



Fox River Life



Seize the Morning

Is there any single habit more important than getting your soul regularly within earshot of God? Right there with the basic natural habits we cannot avoid — breathing, eating, sleeping — one supernatural habit stands at the fountainhead of all others for our spiritual life and health and growth in a new year: hearing God's voice in his word. The first and most fundamental means of God's grace for the Christian life is his word to us in the gospel and in the Scriptures. Having his ear in prayer, because of Christ, comes in response to God's self-revelation in his word, incarnate and written. And belonging to his body in the fellowship in the local church is a reality created and sustained by God's word. Vital as prayer and fellowship are, all spiritual life and health and growth begins, just as creation, with the word of God (Genesis 1:3).

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First and Greatest Habit

Is there anything more fitting, then, for starting every day in the new year than the word of God? The Bible never commands the modern “quiet time.” Nor does it specify that we must read our Bibles first thing in the morning. In fact, the concept of Christians having their own copy of the Scriptures for private reading is a fairly recent phenomenon in the history of the church. So, here at the outset of the year, we’re not talking mainly about an obligation but an opportunity.

For Christians, getting our souls within consistent earshot of God’s voice in his word is as basic as sleeping and eating and even breathing. Our fully human Savior himself said, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). If Jesus needed his Father’s revealed words for daily human living, how much more his fallen brothers?

Grow in Grace — or Fall Away

Twice in the apostle Peter’s letters, he encourages his readers to grow. The second is his final word to them, at the end of his second letter, very last verse. You . . . beloved . . . take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (2 Peter 3:17–18)

Note first the parting of the ways. Peter’s “beloved” fellow believers are either being carried away and losing their stability (verse 17), or they are growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ (verse 18). Standing still is not an option. There is no neutral in the Christian life, back then or in the coming year. We are either regressing in the faith or progressing. Losing stability or gaining maturity. Shrinking or growing.

The all-important question, then, here at the start of a new year is how? We want to grow, don’t we? We don’t want to regress or fall back or be carried away or lose our position of security and stability. Rather, we want to grow in the grace of Christ, and increase in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:10). And grow in knowing him (John 17:3; Philippians 3:10). How, pray tell, Peter, will we grow this year?

Taste His Goodness

Only one other place in Peter’s two letters uses this same verb grow:

Put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation — if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. (1 Peter 2:1–3)

“Salvation,” in this instance, is not something Peter’s readers have already attained (unlike Ephesians 2:5, 8), but something they are, if healthy and true, growing into. This is like Paul’s statement in Philippians 2:12 not to work for but to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Which means, this “pure spiritual milk” Peter mentions has a real part to play in our final salvation.

What, then, is this “pure spiritual milk” that we not only drink but long for? Where is it that we will taste that the Lord is good? The answer, as the immediately preceding verses make plain, is “the living and abiding word of God” (1 Peter 1:23), which is “the good news that was preached to you” (1 Peter 1:25).

In other words, the key to spiritual life and health and growth — the pure spiritual milk — is God’s self-revelation to us in his words through his inspired prophets, culminating in the gospel word about his Son, attested to by the inspired apostles. The pure spiritual milk by which Christians grow up into salvation is the living and abiding words of God in the Bible, with the gospel of Jesus Christ at the heart and center.

Seize (the First Moments of) the Day

What we do each morning in the first fifteen to thirty minutes of our day is doubly revealing: it reveals both where our treasures really lie, as well as the trajectory of desires and decisions that will direct the day and, over time, our life. Therefore, while the Bible does not command morning devotions, all Christians would do well to consider starting each day in the Book. What baby steps might you take, along with these suggestions below, toward a new-year’s resolve to be in the Bible more next year?

Audit Your Morning Habits

Alexander Hamilton famously wrote, “Man is very much a creature of habit.” And perhaps especially so first thing in the morning. The relatively new “science of habit” can help us with this. As Jerome Groopman explains, writing on habits in *The New Yorker*, and quoting author Wendy Wood, “Our minds have “multiple separate but interconnected mechanisms that guide behavior.” But we are aware only of our decision-making ability — a phenomenon known as the “introspective illusion” — and that may be why we overestimate its power. In other words, because our conscious thoughts direct only a limited amount of our behaviors — and we are, unsurprisingly, very conscious of our consciousness! — we tend to overestimate our willpower. New-year’s resolves, apart from the formation of new habits, likely will not become new-year realities.

