

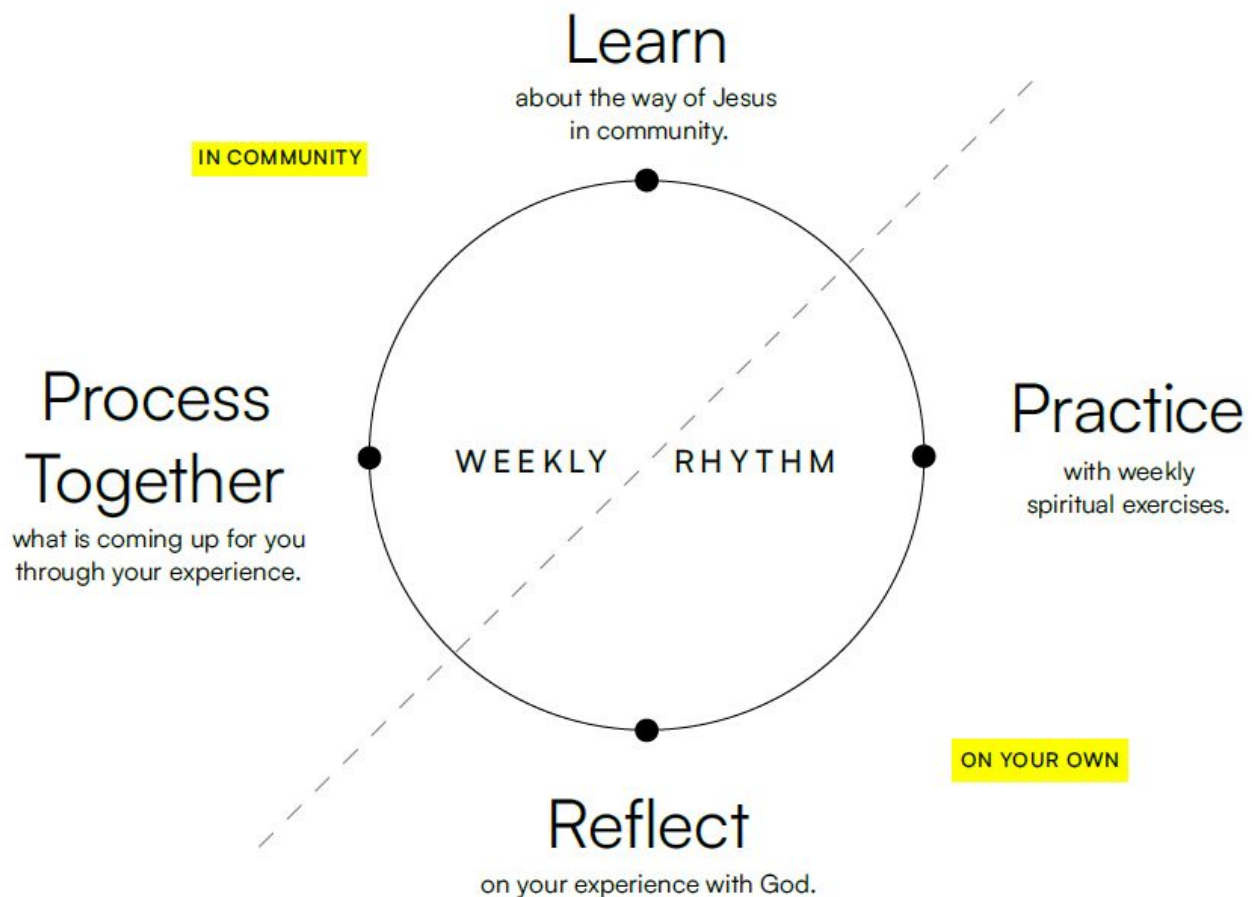
# The Scripture Practice

Practicing the Way

# WHAT IS THE PATHWAY?

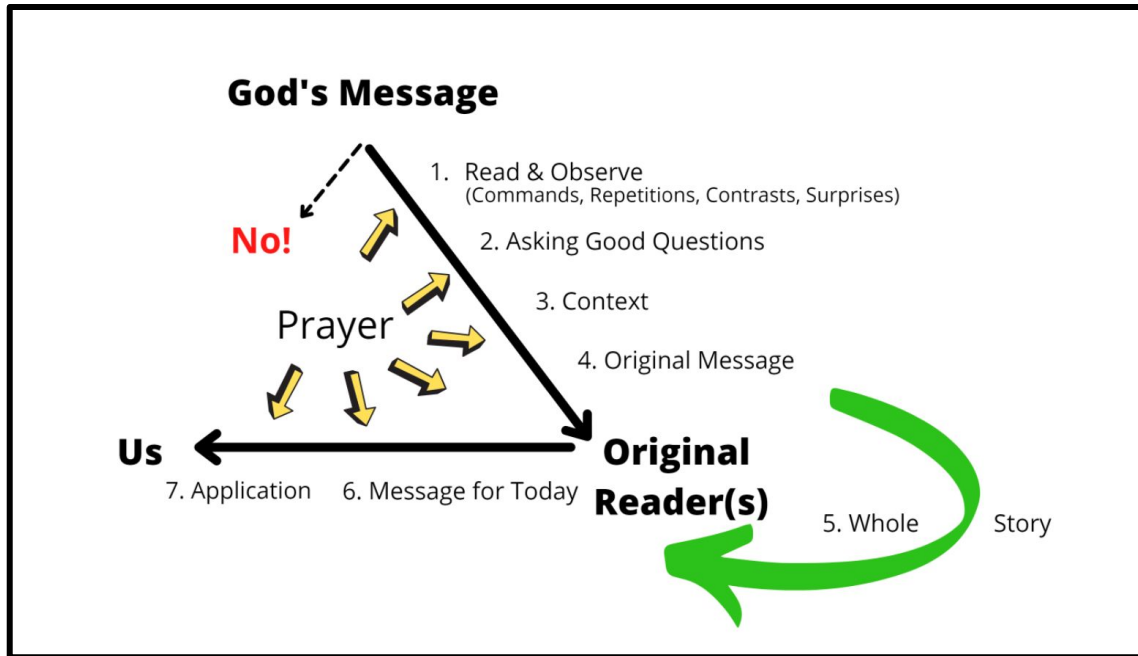
The Pathway is an important part of Paseo del Rey Church's method of discipleship. As a community, we want to follow Jesus as "the way, the truth, and the life." We LEARN together from Jesus how to live by following his example and teaching through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus modeled for us what a Spirit-filled life looks like. In our daily lives, we seek his words and ways and "put them into PRACTICE." Being *on the pathway* with your Growth Group is important because it allows us to REFLECT on the joys and difficulties of following Jesus and PROCESS TOGETHER so we can experience the Jesus-filled-life more fully.

The Pathway uses the following model:



# CAREFUL BIBLE STUDY

Each week your group will study a passage of Scripture together. Make sure to use the Careful Bible Study method illustrated below to discern God's message.



**Remember:** The Bible was not written to us, but it was written for us. To understand what God is saying to us through His word, we need to first understand what He was saying to the original readers in their context. Then we filter that understanding through the gospel of Jesus Christ to discern God's message for us today and how it applies to our lives. Take your time and follow these steps as you study God's word:

- Start with prayer. Be still and know that God is sovereign, holy, and available to us through Christ. Pray Psalm 119:18, *"Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law."*
- Read the passage of scripture. Read it again, slowly. Take your time. Read it a third time.
- Make observations from the text. Look for commands, repetitions, contrasts, surprises. Ask good questions of the text, questions that make you think and ponder.
- Think about the context and the Original Readers. What was God saying to them?
- Apply the gospel of Jesus to the text. How does the good news about Jesus shape our understanding of what is written in the passage?
