

SPIRITUAL GROWTH RESOURCES



WEEK 8 | JAN 2-9
SCRIPTURE

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Spiritual Growth Resources brought to you by the Discipleship & Outreach Ministries of the Carmichael Seventh-day Adventist Church.

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PROLOGUE

The Carmichael SDA Church is providing spiritual growth resources for individuals, couples, families, and small groups as an extension during this pandemic for a church that is scattered like salt and to indeed be salty; to be light and receive another infusion of power. Pick and choose from these resources for your spiritual growth, whether it's during your time of personal devotions or family worship or small group gathering. The 10 options include:

1. Video
2. Bible Dialogue
3. Prayer Experiences
4. Discussion Questions
5. Application Ideas
6. Sharing Options
7. Bible-In-My-Head, Heart, and Hand
8. Sing-Along
9. Inspirational Music
10. Kids of All Ages

SCRIPTURE

Pastor Melissa shares this week's introduction to the topic



INTRO AND VIDEO

The start of a new year marks a natural time for new beginnings. It's a time to start afresh, to give it another shot. Many people make New Year's resolutions to lose weight, spend consistent time with God, manage personal finances better, schedule regular family time, or apply one's self more to school and

As you begin the year 2021, we invite you to spend time each week investing in your relationship with God. That's why we provide these Spiritual Growth Resources. This is especially true when we aren't able to meet in person at the sanctuary. We're being "the church" away from "the church building." Use these Spiritual Growth Resources for your personal devotions. Tap into different elements for a shared spiritual time with your spouse. Pick and choose components for family worship time or with your small group.

The theme for January's resources is "Making Things Right" and this first week's topic is "Scripture." We might have heard about a scarcity of Scripture for certain people at some specific times in history. It's difficult to imagine not having access to the Bible when we have it instantly on our device, and with multiple translations. But availability doesn't equate to availing ourselves of the Word of God.

God spoke these instructions to Joshua after the death of Moses. "Study this Book of the Law continually. Meditate on it day and night so you may be sure to obey all that is written in it. Only then will you succeed." (Joshua 1:8 NLT) The same is true for us today. Let's delve into Scripture!

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BIBLE DIALOGUE

Prior to the printing press in the middle of the 15th century, the Bible had to be copied by hand. It's scarcity made it valuable, but not available. In Old Testament times, God's instructions for his people, written by Moses as the first five books of the Bible, came to be known as the Torah, which is translated "Law of God." According to Deuteronomy 17:18-19 (NLT), "When he (the king) sits on the throne as king, he must copy these laws on a scroll for himself in the presence of the Levitical priests. He must always keep this copy of the law with him and read it daily as long as he lives. That way he will learn to fear the LORD his God by obeying all the terms of this law."

This was Scripture—the Word of God. Our passage for today describes a time when Scripture had practically gone extinct, until the high priest happened to discover it one day in the temple.

STUDY

FINDERS KEEPERS! **READ 2 KINGS 22:1-20**

When were you happy to find something you had lost?

1. Why did King Josiah initiate a temple restoration?

- To find God's law, which had been lost.
- It was time for a makeover.
- The boy king finally reached 26 years of age.
- The temple building had deteriorated.

- The temple practices had deteriorated.
- The king had no written guidance from God.
- To provide jobs.
- God impressed him to do this.
- Other.

2. **What's the significance of finding God's law in the temple?**

- It seems like it should always be available there.
- It raises the question about what the high priest was doing.
- The fact that the law of God had been lost (for years).
- Access to direct revelations God had made to his people.
- Original source of right and wrong instead of only traditions.
- The temple must have been a mess in order to have lost God's law.
- If God's law had been put in the ark, had the ark also been lost?
- The covenant between God and his people could be renewed.
- Other.

3. **What happened when the king heard the content of God's law?**

- Not much.
- It confirmed what he already knew.
- The king found it shocking.
- The king tore his robes in despair.
- It fed his faith.
- He fired the high priest.
- The king actively pursued more input from God.
- The king repented for unknowingly breaking the covenant.
- Other.

4. **What message did God send via the prophet Huldah?**

- No problem; it's all good.
- Big problem; it's all bad.
- Too little, too late.

- You've been consistently breaking our covenant for years.
- You can count on me to be true to our covenant.
- We all make mistakes, so forget about it.
- I am going to destroy Jerusalem because you keep breaking my law.
- Your repentance has been noted.
- Other.

5. What impact does repentance make?

- It changes the heart of God.
- It changes the heart of the sinner(s).
- It's a gift from God, so the sinner first has to accept this gift.
- It results in humility.
- It delays punishment.
- It removes punishment.
- It changes a person's orientation and how they live.
- Other.

