

12 SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

TO GROW IN JESUS CHRIST

LIFE GROUP CURRICULUM 2026

JANUARY • FEBRUARY • MARCH



12

OVERVIEW

PRAYER

Matt 6:9-13	WEEK 1	Jan 4	Connect
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	WEEK 3	Jan 18	Ask
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COMPASSION

1 John 3:17	WEEK 1	Feb 1	Awareness
	WEEK 2	Feb 9	Empathy
	WEEK 3	Feb 16	Action
	WEEK 4	Feb 23	Celebration

SCRIPTURE

Col 3:16	WEEK 1	Mar 1	Christ the Center
	WEEK 2	Mar 8	Teach
	WEEK 3	Mar 15	Sing
	WEEK 4	Mar 22	Gratitude

PRAYER

Matt 6:9-13

⁹ Pray then like this:
“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
¹⁰ Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,
¹² and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

[PRAYER]

WEEK 1

January 4 to 10

Focus: Connect

Prayer is about connecting with a personal God.

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr - 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up

- Name as many pop songs as you can with the word "prayer" in them.
- What's one word you associate with prayer?
- When you think of prayer, do you imagine talking, listening, or something else?

Go Deeper (5-10 min)

- Who is someone who taught you something meaningful about prayer?
- Have you ever prayed consistently for something over a long period?

Scripture Prep (2 min)

Group Leader (or delegate) gives brief context for the passage (a quick web search should do the trick!).

Scripture Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read Matt 6:9-13 aloud.

Open Scripture Discussion (5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage, and/or if any other scriptures come to mind that relate to this spiritual concept.

[PRAYER]

WEEK 1

January 4 to 10

Written

Devotional:

In his timeless book, *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster opens his chapter on prayer saying "prayer catapults us onto the frontier of the spiritual life. Of all the Spiritual Disciplines prayer is the most central because it ushers us into perpetual communion with the Father...it is the deepest and highest work of the human spirit." It is no mere coincidence that Jesus models prayer for his disciples starting by connecting with the Father ("Our Father who is in heaven..."). For me, starting prayer by closing my eyes and simply saying "good morning" to my heavenly Father is a critical connection to make before anything else is said. It's almost as if that initial connection is the turn of the ignition that revs the Holy Spirit engine to life! A key first step! Jesus, then, goes on in Matthew 6:9 to say "...hallowed be Your name." Hallowed simply means "sacred" or "holy," and is a word choice Jesus uses to indicate that prayer is something that transcends anything and everything else that might be going on in one's world. As Christians, we should not take for granted this incredible gift that has been given to us by God--access to Himself! Think about the implications! We, as flesh bound, mortal humans are invited to connect with the God of the universe at anytime, anywhere for any reason--a gift made possible through Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the Cross!! My growth step is a renewed commitment to daily accept this incredible gift--to pause, to quiet myself, to allow the eyes of my heart to turn to heaven and simply say, "Our Father, in heaven, Hallowed be Your name."

Discussion Questions (15-20 min)

- What single word would you use to characterize your prayer life?
- What does "access to God" mean to you personally?
- What steps do you want to take this week to grow in your prayer life?

Additional Question

- What other rhythms or tools help you connect with God (journaling, walking, quiet, music)?

Closing Prayer (1-10min)

Ask someone in your group to close in prayer (or share prayer requests and open up prayer for the group if time permits).

[PRAYER]

WEEK 2
January 11 to 17

Focus: Yield

Prayer helps yield our will to God's

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr - 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on
your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up
Questions:
(10-15min)

- Do you prefer praying silently or out loud?
- What time of day feels easiest for you to pray?

Go Deeper
(5-10 min)

- When you struggle to pray, what usually makes it hard?
- What do you think is easier—asking God for things or listening to God?

Scripture Prep
(2 min)

Group Leader (or delegate) gives brief context for the passage.

Scripture
Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read Matt 6:9-13 aloud.

Open
Scripture
Discussion
(5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage, and/or if any other scriptures come to mind that relate to this spiritual concept.

