



OUTSIDE READING ASSIGNMENT

APPOINTMENT WITH GOD

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Preface

The most exciting and dynamic relationship you will ever experience is available to you as you get to know Jesus Christ. This relationship, however, will not mature naturally. It requires careful attention and energy and cannot be accomplished without a plan.

The men who have most fully illustrated Christ in their character, and have most powerfully affected the world for Him have been men who spend so much time with God as to make it a notable feature in their lives...to be little with God is to be little for God.

E. M. Bounds

Regardless of the name you prefer—daily devotions, morning watch, quiet time, daily appointment with God, or any other—this time serves as a method in building a vital relationship with Jesus Christ.

A person's relationship with God is established when he accepts Jesus Christ as his Saviour and becomes a child of God. Then it becomes the responsibility of each individual Christian to actively cultivate a growing relationship with God. *Appointment With God* explains this relationship, provides you with the tools necessary to develop your own plan for a maturing relationship with Jesus Christ and helps you put this plan into action.

Note: All verses in Appointment With God are from Revised Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

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God the Initiator

In keeping with His character as Creator of the universe, God throughout history has been the One to initiate the relationship between man and Himself.

God created man in His own image so that they might fellowship together. More specifically, every man is designed to have both the potential and the need for a personal relationship with God. Sin is man's declaration of independence from God, and, thus, man needs to have his relationship restored.

And again, it was God who initiated the plan to bring man into an eternal relationship with Him in the Person of Jesus Christ. "But God shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). The Cross re-established the potential for this relationship which was once broken by sin.

Just as God sought out Adam after Adam's sin, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9), He is still seeking men today, "Where are you?" What was true then is true today; God, who restored at free cost the potential for being part of His family, loves you and desires a personal relationship with you. This relationship begins when you accept God's solution to your sin problem by inviting Jesus Christ into your life.

God is seeking you. He wants personal fellowship with you rather than a ritual you might perform.

Why you do something is more important to God than what you do. "And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, yet not with a blameless heart" (2 Chronicles 25:2). Man is interested in how people appear externally while God is interested in attitudes of the heart. "...Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

If a man does the right things for the wrong reasons, he may soon begin to do the wrong thing. The process, as well as the end product, is important to God because it is the process that builds and reveals attitudes. Regardless of how successful a physician may have been in diagnosing illnesses in the past, who would go to him for help if he revealed all his conclusions were based on luck rather than on analysis? The process, therefore, is as important as the product. To begin to develop a relationship with God for any reason other than love and your desire to know Him would be futile. Even love was initiated by God.

In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the expiation for our sins.

1 John 4:10

For no other reason except that He loves men, He has said, "For the Lord's portion is His people..." He wants you!

A Relationship with a Purpose

Every man and woman has a desire to grow into his full potential as a person. Just as Jesus developed in every area, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52), so you should grow and develop mentally, physically, spiritually and socially. But your growth into spiritual maturity only begins to develop as you establish a close personal relationship with your Lord through God’s written word.

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby...

1 Peter 2:2 (KJV)

Just as each person has certain apparent aptitudes and abilities, God has provided each individual with a certain set of spiritual gifts. “As each has received a gift, employ it for one another...” (1 Peter 4:10). These gifts are developed through a personal relationship with Christ and the outworking of that relationship. God had a purpose in mind when He designed you with your specific set of gifts. When you function in the purpose for which you were designed, you are fulfilled in every way. Freedom and order, not slavery and chaos, are God’s eternal purpose.

There are those who neglect their relationship with God. The result is spiritual immaturity. God designed you with strengths in some areas, but He also fashioned you with weaknesses in others. A neglected relationship allows your weaknesses to begin to control you while your strengths dwindle in effectiveness. And yet, God is sufficient in every area of your life in the Person of Jesus Christ.

For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness of life in Him, who is the Head of all rule and authority.

Colossians 2:9,10

But unless you develop a close relationship with Him, you will never experience His sufficiency.

