

01 – Thrive: The Word of God - Psalm 19:7–11

INTRODUCTION

Today we begin our new series entitled “THRIVE.” A short series in which we will look at the Essentials of Spiritual Growth and Success. Things that every Christian should know that is, if they want to have a thriving Christian experience.

Thrive: to prosper; be fortunate or successful. To grow or develop vigorously; flourish.

So let me begin with a question, how many of you want to be thriving spiritually? Raise up your hand. Ok. See how cool it is when God just leads something and it's what we need?

Now, we all know people who have received Christ and have gone on to serve the Lord with great effect. There have been dramatic changes in their lives and they are thriving in their Christian walk.

But we also all know people who have had a difficult time spiritually maturing. Maybe even some of you listening right now would say, “You know I don’t feel that I am really doing all that well. I know others that have just taken off in their relationship with Jesus but I still am struggling and staggering helplessly, and I have never been able to really get this together.”

You know on my computer I have a tendency to open a lot of programs at once. I might have my Word documents opened; my Bible programs; a Web browser and a few other things. And what happens is when I got this multitasking going on, my whole system begins to slow down. And I realize it is time for a reboot. I need to start it up again to reboot and refresh. Then everything runs smoothly

In the same way some of us, might ourselves getting sluggish spiritually speaking. And maybe we need a reboot or a refresh. Or we need to just say, “Lord I want to start again.” And I believe if you will apply some of these principles that I am going to be sharing with you over the next few weeks, you can see changes in your life.

So here is what it comes down to. Christianity will work for every man and every woman because simplified Christianity is Christ. If a person says, “I tried the whole Christian thing and it didn’t work for me” I reject that outright, because Jesus will change any man or woman who comes to Him in genuine faith and on His terms.

It was **G. K. Chesterton** who said, and I quote, **“Christianity has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and not tried.”**

See for many, that is the problem, is not that I tried and it didn’t work, but it’s more like, “Well as I looked at what it really meant to be a Christian I decided I didn’t really want to do that.”

So why do some succeed spiritually and others seem to fail? The short answer is that many of those who struggle chose this path. Because if you have a real desire to know God, I believe that you will by God’s grace do just that, if you search with your whole heart.

Now someone might protest and say, “Pastor Rudy, it sounds like you are implying that our Christian walk is a result of human effort.” I am not saying that at all. But I am saying there are some things that only God can do and there are some things only I can do.

For instance **Philippians 2:12** says, **“...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”** That doesn’t say, “Work for your

own salvation” because that is already a gift given to us by God. It says “Work out your own salvation.” What does that mean?”

Another translation would say, “Carry to the goal and fully complete your own salvation with self-distrust.” And then it continues on and says, “**...for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**” (Philippians 2:12)

So there you have the whole picture laid out for you.” I am to carry it to the goal with self-distrust and live this Christian life. But it is God giving me the strength to live the life He has called me to live.

Listen. Only God can do certain things, and only I can do certain things. Only God can convict me of my sin. Only God can forgive me of my sin. Only God can convert me. **Only God can save me.** However only I can repent of my sin. Only I can make that choice to follow Jesus Christ you see, **Only I can believe.** So there is a part that God wants to do and there is a part that I need to do.

God says, “**I set before you death and life, blessings and curses. Choose life that you might live.**” (Deut 30:19) So it comes down to my willingness. Do I want to succeed? You have a choice in the matter.

But the good news is that God, by the power of the Spirit has given you everything you need to live the Christian life. 2 Peter 1:3 says, “**By His divine power God has given us everything we need for living a godly life.**” (2 Peter 1:3)

It was **Alexander McLaren who said, “He that has the Holy Spirit in his heart and the Scripture in his hands has all he needs.”**

It is sort of like you have all of the horsepower under the hood and you just need to put the key in the ignition and hit the gas and watch

what happens when you are full throttle. It is all there but you have to step out and start applying it.

But this introduces us to another issue. See **we live in an "instant" society**. A culture where you get everything fast and everything is easy. And then we come to the Bible and we read words we are not all that comfortable with.

