

How is Your Appetite for the Word of God?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 31 July 2022

Preacher: Roy Agustin

- [0 : 00] prepare your heart and hope to bring and equip us with the words. Amen. Thank you.
- Thank you, Callan. Yeah, I love what Callan said earlier. He said, hey, Roy, we're bare bones this morning, and I said, it's fine.
- And he just mentioned earlier that it's like family. And it does feel like family. And you guys are family to me, family to my family, family to the church down south.
- And every time I come here, that's what I sense, that we are a family of brothers and sisters in Christ. And I love coming here.
- Just standing right there earlier, that's really all you need. A piano. Your voices. Right? Some hymns. I was able to take one of your hymnals and open to the number.
- [1 : 07] I don't remember when the last time was I got to do that. Other than at home. That's why it feels like family. At home, sometimes, it's been a while, but sometimes, my wife will play the piano.
- We'll pick a couple of hymns from the hymnal. And then all five kids kind of just are belting out their voices. But that's really all we need.
- Right? Piano, hymns, our voices, and God's word. So, thank you for having me. My name is Roy Augustine, for those of you who don't know me. And I've visited here a few times before.
- I think three times now. Three years ago, then two years ago, and then last year, Jim had better options. So, we skipped last year. But I know that you guys are well taken care of every time he's away.
- And it's always a sweet privilege to be asked by your pastor to fill in for him. I know he needs this time, like you guys were praying earlier, to be with his family.
- [2 : 16] I've known Jim for three, four years now and has become a dear, dear friend of mine. My wife's name is Leslie and, thank you, and we have five kids in the back, from nine all the way down to eight months.
- So, and we are not, for the record, we're not in competition with Jim and Chris. I don't even know how many they have. So, we're part of Northwest Community Church down in Phoenix.
- I served there as a youth pastor and one of the, elders. And again, we, I love coming here. I love coming to a smaller church. You just sing and you just talk about God's word and, and really, that's all you need.
- Sometimes, when you get too big, it gets too complicated and you miss the point. You miss the point of why we gather as, as believers. believers. Well, I've titled this morning's sermon, How, how is your appetite?
- That's the title if you're taking notes. How is your appetite? And I'm not talking about your appetite for food. That's for later. Hopefully, we'll be done before, before noon, before lunch.

[3 : 27] But I'm, I'm referring to your appetite for God's word, for the Bible. Your appetite for God's word. So I, so I want to ask you this question.

Do you, do you love it? Do you love God's word? And I'm sure all of us, including myself, we would all say, oh yeah, of course I do. I love God's word. I love the Bible.

Next question is, does it show? Right? Do you, do you, do you walk the talk? Does it show that you really love God's word?

Do you spend time hearing and reading it? And, and most importantly, do you obey it? Now you may be saying, okay, is this, is this a sermon on reading your Bible?

And, yeah, it is. Now you may say, well, okay, if this sermon is about reading, reading my Bible, then, then I'm guilty because I haven't read my Bible in months. And that may, that may be true for, for some of you.

[4 : 27] Or you may be saying, I do read my Bible, but it's irregular, it's inconsistent, um, because I've just been, just too busy. You know, life happens, you know, it just gets too busy and, um, and I get distracted.

So I, I, I do read it, but it's inconsistent. That may be true about you. How about this? You may be saying, I do read my Bible, regularly and consistently, but oftentimes, when I get into it, I'm just not feeling it.

It just feels dry and, and I don't enjoy it as much. And that could be true, true also. All, all those, all those, uh, statements may be true and we may go into those seasons from time to time.

Um, if that's where you are this morning, if that's where you've been lately, let me encourage you this morning, you're in the right place at the right time because we're going to look at a passage this morning that is going to show us how to develop what I'm calling an appetite for God's Word.

Okay, our passage is going to teach us how to develop an appetite for God's Word. So turn in your Bibles with me to 1st Peter chapter 2.

[5 : 38] 1st Peter chapter 2. And follow as I read just those three verses, very familiar verses to, to all of us.

1st Peter chapter 2 verses 1, through 3. And Peter writes this, Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the Word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

That's our passage for this morning. If you're taking notes, here's the outline. We are going to look at four truths to consider in developing an appetite for God's Word.