Sin pollutes your relationship to God just as man pollutes the environment. In man’s haste to get what he wants out of nature, he unthinkingly upsets its balance and is now well on the way to destroying it completely. Once he realizes his error, however, it is not possible to immediately restore its delicate balance. In the same way, once you realize that you have neglected your relationship with God, it takes time and concentrated effort to build a mature relationship with Him. Even though confession immediately restores fellowship (1 John 1:9), a quality relationship with God, like nature’s delicate balance, takes time to be restored.

Without the development of a maturing relationship with Christ, you will be out of step with the world around you. It is impossible to relate properly to other people or to accept yourself without this relationship; you are controlled by your circumstances and unable to measure up to your own standards. A neglected relationship with Christ is not a pretty picture.

In contrast, you can relate properly to other people when you are continually learning more about God and His values; you can accept yourself because you know God accepts you according to His Word; you can have victory over circumstances because you know God is in control and He loves you; and He gives you the strength to live as He desires. You can experience the sufficiency of Christ as you begin to make Him the center of your life. You will find guidance for your life in the never changing Word of God, “All Scripture is inspired by God...that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16,17). This relationship

is continually refreshed through prayer and meditation. Your relationships with other people become more meaningful as you engage in Christian fellowship. A natural outgrowth of a personal relationship with Christ is sharing Him with others. The purpose of developing a relationship with Christ is to know Him and to become a channel of His love to the world.

A Biblical example of a man who desires to know God is found in Psalm 1, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers” (Psalm 1:1-3). A key to a successful relationship is realizing that knowing God is different from knowing about Him!

Essentials of Relating

Just as there are essentials that cannot be overlooked in erecting any structure, there are essentials you cannot afford to neglect in building a relationship. These essentials are the foundation of successful building. A visible example today of that relationship is found in the few truly successful marriages. The fifth chapter of Ephesians characterizes the husband-wife relationship as one permeated with love, submission and order. This relationship between a husband and his wife communicates visibly to the world the kind of relationship you can have with Christ. Unfortunately, in many marriages, the essentials of building a good relationship are not employed by husbands and wives. The consequences are obvious.

There are at least five essentials in building a good relationship: (1) time, (2) communication, (3) circumstances, (4) attitudes and (5) objectives.

Time—Any type of growth requires time. Obviously, if you are going to get to know someone, it is necessary to spend time together. Your emotions, as well as your intellect, are involved in the development of a meaningful relationship. Every relationship needs time to mature and develop, but time with Jesus is often neglected. The key is coming to a point of empathy with Jesus Christ by getting to know how He thinks. Everyone needs to develop the understanding and appreciation for Him that He already has for them.

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Communication—The transmission of thoughts from one person to another is necessary to build a relationship. No matter how close you grow to a person, you will never get to know each other without talking, since talking is the primary means of transferring thoughts. You must develop a listening ear. Listening is the key to understanding. It is helpful to listen to what a person can, can't and won't say. You cannot understand someone without listening to him talk, nor will you ever feel understood until you feel you have been heard. God speaks to you through His Word and His indwelling Holy Spirit, and you have the privilege of communicating to Him in prayer. Remember that God is interested in all aspects of your life, even the little things.

True communication not only involves transmitting words, it also involves transmitting feelings. In many marriages, communication is limited to exchanges of information without feeling. When this happens, understanding is soon lost. There should not be long periods of silence in which barriers develop. Both parties must participate in an exchange of ideas; one party alone is not sufficient.

Circumstances—You grow to know someone as you observe him in a variety of circumstances. There needs to be variety in the time spent getting to know someone. In order to get inside someone's mind, you must observe his reactions in different situations. Learning how someone thinks is not an easy task. It usually takes difficult times together as well as enjoyable ones. The disciples got to know Jesus in a variety of situations.

You grow to know someone as you observe them in a variety of circumstances.



In any relationship your attitude is important because it determines your approach to any given circumstance.



All too often people begin with no objective, no direction.

When they arrive at the familiar place, "Nowhere," they wonder why.



