

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

What Inspires You? – The Bible is Greek to Me

July 25, 2022

When I became a Christian at the age of 43, I knew about the Bible because my family faithfully attended church throughout my childhood and adolescence. I just didn't think it had any relevance in the 21st century, nor did I believe it was necessarily the inspired word of God.

The best thing that happened to me along my faith journey was when I discovered a church that lived out what the Bible teaches. Lee Powell, founding pastor of CedarCreek Church, was the associate pastor there. I surrounded myself with people who were actively living out their faith and tried to learn from them. I was shocked to learn that, unlike my previous church, these people actually did what the Bible says, whether it was convenient or not.

Where the Bible says:

Matthew 5:44

"But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!"

They did that! And where it says:

Malachi 3:10

"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!"

That's what they did!

Their faith was not confined to Sundays in church—it was lived out in the power of the Holy Spirit every day. That was the kind of faith I wanted, and I was inspired to shrink the gap from the life I was living to the one God was calling me to. For me, the Bible became God's inspiration for my transformation—I finally accepted this truth from 2 Timothy:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong

and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷ God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

God used those people to help me recognize some of the lies I had believed. As I intentionally made time in my schedule for Bible study, journaling, and reflection, God used his Word to correct me when I was wrong and guide me into his truth. He used it to help me find the gifts he had given me and how to use them for his purpose.

I continue to be encouraged by the people God has put into my journey, especially those in my life group and those I've met through serving opportunities. I am so grateful for them and this wonderful church. None of us are perfect, but we have determined to follow Jesus with love and enthusiasm!

Questions:

What inspires you? Have you ever drawn inspiration from the Bible? Have you put that inspiration into action?

Next Steps:

Commit 10 minutes for the next 10 days to read a Bible passage. Use the P.A.U.S.E. (prepare, ask, understand, serve, encourage) method described in this weekend's message. Journal what God says to you and share it with a Christian friend. Invite them to join you!

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, I desire to be filled with your Holy Spirit and to follow Jesus with all my heart! I trust that in doing so my life will become more joyful, peaceful, loving, and purposeful. Guide me. Help me to hear your voice and follow your lead. I trust in your plan and purpose for my life. In Jesus' name, amen.

This post was written by Laurie White, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

The Journey to Servanthood – The Bible is Greek to Me

July 26, 2022

During the weekend message, each campus pastor discussed the steps on our spiritual journey with Jesus Christ. We transform from an unbeliever to a believer to a leader of others before ultimately reaching servanthood. How do we practically grow in our spiritual journey and reach servanthood?

There are four main steps that lead us from unbelievers to servants for the Kingdom of God: education, purification, purpose, and action.

Education: This step consists of learning about God and his character to build an intimate relationship with him. A crucial aspect of education is to study the Bible regularly and ask God to guide us while reading his word. This requires discipline and patience; however, the rewards we reap by having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ are immeasurable.

Purification: Even many seasoned Christ-followers are unfamiliar with purification. As we learned last weekend, purification can be simplified to “finding freedom.” When we develop our relationship with Jesus and familiarize ourselves with Scripture, we find freedom from sin, freedom from the chains of the world, and freedom from the heavy burdens that each of us carries. By studying the Bible, we are convicted of our sins and redirected by the Holy Spirit to live according to the example Jesus set for us.

Galatians 5:13-14

For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Purpose: The third step in the spiritual journey is a major part of the mission at CedarCreek Church. It includes finding our purpose—the unique reason that God created us. This largely consists of discerning our spiritual gifts, such as pastoring, encouragement, intercession, etc. However, through studying the Bible, we also find that our main purpose is to live in relationship with God and

with others. Through his word, we can clearly see that we were created to glorify God and serve one another.

Action: The final step of this ongoing spiritual journey is action. This means living out our faith and having a meaningful impact on the lives of those around us. Once we know God and experience purification and preparation, we can use our newfound freedom and purpose to be a light to our communities. This could be achieved by using our spiritual gifts, volunteering, and being a friend to those who need it. It is living out our faith and being the hands and feet of Jesus in our world.

Growing in our relationship with God and learning how to consistently interact with Scripture is not always easy. It requires discipline and a heart transformation that only the Holy Spirit can provide. However, the life change that results by living out our faith and following Scripture will have a profound spiritual impact in each of our lives.

