

THE TORCH

April and May 2017



The Spiritual Discipline Of the Word-Part 2 Ronald L. Rushing, Th.D. Senior Teaching Pastor

The spiritual disciplines are means of grace. Too often we think of the spiritual disciplines as those spiritual tasks we must endure, but certainly won't derive any pleasure from. The idea behind that mentality is just grit your teeth and get through them – sort of like drinking really nasty tasting medicine that we have to take. Nothing could be further from the truth! Now, it is true that we won't derive carnal or fleshly pleasures, but we will experience wonderful spiritual pleasures. And truly, spiritual pleasures are really the most satisfying. We can enjoy spiritual pleasures without enduring a hangover the next day, or the guilt that comes along with indulging the flesh.

My goal is not to guilt anyone into reading their Bible or praying. Rather I want to motivate and inspire every Christian to experience greater joy and pleasure in God than we ever have before. C. S. Lewis once made this very insightful remark, "It would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

Last month I developed some of the spiritual disciplines involved with the Word - hearing, reading, and studying the Word. Today we are going to briefly mention three more: memorizing, meditating, and obeying the Word.

Memorizing The Word - Why memorize the Word of God? There are a whole host of reasons! First, to Be Conformed into Christ's Image (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18). If we want to be transformed into Christ's image, we must behold Him constantly. The way we behold Christ is in His Word. Memorizing Scripture enables us to behold the Lord wherever we are and at any time. Second, to Have Victory Over Sin (cf. Psalm 119:9, 11). How did Jesus have victory over temptation in the wilderness? He quoted Scripture to the devil. How did He do that? Jesus had committed these passages to memory. Third, to Be Able to Share

the Gospel with Unbelievers. If we have hidden God's Word in our hearts, we can quote Scripture easily and freely. Fourth, to Be Able To Encourage and Counsel Believers. Fifth, to Be Able To Meditate on God's Truth Throughout the Day. Sixth, to Be Able to Strengthen Our Faith: How often have we sensed that our faith was weak? Well, by recalling God's word, we will find our faith growing stronger (Proverbs 22:17-19).

Chuck Swindoll has written, "I know of no other single practice in the Christian life more rewarding, practically speaking, than memorizing Scripture. . . . No other single exercise pays greater spiritual dividends! Your prayer life will be strengthened. Your witnessing will be sharper and much more effective. Your attitudes and outlook will begin to change. Your mind will become alert and observant. Your confidence and assurance will be enhanced. Your faith will be solidified." Dr. Howard Hendricks of Dallas Seminary once made the statement that if it were his decision, every student graduating from Dallas Theological Seminary would be required to learn one thousand verses word perfect before they graduated. Dallas Willard, professor of Philosophy at the University of Southern California, wrote, "Bible memorization is absolutely fundamental to spiritual formation. If I had to choose between all the disciplines of the spiritual life, I would choose Bible memorization, because it is a fundamental way of filling our minds with what it needs. This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth. That's where you need it! How does it get in your mouth? Memorization."

Meditating On The Word - What is Christian meditation? Meditation is to think deeply about Scripture. It is not mental passivity, but mental activity. It is not emptying the mind, but filling it with God's truth. It provides a picture of a man so deep in thought that he goes around muttering to himself. The illustration that Donald Whitney uses in his book, *The Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life*, is that of a tea bag. He likens us to a cup of hot water, and different plunges of the tea bag to

hearing, reading, studying, and memorizing the Word of God. Meditation on the Word, however, is to fully immerse the tea bag completely in the hot water and let it steep until all the rich tea flavor is extracted and the water becomes reddish brown.

Obedying The Word - It really doesn't matter how much time we spend hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on God's Word, if we don't obey it! The purpose of all Scripture intake is life change. If that is missing, then all these other spiritual disciplines are pointless. I've known Christians that were involved in many different Bible studies each week, but were only taking in more and more information and not being changed by it. The more truth we know, the more responsible we are to obey that truth! Jesus said at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, that there are two kinds of people – those that hear His word and acts on it, and those that hear His word and don't act on it. Those that act on His word are like the man who builds his house on the rock. When the rains fall, and the floods come, and the winds blow and slam against the house it doesn't fall. But those that don't act on His words are like the man who built his house on the sand. When the great storm comes, his house falls.