...it is specified that the Twelve are appointed in the first place 'That they might be with Him' (Mark 3:14). For close to three years these men experienced, not the limited contact of the classroom or the pulpit, but full contact in every phase of life.

Dr. W. Maxfield Garrett

In any relationship, you share life itself. Your life cannot be separated from the variety of circumstances in which it occurs and still have meaning.

Attitudes—In any relationship, your attitude is important because it determines your approach to any given circumstance. If you feel a project is unworthy of your time, no matter how much time you devote to that particular task, it will never receive your best. Your relationship with God deserves your best—Jesus is God's best and He is waiting for fellowship and communion with you: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock..." (Revelation 3:20). In any relationship with other people, attitudes of mutual respect are built on knowledge about each other. This log of knowledge must not only contain likes and dislikes, but failures, successes and aspirations as well. In establishing a relationship, the proper attitude is foundational for the growth of the relationship.

Objectives—All too often, people begin without direction. When you arrive at the familiar place called "nowhere," do you wonder why? Your objective wasn't clearly defined; therefore, it was never attained. The building of relationships should be related to your life goal. What is a legitimate life goal? Jesus said, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 6:38). By developing a close relationship with Christ, your life can begin to take on divine purpose as He reveals His will for you. Only when your objective is to fulfill His purpose, will your relationship with Him become vital.

Time, communication, circumstances, attitudes and objectives are five foundational essentials in building any good relationship. They are basic to your accomplishment of the too often neglected task of developing a relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Method

Principles without methods to apply them result in hollow idealism. It is important, therefore, to devise methods to put into practice the essentials you have discovered about developing a relationship. Creative methods built on a foundation of essentials will result in a continually vital relationship with the Saviour.

It is important to understand from the beginning the difference between essentials and methods. Without the essentials, your relationship with Jesus will become anemic. Methods, however, are not universal. Feel free to vary, change, combine, or even create new methods at any time. If you marry yourself to one method or become closed except to a select few, the result may be a dry relationship strangled by legalism. It is not difficult to fall into the trap of performing a method, rather than getting to know the Person of Christ. Many people have spent time reading their Bibles and praying without developing a vital relationship with Christ.

In order to approach any task properly, you must first make a decision. Ask yourself if you actually desire a relationship with Christ. After making your decision, commit yourself to the job of working at developing a relationship with your Lord. You might also make your commitment known to a friend who will be faithful to encourage you.

Every person has been entrusted with 168 hours each week. Part of that time should be set aside for time with God. In fact, why not an appointment with God daily?

It is important to have a time and place for your appointment planned before you actually meet with God. The place should be quiet and private, away from as much disturbance as possible—when you are at your best.

David decided, “O Lord, in the morning Thou dost hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for Thee, and watch” (Psalm 5:3). Again in Psalm 143:8, David refers to his daily appointment with God, “Let me hear in the morning of Thy steadfast love, for in Thee I put my trust. Teach me the way I should go, for to Thee I lift up my soul.”

You may find that morning is best for you because it enables you to dedicate your life that day to the discipline of walking with Christ.

Whatever time you choose, you need to be alert and consistent.

Now that you have determined the time and place for your appointment with God, explore how you might spend this time with Him in worship, prayer, His Word, meditation and application.

WORSHIP

— involves recognizing and acknowledging who God is and what He has done. A rewarding way of doing this is to read all or any part of Psalms 145 to 150 aloud. In prayer, it is possible to express your own personal recognition of the attributes of God. This is accomplished by word and attitude.

PRAYER

— is the method by which you communicate with God. “With confidence draw near to the throne of grace” (Hebrews 4:16).

Prayer is spiritual work; and human nature does not like taxing, spiritual work. Human nature wants to sail to heaven under a favoring breeze, a full, smooth sea. Prayer is humbling work. It abases intellect and pride, crucifies vain-glory, and signs our spiritual bankruptcy, and all these are hard for flesh and blood to bear. It is easier not to pray than to bear them. So we come to one of the crying evils of these times, maybe of all times—little or no praying.... Little praying is a kind of make-believe, a salve for the conscience, a farce and a delusion.

