

**Get Fit For The Journey With The Proper Diet –
Hearing And Heeding The Word Of God.
Romans 10:12-17**

Intro: Today we are going to begin to **Get fit for our Journey – Our transformation.** What is transformation? Well, the Encarta Dictionary defines transformation this way:

*A complete change, usually into something with an improved appearance or usefulness; **Transforming is the act or process of transforming somebody or something;***

If we are going to **Transform for Heaven** this year then we need to make some changes in our lives. We need to change who we are a *complete change* of who we are spiritually so we can be more *useful* to God in this life and better fit in when we get to heaven. Just as if we are going to transform our bodies into something new we need to make some changes in our diet the same is true if we are going to transform ourselves spiritually.

Since God has determined that we are to be conformed into the image of His Son and that through the blood of his son we have become adopted heirs then we out to look like and behave like a child of the Father. How is that done? By this transformation; when this transformation is completed we will then fit in up in heaven.

The question is where does this **transformation** begin? Where do we start? As with every fitness regimen we have to begin someplace. When we decide to get in shape physically most experts will tell you the place to begin is in the area of diet and exercise. So today we are going to begin our **Spiritual Fitness** by seeing what a **Proper Diet** looks like. Today we are going to **Get fit for the journey with the Proper Diet.**

In Scripture there are generally five main ways we are instructed to receive the Word of God:

1. Hearing
2. Reading
3. Studying
4. Ownership
 - Memorizing
 - Meditation

Today we are going to look at the first one, the Hearing of God's word. I believe the Hearing is first building block of a good Spiritual diet.

[Read Romans 10:17/pray/dismiss Jr. Church]

I don't believe the importance of hearing God's Word cannot be over emphasized. Throughout Scripture we are told that we are to hear what is being said or read. Jesus when he was telling the people that He was their long awaited Messiah he said **"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."**

Later when He had John write to the 7 churches (Rev 2 & 3) after each of His warning he ends with, **"...He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches..."** After nearly every warning of Jesus' He ends with, **"...He that hath an ear, let him hear..."**

Jesus said in Luke 11:28 **"...blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."** So, if we desire the blessings of the Lord on our lives then we out to **Hear and Heed the Word.**

Hearing the Word of the Lord is an important theme and if we are going to get **Fit for this Journey we need to develop the proper diet; We need to Hear and Heed the Word of God.**

In scripture there are two ways we can "hear" the Word: 1. through preaching; 2. through public reading – this can be in a church service, or a Bible study, it can be over the air waves (TV/Radio/Tapes & CD).

We are told that one of the most important keys to a healthy life is having a **proper diet.** A diet that is balanced; if we are to have a balanced spiritual diet the first thing we need to do is **Hear and Heed the Word of God properly. What does it mean to Hear the Word of God properly?**

1. Hearing the Word Properly Requires our Attention.

A. Look at Neh 8:3 ***“And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.”***

- 1) It says the ears of all the people were attentive
- 2) There are three kinds of hears in a Church service on Sunday morning.
 - (a) There is the one who sits with their mind turned off; oh, they hear the words but the words never go beyond ear.
 - (b) There is the one who sits and sulks and judges every word that comes from the mouth of the preacher or the one who reads
 - (c) Then there is the active listener; this is the one who hangs on every word that is being said, they are taking notes they are really paying attention.

B. James tells us that we are to be ***“... swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath then it says *“...be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves”**** (James 1:19,22).

- 1) The people in Nehemiah’s day were attentive to the Word because they took God’s Word seriously.
- 2) This is the person who receives the *engrafted word* and is a *doer of the word*.
- 3) There are those who come and never truly hear what is being read or preached.

2. Hearing the Word Properly Requires Preparation James 1:21 ***“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”***

A. James saw the human heart as a garden; if left to itself, the soil would produce only weeds.

- 1) He urged us to “pull out the weeds” and prepare the soil for the “implanted Word of God.”
- 2) The phrase *“superfluity of naughtiness”* gives the picture of a garden overgrown with weeds that cannot be controlled.
- 3) It is foolish to try to receive God’s Word into an unprepared heart.