A great place to start is with being honest about what your current habits are. Ask yourself, What are my morning habits? What do I typically do in those first fifteen minutes to half hour each day? What is my morning routine, not ideally but practically? What’s the sequence of what I actually do first thing in the morning?

Identify the Cost

New habits typically don’t come easily. They aren’t “free.” There is some attendant cost. New habits that really matter don’t just typically thread into your current ones. They must displace the old. According to Groopman, “the key lies not in breaking a habit through willpower but in replacing one habit with another.” With regard to your mornings, make conscious decisions to change tangibles in your world that will guide your subconscious.

So ask, How can I get into the word of God in those first moments of each day? What needs to wait until later in the day, or go away altogether, to make space for what's more important?

Create Barriers to the Bad

After identifying the bad habits keeping you from what's more important, make concrete plans against them. Create "friction" between the bad habits of checking email or getting sidetracked in texts or notifications. Or turning on the TV. Or reading something else less important. Make them inconvenient. Take steps to remove or keep yourself from whatever is keeping you from the Bible.

Incentivize the Good

Reading the Bible is not a chore, and there's no virtue in making those moments as unpleasant as possible. Identify an inviting space, consider conducive sounds (whether silence or beloved soundtracks), and "treat yourself," within reason, to solidify the habit of coming first to God's word in the morning. In doing so, of course, we want to develop a palate that increasingly tastes and enjoys God's goodness in his word so that the real incentive and greatest reward is knowing and enjoying him.

God Gives the Growth

Whatever little supplemental steps we might try in habit formation, they are but supplements. In the end, the word of God is supernatural, and tasting his goodness is beyond our natural abilities. We cannot cultivate supernatural appetite through natural habits alone. For those of us who are serious, especially here at the outset of a new year, about making daily and consistent access to God's word vital in the new year, and the rest of our lives, we look, in and through our efforts and strategies, to God himself as the one who gives the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6–7), if it is real growth. He is the one who grows our faith (2 Corinthians 10:15) and his church (Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20) through his word, and the one who stands ready to have his gospel word bear fruit and grow in our lives (Colossians 1:6, 10).

This article comes from the desk of David Mathis the executive editor for desiringGod.org and pastor at Cities Church. He is a husband, father of four, and author of *Workers for Your Joy: The Call of Christ on Christian Leaders* (2022).

Pastor Tim Godfrey

Fox River Church Vision Statement

We desire that everyone who enters Fox River Baptist Church
Grow in the grace and Knowledge of Jesus Christ and grow in
authentic, loving familial relationships to make the name of Christ
known in our community and world, all for the glory of God and joy
of all

Communion is celebrated the first Sunday of every month



If you have events and need bulletin insert made please send me the information by Thursday 9am of each week, bulletins are printed Thursday morning.

Children's Church

Our little group has been studying the Nativity story, learning about the greatest gift given to us during Christmas.

We are starting the New Year with new material and continuing learning the books of the Bible. Please pray for our church children that their hearts will be open to the Word of God.



Fox River Baptist Church

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Website: foxriverbaptist.com

Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday
& Thursday - 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm



Here at FRBC, we have a prayer chain meant for the sharing of prayer request needs and for sharing praise for the awesome & mighty work God does in our lives. Please feel free to share any praise or request at our new Prayer request email address:

Prayer@FoxRiverBaptist.com

Care to be part of the prayer chain?

Email or call Becky Godfrey at
becl.godfrey@gmail.com —
(920) 277-1526

St. Joseph Food Program

January

Pasta Noodles



Help us reach our goal of 1,000 boxes
Drop off Boxes in the foyer near the Baptismal area

January's Birthdays

08 Nikki Ovenshire
09 Samya Johnson
12 Jordan Platel
19 Aaron Bressler
21 Nadige Platel
23 Bill Olson

January
Anniversaries



Young at heart

“Young at Heart Road trip to Celebration of Lights”

On Wednesday, Dec. 11, a van full of wide-eyed folks from FRBC, capably chauffeured by Kyle Tubbs, travelled to see the Celebration of Lights at the EAA grounds in Oshkosh, singing Christmas carols along the way. We contributed 2 grocery bags full of nonperishable food items as our entry fee and proceeded to wind our way through the many beautiful and fanciful light displays, ending in 2 light shows synchronized to Christmas music.