E. M. Bounds

There are different approaches to prayer. The following are four approaches to prayer which form the acronym:

ACTS

- **A**doration is a selfless kind of prayer because it is primarily for God. There is something, however, in it for you—it establishes your relationship as you tell the Lord that you love Him. Reflect on His greatness, His power, His majesty and His sovereignty!
- **C**onfession is making sure every known sin is acknowledged to God and forsaken. Confession comes from a root word meaning “to agree together with.” Apply this to prayer and agree with God about sin in your life using 1 John 1:9. Call sin what God calls it—sin. “If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened” (Psalm 66:18).

- **Thanksgiving** is expressing your appreciation to God. Thank God for several of the specific things He has done for you personally.
- **Supplication** is asking for things, earnestly and humbly. Ask for others...then for yourself.

This is the part of your prayer life where you make your petitions known to God. Why not include your family, friends, even other people from around the world—missionaries and the nationals of many lands who have yet to hear about Jesus Christ. You might want to develop your own prayer list. Make your prayer specific—praying specifically requires faith, but then you can see the results.

GOD'S WORD

—the Bible, is His written revelation to man. Your greatest need is to hear some Word from God—allow the Word to strike fire within your heart. Don't race. This is Bible reading for the pure joy of reading and allowing God to speak to you personally. Feel free to stop reading and meditate if you feel God is speaking to you.

MEDITATION

—is the process by which you appropriate the very life of the Lord Jesus into your spiritual bloodstream. Meditation involves pondering and reviewing various thoughts by mulling them over in your mind and heart. It is the processing of mental food. You might call it “thought digestion”—“chewing” upon a thought deliberately and thoroughly, providing a vital link between theory and action.

Meditation is also analysis. It is the art of taking a good, long look at a given object as the craftsman does his dazzling jewel...polishing the diamond to reflect all its light and beauty. Meditation on a portion of the Holy Bible is like gazing at a prism of many facets, turning the stone from angle to angle in the bright sunlight. Steady and constant reflection reveals unlimited beauties from the Scriptures which otherwise may not be seen. “Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law” (Psalm 119:18). A practical way to facilitate meditation throughout the day is to memorize God's Word.

Beware of getting alone with your own thoughts. There is danger in rummaging through waste and barren desert—thoughts that can be labeled daydreaming or worse. There is always danger in meditating on your problems. Get alone with God's thoughts. Don't meditate on yourself but dwell on Him. Seek God in your inner thought life. Develop the habit of reflection upon the Word of God and therein find the answers to your problems. “My soul is feasted as with marrow and fat, and my mouth praises Thee with joyful lips, when I think of Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the watches of the night” (Psalms 63:5,6).

The importance of meditation is seen by the commands and promises of Joshua 1:8, “This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success.”

Without meditation, it is impossible to develop a healthy relationship with the Lord. Perhaps you will want to develop your own technique. THE PLAN introduces several ways of approaching the art of meditation.

APPLICATION

—is putting the new truth God has revealed to you into practice. The visible result of appointments with God is the changed life. Unless your life changes, further development of

your relationship stops. This was the problem Jesus had with the Pharisees of His day. They knew the facts and were experts in doctrine. They were conscientious, possibly sincere and dedicated men. But the Lord called them sons of Satan, "...You are of your father the devil...". Why this stinging indictment? Because in spite of all their study of the Old Testament, their lives didn't change. There was no heart application. There were many who still oppressed the poor, defrauded widows and pursued doubtful business practices (Matthew 23).

Beware of meditation that ends in pious words only. True meditation ends in moral action. A changed attitude toward God and your fellow man is the result. A changed work habit. A changed relationship to your family. In short—a changed life! Anything less is not enough. "Oh, How I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97).