[PRAYER]

WEEK 2

January 11 to 17

Written

Devotional:

A USC college student who was leading an on-campus Bible study once said once to me, "I'm burned out and discouraged...but maybe that's what ministry is." Ever felt that way? All of us have been dry, discouraged, and even disillusioned at times, but in John chapter 7:37-39, Jesus painted a much different picture of the life He has for us. "On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.' By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified." So how do we go from dry and disillusioned, to rivers of living water flowing in us and through us? We yield. Yielding is when we say to Jesus, "I can't do it, but you can." It is when we let go of relying on our efforts and lean on His power to work within us. Yielding is getting out of the way and giving God control. You will see a dramatic transformation in your life as you learn to yield to Jesus Christ moment by moment. We get off track, but at any time, you can surrender control back to Him. For me, the D.R.Y. acronym has been really helpful. Ask yourself, do I truly DESIRE to yield control of my life to Jesus right now? Am I willing to REPENT of any sin that may be getting in the way? Am I ready to YIELD to the power of the Holy Spirit and give Him control of my life? Try praying through the D.R.Y. acronym yourself this week and share with someone any difference that you notice making yielding a regular practice in your week.

Discussion
Questions
(15-20 min)

- Do you truly DESIRE to yield control of your life to Jesus right now?
- Are you willing to REPENT of any sin that may be getting in the way?
- Are you ready to YIELD to the power of the Holy Spirit and give Him control of your life?

Closing Prayer
(1-10min)

Ask someone in your group to close in prayer (or share prayer requests and open up prayer for the group if time permits).

[PRAYER]

WEEK 3

January 18 to 24

Focus: Ask

Prayer includes asking God for his provision

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr - 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up
Questions:
(10-15min)

- Do you find it easier to pray alone or with others? Why?
- If prayer had a theme song, what would it be?

Go Deeper
(5-10 min)

- If you could ask God one question about prayer, what would it be?

Scripture Prep
(2 min)

Group Leader (or delegate) gives brief context for the passage.

Scripture
Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read Matt 6:9-13 aloud.

Open
Scripture
Discussion
(5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage, and/or if any other scriptures come to mind that relate to this spiritual concept.

[PRAYER]

WEEK 3

January 18 to 24

Written

Devotional:

We don't tend to ask for things we already have. And we don't tend to ask for things we don't feel we want or even need. We tend to ask for things we don't have, but know we want or need. To me, this is why Jesus' instruction on prayer in Mt. 6, and specifically what He tells us to ask for, is so important. He reminds us of what we really need and don't have. Jesus tells us to ask for three things: our daily bread (provision), forgiveness, and protection from temptation or evil. The implication is that none of these things is truly available to us except through God's grace. But our natural inclination can tell us otherwise, especially in the success culture we live in. We might believe we earn our daily bread based on our own efforts. And we might think we don't need forgiveness because we are basically good people. And when it comes to temptation, we might believe we're above it, or worse yet, that we're not even sinning. These responses are all products of a pride that is in each one of us, and it's a pride only God can deal with. But Jesus doesn't condemn us. He simply, compassionately, and beautifully invites us. "Ask for My help," He says, "because the burden you put on yourself to perform is too great for you, but My yoke is light." (Mt. 11:30) Make it a point today and every day to see your needs for provision, forgiveness, and protection for what they truly are, and hand them to Him.

Discussion Questions (15-20 min)

- Do you ever feel guilty asking God for things you want/need? Explain that feeling.
- What evidence would you give to support that Jesus is a 'giver?'
- If you could rank elements of prayer in order of importance, where would you place asking for help?

Closing Prayer (1-10min)

Ask someone in your group to close in prayer (or share prayer requests and open up prayer for the group if time permits).

[PRAYER]

WEEK 4

January 25 to 31

Focus: Receive

Prayer allows us to receive God's grace and empowers us to offer forgiveness to others

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr - 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

**Warm-Up
Questions:
(10-15min)**

- Have you ever prayed for something that didn't happen the way you hoped? How did you handle that?
- What do you think God wants to teach you through unanswered prayers?

**Go Deeper
(5-10 min)**

- If you could sit down and pray with anyone from the Bible, who would it be and why?

**Scripture Prep
(2 min)**

Group Leader (or delegate) gives brief context for the passage.

**Scripture
Reading (2 min)**

Choose someone in the group to read Matt 6:9-13 aloud.

