

Being a Spiritually Minded Christian
Part Seven
How to Develop a Relationship with God's Word

- *As believers we have a choice: We can be naturally minded, carnally minded, or spiritually minded.*

1 Corinthians 2:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

¹⁵But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.

- *As Christians we can have a spiritual mind which is to think the thoughts of God and to see and evaluate circumstances and events from God's perspective, which is both heavenly and eternal.*
- *As Christians we can have a natural mind which sees and evaluates life only from this temporal physical earthly perspective.*
- *The natural mind sees things only from the natural perspective and either does not acknowledge the existence of a spiritual realm, or does not recognize the value or the activities of the spiritual realm.*
- *As Christians we can have a carnal mind which sees and evaluates life from a purely selfish perspective seeking to satisfy the fleeting lusts of the flesh. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be." (Romans 8:7).*
- *The three areas that enable us to develop into spiritually minded Christians are our relationship to the Word of God, Prayer, and Christian Fellowship.*
- *Of the three foundational principles that enable us to develop into spiritually minded Christians, it is the Bible that grounds us in the truth and provides a spiritual compass to ensure we do not stray from being Christ-centered.*
- *Though experience validates our faith, it is the Word of God, the Bible, that establishes our faith.*
- *There are many aspects to our relationship with the Word of God, the Bible, which are essential for us to develop into spiritually minded Christians.*
- *Previously in part 3 we established the reliability and the authority of the Bible.*
- *In part 4 we looked at the Word of God as spiritual water in terms of the laver which both cleanses and refreshes.*

- *In part 5 we looked at the Word of God in terms of the Table of Showbread—the Bread of Life.*
- *In part 6 we studied how to handle the Word of God properly.*
- *This week we are going to explore how to develop into spiritually minded Christians in relationship to the Word of God—the Bible.*
- *Through receiving God’s Word we are born again, declared righteous and thus justified, “having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.” (1 Peter 1:23).*
- *However, once we have received Christ our relationship to the Word of God doesn’t end, it’s actually just beginning.*
- **“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” (Acts 20:32).**
- *Paul noted that God’s Word builds us up, provides a blueprint for living, and promises us the full inheritance God is offering all His children if we’re sanctified. Receiving the full inheritance requires sanctification.*
- *Justification positions us to receive the inheritance, but sanctification qualifies us to receive it as we submit to God’s Word.*

Psalm 119:101 (NKJV)

¹⁰¹I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word.

- *For any healthy relationship to develop one must have a respect for the other party. It is not any less true in developing a healthy relationship with God and His Word.*
- *If we’re unfamiliar with God’s Word, we will never learn to love and cherish His Word.*
- *Unless we read God’s Word daily, we are in fact ignoring God.*

John 14:23 (NKJV)

²³Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

- *Our relationship with God’s Word not only reflects how much we value God, but it will also have a direct impact on the level of intimacy and friendship we will be able to develop and experience with Christ.*

John 10:27–28 (NKJV)

²⁷My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

²⁸And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

- *Some Christians complain, “I have never heard God’s voice.” The truth is that if true faith has sprung up in your heart and you responded to it by repenting and putting your faith in Christ, then you have heard His voice.*
- *Jesus calls both Jews and Gentiles to Himself the same way, by speaking to their hearts, “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.” (John 10:16).*
- *Jesus Christ says this about Himself, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6).*
- *If Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, how does God reveal this truth to us? Jesus answered that question with these words, “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.” (John 15:26).*

The next logical question we should ask is, “How do we ensure that what we actually believe is the truth and that it is not some subjective interpretation of people’s opinions?” The most foundational way that the Holy Spirit speaks to us is through the Word of God, the Scriptures, which is our measuring rod for all truth, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.” (John 17:17).

