

BEFORE JOURNALING

Before reading, take a few moments to quiet your heart before the Lord. Then ask Him to help you be aware of the Holy Spirit's presence and pay attention to what he is saying to you. It's crucial that we seek God's guidance to understand His Word. Every time we open the Bible, we should say David's prayer in Psalm 119:18: "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things from your law (Word)."

Below are two journaling options, starting with the most simple. Choose one to begin with and see how God changes your heart through the practice of journaling. Feel freedom to use both of methods over time. Our hope is that you will journal at least 3 days per week as you read Scripture in your D-Group. Before journaling, write the following at the top left hand side of your notebook:

- Today's date
- Passage read

I BELIEVE & I WILL

During your reading, a few verses will stand out as the Spirit stirs your heart. After reading, highlight the 1-2 verses that speak to you in your notebook. Then read the passage a second time. After reading again, write 1-2 sentences in response to the following:

- "I believe ..." (what the passage teaches about who God is and/or who you are)
- "I will ..." (what you need to do as result of reading, being specific and tangible)

EXAMPLE

January 1, 2020
James 1

"Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance." (James 1:2-3)

I believe that God has a purpose in allowing me to go through trials and wants me to trust him even more when I go through trials.

I will give God glory the next time I go through a trial and ask for the courage to persevere throughout.

H.E.A.R. BIBLE STUDY METHOD

Help

We need to read Scripture in humility and with teachability. As disciples and followers of King Jesus, we read to be taught and transformed by God, as well as be connected to Him. Additionally, we need the Holy Spirit's help when we hear God's Word. Before you read, you might say a prayer similar to the one in Psalm 119:34 ... "Help me understand Your instructions, and I will obey it and follow it with all my heart."

Examine

Read the passage slowly and simply be in awe of who God is. As you read the passage again, examine what it says, being careful not to bring your own opinions or perspectives to the text. We want to examine the text for what it meant when it was written, looking for insights about God and His Gospel work, humanity, and timeless truths. These questions can help guide your journey through the text:

- What does it tell us about God? Who He is and/or what He is doing?
- How does it point to Jesus and the Gospel?
- What does it tell us about human beings?
- Who we are meant to be and/or what has gone wrong with us?
- What might be the timeless truth or principle? Try to write it in your own words!

Application

In Matthew 28:20, Jesus tells us to "obey everything I have commanded you." So hearing from God involves living out what we hear! There are two categories that are helpful to consider for application:

- In light of what I heard from God, how do I need to relate to Him?
 - Praise and thank Him? Confess and repent of sin against Him?
 - Listen to a warning from Him? A truth to believe or a promise to trust?
- In light of what I heard from God, how do I need to relate to others and grow in love? Is there someone in my life I need to ...
 - Seek forgiveness from or give forgiveness to?
 - Encourage, serve, or bless in a practical way?
 - Pray specifically for (in light of the grace and truth in this Scripture)?

Respond

Respond to God in prayer, praying the truths you have discovered and asking God for His help to live out your faith. Thank God for this time with Him! Share what God taught you with someone else — your roommate, spouse, kids, or coworkers. Don't keep what God taught you to yourself!