

# Reclaiming the Scriptures: Becoming Self-Feeders

John 6:25-71

Ben Deaver at New Hope Church on February 8, 2015

## Announcements:

- Austin and Jenni and their family is sick unfortunately. ☹️
- Check out our wotys word cloud. The larger the word, the more NHers chose that word. I see some interesting words up there, like “mojo.” Thanks Faith Bomar, great word!

## Why *Reclaiming Spiritual Disciplines*?

ILLUS: Second Life Studios

- Old barn is a beautiful thing of the past but is now dangerous and not functional.
- The reclaimed wood is now both beautiful and functional.

**SERMON SERIES BIG IDEA:** Let’s reclaim Gospel-powered spiritual disciplines for the sake of godliness (i.e. good works to the glory of God and for the good of His people).

- Duty is often necessary to move towards desire.
- There are no limit to how many spiritual disciplines there are. If it is training you to have the fruit of the Spirit, then it’s a spiritual discipline.
- The desire is true freedom, living as we were designed to live, not doing whatever we want.
- The Biblical picture we have of discipline is that of a good, loving father with his son. These disciplines are relational in nature.
- We should be zealous for good works.

Next week we’ll hear from Dave Geldart on *Reclaiming Prayer*.

Our featured resource for this series is *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald Whitney. It was written in 1991 and a new edition just came out last year.

## I love to eat!

Anyone who knows me knows this to be true. For a fallen world there are some pretty delectable items to be eaten.

- Green Tea Sushi—maki special, three rolls—spicy crab, crunchy shrimp, sweet potato roll, a little Wasabi in the Soy Sauce, with Yum-Yum sauce, Sriracha sauce, that ginger dressing on the crisp salad, miso soup.
- Y’all ever had that Spicy Szechuan Beef and Noodle Soup from Imperial Garden Express?
- Bruschetta from Harry’s?

What am I missing? What do I need to try around here?

Listen, one of the best things my mom taught me was to feed myself. Thanks, Mom! I've even learned to cook a little over the years.

The goal of parenting is to produce adults who can feed themselves. When an adult can feed themselves it's a beautiful thing. When they can't, not so beautiful. We're helping Maddox become a self-feeder right now.

- We still have to cut the food up for him.
- I remember when Maddox was putting his little macaronis in his straw. They were pushed all the way to the bottom and were pooling up in a nice, little pile. Very cute...for a one-year-old. For a 21-year-old, not so cute.

**1 Corinthians 1:1-3a** <sup>1</sup>But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, <sup>3</sup>for you are still of the flesh.

- Mature believers are the ones who can feast on the Word of God and enjoy relationship with Jesus for the sake of the relationship and not what Jesus can give you.

This morning we're going to talk about *Reclaiming the Scriptures: Becoming Self-Feeders*.

## PRAY

### John 6:25-71

**vv. 25-28** "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?"

- Religion = Doing things to get what you want from a higher power.
- Name it and claim it teaching along with health, wealth, prosperity theology are not after relationship with God but are after the things that God can give us. He is the giver of good gifts but the best gift He has given is relationship with Himself.

**v. 29** "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

- God is interested in relationship.

**vv. 30-31**

- These are some immature folks. Like a baby who only wants milk from its mother. Give us some more bread...
- What's up with this manna?

### Exodus 16

- The people of Israel are in the wilderness whining, "We would have rather died in Egypt where our bellies were full than wander out here in the wilderness and be hungry."
- God says to Moses, "Look, I'm going to rain bread from heaven for these hungry and whiny people."

**Read Exodus 16:14-18**

- "What is it?" Could also be "It is manna." Manna means "What is it?" They don't know what it is.
  - They don't have a category for this manna.
- "Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat." Gather manna for yourself.

- There's a community aspect going on here. There was no lack as long as each person was gathering what they were able to gather.
- **Luke 11:3** "Give us each day our daily bread..."
- Taste and see. **Psalm 34:8a** "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!"
  - God tells His people to taste the manna before they fully understand what it is. Taste and see that God is good.
- They are to be self-feeders in the context of their community.
- They were instructed to keep a jar of manna before the LORD to be kept throughout the generations as a reminder of God's provision.
- They ate manna for 40 years until they reached the Promised Land.
- The provision of manna for the people of God is firmly rooted in their collective memory.
- Moses gives us more commentary on the significance of this manna in the book of Deuteronomy.