As we are reading the Word, look for the timeless truth in a passage. When Jesus said to the thief on the cross, "Today you shall be with Me in paradise," it had a very specific application for the thief on the cross that is different from the application that you and I would make. The application to us is not that every believer is going to die today and go to be with the Lord. What would the timeless truth be in this text – that truth that is true for all people of all time? Well, one timeless truth is that a believer who dies in the Lord goes to be with the Lord forever. To apply that truth, we would believe and rejoice in it.

As we read and meditate on God's Word, we need to be asking ourselves questions like I have learned from The Navigators: Is there a sin to avoid? Is there a promise to claim? Is there something I should praise and thank God for? Is there a prayer to repeat? Is there a command to obey? Is there a condition to meet? Is there a challenge to face? Is there an example to follow? Is there a truth to believe? We need to write down specific points of application the Holy Spirit gives to us. It would be good to seek and come away from our time with the Lord with at least one specific action we will take. So, it falls upon us to make a decision. Will we spend time memorizing, meditating, and obeying God's Word? Will we follow these paths up the mountain into the very presence of God where we can behold His unspeakable beauty? The choice is yours!

Pastor Ron



Summer Family Study

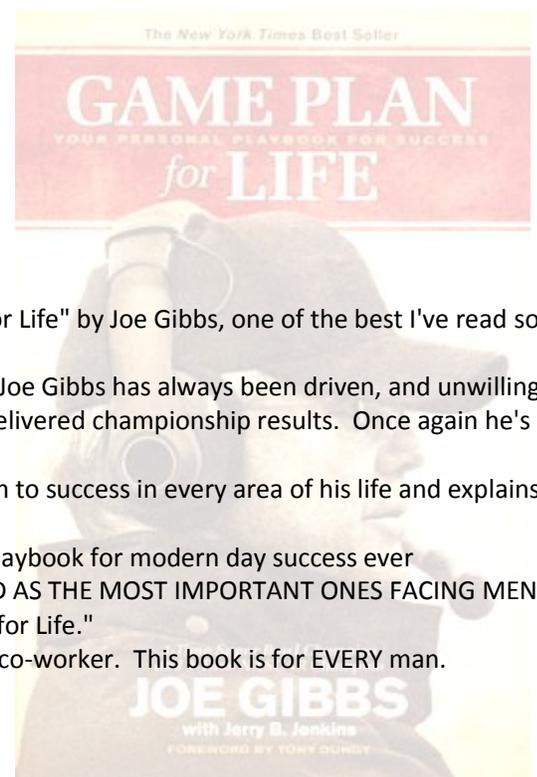
Hey guys, this summer we have a great study lined up for you. "Game Plan for Life" by Joe Gibbs, one of the best I've read so far.

Tony Dungy, wrote " 'Game Plan for Life' is a great guide to successful living. Joe Gibbs has always been driven, and unwilling to settle for second best. Whatever challenge he's undertaken, he has always delivered championship results. Once again he's done it at a Super Bowl level."

Now for the first time, Coach Gibbs shares the principles that have guided him to success in every area of his life and explains how you can make those same principles work for you.

Come join Joe and his team of experts as they walk us through the greatest playbook for modern day success ever written - the Bible - and address THE SIX ISSUES A NATIONAL SURVEY IDENTIFIED AS THE MOST IMPORTANT ONES FACING MEN TODAY. In our time we will use a DVD, a workbook and Joe's book, "Game Plan for Life."

The cost for both book and workbook is \$20.00. Bring a friend, a neighbor, a co-worker. This book is for EVERY man.

