

BIBLE TIPS

A Bible Intake Toolbox for Your Summer Workout

Thank you for signing up for Bible Tips!

[Donald Whitney](#) writes, *"No spiritual discipline is more important than the intake of God's Word."* Every other spiritual discipline is fueled by Scripture. Our prayers are shaped by Scripture. Our worship is guided by Scripture. Our understanding of God, ourselves, and the world comes through Scripture.

[Richard Foster](#) reminds us that the spiritual disciplines do not transform us by themselves. God transforms us. The disciplines simply place us before God so He can do His work in us.

Think of Bible Intake like nutrition for your spiritual life – A Feast on God's Word. Just as muscles need consistent nourishment to grow stronger, our souls need consistent nourishment from God's Word.

Don't feel like you need to master everything in this guide. Think of it as a toolbox. Different tools serve different purposes in different seasons.

Helping People Experience Jesus,
Pastor Brad Murphy



1. HEAR THE WORD

Before Christians could own personal copies of Scripture, they heard God's Word read publicly and taught regularly. Hearing remains a vital discipline today.

PRACTICAL WAYS TO HEAR THE WORD

- **Attend worship services consistently** - Place yourself under the regular preaching and teaching of God's Word.
- **Listen actively during sermons** - Listen with a pen, not just your ears.
- **Take notes** - Writing helps retention.
- **Review sermon notes later in the week** - Reinforcement increases growth.
- **Listen to the Bible in audio format** - Great for commutes, walks, and workouts.
- **Listen to trusted Bible teachers and podcasts** - Expand your understanding through gifted teachers.
- **Participate in Bible studies and small groups** - Hearing others' insights deepens understanding.
- **Read Scripture aloud** - You become both reader and listener.
- **Listen with your family** - Shared hearing creates shared conversations.
- **Ask questions while listening** - Engagement promotes learning.

2. READ THE WORD

Reading Scripture regularly exposes us to the whole counsel of God.

Practical Reading Plans

- **Read through the Bible in a year**
- **Read the New Testament in a year**
- **Read one Gospel repeatedly**
- **Read one chapter of Proverbs each day**
- **Read Psalms daily**
- **Follow a chronological reading plan**
- **Read according to a church sermon series**
- **Read a book of the Bible repeatedly for a month**
- **Read one chapter each starting in Genesis, Joshua, Job, Isaiah, Matthew**

Practical Reading Tips

- Read at the same time every day.
- Read before checking your phone. Close other apps, put in airplane.
- Start small and stay consistent.
- Use a paper Bible when possible.
- Read for quality before quantity.
- Read slowly enough to understand.

3. STUDY THE WORD

Reading asks, "What does it say?" Study asks, "What does it mean?"

Reading is for breadth. Study is for depth.

Study Methods

Inductive Bible Study (OIA)

- Observe what the text says, interpret what it means, and apply what it requires.

SOAP

- Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer.

SWORD

- Scripture, Word Study, Observation, Reflection, Doing.

Verse Mapping

- Dig deeply into one verse by exploring context, keywords, cross-references, and application.

Word Study

- Trace an important biblical word throughout Scripture to understand its meaning and usage.

Character Study

- Study the life, strengths, weaknesses, and lessons from a biblical person.

Topical Study

- Explore what the Bible teaches about a specific topic.

Chapter Study

- Read and analyze one chapter in detail.

Book Study

- Read an entire book repeatedly to understand its message and structure.

Cross-Reference Study

- Allow Scripture to interpret Scripture by comparing related passages.

Context Study

- Examine verses before and after a passage to understand meaning.

Original Language Study

- Use tools to explore key Hebrew and Greek words.

Comparative Translation Study

- Compare multiple translations to gain clarity.

STUDY TOOLS

Study Bibles

- Provide notes, introductions, maps, and helpful background information.
- My Recommendations:
 - Fire Bible
 - ESV Study Bible
 - Life Application Bible

Commentaries

- Offer insights from trusted biblical scholars and pastors.

Bible Dictionaries

- Explain people, places, customs, and biblical concepts.

Concordances

- Help locate verses and trace themes.

Maps and Timelines

- Provide historical and geographical context.