**Open
Scripture
Discussion
(5 min)**

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage, and/or if any other scriptures come to mind that relate to this spiritual concept.

[PRAYER]

WEEK 4

January 25 to 31

Written

Devotional:

This prayer for forgiveness Jesus models in Matt 6:12 seems like God's forgiveness of our sins is conditional on whether or not we forgive others. Yet that is difficult to square with such theological passages like "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rm 5:8) which indicates unconditional forgiveness. Even more striking is when Jesus doubles down on this important topic in vv.14-15. We should remember, though, these verses from our Savior are not intended to be a theological treatise but a practical application prayer. St. Augustine describes it well: "God gives where He finds empty hands." I love this empty hand analogy, because of its practicality. In other words, you can't receive much of anything if you have closed fists and folded arms. At the same time, we certainly can't give to others with the same "closed-for-business" posture. Which means, the opposite is true--receiving--with open hands--God's forgiveness of our debts leaves us open to share that forgiveness with others. In our sin-soaked world, this is tough. People have hurt us, and extending forgiveness is hard. But this is exactly why this is tucked into the form of a prayer. Prayer reminds us of God's forgiveness, fueling our desire to do likewise with others. My growth step is this: to ensure that my daily prayers would include a reminder of God's gracious forgiveness of my stubborn heart in order that it can fuel my love and forgiveness of others.

Discussion Questions (15-20 min)

- In what ways has forgiveness been a difficult concept for you?
- Is it harder to receive or offer forgiveness? Why?
- How do you remind yourself that you are forgiven through Jesus Christ?

Closing Prayer (1-10min)

Ask someone in your group to close in prayer (or share prayer requests and open up prayer for the group if time permits).

COMPASSION

1 John 3:17

But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

[COMPASSION]

WEEK 1
February 1 to 8

Focus: Awareness

Compassion starts with becoming aware of those around you.

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr - 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up
Questions:
(10-15min)

- When you hear the word “compassion,” what comes to mind?
- Can you think of a time when someone showed you compassion? How did it impact you?

Go Deeper
(5-10 min)

- Is compassion more of a feeling or an action?
- What kind of feelings or actions might you associate with it?

Scripture Prep
(2 min)

Group Leader (or delegate) gives brief context for the passage.

Scripture
Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read 1 John 3:17 aloud.

Open
Scripture
Discussion
(5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage, and/or if any other scriptures come to mind that relate to this spiritual concept.

[COMPASSION]

WEEK 1

February 1 to 8

Written

Devotional:

There once was an experiment conducted by sociologists in which they gathered a group of people in a circle, gave them a ball, and told them to toss it to one another. But there was a catch, so to speak. All but one of the members was told not to throw the ball to that one member. She was not made aware of this. As play continued, she grew increasingly uncomfortable with being ignored. She tried to assert herself, but the group was adept at excluding her. Eventually, she left the game in despair. The sociologist observed what we all know to be true: that it hurts not to be seen. 1 John 3:17 says "Whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?" The question is rhetorical. Such love does not abide in this man. Such a person is like those in the experiment, seeing while choosing not to see. But we must ask ourselves, what if Jesus did that to us? Jesus not only chose to see the broken, He left the throne and came to us. He saw our poverty and entered into it with us. And most incredibly, He chose to die for us to save us from our hopeless state. His sacrifice made it such that His Father, who had to look away from His Son on the cross for our sake, would see us anew. Jesus demonstrated the most profound awareness of the unseen that there has ever been. He asks us now to do the same. He asks us to see our brothers and sisters in need, and to make them feel seen by extending our love. Take note today of who you see and how you respond, and be challenged by Jesus to shape who you are to those in need.

Discussion
Questions
(15-20 min)

- Have you ever felt unseen by those around you? What was that like?
- How do you typically respond when you encounter others in need?
- What might you do to help others feel seen—by you and by Jesus?

Additional
Question

- Where have you seen compassion displayed in your church community?

Closing Prayer
(1-10min)

Ask someone in your group to close in prayer (or share prayer requests and open up prayer for the group if time permits).

[COMPASSION]

WEEK 2
February 9 to 15

Focus: *Empathy*

Compassion means developing empathy for those around you.

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr - 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up
Questions:
(10-15min)

- Which is easier for you personally — receiving compassion or giving it? Why?
- Do you find it easier to show compassion to strangers, friends, or family?