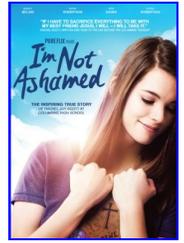


Gary Cumberledge

DVDs

I'm Not Ashamed

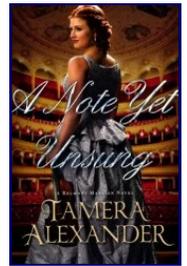
I'm Not Ashamed is the inspiring and powerful true story of Rachel Joy Scott- the first student killed in the Columbine High School shooting in 1999. The movie shows us, largely through her journals that were later found, that she had struggles just like the rest of us. She did not fit in, she questioned her direction, she had moments of doubt. But she always had a friend to lean on and once she committed fully to living for God, she decided she was going to stand for her faith regardless of the cost. And so, Rachel showed compassion and love for her fellow students until armed classmates entered Columbine High School on a fateful day that changed America forever. Her hopes and dreams seemed to end, but God was just getting started. This hope-filled story reminds us that when we put our lives in God's hands, we can make a world of difference.



***A Note Yet Unsung* by Tamera Alexander (Belmont Mansion #3)**

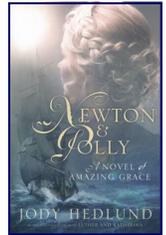
A master violinist trained in Vienna, Rebekah Carrington manages to wheedle her way into an audition with the new maestro at the Nashville Philharmonic. But women in the post-Civil War South are "far too fragile and frail" for the rigors of an orchestra, and Rebekah's hopes are swiftly dashed when the conductor bows to public opinion. To make matters worse, Adelia Cheatham, mistress of Belmont Mansion and Rebekah's new employer, agrees with him.

Conductor Nathaniel Tate Whitcomb must finish composing his symphony before the grand opening of the city's new symphony hall, despite a strange buzzing and recurring pain in his head. As Tate's ailment worsens, he knows Rebekah can help him finish his symphony, if she can forgive him for robbing her of her dream. Both characters face complex situations that test their loyalties and integrity, and both must decide what they can sacrifice and what chances they can take in order to pursue their dreams while still honoring God first with their musical gifts.



***Newton and Polly: A Novel of Amazing Grace* by Jody Hedlund**

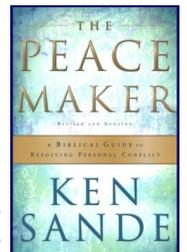
Newton and Polly: A Novel of Amazing Grace is a story of the early years of the life of John Newton, author of the renowned hymn, "Amazing Grace," and his wife Polly. He was still a teenager when he met his distant relation, Polly Catlett, but he was immediately taken with her. Though the book is a work of fiction, the author has kept to the facts of Newton's life - his dealings in the slave trade, his disreputable character, his lack of morals, and most of all his unbelief in God. It was Polly's love for John and her belief that God had a purpose for him that was clearly the hope John clung to in his lowest moments. His perilous experiences finally led him to a place of redemption and repentance before his time as a pastor and figure of influence in the late 1700s. The book is an inspiring tale of a prodigal's flight from God, his redemption, and the woman who loved him.



NON-FICTION

***The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* by Ken Sande**

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." But it often seems like conflict and disagreement are unavoidable. Serious, divisive conflict is everywhere — within families, in the church, and out in the world. And it can seem impossible to overcome its negative force in our lives. In *The Peacemaker*, Ken Sande presents a comprehensive and practical theology for conflict resolution designed to bring about not only a cease-fire but also unity and harmony. Sande takes readers beyond resolving conflicts to true, life-changing reconciliation with family members, coworkers, and fellow believers. Biblically based, the book is full of godly wisdom and useful suggestions that are easily applied to any relationship needing reconciliation. Sande's years of experience as an attorney and as president of Peacemaker Ministries will strengthen readers' confidence as they stand in the gap as peacemakers. (From the Publisher's Description)





Ministering to families with children from Birth-High School



2, 9, 16, 23, 30	Sunday School and Children's Church
2, 9, 23, 30	Awana
5, 12, 19, 26	High School Youth Group
5, 12, 19, 26	Good News Clubs
7, 14, 21, 28	Middle School Youth Group
7, 21	Wildside Preteen Youth Group
9, 12, 13, 14	Living Lord Supper
20, 21	Good News Club End-of-Year Parties
30	Business Meeting
May 7	Awana Awards



Our **Summer Fun Booklets** are ready!
Extra copies are available in the main foyer, the N.E. foyer, and the Children's Welcome Center.