- *The Holy Spirit can lead and direct us through the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit. However, everything that we receive, whether by revelation or by teaching, must be tested against the Word of God. We must ensure that it is the Holy Spirit who is actually speaking and that we correctly understand what we have received. “These people were more willing to listen than the people in Thessalonica. The Bereans were eager to hear what Paul and Silas said and studied the Scriptures every day to find out if these things were true.” (Acts 17:11, NCV).*
- *One of the primary ways that God speaks to us is through His Word.*
- *Sometimes, Christians grumble, “Why doesn’t God speak to me?” The answer is simple. He wants to speak, but we need to be willing to listen by developing a relationship with the Word of God by reading the Bible daily so that we can hear Him.*
- *Sometimes we see Christians falling into error of lifestyle and it appears that God says nothing to warn them. When their lives begin to fall apart they may*

even initially plead ignorance saying, “God didn’t warn me about the bad decisions I was about to make!”

- *However, God has already given us His Word, which fully instructs us in godliness and warns us about the destructiveness of sin. Our part is to open the Bible and begin to read it and obey.*

1 Samuel 14:37 (NKJV)

³⁷So Saul asked counsel of God, “Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You deliver them into the hand of Israel?” But He did not answer him that day.

1 Samuel 28:6 (NKJV)

⁶And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets.

- *Why is it that the Lord did not answer Saul, “either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets?” Because Saul had rejected the Word of the Lord. (1 Samuel 15:23, 26). God stopped speaking to him through prophets and in dreams.*
- *This does not mean God did not want to speak to Saul, nor does it mean that God had nothing more to say to Saul. However, to hear God, Saul needed to turn to the written Word of God.*
- *Saul’s sinful decisions and disobedience continued to increase and the consequences of those decisions continued to grow—all because Saul ignored God’s Word. He continued to make worse and worse decisions. Eventually, he even consulted a witch for direction!*
- *Saul was asking the wrong questions. Saul was seeking God about how to fight the Philistines, but what he really needed to know was how to get his life right with God and back on a course of godliness.*
- *For Saul to hear from God he needed to go back to the Word of God, and read it, study it, meditate upon it, and above all obey it. Through His Word, God would speak to him about all he needed to know to change the course of his life.*
- *Before the Holy Spirit will lead us in the specific decisions we need to make in life, we need to first study His Word and hear what God wants to say to us about how He wants us to live.*

Nehemiah 13:26 (NKJV)

²⁶Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin.

- *King Solomon is an example of one who was beloved by God, but failed to heed the Word of God resulting in disastrous consequences.*

1 Kings 2:1–4 (NKJV)

¹Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying:

²“I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man.

³And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn;

⁴that the LORD may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, ‘If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,’ He said, ‘you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’

- *David’s last instructions to Solomon began with the word’s “prove yourself a man,” which could accurately be translated, “become a man.” In other words, grow and mature into a true man and prove yourself to be a godly man.*
- *King David, Solomon’s father, gave Solomon the key to becoming a godly man and to live a fruitful and victorious life, a life in which his relationship with God would flourish. “I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; that the LORD may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me.”*
- *David gave Solomon the solution for every problem and challenge he would face. Read, study, and meditate upon God’s Word. Be diligent to walk in God’s ways, keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, His testimonies, and all that is written in the Law of Moses.*
- *If Solomon had been diligent to keep the Word of God deep in his heart he would never have strayed. He would have avoided making foolish decisions, and his love for God would have continued to grow and blossom as he contemplated how wonderful, holy, just, and loving God is.*
- *The first time God appeared to Solomon in a dream, early in his reign, God expressed His love for Solomon and promised him to give him wisdom, riches, and honour like no other king in his time. God’s words ended with this exhortation: “So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.” (1 Kings 3:14).*

