



Connect Study Notes 1/11/20

Flourishing Spirituality Devotions Part 4

Spiritual Rhythms - Bible reading and Study

I have such good memories of being in a Bible Study group as a teenager where an incredibly wonderful mentor of mine shared his love of scripture with us and brought the Bible alive when he led us. But the more exceptional thing he passed on through his example was that he showed us how to engage with the Bible personally, how to build the spiritual discipline of reading scripture and studying the Bible into our daily lives.

I am so grateful for my mentor's legacy in my life but the realisation came over the years that continuing my love for scripture and building the rhythm of Bible reading into my life was going to take some personal discipline. To flourish in our spirituality means we need to continuously open our lives up to be shaped and influenced by the Holy Spirit, this includes Bible reading and study.

We have an opportunity to grow in our spirituality, to continue to be purposeful about our spiritual disciplines or maybe for you it is time to engage again with the spiritual discipline of reading scripture. It's time to dust off our Bibles and to refresh and update the apps on our devices!

As we are engaging with Scripture there are different levels of understanding going on for us. There is an unravelling of the meaning of what we are reading or hearing, we tend to gather information when we read but we need to go further, to go deeper with God. The key when we engage with Scripture is to not simply attain knowledge, to understand the Scriptures but to receive what we are reading, to internalise and personalise the message, to become open and attentive to God.

Eugene Peterson in his book *Working the Angles* encourages us to focus our attention on what is involved. 'To read our Holy Scriptures formatively, that is, in such a way that the Holy Spirit uses them to form Christ in us.' We need to be interested in becoming more not just knowing more.

As we approach our Bible reading we need to consider the method, the place and the time. Deciding ahead of time how, where and when you'll engage in Bible reading is a great first step especially if you find yourself with no rhythm in this spiritual discipline. Making some decisions about when and where, prioritising this time and even blocking time in your calendar are really good ideas if it has been a while. There are many different tools for Bible reading that are available online or ask people you know what they do, you might discover new methods and new ways of engaging. Your church may have a plan that they use that you can connect with and make sure you share with others what God is saying to you, our Bible reading helps us to experience personal and communal transformation.

You know it is not enough to just understand the Bible or even gain admiration for it, as we read and pray we need to remember that 'God has spoken; now it's our move. We pray what we read, working our lives into active participation in what God reveals in the Word.' (Eugene Peterson). Let our prayers be that of the Psalmist: 'Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path' Ps 119:105 and may our own lives and our churches continue to live out of a spirituality that is flourishing and is impacting those around us.

Questions:

- What has been your experience of personal Bible reading and how would you rate your engagement with scripture in your life right now?
- What impact can you imagine that your rhythm of Bible reading and study will have on your family and on your church community?
- What will you do this week to build a rhythm of Bible reading and study into your life?
- Who have you shared with this week of how Jesus is being formed in you through your reading?

Blessings,

Leanne

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