

Serious

I Peter 1:13- 2:12

“Get serious”

1. Do you think our society is more likely to be too serious or to lack a sense of gravity?

13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 15 But as he which has called you is holy, so you be holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, You be holy; for I am holy.

Being serious doesn't mean being joyless; it means preparing our minds for action and then taking those actions.

2. What was Peter specifically telling believers to get serious about?

Spiritual _____

If we're going to stand firm for Christ in a world growing increasingly hostile to our faith, we must get serious about spiritual growth.

3. What is absolutely essential for any kind of growth to occur?

The Bible and Spiritual Growth

“Desire the pure milk of the word, so that you may grow up into your salvation.”

Peter (1 Pet. 2:2)

“The very practice of reading [the Bible] will have a purifying effect upon your mind and heart. Let nothing take the place of this daily exercise.”¹

Billy Graham

“No factor is more influential in shaping a person's moral and social behavior than regular Bible reading.”²

Christianity Today and the Gallup Poll

“The most transforming practice available to us is the disciplined intake of Scripture.”³

Donald Whitney

“The Bible was not given for our information but for our transformation.”⁴

Dwight Moody

“The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts.”⁵

A. W. Tozer

“For they are not meaningless words to you but they are your life.”

Moses (Deut. 32:47)

“Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

Jesus (Matt. 4:4)

1:22 Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides for ever. 24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away: 25 But the word of the Lord endures for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.
2: 1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby: 3 If so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

4. What are the qualities that make God's Word so valuable?

*Do infants generally need to be commanded to DESIRE milk?
Do we? (Is "desire" here a suggestion or command?)*

5. What is the hardest part about consistently being in God's Word?

What practical things have helped you in the past to consistently be in God's Word?

A. Read It.

The Bible is not going to transform your life sitting on your coffee table or on your shelf. While God did give preachers and teachers to help explain God's Word (Eph. 4:11-13), you can understand the Bible through the Holy Spirit's guidance. The Bible is not some idol to just respect, it is a book to be read, meditated on, memorized, and obeyed.

Make a plan for regularly reading Scripture

B. Study: Reflect on the Passage and Ask Questions.

So much of benefit gained from the Bible comes by studying and intentionally reflecting (meditate) on what you just read.

Asking some basic questions about it can be very helpful. Some good questions are:

- What is the main point the writer is communicating in the text?
- What action do I need to take based on this passage?

This could be: **a promise to claim**

an example to follow

a duty to perform,

a sin to confess or repent of.

- What does this show me about Jesus?

C. Pray God's Word Back to Him.

Take what you read and pray it back to God. It might go something like this:

"God, this is what Your book says and I take You at Your Word. Enable me to walk in faith as You work out Your plan in me."

1 Peter 2:1-- What happens as people read, reflect, and pray over Scripture.

2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking,

“**malice**”- wickedness

“**guile**”- includes all dishonesty or exaggeration

“**hypocrisy**”- paints the picture of pretending or role-playing someone you are not

“**envy**”-carries the idea of resenting others and not being content with what the Lord has provided or entrusted to you

“**slander**” is the sin of tearing other people down.

There is no way we can rid ourselves of sin’s impurities in our own strength; God performs that sanctifying work in our lives as we gain regular nourishment from His Word and obediently put what we learn into action.

Don’t let the following be the diary of your Bible:

The Diary of a Bible

- January 15. Been resting for a week. A few nights after the first of the year, my owner opened me, but no more. Another New Year’s resolution gone wrong.
- February 3. Owner picked me up and rushed off to Sunday School.
- February 23. Cleaning day. Dusted and put back in my place.
- April 2. Busy day. Owner had to present the lesson at a society meeting. Quickly looked up a lot of references.
- May 5. Grandma’s in town. Back in Grandma’s lap. A very comfortable place.
- May 9. She let a tear fall on John 14.
- May 10. Grandma’s gone. Back in my old place again.
- May 20. Baby born. They wrote his name on one of my pages.
- July 1. Packed in suitcase. Off for a vacation.
- July 20. Still in the suitcase. Almost everything else taken out.
- July 25. Home again. Quite a journey, though I don’t see why I went.
- August 16. Dusted again and put in a prominent place. The minister is to be here for dinner.
- August 20. Owner wrote Grandma’s death in the Family Record. He left his extra pair of glasses between my pages.
- December 31. Owner just found his glasses. Wonder if he will make any resolutions about me for the new year?

6. We need to get serious about getting into God’s Word and get serious about getting closer to God’s Son

Our kidneys are supposed to purify our blood by getting rid of waste so the blood can carry the required nourishment to the body. But if your kidneys are not working, the waste in the blood poisons the rest of the body. Dialysis is a treatment that removes waste that is trying to poison the body when the body cannot remove the waste itself. Spiritually, if the impurities of sin—which we cannot remove ourselves—are not cleansed from our lives by the blood of Christ, we will cease to be healthy and growing Christians.

“The Bible is not so much a destination in and of itself; it’s more like a bridge to a better place. If you get into God’s Word without getting closer to God’s Son, there has been a massive failure.

1 Peter 2:4-8.

4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 You also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believes on Him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Principles from I Peter 2:4-8 that believers can implement into their lives that demonstrate they are serious about getting closer to Jesus

7. We live in a world, and a nation, full of people who reject and stumble over Jesus, and consequently they reject believers who choose to follow Jesus

1 Peter 2:9-10

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar (*exclusive unto Him*) people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:
10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

8. According to these verses (9-10), who are believers?

1 Peter 2:11-12

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12 Having your conversation (lifestyle) honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Be serious about how we conduct ourselves in this world because everything we do adds to or detracts from giving God glory.