## Deuteronomy 8

### Gospel Circles

**Gospel** = God has done for us what we could not do for yourself. I.e. Jesus died for my sins.

- **Deut 8:11, 14b** <sup>11</sup>Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today... <sup>14</sup>...then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, ***who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery...***

### Gospel Truths

#### **Read Deuteronomy 8:1-5**

- God has given the 10 commandments (v. 1)
- God has promised land to them (v. 1)
- God has led them these 40 years (v. 2)
- God has humbled and tested them to do them good (v. 2, 16)
- God kept their clothes intact and their feet from swelling (v. 4)
- God disciplines them as a father disciplines his son (v. 5)
- ***God let them hunger and fed them with manna so they would know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD (v. 3)***
  - God spoke the world into existence with His Word.
  - God freed Israel with His Word. "Let my people go..."

### Gospel Conduct

- Do the commandments of God (v. 1)
- Remember God's provision (v. 2)
  - The Scriptures are essentially a bunch of books recounting God's provision for relationship with Him.

### Back to John 6...

#### **vv. 32-35, 40**

- Again, God the Father is interested in relationship, an eternal relationship with those He has created.

#### **vv. 41-42**

- "Who is this man, Jesus? We don't have a category to put him into. What is it?"
- Taste and see. **Psalm 34:8a** "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!"

- God tells His people to taste the manna before they fully understand what it is. Taste and see that God is good.

#### v. 43

- Notice any similarities to the Israelites in the wilderness?

#### vv. 47-51

- “I will give my body to be broken for the world.”

#### v. 52 “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

- This is a very disruptive thought. We are to eat Jesus? What does that mean?
- Jesus reiterates Himself.

#### vv. 53-58

- <sup>27a</sup> “Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.”
- <sup>29</sup> “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”

#### vv. 60-61

#### vv. 66-66

- Jesus has just spread a meal for the disciples and most who have been following Jesus to this point leave it on the table. Their loss. Why would you ever leave that good food?
- Don’t leave food on the table, y’all! Don’t let it go to waste.
- If you go out to eat with me one of the first things I try to make clear at the beginning is that we don’t want the wait staff to pick up plates with a bunch of good food on it. I’ve gotten better about not doing this recently, I think.

#### vv. 67-69

## The Words of Eternal Life

As the Jews consumed the manna for physical sustenance so we must consume the Word of God for spiritual sustenance.

- **John 5:39-40** <sup>39</sup>You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, <sup>40</sup>yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.
- **John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- **John 1:14, 16-18** <sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>16</sup>For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.
- **Hebrews 1:1-2** <sup>1</sup>Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.
  - Compare and contrast the Islamic paradigm to the Biblical paradigm.
    - In Islam God gives His Word so that we can please Him.
    - The Biblical view is that God Himself steps into history as the Word so that we can know Him.
- **Luke 24:27, 44-45** <sup>27</sup>And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself... <sup>44</sup>Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to

you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”<sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures...

- **2 Timothy 2:15** Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.
- Graeme Goldsworthy quote in *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics* (p. 252)
  - Thus the prime question to put to every text is about how it testifies to Jesus. Only then can we ask how it makes real his rule over us, and makes real his presence with us so that we are conformed more and more to his image.

We find the words of eternal life in the written Word of God (i.e. the Scriptures). The only place where you will find the words of salvation are in the Scriptures. This is what makes Christian community unique. We speak to one another things that belong to salvation. See **Hebrews 6:9**.

- **Psalms 81:10** I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.
- **Matthew 11:28-30** <sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.
- **Hebrews 13:5b** “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Like sushi, the Word of God is an acquired taste. That’s why it takes discipline to engage with it well. You may need to lean on the crutch of duty before you delight in the Word of God.

## Consuming the Written Word

- Jewish Discipline—**Deuteronomy 6:8** You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.
- From Mike Bullmore’s workshop at the Xenos Summer Institute 2010 called *Feeding on God: Cultivating a Fruitful Life in the Word*. Listen online at <http://www.xenos.org/teachings/?teaching=1772>

### 1. Pray

### 2. Plan—Do your plan.

### 3. Pray

#### Step One – Pray.

Briefly pray for God’s help as you read His Word. Humbly acknowledge your need for this help. **Ask God to feed you with His Word.** This small act of humility will position you for God’s grace. Remember, “*God opposes the proud, but he gives grace to the humble.*”

Some sample prayers:

- God, I don’t have wisdom. Wisdom is in your Word. Please grant wisdom. Amen. (James 1:5)
- God, as I read your Word, would you please make yourself known to me. Amen.
- God, please show me Jesus in Your Word and make me more like Him. Amen.
- God, show me the Gospel in Your Word. Help me live out of the Gospel more fully. Amen.

