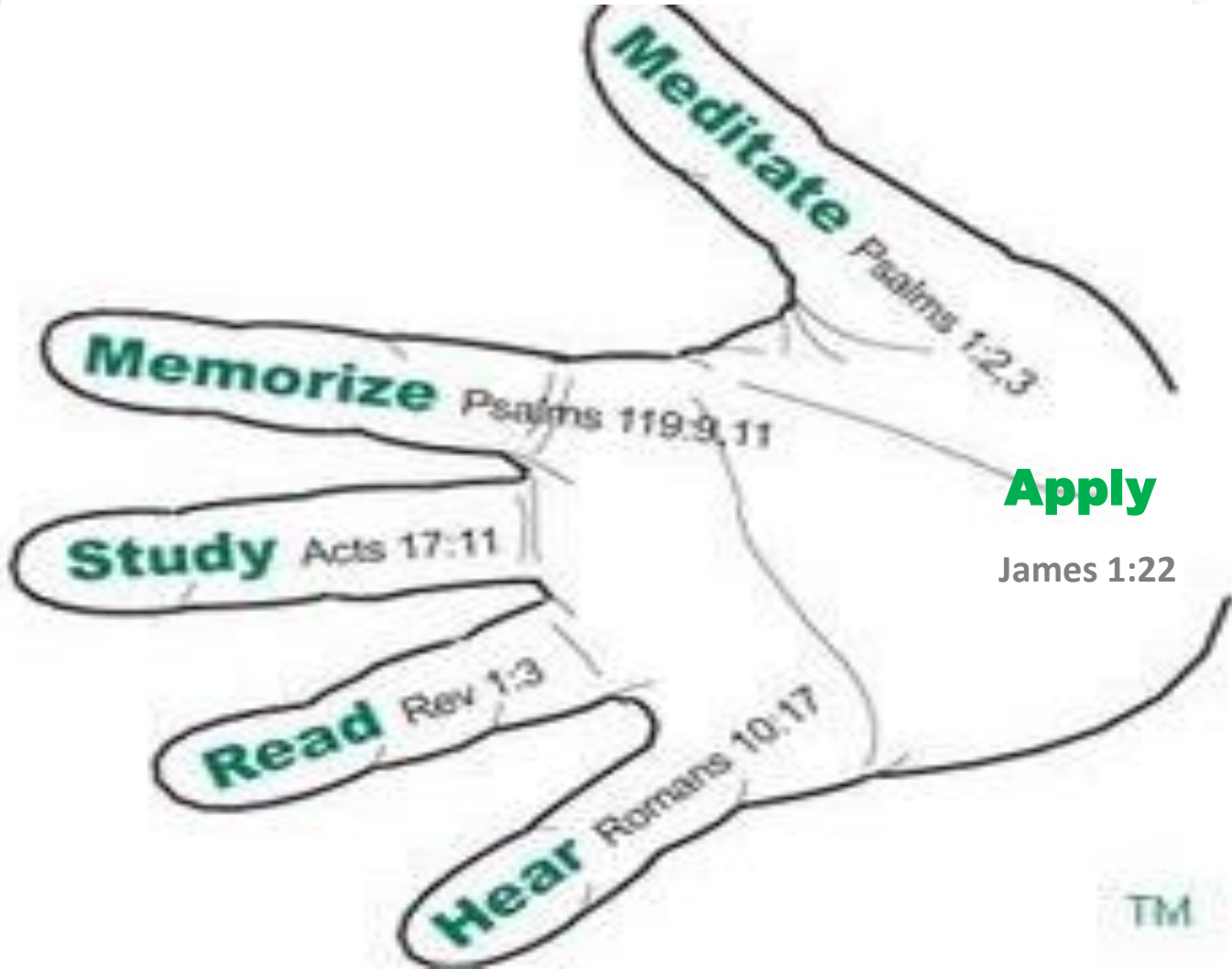


THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES (Part 5)

BIBLE INTAKE ... FOR THE PURPOSE OF GODLINESS



The Hand Illustration:

This is a simple illustration explaining different ways we interact with **God's Word**

C. Studying God's Word

- Studying (middle finger) the Bible personally or in a group helps us dig deeper into God's truths.
- Writing down insights helps us remember them.

Consider how the following might enhance your study of Scripture:

Writing	Writing down observations and questions about what you read.
Looking	Looking up cross-references.
Finding	Finding key words and seeing how they're used in other Scripture portions.
Outlining	Outlining chapters, one paragraph at a time.
Doing	Doing book studies, character studies, topical studies, and/or word studies.

Discussion Questions

1. a. Consider Ezra 7:10. To which three key areas of study did Ezra devote himself?
- b. What did he do before he began teaching God's Word to the people?

