



# The Role of Knowledge in Moral Development

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Knowledge is important.

Wisdom is more important.

Character is the **MOST** important!

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# Moral Development

Behavior

Training

Action

Love

Knowledge

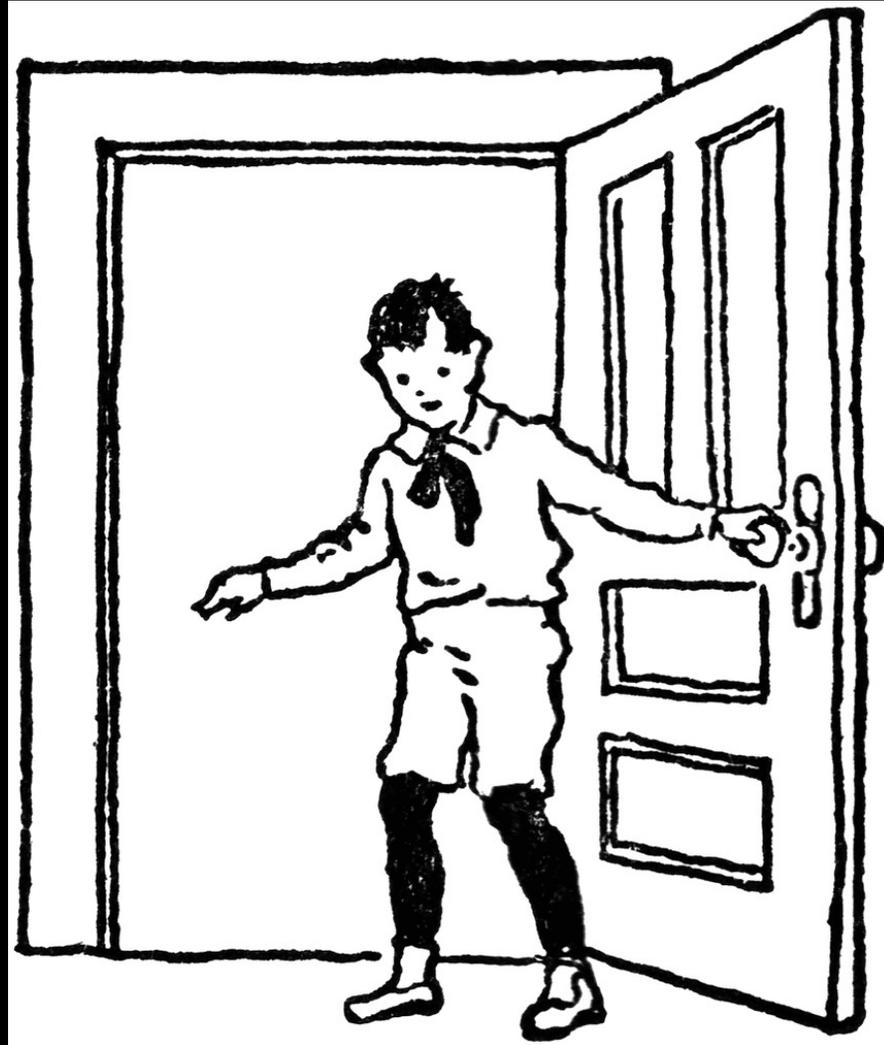
# “Moral Habits”