Four truths that you and I need to consider if we want to develop an appetite for God's Word. And we see the first one in verse 1.

Here's the first truth that will help us develop an appetite for God's Word. Sin spoils your appetite. Okay, sin spoils your appetite.

[7 : 13] We, I just got back from summer camp a couple weeks ago. Like I said earlier, I'm the youth pastor at Northwest Community Church. Every summer, we take our students up north for summer camp, ages like 11 through 18, you know, 7th graders all the way through 12th graders.

And I mean, they come with a bunch of snacks. I mean, they, you know, they can forget their sleeping bag, they can forget their Bible, but they're not going to forget one thing, their snacks.

And at camp, we eat, you know, three times a day, breakfast, lunch, dinner, we go to the cafeteria and have those meals. But for the rest of the day, all the way till bedtime, guess what those young kids are doing?

Eating snacks. They have gummy bears, Twizzlers, all kinds of snacks, chips, potato chips, M&Ms, all kinds of snacks. And then, and I, and as leaders need to remind them, hey, make sure you stop eating so much snacks because you are, dinner is coming and all those snacks, all those sugar and salt, they're going to spoil your appetite for dinner.

And, and they hear us, but they don't listen because come, come dinner time, right, they don't want to eat. My tummy hurts, so I can't, I don't have enough room. That's always the case. Here, Peter is, is, is trying to give us the same picture.

[8 : 39] He's saying sin, okay, unrepentant sin, secret sin, any of those things, sin will always spoil your appetite for God's word. Look at verse one.

Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Let's stop right there before we get to the command.

The therefore, here relates back to what Peter just talked about back in verses 22 through 25 of chapter one. So, just look at, just look up real quick in those verses starting in verse 22.

Just follow as I read verse 22 as a launching pad to the therefore in chapter two, verse one. Peter says, having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth, so he's been talking about God's word, for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart.

Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, again referring to God's word, through the living and abiding word of God. For all flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass.

[9 : 56] The grass withers and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever. And this word is the good news, he calls it, that was preached to you, talking about the gospel.

So Peter is saying, you've been born again through the living and abiding word of God, the imperishable good news, which is the gospel, and it was preached to you.

So Peter says, since that's true, since you've experienced that, you have heard and you have received the word of God, since that is true, here's how you must respond to it.

And then he gets to chapter 2, he gets to verse 1, he starts with, therefore, because that's true, here's how you're to respond to it. You are to put aside some things first, Peter says.

You're to put aside some things. The picture here is to take off and throw off, you can say, dirty clothing, dirty garment is the picture.

[10 : 58] To take it off and throw it away. Here, I think, is a great illustration to make sure that you understand this strong word put aside.

It's to take off and throw off away any dirty garment. Before I was a pastor, I was a firefighter in Florida, South Florida. Before I was a firefighter, I was a medical assistant at a dermatology practice, so a doctor of skin.

And I worked there for six years, so I saw a lot of skin conditions. Skin cancer, acne, all kinds of skin conditions. I was there for six years assisting doctors.

Now, I remember one day, a guy came in who had probably the biggest cyst I've ever seen in my life. I mean, we probably saw a cyst of all shapes and sizes at least once a day.

But this guy who showed up had a large cyst behind his neck almost as big as a tennis ball. Almost. It was bigger than a golf ball, but not quite as a tennis ball.

[12 : 06] And like I said, it was the biggest one I've ever seen. It was bright red. I don't know if you've ever had one before. They can get red. They can get very painful. They can pull on your skin.

So this guy had it behind his neck back here so I could tell how just angry looking it was. It was pulling on his skin. He was in a lot of discomfort and pain. So he shows up.

I put him in one of the exam rooms. I call the doctor in. The doctor comes in. He looks at it. And he tells me, okay, Roy, we're going to have to drain this thing. We're going to have to drain it and give this guy some relief.

So I prep it. I clean it. I prep it. Put some lidocaine in there, some numbing agent. And I let it sit for a few minutes. And then the doctor finally comes in and like we always do for any cysts.

I put the patient back in. I prep him, numb him, let it sit. Call the doctor. He comes in. He's just like any other cysts. We both glove up. We both put our mask on.

[13 : 12] You always need a mask on for cysts. And you put your glasses, your eye protection on. That's the minimum. You need gloves, of course. You need your mask, of course.