Your appointment with God may not be the highlight of your day—but it should be the renewing of a vital relationship with Him that lasts throughout the day. God will probably speak to you at other times in addition to your appointment with Him. Therefore, it is important to be available to Him throughout the day and experience Him in all your activities. Do not become devoted to the habit of a daily appointment, but to the Person of Christ.

The Plan

Begin now to develop the habit of having a daily appointment with God—not because others are doing it—not as a spiritless duty every morning—nor merely as an end in itself—but as a means to begin developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Will you covenant with Him right now to guard, nourish and maintain your daily appointment so that your relationship with Him will deepen week by week?

The following appointment calendar contains a plan to help you get started building your relationship with Jesus Christ. This plan will familiarize you with a variety of methods to use in the future and furnish you with ideas to expand on later. The appointment calendar will give you an overview of your month of appointments.

In the accompanying *Planned Appointments With God*, you will find the daily plans for these appointments. Keep them as a record of your growing relationship with God. Start now—you don't have to wait until a certain date. Simply mark the date in the small box provided in the upper left hand corner of the first day's box on your calendar, turn to the page for Appointment No. 1 and you are on your way. You'll also want to record the time of your appointment in the space provided on the calendar.

Complete your month of appointments before going on. Page 13 will give you ideas for continuing your appointments after you finish your month.

Remember, go to bed on time in order to be awake and alert for your appointment. Choose a quiet place where you are less likely to be distracted. Don't rush! Your appointment with God is not a time to "get something"—it is a time to begin developing a relationship. Begin to consciously experience the presence of God and continue throughout the day.

Appointment Calendar

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
PRAY and PLAN FOR THE WEEK TIME ___to___	Becoming Acquainted With Jesus					REVIEWING YOUR RELATION- SHIP TIME ___to___
	(John 1:1-13) TIME ___to___	(John 1:14-18) TIME ___to___	(John 1:19-28) TIME ___to___	(John 1:29-42) TIME ___to___	(John 1:43-51) TIME ___to___	
<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 14
PRAY and PLAN FOR THE WEEK TIME ___to___	Getting Closer To Him					REVIEWING YOUR RELATION- SHIP TIME ___to___
	(John 2:1-12) TIME ___to___	(John 2:13-25) TIME ___to___	(John 3:1-15) TIME ___to___	(John 3:16-21) TIME ___to___	(John 3:22-26) TIME ___to___	
<input type="checkbox"/> 15	<input type="checkbox"/> 16	<input type="checkbox"/> 17	<input type="checkbox"/> 18	<input type="checkbox"/> 19	<input type="checkbox"/> 20	<input type="checkbox"/> 21
PRAY and PLAN FOR THE WEEK TIME ___to___	Observing The Psalmist's Relationship With God					REVIEWING YOUR RELATION- SHIP TIME ___to___
	(Psalm 1) TIME ___to___	(Psalm 5) TIME ___to___	(Psalm 15) TIME ___to___	(Psalm 23) TIME ___to___	(Psalm 112) TIME ___to___	
<input type="checkbox"/> 22	<input type="checkbox"/> 23	<input type="checkbox"/> 24	<input type="checkbox"/> 25	<input type="checkbox"/> 26	<input type="checkbox"/> 27	<input type="checkbox"/> 28
PRAY and PLAN FOR THE WEEK TIME ___to___	Worship (Psalms 145-150) TIME ___to___	Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) TIME ___to___	God's Word (Psalm 119:9-16) TIME ___to___	Meditation (Romans 4:20,21) TIME ___to___	Application (Psalm 139:23,24) TIME ___to___	REVIEWING YOUR RELATION- SHIP TIME ___to___
<input type="checkbox"/> 29	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PRAY and PLAN FOR THE WEEK TIME ___to___	Begin Your Own Appointments with God					

That we might accustom ourselves to a continual conversation with Him, with freedom and in simplicity. That we need only to recognize God intimately present with us, to address ourselves to Him every moment, that we may beg His assistance for knowing His will in things doubtful, and for rightly performing those which we plainly see He requires of us, offering them to Him before we do them, and giving Him thanks when we have done.

