

# Trellis

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Scripture

## Week 1, S.O.A.P.

There are many methods for studying scripture. Most of them are very good, and highly effective. The point is not to find the perfect methodology, but to thoroughly commit to opening the scriptures every day, and seeking the Lord in prayer. We must make this of first importance! This keystone habit will largely determine the trajectory of our walk with Jesus.

This is the first of 4 weeks. Our goal is simple: Let's commit together to reading the Bible everyday for the next 4 weeks. Let's make this our top priority! In 4 weeks we can learn a lot, try a handful methodologies for reading the Bible and, most importantly, begin to establish a routine—a routine that will transform us.

### John 15:1-5, NIV

*"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup> He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. <sup>5</sup> "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

- What stands out most to you in this text?
- How can a daily commitment to scripture help us to 'remain in him'? What are the challenges to keeping a daily commitment?
- Verse 5 has an explicit promise: if we remain in him, we will bear lots of fruit... and if we don't, we won't! What does this mean?

Dr. Scot McKnight and other scholars have suggested that **"He cuts off every branch"** (15:2) may not be the best translation. The Greek word *airō* can mean 'to cut off' but its primary meaning is to lift/raise up. Gardeners often find the branches that are struggling, and tie them to a higher place on the trellis where they will have more access to light and water, and will be protected from rot and soil-borne diseases. As we commit to daily scripture reading, we are submitting to the gardener (vs 1, that's our Father!) and being tethered to the trellis.

Healthy vines have quickly growing tendrils that grab the trellis and pull the vine into the light. Short of that, the gardener must lift up that vine and tie it to the trellis. If you don't have an established pattern of Bible study, that's a problem. The solution is making a commitment to the Lord, to the people in your Trellis Community and to yourself, to a daily routine. This is allowing the gardener (again, the Father!), to tie you to the trellis.

### **Time and Place:**

This commitment begins by setting a time and a place for your daily study. Go around the room & share what will be your set time and place to open the scriptures.

Each week we will try out a different approach to studying scripture. This week will learn the S.O.A.P. methodology. Set aside a few minutes each day for this. We strongly recommend journaling through this as you go.

### **S. - Scripture**

Read a passage from the Bible. It can be a little or a lot.

### **O. - Observation**

Write down (or highlight) what stood out to you in the text.

### **A. - Application**

Write out your application for this text: How will you respond/listen/obey?

### **P. - Prayer**

Spend time in prayer. Be sure to thank God for his word, and to commit to the application(s) you've written out in response to the text.

Next week we will discuss how it went!

## Week 2, Lectio Divina

### How did it go?

- Did you find it difficult to stick to your plans of time and place? What were the biggest obstacles?
- Is there anything about your approach from the last week that you'd like to change moving forward?
- Tell us about something meaningful that came up during your times with the Lord. Did you sense the Lord speaking to you? Was there a specific challenge or encouragement you could tell us about?
- Discuss the S.O.A.P. bible study method: What about this process was most helpful? What were the pros/cons?

The S.O.A.P. bible study method is analytical and systematic—which makes for an excellent default for daily study. This week's method is a bit more reflective and meditative. Lectio Divina (Latin for "divine reading") is a way to encounter God through the written word and deepen your understanding of its message.

### Lectio Divina is traditionally seen as a journey with four steps:

- **Lectio (Reading):** This involves slowly and attentively reading a chosen passage from scripture. Read it multiple times if needed, focusing on each word and sentence.
- **Meditatio (Meditation):** Ponder the meaning of the passage. Ask yourself questions like "What is this passage about?" "What words or phrases stand out to me?"
- **Oratio (Prayer):** Respond to the passage in prayer. Talk to God about what you're learning, how it makes you feel, and how it applies to your life.
- **Contemplatio (Contemplation):** Rest in silence and allow God's presence to fill you. This is a space of openness to what God might reveal.

### Challenges:

- It's difficult to hold still, and allow the Lord to speak. We quickly become anxious or restless. Be kind to yourself. You may need to start with short times of reflection and work your way into longer ones.

- It's hard to know if the Lord is directing your thoughts and attention, or if it's just your own wandering mind. Resist the impulse to decide. God can nudge us in subtle ways, and to the extent that we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16) this may be a distinction without a difference. Remain humble and open. God is eager to speak to you, and there's tremendous opportunity in allowing him to highlight his word, and guide our thoughts.
- That said, it is possible for our minds to run off in this process and latch onto something untrue or unbiblical. As with all things, measure the direction/insight you receive against the whole of scripture and the teachings of the church. ***Lectio Divina is not about formulating new doctrines or theologies***, it's about allowing the Lord to point out the truth in his word, and how it applies to your life. Your trellis community is a great resource for evaluating these things.

The Bible is a bit like wind chimes on your back porch. The notes played are the notes of truth and love. Those notes are unchanging. However, as the wind blows, the song is new every time. Lectio Divina is not asking the scripture to play new notes... it's allowing the Holy Spirit to blow through, and play a new song that meets us where we are and whispers to our souls.