And you need your eye protection. And as soon as the doctor touches the cyst, I mean, again, it's large, it's inflamed, it's red, it's infected looking, and I've pumped it up with lidocaine.

And as soon as he touches it, it just starts gushing out. Yes, that's what I said under my mask. And I've seen a lot of cysts before, but this one is, I will never forget this one.

So, it starts gushing out, starts bursting out all this fluid. And I will never forget, because of the pressure, it went to the ceiling first, and then down to the wall, a little bit on the floor, because he's laying down this way, down on the floor, and then on my scrubs, scrub pants, my scrub shirt, and then my arms, and a little bit on my glasses.

Good thing I was wearing those glasses. And then on his back. So, you know, we kept working on him. Again, we need to drain all that out, all that infection out, so that he would get some relief, and he did, thankfully.

[14 : 35] Now, do you think I took my scrubs home, and washed them in the washer with my other clothes that I wear at home?

No, no way. No way. I always had extra scrubs at work, so that's what I did. I took off, and threw away my old scrubs that were contaminated, and I put them in the biohazard container, container.

Not just trash can, a biohazard container. It's going in the biohazard trash to be incinerated. That's the picture here of this word, putting aside, Peter says.

Therefore, putting aside, you're supposed to, you're supposed to know your sins. You're supposed to treat them as contaminated clothing, clothing, so that you would take them off immediately, and throw them away from you.

Not to clean up a little bit, not to rinse a little bit, so that you can put them back on. No, repentance, putting aside, is to take off and throw off to never, to never be put back on again.

[15 : 52] This is what Peter is trying to, trying to give us a picture here. We need to treat any sinful habits like foul-smelling, contaminated scrubs that we take off and throw off.

Why is that? Because if you don't, okay, if you don't, those sins are going to spoil your appetite. You look at your day, you've enjoyed some sin.

You look at your week, you've enjoyed some sin. Sins that you're supposed to be working on, sins that you're supposed to be confessing to the Lord and seeking His forgiveness and putting away, putting aside, putting off, and you don't do that.

You don't do that daily. You don't do that weekly. Guess what's going to happen? You're not going to long for God's Word. You're not going to have a strong appetite for God's Word. That's what happens. Now, Peter gives us five specific relational sinful habits that does that here.

Look at the list. Sins that spoil your appetite for God's Word that you need to be putting aside. First, he says, all malice. Put aside all malice. This can be referring to wickedness in general.

[17 : 04] It's a broad terminology, but also it can be specific, specific terminology, which is to desire harm or ill will toward other people.

So that's malice. He said, put that aside. That's going to spoil your appetite for God's Word. Secondly, he says, all deceit. All deceit. This term originally meant a bait or a fish hook.

It's the attitude of wanting something so much that you become cunning or crafty or deceitful. You put that aside. That's going to spoil your appetite for God's Word.

Number three is hypocrisy. Literally, this is to be a mask wearer. A mask wearer. When somebody wears a mask, you can't really tell who that person is.

And that's the picture here. It's the behavior of hiding evil intent behind good appearance. That's a hypocrite. To be inconsistent with what you believe or what you say.

[18 : 09] Fourthly, he says, put aside envy. Envy. Here's kind of how I remember the definition of envy. Jealousy says, I really want what that person has.

That's jealousy. I really want what you have. Envy is a worse attitude that says, not only that I really want what you have, but I don't like the fact that you have it and I don't.

Okay, jealousy is, oh, I wish I had what he has. Envy is worse. Envy is saying, man, I really wish I had what he has and I actually hate it and I don't like it when I watch him enjoy it and I don't have it.

That's envy. That is going to spoil your appetite for God's word. And then fifthly, he says, in all slander, this is the behavior of gossiping, backbiting, talking behind somebody's back, defaming another person's character so that that person is viewed worse than you are, so that you're viewed better in the eyes of others.

That's slander. Now, I know Peter could have come, he could have came up with a longer list, right? all sins spoil your appetite for God's word.

[19 : 17] I think he chose these five sins because they are in a church context like this, a family. And he's specifically choosing five relational sins, sins that you can commit among the body of believers, sins that will definitely affect your relationship with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

And he says, if you don't put those things aside, if you keep coming to church while you are committing these sins or like these sins, mark it, he says, you are going to decrease your appetite for God's word.