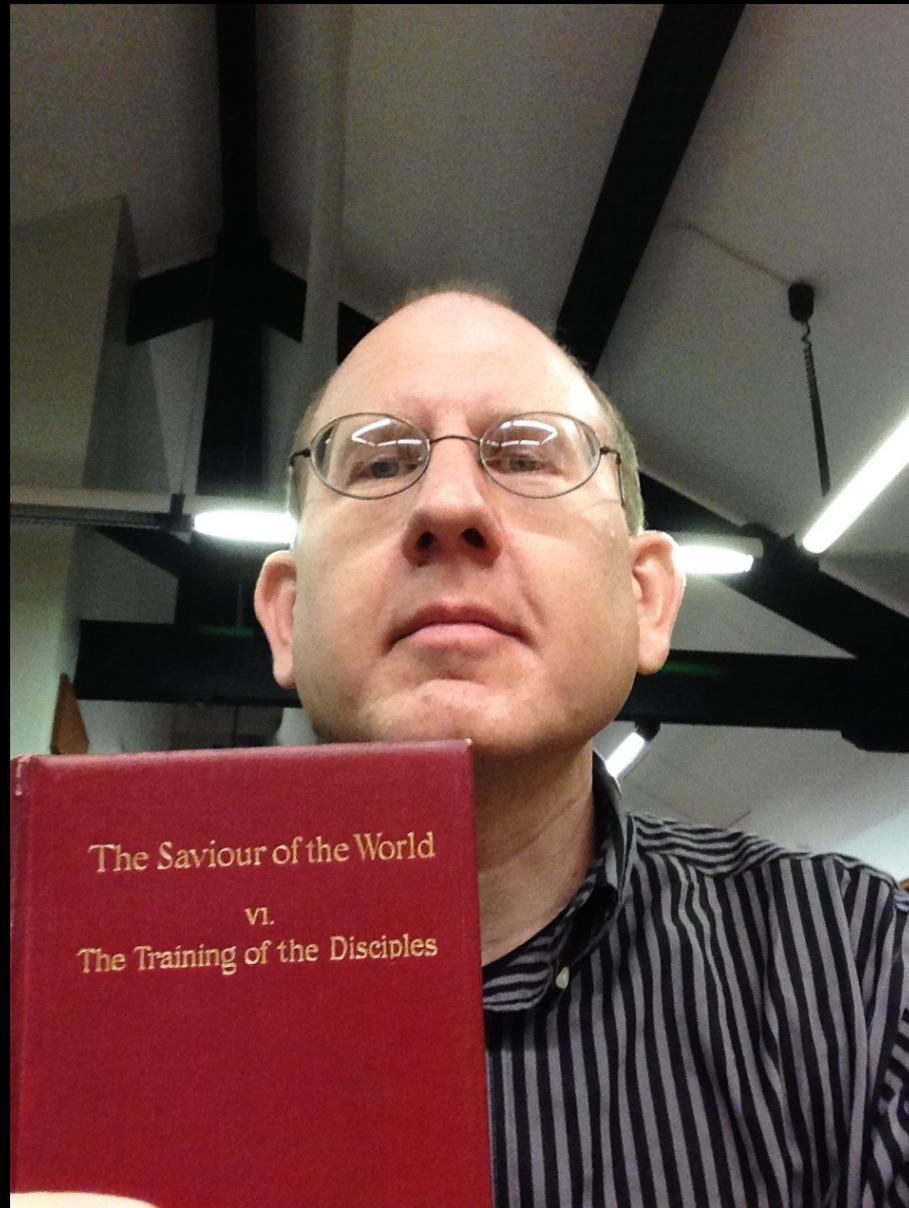


- Obedience
- Truthfulness
- Reverence
- Sweet Temper

“the cultivation of habit applies with the greatest possible force to each of these habits”

“First and infinitely the most important, is the habit of obedience... obedience is the whole duty of man; obedience to conscience, to law, to Divine direction.”





mine enemies be put to flight : this I know ; for  
God is on my side.

10 In God's word will  
word will I comfort me.

11 Yea, in God have  
not be afraid what man

12 Unto thee, O God  
unto thee will I give th

13 For thou hast  
death, and my feet fr  
walk before God in the

## PSALM LVII.

**B**E merciful unto me, O God, be merciful  
unto me, for my soul trusteth in thee :  
and under the shadow of thy wings shall be my  
refuge, until this tyranny be over-past.

2 I will call unto the most high God : even  
unto the God that shall perform the cause which  
I have in hand.

3 He shall send from heaven : and save me  
from the reproof of him that would eat me up.

4 God shall send forth his mercy and truth :  
my soul is among lions.

5 And I lie even among the children of men,  
that are set on fire : whose teeth are spears and  
arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.