Brother Lawrence

Continual Development

Vast opportunities lie ahead of you in further developing your **relationship with God**. However, don't expand these at the expense of your **relationship with God**. This chapter of suggestions on how to keep your relationship with Him vital is designed to be read **after** completing your month of *Planned Appointments With God*.

Man is a creature of habit. Most people do something once or twice and it becomes a habit—be careful not to do this in your appointments with God. For your continual development in establishing a close personal relationship with your Lord, this chapter lists methods you can employ during your appointments with God. View them as starting points and not ends in themselves. This is not an exhaustive list. Don't try everything at once or feel you must employ every method in order to have a maturing relationship. You can implement them with your own ideas to make them more meaningful to you.

Methods already explored in your planned appointments include:

1. The use of the acronym **ACTS**

A - Adoration

C - Confession

T - Thanksgiving

S - Supplication

2. George Muller's approach to application

Is there any...

- Example for me to follow?
- Command for me to obey?
- Error for me to avoid?
- Sin for me to forsake?
- New thought about God Himself?

3. Devotional Diary

Date _____ Passage _____

Wondrous Thing: (Title) _____

Wondrous Thing in Context: _____

Wondrous Thing Applied to My Life: _____

4. Verse Analysis

Date _____ Passage _____

What is the thought before the verse? _____

What is the thought after the verse? _____

What is the thought of the verse? _____

What is another verse that teaches the same thought? _____

What are your questions and/or observations on the verse? _____

What personal application will you make from the verse? _____

5. Reading Psalms aloud in praise to God

6. Meditation using recurring thoughts

- Are there any patterns in the passage?
- Are there any recurring thoughts exemplified by repeated use of the same word, phrases, contrasting words or thoughts, words that sound alike or begin with the same letter?
- What is the direction of the passage—specific to general or general to specific in the subject matter?

7. Application of the Word

- Use Psalm 139:23,24 as a prayer.
- Use the prayer of Jesus as a guide for your prayer (Matthew 6:9-13).
- Find out what the approach to God's Word should be (Psalm 119:9-16).

As you further your relationship with God, you may wish to vary your use of prayer, reading, memorization, study and meditation.

Prayer

1. PRAY through a Psalm. Read a thought, then pray the same thought back to God, asking how it may apply to you personally.
2. PRAY through *Beginning With Christ. Beginning With Christ* (which are the Bible Studies found in lessons 1/4 - 1/8) contains five assurances that all Christians have from the Word of God.
 - Assurance of Salvation (1/4)
 - Assurance of Answered Prayer (1/5)
 - Assurance of Victory (1/6)
 - Assurance of Forgiveness (1/7)
 - Assurance of Guidance (1/8)
3. PRAY through the Bible Study: Select a study you will do in this course or another study you have done and meditate on it.
4. PRAY through a hymn. Read and meditate on verses of hymns that glorify God. You might like to pray through the verses and ask God to speak to you concerning the words of the hymn.

(Warning—hymns are not Scripture and occasionally are not scriptural.)

Reading

1. READ Psalms and Proverbs. Read five Psalms and one chapter of Proverbs each day. This enables you to cover the entire 150 chapters of Psalms and 31 chapters of Proverbs each month. You may also get more satisfying results if you do not read consecutively. Take the date on the calendar and select the psalm corresponding to the date. Add 30 to it and read that psalm. Add 30 to that number and read another. Continue in this way until you have read five psalms. For example, if this is the 25th day of the month, you would read Psalms 25, 55, 85, 115 and 145.
2. READ the Bible through in one year. The Navigators have a plan you can use to read through the Bible in a year by reading three short passages daily. Two in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament. This plan is a part of the *Equipping The Saints* course. You may obtain a copy of this plan from The Materials Department, The Navigators, P. O. Box 6000, Colorado Springs, Col., 80934.
3. READ through the chapters from which your memory verses come.
4. READ an entire book. Most of the books in the New Testament can be read in 20 minutes or less. This is no more reading than two or three columns in a newspaper. You wouldn't want to do this type of reading all the time, but sometimes you can get an overview that could not otherwise be obtained by reading parts at different sittings.
5. READ devotional books. Some examples are:
 - *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers
 - *Great Devotional Classics*
 - *The Upper Room*

Memorization

1. MEMORIZE a verse from a passage you are meditating on during your appointment with God.
2. MEMORIZE a verse and draw a picture or a diagram to help you recall it. This can be done on a verse card.