Questions:

What is the most difficult part of reading Scripture for you personally? Does anything hold you back from reading the Bible consistently?

How has reading the Bible and learning about God helped strengthen your relationship with him?

Next Steps:

Sign up for [GrowthTrack](#) to discover your purpose and find your spiritual gifts.

Join a [Group](#) to connect with a life-giving community of Christ-followers who will encourage you to read Scripture and will help you grow in your relationship with Jesus.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us your inspired word through the Bible. It is incredible that you provided me with a way to learn about you, find freedom, discover my purpose, and live out my faith. I praise you for the wonderful gift of your word, and I pray that you strengthen me to study it each day, consistently and attentively. Open my heart to understand Scripture and reveal what the Holy Spirit is trying to teach me. In Jesus' name, amen.

This post was written by Isabelle Billnitzer, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Prepare to be Amazed – The Bible is Greek to Me

July 27, 2022

I often prepare myself to be disappointed. I create a backup plan when I try a new food—just in case I don't like it. I hesitate to read the next book in a series—afraid it won't be as good as the previous one. I often throw in a "*but your will be done*" when I pray so that I won't feel let down if God doesn't answer with a "yes."

When we prepare ourselves to be let down by God, we prevent ourselves from seeing his plan unfold in our lives. We tell ourselves he is no longer performing the miracles he did long ago, or that he only answers the prayers of the most perfect people.

John 5:17

But Jesus replied, "My Father is always working, and so am I."

"Prepare the Way" by Bethel Music

We've heard the revival stories

Or ancient and old time glory

Spirit of God, come do it again.

Miracle-working power

Moving in Signs and wonders

Spirit of God, come do it again.

Prepare the way, He's coming through

Ready or not, our God's on the move

We're gonna see, Heaven on Earth

Come Holy Spirit, awaken Your church.

God did incredible miracles long ago. *And*—he is doing amazing works now. He will continue to provide signs and wonders until all of the things that disappoint us, the hurt, sorrow, and pain are gone forever.

Philippians 1:6

And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

More often than not, I am blown away by the very things I thought would disappoint me. The strange food is delicious, the newest book is the best yet, or God has completely baffled me by answering my prayer with a “yes, and...” There are certainly times I am disappointed, but it is not worth getting anxious over.

God is on the move, and he wants us prepared for his work. Perhaps he won't come through in the way we expect, and he may not answer every prayer with a “yes,” but that is because God has a better plan. He wants us prepared to be amazed.

1 John 2:28 MSG

And now, children, stay with Christ. Live deeply in Christ. Then we'll be ready for him when he appears, ready to receive him with open arms, with no cause for red-faced guilt or lame excuses when he arrives.

Questions:

In what areas of your life are you doubting that God will show up? How can you prepare yourself to see God transform your life?

Next Steps:

Find a time, a location, and a passage from the Bible to prepare your heart and mind for God's transformation. Before you start reading, pray to be awed by God.

Prayer:

Father, I have been doubting your ability to work in my day-to-day life. Prepare me to see your miracles, teach me to expect your good works, and open my eyes to see you transform my life. Your power is incredible, and I can't place limits on it. I can't wait to be amazed by you today. Amen.

This post was written by Lydia Snyder, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut

Ask Questions to Understand – The Bible is Greek to Me

July 28, 2022

Yesterday we discussed how to **Prepare** for Bible study. Now that you have set aside time, decided on a passage, and asked God to speak to you, the next step is to read.

James 1:1-4

¹ This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am writing to the “twelve tribes”—Jewish believers scattered abroad. ² Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³ For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. ⁴ So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

The Bible has always been an important part of my life, but for the last five years, my journey with personal Bible study has exploded. I hunger for God’s Word. How did I get here? Here are a couple strategies I have used on this journey. First, it is important to start at the beginning of a book to know where it fits into the bigger picture of the Bible. Before you begin, **Ask** yourself some basic questions (a good study Bible can help you answer these):

- Who wrote the book?
- To whom is it written?
- When was it written?
- What type of literature is it (history, poetry, letters, narrative)?
- Why was it written?

In the above passage, the author is James, Jesus’ brother. He was writing a letter to the Jews scattered throughout the known world. A little research revealed that James was martyred for his faith in AD 62, so the book was written before then. His primary aim in writing the book was to show how to live out your faith as a believer.

