

Developing a Sweet Habit 005

Hello again.

I am Steven Baldrige, Pastor Rome Community Church in Richland county Ohio and this is lesson five an hour series Developing a Sweet Habit.

In this series we have seen that God's word it is indeed sweet and that though there are times when reading large portions of Scripture, even chapters or entire books, is indeed beneficial, there is much to be said for slowing down and taking smaller passages, single paragraphs, single sentences, single verses, single phrases, or even single words, and savoring the sweetness of God's thoughts.

For this fifth and final lesson in this series we will turn to 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

Start your clean sheet of writing tablet as always with date, date, and passage to be considered. In this case 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

Go there now and choose whether you want to expand beyond these few verses, either starting earlier or going beyond verse 17, write your verses and then restart the audio.

Today I want to show you a great way to use Bible commentaries. Think of Bible commentaries as sermons or Bible studies *written down*. Much in the same way you have been writing the verses, cross references, and thoughts on those versus others before you have studied and done the same thing. They also took much time in some cases to research history associated with the events surrounding the verses as well as a deep dive into the grammar used in the Hebrew or Greek (or Aramaic, and the Latin the Bible was translated into long ago) and the way other historians have thought about the target verses.

Finally, these commentaries often also explore any errors that have popped up over the centuries around your target verses, how the errors were uncovered and answered, and how your verses may be an *answer to other* challenges to proper interpretation of Scripture. In short, good commentaries can be a gold mine of the thoughts of smart, God-loving people before you.

Of course just as there are some pretty bad translations of the Bible there are also some pretty bad explanations of the Bible and some pretty bad commentaries. So with those cautions considered, I would like to give you a general method for using a Bible commentary. After writing your target verses, in this case 2 Timothy 3: 14-17,

find those verses in your chosen commentaries. Some will be long. Some will be brief. Some may skip your verse altogether. That's why we look at several. Some commentaries focus on grammar or history, for example, and only touch on other topics in lesser detail. Some may focus on doctrine and only lightly touch history or grammar. What we will do is choose one to start, and read the commentary.

However, remember that this is a *writing* exercise. Feel free to write in your notes passages of the commentary that state a thought well. Copy them word for word if you like. After all, this is not plagiarism because you are not writing for republishing. Write phrases, quotes, sentences or more. Write word for word, or paraphrase. You were not in a hurry. Savor the sweetness of what others have said about God's word.

Have you noticed that many of these commentaries will allude to a particular verse? Often it is cited in parentheses right in the sentence, or at the end. Hey, you could look up these verses and consider writing them. (Hint, hint, hint)

Next, consider doing the same with another commentary, or two, or three.

And finally, in some of my study apps there are additional resources. I find there related sermons, blog post, or question and answer articles related to the verse in question. Sometimes they are directly related to my target text, sometimes the relationship is more tangential. Like when I look up 2 Timothy 3, the main point of an article may deal with verse 17 but I am working on verse 14. Save it for later. Read it now. Ignore it altogether as you wish. It is not possible to exhaust your resources. Take your time. Savor the sweetness of a passage. And when you're full, Move on. You do not need to stay with the passage until you are sick of it. Enjoy.

One last word of caution. Folks can get off track when they ask “what does this passage mean to *me*?” The appropriate question to ask is “how am I to apply this to my life?” But always stay with “what exactly does the passage actually mean?” “What does the author - God, (and Moses, Isaiah, Peter, Paul, Jesus) want me to understand from this passage?”

Thank you for joining me on this journey. I'd love to know how you have taken these ideas and made them part of your own journey Developing a Sweet Habit.