

this week's walk

A Five Day Devotional Journey

September 17-23, 2006



Why we do what we do

The Word

Five Day Devotional

1 Read: Deuteronomy 8:1-3

Keep and live out the entire commandment that I'm commanding you today so that you'll live and prosper and enter and own the land that God promised to your ancestors. Remember every road that God led you on for those forty years in the wilderness, pushing you to your limits, testing you so that he would know what you were made of, whether you would keep his commandments or not. He put you through hard times. He made you go hungry. Then he fed you with manna, something neither you nor your parents knew anything about, so you would learn that men and women don't live by bread only; we live by every word that comes from God's mouth.

Think:

- How "pushed to the limits" have you felt lately? Has the Bible been manna for you on your journey or has it been left behind in the baggage of life — or even a source of angst and frustration to you? Why? When's the last time you read the Bible and felt like you were hearing the very words of God?

Pray:

"Abba, when I read scripture let me hear your voice. As I ponder each line, fill me with fresh passion for you and for life."

Live:

Read a book of the Bible this week you either haven't read in a while or have never read. Write what you see.

John Wimber on the Bible...

If the Bible is God's Word and he uses it to point us towards Christ - it is the words of Christ - the most fundamental reason for reading the Bible is to maintain and refresh our relationship with God. Back in the fourth century a famous church leader named Jerome said, "Ignorance of the Scripture is ignorance to Christ." But let's face it; many Christians find it difficult to read the Bible. Two attitudes towards Scripture inhibit many Christians from allowing the Bible to have its full authority in their lives. The first is the "leave it to the experts" mentality, where people abdicate personal responsibility for knowing God in Scripture. Modern Theologians and pastors have unwittingly contributed to this problem. Armed with the latest discoveries in linguistics, anthropology, psychology, sociology and history, they leave most laypeople with the impression that interpreting the Bible is far too complex an operation for the ordinary person.

In many instances Christians use the Bible to shield themselves from authority in their lives, especially from pastors and more mature Christians. But the Bible teaches that we are an interdependent people, and the wisdom and understanding of pastoral leaders with vital elements of the Christian life. This abuse of Scripture by some discourages others from ever starting to read it. Pastors and theologians have much to offer for understanding Scripture. But they cannot stand in the way of our freely reading and submitting to Scripture. This doesn't require much expertise as some people think. We gain much benefit from Scripture without being scholars, especially when we keep in mind the goal of our faith: Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior.

- Read to **learn** from God
- Read to **obey** God
- Read to **share** with others

Four Daily Devotional Steps

Read

Meditatively read a verse/passage.

Think

Ponder its meaning.

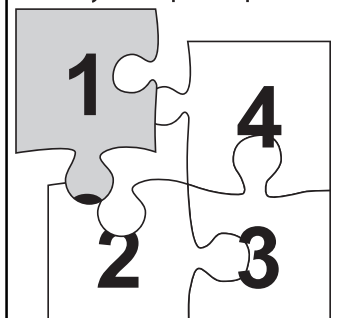
Pray

Talk it over with God.

Live

Pursue life response.

Weekly Discipleship Track



2 **Read:**
Psalm 119:129-136

Every word you give me is a miracle word—
how could I help but obey?
Break open your words, let the light shine out,
let ordinary people see the meaning.
Mouth open and panting,
I wanted your commands more than anything.
Turn my way, look kindly on me,
as you always do to those who personally love you.
Steady my steps with your Word of promise
so nothing malign gets the better of me.
Rescue me from the grip of bad men and women
so I can live life your way.
Smile on me, your servant;
teach me the right way to live.
I cry rivers of tears
because nobody's living by your book!

Think:

- What has been your greatest challenge in reading the Bible? What is the greatest benefit that you have received?

Pray:

“Lord, stir up fresh hunger in me for you and your word. Let my mouth be open and panting for fresh glimpses of you from its pages.”

Live:

Read all of Psalm 119 over the course of the day.

4 **Read:**
Acts 20:29-32

I know that as soon as I'm gone, vicious wolves are going to show up and rip into this flock, men from your very own ranks twisting words so as to seduce disciples into following them instead of Jesus. So stay awake and keep up your guard. Remember those three years I kept at it with you, never letting up, pouring my heart out with you, one after another. Now I'm turning you over to God, our marvelous God whose gracious Word can make you into what he wants you to be and give you everything you could possibly need in this community of holy friends.

Think:

- What are the things that most consistently pull or seduce you away from time with the Lord in Bible reading and meditation? Have you found your own “community of holy friends” with whom to share your journey and your insights into God and his word — and vice versa? How have they blessed you?

Pray:

“Marvelous God, through your gracious Word make, mold, shape and form me into what you want me to be today. Mute the distracting and deafening voices of culture and life, and even for a moment this day, let me see and hear you and feel your touch as I spend time in your Word.”

Live:

Find a practical way of encouraging someone (non-guilt induced) in their own Bible reading and meditation.

3 **Read:**
1 Peter 1:22-25

Now that you've cleaned up your lives by following the truth, love one another as if your lives depended on it. Your new life is not like your old life. Your old birth came from mortal seed; your new birth comes from God's living Word. Just think: a life conceived by God himself! That's why the prophet said,

The old life is a grass life,
its beauty as short-lived as wildflowers;
Grass dries up, flowers droop,
God's Word goes on and on forever.

This is the Word that conceived the new life in you.

Think:

- To what extent do you relate to the Bible as a textbook rather than as a personal, life-giving message to you? How can we keep from falling into legalistic ruts of reading to impress ourselves or others rather than for simple communion with God?

Pray:

“Spirit of God, birth new life in me; let each word in your book, each comma, each period, mark the contractions of new creation in me.”

Live:

“The old life is a grass life, it's beauty as short-lived as wildflowers...” Meditate on the full quotation thru the day

5 **Read:**
2 Timothy 3:10-17

You've been a good apprentice to me, a part of my teaching, my manner of life, direction, faith, steadiness, love, patience, troubles, sufferings—suffering along with me in all the grief I had to put up with in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. And you also well know that God rescued me! Anyone who wants to live all out for Christ is in for a lot of trouble; there's no getting around it. Unscrupulous con men will continue to exploit the faith. They're as deceived as the people they lead astray. As long as they are out there, things can only get worse. But don't let it faze you. Stick with what you learned and believed, sure of the integrity of your teachers—why, you took in the sacred Scriptures with your mother's milk! There's nothing like the written Word of God for showing you the way to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 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.

Think:

- According to Paul, what are the benefits of Scripture reading? Which of these have you most recently experienced in your own Bible reading? How “put together and shaped up” do you feel for today's tasks?

Pray:

“Lord, train me in your ways! Give me steadiness of heart, mind, and purpose to pursue you in the Word all the days of my life.”

Live: Read the Word. Live it. Obey it. Share it...