



Bible Verses: Hebrews 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Quotes: *“The Bible was not given for our information but for our transformation.”*— Dwight Lyman Moody

“The primary purpose of reading the Bible is not to know the Bible but to know God.”— James Merritt

Resources:

Celebration of Discipline (Author-Richard Foster)

Podcast 26: Get Your \$#@* Together – Spiritually

If you're anything like me you might feel spiritually stuck from time to time—like you've plateaued in your relationship with Jesus and can't find a rout to keep climbing. If you grew up attending church you may even feel ashamed of this lull in your faith. Hear this: nothing is wrong with you...and it doesn't mean you've somehow caused God to dislike you. We all feel this way sometimes. We all get distracted, pulled down by life's worries, and feel like God is distant.

Often, at least for me, the end of a year can be the most difficult time for me to stay engaged in my spirituality. It is the most demanding time of year at work, and with family, and if I'm not careful the first thing to get shoved out of my life is connection with God. One of the things I love the most about God is the way He loves to give things new beginnings. Lamentations 3:22-23 tells us, *“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”* God's mercies are new every morning and I believe his mercies are new every year. So, no matter how dry we've been God is always ready to start fresh with us and to meet us where we are stuck.

Michel Hendricks offered 5 great ways to get unstuck as your start this New Year: (1) Hear God's word (2) Read God's word (3) Study God's word (4) Memorize God's word and (5) Meditate on God's word. I want to offer a preemptive step before you dive into these five practices: Practice receiving God's love. It may be the most important thing you can do. Without remembering that God loves you—and deeply cares about the intimate details of your life—the pursuit of closeness will feel one-sided and empty. Know that God is pursuing closeness with you as you pursue him.

The beauty of God's love is that it survives spiritual dry times. Don't let the lie sink into your mind that spiritual dryness indicates that God has gotten over you, or that he's tired of working with you. Far from it. – Paul Maxwell

—Luke Burgett

Talk about it:

- How is your spiritual life right now? Do you feel like you have things together? Why or why not?

Make it personal:

- Which of the 5 steps that Michel Hendricks gave come easiest to you? Which are the hardest?
- When you think and reflect on your spiritual struggles, where do you see your struggles having the most negative effect? What do you do (if anything) to overcome the negative effects?

Accept the Challenge:

- Try to use the 5 Simple Steps Michel Hendricks gave to start your New Year on the right track spiritually...and connect with someone who will help hold you accountable with this.

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