What to Do When Kids Are Annoying

Dealing with annoying behavior is not like disciplining for defiance or teaching a child to follow instructions. When it comes to impulsivity, the child can't always make changes just by choosing something different. In many cases, kids don't realize that they're being annoying and they don't know what to do to be more appropriate. Furthermore, these patterns often come from habits that have been practiced for a long time. These reasons are not excuses for inappropriate behavior but they're a further indication that the job will take concentrated effort from the child and the parents.

Part of the issue is immaturity; the child hasn't learned how to pick up on the social cues or restrain behavior as much as we'd like. But these children need more than just time to grow up. They need concentrated work to develop two character qualities: self-control and sensitivity. These qualities not only help children when they're young, but they become tools for success as children get older.

Here are some working definitions for sensitivity and self-control to get you started with your children in this area:

Self-control is the ability to control myself so that Mom and Dad don't have to.

Self-control means to think before I act.

Self-control is the ability to talk about problems instead of grabbing, pushing, or hitting.

Self-control means that I limit the noises I make when others are around.

Self-control means that I focus on one thing until it gets done, before I move to the next.

Sensitivity means that when I walk into a room I look and listen before I speak.

Sensitivity is thinking about how my actions are affecting other people.

Sensitivity means thinking about how I could help someone else.

Working on these two character qualities can help children become more self aware, and can help your parenting become more positive.

This parenting tip comes from the book [Good and Angry: Exchanging Frustration for Character in You and Your Kids](#) by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN.

Stephen Crabbe
GO Team
Chairman



“What am I doing right now to better the Kingdom of God!” That statement can apply to all of us no matter where we are or who we are with. Doesn't it! However, it was the perspective that Sam Perez stated will be on the team's mind when they are in a village eight hours drive out from Oaxaca, Mexico. You may be asking yourself - What team? Who? Where? Why?

Well, I asked myself those same questions. OK, I knew the answers, but thought I should still ask the questions for the benefit of the rest of El Camino.

Teri Ploski and I had the privilege of interviewing the Oaxaca Short Term Mission team for the purpose of providing you personal insight to the team. They will be leaving June 3, and returning June 13. We sat down with Sam Perez, Amanda Starks, Adriana Newton, and Pastor Hoss Hughes to hear firsthand their excitement to serve God in a number of ways, their plans, their anxieties, and their prayer requests.

When asked how the idea of this STM trip came about, Hoss said that many had the same idea, which came to fruition at a meeting of some of the members of Crossroads (the ECBC college group) in the sound studio at the back of the church.

“We came to the meeting with an idea of that this is something we need to do. We've been doing Crossroads the same for the last two years and everybody felt this was a good way to take another step forward.”

Sam also shared that he had been wanting to take a team down to the area where he grew up so, “Why not Oaxaca?”

When I asked Adriana what she thought about this Oaxaca STM trip, she shared how she had been on an ECBC STM trip years ago to Mexico. Her excitement was clear when she said “The [previous trip] experience was amazing, getting to work with kids down there. So, when I heard there was another opportunity, especially for the college group, I thought it was a good idea and a good way for the group to come together in a team aspect.”

Amanda had been on some organized STM trips before, but this trip presented a new opportunity to grow as a Christian. As co-Team Leader with Sam, she now is in a position of more responsibility and expressed that “making sure everything is organized well before, and runs smoothly during the trip” is a whole new experience that she is enjoying.

From being stretched in responsibility, to cultural differences, to language barriers and possible food issues (yes, Hoss who absolutely dislikes beans will “happily and joyfully eat what is served”) all on the team foresee some challenges about this trip, but maybe none so “good” as the challenge that Sam faces.