You're going to spoil it. So, Christian, how is your appetite for God's word? If you don't have a strong appetite for God's word, it could be because you're still holding on to a secret sin or an unrepentant sin that you haven't repented from, haven't confessed to the Lord.

And whatever that is, whatever that sin is, it will never help you develop an appetite for God's word. Never. It always does the opposite.

It spoils it. That's why Peter is telling us here to put them aside. Or to put them aside. Like I did with those foul smell and contaminated scrubs.

[20 : 38] Or to put them aside. sin spoils your appetite, Peter says. Secondly, here's the second truth that you and I must consider if we want to develop an appetite for God's word.

Number two, God demands your appetite. He commands it. He demands your appetite. He's asking of us to have this appetite for his word.

Look at verse two. Like newborn babies, long. If you're an underliner or a highlighter kind of person, that is the word for today.

That's where I'm getting that word appetite. It's that word there, long. It's actually the only command in these three verses. Everything else before it and everything else after it are just telling us how we are too long for God's word.

So, like newborn babies, here's the command, long for the pure milk of the word. Now, before we look at this command, this word long, before we look at what that means, let me first give you a list of things that we all do today as Christians that neither prove nor disprove that we long for God's word, that we have an appetite for God's word.

[21 : 59] You may be doing these things right now, I do these things right now, but it doesn't mean that we genuinely long for God's word, and also it doesn't mean that we don't.

Things that we can just do today as Christians that neither prove nor disprove that we long for God's word. Here's one on the list. Attending events that teach the Bible.

Attending events that teach the Bible. You may be here every Sunday for church to hear the preaching and teaching of God's word, but that doesn't automatically mean, okay, listen to me, that doesn't automatically mean that you have an appetite for God's word.

Secondly, reading books that talk about the Bible. You may be a disciplined reader and you find it easy to read Christian books by your favorite authors, but that too doesn't automatically mean that you actually have a genuine longing for God's word.

It doesn't automatically mean that just because you're a reader. Thirdly, having a plan to help you read the Bible. Having a plan to read your Bible.

[23 : 04] You may lack the discipline in Bible reading, so you implement some kind of Bible reading plan that maybe your mentor, disciple, or maybe you just look it up on the internet to help you be disciplined in the Bible.

And you do it, you read the Bible in a year or two or three, you read Psalms a couple times, Proverbs, you know, 12 times. But listen, that doesn't automatically mean that you have a genuine longing for the word of God.

Here's the fourth thing that we do today. Knowing facts about the Bible. Knowing facts about the Bible. You may be good at memorizing and retaining biblical truths, right?

You may be good at studying a doctrine or a theology and your mind just works that way and you know those things in your mind and your friends are impressed by you.

But again, that doesn't automatically mean that you have a strong appetite for God's word. Now, please don't misunderstand me. Those things are good for us.

[24 : 11] Okay, attending events where the Bible is taught and reading books that talk about the Bible, having a plan for us to be disciplined in our Bible reading and knowing facts and truths about the Bible.

Those things are good for us and they actually do help us in our Christian walk. But sadly, as Christians, and you can relate to this, as Christians, we oftentimes do all those things, yet we don't have an appetite for God's word.

We still don't long for God's word in the way that Peter is going to tell us here. What Peter is after here is a genuine appetite for God's word.

He says long. If you have other translations, that word can be translated in different ways. The New King James version says desire.

I like that also. Desire, God's word. The NIV says crave. Maybe that's my personal preference.

[25 : 14] Out of those three words, longing, desiring, and craving. I think craving really captures the intent here of Peter. This is to have a strong longing or desire for something.

Now, Paul used this same word in other passages. You don't have to turn to these passages. I'll just read them to you and listen as I read them because I want you to picture what he's commanding us here.

It's more than those examples that I just gave you. He used this word in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 2. Listen to not just what Paul is saying, but how he's saying it.

2 Corinthians 5, verse 2. For indeed in this house, he's talking about our physical body, we groan, longing to be clothed, desiring, craving to be clothed with our dwelling in heaven.

He's just longing and craving and desiring to get to heaven so that he would have a glorified perfect body. Maybe some of you long for that because of the mileage that we put on our physical body.