Go Deeper
(5-10 min)

- Why do you think God calls us to show compassion?

Scripture Prep
(2 min)

Group Leader (or delegate) gives brief context for the passage.

Scripture
Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read 1 John 3:17 aloud.

Open
Scripture
Discussion
(5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage, and/or if any other scriptures come to mind that relate to this spiritual concept.

[COMPASSION]

WEEK 2
February 9 to 15

Written

Devotional:

Once you've been a Christian for a while, it's easy to fall into the trap of having a list and checking off the things that you're "supposed" to do. Read the Bible? Check. Pray? Check. Tithe on autopay? Check. Serve? Check. But are we just going through the motions, or are we stopping to look around and see the people that we are serving? Ten years ago I lived in a shelter for women and children experiencing homelessness as the shelter manager. The shelter was owned by sixteen churches in Atlanta, and every day a different church group would bring us breakfast and dinner. Many of the church groups would stay in the kitchen, serving dinner, and talking among themselves while I sat with the ladies in the dining room. There was one church that always stuck out as the sole congregation that came out into the dining room with us, sitting with the women, talking to them, and really investing in their lives by showing interest. Making a meal and dropping off muffins is pretty easy and you can pat yourself on the back and say that you served someone else. But Jesus sat down and broke bread with the poor and the outcasts and spent time with them, getting to know them. Jesus modeled empathy along with love and compassion. As Timothy Keller wrote, "Christ literally walked in our shoes and entered into our affliction." Are you walking alongside those you're serving?

Discussion
Questions
(15-20 min)

- Tell about someone who walked alongside you and made you feel truly loved.
- How can you show that kind of empathy to someone this week?
- How can you be more like Jesus in showing empathy?

Additional
Question

- What is one practical way our group/church could show more compassion?

Closing Prayer
(1-10min)

Ask someone in your group to close in prayer (or share prayer requests and open up prayer for the group if time permits).

[COMPASSION]

WEEK 3
February 16 to 22

Focus: Action

Compassion includes sustained (action to help) attentiveness to those in need.

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr - 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up
Questions:
(10-15min)

- Who is someone you'd describe as a compassionate person, and why?
- If compassion were a color, emotion, or action, what would it be?

Go Deeper
(5-10 min)

- What helps you feel compassion toward others who are different from you?

Scripture Prep
(2 min)

Group Leader (or delegate) gives brief context for the passage.

Scripture
Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read 1 John 3:17 aloud.

Open
Scripture
Discussion
(5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage, and/or if any other scriptures come to mind that relate to this spiritual concept.

[COMPASSION]

WEEK 3

February 16 to 22

Written

Devotional:

As Christians, we all feel something when we see suffering in the world. When we comfort those in need by understanding and sharing their feelings, we show empathy. But when we take specific action to address someone's needs, we show compassion to that person. Empathy and compassion go hand in hand, but compassion has an added active component. Think of empathy as the capacity to feel another's pain. Compassion is also a feeling: it is the concern for another's suffering that motivates a desire to help. So, compassion and empathy are similar but have distinctly different outcomes. Empathy is having awareness of another's emotions and sharing their burdens. Compassion adds an active, caring response for the purpose of alleviating suffering resulting from those emotions. Compassion builds on empathy by adding action. We can see in 1 John 3:17 that as Christians we are under a divine obligation to do what we can to alleviate suffering in this fallen world, especially the suffering of our fellow believers. To paraphrase John, if we see one of our Christian brothers and sisters in need and have the capacity to help, we show God's love and compassion to the world by helping that person. Conversely, if we fail to help John asks, rightly, "how does the love of God abide in us?" This active component of compassion requires a sustained attentiveness to the needs of those around us. The Christian believer is rightly moved by suffering, and having the desire to help, he or she then takes specific steps to alleviate that suffering. What does this look like? John McArthur once noted that "true love is not limited to supreme sacrifices, but shows up in lesser ones." Compassion manifests in sacrificial giving. We can start by just actively listening without judgement, then speaking with kindness and encouragement. But when we do speak, we shouldn't assume we know what the person needs. The first thing to say may simply be "what can I do to help?"