- *The most startling thing about Solomon's first encounter with God through a dream is that he was not confronted about his first grave error which was marrying not only a Gentile woman, but the very daughter of Pharaoh!*
- *What is even more startling is that when God appeared to Solomon a second time in a dream after he had finished building the Temple in Jerusalem, God did not directly address the things in Solomon's life that were leading him on a very destructive path.*
- *In this dream God clearly pointed out the conditional blessings He had for Solomon. Solomon's blessing was conditional on his obedience: "I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.'" (1 Kings 9:3-5).*
- *However, unlike the first dream, God clearly warned Solomon of the dire consequences if he failed to obey His Word. "But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples." (1 Kings 9:6-7).*
- *God told Solomon that if he chose not to heed His warning, God would still use Solomon and Israel as witnesses of His righteousness to the nations. However, instead of being an example of the blessing that results from obedience, they would experience the consequences of disobedience, "and as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?' Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the LORD has brought all this calamity on them.'" (1 Kings 9:8-9).*
- *At this point in Solomon's life he thought he was still doing well. He had just completed building the Temple in Jerusalem, his kingdom was prospering, and he was the envy of all the kingdoms around him. Yet, he was blind to the direction his life was taking. Despite his service, he had no viable relationship with God or with His Word.*

- *For believers, Solomon’s life serves as a warning. Just because we are being blessed at the present time does not mean everything in our hearts is right or that our lives are perfectly lined up with God’s Word. It is a sign that God loves us and is seeking to encourage us to get into His Word and hear His Holy Spirit, so we can correct those things in our lives that need to be changed. Only then can we “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18).*

- *Simple steps in developing a relationship with the Word of God:*
 - *Read the Bible*
 - *Study the Bible*
 - *Meditate on the Bible*
 - *Memorize the Bible*
 - *Speak the Word*
 - *Pray the Word*
 - *Obey the Word by applying what you have learned.*
 - *Share with others what you have learned.*

- *1. The first step in developing a relationship with the Bible is to simply begin reading God’s Word.*

- *By simply reading the Bible we will develop an overall view of the Word of God and a working knowledge of what is written and where it is located.*

- *2. The next step in developing a relationship with the Bible is meditation.*

- *This is where we just park ourselves on a specific Scripture and spending time pondering and thinking about its meaning.*

- *We can meditate on a Scripture by simply re-reading a verse over and over again and allow its truth to impact us.*

- *We can also meditate on a Scripture as we are praying and worshipping God.*

- *3. Another important way to develop our relationship with the Bible is by spending time studying it.*

- *This is where we begin to not only study the context of specific verses, but also understand how they relate to other Scriptures.*

- *Studying the Word of God is like digging deeply to mine out treasures.*

- *Sometimes when I spend time meditating or reading the Bible something will jump out at me and I will begin to study it in greater detail.*

2 Timothy 2:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

- *Studying the Word of God is “rightly dividing the word of truth” as we seek to understand “the whole counsel of God.” (Acts 20:27).*
- *Developing a doctrine around one individual verse divorced from the rest of Scripture can lead to error, which will produce either legalism or license for sin.*
- *One of the foremost hallmarks of healthy doctrine is the centrality and preeminence of Jesus Christ. “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.” (Colossians 1:16).*
- *Another key test for healthy doctrine is this: “Can you hear Jesus saying those words?”*
- *However, for us to apply this test correctly requires us to truly understand the heart of God and to know Jesus Christ intimately. We come to know Jesus better as we read, meditate, and study the Scriptures.*

Matthew 10:37 (NKJV)

³⁷He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

- *Legalism says we need to love others less.*
- *License for sin would have us love many things before God.*
- *But grace says, “You do not love God more by loving others less, you love God more by loving God more.”*

Matthew 22:37–40 (NKJV)

³⁷Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’

³⁸This is the first and great commandment.

³⁹And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

- *When we love God more it actually causes us to love others more!*
- *Two foundations of godly character are love and holiness. The Word of God says, “He who does not love does not know God, for God is love” (1 John 4:8),*