6 Set up thyself, O God, above the heavens :  
and thy glory above all the earth.

7 They have laid a net for my feet, and  
pressed down my soul : they have digged a pit  
before me, and are fallen into the midst of it  
themselves.

8 My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is  
fixed : I will sing, and give praise.

: this I know ;

# What is Knowledge?

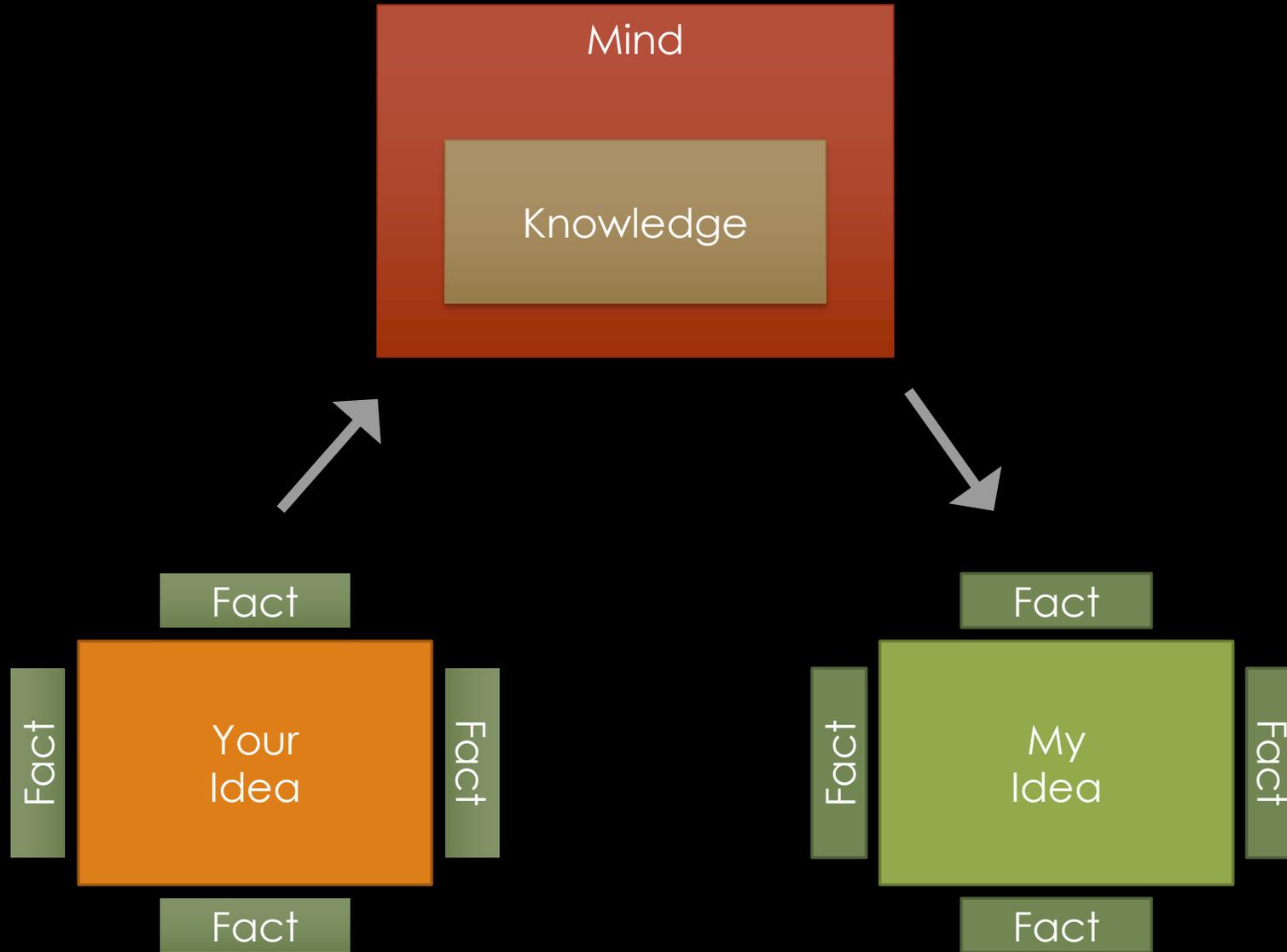
1. NOT a well-stored memory
2. NOT scholarship
3. NOT academic success
4. NOT reason
5. NOT information
6. NOT instruction
7. NOT training
8. NOT facts
9. NOT idea