[26 : 34] And Paul is saying, I long for that. I crave that. I desire that. He uses this word in, this word is also used by Paul in 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 4.

2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 4. Paul is writing to young Timothy. He says, longing to see you, Timothy, craving and desiring to see you, Timothy, even as I recall your tears so that I may be filled with joy.

Now, what was Paul talking about there? Paul and Timothy, the last time they saw each other was with tears because they had to part ways. They had to part ways.

So it was with tears, Paul says, even as I recall your tears. And now Paul, he's writing his last letter, 2 Timothy, he's in jail, his death is imminent, and he's writing to young pastor, young Timothy, and he says, okay, I'm going to die soon.

This is most likely the last letter that I'm writing, and there's only one thing that I long for, only one thing that I am craving right now, only one thing that I'm desiring, to see you, he says.

[27 : 46] To see you one last time. So I hope that kind of gives you the, not just the content of the command long, but the emotion side of it, the heart side of it.

Peter tells us what to do, we're too long. Then he tells us what we should long for, the pure milk of the word. Back to 1 Peter 2, the pure milk of the word.

Peter is referring to God's word, and he describes it as pure milk, because he wants us to see it as our main nourishment for spiritual maturity.

That's why he calls it the pure milk. It's our main source of spiritual nourishment. So he says, okay, here's my command for you Christians, you need to long, desire, crave, what?

My word. And here's how you should long for it. Okay, here's the how, like newborn babies. Like newborn babies. That's how you long for it.

[28 : 54] Like newborn babies. Now, Peter is not saying that this command, okay, to long, to have an appetite for God's word, to crave it and desire it. He's not saying that that command only applies to baby Christians, like new believers.

Okay, we call them baby Christians. He's not saying that it only applies to those people. It applies to all believers, to all Christians, to all of you, to me, myself. And notice that his focus is not really on the baby.

Okay, if you're looking at that verse in verse 2, Peter is not really focusing on the baby. He's focusing on the what? The longing of the baby. Okay, so this is not just, oh, congratulations, you just got saved, you really need to long for God's word.

That's what Peter says, it's for newborn babies like you. No, it's for all Christians. The focus is on how the baby longs for milk. The craving of the baby, the desire of the baby, baby.

That's the very thing that Peter wants us to mimic. Like I shared earlier, we have five kids in the back. Our youngest one is eight months old.

[30 : 05] And for those of you who have had babies and kids, it doesn't matter the time, right? It doesn't matter the time. In the car, on the road trip, or in the church, it doesn't matter the place, it doesn't matter the time, middle of the night, when we're asleep, in the car, or at church, it doesn't matter who he's with, you know, with his mom, or with me, or with nursery worker, volunteer.

He's always longing and desiring and craving for one thing. What is that? Milk. Anytime, anywhere, with anybody.

When you are an infant like that, that's all you think about. That's all you think about. And it comes out because you long for it and you desire it and crave it.

So, that's the point of verse 2, the surrounding context of that command long. We are to long for God's word. How, in what way, in what manner, in what attitude?

Like a baby. Like how a baby craves milk. Anytime, anywhere, with anyone. It consumes our minds.

[31 : 22] So, Christian, how's your appetite for God's word? Parents, let me just talk to you here for a little bit. Would your kids say that you're teaching them the importance of longing for God's word?

Would your kids say that? And we would probably say yes, as a dad, as a mom, or even as grandparents. I think we do teach these young people the importance of longing for God's word.

Well, how about this question? Would they say, the younger generation in your home, or even other people in the sphere of your influence, either at home or at work, would those people say that you're modeling that to them?

You're teaching them you need to long for God's word. Sin spoils your appetite. God demands it, so you need to do it. Yes, yes, we do say that, we do teach that. But would those people say that we actually model it in front of them?

Or do we just say it and we don't do it? Would they say that it looks like you long more for other things, like your phone, sleep, hobbies, material things, sports, all kinds of other things?

[32 : 35] Is that what they would say? Oh, yeah, I think mom and dad, they do teach us that. Well, do they model it? Not so much. You know, they actually, I think, model the opposite. They long for other things.

Is that what they would say? Listen, God's word is your main spiritual nourishment, Peter's saying. It's this pure milk. It's your main spiritual nourishment.

