

RESPOND



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I discover and act on what God reveals

TRY THESE IDEAS

Ephesians Exploration: Read through the book of Ephesians in the Bible. Write down every title or description given to a follower of Jesus.

Patterns: Look back over past sermons, books you've read, conversations you've had, or personal times with God to discover patterns or repeated themes. Could God be trying to get your attention about something? Once you see the themes, respond by acting in faith.

Soft Small Voice: When you have those out-of-the-blue ideas or nagging thoughts, stop and consider them. Could the Holy Spirit be trying to help you? Evaluate if they are based in truth and facts from the Bible, or feelings, before following through or disregarding the ideas.

Candlelight Scripture: Light a candle and read and meditate on Matthew 5:14-16.

Who Am I?: If you haven't taken a spiritual gifts survey, use the resources available to do so. When you have completed it, talk with someone else about your results. Spend time in prayer with a partner asking God to reveal how He would have you use your gifts to impact His people and His Church. Then, act on what God reveals.

Be Somebody: So many times we look at situations around us and say, "somebody should do something." Choose to be the "somebody" and just do something in the name of Jesus to bless others or improve a situation.



RESPOND

I act on
what God
reveals



Developing rhythms
in my relationship
with God

Respond *I act on what God reveals*

If we're not careful we can become Christian consumers, seeing our faith as religious goods and services, or Christian knowledge seekers, learning lots about God and the Bible without ever putting anything into practice. The longer we're in the church, the more we are tempted to become passive in our faith. God is continually speaking through His Word, His Spirit, and other people. We must choose to lean in to listen, and actively seek out Truth to act on. Sometimes our response will be to move away from something, or to change a negative behavior/ thought pattern. Sometimes it will be to move towards something, or choose to obey God in some area of our life. Our obedience is often preceded with a choice to trust that God's way is always best.

PRACTICES

OBEY: As we learn who we were made to be and what God calls us to, we have an opportunity to practice and respond. There will be many times where we may question or second guess God, as the steps of obedience don't seem to make sense emotionally or don't seem to fit in our societal norms. When the Bible is clear, choose to obey first and discuss with a trusted Christian afterwards. Even when you don't fully understand, always go God's way!

TRUST: We have a choice when our own intellect, emotions, and desires seem to conflict with God's promises. Choosing to trust fights against our innate desire to control our circumstances. Trust is surrendering our way and believing God is for us and knows what's best for us. Even when things don't go the way we may hope, we can continue to practice trust.

REFLECT: Choose to spend a block of time consistently in your life to think deeply about things. Compare the call and creation of God with your own life, patterns and actions. Ask questions of yourself to dig deeper. Why did I react that way in that circumstance? What made me come alive back there? Where did my past shame or baggage get triggered? Learn more about yourself, and about your God, by regularly pausing to reflect. This practice will prepare you and set you up in the best place to act in a Godly way going forward.

DIG IN

Read James 1:22-27

Why do you think James uses the picture of a mirror to talk about time with God?

If your hair was all out of place or there was a blemish on your face, you likely would not walk away without doing something about it. What is James hoping we do in response to his words?

Read 1 John 2:1-6

Obedience is a dirty word in our culture, and to be fair it is made out to be one of the lowest forms of relationship. We eventually want to respond by living in holiness out of love and worship for God, not just being outwardly obedient. However, obedience is still very important and often the place where we start in our relationship with God.

What does John say about people who claim to be in Jesus, but don't do what He says to do?

John says that when we obey God, His Word is made complete in us. What does that mean and why is it important?

Read verse 6 again. What is the standard of living if you claim to be in Jesus?

In what area(s) of your life do you feel you need to become more obedient to God?

How does obedience build trust in God?

RESPOND

Of the three practices (Obey, Trust Reflect) which feels most natural to you? Which stands out as an area for growth? If a practice is natural for you, take it to the next level. If a practice is an area where you would like to grow, make a plan to read more about it, and seek out others who do it well or have incorporated it into their lives. Then, actively and intentionally, try out that practice for a month. Write down how you have seen God working in you, and others, as a result of anticipating God's movement through the practice.

Some of us tend to beat ourselves up for past (or even) present choices that we make that are out of alignment with who God made us to be. This common practice often keeps us punishing ourselves and failing to move towards God and living in holiness (even after God has showered us with His grace and forgiveness). We must instead ask, "What does forward look like from here?" Choose to do the next right thing. Wherever you're at today, what is a next step you can take to live out your faith in your everyday?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Magnificent Journey: Living Deep in the Kingdom by James Bryan Smith

Something More by Jason Stonehouse

The Life You've Always Wanted: Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People by John Ortberg

FOR KIDS

What's Up: Discovering the Gospel, Jesus, and Who You Really Are by Deborah Harrell



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