

# Get in the Game: A Spiritual Renewal Bible Study

## Week 1 – Get in the Word

Get in the game! In a culture fascinated by sports ... watching, playing, even talking about them ... many know the best way to experience sports is to play the game. Spectators who have played the game at one time long to have one more chance, one more opportunity, get on the field or court. Athletes who spend days, weeks, months, even years in training know that all the work, all the effort is to get into the game ... to actually play.

Playing is what it's all about when it comes to games ... whether that be athletic contests or sitting around the kitchen table playing board or card games. When we're merely spectators, we know that we're missing something. We may be missing the competitive spirit, or the comradery, or just the fun of playing. The same is true about our Christian faith. Our life with God wasn't meant to be spent on the sidelines watching other believers participate in living faith and sharing life. God didn't bring each one of us onto His team so that we could watch others play and not play ourselves.

In order to play, we need to practice. In order to practice, we need to know some fundamentals. In sports, even the professional athlete spends time at every practice working on fundamentals ... the basics to the game. In this Spiritual Renewal study, we'll spend time each week reviewing the fundamentals ... the basics ... of a life with God. In Week 1, we'll start with ...

### **Get In The Word ... Daily Bible Reading**

For Christians, reading the Bible is a basic part of our life with God. When we come to worship, our services are full of Scripture passages; whether it is in the sermon, the Bible readings for the week, or the music we sing. Yet, one day immersed in the Word doesn't get us into the game. Consider these facts about the Bible from George Barna's book, *Data and Trends*.

- 91% of all US households owns at least one Bible
- The typical American household owns three Bibles
- Outside of worship attendance, 38% of Americans read the Bible during a typical week

- Of those who read the Bible, the average time spent reading for an entire week is 52 minutes ... less than 10 minutes per day.

Many of us read those statistics and either experienced a twinge of guilt or a swell of pride, but that's not the point. The point is this: If we're going to get in the game we need to learn from the Master. Scripture is a means of grace – a place where God brings into our lives the gifts of forgiveness, love, and grace. In short, reading God's Word is a place where we are guaranteed to encounter our Lord; and daily Bible reading is an important fundamental for getting in the game.

1. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Why is the Bible a basic fundamental for getting into the game as a disciple of Jesus?
2. How do we know that the Bible will teach us correctly what we need to know about Jesus according to John 20:30-31?
3. The longest chapter of the Bible is Psalm 119. In this psalm the psalmist espouses on the wonders of God's Word. Read Psalm 119:9-16. What is being said here about the value of the Word?

### **Learning Some Fundamentals**

Its one thing to look up Bible passages which tell us how important it is to be in the Word, and it's another to learn some skills to help us get in the game. Here are some options:

- Get a Bible app on your phone (YouVersion, Olive Tree, and Bible Gateway are good options)
- Start reading the Gospel according to John (reading plan below)
- If you're reading a Bible passage and don't understand it, take your question to Pastor or another believer you trust
- Write down questions or thoughts provoked from what you've read. As you read, pray "Please, Lord, help me understand what I'm reading today."
- Dedicate a specific part of your day (first thing in the morning, during lunch, right before bed) for your daily Bible reading

4. What are you currently doing to grow in this area? Are you doing anything not listed above? If so, what?

### **Daily Practice**

To get better at their game, athletes take part of their day to practice the fundamentals of their sport. To get in the game of a disciple, here are some ways to practice:

- Read or listen to a chapter of the Old or New Testament every day
- Pick a verse you've read ... memorize it and reflect on it through journaling (example below)
- Choose a Bible reading plan from your Bible app
- Identify verses that are important to you from your reading. Highlight them and note why the verse was meaningful.

5. What are you currently doing to grow in this area? Are you doing anything not listed above? If so, what?

### **Make it a Heart Habit**

Being consistent with the fundamentals makes any activity a Heart Habit. As you dive into the Bible consider the following questions:

- What is the Lord teaching in my Bible reading?
- What can I take from this Bible reading and apply to my life?
- What did I read which was encouraging or helpful for my faith life?
- What did I read that challenged me to grow in my life with God or confronted a sinful behavior?

## **A Bible Reading Plan ... Gospel according to John**

Day 1 – John 1:1-34  
Day 2 – John 1:35-51  
Day 3 – John 2  
Day 4 – John 3  
Day 5 – John 4  
Day 6 – John 5:1-18  
Day 7 – John 5:19-47  
Day 8 – John 6  
Day 9 – John 7:1-52  
Day 10 – John 7:53-8:59  
Day 11 – John 9  
Day 12 – John 10  
Day 13 – John 11  
Day 14 – John 12:1-11  
Day 15 – John 12:12-50  
Day 16 – John 13  
Day 17 – John 14  
Day 18 – John 15  
Day 19 – John 16  
Day 20 – John 17  
Day 21 – John 18:1-27  
Day 22 – John 18:28-40  
Day 23 – John 19:1-30  
Day 24 – John 19:31-42  
Day 25 – John 20  
Day 26 – John 21

## **Daily Practice – Getting into the Word ... A Journaling Exercise**

One way to gain insight into the Bible is to journal ... to write down your thoughts of what God is saying in a passage. Take time to practice below. Read Romans 10:17. After reading the verse, write below what thoughts about life with God the verse prompted. You may want to look at the entire context of Romans 10 to help.

- What is God saying?
- How does this apply to my life?
- Why is this important in my life with God?