Words like discipline, obedience and self control. We read about being still and knowing that He is God. And we read about trusting God. And we don't want to do that. We want to get on that fast track spiritually. We want to know the easy way to do it.

For instance if you want to lose weight what is that one diet that will do it overnight while you sleep? Or how about that ab machine? Remember the one that you would wrap it around your waist and turn it on and it would do all the work for you. You wake up in the morning with a six pack. We live in an instant society and we want everything now.

I remember in the old days when we wanted to get music we bought something called records. Nowadays you want music you just download it.

And you know there was a time when people used to actually write letters. Did you know that? Now we call it snail mail. But now we will just shoot off a quick email. But even emails seem slow now. You have to wait so long. So we just text one another. Next we are going to just read each other's minds.

But my point is simply this. In a culture, in a society, where we get news on demand, music on demand, movies on demand, we ask, "Ok what is the fast way to do this?" And we have a hard time with

discipline, obedience and applying ourselves to these truths. We need to change our way of thinking.

So what I am saying is if you want to thrive and grow spiritually and be successful as a follower of Jesus Christ it is going to take discipline. And you must apply these disciplines in your life.

These are things that must be in play in your life as a follower of Jesus on a regular and even a daily basis. These are non-negotiables, they are essentials. They are disciplines of the Christian life.

The first essential is found throughout the entire bible, but we will focus our attention on what Psalm 19 has to say about it our first essential, today. So please turn in your Bibles to Psalm 19.

I. **Principle number one.** If you want to be a successful Christian you must read, study, and love the Word of God. Let me repeat that. If you want to be a successful Christian you must read, study, and love the Word of God.

A. **Joshua 1:8... 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.**

1. You are holding in your hand God's revelation to mankind. The user's manual of life. Everything that you need to know about God is found in this book the Bible. You must learn to love it. You must learn to study it.

You must learn to memorize it. And if you don't do it, you are not going to succeed spiritually.

2. Years ago a young man named Billy Sunday received Christ into his life. An older believer gave him some advice he never forgot. He said, **“William there are three simple rules I wish you would practice and if you do no one will ever write the word backslider after your name. Number one. Take 15 minutes every day to let God talk to you. Number 2. Take 15 minutes every day to talk to God. And thirdly. Take 15 minutes every day talking to someone else about the Lord.”**

That is good advice. Because if you take 15 minutes to let God talk to you it will probably become 20 and 30 and 40 minutes. If you take 15 minutes each day as a discipline I suggest it will take more time. If you take 15 minutes to tell others about the Lord I think you will find yourself doing it more.

- B. Psalm 119 says, **“I love Your commandments. All Your words are true. All Your laws will stand forever.”** It is an application to God's Word on a regular basis. This is not something you outgrow.

1. It was **Spurgeon** that said, and I quote, **“Nobody ever outgrows Scripture. The Book widens and deepens with out years.”** That is true.

- a. You don't outgrow your need to study the Bible anymore than you outgrow your need to eat food.
“Yeah I used to be in the whole eating thing. Every

day. Three times a day. Sometimes even with snacks I would eat. But now you know I don't need that anymore. I have moved beyond that." Come on. "Oh yeah.

I used to breathe with the best of them. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale. I am not into breathing anymore." Listen. If you are not into breathing you are not going to be into living.

- b. And in the same way if you are not into the regular study of the Bible you are going to find yourself crashing spiritually.
 - c. It is not enough to just go to church on Sunday and Wednesday and read good Christian books and listen to great Christian radio broadcasts. Those things are all wonderful and have their place. **But nothing will ever take the place of you opening up your Bible and reading it every single day.** I am telling you the truth. God will speak to you through the Bible. His word will not return void
2. I never really read at all. But as I began to open up God's Word it began to change my life. And I was amazed at how it resonated with truth. How it spoke to me. How it related to what I was facing as an 18 year old young man back. And you know what? It will still resonate with anyone today.
 3. But if you are like me you just don't like to read manuals. Whenever I get anything electronic I hate to read directions. I will just start pushing buttons and see

what happens. And then something bad happens and I open the manual and the first page says, all caps. Whatever you do don't do this first. And I just did that. We need to learned to read the manual and warning labels.

