

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

**Central idea** – We cannot effectively pursue holiness without the Word of God stored up in our minds where it can be used by the Holy Spirit to transform us. We need the discipline of forming Bible-based convictions.

**Developing the Discipline of Grace**

1. We are to “store up” God’s precious Word within us (Psalm 119:11; Proverbs 2:1, 7:1). The idea behind “store up” is to lay away in anticipation of a future need or opportunity. People store up canned fruits and vegetables from their garden, a “rainy day” fund from their paper route, or an old penny collection from their grandparents.
  - a. In your younger days, what did you so value that you stored it up, treasuring it, perhaps even to this day?
  - b. If you were to apply that same diligence and childlike zeal to Bible study or Scripture memorization, valuing it above everything else (Proverbs 3:13-15), what do you think would be the result five years from now?
2. Someone has observed, “A belief is what you hold, but a conviction holds you.” You may live contrary to what you believe, but you cannot live contrary to your convictions. In developing our convictions, we believers are influenced by both society and the Word of God. What determines whether we are influenced by one more than the other?
3.
  - a. Below are two contrary convictions. Which one do you tend to live by more than the other? Give an example of how you have displayed that conviction in your behavior.
    - i. Avoid pain if at all possible
    - ii. If doing what Christ would do involves pain, then I have through the Holy Spirit the strength to endure that pain.

- b. What do you think it would take for the second of these two convictions to become the one you live by habitually?
4. The idea of continually meditating on the Word of God may seem unrealistic and unattainable in our busy age when our minds need to be occupied with the various responsibilities we all have. So the question naturally arises: “How can I meditate on Scripture, when I have to think about my work all day long?” What opportunities to meditate on Scripture does your day offer you?
5. When your mind is free to wander where does it go? (Or, what do you think about in your free time?)
- i. My mind turns to Scripture.
  - ii. I think about my problems.
  - iii. I engage in mental arguing with a personal nemesis.
  - iv. I allow my mind to drift into a wasteland of impure thoughts.
  - v. I hum tunes from my favorite songs.
  - vi. Other (give an example):
6. What value do you place upon the Word of God in practice?
- i. I study the Bible only because I know it is something Christians should do.
  - ii. I depend more on study aids, Bible commentaries, and my intellect than on the Holy Spirit to enlighten my understanding of Scripture.
  - iii. I search the Scriptures with the same childlike intensity that I use when searching for “hidden treasures” or my favorite collectibles.
  - iv. Like my storehouse of favorite collectibles, God’s Word remains on the shelf, collecting dust.
  - v. Other:
7. God provides opportunities to develop Bible-based convictions by applying the teachings of Scripture to real-life situations. Describe a situation in which God gave you a chance to build a conviction by applying the teaching of Scripture.

8. During the coming week, pray as the psalmist did that God will open your eyes to see wonderful things in His law, and that He will give you understanding so as to keep His law (Psalm 119:18,34). He will also very likely make you aware of areas of your life where you are not fully obedient to His revealed will.
  
9. Jesus used scripture to combat temptation (Matthew 4:1-11). In session 9 you were urged to make specific commitments regarding your areas of vulnerability to sin. How can you go about finding passages of Scripture that apply to these vulnerabilities so that you can memorize those passages and use them when temptation strikes? (If you don't already know where in the Bible to find relevant passages, is there someone you can ask for suggestions? Can you start reading through the New Testament, looking for passages that apply to your need? Describe your plan.)

### **WHAT'S THE POINT OF ALL THIS?**

We have looked at some difficult disciplines in this session: diligent but dependent Bible study, Scripture memorization, continual meditation, and application of Scripture to real-life situations. Actually, these disciplines are not all that difficult, but they can appear that way to those who have never practiced them. So the question may arise in some minds, Is there any room for grace here? What happens if I stumble along in Scripture memorization, for example?

First of all, God does not love us any less. His love for us is based solely on the fact that we are in union with His Son Jesus Christ. The discipline of developing Bible-based convictions (Romans 12:2) should be a response to the mercy and grace of God to us through Christ (Romans 12:1)