

A Year in the New Testament and Psalms

We believe when we open the Bible, we hold in our hands extraordinary life. We believe that in every season, from the valleys to the hilltop moments, the scriptures sustain us daily. Contained in its pages are words that set people free and teach us how to live the unforced rhythms of grace that humanity was always created for.

So as we stand at the start of a New Year, we extend a simple invitation to join us as we read through the New Testament and pray through the Psalms together each day. Our hope is to journey through the text as family, grappling with the same passages, asking questions and being drawn into daily encounters with Jesus. Our intent is to set aside time each day to immerse ourselves in the text so we might live out the story of God in our city. When the alarm clock goes off, before we turn on the phones, get the download of emails, reply to texts, or check social media, we want to carve out space to breathe in the truth of what God says over us, letting His voice be the most formative in our lives. Rather than eating the bread of anxious toil as the Psalmist says, we want to eat the bread that truly satisfies.

Imagine if, for 366 days (it's a leap year!), we were all feasting on the story of Jesus who declared himself "the bread of life." Not only would it allow us to operate out of a place of joy and rest each day, but it would also form us into his likeness, enabling us to become agents of kingdom renewal in the places we live, work, and spend our time. We would become, as the Psalmist says, like a tree planted by streams of living water, sustained by the presence of God, providing shade to a weary city and producing fruit that speaks of a better story.

So let's open up the scriptures together. Let's devour it, devote our day to God, and press on expecting to be changed, challenged and transformed as we live in and live out the story of God together today.

Bread – Psalms

"Praying through the Psalms" is a Christian spiritual practice hundreds of years old. The Psalms contain within them the rich tapestry of what it means to be human, to feel joy, disappointment, anger, grief and so much more. As we take in the display, the psalmists model for us how to express the rawness of our hearts to God in prayer. To pray through a psalm isn't just to read the psalm, but to notice the emotion held within the verses and allow the psalmist's words to become your own prayer. Perhaps the psalmist's cries resonate with your own heart. Then, allow the truth of who God is to orient your heart towards Him again.

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Bread – The New Testament

Rather than racing through the New Testament text each day, we're going to use an acronym to help us slow down and delve deeper into the passage. Each day we'll be following the pattern B.R.E.A.D.

Be still - Find a place where you can encounter God, ask him to fill the space. Take a minute in stillness, fix your eyes on Jesus and invite the Holy Spirit to guide your time.

Read - Read through the passages for the day. If there's a QR code on the page, scan it to follow the link to a short video explaining the context of the passage. Then, look for one verse that stands out or interests you. Write out that verse in the 'read' section.

Encounter - Take your chosen verse and meditate on it. What comes to mind and how does it make you feel as you read it? What do you think God is trying to reveal through this verse? Allow him to speak to you. Write a short reflection on what you think He might be saying.

Apply - Now turn your focus outward. Think about how you might apply this to your day and write down how you're going to try to live this out.

Devote - Finally, close each day by writing a simple prayer of devotion to God. Ask that God would fill you afresh and commit your day to Him.

QR Code

On some days there is a short video to watch alongside the readings. These days have a QR code at the of the page. Open the camera on your phone and simply hover over the QR code and click the link that pops up. This will lead you to a video designed to help provide historical context, an overview of the book of the Bible, or personalized devotional content for that specific text or topic of the day. This may add anywhere from 2-10 additional minutes to your time but we believe it will be well worth it.

Day entry example

Be Still

Read

The sun rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other, nothing is deprived of its warmth. Psalm 19:6

Encounter

The glory of God is revealed in the sun, our source of light. But Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." In him, the people walking in darkness saw a great light. This is a promise that no-one need be deprived of his warmth. So step out of the shadows, into the light, and be drenched in both the warmth and colour of his love.

Apply

what does it look like to step outside of the shadows? It means to come towards

Jesus, the light, and enjoy his warmth. Enjoy the beauty of his creation. Walk____

in green spaces. Kick some leaves. And pause every so often to spiritually turn

your gaze heavenwards to thank God for his beauty, and connect to the love that

gave birth to such beauty. Allow that love to permeate your inner being.

Devote

Father, I devote this day to you. Invade my heart with the warmth of your Son.

Amen.

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My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to one's whole body.

Heavenly Father, as I pause to pray this day, I ask you to meet me. I speak the ancient words of invitation, "Holy Spirit come."

Your Word is full of wisdom and life.

I confess it's easy to look elsewhere before coming to You.

I repent of the times I've depended on my own wisdom and the world's.

I ask for your forgiveness and help to keep my mind on Your Truth.

I take a moment to express gratitude for the riches I've found in scripture.

I thank you for the comfort, peace and encouragement they've given me.

I ask now for your help to grow my desire to read, study, and meditate on Your Truth.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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