4. Why are those Warning labels there? Because someone somewhere probably filed a lawsuit and won and therefore there is this stupid warning label. I mean some make sense. But some are weird..

On a cardboard windshield sunshade. Warning: Do not drive with sunshield in place. Some dummy thought..., well this will shield me from the sun.

How about this one on a hair dryer? I can't believe this. Do not use while sleeping.

On an electric rotary tool. This one kind of freaks me out a little bit right now. This product not intended for use as a dental drill. That means somewhere, some guy thought I got this sore tooth. (Drill noise).

On the manual for a microwave oven. Do not use for drying pets.

On a children's cough medicine bottle. Do not drive car or operate machinery after using this. Yeah. Kind of hoping the 3 year old will not be using the forklift today.

This one is scary. On a child size Superman costume. Warning: Wearing of this garment does not enable you to fly. There is a hurt kid out there somewhere.

On a shipment of hammers. This one is weird. Maybe harmful if swallowed. What?

On a bottle of Nytol. A brand of sleeping pills. Warning: May cause drowsiness. I was kind of hoping for that.

How about this on a box of rat poison. Warning: This has been found to cause cancer in laboratory mice. Good! But I was hoping for something that would kill them more quickly.

On the sign of the railway railroad station. Beware, to touch these wires is instant death and anyone found doing so will be prosecuted. Huh? I am dead.

5. See what concerns me about all of these things, the people found out the hard way, but they could have avoided it had they read the manual or warning labels.
6. Man how much better our lives would be if we read the warning labels. If we read the admonitions. If we read the teachings of Scripture that tell us how to live.

It happens spiritual too. Warning going to the bar doesn't keep you sober, porn doesn't make you pure... Money doesn't make you happy... Sin will find you... Warning you can't take your toys with you... Similar examples

7. God gives us everything we need in this book. 2
Timothy 3:16 says, “**All Scripture is inspired by God and it is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out. It teaches us to do what is right. It is God's**

way of preparing us in every way fully equipped for every good thing that God wants us to do.”

11. See the Bible speaks to us. It is alive. **Hebrews 4:12** says, **“The Word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife cutting deep into the innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are.”**

The Bible reveals who we really are, and that may be one of the reasons why some people don't like to read it. They don't like what it says about them.

Martin Luther once said, and I quote, **“The Bible is alive. It speaks to me. It has feet. It runs after me.”**

- C. And that is why I need this Word in my life because success or failure in the Christian life depends on how much the Word of God you get into your life on a daily basis and how obedient you are to it.
 1. You show me a Christian who is failing. You show me someone who is backsliding. You show me someone who is not growing spiritually and I will show you someone that is not in the Word of God. We neglect this at our own peril.
 2. One of the ways that a doctor can find out how you are doing is by your appetite. Because he knows that a healthy person is a hungry person. That is how I know I am healthy right now. I am looking forward to lunch.
 3. In the same way if you neglect God's Word and you find yourself sort of weak spiritually and you are and you are

find your mood is changing and your outlook is changing, because you have a deficiency of God's Word in your life. You need to get it in your life again.

- D. The Bible is the Word of God. If you want to grow spiritually you need it in your life. This is the user's manual you have been searching for. The very word Bible says it all. Bible.

B I B L E. Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth. So start reading it and see what it has to say for you.

- II. That brings us now to Psalm 19:7-11. Psalm 19 is about the Word of God.

Psalms 19:7-11... 7 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; 8 The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; 9 The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward. NKJV

Ok. It tells us five important things we need to know about the Bible. Things that will help you in your spiritual growth.

A. **No.1 - The Word Of God Is Perfect.**

1. This phrase **The law of the Lord** is a Hebrew term used to define Scripture. So it is not limited to the law

alone. It is really speaking of all of God's Word. So we could say the Word of God or even the Bible is perfect.

