

# DISCIPLINE FOR GODLINESS

## DISCIPLINE OF MIND-SOUL INTENTIONAL PROGRAMMING

In the text we have been considering, Paul recommends that we focus our minds on truth, nobility, rightness, purity, loveliness, admirability, excellence, and praiseworthiness, and ends with this loaded charge: “**Think about such things**” ([Philippians 4:8](#), **italics added**). The word he uses is *logidzamai*, from which we get the mathematical computer-like word *logarithm*. It means a “... deliberate and prolonged contemplation as if one is weighing a mathematical problem.” The way I handle my mail gives an example. Frankly, most of it gets tossed. I read the return address to see if it is an ad, perhaps open it, scan a few lines — and away it goes. We are to think about the wonderful elements God wants us to put into our computers. God calls us in His Word to a massive and positive discipline of the mind.

### *Scripture*

This can only happen through a profound exposure to and continual immersion in God’s Word, accompanied by the illumination of the Holy Spirit — an exposure that is within the reach of all literate and semiliterate Christians.

Lt. General William K. Harrison was the most decorated soldier in the 30th Infantry Division, rated by General Eisenhower as the number one infantry division in World War II. General Harrison was the first American to enter Belgium, which he did at the head of the Allied forces. He received every decoration for valor except the Congressional Medal of Honor — being honored with the Distinguished Silver Cross, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star for Valor, and the Purple Heart (he was one of the few generals to be wounded in action). When the Korean War began, he served as Chief of Staff in the United Nations Command — and because of his character and self-control was ultimately President Eisenhower’s choice to head the long and tedious negotiations to end the war.

General Harrison was a soldier’s soldier who led a busy, ultra-kinetic life, but he was also an amazing man of the Word. When he was a twenty-year-old West Point Cadet, he began reading the Old Testament through once a year and the New Testament four times. General Harrison did this until the end of his life. Even in the thick of war he maintained his commitment by catching up during the two- and three-day respites for replacement and refitting which followed battles, so that when the war ended he was right on schedule.

When, at the age of ninety, his failing eyesight no longer permitted his discipline, he had read the Old Testament seventy times and the New Testament 280 times! No wonder his godliness and wisdom were proverbial, and that the Lord used him for eighteen fruitful years to lead Officers Christian Fellowship (OCF).

**Bible Study: Discipline for Godliness**

**Discipleship Series:**

**Pastor Eddie Ildefonso**

General Harrison's story tells us **two things**. **First**, it is possible, even for the busiest of us, to systematically feed on God's Word. No one could be busier or lead a more demanding life than General Harrison.

**Second**, his life remains a demonstration of a mind programmed with God's Word. His closest associates say that every area of his life (domestic, spiritual, and professional) and each of the great problems he faced was informed by the Scriptures. People marveled at his knowledge of the Bible and the ability to bring its light to every area of life.

He lived out the experience of the Psalmist:

**Oh, how I love your law!**

**I meditate on it all day long.**

**Your commands make me wiser than my enemies,**

**for they are ever with me.**

**I have more insight than all my teachers,**

**for I meditate on your statutes.**

**I have more understanding than the elders,**

**for I obey your precepts.**

**(Psalm 119:97–100)**

You must remember this: You can never have a Christian mind without reading the Scriptures regularly because *you cannot be profoundly influenced by that which you do not know*. If you are filled with God's Word, your life can then be informed and directed by God — your domestic relationships, your child-rearing, your career, your ethical decisions, your interior moral life. The way to a Christian mind is through God's Word!

Again, we must be careful not to create a Bible-reading legalism — “good Christians read the Bible through once a year.” The Bible nowhere demands this. Some simply cannot read well, or fast, and speed reading is not the answer. As Lucy told Charlie Brown: “I just completed a course in speed reading and last night I read *War and Peace* in one hour! ... It was about Russia.”

I have a dear friend who is severely dyslexic, having had the misfortune of receiving his schooling before much was known about learning disabilities, only learned to read well enough to get along in his trade. Recently he became a Christian, and with his newfound motivation to know God's Word he purchased tapes of the Scriptures. His wife also reads to him. He is reading better each year.

Most people, however, will find that reading the Scripture through once a year is the best way because it requires only five pages a day and offers a reachable annual goal. Believers, whatever your ability, you must regularly read and study God's Word. If you refuse, you are in effect “editing God” and will never have a fully Christian mind.