D. Memorizing God's Word

Memorizing the Word (index finger) is the most powerful way to change our thinking and give us the mind of Christ.

Memorizing Scripture strengthens our faith because it repeatedly reinforces the truth, often just when we need to hear it again.

When Scripture is stored in the mind, it is available for the Holy Spirit to take and bring to our attention when we need it most. Psalm 119:22; Col 3:2

Memorization stimulates meditation, anywhere at any time during the day or night

It helps us resist Satan and conquer temptations and gives us ways to witness to or counsel others.

If our faith is weak, memorize verses on faith. If you're struggling with a habit, find verses that will help you experience victory over it.

Tips on Scripture Memory

Write out the verses on a sheet of paper or index cards.

Draw picture reminders to trigger your memory of key words in the verses.

Memorize the verses perfectly, word for word with each reference.

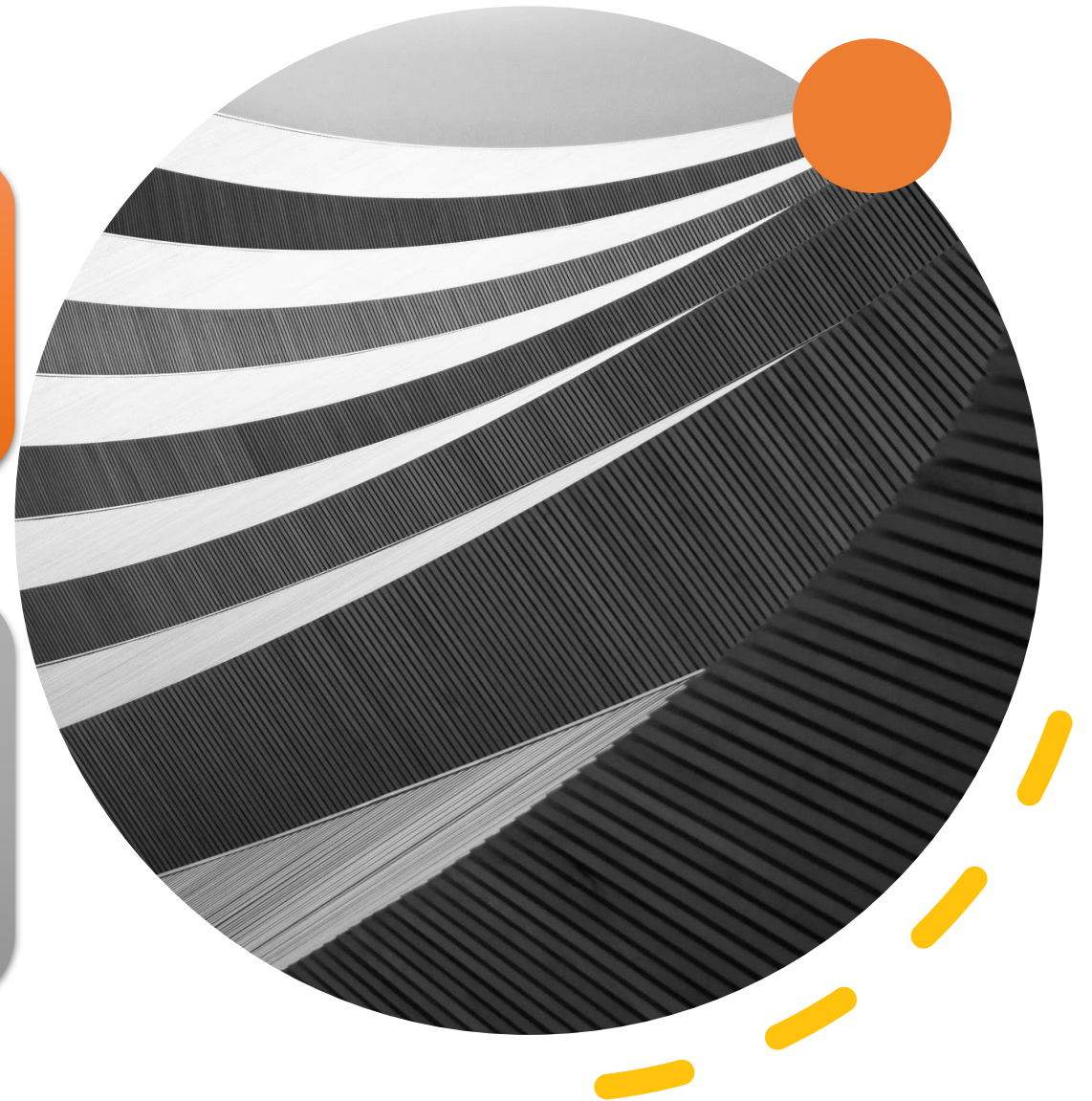
Find someone who will hold you accountable for your memory work and will review verses with you.