6. What are good ways to repent?

- Say, "I'm sorry."
- Say, "I'm sorry," and really mean it.
- Promise to change what you've been doing wrong.
- Deny as much as you can.
- Make a public confession.
- Apologize to God.
- Apologize to those you've wronged.
- Wear sackcloth and ashes.
- Other

7. When and where do you get input from God?

8. Why would you repent?

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PRAYER EXPERIENCES

Create a dialogue with God by reading part of the Bible. Take this as God's message to you, and then pray your response back to God.

Don't worry about whether or not you are saying the right thing. Just let Scripture spur your dialogue with God.

Psalm 23, TLB, begins, "Because the Lord is my Shepherd, I have everything I need!" That might spark my response of, "Right now I don't feel like I have everything I need. I want to believe this verse, but I'm not feeling it right now. Does that mean it's not true for me, at least not now? Or does it mean that my faith can't grasp it right now because my reality challenges David's statement?"

Psalm 23:2-3, TLB, continues, "He lets me rest in the meadow grass and leads me beside the quiet streams. He gives me new strength. He helps me do what honors him the most." My first reaction is, "I don't know much about being a lamb or resting in meadow grass. But leading me beside quiet streams reminds me on biking or walking along the American River bike trail. Sometimes I just stop and watch the water flow—fast in some parts and slow in other parts. Watching that seems to release the tension I've held inside my gut. Oh, and the latter part of that message about giving me new strength—I could use some of that right now. And yes, I need help to do what honors You the most."

That's just one person's response to dialogue with God by taking God's Word, Scripture, as the starting point for a dialogue with God. The more you have to say, the fewer number of verses you'll cover (that's not the point). The less you have to

say, the more you'll be listening to God's message to you. This might be difficult if you haven't done it much. But when you cultivate this type of dialogue you might have to set an alarm because the time can really fly when you're talking with God.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Select from these questions, or let them prompt your own questions. You can reflect on these by yourself, or discuss them with another person or group of people.

1. What comes to your mind when you hear the word "Scripture"?
2. Compared to other things in your life, what value do you place on Scripture?
3. What are your sources of spiritual authority and guidance?
4. When it comes to reading Scripture, how do you go about doing it?
5. Which translation or paraphrase of Scripture is your current favorite?
6. Is Scripture more likely to be in your head (thoughts), in your heart (feelings), or in your hand (actions)?
7. What do you do when reading Scripture seems boring or lifeless?
8. Do you read the Bible more for information or for connection?

9. How often do you read the Bible?
10. With whom do you share what you find in the Bible? Who shares the Bible with you?
11. Which parts of the Bible are your favorite? Which parts do you avoid?
12. If you're not a Bible scholar, how would God communicate to you through the Bible?

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APPLICATION IDEAS

The obvious application for this study is to read the Bible. Many people set about to do that at the start of a new year. You can probably do that if you read about pages a day. But when a person misses a day or two, the number grows too large and often ends in the person giving up on that New Year's resolution. Those more persistent sometimes lose interest with the details of sanctuary construction in Exodus or sacrifice and festival details in Leviticus.

Consider a variety of One-Year Bible possibilities. These usually combine a daily reading with an Old Testament passage plus a New Testament passage. They might also include a Psalm and a few verses from Proverbs so you have a variety each day.

Having a partner to hold you accountable might be more important than even the Bible translation or paraphrase you choose.

With today's technology you can easily get an audio version of the Bible being read and listen while you exercise or cook or

rest. The Bible app “YouVersion” has five different versions of the Bible (ESV, NLT, KIN, KJV, and MSG) narrated and available free.

For those who are more spontaneous or sporadic than having a daily routine, consider reading one chapter from the book of Proverbs. Choose a chapter based on the day of the month because there are 31 chapters in Proverbs. If it’s January 14, read chapter 14 in Proverbs. It will take you about two to four minutes. You might pick out one of the gems to be your proverb message from God to you for that day, week, or for the month.

A different approach is to simply connect to Jesus rather than trying to finish a book. View the Bible as God’s love letter to you and read a portion and reflect on it. Let it lead you into prayer so you have a two-way communication with your Creator and Redeemer. The popular “YouVersion” Bible app also has daily devotionals as an option.

Being part of a small group can provide support, accountability, and help in personal application of the messages found in the Bible. With the pandemic you can still connect on Zoom or FaceTime or with some other social media platform.

Probably the most important thing is that you simply do it.

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SHARING OPTIONS

One way for the Bible to find root in you is to give it away to others. That might seem counter-intuitive, but this spiritual principle miraculously takes Scripture deeper in your own life when you share it. Teachers experience this when they internalize something by teaching it to others.

Take the risk of inviting someone to be your partner in sharing Scripture over the next month. Choose if you want to

make contact daily, even if it's just a quick text message, or if you want to connect once a week. Try it for a few weeks and evaluate what you will do about the future of your partnership—should you continue for a quarter or until this summer or longer?

