

Wednesday, March 22

Reading Scripture: "The purpose is to know who God is so that we might grow in our relationship with God."

(Foundations: An Introduction to Christian Practices)

Where are you at?

Searching: I'm curious about God's word but I really don't know where to start.

Exploring: I occasionally try reading the Bible but it's difficult to understand.

Beginning: I understand more about Jesus' teaching through classes and my own study.

Growing: I read the Bible often and seek its wisdom about how to live my daily life.

Maturing: I regularly read the Bible and respond obediently as the Spirit speaks to me.

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Looking at the list above, where are you at in reading scripture?

An Action Step or SMART goal that will help me grow is:

Specific:



Measurable (how will you measure this?):

Action-Oriented:

Realistic:

Time :

Someone who could support me in developing this is:

Here's how to make SMART goals:

S

Specific

State exactly what you want to achieve. Can you break a larger task down into smaller items?

M

Measurable

Establish clear definitions to help you measure if you're reaching your goal.

A

Action-Oriented

Describe your goals using action verbs, and outline the exact steps you will take to accomplish your goal.

R

Realistic

Give yourself the opportunity to succeed by setting goals you'll actually be able to accomplish. Be sure to consider obstacles you may need to overcome.

T

Time-Bound

Now much time do you have to complete the task? Decide exactly when you'll start and finish your goal.

Small Group Discussion Questions:

- Where are you at on the range of searching to maturing see above.
- What did you think of the Lectio Divina experience in worship? How did you feel? Is this something you would do on your own? Explain
- What connected with you in Brandon's talk tonight?
- Look at the idea to the right and on the back, have you tried any of these before? Are there any that you are willing to try?
- What is one action step (goal) that you can practice in order to grow?

Just 3 Questions

1. What do you think God is doing here?
2. What do you hear God saying to you personally?
3. What do you hear God saying to us (as a small group, congregation, community, nation)?

Scripture Reading Resources

The Journalistic Approach– Five Ws and an H

Journalists are often taught that when they report on anything they need to answer six basic questions about every story. These same basic questions help us to understand what is going on in the stories told in the Bible. Pick a New Testament story you know well or one you don't and try this.

Who? Can you identify who is in the story? How are they described? What is their relationship to each other?

When? When does this story take place? How long a time passes in the story? How do these events relate to other events chronologically?

Where? Where does this story take place. You may not be able to find it on a map, but how are the places described? (Bethlehem? Judea? A village? A house?) Are they related to other places? ("near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son). Are specific people related to a place? (Martha's house? Herod's palace?)

What? What happens in the story? What issues or topics are raised in the passage?

Why? Why does what happens happen? What motivates the people in the story to do what they do? Why does the author tell us the story?

How? How do these events unfold? How do they relate to each other? How do they relate to other events in the Bible?

After you try this exercise with a story from the Bible, ask yourself: What did I discover that I had not noticed before?

Check out the YouVersion Bible app to read the Bible and check out the wide variety of Bible reading plans.

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina (a Latin term divine reading): is a practice of reading scripture and meditating on it so that you can grow closer to Jesus.

There are 5 things you do:

- 1) Begin with prayer asking God to renew your mind with his truth- "O God, use this scripture reading to speak to my heart and renew my mind."
- 2) Read a passage out loud slowly and reflectively. Any scripture passage will work– easier if it isn't too long. Take a moment to reflect on the words and let them sink in. What word or phrase touches your heart?

S.O.A.P.

Journaling is an excellent way to both record and process what God has spoken to us. It's also a useful tool to use at a later time to reflect on and review some of the "gems" that you have received. Without writing these down, you may forget those blessings and some very important lessons! While journaling is a very personal time with the Lord, you may want to share some of your daily devotions with your small group or mentors. Through discussion, you may be able to look deeper into what God is speaking to you, gain new insights and even encourage others.

S for Scripture Choose a reading, for example, follow the daily readings on the announcement sheet; or another Bible reading plan; or pick one book of the Bible, like the gospel of John and read one section each day. Take time reading and allow God to speak to you. When you are done, look for a verse that particularly spoke to you that day, and write it in your journal.

O for Observation What do you think God is saying to you in this scripture? Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal Jesus to you. Paraphrase and write this Scripture down in your own words in your journal.

A for Application Personalize what you have read, by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, revelation of a new promise, or corrections for a particular area of your life. Write how this Scripture can apply to you today.

P for Prayer This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this Scripture, or it may be a greater insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two-way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to

- 3) Read a second time and ask what in this reading speaks to my life today? Reflect on that.
- 4) Read a third time, ask God what do you want me to do differently today because of my meditation on this passage? What is Christ calling you to do or to become today or this week? This is our response to what we hear God speaking into our hearts.
- 5) Read the verse a fourth time and let this word sit with you and refresh you. This final step is where we let go of our own ideas, and simply rest in the Word of God.
- 6) In a group setting, this practice concludes with each person praying for the person on their right.