

Spiritual Disciplines: **Scripture**

Jesus answered, ‘It is written: “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”’ Matthew 4:4

Questions for personal & communal contemplation and engagement based on the sermon ‘Scripture’:
<https://histonbaptist.org.uk>

Immediately after the spiritual high of his baptism and ahead of his ministry, Jesus goes into the wilderness to be refuelled by his Father. Which of the Spiritual Disciplines that we’ve covered does he employ during this period?

1. Jesus is able to quote Scripture well in the encounter in Matthew 4 – is this in defence or attack? See Ephesians 6:17 for a clue.
2. What is your favourite book of the Bible? Why?
3. Which parts of the Bible are you less familiar with, or maybe find more confusing? Where do you turn to broaden your biblical diet and nourishment for your head and your heart? Do you have a routine?
4. *A cookbook is not doing much good if it’s left on a shelf; knowing a recipe isn’t the same as cooking and enjoying the food.*

Is there a link between reading the Bible and acting on it?

Jesus commands his followers to do all kinds of good things as we learn to imitate him. Consider how you have already grown and also where you might need to ‘follow the recipe’ more closely, e.g. love for the outsider (Zacchaeus), discipling others (Great Commission), using the gifts God has given you (parable of the talents), humility (when falsely accused), forgiveness (on the cross), confidence (challenging injustice).

Our aim is to be with Jesus, become like him and do as he did. In internalising God’s word, it becomes the ‘pacemaker of our consciousness’ (George Steiner) even when we don’t see that. The habit of regular Bible reading and study is important for every Christian who seeks to be more like Jesus. Consider the supplementary grid (also in *Telling the Big Story*, page 39) and choose a new challenge to help you keep growing.

Using the Bible against temptations (just a few examples)

<p>If the challenge to you is in your identity, remember 2 Corinthians 5:17:</p>	<p>Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!</p>
<p>If the challenge to you is in your biological desires, remember Romans 8, especially verse 37:</p>	<p>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.</p>
<p>If the truth is being twisted and something feels off, remember John 14:6:</p>	<p>Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.</p>
<p>If you are being goaded into a reaction, remember 2 Corinthians 4, especially verses 8 and 9:</p>	<p>⁸We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.</p>
<p>If you being tempted into a shortcut to success, remember Galatians 6:9:</p>	<p>Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.</p>
<p>If you are tempted to idolise something other than God, remember Psalm 106:36:</p>	<p>They worshipped their idols, which became a snare to them.</p>

You may face other temptations and challenges too. This is why it is so valuable to be familiar with the character of God (demonstrated throughout the Bible and especially in Jesus), as well as the commands God gives, the promises he sets us and the truth about who we are. People in the Bible often demonstrate the mistakes of not living according to God's best ways; this too is helpful for learning and growing. Wisdom literature also shows us it is ok to cry out to God in distress with honesty and emotion.