Discussion

Questions

(15-20 min)

- Is it harder for you to show compassion or empathy? Why?
- Share a time you showed empathy but not compassion—what kept you from acting?
- How did Jesus show compassion, and how can we follow His example?

Additional Question

- How do you think compassion changes relationships?

Closing Prayer

Ask someone in your group to close in prayer (or share prayer requests and open up prayer for the group if time permits).

[COMPASSION]

WEEK 4
February 23 to 29

Focus: Celebration

Compassion is celebrating receiving and giving God's love

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr - 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up
Questions:
(10-15min)

- What's the most compassionate thing someone has done for you recently?
- Do you think compassion comes naturally to you or is it something you have to practice?

Go Deeper
(5-10 min)

- What situations today make it challenging to show compassion?

Scripture Prep
(2 min)

Group Leader (or delegate) gives brief context for the passage.

Scripture
Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read 1 John 3:17 aloud.

Open
Scripture
Discussion
(5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage, and/or if any other scriptures come to mind that relate to this spiritual concept.

[COMPASSION]

WEEK 4

February 23 to 29

Written

Devotional:

We cannot survive this world on our own. God designed us in His image as relational beings, so we require the community and support of others to get through this life. Jesus instructs us in Luke 6:36 that to live rightly we are to "be compassionate, just as your (Heavenly) Father is compassionate." Providing compassion to others is one way we demonstrate our relationship with God and show God's love to others. Furthermore, activating compassion has exponentially positive results on our community that is worth celebrating! Jesus challenges us to notice the Good Samaritan's act of compassion in Luke 10 and to "go and do the same" by helping those in need. Imagine the impact on the community around us if each of us were to operationalize that in our own lives. Now that would truly be something to observe and celebrate! Compassion is a powerful witness because it activates God's love in very practical ways to help others persevere through real challenges. We should strive to act with compassion for the purposeful benefit it delivers and because to share love and compassion is a mark of Christian faith that inspires others towards a relationship with the Lord. Christ directed His disciples to "love one another" like He loved them (John 13:34-35). Notice this is instruction; therefore, it is a choice that we make, even when we may not feel like it. Jesus is our ultimate example of God's love and God's compassion for mankind, and He challenges us to replicate that in our own life for the benefit of the world. God's compassion provides indisputable evidence of His love for all. What a gift to be celebrated! Let's celebrate God's love by demonstrating compassion to each other and to our community. Let's live it out!

Discussion

Questions

(15-20 min)

- Share one recent moment when you received compassion.
- Where do you feel challenged to act compassionately right now?
- How will you activate compassion this week?

Closing Prayer

(1-10min)

Ask someone in your group to close in prayer (or share prayer requests and open up prayer for the group if time permits).

SCRIPTURE

Col 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

[SCRIPTURE]

WEEK 1

March 1 to 7

Focus: *Christ the Center*

All of scripture points to Jesus Christ.

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr - 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up Questions: (10-15min)

- When you think about the Bible, what feelings or words come to mind?
- Can you recall the first time the Bible felt “alive” or meaningful to you?

Go Deeper (5-10 min)

- Why do you think some people struggle to trust or value Scripture?

Scripture Prep (2 min)

Group Leader (or delegate) gives brief context for the passage.

Scripture Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read Col 3:16 aloud.

Open Scripture Discussion (5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage, and/or if any other scriptures come to mind that relate to this spiritual concept.

[SCRIPTURE]

WEEK 1

March 1 to 7

Written

Devotional:

In this passage we see how the message of Christ is the catalyst for our positive interactions with one another. It is the message of Christ which transformed the world and brought unity to an otherwise divided Church. It is through the gospel story of Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection, which creates the community we now experience here at Burke Community. When we allow the Word, Himself, to be soaked into our being and we let Him do in us the works that He has planned from the beginning, we will be used greatly for His sake. I find particular interest in the word, "dwell." It is not enough, it seems, to "read" or even to "study." The Word of Christ is instead to dwell in us - to live in us - to make a home out of our hearts and minds. Have you ever felt like the Sunday sermon does not truly impact your week? Have you ever noticed that your morning devotional seems to have a lasting impact of about 30 minutes? Have you ever felt like your Christian beliefs seem separated from your lifestyle throughout the week? Letting the Word of Christ dwell in your life makes all the difference. Try focusing on one word or idea from each experience in the Bible. Meditate on it by thinking about it on your way to work or on your way to the store. I have a friend who keeps sticky notes in his car. Whenever he is meditating on a particular verse or word in a verse, he writes it on a sticky note and attached it to his dashboard. This is a beautiful example of the practice of meditation and letting the Word dwell in you. Letting the Word of Christ dwell in you does not only benefit your own spiritual formation, though. It benefits the Church. The overarching teaching in this chapter is that when we put off the old self and put on the new self, the Church benefits. This is the effect of Christ's ministry. He came, lived, died, resurrected and ascended so that His people might be united under His name.

