



{INVITATIONS}

LISTEN.

LISTEN TO THE WORD OF GOD

Matthew 2:1-12

GETTING STARTED

When you get lost, do you stop and ask for directions? Why or why not?

Do you consider asking questions a weakness or a strength?

Do you feel all the information we have access to is making us wiser or distracting us?

READ AND REFLECT

Read each of the lectionary passages and reflect on what stands out to you.

- Psalm 29; 72:1-7, 10-14
- Isaiah 42:1-9; 60:1-6
- Matthew 2:1-12; 3:13-17
- Acts 10:34-43

Do you see a common theme in these scriptures about how God's power is at work in us?

Matthew 2:1-12 tells us how the Magi journeyed **to** Jesus, but our journey is **with** Jesus. What are some of the examples Peter and Paul are giving us that Jesus is with us? (Acts 10:34-43 & Ephesians 3:1-12)

Do you feel you are going "to" Jesus or journeying "with" Jesus in this season of life? Explain.

ENGAGE AND DISCUSS

How would you respond to this statement: "The greatest wisdom leads to worship of God"?

What prevents our knowledge from becoming wisdom? (James 3:13 – 18)

Do you know a person you would consider wise? What makes them wise?

The Magi were willing to humbly journey a long distance to gain wisdom and even greater understanding. How has our culture of instant information impacted your journey with God and what it means to follow Jesus?

NEXT STEPS

We have a tendency to fall away from the truth and move forward with our own agenda and selfish desires, being pulled away from our Creator, His love and His guidance. To make sure we're growing in our faith and gaining Godly wisdom we need to turn off the noise from all the knowledge giving devices and take the time to sit with our Father.

- Identify a distracting information input you can remove from your day to make room for your journey toward God.
- Continue reading the Bible (follow your preferred reading plan or simply read the lectionary scriptures)
- Sit with God in silence and just listen

Listening to God's Word

A Christ Church Soul-Training Resource

Why Study the Bible?

1. Because Jesus did.

Jesus is the Word of God made flesh (John 1:14). Not surprisingly, then, Christ expressed the love of God's Word in every area of his life. He used Scripture to: answer those who tested him, resist temptation, find guidance, encourage his heart, comfort others, explain his actions, and, ultimately, face his own death.

Jesus also made it clear that we were to do likewise – to make his Word foundational to our lives (Matthew 7:7).

2. Because it is so useful.

The Apostle Paul wrote that: *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16-17)*

The Bible is Divine Revelation. It reveals who God is, what his character is like, and what his desires are for human life and other aspects of his creation. Through Bible study we also gain insights into who we are and why we are here. We learn how to live in a manner that deepens our friendship with God and others and enhances life in many additional ways.

For these reasons, both Old and New Testaments encourage regular study of, meditation on, and memorization of God's Word.

How to Study the Bible?

There are many different ways to mine insights from the Scriptures. Try each of these methods over time and see how God uses them in your life.

1. **The Artist Method:**

Read a passage of Scripture, considering the following three questions as you read...

- a. *What speaks to my heart here?*
Draw a heart beside the word(s) that stir you.
- b. *What new thought or idea comes to me?*
Draw a light bulb beside the new thought or idea.
- c. *What does Scripture move me to do?*
Draw a hand beside the action you want to take.

How can you live into one of your insights today? Share your insights with a friend.

2. **The Detective Method:**

Read a short narrative passage from one of the gospels. Let the story take shape in your mind's eye...

- a. Imagine the scene and observe all the facts.
Ask the *who, when, where, what* questions.
- b. Once you have the facts, interpret the facts.
Ask the *why* questions. What meaning did the actions or pronouncements have for the characters?
- c. Then, apply your study to your own life.
Ask *how* might all this apply to me? What is the personal "take-away"?

3. **The Treasure Seeker Method:**

When reading Scripture consider the following application questions...

- a. Is there an *example* here for me to follow?
- b. Is there a *promise* or *attribute of God* to claim?
- c. Is there an *instruction* to obey?
- d. Is there a *truth* to be applied?
- e. Is there a *prayer* here for me to pray?
- f. Is there a *sin* to be confessed?
- g. Is there a *question* God is asking me?

4. **The Jesus Student Method:**

If you are unfamiliar with Scripture, read the gospel according to Mark or Luke and study to discover all you can about Jesus. Ask yourself the following questions...

- a. What seems important to Jesus?
- b. What sort of questions does Jesus ask people?
- c. What sort of questions do people ask Jesus?
- d. How is Jesus different from other leaders?

What Other Ideas Are Worth Exploring?

1. Experiment with different ways of listening to Scripture.
 - Read the Bible out loud or ask someone else to read a passage to you so you can savor the words.
 - Listen to an audio Bible while driving or exercising.
 - Put a verse on your computer screen saver or post it on a card where you will see it throughout the day.
2. Enhance your understanding of the original context of a particular passage by referencing a Bible commentary or a Bible dictionary. Or go online and type in places, cultures, and people you come across in your Bible study.
3. Visit a Christian bookstore and look through the array of Bible study guides available.
4. Join a Bible study at the church or in your community or begin your own. Greater insight and encouragement often comes from having partners for the journey.