- and “but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”” (1 Peter 1:15-16).*
- *A good way to test the health of our doctrine is by gauging the development of love and holiness in our lives.*
 - *As we read, meditate and study God’s Word we can begin to understand how much He loves and cares for us. “Your thoughts toward us cannot be recounted to You in order; If I would declare and speak of them, They are more than can be numbered.” (Psalm 40:5-7).*
 - *Our response to God’s love is that we will increasingly love Him more. “We love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19).*
 - *When we study the Bible we need to do it exegetically not eisegetically.*
 - *Exegesis is derived from two Greek words “ex” meaning “out of,” and “egesis” meaning “to guide.” Thus allowing the Scriptures to guide us and speak to us.*
 - *The opposite of exegesis (to draw out) is eisegesis (to draw in), in the sense of an eisegetic commentator "importing" or "drawing in" his or her own purely subjective interpretations into the text, unsupported by the text itself. Eisegesis is often used as a derogatory term.*
 - *An exegetical study of the Bible is where we try to bring all the relevant Scriptures together and allow them to speak to us. An eisegetical method excludes those Scriptures that seem to contradict what we want to believe.*
 - *When studying the Bible it is okay to acknowledge when we still do not yet understand a certain Scripture, because “for we know in part and we prophesy in part.” (1 Corinthians 13:9). It is much better to be honest and admit we still don’t have clarity on a specific Scripture, instead of trying to force it to say something that it may not be saying.*
 - *If we don’t have clarity or revelation on a certain Scripture we need to set it aside and wait on the Lord until we get the proper understanding and revelation of it and where we can hear Jesus saying those words.*
 - *Memorizing God’s Word can take a number of forms but the result is, “Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:11).*
 - *When we have God’s Word hidden in our hearts, it is so strongly ingrained in us that the Holy Spirit can easily bring the appropriate Scriptures to our mind whenever needed.*

- *Memorization of the Word of God can happen very naturally, simply as we continue to cultivate a relationship with it through reading, studying, and meditation.*
- *Some Christians misunderstand how we are to co-labour with the Holy Spirit. They think that God will do it all and no preparation on our part is required. This is simply not true.*
- *When Jesus came into the synagogue to proclaim that He was the Messiah and to begin His public ministry, He acted very deliberately. “So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written” about Himself in the book of Isaiah.*

Matthew 13:34–35 (NKJV)

³⁴All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them,

³⁵that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: “I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.”

- *When we read about Jesus teaching in parables so that the multitude would not be able to understand it begs the question, “Why?”*
- *When Richard Dawkins a renowned evolutionary biologist and militant atheist was asked what he would do if he met God after he died, Dawkins replied by quoting Bertrand Russell another famous atheist, “Sir, why did you take such pains to hide yourself?”*
- *I think God’s reply to Richard Dawkins is obvious, “Why didn’t you seek Me when I called you!” and of course the answer is, “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” (John 3:19).*
- *The answer to the question as to why Jesus taught in parables is very clear, He simply revealed the meaning to those who truly wanted to know. “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” (Matthew 7:7–8).*

Mark 4:10–12 (NKJV)

¹⁰But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable.

¹¹And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables,

¹²so that ‘Seeing they may see and not perceive, And hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, And their sins be forgiven them.’ ”

Mark 4:33–34 (NKJV)

³³And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it.

³⁴But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

- *Jesus expounded on the meaning of all His parables when He was alone with His disciples. The disciples were the only ones who stayed behind to ask what the parables meant.*
- *Jesus never rebuked them for their questions. He always gave them the interpretation and the understanding.*
- *The disciples desired to know what the parables meant and they were willing to spend time with Jesus to hear the answers. “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.” (Matthew 13:36). When Jesus taught about His return they responded by saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?” (Mark 13:4).*

Romans 10:4–10 (NKJV)

⁴For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

⁵For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who does those things shall live by them.”

⁶But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ down from above)

⁷or, “ ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

⁸But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach):

⁹that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

- *For many years Romans 10 verses 6 and 7 were very puzzling to me.*
- *One evening in literally the blink of an eye I received some insight in Romans 10:6-7.*
- *Two lies that Romans 10 dispels:*
- *Some people aren’t broken.*
- *Some people are too broken or evil to be fixed.*
- *The two truths that Romans 10 drives home:*

- *We are all broken.*
- *We can all be fixed.*
- *Simple steps in developing a relationship with the Word of God:*
- *Read the Bible*
- *Study the Bible*
- *Meditate on the Bible*
- *Memorize the Bible*
- *Speak the Word*
- *Pray the Word*
- *Obey the Word by applying what you have learned.*
- *Share with others what you have learned.*