- Once you have worked through each step above, ask: What is God's message through this text for us today? How does this apply to your life? What changes in thoughts and deeds should you make?

# DISCUSSION GUIDES

We have created weekly guides to help you establish a rhythm and to maximize the learning experience for your group as you explore the practice of *Scripture* over the coming weeks.

Each weekly discussion guide has the following five sections:

## **Reflect**

These questions will help you understand where each person is starting from and keep track of how it's going as you move through each week of the practice.

## **Overview**

This section provides a helpful introduction to important reasons and ways this practice can help us faithfully follow the Way of Jesus.

## **Bible Study**

Using the Careful Bible Study method outlined above, these passages and questions help us deepen our biblical convictions regarding the practice.

## **Practice**

This is where the rubber meets the road. We don't want to only talk about and study Jesus. We want to follow and be transformed by him. This section gives simple instructions on how to get the most out of the Scripture practice.

## **Pray**

Each week we want to be praying with and for one another. We also want to celebrate the good things God is doing among us. Take time at the end of your weekly gatherings to pray together.

# WEEKLY DISCUSSION

## WEEK 1: READ

### REFLECT

1. What are you hoping to see God do in your life through this practice?
2. Growing up, what was your family's attitude towards the Bible?
3. Which of the following words best describes your primary feeling about Scripture: Fear? Enthusiasm? Shame? Ambivalence? Is there a different word you would use?

### OVERVIEW

The main word people in the gospels used to describe Jesus was *rabbi* – a teacher of the Scriptures. His mind, heart, and life were shaped by the Word of God. Just listen to Him teach. His words are filled with the language of Scripture; with quotes, imagery, and connections that draw us back to the story of God from the beginning.

