

# Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

*A Discipleship Journey*



## **Discipleship Habit #2: Read Scripture Every Day**

Week 15

Jesus, Speak Directly to Me

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:

Each week, we grow more deeply into the habits of discipleship, into that “ONE THING”, which is the loving encounter with Jesus Christ in his Church. Last month, we focused on the habit of prayer. This month, we turn to the habit of growing in deeper relationship with Jesus by coming to know, more deeply, God’s Word in Sacred Scripture.

Pause, for a few moments, and consider how Jesus prayed during His earthly life. He was raised in a Jewish family and steeped in Jewish traditions. He was taught to pray, by His family, His teachers, and the rabbis. He was taught the Sacred Scriptures from childhood, memorizing them, and coming to grow into God’s Word. As disciples, we do as Jesus did.

How does one begin the habit of reading and praying with Scripture? An easy way to begin this habit is to pray with the whole Church, each day, by praying the readings of the day. These can be easily found in your parish bulletin, on the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops ([usccb.org/bible/readings](http://usccb.org/bible/readings)), and you can download an app for your smartphone (look for “Daily Readings” at the Apple App Store, Google Play, or Amazon App Store). When you read the daily readings, you not only have the opportunity to pray the daily Scriptures (habit of prayer), but you do so with the entire Church throughout the world (habit of community). There are terrific publications you can also subscribe to in printed or electronic form, like *Give Us This Day*, *The Word Among Us*, *Magnificat*, and *Living Faith*. You can also find great websites that offer reflections on the readings of the day.

Throughout the month, practice incorporating reading and praying with Sacred Scripture into your day. By listening to God’s living Word in Sacred Scripture, we can hear the voice of Christ speaking directly to us in our lives.

What is your favorite Bible verse? In what way does it impact how you think about Jesus? ... about yourself?

## Praying with Ignatian Contemplation

The Scriptures are God's Word revealed to His people. He continues to speak to us through them today. Learning to listen to God speak through Scripture is like learning any new language. It takes practice.

One way the Church has taught us to listen to God speaking through the Scripture is through Ignatian Contemplation. In this prayer, one uses his or her senses in an imaginative way to reflect on a Gospel event in Jesus' life. One uses the senses – seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling – to make the Gospel scene feel real and alive. Begin by selecting a passage from Sacred Scripture with which you may wish to pray. Some suggestions might be:

John 11:1 - 44: *The Raising of Lazarus.*

Mark 10:46 – 52: *The Blind Bartimaeus.*

1 Samuel 3:9: *Speak, Lord.*

### The Ignatian Contemplation method:

1. Relax and settle into God's presence. Ask the Holy Spirit to sanctify (or bless) your imagination. Ask for a particular grace that you are seeking or the particular gift you need at this time – perhaps to know Jesus more intimately, or to become more compassionate, or to be healed in a particular area of your heart, etc.
2. Read the passage slowly, preferably out loud, several times, pausing half a minute or so between each reading while the Gospel episode becomes familiar or takes hold of you.
3. Set your Bible aside and let the scene happen. Close your eyes and reconstruct the scene in your imagination. As you let yourself sink into the scene, you will tend to lose the sense of yourself and to identify with the situation. See what is going on and watch the men, women, and children in the scene. What does Jesus look like? How do the others react to Him? What are the people saying to one another? What emotions fill their words? Is Jesus touching someone? You might imagine yourself as one of the characters who interacts with Jesus or as a bystander. Use all of your senses. What does it look like, smell like, feel like? What is the weather like, hot? Cold? Bright? Dark? Rainy? Etc. ...
4. Allow yourself to take part in the scene which is now present to you. Be as passive as possible while also being as alert as possible. Let everyone else control the events. Some peoples' imaginations are very active, so they construct a movie-like scenario with a Gospel passage. Others will enter the scene with verbal imagination, reflecting on the scene and mulling over the actions. Vividness is not a requirement for the effectiveness of this kind of prayer. Engagement is a requirement, and the result is a more interior knowledge of Jesus.
5. At the end of the scene you've imagined, have a conversation with Jesus (or another main character) about it. Notice how you feel while conversing with Him and in the silence when you finish. Do you feel a sense of peace? Something else?
6. Do not moralize or try to make applications. By losing yourself in the persons, works, and activities of the Gospel event, your whole being is affected and influenced. You won't need applications because you will notice what happens to you either in the period of reflection after your prayer or, more subtly, in the effect in your life almost by osmosis as you begin to put on the mind and heart of Jesus' Spirit.

7. Journal about the experience. What do you think Jesus is trying to speak to your heart? What did your heart feel as you spent this time with Him?
8. Resolve to respond to Jesus' leading and express your gratitude to Him for all He did in this time of prayer.

### Closing Prayer

Lord, inspire me to read Your Scriptures  
and to meditate upon them day and night.  
I beg You to give me real understanding of what I need,  
that I in turn may put its precepts into practice.  
Yet, I know that understanding and good intentions are worthless,  
unless rooted in Your graceful love.  
So I ask that the words of Scripture may also be not just signs on  
a page, but channels of grace into my heart.

AMEN

*Origen of Alexandria, 184 – 253 AD*