



LIVING THE MISSION PRAYER

AWAKEN RISK BLESS

CRITICAL ISSUES: STUDY AND CONVERSATION

Adapted from Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*

INTRODUCTION

Richard Foster shares about the discipline of study, "Study is a specific kind of experience in which through careful attention to reality the mind is enabled to move in a specific direction. Remember, the mind will always take on an order conforming to the order upon which it concentrates."

The Apostle Paul reminds us that our minds will be renewed by applying them or engaging them with those things that will transform them. Study and conversation have this transformative effect. Jesus was also clear in John 8:32 that knowledge of the truth will set us free.

In this practice we seek to become informed about critical issues of our day that require our response as disciples and communities of Christ's love and peace. Conversation with others who think and look different from us helps us apply our learning through the multiple experiences of those we choose to interact with in deep listening and dialogue. Together we discern compassionate actions that will make a difference in our world and bring the kingdom a little closer.

SUGGESTED STEPS

1. Repetition—repetition regularly channels the mind in a specific direction. What are we putting into our minds on a regular basis and how is it moving us closer to Christ's vision of the peaceable kingdom of God on earth? Consider studying good books that move us toward Jesus and his mission as proclaimed in Luke 4:18,19.

There are many issues that need to be addressed. Our willingness to become informed can set us free to engage as informed disciples and global citizens.

2. Concentration—concentration focuses the attention on what is being studied. We live in a culture that does not value concentration. Set aside the necessary time and place free of distractions to engage in study.
3. Comprehension—comprehension focuses on how knowledge is processed, absorbed, and applied through our interpretive lenses. Do we understand what the author is trying to convey? Do we need further help by reaching out to a friend or expert in the field of study?
4. Reflection—reflection is attaching meaning and significance to what we study. Reflection integrates our theological understanding with the field of study and the gift of discernment. Personal reflection is essential. Community reflection is equally essential to deeper understanding and application to real life circumstances.

BLESSING

Let the educational and community development endeavors of the church equip people of all ages to carry the ethics of Christ's peace into all arenas of life. Prepare new generations of disciples to bring fresh vision to bear on the perplexing problems of poverty, disease, war, and environmental deterioration. Their contributions will be multiplied if their hearts are focused on God's will for creation.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:4c