#### Step Two – Do your plan. Eat the meal.

In an unhurried way, read through a pre-selected portion of Scripture. What you are seeking for is **prayerful meditation** on God’s Word. You are seeking to let God feed you with His Word.

- Some Time
  - When will you engage with the Scriptures?
  - “A verse a day keeps the Devil away” isn’t going to cut it.
  - What’s the next step for you? 5 minutes? 15 minutes? An hour?
  - Seek for consistency of time and place. There’s a benefit of habit.
- A Plan
  - What’s your plan?
  - Examples of bad plans:
    - Luckydipping isn’t a good approach. You wouldn’t read a recipe this way, would you?
      - “...he departed, and he went and hanged himself.” Matthew 27:5 “...You go, and do likewise.” Luke 10:37 “...Make haste...” Acts 22:18
    - Taking passages out of context isn’t helpful.
      - **Philippians 4:13a** “I can do all things...”
  - Things tend to go better for me when I have a plan.
    - My plan recently has been whatever our sermon series has been.
    - I’ve also been chewing on a few big questions that are floating around in my mind.
    - I also have my neglected Bible reading plan.

### The Hand Illustration (From the Navigators)

Any of these can happen in the context of community as well as individually.

1. Hear—Rom 10:17; Jer 3:15; Neh 8:1-18
  - a. ***This just a sample. Like getting samples at Costco. It’s good, but I want more!***
2. Read—Rev 1:3; Deut 17:18-20
  - a. You need a decent translation.
  - b. Use technology in your favor.
    - i. YouVersion.com
  - c. Reading plans are helpful as servants but terrible as masters.
    - i. Stay in the passage that you’re meeting God in.
  - d. ***This is just the hors-d’oeuvre. Great stuff, but I want more!***
3. Study—Acts 17:11; 2 Tim 2:15; Ezra 7:9-10
  - a. Take notes. Revisit your notes.
  - b. Use technology in your favor.
    - i. BibleGateway.com
    - ii. Evernote
    - iii. MySword
    - iv. Olive Tree
  - c. Double-spaced, hand-written
  - d. Load your phone up with good sermons from gifted speakers.
  - e. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart
  - f. The Greenhouse is full of great resources! Let us help you use them.
    - i. Word Studies
    - ii. Commentaries
  - g. ***This is the entrée. Now we’re starting to feast!***
4. Memorize—Ps 119:11; Prov 7:1-3
  - a. You will get the most bang for your buck with this discipline, rivaled perhaps by the discipline of fasting. Notice that both are difficult.

- b. In the past I've memorized the whole Navs Topical Memory System, Romans 8, all of Philipians. I was the kid who got the t-shirt at L-Bar-C summer camp for memorizing all of the Bible verses. I worked hard at it. I was the college kid who would work through my verses on the way to class in the morning. My packet of verses was washed in the washing machine once. That was tough.
    - i. Review is so difficult, friends!
  - c. I love how KidsLIFE is leading the charge in our church with Scripture memory!
  - d. ***This is the doggy bag, although it's not for the dog. Now we can feast whenever we want to!***
5. Meditate—Psalm 1; Josh 1:8
- a. Blessed is the man who delights in the law of the Lord, who meditates on God's Word day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water!
  - b. John Piper paraphrased quote: Place a passage of Scripture like a lozenge and placing it on your tongue of your heart and letting the juices drip down to the depths of your soul.
  - c. Learn to linger. Quote on pp. 32-33 in *Reclaiming Friendship: Relating to Each Other in a Frenzied World* by Ajith Fernando
  - d. ***This is continuing to taste the meal throughout the day. You know, when you don't want to brush your teeth. You're just engaging with the food throughout the day.***
6. Apply—James 1:22-25; Luke 6:46-49
- a. ***You now have energy to do your work.***

### Step Three – Pray.

Let your meditation on Scripture lead you into a time of more intercessory prayer according to your own life situation, needs and responsibilities.

Let's become mature, self-feeders of the Word of God for the sake of godliness. That is, to know Jesus and to become more like Him. That is, to do good works to the glory of God and for the good of people.

- **Psalm 131:2** But I have calmed and quieted my soul,  
like a weaned child with its mother;  
like a weaned child is my soul within me.