B. One who comes to service on Sunday having given little thought to what God may be going to reveal to them that morning is the one James is speaking to

- 1) Often times we don’t come to church to meet with God; to interact with Him and His Word.
- 2) We come in with attitudes that are all wrong.
 - (a) Angry at someone for something
 - (b) Worrying about something
 - (c) Anxious about that meeting at work tomorrow.
 - (d) Struggling with that fellow Christian that didn’t quite live up to our expectation or didn’t treat us the way we thought we should be treated
 - (e) Or we come in with a chip on our shoulder
- 3) Often we come to church on Sunday sleepy not well rested unable to focus on the Word being read and preached.

C. One of the ways we can come prepared is to truly believe that what you are hearing read and preached is the word of God

- 1) Jeremiah Burroughs, a 17th Century Puritan wrote: *“First, when you come to hear the Word, if you would sanctify God’s name, you must possess your souls with what it is you are going to hear. That is, what you are going to hear is the Word of God...Therefore you find that the apostle, writing to the Thessalonians, gives them the reason why the Word did them so much good as it did; it was because they did hear it as the Word of God. ‘For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God...’”* (1 Thess. 2:13).

3. Hearing the Word Properly brings a Response

A. It Brings Reverence for His Word

- 1) ***“And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up... they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. And Nehemiah... and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This***

day is holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law" (Neh 8:5-9).

- 2) The reading and preaching of God's Word brought the people to tears
 - (a) it says that Ezra "...gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."
 - (b) This is the preaching of the word
 - (c) Notice that when Ezra opened the Scripture (.5) it says "...all the people stood up."
 - (d) They demonstrated a true reverence for the Word of God

B. It Brings Saving Faith Rom 10:12-17

- 1) Our text today makes it clear that it is through the Preaching and Hearing the Word of God that Saving Faith is transmitted
 - (a) The fact that someone even gets saved is linked to the hearing of the Word.
 - (b) It would be safe to say that none of us came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ apart from the hearing of the Word of God
- 2) Paul tells us that "**...in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.**" (1Cor 1:21).
 - (a) Saving Faith comes from preaching and hearing
 - (b) Once the truth of the gospel is heard then one must **Heed** or respond to the message.

3) What is the result of this hearing the Word Preached...

C. It Brings Confession & Repentance

- 1) "**And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD. And Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes**" (2 Kings 22:8-11).
 - (a) *He rent his clothes* - This idea of renting his clothes, according to the custom of the Jews, was when they heard or saw any thing done or said, which they looked upon to be a reproach to God they would *rent* or tear their cloths.
 - (b) When Josiah had the Word of God read to him he heard all the things that he and his people should have been doing and weren't.
 - (c) The Jew would often rend their clothes as a sign of grief over what they saw or heard
 - (d) When he heard it he rent his cloths this was a sign of sorrow and repentance
- 2) Two days after the feast of Tabernacles (8:13-18) which they had not recognized properly in the past, concluded is says, "**...they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God**" (Neh. 9:3).
 - (a) When they had first heard the Scriptures read and realized that they were had not been celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles correctly (8:13-18) they where so moved with remorse for their behavior that they went right away and did as the Word told them (16).
 - (b) Once they had obeyed and celebrated the Feast correctly they met again and the Word was read allowed to them for one forth of the day and then they spent then next forth of the day in confession.
- 3) Confession always precedes repentance.
 - (a) We need to spend more time hearing the Word of God Properly
 - (b) It will bring true confession
 - (c) Which will bring real repentance

Conclusion: How is your diet? Are you receiving a balanced diet of **Hearing the Word of God?** My challenge to you today is to make the commitment to be under the preaching of the Word of God every week.