That's why God is demanding you to develop an appetite for it, like a baby, like how a baby longs for milk. sin spoils your appetite.

God demands your appetite. Here's the third one. Maturity requires your appetite. If you want to become a mature Christian, if you want to grow in your spiritual walk with the Lord, it requires your appetite for God's word.

Maturity requires your appetite. Look at the second half of verse 2. So that by it, that's referring to God's word, you may grow in respect to salvation.

[33 : 49] So Peter just gave us the command, long. He told us what to long for, God's word. He told us how to long for it, like a newborn baby. Now he gives us the purpose, the result.

The reason why you and I should be longing for God's word is that because that's how we grow spiritually. That's how we grow in our faith. That's how we become more godly, you can say.

That's how we can become more like Jesus Christ. That's how we can become more sanctified. And if you're looking at that last word in verse 2, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.

Now salvation is a pretty broad word when it's used in the Bible, but you can simplify salvation in this way. You can break it up into three parts. The first one is justification.

You have been saved. The second one is sanctification. You are being saved. And in the third part, which is in the future for all of us who are Christians, you will be ultimately saved.

[34 : 59] That's glorification. So I believe that Peter is referring to salvation here in the sanctification sense. He's saying that you should have an appetite for God's word because that's how you are going to become sanctified.

That's how you are going to become more mature in your faith. That's how you can become more godly like God. That's how you become more Christ-like like Jesus Christ.

And that's the only way. It's through God's word. That's why when you simplify worship, especially like on a Sunday morning, you just sing God's word, you just teach God's word, and you just listen to God's word.

You can be, you can be, you're content with all that. You don't have to do, you don't have to have other things, and you can leave church content and say, man, I really, I think I really was fed.

I think I can really grow this week. Right? Because it's all about God's word. word. That's how you and I are going to be mature in the faith.

[36 : 07] So, Christian, how's your appetite for God's word? If you're saying, man, I've been a Christian for decades, you know, I've been, the years that I've been a Christian has been longer than the years that I wasn't.

but why am I still so immature? Right? I hang out with my friends and they've only been saved for five years, five months, and they're more spiritually mature than I am.

I visit my son and his family, and my son is more mature than I am. Right?

You may be thinking that way. Well, it could be because you have forgotten that your spiritual maturity is dependent on your relationship to God's word, that they actually are in sync with each other, that they are interdependent with each other.

You can't say that I am going to be spiritually mature, I'm going to be a mature in the faith kind of woman or kind of man and neglect God's word.

[37 : 14] That's not going to happen. Spiritual maturity doesn't happen apart from God's word, beloved. it doesn't. There's no other way, there's no shortcut.

And like I tell our people down south, I say, there's no microwave option. You know, you don't just put your sanctification yourself in the microwave, push in five minutes, ding, and then you're Christ-like and you're godly without putting in the work.

work. No, you actually need to have an appetite for God's word. That is the requirement if you want to become mature. Now, before we move on to verse 3, which is my last point here, if you're struggling in disciplining yourself in spending time with God in his word, if that's a struggle for you, if it's irregular, inconsistent, you get all fired up and you say, okay, I just got a new Bible, I'm going to read the Bible in two years or in one year, and then you kind of do it for two weeks and then it's gone and then you hit reset, you try it again and it's never, you know, you just never take off, right?

If you lack discipline in spending with God in his word, let me just share four practical ways that have helped me and are still helping me when it comes to that discipline, okay?

And I believe this will also help you. Here's the first thing that you need to do. If you want to be disciplined in God's word, number one, have a reasonable goal.

[38 : 52] Okay, have a reasonable goal. Don't compare yourself to your friend, don't compare yourself to your pastor, don't compare yourself to anyone, you just develop your own personal reasonable goal. Don't read the Bible in a year when you haven't read a book in a year.

That's an unreasonable goal. Just because somebody else is doing it doesn't mean you have to do it. The Bible actually doesn't say, read your Bible in a year and pray every day and you grow, grow, grow.

That's not what the Bible says. It's actually a harder command, long, crave, desire. That's all you think about. So have a reasonable goal, something that you can actually achieve.

Number two, pick a productive time. Pick a productive time when you're disciplining yourself in Bible reading. whichever time of the day, your most productive, you give that to God.