### Reflection/Diagnostic Questions:

- What's the next right step for you to reclaim the Scriptures?
- What's worked well for you?

What would happen if..." Vision for New Hope:

## Bring up ushers and PRAY.

## Good stuff on the chopping block:

### Why *Reclaiming the Scriptures*?

- The kings of Israel
  - **Deut 17:18-20** <sup>18</sup>“And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. <sup>19</sup>And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, <sup>20</sup>that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.
  - Josiah discovers the Book of the Law in **2 Kings 22**.
- The prophets of Israel
  - **Jeremiah 36**
  - **Amos 8:11** “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord GOD, “when I will send a famine on the land— not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.”
  - **Malachi 4:4a, 5a** Around 460 B.C. the prophet Malachi speaks on God’s behalf, <sup>4</sup>“Remember the law of my servant Moses... <sup>5</sup>Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet...”
- The dark ages
- The inundation of information in our own day

## The Written Word

### What do I mean by the Scriptures?

- Canon = 66 books—39 in OT, 27 in NT
- They were written over 1400 years by various authors in various genres all under the influence of the Spirit of God.
- The Bible is a unique book in that it is the only book that verifies itself through the fulfillment of specific, predictive prophecy. That’s how God proves that it’s true.
- Convictions about the nature of the Scriptures
  - God-breathed – See **2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21**
  - Useful
  - Understandable – God intended His truth to be understandable to everyone. It’s often said, “The Bible is shallow enough for babies to wade in, but deep enough for elephants to drown in.”
  - Effective – See **Isaiah 55:10-11; Hebrews 4:12**. God’s Word will not return void. When God speaks, it works. Think of creation. Think of Him sending His Son. Etc.
  - Sufficient but not exhaustive
    - The written Word will not answer all of life’s questions.
    - For example, the Bible doesn’t tell you exactly how to do the spiritual disciplines or exactly how to do church. The Bible doesn’t explain the origin of evil.

### Step One – Pray.

Briefly pray for God’s help as you read His Word. Humbly acknowledge your need for this help. **Ask God to feed you with His Word.** This small act of humility will position you for God’s grace. Remember, *“God opposes the proud, but he gives grace to the humble.”*

### More sample prayers before getting into the Word:

- God, as I come to your Word, would you please form your mind and your heart in me. I want to think about things the way you think about things. I want to feel about things the way you feel about things.

And I want to respond to things the way you would have me respond to things. So God, I ask for your help now through your Word. Amen.

- God, as I read your Word, please “open my eyes, that I may see wonderful things out of your law.” (Ps. 119:18)
- God, my heart is not inclined to your Word this morning. Oh, God please “incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain.” (Ps. 119:36)
- “Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.” (Ps. 25:4-5)
- God, “please show me now your ways, that I may know you.” (Ex. 33:13)
- “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me, and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” (Ps. 139:23-24)
- Oh Father, would you out of the riches of your glory strengthen me with power by your Spirit in my inner man so that, as I read your Word, Christ might dwell in my heart by faith and I might be rooted and grounded in his love, and, in fact, know His love for me today. (cf. Eph. 3:16-19)
- Oh God, “satisfy me again this morning with your steadfast love, that I may rejoice and be glad all day long.” (Ps. 90:14)

#### Unity of Allah Illustration

#### Re: Duty:

- Use duty when necessary. Marriage analogy.
- “I was only doing my duty.” This sentence has positive connotations.

“Discipline without direction is drudgery.” – *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald Whitney

“Direction without discipline is drudgery.” This should be the quote for my generation and younger.

We want to do great things for God, and rightfully so. But we won’t get there without spiritual disciplines.

#### Tools:

- Good Translation(s) – **Refer to the Translation Scale (Appendix 6).**
  - BibleGateway.com
  - YouVersion.com – a free Bible on your phone, tablet, and computer
  - MySword.info – a free offline Bible study tool for Android
  - Bible.is – dramatic reading of the Bible
  - BlueLetterBible.org
  - ???
- Bible Reading Plan
  - Refer to the websites above
  - Discipleship Journal Bible Reading Plan
  - M’Cheyne Bible Reading Plan
- Concordance
- **Refer to Recommended Resources (Appendix 14)**
  - Good Books
  - Teachings
- Reference Books – **Refer to *Building a Personal Library* (Miscellaneous)**
  - Bible Dictionary
  - Maps and Other Resources
  - Greek Word Study
  - Biblical Theology Book
  - Commentary