2. That is what we need to know right off. That is in direct contrast to the flawed imperfect reasonings of humanity today. We don't need to flow with the winds of change. You can stand on the firm foundation of God's Perfect Word.
3. It is perfect for every season. I mean where are you going to turn in a time of crisis? When tragedy hits? When disaster strikes? When you need something that will give you strength and direction in your time of need. That will come from the Word of God.
4. One writer said, and I quote, **“One gem from that ocean is worth all of the pebbles from earthly streams.”**

And that is so true. Just a pebble from the ocean of God's Word can make all the difference in the world. How many in their affliction have found comfort from Scripture.

5. One person wrote, **“He who rejects the Bible has nothing to live by. Neither does he have anything to die by.”**
6. And I can tell you from personal experience I have put the Word of God to the test. I have trusted in what it has said and it has sustained and given me direction and hope and comfort when I needed it.

7. **The Word of God is perfect.** That could be translated, **“It is whole. It is complete. It is sufficient.”** The Bible is sufficient. I don’t need to add to it. I don’t need to take away from it.
- B. No.2 - The Word Of God Transforms Us. - Psalm 19:7**
- The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul:** This phrase converting could be translated, “It revives us. It restores us. It reboots us. It transforms us.” You see when you read God’s Word it will revive you. It will restore you. It will change you.
1. Now if you don’t need to be changed then maybe you don’t need the Bible. If you have got it all together and you don’t have any questions and you don’t have any conflicts and you feel your life is perfect then I guess you don’t need the Bible.”
 2. But if you are like the rest of us, and you are aware of your weakness and you are aware of your inadequacy and you are aware of your need for God then you will be thankful to know that the Word of God is perfect and the Word of God can transform you and help you to be the person God has called you to be.
 3. **But it is not just enough to read and study God's Word. We must do it!** **James 1:22** says, “It is a message to obey, and if you don’t obey, you are only fooling yourself. You are like a person who looks at their reflection in a mirror and doesn’t do anything about it.”

- a. It is sort of like you know you think you are looking pretty good and you notice people are laughing at you. Why are they laughing? You didn't say anything funny. And you go into the restroom and you check yourself in the mirror and you go, "Oh, there is a noodle there from your spaghetti just stuck to your cheek. So you pull it off. Good.
- b. Now what if you went in and saw this problem. "Oh wow. Look at that. That is something. Yeah." And you just walk out. That is crazy.
- c. In the same way I come to the Word of God. It says something. It exposes an error in my life. It shows me something I need to do.

And I see it. If I don't do it I am like a fool who looks at his reflection in a mirror but doesn't heed what I see.

And the same is true when I hear the Word of God and don't apply it in my life.

You must process it. And then you must obey it. You must do what it says.

C. **No.3 - The Word Of God Gives Incredible Wisdom.** - **"The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."**

It is an interesting thing this Hebrew word that is translated to the English word **simple** comes from a root that means an open door. It is the idea of a person who has a mind like an open door. Everything comes in and everything goes out. But it goes in one ear and goes out the other.

1. It is the kind of person that would say, “Hey you know I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I am good with that. I think that is true.” And then they will also say, “And I also believe in UFOs and I am certain that Elvis is still alive.” You know they are just sort of open to everything.
2. But the Word of God can make a person like that, a simple-minded person into someone who is wise.
3. And thus they can develop a biblical world view. So I will see this world and culture as God wants me to see it. That is why it is so important to understand what it says.

So what have we learned so far? 1) God’s Word is perfect. 2) God’s Word transforms us. 3) God’s Word makes us wise.

D. **No.4 - The Word Of God Is Right.** - **“The statutes of the Lord are right...”** In Hebrew this means that the Bible has set out the right path for us to follow. We don’t have to lose our bearings in the fog of human opinion. Or in the craziness of circumstances and events. We don’t have to let our fickle emotions lead us about. We have a more sure foundation. The Word of God.

1. That is why it is important to read through books of the Bible verse by verse chapter by chapter. And as I read these verses I ask myself questions like:

- **Is there any sin to avoid.**

- **Is there a promise to claim?**

- **Is there a victory to gain?**

- **Is there a blessing to enjoy?**

2. Knowing the Word of God is right. Sometimes people will ask the question, “Well what do you do if you come to a verse in the Bible you don’t agree with.” Change your opinion because you are wrong. It is simple.