- "A great future lies before the nation which shall perceive that knowledge is the sole concern of education proper, as distinguished from training, and that knowledge is the necessary daily food of the mind." (VI:2)
- "they hunger for knowledge, not for information" (VI:44)
- "For the mind is capable of dealing with only one kind of food; it lives, grows and is nourished upon ideas only; mere information is to it as a meal of sawdust to the body; there are no organs for the assimilation of the one more than of the other." (VI:105)
- "Academic success and knowledge are not the same thing and many excellent schools fail to give their pupils delight in the latter for its own sake or to bring them in touch with the sort of knowledge that influences character and conduct." (VI:266)
- "it is nourished upon ideas and absorbs facts only as these are connected with the living ideas upon which they hang." (VI:20)
- "As I have said, knowledge, that is, roughly, ideas clothed upon with facts, is the proper pabulum for mind." (VI:256)
- "'What is knowledge?' the reader asks. We can give only a negative answer. Knowledge is not instruction, information, scholarship, a well-stored memory." (VI:303)
- "For it is a fatal error to think that reason can take the place of knowledge, that reason is infallible, that reasonable conclusions are of necessity right conclusions. Reason is a man's servant, not his master; and behaves like a good and faithful servant — a sort of 'Caleb Balderstone,' ready to lie royally in his master's behoof and bring logical demonstration of any premiss which the will chooses to entertain. But the will is the man, the will chooses; and the man must know, if the will is to make just and discriminating decisions." (VI:314)
- "Without knowledge, Reason carries a man into the wilderness and Rebellion joins company. The man is not to be blamed: it is a glorious thing to perceive your mind, your reasoning power, acting of its own accord as it were and producing argument after argument in support of any initial notion; how is a man to be persuaded, when he wakes up to this tremendous power he has of involuntary reasoning, that his conclusions are not necessarily right, but rather that he who reasons without knowledge is like a child playing with edged tools?" (VI:315)
- "persons whose education has not enriched them with knowledge store up information (statistics and other facts), upon which they use their reasoning powers; that the attempt to reason without knowledge is disastrous" (VI:321)

# What is Knowledge?

ideas clothed upon with facts,  
which have been assimilated by the mind,  
by the mind acting upon them,  
and bringing them forth in a form which is  
original  
because it has been modified or re-created  
by the action of the mind

- "As I have said, knowledge, that is, roughly, ideas clothed upon with facts, is the proper pabulum for mind." (VI:256)
- "What, then, is knowledge? – was the next question that occurred; a question which the intellectual labour of ages has not settled; but perhaps this is enough to go on with;—that only becomes knowledge to a person which he has assimilated, which his mind has acted upon." (VI:12)
- "what he can do is to assimilate and give this forth in a form which is original because it is modified, re-created, by the action of his own mind" (VI:66)
- "One thing at any rate we know with certainty, that no teaching, no information becomes knowledge to any of us until the individual mind has acted upon it, translated it, transformed, absorbed it, to reappear, like our bodily food, in forms of vitality." (VI:240)
- "What is knowledge? some one will say, and there is no pat, neatly-framed answer to be given; only this we can assert,—Knowledge is that which we know; and the learner knows only by a definite act of knowing which he performs for himself."(VI:254)
- "information does not become knowledge unless a child perform the 'act of knowing' without the intervention of another personality." (VI:271)
- "But the children ask for bread and we give them a stone; we give information about objects and events which mind does not attempt to digest but casts out bodily (upon an examination paper?). But let information hang upon a principle, be inspired by an idea, and it is taken with avidity and used in making whatsoever in the spiritual nature stands for tissue in the physical." (VI:26)



# How does the mind act upon ideas?

## 1. With the mouth

- Narration

## 2. With the pen

- Journaling
- Outlining
- Essay-writing

## 3. With the heart

- Meditation

# Moral Development



“If we realise that the mind and **knowledge** are like two members of a ball and socket joint, two limbs of a pair of scissors, fitted to each other, necessary to each other and acting only in concert, we shall understand that our function as teachers is to supply children with the rations of **knowledge** which they require; and that the rest, **character** and **conduct**, efficiency and ability, and, that finest quality of the citizen, magnanimity, take care of themselves.”

