort zone and avoid the hard work of actually changing.

If we are honest about it, it's emotionally draining to work through our brokenness and bondage. It can be intellectually

demanding to work out our specific positions on controversial spiritual and cultural issues. It can be psychologically difficult to examine the darkness of our own hearts.

So, why would anyone persevere through this spiritual workout? Simply because truth is the only way to freedom (John 8:32). And let's face it, we all want to be free. The Bible gives us the only truth that makes sense. It addresses the fundamentals of identity and purpose and compels us into meaningful connections.

Maybe you are like me and your Bible is, in essence, at your fingertips but rarely do you actually pick it up and read it. Maybe it is time to dust it off, move it to the top of the pile, and see what happens.



Spiritual growth is the process of replacing lies with truth.

~ Rick Warren ~



Coffee Talk

1. How has your thinking about prayer changed recently?
2. In what ways were you and your family able to integrate prayer into your routine this past month?
3. What challenges or questions are still lurking with respect to prayer in your life?

Lectio Divina: A meditative approach to the Scriptures

lectio (reading): Choose and read a passage slowly and deliberately, pausing when a word or phrase speaks directly to your heart.

meditatio (discursive meditation): Reflect on the specifics of the passage that resonated with you. Open your heart to the nurture, challenge or conviction of the passage. Focus on the relational aspect of this communication. God is speaking into your life and circumstances.

oratio (affective prayer): Offer a prayer of thanks for the work that has been done through the Word you just read. The content of your reading and your inner promptings will guide the specific content of your prayer. Ask him for the grace and strength to obey His revelation.

contemplatio (contemplation): Rest in His presence. Just allow yourself to enjoy a quiet moment with God. "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).

The point is *not* to get through the Scriptures but to get the Scriptures through you.

mommy moment: If you need someone to help guide your exploration **consider connecting with a mentor.** Approach someone that you believe is a little further ahead in her spiritual journey with whom you have a natural and comfortable connection. Perhaps she could simply be a sounding board for your questions via email. Maybe you want to chat on a regular basis and work through a study together. Determine the parameters (time, frequency, content, format) that will suit your spiritual needs.

This Month With Ourselves:

EDUCATE:

Read Psalm 119:9-16. Underline actions or attitudes that you should adopt with respect to God’s Word in your life.

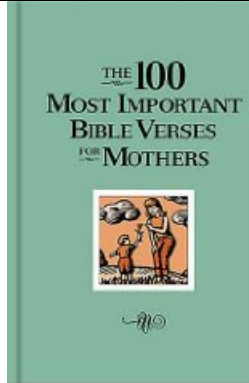
EVALUATE:

Jesus tells us that we “do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). How might we be spiritually starving if we do not nourish ourselves with regular reading of the Bible? Reexamine your heart attitude towards Scripture? Do you truly

hunger for the Word? Why or why not?

EXPRESS:

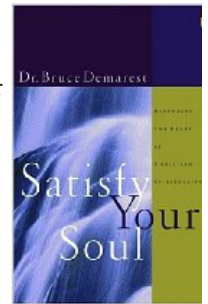
Use a journal to record your personal revelations and responses to the Scripture you are reading. Indicate any questions you may have. Reread your entries on occasion to see how your understanding has grown.



Start simply with a relevant guide.

EXPAND:

Have a desire to infuse new life and authenticity into your devotional practices? Read this book to investigate topics such as meditation, contemplation, discernment and guidance.



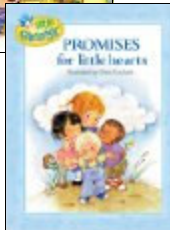
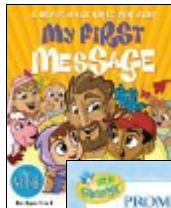
NOTE: John Stott’s *Christian Basics* is an excellent foundational resource for every Christian’s library.

family fun: Act out a Bible story after reading it. Tailor the activity to work with your family’s strengths and comfort zones. Narrate the story for them or have an older child read or retell it. Add options for extended versions, new characters or comedy. You may wish to choose a story with lots of action. Perhaps add a song or background music. Collect and/or create costumes and props. If you wish, you could take the time to fully write out a script as a family. Make sure you have the video camera ready for the official performance!

This Month With Our Kids:

MAKE A POINT:

Deuteronomy 6 reminds parents to be sharing the principles and the truths of Scripture as a natural part of their family’s daily activities. Resolve to be open to opportunities to share what you understand about God’s teachings with your children at every occasion. Even the simple truths that you already know need to be taught to them.



MAKE A PROMISE:

Begin to explore the Bible together. Be open to learning the stories and principles as a family. Consider teaching or helping in one of their Sunday School classes. Talk about ways to apply what you are reading.

MAKE A PLAN:

Determine a realistic goal for your family. Perhaps reading one Bible Story a week is an attainable goal. Perhaps a verse of the day or week is a good starting place. Your Sunday School teachers may have suggestions that fit with their curriculum.

Why do I meditate? Because I am a Christian.
Therefore, every day in which I do not penetrate more deeply into the knowledge of God’s Word in Holy Scripture is a lost day for me. I can only move forward with certainty upon the firm ground of the Word of God.
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 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. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6: 6-9)

HEALTHY SNACK S (Thanks Crissy Hesch of C&C Catering)

- Fill a waffle cone with cut-up fruit and top with vanilla yogurt.
- Peel a banana and dip it in yogurt. Roll in crushed cereal and freeze.
- Spread celery sticks with peanut butter or cream cheese. Top with raisins.
- Stuff a whole-grain pita pocket with ricotta cheese and Granny Smith apple slices. Add a dash of cinnamon.
- Make snack kabobs: put cubes of cheese and grapes on pretzel sticks. Use strawberries and marshmallows for a sweet treat!
- Mix together peanut butter and cornflakes in a bowl. Shape into balls and roll in crushed graham crackers.