Discussion

Questions

(15-20 min)

- Who can you encourage this week?
- How can you let the Word of Christ dwell in you today?
- How does the Gospel as a unifying force guide our interactions with believers and non-believers alike?

Closing Prayer

(1-10min)

Ask someone in your group to close in prayer (or share prayer requests and open up prayer for the group if time permits).

[SCRIPTURE]

WEEK 2
March 8 to 14

Focus: Teach

Scripture is to be taught faithfully and earnestly

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr - 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

**Warm-Up
Questions:
(10-15min)**

- Who first taught you the importance of Scripture?
- What is your earliest memory of hearing or reading God's Word?

**Go Deeper
(5-10 min)**

- What parts of Scripture do you find most challenging, and why?

**Scripture Prep
(2 min)**

Group Leader (or delegate) gives brief context for the passage.

**Scripture
Reading (2 min)**

Choose someone in the group to read Col 3:16 aloud.

**Open
Scripture
Discussion
(5 min)**

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage, and/or if any other scriptures come to mind that relate to this spiritual concept.

[SCRIPTURE]

WEEK 2
March 8 to 14

Written

Devotional:

John Chrisostom, in the 4th century, said "Nothing so builds up believers as the sacred Scriptures; let us hear them continually, for they are our greatest security." If we are honest with ourselves, I wonder if being taught the "sacred Scriptures" would be on our Top 10 list of "securities." Money, shelter, love, health are surely somewhere near the top of yours--but, the "sacred scripture?" Yup! The verse we are studying in Col 3 is in the context of the Apostle Paul talking about putting on the "new self" (our new identity as beloved child of God!) and so in v.16 we learn that one of the key ways to live well as a Child of God is by hearing and absorbing the Word of God--which is embodied in Jesus Christ, himself! Anyone who has been taught the Word of Christ for any amount of time knows this--the Holy Spirit uses it to impact our lives directly--to influence our decisions, our relationships, our confidence in our new identity in Christ, etc...For me, one of the first things that happened after I became a Christian my freshman year in High School was to be taught four key verses to help me understand my faith in Christ more. Having those memorized and deep in my heart has kept me secure through some pretty tough times along the way. I'm sure some of you reading this might have a story or two about someone who has taught you a verse and how that has paid dividends in your life as well! My personal growth step is to have heightened awareness of moments when I'm being taught the Word of Christ, and to understand how they are, ultimately, my greatest security!

Discussion

Questions

(15-20 min)

- How has the Scripture (Word of Christ) impacted your life?
- Do you agree that hearing Scripture is a kind of "security"? Why or why not?
- What is one thing you can do this month to let Scripture teach and admonish you?

Closing Prayer

(1-10min)

Ask someone in your group to close in prayer (or share prayer requests and open up prayer for the group if time permits).

[SCRIPTURE]

WEEK 3
March 15 to 21

Focus: Sing

Scripture is to be sung and memorized and recited to become a part of the Christian's life

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr - 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up Questions: (10-15min)

- Can you remember a time when you connected a song to a Bible verse?
- Have you ever gone through a season where Scripture felt especially comforting or difficult?

Go Deeper (5-10 min)

- Why is it important to study the Bible in community rather than only individually?

Scripture Prep (2 min)

Group Leader (or delegate) gives brief context for the passage.

Scripture Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read Col 3:16 aloud.

Open Scripture Discussion (5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage, and/or if any other scriptures come to mind that relate to this spiritual concept.

