

# Spiritual Discipline: Learning

January 2015

When it comes to learning, people fall somewhere between two extremes. On one end are those that enjoy learning. They enjoy the process of learning new things, whether that new skill or concept is trivial or profound. However, at the other extreme are those that for whatever reason do not enjoy the learning process. They would rather focus on getting things done, instead of sitting around talking about it. Listening to others share new ideas or expound on ways to improve simply leaves them cold. Everyone falls somewhere between those extremes depending on their learning style, their motivations, and the foundational pre-learning they bring to any situation.

So how does this affect our spiritual learning? Some of us approach our spiritual life with a desire to learn all we can by reading the Bible, reading books or listening to our favorite preacher on the radio. Others focus on spiritual zeal, desiring to live a life of devotion and seeking to learn from experience, as we see God moving in our day-to-day lives. If we overemphasize either extreme, we will fall into a trap. The Pharisees elevated scholarly knowledge of the law, and Jesus clearly informed them that they had missed the point. However, Scripture has something to say about the other extreme of elevating spiritual zeal. Romans 10:2 warns against having “a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge” (NASB).

No matter how you learn, remember that the goal is not just gaining knowledge for knowledge sake. Instead, your goal should always be to learn in order to grow in godliness. I Timothy 4:7 says “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness” (NASB). The word “discipline” here is from a Latin word meaning “courses of learning and training.” If you desire to be a “disciple” of Jesus Christ, inherent in the word is not just being a follower of Christ, but also a “learner.”

In most cases learning happens by accident or convenience. Therefore, one would reason that the more you live the more you will know. That may be true about some things, but the truth is, it does not necessarily apply to spiritual maturity and wisdom. As a matter of fact, Job 32:9 says, “The abundant in years may not be wise, nor may elders understand justice” (NASB). Those who are not trying to learn will only get spiritual and biblical knowledge through accident or convenience. Most of us can name several books of the Bible, but it takes true discipline to memorize them all in order. To learn true wisdom and experience real spiritual growth we must practice the Discipline of Learning. The Discipline of Learning transforms accidental learners into intentional learners.

So how can you become a more intentional learner? You can keep your learning fresh and stay engaged in the learning process by using as many different ways as you can.

1. Reading books and articles
2. Listening to recorded books
3. Accessing audio or video recordings online (You will soon be introduced to the online training, MinistryGrid)
4. Listening to Christian radio – Ensure it is a reputable ministry, not just anyone whose speaking style you enjoy.

Over the month of January, live out the spiritual discipline of learning by working through the items below and discussing them with your 222 Group.

- Commit to meet regularly with your 222 Group for the purpose of learning to grow in godliness.
- Commit to being an intentional learner.
- Answer the following question – “Other than the Bible, what am I currently reading / listening to in order to further my spiritual growth?”
- Go to [ministrygrid.com](http://ministrygrid.com) and start to learn about what it is and how it can help you in your walk.
- Identify from the list above your preferred learning method, make sure you are using this method in your spiritual growth, and determine whether you need to vary your learning methods in order to keep your learning fresh.