Every day, review some of the verses you have memorized and meditate on them.

Discussion Questions

Read Proverbs 22:17-19. Why should we keep God's Word within us and ready on our lips?

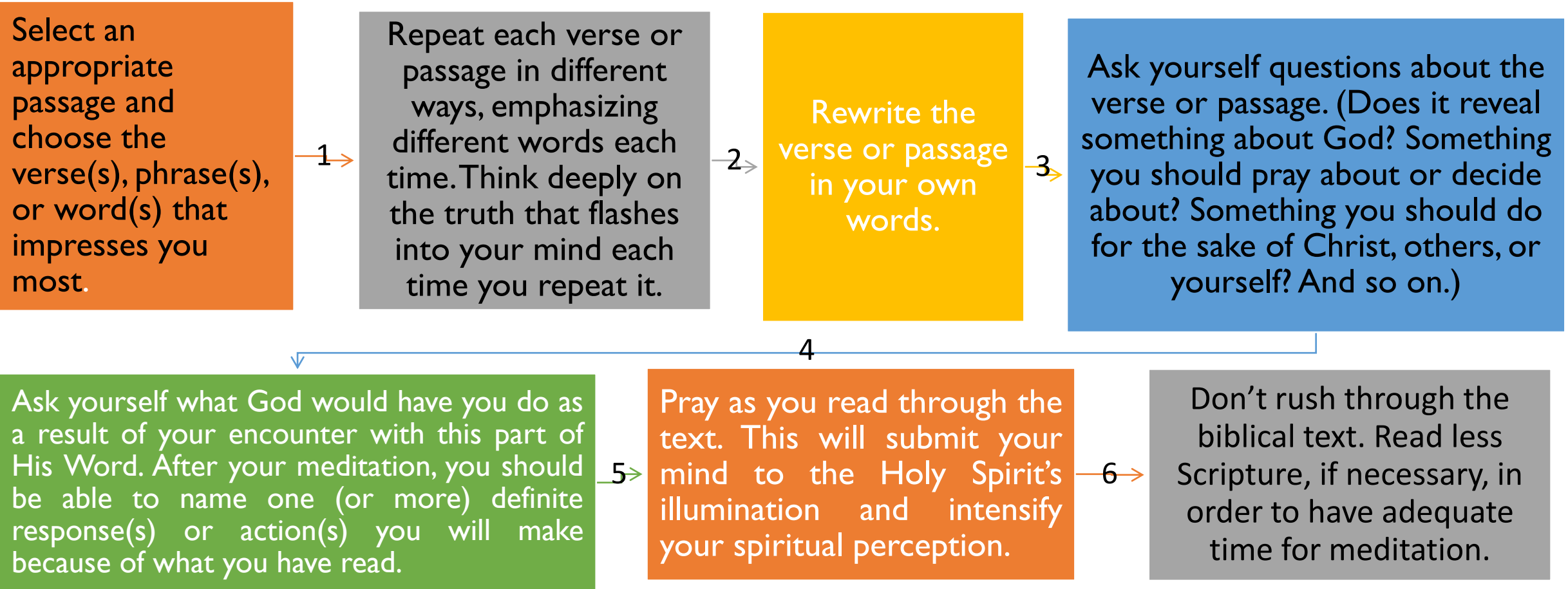
Describe a time, if you can, when Scripture memory helped you during a witnessing or counseling opportunity. Share your experience with the group.



E. Meditating God's Word

Meditation/reflection (thumb) connects with the others, like the thumb touches each finger. Taking time to ponder what we've read, heard, studied and memorized will cause spiritual transformation.

While some advocate a kind of meditation in which they do their best to empty the mind, Christian meditation involves filling our mind with God and truth.



How then do we meditate Christianly?

Discussion Questions

What do you think it means to meditate on God's Word throughout the day and night?

As we meditate on Scripture, what happens to our minds?

(See Romans 12:2.)

E. Applying God's Word

Putting the Word
into practice
(palm) is crucial.
Knowledge
acquisition isn't
the goal,
application is,
when dealing with
God's Word.

Discussion Questions

- Read James 1:22-25. When you read the Bible, do you find it easy to apply what you read to your life? Why, or why not?
- What steps will you take to deal with the obstacles you expect to face as you begin to memorize God's Word?
- What three steps can you take this week to cultivate the Discipline of meditating on God's Word?



CLOSING PRAYER

Ask God to open your eyes and show you the wonderful truths in His Word. Praise Him for who He is and ask Him to guide you as you seek to apply biblical truths in your life this coming week.