[SCRIPTURE]

WEEK 3
March 15 to 21

Written

Devotional:

The Bible mentions singing over 400 times and gives 50 direct commands to sing. Clearly, music is close to the heart of God. And how amazing it is that our God is not silent! He is a singing God. Zephaniah 3:17 tells us, "He will rejoice over you with singing." Imagine that: the Creator of the universe sings over His people with joy! HE sings over you and me!

Throughout Scripture, we see God's people joining in that song. The Psalms were written as prayers, laments, and praises to be sung back to Him. The same God who gives us words of worship invites us to lift our voices in response. And Jesus, the eternal Word, the One through whom all things were created, became human and sang the very songs written by Him and for Him. In Jesus, every Psalm, every melody of hope, longing, and praise found its true and complete fulfillment.

Throughout history, Scripture has been sung, memorized, and recited, not just read. The Word of God was meant to dwell richly within us, shaping both our minds and our melodies. Every verse, every Psalm, every chorus becomes a way to carry God's truth deep into our hearts and daily lives.

Now, when we sing, we echo the song of Heaven. Each hymn, each word of praise, each melody is a rehearsal, a glimpse of the eternal worship we will one day offer to Christ face-to-face. This understanding has transformed the way I worship. I no longer sing with just my voice, but with my whole heart, allowing God's Word to form each note as an act of love and anticipation for the day I see Him in glory.

Discussion Questions (15-20 min)

- What does it mean to you that God rejoices over His people with singing?
- How can singing draw you closer to God in your daily walk?
- How can singing or reciting Scripture deepen your connection to God's Word?

Closing Prayer (1-10min)

Ask someone in your group to close in prayer (or share prayer requests and open up prayer for the group if time permits).

[SCRIPTURE]

WEEK 4
March 22 to 28

Focus: Gratitude

Scripture should be studied and sung with a heart of gratitude

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr - 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

**Warm-Up
Questions:
(10-15min)**

- Thankfulness is mentioned over 200 times in the Bible. Does this surprise you?
- What is a Bible verse you are thankful for?

**Go Deeper
(5-10 min)**

- Do you think your view of Scripture has changed over time? How?

**Scripture Prep
(2 min)**

Group Leader (or delegate) gives brief context for the passage.

**Scripture
Reading (2 min)**

Choose someone in the group to read Col 3:16 aloud.

**Open
Scripture
Discussion
(5 min)**

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage, and/or if any other scriptures come to mind that relate to this spiritual concept.

[SCRIPTURE]

WEEK 4
March 22 to 28

Written

Devotional:

We've been studying the important aspects of the "Word of Christ" this month in Col 3:16, and we come now to its critical conclusion: "with gratitude (or grace) in your hearts to God." Paul is saying the manner in which you are to do all of these things (dwell in Christ's word, teach and admonish, sing psalms, etc) is with a heart of charis (greek for grace or gratitude). The word is used abundantly in Paul's writings as well as the Gospel of John and Acts to define God's love (Grace) for us through Christ Jesus, and so it makes sense that the way we should encounter God's word is by reflecting the very charis He shows to us. In John Ortberg's book, *The Life You've Always Wanted*, he gives a practical tip as to how we may approach the study of scripture with grace and gratitude when he says "the goal is not for us to get through the scriptures, but for the scriptures to get through us." Go ahead. Read that again. Have you ever approached Bible reading as a task to complete? Something to check off the list so you could feel like a more accomplished Christian? If so, you are not alone. It's pretty common actually. But if the apostle Paul is asking us to approach the scripture with charis in our hearts, it stands to reason this is only possible if our hearts are first impacted by the Scripture in such a way that we experience God's grace and respond in kind--with gratitude. What does this look like? For me, my growth step is to allow time for the scripture to impact me, so I'll try to go slowly. I'll pause if I need to, especially if something needs a little more time to soak in. Finally, I'm looking for ways that God is showing me charis through His Word. And I when I receive this grace from Him, I plan to take the time to respond with a heart of gratitude for His great love!

Discussion

Questions

(15-20 min)

- How would you describe your approach to Scripture reading?
- Where does gratitude show up in your engagement with the Word?
- How would you encourage someone struggling to connect with God through Scripture?

Closing Prayer

(1-10min)

Ask someone in your group to close in prayer (or share prayer requests and open up prayer for the group if time permits).