

Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey



Discipleship Habit #2: Read Scripture Every Day

Week 14

Lord, Teach Me To Listen

This weekly material is offered to support our Discipleship Journey as we walk in the foot prints of Jesus.

We encourage you to use this material as a part of your daily prayer practice as follows:

- ❖ Begin with the Opening Prayer.
- ❖ Study Discipleship Habit #2: Read Scripture Every Day.
- ❖ Reflect on Scripture (*Luke 24:13 - 34*).
- ❖ Close with the Closing Prayer.

Let us pray for each other that we are transformed, as individuals and as community, by this Discipleship Journey.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, You are good, and we praise You. Through Your Scripture, You lovingly tell us the story of our salvation and continue to speak to us today. Forgive us for the times that we haven't listened to You in the Scripture. In Your Scripture you tell us, "the Word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12) Thank You for coming to us so powerfully through Your Word. Help us to know that You long to speak to us through Your Word. Lord, teach us how to listen to Your voice speaking to us through Your Scriptures. Inspire us to meet You in Your Word daily. Jesus, we trust in You. We make this prayer in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

AMEN

Reflection:

Let's remember that the attributes of the heart and the six habits of discipleship, though dealt with separately for clarity's sake, are really just one thing. They are "THE ONE THING", that is, "the loving encounter with Jesus Christ in His Church". This is the one thing, and the only thing, that really matters. With that in mind, let's continue our exploration of discipleship habits.

The second habit of discipleship that we want to explore is the call to "*Read Scripture Every Day*". This is the habit that finds the disciple regularly encountering Christ in His Holy Word, and most especially in the four Gospels.

Do you want to learn how to listen to God? Praying with Scripture regularly is how we hear the living and eternal voice of Christ speaking directly to us in our lives. Scripture is God's Word spoken both to a people in the past and to us today. Through it, "the deathless presence of Jesus speaks to us in the moment we read [a passage]" (Dr. James Finley). Just a few of the ways He speaks through Scripture include making a word or phrase jump out at us, showing us more of who He is as we reflect on stories from His life, or giving us insight into our own life when we reflect on how He acted in the lives of others.

Encountering Christ in His Word is always an encounter with Love. Jesus meets us without judgment and lovingly helps us to see ourselves and our lives more clearly. Then He invites us to turn away from what is less than our Divine purpose and calls us to follow Him in His way of truth, goodness, and beauty. Christ in the Word brings us to the point of decision: Will we turn to follow Him more completely, or will we turn away?

So, reading Scripture is always an encounter with Christ. And since the Scriptures are God's revealed Word to His covenant people, reading Scripture is simultaneously an encounter with the Church. Reading Scripture timelessly connects us with Christ in and through all of His people – past, present, and future. In the Scriptures, Christ encounters us together to know us, call us, convert us, and set us free.

Describe an experience that caused you to think about something or someone differently. What happened? How did it change you?

Reflect on Scripture

Luke 24:13 – 34

Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all of the things that had occurred. And it happened that, while they were conversing and debating, Jesus Himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And He replied to them, "What sort of things?"

They said to Him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all of the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed Him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that He would be the One to redeem Israel; and besides all of this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group; however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find His body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that He was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but Him they did not see."

And He said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into His glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them what referred to Him in all of the scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going, He gave the impression that He was going on farther. But they urged Him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So, He went in to stay with them.

And it happened that, while He was with them at table, He took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him, but He vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning [within us] while He spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" So, they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how He was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

At the start of the passage, what are the disciples thinking and feeling? What are they thinking about Jesus?

Why do you think Jesus asks them what they are discussing? (As if He doesn't know...) What does this tell us about Jesus' attitude toward us?

In response, what does Jesus explain to them? Why do you think Jesus used Scripture to explain this?

How do the disciples come to recognize Jesus? What part do the Scriptures play in this?

What do you think it means that their hearts "were burning within them" when Jesus opened the Scriptures to them? Have you ever had an experience like this?

What do the disciples finally come to understand? What is their response?

How do you think Jesus is calling you right now through this passage? How are you going to respond?

Closing Prayer

Easter Arsonists of the Heart

On the road that escapes Jerusalem
and winds along the ridge to Emmaus
two disillusioned youths
drag home their crucified dream.

They had smelled Messiah in the air
and rose to the scarred and ancient hope
only to mourn what might have been.
And now a sudden stranger falls upon their loss
with exited words about mustard seeds
and surprises hidden at the heart of death
and that evil must be kissed upon the lips
and that every scream is redeemed for it echoes
in the ear of God and do you not understand
what died upon the cross was fear.

They protested their right to despair, but He said,
"My Father's laughter fills the silence of the tomb."
Because they did not understand, they offered Him food.
And in the breaking of the bread
they knew the imposter for who He was –
the arsonist of the heart.

John Shea