Get a Running Start

Each lesson in our study of Colossians begins by asking you to meditate on the passage of scripture you are studying that week. But what does it mean to meditate on scripture? How do you make observations about a passage in the Bible? And why is this an important place to start your study of God's Word?

Making Observations in Scripture

Being an observer of God's Word is no different than sitting on a bench at a busy park and noticing all the people there. Who are they? What are they doing? Who is with them? How are they relating to one another? Why are they there? When you take time to look and listen, there are so many things you can observe. The same is true of God's Word.

Observation is the act and art of noticing details. In its simplest form, it's asking these six basic questions: who, what, when, where, why and how? And with that initial understanding, we can be effective observers of God's Word if we are patient and disciplined to do so. If you are in a hurry or are just trying to complete a lesson you will miss out on seeing exciting details in God's message to you. Stop, slow down and see what isn't obvious to the casual reader. Make observation of God's Word a habit you enjoy.

Meditating on a Bible Passage

Meditation is the act of pondering or thinking deeply. In the case of a believer, it's reflecting on the meaning, implication and application of a particular Bible passage. It provides the foundation for study by allowing God to reveal key verses, repeated words, phrases or ideas that point us to the message He has for us. Meditation comes naturally for some and is more difficult for others; but we are all called to meditate on God's Word often.

The challenges we face today are the many distractions and stresses in our daily lives. In order to effectively meditate on God's Word, we need the Holy Spirit's help in allowing us to block out worldly cares and to focus solely on His Word and its implications for our lives. Think of meditation as the quieting of your life to listen to God's voice. You may need a special place in your home that is away from others, or a particular time of day when no one else needs your attention. Either way, meditation doesn't just happen because we want it to. Just like effective observation, it must be intentional. Make meditation a priority and see what God can do in your life as you allow His word to sink in to the very fibers of your soul.

Growth in Him

Colossians 1:1-12

1. Begin meditating on Colossians 1:1-12. Read through the passage and list as many observations as you can find. What verses, repeated words, phrases and key points stand out to you?

2. How does Paul specifically describe the Colossian believers.

3. Make a list of the ways Paul specifically prays for the Colossians. Which one is the most meaningful to you and why? For whom will you commit to pray this prayer?

4. Compare Paul's description of the Colossian believers with how he prays for them. Why do you think he prayed such a deep prayer for a church so right on spiritually? (See Rev. 2:1-7 and 3:14-22) Why write to them when they seemed to have it all together? (See Colossians 2:8-10.)

5. What kind of love is Paul referring to that is so well known? (See Gal. 5:6; 1 Thes. 1:3; James 2:18, 20, 22; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 3:11; and 4:7-11.)

6. What does Paul refer to when he uses the words "truth" and "fruit?" Why do you think he uses these words?

7. Reread Colossians 1:1-12. What does this passage teach you about God? What did you specifically learn about growing in Christ? How will you apply these truths to your own life?