Sam grew up as a missionary kid. His parents, Ciro and Juanita Perez, are part of the El Camino family as missionaries we help support. They are tent maker missionaries who serve God in Oaxaca, Mexico, and in the surrounding areas (up to many hours drive away). Sam is not coming home as the son his parents get to spend undivided time with. He will be there as the co-Leader of the STM with responsibilities to help the team navigate the issues of the day and help them serve God in the place he grew up.

One of those places is the village of La Luz (the Light). It is a six to eight hour drive from Oaxaca, depending on the conditions of the hilly and winding roads. It is the home of people from the Zapotec Indian tribe; the same Indian tribe his father comes from. (There are many villages / different dialects of Zapotec Indians in and around the state of Oaxaca, Mexico). In fact Ciro and Juanita helped found the church in the village of La Luz. After many years under their care, followed by years under the care of other Christians, the village has expressed the desire for Ciro and Juanita to take on a more regular role to help them stay on track spiritually. Their renewed contact is what led to the opportunity for the El Camino team to serve there, and to encourage the Perez's and the church in La Luz.

Sam, Amanda, Adriana and Hoss (with the Perez's and others) will go to La Luz to spend time studying with the youth and discuss with them the universal challenges that all youth and young adults face in society to help and encourage them to navigate life from a



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The Torch is a publication for the members and friends of El Camino Baptist Church, 7777 E. Speedway, Tucson, AZ 85710. Phone: (520) 886-7770. Email: torch@elcaminochurch.org or call the church office. Torch articles are due no later than the third Monday of the month for that month's publication.

El Camino Family Ministries has been evangelizing and discipling children through Good News Clubs this school year. We would like to ask you if you would pray about partnering with us as we reach out to parents and guardians through our Good News Club Family End-of-the-Year Party on April 20 and April 21.

Here are some ways you can partner with us:

- **Contribute a gift basket or two for a grand prize**
- **Be a table host, conversing with families, inviting them to our summer programs**
- **Make or purchase a yummy dessert**
- **Help us decorate and set the tables**
- **Help us clean up and reset for the second party**
- **Help us clean up the second night**
- **Help in the kitchen with dinner details (Simple tasks, many hands make light work!)**
- **Be a fervent Prayer Partner! Let us know and we will give you a specific prayer list.**

Thank you for prayerfully considering partnering with us in this outreach ministry!

Please contact Diane in Family Ministries at dyeager@elcaminochrch.org or 886-7770 ext 17 with any questions, input or suggestions, and to sign-up.



627 N. Swan Rd, Tucson, AZ 85715

Phone: 520-308-8990

Hours: Monday 1:00 pm-7:00 pm, Tuesdays and
Thursdays 11:00 am-5:00 pm

Thank you for praying for our roof replacement and making a decision on a roofer. We have asked God for guidance and direction and as always He has answered our prayers. We believe He has lead us to the best companies to do the job needed. Now we need prayer that the job will go well, be completed in a timely fashion, for the weather to not cause any delays, and that God will prepare us financially as we try our best to be the best stewards of His money. We also ask that God's grace and blessings abound while these repairs are in progress.

For the month of February there were 322 client visits, 14 people accepted Jesus as their Savior, Gospel presented to 36 clients and 161 spiritual discussions. It seems we are seeing more abortion minded clients. Please pray for our counselors that the Holy Spirit will give them just the exact words the clients need to hear to soften their hearts toward their unborn baby.

Because of your partnership with us, together we save babies and families not only with material needs but spiritual also. Thank you for making it possible to meet the material needs for new babies and children up to size 5T in clothing and size 6 in diapers. They are able to come once a month for diapers, wipes, formula and clothing. We are always in need of the larger size diapers and clothing.

[Ruth Applegate](#)

Jeremiah 33:3 "Call on Me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."



