

PATHWAYS

Week 3 | Reading God's Word

Colossians 3:16a

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly..."

4 Reasons We Center Our Lives On God's Word

1. Inspired By God
2. Inerrant
3. Sufficient
4. Eternal

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness

Numbers 23:19

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind.

2 Peter 1:3

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence

Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Reading God's Word For Depth

1. Read
2. Reflect
3. Respond
4. Rest

INDIVIDUAL EXERCISES

“But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.” -Deuteronomy 30:14

This week, our exercises center on reading for “depth” instead of “width.” Many times, we believe that the primary way to take in scripture is through reading lengthy passages in one sitting, trying to get as much information as we can out of the text.

This week, we’ll be focusing instead on “depth”—reading shorter passages of Scripture and prayerfully focusing in on them. The exercises this week will be less about reading for information and more about communing (abiding) with Jesus.

This week, we’ll read or listen to short passages of scripture several times with stillness and silence between and within each reading. There are four movements in this process: Read, Reflect, Respond, Rest. Below are the suggested scripture passages for this week, and on the next page, the steps are explained.

Day 1: Psalm 103:1-5

Day 2: Luke 12:22-26

Day 3: Colossians 3:12-17

The above are suggested passages, but the steps below can be used as a tool with any scripture passage.

Prepare to enter this devotional time with a posture of prayerful expectancy. Find a quiet place, sit comfortably, alert, and relaxed. Try, if you can, to put away your thoughts of the day and ready yourself to listen. Start with a simple prayer,

“Lord, thank you for your loving presence. Prepare my heart and mind to receive your word.”

Read: Read the passage aloud (or silently if you are not in a place where you can read aloud). Listen for a word or phrase that sticks out to you. Read the passage again. If one word or phrase stood out the first time, see if it does the second time. Begin to repeat this word or phrase to yourself and let it resonate with you. If nothing sticks out, that is okay; just read again. Imagine someone taking a highlighter and pointing out one word or phrase. Remember, this is not a performance-driven exercise. Focus on spending time with God in His word.

Reflect: Reread the passage. Focus in upon your word or phrase that the Spirit has highlighted and ask God how this speaks to your life. This could be a realization, feeling, sensory perception, image, thought, etc. Let your heart and mind be engaged. As these images, thoughts, and feelings come to you, take time to think about them. As you reflect, think about how Jesus taught, modeled, or fulfilled the passage of scripture. When you feel like praying about your reflections, move to the next phase.

Respond: Thank God for the gift you’ve been given in His personal word to you. Then allow your heart and head to lead you in a response. Pray what you most desire to say to God, then listen. Journal and write down thoughts that come to mind, and what you believe God saying to you from the word. Listen to the Holy Spirit to discover a

possible invitation relevant to today, the next few days, or the season to come. It could be an action to take, a truth to discover about God, a way of life to change, someone to forgive, or something to celebrate. As you sense God bringing the time to a close...

Rest: As your worded prayer comes to an end, simply be with God in stillness. Celebrate hearing from God and soak in the goodness of God's grace. Enjoy the silence then reflect on the experience. Thank God for the chance to encounter him and his living word and for the encouragement to learn more about Jesus. Ask God to bless you, especially if you feel called to an action. Spend another moment in silence before ending your time.

MISSIONAL COMMUNITY

Pray

As you begin, pray with your group. Pray that Scripture would ultimately serve the purpose of pointing to Jesus so that individuals in your group would know and love Him more. Pray that God would give you a passion for His word and that He would transform you through it.

Discuss

Discuss this week's sermon and the following passage with your group:

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life." John 5:39-40

1. Why is it important that we see all of Scripture points to Jesus?
2. What are some ways we try to read Scripture without seeing and coming to Jesus?

In this week's preach, Seth invited us to Read, Reflect, Respond, and Rest as we encounter scripture. Now, let's take a moment to do this a group together. The explanation of the steps is in your individual exercises.

Group Passage:

1. READ - Ephesians 3:14-19
2. REFLECT - journal group reflections

3. RESPOND - journal group responses

4. REST - answer the question below and pray together

- How has this group exercise led you to know and love Jesus more?
- Pray, thanking God for His goodness in the life of your group.