Moral Development

Knowledge

Habit

# How can this be?

1. Knowledge of inspiring ideas
2. Knowledge of the Bible
3. Knowledge of Christ

# 1. Knowledge of Inspiring Ideas

“it is as vital\* thought touches our minds that our ideas are vitalized, and out of our ideas comes our **conduct of life.**”

\*vital = living

(from Latin *vitalis* = of life)

# Habit Formation

The boy does not wish to get up in the  
morning,

You stimulate him to act

day after day for a month or so, until the habit  
is formed, and it is just as easy as not to get up  
in good time.”

# Habit Formation

“You tell a child that the Great Duke slept in so narrow a bed that he could not turn over, because, said he, ‘When you want to turn over it's time to get up.’

The boy does not wish to get up in the morning,  
but he does wish to be like the hero of Waterloo.

You stimulate him to act  
upon this idea  
day after day for a month or so, until the habit is formed, and it is just as easy as not to get up in good time.”



Habit

Idea

# Good Ideas Are From Above

“The idea is the motive power of life, and it is because we recognise the spiritual potency of the idea that we are able to bow reverently before the fact that God the Holy Spirit is Himself the Supreme Educator, dealing with each of us [individually] in the things we call sacred and those we call secular.

We lay ourselves open to the spiritual impact of ideas, whether these be conveyed by the printed page, the human voice, or whether they reach us without visible sign.”

## 2. Knowledge of the Bible

“we nourish our children on ‘the sincere milk of the Word,’ and they delight in their sustenance.”

## Inductive Bible Study Questions

### Part 1. What does the passage say? (Psalm 119:18)

1. Who is involved? How are they related to each other?
2. What events are described?
3. Where and when did the events occur?
4. What does the writer compare, contrast, or repeat?
5. What cause-effect relationships are presented?
6. What is the main thought of the passage?

### Part 2. What does the passage mean? (2 Timothy 2:7)

1. What is the significance of the comparisons, contrasts, and repetitions used (Part 1, number 4)?
2. For each cause-effect relationship (Part 1, number 5), why does the cause produce the given effect?
3. Why did the writer want to convey the main thought (Part 1, number 6)?
4. How might the original audience have understood the passage?
5. What are the general principles taught in the passage?

### Part 3. What then should I do? (James 1:22)

1. What commands are given to be obeyed?
2. What example is given to follow?
3. What promises are given to claim?
4. What should you thank or praise God for in light of the passage?
5. What sins should you confess in light of the passage?
6. What is one specific, measurable way can you apply the passage this week?



"... with the distractions of my life and my irregular education, I concentrated my mind and my emotions in quiet action on one point; because I can in no other way account for the peace which enveloped me, however disturbed and strange were all things without. If an ever-active imagination, of which the story of my life bear witness, led me here and there, if the medley of fable, history, mythology and religion threatened to drive me to distraction, I betook myself again to those morning-lands, I buried myself in the first books of Moses, and there amongst the wide-spreading shepherd people, I found the greatest solitude and the greatest company."

# Must there *always* be an action?

“... religion has two aspects. There is the attitude of the will towards God... But religion has another aspect: the conception of God which comes from a gradual slow-growing perception of the divine dealings with men. This repose of the soul, this fresh back-ground for the thoughts, Goethe tells us he got from his study of the books of Moses; tells us, too, that he could have got it in no other way (and, indeed, he tried all ways)”

"Here Goethe unfolds for us a principle of education which those who desire their children to possess the passive as well as the active principle of religion would do well to consider; for it is probably true that the teaching of the New Testament, not duly grounded upon that of the Old, fails to result in such thought of God—wide, all-embracing, all-permeating—as David, for example, gives constant expression to in the Psalms."