ABUNDANCE Conference

A group of women from El Camino just returned from the ABUNDANCE conference in Phoenix. We had a wonderful weekend with many tears, both those brought on by the Holy Spirit, and those from laughing until we cried in hysterics. Our time began in our choice of hotels, and to say that it was less than stellar would be an understatement, but we all chose to call it an adventure! And, I might add, we all lived to tell about it, although it is really is the least important part of the time we had together. Abundance is a word I have thought of very often in my Christian walk! God's abundance permeates my entire life, and I am so very grateful for His lavish abundance. His Word speaks often of the abundance He desires to give to each of us, and I will share some of them with you. "...You have brought us out to a place of ABUNDANCE." Psalm 66:12b "...serve the Lord your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the ABUNDANCE of everything," Deut. 28:47 "...He gives food in ABUNDANCE." Job 36:32b "...And shall delight themselves in the ABUNDANCE of peace." Psalm 37:11b"and Your paths drip with ABUNDANCE." Psalm 65:11b " And, may I say they go on and on. Here are some ideas that I would like to share from the conference. "In Him little is much. In Him less is more. In Him hardship is blessing. In Him hurt is healed. In Him wrong is made right." "His love multiplies. His mercy is boundless. His grace is gratuitous. His forgiveness is excessive. His kindness is generous. His faithfulness overflows. In Him, our lives are ABUNDANT."

We left the conference filled to overflowing in God's great ABUNDANCE for each of us. And most importantly, we deepened friendships with those we knew well, and made new friendships with those we did not know past knowing their names, and, that is ABUNDANCE that will never be forgotten or unappreciated. Because of an accident, it took us four and one half hours to get back to Tucson, but even that was part of God's adventurous plan for us, so that we had uninterrupted time to share our lives and hearts with each other. Even that was divine providence.



Christian perspective. The village and church there is on the side of a mountain, and people have to walk a quarter mile uphill from the church to use the nearest bathroom. The Team will also help build either a bathroom at the church property or a cement ramp to the bathroom (if the bathroom is already built) so people don't have to walk in the dirt and mud to get to the bathroom.

This trip is about serving God, and fellowshiping with His people no matter their culture or circumstances. There will be no 5 Star Resorts . . . steaks on the grill . . . ice cream at the pool . . . lounging in the sun. It will be about sweating in the sun, humidity and heat, sleeping on the floor, showing the love of God to others, and being stretched and grown by God.

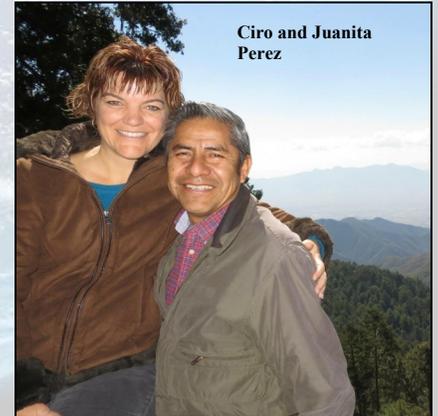
Even though they all expressed loving support from their families and friends (Amanda said "My family is all for it!" Adriana's big brother is supportive but concerned for his little sister). There are many ways we as a church family can prayerfully support them.

- Pray that their preparations in advance, as they study together scriptures about Paul reaching other cultures, discuss cross-cultural sensitivities, and come together as a team are honoring to God and fruitful.
- Pray that their expectations, or previous cross-cultural experiences, don't hinder what God wants them to see and do on this trip.
- Pray that God prepares the hearts of the people they will meet, share with and minister to.
- Pray that the families and circumstances of life they leave behind for this trip are taken care of by God.
- Pray that the necessary financial support is available when plane tickets need to be purchased, and for the trip in general.
- Pray that their time on the trip is not without impact. The team very much wants the time and effort and resources to be of lasting Kingdom significance.

Look for opportunities to interact with, and pray for, the team in the coming weeks before their trip!

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen Crabbe



Ciro and Juanita Perez

Jonah



Navigating a Life Interrupted

A seven week study by Priscilla Shirer

Tuesday nights, June 6-July 25

Family Dinner 5:30 pm

Discussion Groups 6:30 pm

DVD Study 7:00 pm

Cost \$16.00 for those attending the discussion groups