

This Year I Will...

Part 4: Develop My Spiritual Life

"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" Ps. 42:1, 2

E - - - - - I - - - - - F

"I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men... Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love... Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first." Rev. 2:3-5

How can I develop a stronger spiritual life?

1. _____ up

"Be still, and know that I am God." Ps. 46:10

"Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen ... Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few." Eccl. 5:1, 2

2. _____ up

"You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God." Matt. 22:29

"My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life." Ps. 119:50

"I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free." Ps. 119:32

"...meditate on it day and night... do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." Josh. 1:8

Billy Graham's secret: "I never _____ my Bible."

3. _____ up

"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another..." Hebrews 10:25

"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." Matt. 18:20

"I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ." Philemon 6

"... whatever you did for one of the least of these... you did for me." Matt. 25:40

4. _____ up

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." Matt. 7:7

"It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it... Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore stand in awe of God." Eccl. 5:5, 7

Daily Meditations

Take a few minutes every day to read Scripture, pray, and answer some thought-provoking questions pertaining to this week's topic.

This week's memory verse:

"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" Ps. 42:1, 2

Monday

Read Revelation 2:1-7. Do you identify in any way with the church at Ephesus in these verses? How?

How does their progression mirror the progression you often see in a Christian's spiritual life?

Review the scriptures and the points from the message last weekend. To which points do you need to return, in the spirit of Revelation 2, in your life?

Talk to God about the state of your spiritual life. Ask Him to fill you again. Ask Him to show you how you can achieve a spiritual closeness with Him again.

Tuesday

One effective way of meditating on Scripture is to take one verse and emphasize each word in turn. Turn it in your mind like a diamond, looking at each facet. Try this today with John 15:5: "I am the vine; you are the branches." What insights do you gain from each emphasis?

TLC message by René Schlaepfer for January 26 & 27, 2002

"I am the vine; you are the branches."

"I **am** the vine; you are the branches."

"I am **the** vine; you are the branches."

"I am the **vine**; you are the branches."

"I am the vine; **you** are the branches."

"I am the vine; you **are** the branches."

"I am the vine; you are **the** branches."

"I am the vine; you are the **branches**."

Thank God for specific insights gained through your meditation today! Listen to Him-- simply spend some moments "abiding" as a branch to a vine today!

Wednesday

Read Matt. 22:29. Why were Jesus' enemies in error, according to Christ?

Have you ever made errors because you did not know what the Bible taught about an issue?

How can you prevent this in the future?

Read Psalm 119. Write down at least five benefits, with references, that this Psalm says result from Bible study and memorization:

What is your biggest obstacle to reading your Bible more regularly?

Which of the tips Rene mentioned will you employ?

Take some more time today to pick a passage and meditate on it more deeply. Thank God for the blessings of His word!!

Thursday

Read Psalm 42. What is bothering the Psalmist?

Have you ever felt like this? When? What happened to help you "connect" with God again?

In verses 5 and 11, the writer suggests that, even when we feel distant, we need to have hope that "we will yet praise Him"; in other words, that we will once again sense His presence.

Thank God today for His presence all around you! If you are thirsty for God, take a drink of Him today-- spend some time in solitude, reflection, prayer, and Bible reading-- just like you're doing now!

Friday

Read Matt. 18:20. Where does Jesus say He will be?

Have you ever felt the presence of Christ in a gathering of Christians? What happened?

Read Matt. 25:35-40. How do we encounter Jesus when we serve others?

This week look for opportunities to help others, and view these times as if you were helping Jesus himself-- because that's how he views them!

Thank God for a healthy church! Pray for the continued health of churches in our area, including our own!

Saturday

Please pray for the services this weekend. Pray for the continued vitality of TLC ministries during the winter months. Thanks!

Some Good Books on Developing My Spiritual Life

Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*

John Ortberg, *The Life You've Always Wanted*

Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines and Divine Conspiracy*