

DEVOTIONAL :

**PSALM-THING
TO DO FOR 5
DAYS IN
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INTRODUCTION

There are loads of different ways of reading the Bible and engaging with God's word. At Devo, we thought that during lockdown could be a great opportunity to try out a few of those methods and see if we can help you find one that suits you. To do this, have produced a 5-day Bible reading resource that will provide you with step by step techniques for reading the Bible in a range of ways.

Each day there will be a short video on the @community_church_youth instagram account where a member of the youth team will be sharing some of their reflections on using the method for that day. The reflections will also be shared on the Community Church Blog.

You can pick any Psalm to work through this week - we recommend one that's on the shorter side, or breaking a longer one down and reading a section of it each day. The youth team will be reading Psalm 145 so if you want to work through with us, the videos will probably make more sense!

Most days will begin with reading through the Psalm and picking out a verse that stands out to you. This could be because you've heard it before, or because you have no idea what it means, or it might mean that God wants to reveal something to you with the words. If there isn't an obvious choice, just pick one at random, they're all good!

This devotional is a way of gaining ideas and providing some structure for quiet times. There's nothing to say that you have to complete it over the 5 days we're posting about it, or even that you have to work through every step each day. If you only feel like thinking about one of the steps, that's fine too. It's up to you to pick and choose which bits suit you and which don't. Spending time with your Bible should be enjoyable, not feel like a chore.

DAY 1.

VERSE MAPPING

Verse mapping is a great way to find out more about a verse by focusing in on the words used and what they really mean. This technique might work well for you if you find yourself struggling to read the Bible because of the language it's often written in.

This method works best if you focus in on one verse from the Psalm.

1. COMPARE VERSIONS

Look up the verse in 2-4 different translations of the Bible. Notice any words that are significantly different - does this change the meaning? Why might they be different?

2. CROSS-REFERENCE

Look up where there are related passages to your verse elsewhere in the Bible. Consider how the words are used in the different contexts, does this tell you anything new about the verse?

3. APPLY THE VERSE

What does this verse mean for your life? Is God saying something specific to you through it?

4. PRAY ABOUT IT

DAY 2.

REFLECTION

This technique for meditating on scripture is based on the writings of Martin Luther. The three main steps in the middle allow you to think about how the verse directly impacts your life and what you can take from it.

1. KEY WORDS

Focus in on one verse and highlight and define any words that you don't understand or that stand out to you for another reason.

2. INSTRUCTION / LEARNING

What is the verse telling you to do/ what instruction can you gain from it?

What can the verse teach you about God or yourself?

3. THANKSGIVING

What in the verse causes you to be thankful to God?

4. CONFESSION

What could this verse lead you to confess? What do you have to bring to God and ask forgiveness for?

5. PRAY IT THROUGH

DAY 3.

S.O.A.P

This is a really simple 4-step method to work through a verse or small section of scripture and apply it to your life. This one will be especially helpful when we go back to our busy lives, if you're someone who struggles to fit in quiet time you can work through it in whatever time you have and get something really great from it.

S - SCRIPTURE

Write out a verse or section of verses from the Psalm that stand out to you.

O - OBSERVATION

What are they saying? Reword the verses to show what God is telling you through them.

A - APPLICATION

What do these verses mean for your life at the moment?

P - PRAYER

Take a moment to pray to God about what you've reflected on and ask him to help you remember and build on it throughout the day.

DAY 4.

IN + OUT

This is a very simple method of reflecting on scripture. Unlike the others we've looked at, this method won't focus in on one verse in particular. Instead we'll be looking at the Psalm as a whole. Simply put, this method is just reading through the Psalm twice, once in your head and once out loud.

Many of the Psalms were written by King David as he cried out to God, so they were written to be spoken out loud. By reading them out to yourself you might pick up on something you skimmed over when you read it in your head and notice something new.

For this method, we recommend using a translation of the Bible with easy to understand words. The message or the amplified translation are often used when reading out loud as the language is much more commonly used - far fewer thous and thys!!

If you struggle with reading out loud, try listening to the Psalm instead. The YouVersion Bible app has a feature for this, or there are loads of songs and spoken word recordings of the Psalms available. Many of them we're used to hearing and may not even know reference Psalms, have a look through your preferred music platform and you'll certainly find something!

DAY 5.

CREATIVE

For the final day of our reflections on the Psalm we encouraging you to be a bit more creative. This will come way more naturally to some of you than others and even the word may have put some of you off, but bear with us. Creativity doesn't just mean drawing or painting, there are so many ways that you can creatively engage with the Bible that don't involve art supplies at all. We've listed a few ideas below to get you started, but really the possibilities are endless.

- Write out a verse - this can be elaborate and decorated or in block caps if that's what you prefer
- Listen to the verse and paint with colours that it brings to mind
- Draw key elements from the Psalm
- Play music to or sing the Psalm
- Dance while listening to one of the recordings from yesterday
- Just sit in silence and think about the Psalm. Listen to what God is saying (you might feel like a thought is you being distracted, but ask God to be involved in it, he could be trying to tell you something)
- Write your own Psalm, you can use the one you've been reading as inspiration but try to draw on your own life and what you want to call out to God

CONCLUSION

We have reached the final day of reflection. Thanks so much for joining in, we hope you've gotten something from the process and have enjoyed trying out new ways of engaging with scripture.

Please remember that while we have used these techniques while reading the Psalms, they can be used to read any book of the Bible at any time. Some techniques may even lend themselves more to other areas.

You don't have to use these methods everyday. As we said at the start, you might have found some of them super difficult to use and never want to go near them again, but we hope you've learned something useful that will help you when trying to read the Bible in the future. And remember, you can adapt these methods to what suits you. Some of them are quite long so maybe using a few steps every other day will be enough to keep you going.

The last thing to say is that reading the Bible is a much more enriching activity if you discuss what you're reading with other Christians around you. Through mentoring, shared Bible plans, home groups or just catching up with friends you can learn from each other and find out much more about God. Some of these techniques can spark more questions than answers, and asking people around you like youth leaders, mentors or friends is a great way to get answers and find out more if you're struggling to work through something with God alone.

Happy reading, enjoy!



FEEDBACK

As long as the tech (and our organisation) has gone to plan, we've been sharing our thoughts and reflections with you for the past week. It would be great to hear from some of you guys too! If you've particularly enjoyed, or disliked any of the techniques this week, or maybe you've got another method you think we should all try, we'd love to be able to share that with everyone on the insta.

Drop an email to youth@thecomunitychurch with a portrait video and we'd love to pass on your thoughts.