#### **Hebrews 4:12, NIV**

*For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

#### **Give a shot while you're together.**

- Choose a short text (consider Mark 6:45-52, John 1:1-5, or Phil 2:6-11). Read it aloud slowly.
- Read it again, this time asking the Lord to highlight a word or phrase.
- Read it aloud a 3rd time and ask the Lord what he may be saying to you in this text, and how you might apply it to your life.
- Be still for a minute. Pray silently.
- Share with each other what stood out.

**This week, choose a short text each day and practice Lectio Divina. The gospels are usually a great place to start. If you sense the Lord speaking to you, be sure to write it down! If you want a guide, try the Lectio 365 app— it's fantastic!**

## Week 3, Memorization

### How did it go?

- How is your routine going? Do you think a habit is beginning to form? Has it gotten easier/harder?
- Compare and contrast S.O.A.P. with Lectio Divina. Do you have a preference? Why? What are some of the pros/cons of each?
- Recall the illustration about the Bible being like wind chimes, and the Holy Spirit blowing through with a new song. Share about a moment that God spoke to you through this process.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17, NIV:** 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**Deuteronomy 11:18-19, CSB:** "Imprint these words of mine on your hearts and minds, bind them as a sign on your hands, and let them be a symbol on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down & when you get up.

**Psalms 119:11, NIV:** "I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

**Joshua 1:8, NIV:** "Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."

**Colossians 3:16, NIV:** "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with gratitude in your hearts to God."

- What do these passages suggest about the power of memorizing Scripture?
- Can you think of a situation you're facing now that you could handle better if you had a relevant memory verse at the tip of your tongue? If you can, share it with the group.
- Share about a time that having scripture memorized has been helpful to you.

Our challenge this week is to memorize some scripture. It can be a little or a lot. Maybe one of the passages from the last couple of weeks have been especially meaningful. That'd be a great place to start.

### **Here are a few texts to consider memorizing:**

- All or part of Psalm 23
- The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)
- Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)
- A Living Sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2)
- The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)
- The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12)
- Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17)

### **Techniques for memorization:**

- Read the text several times over, every morning and every night. Focus on the meaning and application.
- Write the text out, by hand, each day. Long form. Like, with a pen or pencil! This will slow you down, and help to embed the words in your mind.
- Try reciting the verse from memory multiple times. If you get stuck, refer back to the text and then try again. Be kind to yourself—it's hard to memorize!
- Try rewriting it from memory without looking at the original text. Repeat.
- DAILY: it's important to do this every day. For this week, this will be your main text for Bible study. Use the S.O.A.P. method and Lectio Divina to dive into it's meaning. If you have questions, hop online and study it more.

### **The hard part:**

When we gather next week, we're going to ask you to share what you've memorized with the group. Scripture memorization is hard, but it's even harder when people are watching! We will be kind to each other, and you won't be forced to participate—but, if you can, come prepared to share what you've memorized, what the Lord has been showing you, and how you've been impacted by the process.

## Week 4, Discovery Bible Study (DBS)

### How did it go?

- Go around the room and, if you're willing, recite the verse(s) you have committed to memory. It probably won't be your best reciting so far (it's harder when people are watching!), but that's ok. CELEBRATE!
- After reciting what you can, share with the group what the experience has been like. How has memorizing God's word impacted you?
- Did you find the words coming to mind throughout the week, or in particular situations? Share any relevant stories.
- What's your next goal for scripture memorization?
- How is your daily routine coming along? Have you settled into a consistent time/place? Are habits developing? How can we pray for you to continue moving forward.

### Group Discovery Bible Study

Unlike traditional Bible studies where a leader delivers information, DBS emphasizes participant discovery and personal application of scripture.

**As with the other methods we've learned, DBS is considered a journey with four steps:**

- **READING:** A passage is chosen and read aloud by one person, then silently reread by everyone.
- **RETELLING:** Someone summarizes the story in their own words, stating it casually as with a friend over coffee. The group is asked to point out anything significant that may have been added or left out.
- **LOOKING INWARD:**
  - **Look at God:** Ask questions about what the passage reveals about God's character, plans, or actions.
  - **Look at Yourself:** Consider how the passage applies to your life, your actions, and your relationship with God.



- **MOVING FORWARD**

- **What will you do?:** Participants decide how they will live differently based on what they learned.
- **Who will you tell?:** Discuss how they can share their learnings and the message of the passage with others.
- Pray for each other!

**Give it a shot!** The best way to learn this method is by doing it. Turn to John 15:1-5 and walk through the steps together.

### **Individual Discovery Bible Study**

The same four steps can be done on your own, with small changes. Begin with a sheet of paper, divided into 3 columns.

- **READING:** Read the passage once or twice, and then write it out in the first column.
- **RETELLING:** In the second column, write how you would summarize and restate the text in your own words.
- **LOOKING INWARD/FORWARD:** In the 3rd column write out what the text is teaching you about God, and how it applies to your life. Write out a prayer committing to obey what the text teaches.

### **Suggested passages for your first week:**

1. Matthew 5:21-26
2. Mathew 5:27-30
3. Matthew 5:33-37
4. Matthew 5:38-42
5. Matthew 5:43-48
6. Matthew 6:1-4
7. Matthew 6:19-24

Try personal DBS this week & come back ready to share about it with the group! Also, check out [www.waha.app](http://www.waha.app) for a simple app to guide you into more DBS.