
Session 5

How to Grow pt 2 | Action

Let me start by backtracking to the first part of last session's lesson—the “shema.” The ancient Hebrew understanding made it impossible to hear the truth without acting on it. From a Scriptural point of view, this means obedience. However, another way of looking at the act of obedience is taking action. God expects the hearer to pair their listening with action.

Specifically, I encouraged you to learn about your Word of the Year through four practices:

- **Study** | Use your favorite learning methods (books, podcasts, videos, courses, etc.) to grow in your Word.
- **Prayer** | Take your Word to God in moments of prayer to see what he wants to reveal to you.
- **Meditate** | Find a quiet space to think deeply about what you learn.
- **Contemplate** | Keep your eyes and ears open to observing your Word in the world.

When we consider pairing action with these forms of learning, there is an obvious application and a more subtle one. Let me start with the obvious first.

Lessons in Action

In 2022, my Word was BRAVERY. In January, we were just 18 months removed from the initial lockdown forced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Every part of the country responded differently to that crisis, but we were still emerging from those dark days. Bravery was an apt choice for the year.

One of the most memorable takeaways from those early months of studying and learning was a line I read in Rebekah Lyons's book. In it, she described a debilitating anxiety she suffered earlier in her life. She made it through, in part, by repeating this line over and over to herself:

“Bravery is moving scared.” -Rebekah Lyons

That was my mantra for the year. When I felt afraid of making a decision, I would remind myself to be brave and move forward, scared. This type of action is the most literal application of Shema. I learned the concept of bravery, so I acted on it throughout the year (and continue to do so to this day).

In 2011, freedom came from learning to say “No.” That has many meanings, but ultimately, it meant saying no to opportunities that didn’t align with my purpose and calling, because if I did, it would lead to confusion and frustration. What I heard forced me to act. I began to say “no” to what wasn’t mine to move forward with. Saying “yes” to the right things at the right time led to the freedom I longed for.

Those obvious applications of schema (learning and doing) are not the main point of this session, but I challenge you with it anyway. **The more you learn and apply what you know, the more you will grow.** But let’s dig a little deeper into how we can use action to grow through your Word of the Year.

Learning by Doing

When I attended elementary school, there were two widely used learning styles: auditory and visual. We sat in classrooms, listened to teachers instruct, and watched their examples on a chalkboard. Occasionally, we would be split into small groups to work on an assignment or project, but this was the exception, not the rule.

In my early 20s, I worked with inner-city children in a small church, and one of my volunteers introduced me to another style of learning (which he had only recently learned about): kinetic learning. Some of the boys and girls in our church were great kids, but they couldn’t concentrate, no matter how excellent the teaching or the visuals were. He found that if they had something in their hands (a ball, a pencil, a small toy, etc.), they could pay attention to the teacher and the other children much more easily.

You may identify as an auditory learner or a visual learner. If my wife sees something, she is much more likely to pay attention and learn, but if I can hear an explanation from an instructor, I understand much better (of course, the combination of the two is the best for both of us).

While you may identify with one of those two learning styles (or as a logical/mathematical or social learner, two more popular learning styles that have emerged since I was in school), you can also learn by working with your hands.

We are all kinetic learners.

Learn with Your Hands

In his book *Steal Like an Artist*, Austin Kleon described his physical workspace. As an artist, he creates poems from newspaper and magazine pages by marking out all the words except those in his poems (for example, Google “Austin Kleon blackout art”).

Kleon found that he works best in both physical and digital workspaces, so he created them side by side. He can write at his computer and then simply turn around to work with his hands, using exacto knives, pens, paper, and cardboard. The space is ingenious, but, for our purposes, the principle is much more critical.

This practice is helpful with the Word of the Year. **Working on something that is both physical and creative keeps my eye on my Word.** In my case, that means writing - both physically with pen and paper and virtually with screen and keyboard. But it goes beyond just this physically inactive form of creativity.

I was gifted a small screen-print press about ten years ago to tinker with. Screen printing has become a hobby to help me learn with my hands. The process can be tedious and sometimes mindless, which is perfect for learning something outside this hobby. In those moments of screen printing, my mind is free to wander and consider whatever I want...including my Word of the Year.

Screen printing also allows me to create things that represent my Word. These can be things I wear (like a T-shirt) or things I hang on my wall (a print on a piece of paper or the old screen itself).



A few years ago, my wife picked up cross-stitching as a hobby and incorporated it into her Word of the Year practice. She has designed and stitched her Word and others' Words for multiple years.

What hobby do you love and can incorporate into your Word of the Year? For you, it could be knitting, gardening, baking, carpentry, drawing, or any one of hundreds of other options. **There is a connection between the work of our hands and belief in our hearts.** Exploit this for your Word of the Year.

Chapter 5 Homework | Visual Representation

There are two parts to your homework for this session. First, determine how you will use your hands to lean into your Word of the Year physically. Commit to using this physical process 30-60 minutes (or more) a week.

Second, find a visual representation of your Word of the Year. This could be directly related to a hobby you are incorporating into your year or something you see online, in a store, or out in nature. Here are a few example ideas:

- I once found oversized Scrabble tiles at a gift shop. I used them to spell out my word VISION.
- My friend once carved his Word into an axe handle to display in his office or home.
- A member of our church had her son paint her a picture of her Word of the Year so she could hang it in her house.
- I found the picture of the CONTENT in the flea market in Los Angeles.

About Andy



My name is Andy Bondurant. In over 25 years of professional and volunteer ministry experience in the urban, suburban, international, and domestic worlds, and now as a pastor at a local church in Kansas, I have found that most people make connecting to God too complicated. Most people don't believe they can personally connect to Jesus.

Understanding the God of the Bible is easier than you might think, and I want to show you how.

You can find a new article about once or twice a week, where I'll show you how to connect with and understand God. If you don't want to miss one of these, sign up for updates, and I'll send you a free eBook devotional that will help you draw closer to God in just 30 days.

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