

Practicing Jesus' Way: Hearing God in Secret

"Renewing our minds and Hearing God's Voice"

Jesus' Way

Shaped by Scripture.

The Word of God is foundational in following Jesus and practicing Jesus' way of living. Jesus is the Word (John 1). And Scripture is God's word. Jesus was shaped by Scripture. Many times in the gospel accounts, Jesus responded to confrontations with quotes from the Old Testament. He knew it well enough to quote it from memory. Jesus also frequently used imagery and ideas from the Old Testament when he spoke, revealing that his perspective and imagination were thoroughly shaped by Scripture. This same familiarity and shaping are evident in the other New Testament authors. Scripture was as important for them as it is for us. Jesus is our life, not Scripture (John 5). But Scripture is central in practicing Jesus' way together.

Shaping: From head to heart.

To be clear, the point here is not for the head to have more knowledge about either God or Scripture. But God gave us our eyes and ears and brains as the entry point for Scripture. If we don't engage Scripture with them on purpose, there's no chance God's word will move from our heads (where it starts) into our hearts (where we are shaped and transformed). The following practice is one way to hear God (both what he's spoken and what he's speaking) in order to be transformed.

Practicing Jesus' Way

"Take a bite."

Ideally, we want to practice hearing God every day. Each day, we want to "take a bite" of God's Word to us - what God has spoken to us in Scripture.

- Recommendation #1: Read/listen to 3 chapters in both the Old and New Testament each day. This gets you through the Old Testament once and the New Testament three times in one year.
- Recommendation #2: Memorize a meaningful passage and practice bringing it to mind throughout your day, reciting it to yourself each time it comes to mind.

"Chew on it."

In your daily readings (or as you recite a memorized passage), pay attention for any word, phrase, or detail that stands out. It could either resonate deeply with you or cause a sense of resistance. Pause your reading and stay with that detail for a few minutes. "Chew on it." Open the ear of your heart for an area of your life God may be speaking to. Open yourself as God becomes present with you in the passage you're chewing on.

"Savor it."

Experience God's presence in that place. *Feel* how different the same circumstance can be with God at your side and in your heart. Let light come in where there had previously been darkness. Let joy come in where there had previously been heaviness. Let freedom come in where there had previously been guilt or bondage. Enjoy the goodness of your God who has come to be *with* you.

"Digest it."

Before moving on in your reading or recitation, take a moment to "seal" what God has done through spontaneous prayers or worship. If appropriate, consider *within God's presence* how you might respond to what He's spoken or done as you move forward in your daily life.