

Day 4: From milk to meat

Read it: Hebrews 5:12-14 & Joshua 1:8 & Jude 20

Think about it:

No one wants to be a baby forever. Even at a young age we all had a desire to grow, develop & advance to the next stage of life. We naturally desired to go from crawling to walking, from babbling to speaking and from milk to solid foods. That is how we were designed physically and that is how God designed us spiritually, too.

Studying and applying the bible is an important part of developing spiritually and growing up in our faith. God wants us to be constantly growing in our Christian walk—so He can benefit (we carry out His mission) and we can benefit (experience the abundant life). So how do we do that? How do we “build ourselves up” like it says in Jude 20?

In Joshua 1:8 God tells us to “not let this book of the Law depart” from our mouth. That means our words throughout the day will be filled with His words. If we meditate on His commands (we think about them often) than God will build us up in His likeness. It will be more natural for us to “do everything written” in His book—because His words will be on our mind, in our mouth and reflected in the way that we act. Guess what? We get blessed, too: verse 8 says “you will be prosperous and successful”. That is the abundant life that Jesus was talking about (John 10:10), the life available to His followers as they grow in His likeness.

Act on it:



One way to start doing this is to keep an index card with you when you read the bible. Write down one verse that stands out to you and keep it with you during the day. By thinking about that verse, you are meditating on it. And in doing that, you are growing spiritually and moving from milk to solid foods!

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Week 1
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Purpose: To nail down this week’s topic from Bethlehem’s current series, “GPS”.

How to use it: Individuals can do it on their own 4 times a week to cultivate this habit of reading and applying the bible. Families: adults are encouraged to do HammerTime on their own & then meet with their whole family to go through it together.

Example of time: Read verses (3 min), Discuss/think about (5 min), Pray (2 min)

For more tools: check out Bethlehembc.com or BethlehemToolbox.com.



HAMMERTIME

Day 1: Build on sand or rock?

Read it: Matthew 7:24-27

Think about it: Have you ever been to the beach and seen someone build one of those big sand castles? The one with walls and bridges, reaching several feet in the air, looking quite sturdy and impressive? The castle could be very well built—strong, packed in, firm. But what happened when the slow, gentle tide came in? It gradually ate away at the foundation and swept the castle out to sea, never to be seen again.

Jesus knew how important foundations were. Raised as a carpenter, he built with wood and knew the importance of a firm foundation, one that could withstand rain, the tide and the stresses of life. He knew rock foundations are important for things built with wood—and He knew from experience how important it is to build your spiritual life on “the Rock”. The bible is the ultimate authority in life—a rock on which our beliefs, our hopes, our decision-making must be founded.

Jesus challenges us in verse 24 to hear His words and put them into practice—then we will be wise! It is much easier to endure (and even avoid) life’s storms when we have the wisdom of Jesus in our lives. Because no one wants to make the wrong choices and suffer pain, especially when we have a chance to “build on the Rock” and make right choices.

Act on it: Start this GPS journey by making a commitment to study the bible these 7 weeks (“think about it”) and to apply what you learn (“act on it”). Just like a wise carpenter, you will be building a strong foundation—and you will be better prepared for life’s storms.



Day 2: Hear the word...and live the word

Read it: James 1:22-25 & Romans 12:1-2

Think about it:

Have you ever thought about jumping out of an airplane? Imagine strapping a parachute on your back, jumping out of a plane a mile in the sky and hurtling toward the ground. What if, as you were falling, you had this thought: "I read the directions on how to use this parachute, but I really don't need to apply these instructions to this situation?" Oh no! Trouble would be quickly approaching.

It is the same way with the instruction manual we have for life—the bible. If we read it from time to time, but do not apply what we learn, then we too will be heading for trouble. James says we are deceiving ourselves if we read the bible and don't apply it in our lives. One reason that God gave us this handbook, this GPS system for life, so that we would read it and it would change us. Like Romans 12 says, we will be "transformed" and "renewed". This transformation shows people that we truly value God's Word and we are different because we follow Jesus Christ. That is called giving glory to God—to point people toward Jesus and show people the difference He makes in our lives.

Then see what happens to us (verse 25). The person that lives out God's Word will be "blessed in what he does". God promises that if we align our lives (ex. our emotions, our actions, our finances, etc.) according to His Word, He will bless us! What encouraging words in a world where storms are very frequent.

Act on it:

Each day during GPS think about the scripture for the day and really focus on how you can apply the verses to your life. Reading and thinking about them is good—putting them into action is God's best!



Day 3: Knowledge...or death?

Read it: Proverbs 14:12 & Hosea 4:6

Think about it:

My way or God's way? Dozens of times a day that tension will come up in our lives. How am I going to act? How will I treat my spouse, my kids, my co-workers? How am I going to react when things don't go my way? What are my convictions going to be—am I truly going to stand up for what is right, even when others don't? (See this month's Startown God-time card for more on that topic).

For each of those questions, my human mind will come up with some ideas—but as we see in Proverbs 14:12, my ideas aren't always the best. The sin nature in me will tend to direct my ideas away from God, and that is precisely why I need to allow God to influence me through the bible. That will help me from making choices that "seem right" but "lead to death". Hosea 4:6 tells us we are actually "destroyed" from lack of knowledge—the knowledge we can receive when we spend time reading and then applying scripture.

No one likes to make decisions that "destroy" us or "lead to death". God has something much better for us, if we truly build our convictions on "the rock" (Day 1) and not just hear the word, but do it (Day 2). The writer of Proverbs (Solomon) was a man with great wisdom and knowledge. May we also strive for that wisdom and knowledge—it will totally reshape our life!

Act on it: Consider reading 1 chapter of the book of Proverbs each day. There are 31 of them—perfect for one for each day of the month. Take 5 minutes a day to soak in wisdom and knowledge from God and then see how God begins to change you, even in less than 31 days!