### 3. Knowledge of Christ

“And this is eternal life,  
that they **know** you the only true God,  
and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

1. Meditation
2. Prayer
3. Experience
4. Faith

# 1. Meditation

“We cannot grow into the likeness of that which is unknown to us, and we cannot know except by that process of **reflective contemplation** which we name meditation.”

“First we **think upon Him**; we **dwell upon** every circumstance of His life, every word of His teaching; we keep Him in all our thoughts. We eat and drink, not only at the blessed Sacrament, but all times, ‘**in remembrance of Him.**’

... As we meditate upon Christ, as we learn to believe on him, to realise that all blessedness lies in sacrifice and service, in lowliness and meekness, we begin to understand how great is the conversion that must take place in us if we are ever to have in us the mind that was in Christ Jesus.”

## 2. Prayer

“Now the man begins to know Christ. By speaking with Him face to face **knowledge** came, as it comes to us in **prayer** and **meditation.**”

### 3. Experience

“Dare any man stand up and offer himself to the world with such words as: ‘I am the bread of life,’ ‘I am the light of the world,’ ‘I am the truth,’ ‘Come unto me, all ye that are weary, and I will give you rest’?”

It is in verifying the truth of these and such like sayings of Christ that Christianity consists; and all Christians everywhere and at all times have known these things to be true, with the **knowledge** that comes of **experience**; and this is the **knowledge** which is life.”

## 4. Faith

“our Lord here indicates the two stages of the act of **faith**; first the fixed, humble, and open-minded **attention**; and next the sure and satisfying **conviction** which comes of **beholding** Christ; and this is eternal life, because it is ‘to know the Father and Jesus Christ Whom He hath sent.’”

"When we 'believe in' each other it is truly that we recognise each other, know each other for better, for worse, and, because we recognise, place implicit confidence in one another.

It is only by observation, **meditation**, and happy, intuitive sympathy that we know one another in this way.

Most men and women we still see 'as trees walking'; it is only in the few that we 'believe.'

It is such belief as this, intensified by every thought of Him who is 'altogether lovely' until it becomes the master thought of all our thinking, the moving **spring of all our being**, which issues in that constant and joyous commerce between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God which is eternal life, now, at the present moment, and reaches forward to those 'heavenly things' which it is not lawful for man to utter."

# The Role of Knowledge in Moral Development

“the spiritual life must be nourished upon ideas, and not merely emotionally stimulated. We are transformed by the renewing of our minds, and with the renewed vigour imparted by ‘new thoughts of God,’ we are again enabled for the spiritual activities of prayer, praise, and godly endeavour.”

“If we *will* fix our thoughts steadily upon Christ we shall be surprised into such an out going of love and worship as we little thought ourselves capable of.”

# What Does the Bible Say?

“How can we who died to sin still live in it?  
Do you not **know** that all of us who have  
been baptized into Christ Jesus were  
baptized into his death?”





“When any one hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the Evil One comes and snatches away what is sown in his heart; this is what was sown along the path.”

συνιᾶμι (syniēmi):  
to understand —  
to **know** and comprehend  
the nature or meaning of

# Call to Action

1. Do not use the Bible to coerce
2. Sow ideas first, then develop habits

# 1. Do not use the Bible to coerce



“a lot of moralistic cheerleading and putting heavy burdens upon children’s shoulders, rather than bringing them in to trust the love, and compassion, and forgiveness of sins of Christ, from which will come the kinds of things we’re aiming at here”

- Don’t force your children to serve a master they don’t know and love
- Instead of using the Bible as a tool to get a certain kind of behavior, use it for *feeding* (John 6)
- “As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me” (John 15:4)
- “The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.” (Matthew 12:35)

## 2. Sow ideas first, then develop habits

“the mind which does not feed on poetry, history, fiction, travel, all the treasures that are bound up in books, on pictures, on the beauty of a sunset or a flower, such a mind may be acute and alert, but it does not dwell in heavenly places.”



# Thank You

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