As His disciples, we don't come to the Bible the same way we would approach a blog post or a textbook. We come as His followers. Because the Author isn't far away. He's with us.

So our goal isn't just to read the Bible. It's to meet Jesus in the Bible. To sit with Him, learn from Him, and be shaped by what He says. This is what He meant when He told His disciples to "teach them to obey everything I've commanded you."

As we'll see, our posture matters just as much as our method. We come to the Scriptures with the heart of a learner, ready to listen, ready to follow. When we meet Jesus in the Word, He doesn't just inform us. He transforms us.

\* Matthew 28:20

# WEEKLY DISCUSSION

## BIBLE STUDY

*Read and reflect on Matthew 5:13-19*

1. How do the Scriptures, and Jesus being the fulfillment and centerpiece of them, relate to our call to be the salt and light of the world? How do the Scriptures help us?
2. Do you find yourself reading Scripture more for information or formation? Why?
3. Read v. 19 again. What attitude and relationship should we have towards Scripture?
4. What's the main obstacle you face to reading Scripture regularly (e.g., time, your sleep habits, parenting, work schedule, intellectual questions, past experiences)?

## PRACTICE

This week's exercise is to **spend time each day reading Scripture.**

01 Find a place and time that is quiet and distraction free. Leave your phone in a separate room.

02 Make a plan for what you will read. You might read Psalm 1-7 this week. Or you could read Colossians and Titus. Or you might start reading the gospel of Mark and read a chapter each day. Avoid skipping around the Bible when you read each day.

03 Start with a simple prayer: "Lord Jesus, open my mind and help me understand the Scriptures." (see Luke 24:45)

04 Read slowly and consider highlighting or underlining anything that stands out to you. When you finish reading, reflect back on what you highlighted and ask the Lord to help you understand it and live by it.

05 Share something you learned from your reading with at least one person each day.

## PRAY

Whether in smaller groups or all together, take time to pray for one another and to ask Jesus to help you grow in reading Scripture this week.

# WEEKLY DISCUSSION

## WEEK 2: MEDITATE

### REFLECT BACK ON WEEK 1

1. How did it go in finding a place and time to engage with Scripture each day?
2. Did you experience delight, restlessness, frustration, or other emotions as you read?
3. Did you sense God's presence and guidance as you read this past week?

### OVERVIEW FOR WEEK 2

We live in a digital world that's trained us to skim. We scroll, swipe, and scan for what's useful... then we move on. But this fast-paced, surface-level way of reading is actually the opposite of how Scripture was designed to be read.

All throughout the Scriptures, the word used for how we should approach God's Word is *meditate*. In Hebrew, that word paints a picture of reading that is slow, thoughtful, and prayerful. Dietrich Bonhoeffer once called meditation "the prayerful consideration of Scripture." That's a good way to put it.

There's no formula for meditation, but there is a simple practice that has helped generations of believers slow down and really listen. It's called *Lectio Divina*, a Latin phrase that means "divine reading." This way of reading is more about communion than consumption.

Here's how it works:

- **Read:** Notice what stands out in the text.
- **Meditate:** Let those words settle deeply.
- **Pray:** Respond to God from the heart.
- **Contemplate:** Rest in God's presence.

Over time, this way of reading can reshape our hearts, renew our minds, and root us more deeply in Jesus.

# WEEKLY DISCUSSION

## BIBLE STUDY

*Read and reflect on Luke 24:25-45*

1. What kept the disciples from recognizing Jesus and understanding the Scriptures about him?
2. Do you believe we also need Jesus to open our minds today in order to understand the Bible? Why or why not?
3. What do you find most challenging about this passage?

## PRACTICE

This week's exercise is to **read Scripture using the *Lectio Divina* method.**

Select a passage of Scripture to read. It's recommended you read a Psalm or a short passage from one of the gospels. If you read from a gospel, don't read the entire chapter.

Follow the four steps to the Lectio:

- **Read** (*lectio*) the passage slowly, paying close attention to what stands out to you and what you sense the Spirit is highlighting for you.
- **Meditate** (*meditatio*). "Chew" on it. Re-read the passage a few more times and reflect on the words or ideas that stand out most.
- **Pray** (*oratio*). Pray and discuss with God the things you have been seeing in the passage.
- **Contemplate** (*contemplatio*). Spend a few minutes sitting in God's presence and reflecting on what he has taught you.

Let this be a slow, unhurried part of your day. Try to give it at least 20 to 30 minutes!

## PRAY

Whether in smaller groups or all together, take time to pray for one another and to ask Jesus to help you grow in the practice of Scripture this week.



# WEEKLY DISCUSSION

## WEEK 3: STUDY

### REFLECT BACK ON WEEK 2

1. What was your experience of engaging Scripture through *Lectio Divina*?
2. Of the four movements of the *Lectio*, which felt the most natural or challenging to you?