Just think about it. If it's morning time, if that is your most productive self, your most productive time, reserve that for God.

[39 : 56] Don't use that for other things. Whether that's morning, afternoon, or before bed, whenever it is, that productive time, that productive self of yours, you give that to God.

Number three, set up a suitable place. Set up a suitable place when you're disciplining yourself in Bible reading. Set up your place and have everything ready beforehand so it's easier for you to actually get into the Word.

You're not going to read in front of your TV. That's not going to work. Right? You're not going to read in the middle of the day when your wife is homeschooling the kids.

That's going to be difficult. So find a suitable place. And lastly, number four, fourth practical help here in disciplining yourself in Bible reading, remove all distractions.

Remove all distractions. You're not going to miss out if you don't have your phone for 30 minutes. I think that's what we all need to hear.

[40 : 59] We are not going to miss out on anything if we just devote half hour, even 15 minutes to God in His Word because we've put aside our electronics, all our distractions, we've put them aside.

So I hope that's helpful. Again, maturity requires your appetite. If you want to become a spiritually mature person, you're going to have to have an appetite for God's Word and you're going to have to discipline yourself in those ways.

Fourth one, last one here. salvation motivates your appetite. Salvation motivates your appetite. If you are a Christian, that should be enough to motivate you to long desire and crave God's Word.

It should be enough. Look at verse three. If you have tasted the kindness of the Lord, Peter says. Peter's point is this. If you're a Christian, then you will have a growing appetite for God's Word.

But if you are not, or if you don't have an appetite for God's Word, it's most likely because you may not be a Christian. Okay? If you don't have an appetite for God's Word, if it's not developing, if it's not growing, if it's absent, then it's most likely because you are not a Christian.

[42 : 26] If you have tasted the kindness of the Lord, referring to the kindness of God shown in Him sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for your sins so that you can be saved, that kindness of God, if you have tasted that, then you would long for God's Word, then you would crave and desire it.

So, Christian, how's your appetite for God's Word? If you're saying, I am confident, pastor, that I am a Christian and I do have an appetite, but sometimes it just lacks sometimes. And I get that.

The teenagers in my ministry are surprised when I have to tell them that I'm not always in God's Word, that I don't always read the Bible every day.

They're like, the pastor doesn't do that. It's true. It's true. You can be a Christian and your appetite goes up and down. Sometimes it's lacking. So, here's what I would tell that person.

Just take that to the Lord. Confess that to the Lord. Seek His forgiveness and seek His help. And that's the kind of prayer that He loves to listen to and He loves to hear from us because why?

[43 : 39] Because we're proclaiming our dependency and neediness, even in the most simple but most important thing, which is longing for His Word.

You take that to God. You confess that. You seek His forgiveness and you plead for help. He loves that. He'll answer that prayer. Now, if you're saying, I don't think I have an appetite for God's Word.

Reading it has never been an interest to me. Hearing it has never been a priority to me. And it's prompting me to question myself if I'm even saved.

That's great. That is a good, good, good question to ask yourself. Am I even saved? Because I don't see what Peter's talking about here. I don't see it in my life.

Here's my counsel to you. The Lord's kindness and salvation is also available to you. Very freely available to you. Again, His kindness in this context is His love being shown by sending His Son Jesus Christ to die on your behalf so that your sins would be forgiven.

[44 : 46] That's the most kind thing that anyone can ever do for anyone. And only God could do it. And He did it on the cross. And Peter says, if you have not tasted that, you can't.

And once you taste that, once you turn from your sin, and once you put your trust in Jesus Christ and who He is and what He's done for you, when you've tasted that for the very first time, the salvation that is offered through the gospel, then you will see an appetite for God's Word.

And once you see it, all you have to do is develop it. And how do you do that? You put away sin, you remember that God demands it, you remind yourself that that's the only way to become mature, and daily, and always reminding yourself that, okay, salvation is my main motivation.

The reason why I want to get to know God more, and the reason why I want to hear His Word more, and read His Word more, and love it, and obey it more, because He has saved me.

Amen? Well, let me give you a few minutes here to reflect on this passage, and then we'll sing a couple more songs and close in prayer. which I just mention those 73 more HD 10 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00