Study

1. STUDY a character or topic. Plan on spending several appointments on this project. Look up the references related to the topic or character in a concordance. List the references on the left side of your page and record the key thoughts from these verses next to them. Ask questions concerning the verses:
 - Who is mentioned?
 - How do they relate to your topic or character?
 - What is being said?
 - By whom?
 - When did these things take place?
 - Where did they happen?
 - How are they related?
 - What does it mean to me?

Answer these and any other questions you have. Then categorize your discoveries about the topic or character—for example, truths to explain your topic, or strengths and weaknesses of the character. Finally, write out a personal application on the basis of your study.

Meditation

Meditation is not mind-wandering. Meditation has a form and an object. It is directing our thoughts to a single topic. Meditation is thinking with a purpose.

Meditation is not a solemn, academic exercise. It requires an attitude of curiosity and expectation, and lends to exciting discoveries, a refreshed spirit and transformation of character. It brings reward and benefit. It is a crucial step toward fully knowing and obeying God's will.

Here are five methods of meditation you may want to try:

- ❶ **Paraphrasing**—Some exciting insights can come from rewriting a verse or passage in your own words. This exercise is made even more challenging by using as few words as possible in your paraphrase phrase.

For example: Isaiah 26:3 (RSV)

“You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.”

You could paraphrase this:

“You promise freedom from worry to the person who trusts you completely without any doubts in his mind.”

- ❷ **Asking questions**—You can sort through the information in a verse by asking who, what, where, why and how questions about the verse or by jotting down random questions that come to mind as you memorize and reflect on it. (You may not come up with answers for all your questions.)

For Isaiah 26:3 you could ask, “Who does God give perfect peace to?” “What attitude toward God do I need to have in my mind?” and “Why does God provide this perfect peace?”

- ❸ **Praying**—Pray over the passage: Praise God for the way his character is revealed in the verse; thank Him for any promises you see; claim these in your own life; and confess any failure which the verse may bring to mind. Think “out loud” with God as you meditate.

- ❹ **Emphasizing different words or phrases**—This simple exercise involves fixing your focus on small parts of the verse and how they relate to the verse as a whole.

For Isaiah 26:3, you could emphasize these words and think of their implications: “You will **keep** in perfect peace...”; “You will keep in **perfect** peace...”; “You will keep in perfect **peace**...” and so on.

- ❺ **Finding cross-references**—Try to think of other passages which relate directly to the meaning of the verse you are memorizing. Looking for the relationships between various parts of Scripture can be stimulating and will help you gain an overall view of the major themes in God's word.

Again considering Isaiah 26:3, you might think of Philippians 4:6,7, 1 Peter 5:7, or Matthew 11:28.

In all these forms of meditation, relate the verse to your own circumstances. Suppose you are worried and restless and are not experiencing inner peace. You know this doesn't please the Lord, but you can't help it. You decide to meditate on Isaiah 26:3 as a source of help.

As you think about the verse, you ask yourself, "What does it mean to have perfect peace? Is this really available to me? How can I trust God more?"

Then you might make a list of the things that trouble you. For each item on the list you ask, "Am I ready to trust God to take care of these things for me? Am I willing to make a conscious effort to really trust him?"

Some Christians confuse Bible knowledge with spiritual maturity, assuming that knowing more about the Bible automatically makes them better Christians. This is not true. The Pharisees knew the Old Testament, yet they were spiritual reprobates. **The key to spiritual maturity is *applying* God's word to your life.**