

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUPS

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1. Water and the Word

Praying the Word of God (Word-Saturated Prayer) is a discipline with a strong Christian value and is part of many denominational traditions. Perhaps it is helpful to prepare a time of solitude and quiet as you approach God's Word. One begins by invitationally praying that the Holy Spirit is present in your time of prayer, and that the Spirit works God's Word and will within you as you reflect or meditate on the text. After meditation on the Word, an offering in prayer of your personal intentions and the aligning of your own will with God's can follow. Please see Diagram Four for one example of this type of prayer.

Texts for Reflection:

- Luke 2:19 Mary keeps all she has experienced and ponders them in her heart.
- Luke 10:38–42 Jesus visits Mary and Martha at Bethany.
- Matthew 6:5–14 Jesus teaches us the Lord's Prayer in the Sermon on the Mount.

Reflection Questions:

1. What prayer practices do you use in your daily communication with the Lord?
2. What prayer resources or guides do you find helpful in your prayer life?

3. Have you tried to meditate on the Word? If so, what has hindered your reflection time, and what has been beneficial to maintain focus during your time in the Word?
4. Do you use prayer lists, praying for different people or issues on each day?
5. Why would a time of quiet or solitude with Jesus be helpful as you enter a time of praying the Word?

Hymns and Songs:

- “O Holy Spirit, Enter In”
- “Come Holy Ghost, Our Souls Inspire”
- “Spirit of the Living God, Fall Afresh on Me”

Additions:



2. GPS—Family Support and Accountability

Maintaining good health habits and choices is difficult if we try to do so alone. Therefore our families—no matter what form that might take—can provide guidance, encouragement, and accountability. The family should be a place of *agape*, and a place where we learn communication, conflict management, and forgiveness. We realize that family patterns and interactions can be edifying or deflating.

Texts for Reflection:

Unhealthy family interactions:

- Genesis 25:19–34, 27:1–40 Rebekah favors Jacob over Esau and encourages deception.
- Genesis 37:18–36 Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers.

Healthy family interactions:

- Genesis 42:1–38 Joseph forgives his brothers.
- Exodus 17:12 Aaron and Hur hold up Moses' arms.
- John 19:26–27 John takes Mary, Jesus' mother, into his home.
- Hebrews 10:24–25 Encouraging one another through our love.

Reflection Questions:

1. What makes up your family or support/accountability team? How might it be different from other families?

2. What does the term *agape* mean and how does it differ from other types of love?
3. What is healthy within the life of your family? If you are comfortable, what is not so healthy within your family interactions? (You may take personal quiet reflection of this question.)
4. How does your family help hold you accountable to healthy practices and choices?

Hymns and Songs:

- “Oh, Blest the House, Whate’er Befall”
- “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know”
- “For All the Saints Who from Their Labor Rest”
- “Blest Be the Tie that Binds”

Additions:



3. Granola Bar—Nutrition

We need healthy food and drink to smoothly run the gift of our bodies, minds, and emotions. Poor nutrition leading to obesity has become the number-one health issue in our land. When we make nutritional choices, we need to consider whether our short-term choices are consistent with our long-term health objectives. We remember we are caring for the “temple of the Holy Spirit.”

Texts for Reflection:

- Genesis 1:1–19 God’s good creation and the gift of fruit and vegetables.
- Genesis 9:3–4 God’s gift of meat.
- Exodus 16:11–35 The gift of manna and the proper use of it.
- Matthew 14:13–21 The feeding of the 5,000.
- Matthew 26:17–30; Mark 14:12–26; Luke 22:7–39; John 13:1–17; 26 The Eucharist.
- 1 Corinthians 11:23–25 The new covenant in his blood.

Reflection Questions:

1. How many have ever tried to diet or eat more nutritionally? What has worked and what has not? Do you have insight as to why you have been either successful or unsuccessful in your nutritional strategies?

2. What type of support system do you have in place to help you with food choices?
3. What do you understand about the nutritional needs of those in your community both here in the U.S. as well as around the world?
4. What are you doing about hunger in the world within your family or within your community or faith community?
5. Do you still pray before or after meals? What are your family traditions surrounding food?

Hymns and Songs:

- “Feed Thy Children God Most Holy”
- “We Praise You, O God, Our Redeemer, Creator”
- “Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart”
- “For the Fruits of His Creation”
- “Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us”

Additions:



4. Running Shoes—Exercise

All of God's creation is in motion. Our God is in motion. His Son was in motion throughout his earthly walk. God has created us to function best when we are able to be in motion properly and regularly. Exercise is good for our body (weight, bones, heart), and mind (moods and intellect, and dealing with stress).

Texts for Reflection:

- Numbers 20:11; Exodus 16:31 God moves (alters) creation for his people.
- Joshua 5:6 The children of Israel walk in the desert 40 years.
- Matthew 2:13 Joseph and Mary take flight to Egypt
- Matthew 3:13–17 God moves (sends) his Son and anoints him to save his people.
- Luke 24:13–32 The disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Reflection Questions:

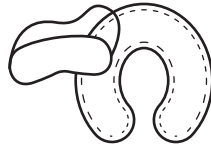
1. What are adequate amounts of exercise time for good health of the heart? Of emotions?
2. What do you do in your own exercise disciplines that you find refreshing?

3. What time of day works best? Do you stretch, lift weights, and/or do aerobics?
4. What benefits do you experience from exercise?
5. Please share community resources for exercise that you are aware of for all.

