



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The Discipline of Study (2Timothy 2:15)

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*Travel is hazardous! Cars rust and wear, ships collect barnacles and invasive species, and aircraft get stress fractures. People gain destructive habits and thought processes as we travel through life. Diagnostic testing reveals problems and pending failure in equipment but has limited success with people. We need more than maintenance and repair; we need to be restored! **What have you tried in an effort to get a new grip on life?***

INTRODUCTION

We practice the Spiritual Disciplines to transform our minds. This is the process of phasing out habits and thoughts which may be destructive and replacing them with those which are life-giving and enriching.¹ We transition from bondage to fears and anxieties into a new freedom. ***“You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free”*** (John 8:32). Culture is always changing, and it is a powerful force to change you. It is like a river! **How are you working to move against the current, or are you being swept along with the masses?**

BEING RENEWED

Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Study is the discipline that brings the most focus to renewing our mind. This broadens our perspective while adding depth to understanding. Study is analytical. It gives us a framework for thought and reflection. **Have you caught yourself simply reading other's thoughts, or do you make an effort to learn and reshape your own thinking?**

DISCIPLINED STUDY

2Timothy 2:15 Study to show yourself approved unto God, a worker that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Study is hard work, but it produces joy. We learn about ourselves, others, the world, and truth. Following are some tips to effective study:

1. Repetition: We make impressions in our minds every time we read or hear information. This key learning technique was taught by Moses: ***Take these commands to heart and keep them in mind, tying them as reminders on your arm and as bands on your forehead. Teach them to your children, talking about them while sitting in your house, walking on the road, or when you are about to lie down or get up. Write them upon the doorposts of your house and gates (Deuteronomy 11:18-20).*** The culture uses repetition also. It's called programming, indoctrination, or conditioning. **How do we keep from participating in lies, half-truths, or negative thinking?**

2. Concentration: Distraction is a hazard to effective study. We dissipate energy when bombarded by all the stimuli around us. Jesus taught focus: ***“Martha Martha, the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her”*** (Luke 10:40). **What do you do to shut out noise and keep focus?**

3. Comprehension: In our hurried society we study about ideas and things rather than the subject. Jesus taught that our focus should be on knowledge of the truth (John 8:32). Paul commended the Bereans for examining the Scriptures to verify what was taught (Acts 17:11). **Do you have the humility to examine what you already know, understand, and believe?**

4. Reflection: This defines the significance of what is being studied. In this we gain some understanding of God and begin to understand ourselves (Philippians 4:8). Reflection helps us to see that accumulation of information is not knowledge. **Do you tarry enough for God to give you understanding, even vision?**

A PRAYER

LORD God: Your psalmist wrote that he had greater understanding than all his teachers, even the ancients due to his study of Your Word (Psalm 119:99-100). Help me gain this shortcut to wisdom. Let me be as a tree planted near the river (Psalm 1:3). I pray in the Name of Your Son, Jesus. Amen.

¹ Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline. (Harper) 1998. p62.