



Studying God's Word, Showing Empathy, and Being Still

with Mitchell Dean

DISCUSSION

1. Mitchell quotes pastor and author A.W. Tozer as saying “Knowledge by acquaintance is better than knowledge by description.” Think back to a time in your life when you struggled to learn something that was spoken or read to you, and only truly grasped it once you’d experienced it firsthand. What was that experience like, and what made it so significant? How has that knowledge made an impact on you over the course of your life?
2. How much of the Bible have you read? If you’ve only read bits and pieces of it, what are the main things that have kept you from digging deeper? Do you know anyone with deeper knowledge of the Bible who might be able to help you approach scripture more easily and find an “entrance” into it? *Psalm 119:11*
3. Discuss the significance of the statement Mitchell quotes from Psalm 19: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord.” Do you ever ponder how God might view the communications you have with others? In the past week, have you said anything to another person that you know would not be acceptable if uttered in the presence of the Lord? Looking back, how could you have communicated those thoughts or desires more respectfully? *Psalm 19:14*

4. How much time do you recall your parents spending with you in which they directly connected with you and helped you grow as a person? How has that time—or lack of it—made an impact on your life? Do you feel like your parents showed you empathy, or was their parenting mostly dos and don'ts? If it's the latter, what do you feel like you lacked or missed out on in life because of it?

5. When do you find it easiest to show your own children empathy and try to understand why they're doing what they're doing? At what times do you find it most difficult?

6. Mitchell says he has “learned things through pain that [he] would never have learned through prosperity.” What's a challenging, disappointing, or even tragic event from your life in which you learned something that you wouldn't have learned had your life situation been more positive? How does that knowledge benefit you today? Is there any part of you that's grateful for that hardship that you endured, or would you say you're still too scarred by it to be truly grateful? *Romans 5:3-4*

7. Are there any areas of your life in which you're “planting oaks whose shade you'll never sit in”—doing work that's unlikely to benefit you directly, but that will benefit future generations?