We concluded our evening by sharing a delicious buffet meal at Pizza Ranch in Oshkosh.

Thank you to all who came out and to Kyle for getting us safely there and back!

Care Partners service on Thursday, January 2, Please call Lynn Abitz at 920-788-9482 if you wish to join or have questions

Women's Ministries



Dear Fox River Baptist Church,

On behalf of Vida, we extend our heartfelt thanks for your participation in the Adopt-a-Family program this year. Your kindness and thoughtfulness have made a tremendous impact on the lives of those in need, bringing joy, hope and the love of Christ during this special season.

Your support is a shining example of God's love in action. Thanks to your generosity, 182 families will experience the warmth and joy of Christmas, knowing that they are cared for. You went above and beyond with your gifts for our families, and we are extremely grateful for your giving hearts.

We pray that you are richly blessed for your giving, and we are incredibly grateful for your partnership in spreading the love of Christ this Christmas. May your Christmas season be filled with peace, joy and the love of our Savior. With sincere gratitude from all of us at Vida,

Liv Lorbiecki, Volunteer Supervisor

VIDA was honored to receive a \$15,000 check from Thrivent Member Network - East Wisconsin & Upper Michigan Region for winning Carols for a Cause! We are incredibly grateful to Thrivent for selecting us to participate, organizing such a fun competition, and for this generous gift. Your support helps us further our mission to provide free medical, mentoring, material, and maternity housing support to the men, women, and families in Northeastern Wisconsin. Thank you!





Sunday Evening Services

January 5— Ask Pastor Tim
January 12—Corporate Prayer
January 19— Sol Fide Study
January 26—Corporate Prayer

No Bible study on Thursday, January 2.
We will resume our study in 2 Peter on
January 9th.



January 2025

Women's Prayer
Wednesdays at 9:30am

Women's Bible Study
Thursdays at 1:00pm

Men's & Women's
Bible Study

Saturdays at
8am

Financial Update 2024

Budget needed weekly:

2836.35



Contact Mark Wildenberg

920-378-3380 with questions.



January 5

Bob Abitz

January 12

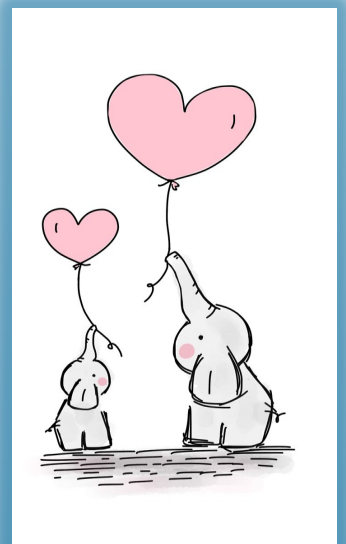
Scott Smith

January 19

Ryan Smith

January 26

Pat Groff



Please contact the
Church Office at 920
-734-6162 or Carol
Smith at (920) 475-
8727 to volunteer
for Nursery
Ministry.

Bonhoeffer
Pastor, Prophet, Martyr and Spy
By: Eric Metaxas

The book is about a pastor and theologian, who was executed for his role in the attempted assassination of Adolf Hitler. This is part one of his amazing story.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born February 4, 1906, in Breslau, Germany (now Poland). He was a German Lutheran pastor, a neo-orthodox theologian and anti-Nazi dissident. He is also one of the founding members of the Confessing Church in 1934. His writings of a Christians key role in a world going crazy was becoming widely influential even today.

Apart from his writings Bonhoeffer was known for his dislike of the Nazi dictatorship which included Adolf Hitler's euthanasia and genocide of the Jewish people. He was known to help the Jewish people escape from the camps. When he was no longer able to preach in public, he started an underground seminary to train Pastors for the Confessing Church.



Nikki Ovenshire