

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”—John 15:5, NIV



Reading the Bible...

READING THE BIBLE is a critical discipline of our spiritual growth. While there are many different ways to build this into your life, the questions included here offer a reflective and prayerful means of allowing the Bible to shape and form us.

As followers of Jesus, we are people of the Word. Our goal is not just to know the facts of the Bible, but to let its truths increasingly shape our attitudes and our lives. Regularly reading the Bible is essential as we seek to become more like Jesus.

There are many ways to dig into a Scripture text. Here's one way to enter the reading as a form of prayer. Using the word GROW as an acronym, the following questions are meant to guide your reading so that it becomes transformational rather than simply informational. As you begin, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. Read the selected text, and then enter a conversation with God about it.

Questions to help you GROW

God's Word...

- What does the text reveal about God's character?
- Is this godly characteristic evident in my life?

Relationships...

- How does the text motivate toward healthier relationships?
- Is there something for which I need to ask God's forgiveness?

Outward Action...

- In what ways am I being called to obedience through this text?
- How might I move into this newly realized truth?

Worship...

- How will I express my gratitude to God for what I've learned?
- How might I more faithfully engage in a lifestyle of worship?

You may wish to focus on the preaching text(s) of the upcoming Sunday in order to prepare you for

listening to God. In that case, you might choose one of these questions as your focus for each day, or consider all of them with a different text each day. Whatever your approach, you can be confident that your attitudes and actions will be increasingly shaped by the truths of the Bible.

“...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”—Philippians 1:4-6

A few passages to get you started

Old Testament...

- Deuteronomy 6:1-9
- Isaiah 55:8-11

Psalms...

- Psalms 23
- Psalms 139:1-14

New Testament...

- Ephesians 1:3-10
- Colossians 3:12-17

You may wish to select your texts from the lectionary (a compilation of readings, based in the Christian year, intended to help a congregation receive the whole counsel of God in a two or three-year cycle). You can find the lectionary beginning on page 960 of *The Covenant Hymnal*.

Please remember that not every question being asked can be answered within every passage we might read. The more specific a question, the more often that question cannot be answered by the text. The guiding questions we've given here are just that...guiding. The desired outcome within this practice is that you develop a regular habit of scriptural reading.

My plan for the next weeks or months

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”—Hebrews 4:12

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