



Week One Devotion

Day 1

The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

John 20:30-31 (NLT)

Have you ever left a note for someone that was not received as you intended? Whenever I leave notes for my teenagers, the meaning always seems to get lost. Somehow a sticky note that asks them to do their chores is interpreted as a license to play video games while I'm away for the afternoon. I have learned the hard way that one must be very specific when talking to teenagers. "Do your chores" must become "put away the dishes" or the entire purpose of the note may be lost to the imagination of a kid eager to jump online and hang out with friends rather than be responsible.

In the same way, John is clarifying what he intends for us to do with the information he has given about Jesus. He has not just given us a collection of facts with which to do whatever we would like. Rather, he has carefully highlighted the life and times of Jesus so that we will believe, and that belief will lead us deeper and deeper into a saving relationship with Christ.

Consider this: What do you know about Jesus and how has this knowledge lead you to a deeper relationship with him?

Day 2

But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 3:14-15 (NLT)

Sometimes a person's conversion to Christianity is an exciting story. The Apostle Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, having scales placed over his eyes and hearing the voice of Jesus himself. The experience transformed him from a violent persecutor of Christians to a committed witness of the truth of the Gospel.

Most of the time, people meet Jesus in much less dramatic ways. Maybe it is a grandmother who takes you to church, or a parent that reads the Bible to you. There are a million ordinary ways that we come to encounter Jesus through practices and traditions that were handed down to us. The Apostle Paul affirms that very truth in his letter to Timothy. The ordinary, everyday practice of reading the Bible is much more than another thing to check off on our to do list. It is a way we can come to an understanding of Jesus and build a relationship with him.

Consider this: What ordinary practices have shaped your life over a long period of time? How might the regular reading and application of the Word become one of those practices?

Day 3

You study the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me.

John 5:39 (NIV)

What do you think the Bible really is?

A religious book with the answers to the universe? A moral code that tells us how to live? A tale of two halves, the first about a vengeful God and the second about how God has a change of heart and now shows His love?

How about a book whose existence is to tell a story about Jesus? That's what Jesus tells the religious leaders in this passage and John records these words for our benefit. God doesn't require blind faith from us as Christians. The Bible tells us everything we need to know about the who, what, where, and why of Jesus so that we may understand His purpose and how our faith in Him reconciles us back to God.

We bear witness to the hundreds of Old Testament prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. From Genesis forward, God's plan for Jesus unfolds on every page so we can have every confidence in our Savior's work on the cross. We watch His divine nature at work through His miracles, then reflect on His humanity as His body is broken and tortured on our behalf.

Consider this: When you study the Old Testament, look for Jesus with intent. What do you learn about Him?

Day 4

In the beginning was the Word, and Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1: 1-5 (NIV)

When you introduce someone, how do you do it? Do you refer to how you know them? Or possibly by their name and what their profession is? Have you considered that how you introduce someone, shows what you know about that person and/or reflects on your relationship versus simply letting others know someone's name?

John introduces us to Jesus in way to help us understand how he thinks of Him. He's careful to note Jesus's divinity. The writer of Hebrews describes Jesus as the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being. John the Baptist exclaimed that he was the Lamb of God.

In an important moment, Jesus asked his disciples who the people thought he was. They gave several answers, all impressive if true, but incorrect. When he asked them specifically, who they thought he was, Peter answered "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

When we read the Bible, learning who Jesus is allows us to get to know him on a personal level. We don't need to be theologians in how we think of Jesus, but we should take the time to get past the point of simply knowing his name and actually treating him as we would any important relationship. Like the centurion, let us explain our witness to the cross, by stating "Truly, this man was the Son of God!"

Consider this: If people asked you to introduce Jesus, how would you do it?

Day 5

Aleph

Joyful are people of integrity,
who follow the instructions of the Lord.
Joyful are those who obey his laws
and search for him with all their hearts.
They do not compromise with evil,
and they walk only in his paths.
You have charged us
to keep your commandments carefully.
Oh, that my actions would consistently
reflect your decrees!
Then I will not be ashamed
when I compare my life with your commands.
As I learn your righteous regulations,
I will thank you by living as I should!
I will obey your decrees.
Please don't give up on me!

Psalm 119:1-8 (NLT)

Imagine you are in the woods; the road is twisted and long and sometimes it hard to tell where you are and where you should go. That's when a map or a compass really comes in handy. They help you identify where you are, where you need to go, and how to get there. The bible for us acts as both our compass and our map, helping us discover where we are showing us where we need to go next. All of Psalm 119 is designed to be a prayer book to draw us into the word. Each section of this Psalm is a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet and this passage, "Aleph" is designed to be prayer for orientation towards the celebration of God's word. It's incredible that the God of the Universe decided to inspire a collection of books which can show us the truth of the world and how to best live in it and Aleph is designed to draw us into the appreciation of this amazing resource God has given us.

When is the last time that you paused to appreciate the amazing gift that is the Bible? It's easy to become too familiar with it, view it as just another book to study, or another drain on your limited time. That is why it is vital for us to remember that the Bible is God's word, given to us to give us truth and life!

Consider this: The challenge today is to not just read, but to pray this passage and then come up with 3 things that you appreciate about the fact that God has given us his word as a guide!