Now that we have the basics, let’s **Ask** a couple deeper questions. For example:

- What does James mean when he says that troubles of any kind are an opportunity for great joy?
- What does he mean by the word *endurance*? Is a different word used in other Bible translations? (The ESV and NIV are good places to look.)

We need to keep going with the text to better **Understand** what he means. What does the passage tell us about God? What does it tell us about ourselves?

Rejoicing in trials is not natural to us—we usually want to get out of difficult things right away. But if we stop and allow God to speak through the passage into our hearts, he’s telling us that by enduring our trials and standing firm, we will grow in our faith and maturity as believers.

Bible study is challenging, but it is very rewarding. I have found that interacting with the same ancient text that believers 2000 years ago did is life-giving. Think about it, you are hearing the very word of God, which is powerful and active. You will find that the more you read, the more you want to read.

The hardest part is just starting.

Questions:

What is your biggest reason for not reading the Bible consistently? What barriers do you need to remove so that you can make time to engage in real Bible study?

Next Steps

If you have not settled on a passage of Scripture to read, consider the Book of James. It’s short and practical. Work through the first chapter a paragraph at a time. Use the above format to guide your study. If you get stuck, don’t give up. Look for a [Group](#) this fall to engage in Bible study with others.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to join with believers throughout the centuries to grow in my faith through the Bible. Give me a hunger to read and meditate on the truth found in Scripture. Help me know the right questions to ask and give me a heart to understand. Thank you for revealing yourself to those who seek you. Amen.

This post was written by Julie Mabus, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Serve and Encourage Others – The Bible is Greek to Me

July 29, 2022

Over the past several days, we have been unpacking the P.A.U.S.E. method as a way to better engage with the Bible. So far, we have looked at **P**repare, **A**sk Questions, and **U**nderstand. Today we will examine **S**erve and **E**ncourage.

Serve—Let God's word inspire how you love others. To do this, model the behavior of Jesus by loving your neighbors. An action step would be to find one person today and serve them in the spirit of God. The highest level of our journey as Christians is servanthood.

Encourage—We need to be encouraged by God's word and give God thanks for it. The Bible can be encouraging during difficult times as well as during magnificent times. One way of showing our encouragement is by sharing his word with others who need to hear it.

James 1:22

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.

Once you've committed to hearing the Gospel message or reading the Bible, you aren't done yet. Jesus is looking for *doers* and not just *hearers* of his word. The bottom line from last weekend's message was *God's word is an inspiration for your transformation.*

Romans 12:6-8a

⁶In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. ... ⁷If your gift is serving others, serve them well. ... ⁸If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging.

Spiritual gifts are not based on merit but, rather, the grace God has chosen to give us. Once we know the spiritual gifts God has given us, we need to use them to serve and encourage others.

Have you attended [GrowthTrack](#)? Its goal is to help you understand the spiritual journey and live it out each day by taking steps toward discovering your true redemptive purpose and the abundant life God has for you.

Do you know your gifts? Are you living out your purpose?

Questions:

How often do you read your Bible? Is the Bible Greek to you? Have you considered joining a Group to work through different books of the Bible and discuss what they mean?

What does serving others mean to you? Are you comfortable enough with the Bible to encourage others by sharing God's word?

Next Steps:

If reading the Bible is something you keep putting off because it is difficult to understand, try reading a different translation (CedarCreek uses NLT, which is very easy to read). Or consider using a different format, like listening to Scripture instead of reading.

If you're artsy like me, another avenue of staying engaged in the Word is with the use of a coloring or creative journaling Bible. I have found they give me a creative way to journal what a passage is speaking to me. It's amazing how Scripture comes to life with a little bit of color.

Attend [GrowthTrack](#) if you haven't recently. You'll discover your spiritual gifts and craft a purpose statement around your personality, place, and passion to determine how you can make an eternal difference in the lives of others.

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, help me transform my life so that I can experience more. Thank you for sending Jesus as an example of how we are to live. Grant me wisdom to know that you uniquely gifted me to serve and encourage others. Open my eyes so I may see opportunities to use my spiritual gifts. In Jesus' name, amen.

This post was written by Jennifer Macke, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.