



take it home

## The Marks of Discipleship: Scripture

*One of the great gifts of daily Bible reading is that we have confidence in our confession. Hebrews 4:14 reads in part: "...let us hold fast to our confession." The author of this letter knows that the more we know Jesus as the living Word of God, the more certain we will be of the character of God. Daily Bible reading, especially when we use Jesus Christ as our lens for understanding it, confirms who God is. God is the God of Jesus. God is the God who forgives and understands us. More than that, in Jesus, God has sympathy for our human predicament. When others ask us who God is, when we wonder ourselves, the practice of daily Bible reading will remind us of all that we have read and come to know about God. Daily Bible reading reminds us of what God does, and is an invitation for us to grow in our confident confession of Jesus Christ as Savior.*

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### **Day One: Guide to Living**

Why do you read the Bible? How has it been meaningful to you? Our third mark of a disciple is centered in scripture. This week, we will look at various ways to use the Bible. One way to read the Bible is as a guide to living. The Bible is alive and active in our world, in our lives and in our hearts. Read Hebrews 4:12-15, Psalm 19:7-11, and James 1:19-27. These few references illustrate words to enrich and guide our lives. These words have been given to us by God, the creator of life. The Bible is our lifeline to God and the path God has created for our lives. The book of Proverbs is a great place to look for more guidelines for living. In your prayer time, ask God to let these words direct your actions this week.

### **Day Two: Story of God**

What was the last story you read? Who was it about? The biggest section of the Bible is story - Adam and Eve, Moses, David, Ruth, Jesus, and so on. Some stories are about faithful people, others about people rejecting God, while others are about how God can change lives. Within these stories is the greater story, that of God alone. Read some of the highlights of God's story found in Genesis 1-2:3, Exodus 3:1-15, Psalm 23, John 1:1-18, 1 John 4:7-12 and Revelation 1:8. God's story is a love story. For further reading, read all of 1 John. It's through these stories that we see the heart of God and build our relationship with God. What verse(s) have been at the heart of God's story for you? In your prayers, talk with God as a friend.

### **Day Three: Shared in Community**

The Bible has a community aspect as well. It's amazing how the Bible can build bridges within groups, keeping people accountable for their actions, giving insight to hardships and reconciling differences within relationships. The Bible has an incredible way of bringing people together. Read Colossians 3:15-17, Deuteronomy 6:1-3 and Jeremiah 31:33-34. As the words of God become written on our hearts, our actions within our communities change. These communities may be within our church, families, our marriage and/or friends. For illustrations of how God's word can unite people, read Philippians, a letter from Paul to a new community of believers living their faith. Today, read God's word with at least one other person, talk about how God's word has been active in your relationship and pray together.

### **Day Four: *Prayer Too***

How do you pray? Are there tools you have found to be helpful? Many people use verses from the Bible as their prayers. The Bible tells us a lot about prayer and what happens when we pray. Read Psalm 1, Matthew 6:5-15, and Psalm 34. The Bible also has the prayers of Jesus. Read John 17. These verses illustrate how the Bible can be a tool for prayer. Today, use the Bible in your prayer time. Pray the Lord's Prayer, pick a verse and meditate on it for an extended period of time or pray through portions of John 17, placing yourself in the garden with Jesus.

### **Day Five: *Knowledge***

Where do you go to learn more about the Bible itself? Both the Old and New Testaments have sections that address our history as Christian people, about worship, truth and many other issues that challenge us. The Bible is the inspired word of God and offers us knowledge about what it means to be a Christian. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Proverbs 30:5, and Isaiah 40:8. We are invited to know God. Part of that is knowing God's story and God's heart, while another part is knowing about God's people, what the Bible says and does not say. Read Genesis 2:9, Job 21:22, Proverbs 1:7 and 8:10, Romans 11:33, 2 Peter 1:5-7, Exodus 6:7 and Psalm 46:10. As Psalm 46 says, "Be still and know that I am God." Use this verse as your prayer, reflecting on the various verses you have just read.

### **Day Six: *Song of our Heart***

Many of us are not aware of the wide variety of emotions demonstrated in the Bible. Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. How often have you gone to Scripture when you are sad? Happy? Confused? Filled with love? The book of Psalms is often referred to as a book of hymns. It is an excellent place to go to discover the depth of emotions expressed by faithful people. One emotion expressed is lament. Read Psalm 90 and Lamentations 5 as two examples. Read Song of Songs 4 for an image of passionate love. What is the song of your heart today? Use a Bible subject guide or concordance to look up some verses dealing with those emotions and read them as part of your prayer time.

### **Day Seven: *Eyes of Faith***

From what perspective do you approach the Bible? Regardless of how you read the Bible, what happens when you read it? Although the Bible has various aspects, at its core is faith. The Bible is a book about faith and God. It is God's voice to us, taken with faith, and can ultimately change our lives. Read Hebrews 11:1-3 and Acts 16:19-34. How has the Bible transformed you? How has your faith changed by reading, praying, singing or living these words of God? As you prepare your heart for prayer today, read the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:1-23. Reflect on what this parable has to do with God's word and faith. In your prayer time, talk with God about your struggles with faith and how faith gives you eyes to see and hear wonderful things in the Bible