### OVERVIEW FOR WEEK 3

The Bible isn't just a book. It's a library. Sixty-six books, written across centuries, in three languages, by dozens of authors, using different styles and genres. No wonder it can feel overwhelming at times. It's easy to get lost or confused along the way.

But here's something we learn from Jesus: *how* we read matters.

All through the Gospels, we see Jesus confronting shallow or distorted readings of Scripture. This is because getting it wrong doesn't just lead to bad ideas, it can actually damage our lives and communities. But when we *understand* the story—when we read the Scriptures rightly—it has the power to shape us deeply and bring life to the world around us.

That's why we need to study the Scriptures.

Study means slowing down and giving focused attention to what the Bible says. What did the words mean to the original hearers and what do they mean for us today? It may not feel as "spiritual" as prayer or worship, but when we study Scripture with a heart to know God and follow Him, it becomes a powerful spiritual discipline.

This week, we want to grow in that discipline. When we approach the Bible as disciples of Jesus—with humility, hunger, and a willingness to be shaped—our understanding deepens, and our lives begin to reflect the One we're learning from.

# WEEKLY DISCUSSION

## BIBLE STUDY

*Read and reflect on Luke 4:1-13*

1. What stands out to you from this passage?
2. What do we learn about Jesus' attitude toward and reliance on Scripture?
3. In this passage, the devil also quotes Scripture. How did Jesus avoid getting misled when this happened? What lessons do you think we can learn from this?

## PRACTICE

This week's exercise is to **study God's Word**.

Select a short passage of Scripture. We recommend you study Mark 9:2-13. Here are some steps you can use:

01 Pray and ask the Lord to open your mind and heart

02 Read the passage once, slowly. Ask the following three questions:

**What? So what? Now what?**

- **What:** What things do I notice in the text?
- **So what:** Why are those things important?
- **Now what:** How should they change the way I think and live?

03 Read the passage again, slowly. Mark or highlight words that stand out to you. Jot down any questions you have that you hope to find answers for.

04 Discuss what you learned with at least one fellow believer.

## PRAY

Whether in smaller groups or all together, take time to pray for one another and to ask Jesus to help you grow in the practice of Scripture this week.

# WEEKLY DISCUSSION

## WEEK 4: MEMORIZE

### REFLECT BACK ON WEEK 3

1. How did your understanding grow from when you started your study to when you finished it?
2. How did the passage you studied relate to you personally? Did it change the way you think and how you lived this past week?

### OVERVIEW FOR WEEK 4

Consider this: When Jesus was suffering on the cross, His final words weren't cries of rage or despair. They were Scripture. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" \* Even in His moment of deepest pain, the Word of God is what came out of Him. Scripture gave Him language for His suffering and anchored Him in the story and plan of God for His life.

That's the power of Scripture stored in the heart.

When we memorize God's Word, we're not just learning verses. We're building a well of truth within us that we can draw from in times of joy or sorrow, clarity or confusion. In moments of pressure, what's hidden in us becomes what steadies us.

But let's be honest: most of us do not memorize God's Word. In the digital age, why store something in our minds when we can easily search for it online?

Here's why: Google can't sustain our soul in suffering. Only the Word of God deeply planted in us can do that.

Memorization is a long-term investment. As we hide God's Word in our hearts, our minds begin to change. Over time, we don't just know the Word... we begin to think and react like Jesus. Memorizing Scripture is an important way we take on the mind of Christ and live as His disciples.

\* Psalm 22:1

# WEEKLY DISCUSSION

## BIBLE STUDY

*Read and reflect on Matthew 27:45-46 and Psalm 22:1-31*

1. When Jesus quoted the first verse of Psalm 22, the Jewish members in the crowd who heard him would have connected it to the rest of the psalm. What does Psalm 22 teach us about what was happening on the cross?
2. Jesus had all of Psalm 22 memorized, not just the first sentence. How would knowing this passage have strengthened Him while He was on the cross?

## PRACTICE

This week's exercise is to **memorize a short passage of Scripture**.

A few suggested passages: John 13:34-35, Ephesians 4:29-30, Philippians 4:6-7

Here are five best practices for memorizing Scripture:

- Write it out by hand on paper to help embed it in your brain.
- Read it out loud from your paper. Every day. Five times in a row.
- Visualize it. Close your eyes and connect an image to the sentence you are working on.
- Recite it out loud to yourself. This engages auditory learning and helps you with the cadence. Every day recite a little more from memory and not from reading.
- Recite it to another person and have them check you on it.

## PRAY

Whether in smaller groups or all together, take time to pray for one another and to ask Jesus to help you grow in the practice of Scripture this week.