DIGITAL TOOLS

Free to Use:

YouVersion

- Hundreds of reading plans, devotionals, and audio Bible options.

ESV App

- Excellent reading, audio, and study resources.

Bible Gateway

- Easy access to multiple translations and search functions.

Blue Letter Bible

- Excellent free tool for word studies and original language research.

Bible Hub

- Provides commentaries, cross-references, interlinear texts, and study tools.

Olive Tree

- Strong mobile study platform with many resources available.

Paid Subscriptions

Dwell

- Beautiful audio Bible experience designed for meditation and listening.

Logos Bible Software

- Comprehensive digital library and study platform.
- This is my personal go-to.

Accordance

- Powerful Bible study software with excellent original language tools.

4. MEMORIZE THE WORD

Psalm 119:11 says, "I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."

Practical Memorization Methods

- Memorize one verse per week.
- Write the verse repeatedly by hand.
- Carry verse cards.
- Use a notes app.
- Make the verse your phone wallpaper.
- Place verses on mirrors or dashboards.
- Recite verses during walks.
- Record yourself reading the verse.
 - Listen to your recording repeatedly.
- Turn the verse into a song.
- Memorize with a spouse or friend.
- Memorize as a family.
- Review old verses weekly.
- Draw pictures representing the verse.
- Use hand motions to reinforce memory.
- Focus on key passages rather than random verses.
- Connect verses to daily routines.

Memorization Tip

Consistency beats intensity. One verse a week becomes over fifty verses a year.

5. MEDITATE ON THE WORD

Meditation is where information becomes transformation.

Biblical meditation is not emptying your mind, like pagan meditation. Biblical meditation is filling your mind with God's truth and thoughtfully reflecting on it. Think on these things.

[Donald Whitney](#) provides numerous ways to meditate on Scripture.

Seventeen Ways to Meditate on Scripture

1. Emphasize Different Words

Stress different words in a verse to discover new insights.

2. Rewrite the Verse

Put the verse into your own words while preserving its meaning.

3. Pray the Passage

Turn the text into a conversation with God.

4. Personalize the Text

Insert your name or circumstances where appropriate.

5. Ask Application Questions

Explore how the passage should change your life.

6. Picture the Scene

Use sanctified imagination to visualize biblical events.

7. Look for Christ

Consider how the passage points to Jesus.

8. Look for God's Attributes

Focus on what the passage reveals about God's character.

9. Search for Principles

Identify timeless truths that transcend the immediate context.

10. Find Connections

Connect the passage to other biblical texts.

11. Reflect on Commands

Consider how to obey what God is requiring.

12. Reflect on Promises

Consider how God's promises apply today.

13. Reflect on Blessings

Notice benefits God offers His people.

14. Reflect on Warnings

Take seriously the cautions found in the text.

15. Ask Why

Repeatedly ask why the author included each detail.

16. Journal Your Reflections

Write your thoughts, observations, and prayers.

17. Review Throughout the Day

Return to the passage repeatedly rather than only once.

6. LIVE THE WORD

Bible Intake reaches its goal only when it produces obedience.

James 1:22 says, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only."

Application Frameworks

The SPECK Method

- Is there a Sin to avoid?
- Is there a Promise to claim?
- Is there an Example to follow?
- Is there a Command to obey?
- Is there Knowledge about God to embrace?

The Head, Heart, Hands Method

- Head: What should I know?
- Heart: What should I believe?
- Hands: What should I do?

The Start, Stop, Continue Method

- What should I start doing?
- What should I stop doing?
- What should I continue doing?

The One-Step Method

Ask: "What is one thing I can do in the next 24 hours because of this passage?"

The Relationship Method

How does this passage affect:

- My relationship with God?
- My family?
- My church?
- My coworkers?
- My neighbors?

The Gospel Method

How does this passage:

- Reveal my need for Christ?
- Point me to Christ?
- Help me follow Christ?

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

Don't try every method.

Pick one or two and begin.

There are seasons when listening is most helpful. There are seasons when reading deeply is needed. There are seasons when study, memorization, or meditation become especially valuable.

The goal is not mastering Bible study techniques.

The goal is knowing God.