Hymns and Songs:

- “Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus”
- “I Want to Walk as a Child of Light”
- “Onward Christian Soldiers”
- “We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight”
- “Greet the Rising Sun”

Additions:



5. Travel Pillow—Rest

Integral to God's creation is rest. He prioritizes it and it is a part of His Son's life and ministry. Rest might be divided into times of Sabbath (solitude and focus on our relationship with God) and leisure (non-work time, relaxation). Adequate and good quality of sleep is critical to the refreshing and resetting of body, mind, and spirit. God-pleasing leisure is renewing. There is a time for every purpose under heaven.

Texts for Reflection:

- Genesis 2:2–3 God rests after creation.
- Leviticus 25:2–7 Israel's guidelines for rest.
- Psalms 55:6; 127:2; 4:8 Invitation in the Psalms to rest.
- Matthew 1:20 Joseph is visited in dream by angel and receives clarity.
- Mark 6:31–32 Jesus rests.
- Matthew 8:23–27 Jesus sleeps in boat during a storm.
- Philippians 4:6–10; Hebrews 4:9–11 Rest for the children of God.

Reflection Questions:

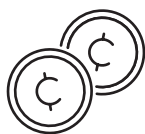
1. Why do you think God builds into his creation the gift of rest?
2. Since all things are in motion, does rest require a lack of motion?

3. Do you keep times of Sabbath in you schedule? What does that look like in your life?
4. How do you balance work and rest?
5. We know that Satan works in times of work and times of rest to disrupt our relationship with God. What do you do to keep your times of *leisure* holy, or God-pleasing?

Hymns and Songs:

- “Be Still, My Soul”
- “Christ Be My Leader By Night and By Day”
- “Go, My Children, with My Blessing”
- “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”
- “Take My Life and Let It Be”
- “The Lord Is My Shepherd, I Shall Not Want”
- “You Who Dwell in the Shelter of the Lord”
- “Abide with Me, Fast Falls the Eventide”

Additions:



6. Two Pennies—Financial Stewardship and Generosity

We are stewards of all of God's creation. All is his and we are caretakers, but caretakers meant to be active in our service. The Lord cares primarily about your heart. Anxiety over our worldly possessions does not prosper us or our faith walk. A marker of good stewardship is our willingness to be generous.

Texts for Reflection:

- Luke 21:1–4 The widow's two coin offering.
- Mark 12:17 Appropriate sharing of our gifts.
- Matthew 25:20–21; Luke 12:42–46; Hebrews 13:5; Colossians 3:23; 1 Peter 4:10; Titus 1:7–9 Good stewardship of God's gifts.
- Matthew 6:5–34; Philippians 4:6–8 Do not be anxious over God's gifts.
- Luke 10:33–35 The Good Samaritan.

Reflection Questions:

1. What stewardship resources and principles do you use within your life and family? Please share these resources for others to be informed.
2. What causes you anxiety in your life?

3. Is stewardship purely a financial concern? Is there stewardship of other parts of your life that the Lord might be inviting you to care for?

4. For personal reflection, are you generous?

5. Do you demonstrate Good Samaritan activity within your faith community? If so, please elaborate. Where can your faith group do more?

Hymns and Songs:

- “Take My Life and Let It Be”
- “Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us”
- “Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart”
- “We Praise You, O God, Our Redeemer, Creator”
- “The Gifts Christ Freely Gives”
- “The Common Doxology”

Additions:



7. Smartphones—Living and Serving in Community

God invites us to live and serve in community. It is not good to be alone all of the time. Face-time, whether on our smartphones or more effectively in person, is a far more valuable form of communication than texting. Our relationships are to be marked by curiosity about two books: the Scriptures and the books that are our family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors. Love and work as *we* rather than *me*. It is important to understand how people communicate (painters/pointers), to respect and honor their thoughts and communications, and to be forgiving, gentle, and patient in our relationships.

Texts for Reflection:

- Genesis 2:18 We are not to be alone on our earthly walk.
- Luke 8:40–48; John 4:4–42 Jesus is always curious about those he meets.
- John 4:7–9; Matthew 5:44 Jesus calls us to love and care for all, even our enemies and those we don't agree with or understand.
- Matthew 9:1–8 Jesus finds teaching moments in all interpersonal situations.
- John 13:34–35 Love one another.
- 1 John 4:20 Loving your brother.
- 1 Peter 4:8 Love one another and forgive.
- 1 Corinthians 13:1–13 What it means to love.
- Ephesians 4:1–32 Loving in the bond of peace—one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.

Reflection Questions:

1. How does the concept of living and working as *we* rather than *me* affect your family life, vocation, and community?
2. Are you a painter or a pointer? (May want to refer to the painter/pointer test in appendix.) How does that affect your communication in these relationships?
3. Have you developed ways to honor others and their thoughts and feelings when you communicate with them?
4. Within conflicts in relationships, whose half of the relationship are you really able to manage; yours or the other person's?
5. Can you think of a person that you have a hard time forgiving? What is obstructing your forgiving? Is it possible for you, in the quiet place of your heart, to offer a prayer to have Jesus help you to forgive that person?

Hymns and Songs:

- “Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus”
- “Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness”
- “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing”
- “Where Charity and Love Prevail”
- “Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love”
- “Love in Christ Is Strong and Living”
- “The Church’s One Foundation”
- “Where Charity and Love Prevail”

Additions:

Wellness Backpack

FOR YOUR CHRISTIAN JOURNEY