Try reading the same passage of Scripture and share with each other what God's message was for you in the reading. A different approach is to read something different from each other and share the unique communicate from God to you. Start with one of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John). For something shorter, select one of Paul's letters to a church or person. Find variety in different Psalms. You could start at the beginning with Genesis.

Challenge each other to memorize a verse each week. Recite it to each other. Share a paraphrase. Pray for each other about this. Ask God to make it come true in your life at this time.

Your accountability partner could be your spouse. Your small group could be your family. With the pandemic giving families more time at home, this might be your best and most logical small group. It might necessitate a new way of doing life in your house, but the start of a new year is a natural time to try out something new or different. Expect God to speak to each person in your family through Scripture. The same Holy Spirit that inspired the original writers can be invited to bring the message to your understanding now, no matter what your age might be.

And here's one more sharing option. Please share your experimenting with these Spiritual Growth Resources with Pastor Pedro Trinidad. Phone or text at 925-951-7041, or email at ptrinidad@carmsda.org.

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BIBLE-IN-MY-HEAD, HEART, AND HAND

Jewish school boys started by memorizing the first five books of the Bible, the Torah. The next level of education required memorizing the entire Old Testament. Those who couldn't do that dropped out of school and entered the family business. The idea wasn't just to memorize Scripture, but to start with that and then have it shape one's feelings and actions—from head to heart to hand.

Here's a short verse to memorize this week, as well as a longer one. Post these and practice them so they find their way into your head, heart, and hands.

SCROLL THROUGH BIBLE IMAGES

6 Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says, "It was favorable to me I listened to you," and in a city of sinners I have helped you."

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We do not obstruct anyone's way, for all are saved may be found with our ministry. We are servants of God, we originate initiatives in every way: by great enthusiasm, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, by beatings, imprisonments, risks, labors, sleepless nights, hunger, by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the holy Spirit, genuine love, by truthful speech, and the power of God, with the weapons of righteousness.

I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, as it is written in the Scriptures: "The righteous will live by faith." But we are of good courage and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. For we know that if we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. For we know that if we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET & A LIGHT TO MY PATH

PSALM 119:105 of the Living God

Do not be unskillfully yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "It will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them; says the Lord.

Paul's joy

I have rejoiced in your faith, one, I do not say this to you, you are in my heart, to the extent, with great joyfulness, for I am filled with comfort, in all my tribulation, even when we parted, but we were afflicted together, and we were comforted together. But God was with us by the coming of Titus, and by the comfort which he brought us of your longing, you rejoiced still more. For I do not regret it though I grieved you, though not because you were grieved, rejoicing. For you felt a love through us.

For gladly grief produced love without regret, whereas for me what earnestness took what fear, what longing, what grief? You have proved yourselves, although I write to you, it was the wrong, not for the sake wrong, but in order that your rejoicing to you in the right be.

And besides our own joy of Titus, because his heart

“Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.” Psalm 119:105 (NLT)

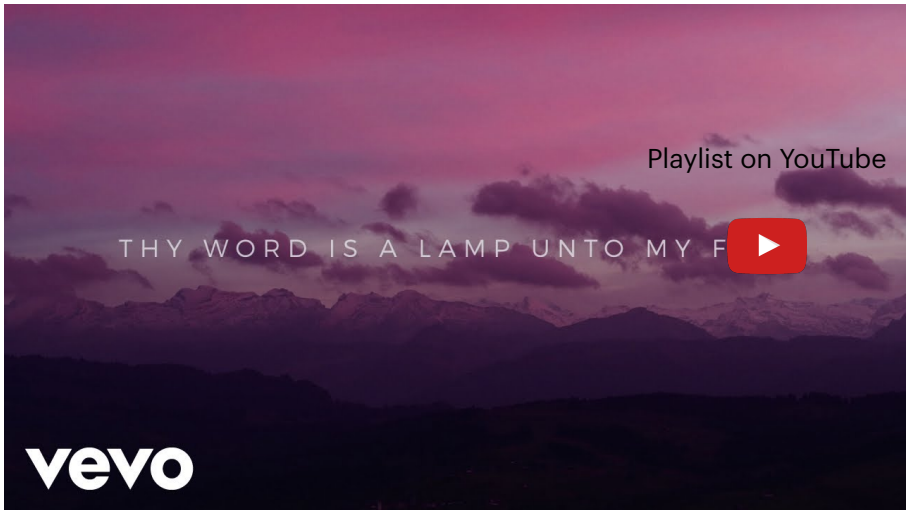
“Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God’s way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (MSG)

Here’s the same passage from the GNT: “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living, so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed.”

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SING-ALONG

Thy Word by Amy Grant



INSPIRATIONAL MUSIC

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