3. **The objective is to conform your thinking to what the Bible teaches not try to conform the Bible to your way of thinking.**

4. We are told in **Romans 12** that we are to be **transformed by the renewing of our minds**. And the problem we have today is people are trying to change God’s Word to their lifestyle or change God’s Word to the things they have decided they want to do. It doesn’t work that way.

5. The Word of God is right. And if you are not in alignment with it you are wrong. So you need to change.

E. **No.5 - Keeping The Word Of God Makes You Happy.** -

That’s right. **“8 The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart”** There is a sense of joy in His ways.

1. **Luke 11:28** says, **“Happy are those that hear the Word of God and keep it.”**

a. Did you know you can have a happy life without sin? A happy life without sex outside of marriage?

A happy life without drugs and alcohol? A happy life without selfishness?

- b. God is not out to ruin your life. He wants it to be fulfilled. The happiness doesn't end when you are living as a follower of Jesus Christ, it truly begins!
2. I read the story of an old hermit who lived deep in the mountains of Colorado. He died. And some of his distant relatives who really didn't know him all that well came to collect his valuables.

Upon arriving they found this old miner's shack with an outhouse behind it. Inside the shack there was the rock fireplace, an old cooking pot, some mining equipment, a cracked table with a three-legged chair by a tiny window. And there was an old kerosene lamp as the centerpiece of the table.

So these distant relatives gathered up the possessions of this old miner and loaded them up in the truck and they were driving off. As they were they were making their way out an old friend of the miner was walking in.

He called out to them and says y'all mind if I take what is left in that old shack. They said oh no, we don't mind. Take it. We have got all the valuable stuff. You can have whatever is still there. He said thanks a lot and off they went.

And that old friend of the miner walked in, looked around a little bit and knew where to look specifically. He reached under the table, found one of the floorboards. He lifted it up and he proceeded to take out

all of the gold his friend had discovered in the past 53 years. There was millions of dollars of gold there.

Apparently the old loner had died with only his true friend knowing his actual worth.

And as the friend looked out the little window and watched the cloud of dust behind the relatives car disappear he said, **“You should have got to know him better.”**

3. And in the same way our friend Jesus Christ wants to make Himself known to us. But sometimes we are like a distant relative.

But if we will get to know Him better we would discover the true riches that He has for us. And where are they? They are in His Word.

He says, “Lo, in the volume of the book I come. It is written of Me.”

4. As you study, as you memorize, as you read and obey the Word of God your life will be transformed and you will be a successful Christian.

III. Psalm 1 pulls our first essential all together for us (turn there please)

Ps 1:1-3... 1 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That

brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. NKJV

- A. So I have a choice. I can follow God's Word and live a happy and fulfilled life. Or I can disobey it and reap the consequences of it. **If you want to thrive and be successful spiritually you must love and study the Word of God.**
- B. And not only that, but you must memorize Scripture as well. **Psalm 119:11** says, **"Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might sin against You."** And when I was a young Christian I hid my Bible in the bushes. No I hide the Word of God in my heart.
- C. It is not just enough to hold the Bible or talk about the Bible. You need to internalize the Word of God in your life. **Colossians 3:16** says, **"Let the Word of God dwell in you richly."** Or another translation would say, "Let the Word of God be perfectly at home in you."
- D. God wants His Word to permeate every area of your life. No exceptions. He wants it to be a part of your business ethic. He wants it to be a part of the way you live as a married man or a married woman or as a single man or a single woman.

He wants it to guide you in the way that you raise your children. He wants it to instruct you in the way that you live your life. He wants it to show you what your priorities in life ought to be.

And you are only going to find it by studying it and learning it and internalizing it and memorizing it.

- E. In closing **the Bible is the book that tells us how to know God and how to get to heaven**. It is the roadmap to heaven.

It is the Bible that tells us that we are separated from God by our sin. It is the Bible that tells us that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

It is the Bible that tells us that Jesus both died and rose again from the dead. And it is the Bible that tells us that Jesus stands at the door of our life and He knocks and if we will hear His voice and open the door He will come in.

- F. You don't have to go through life trying to figure it out, it is already written for you. The path is perfect and complete. Just open up the manual.