

Training Session 3: How do we train people in Scripture engagement?

How to Engage Scripture is part of a training series founded on Jesus' discipleship model. An apprentice (i.e. disciple) spends time with Jesus, becomes like Jesus, and does the things he does. We want to follow His steps so closely that we become covered in the dust of our Rabbi. How to Engage Scripture is one of four growth practices that help us be with him, become like him, and do what he did.

- Scripture - Disciples study, meditate on and apply Scripture.
- Service - Disciples demonstrate the gospel by giving their lives away.
- Share - Disciples declare the gospel.
- Supplication & Other Types of Prayer - Disciples intercede and interact with God through prayer.

SCRIPTURE (Logos)—Scripture is God's Word and the primary means given to understand reality as the Author created it. Through Scripture, we learn God's story, and who we are in it. We must prioritize the ingestion of Scripture, allowing God's story to inform our view of life and the world and to transform us into His image.

Objectives:

- The learners will understand the principles and pitfalls of training others in Scripture engagement
- The learners will be exposed to different methods and strategies for training others in Scripture engagement
- The learners will begin to create a 6-month plan for equipping their house church in Scripture engagement

Intro. & Review

Last month we shared the goal of engaging Scripture and the basic ingredients of the S.O.A.P. process.

What is the goal? Show Slide.

- At a heart level, the goal is to shepherd the heart to repent and believe the gospel.
- Faith then works itself out through a life of knowing Him, believing Him, and obeying Him.
- In Scripture, we come to know and believe God. We are then transformed into his image and become his image-bearers in the world.

How do I do it? Show Slide.

1. Prepare your heart.

2. Scripture: Read the Bible in context.
3. Observation: Meditate on the Bible.
4. Application: Commit to obey the Bible.
5. Pray and Pass it on: Talk to God and Others about the Bible.
6. Write it down!

Transition: Today we will focus on how to train others in Scripture engagement.

When we are training we want to keep the D.E.E.P.E.R. model in mind. So you will first demonstrate the S.O.A.P. process in your house church. Your eventual goal is for them to repeat it in their own lives and then replicate it with others.

On your table is a Psalm 1:1-2 training exercise handout. This represents how you might demonstrate it to your house church.

Turn to Psalm 1:1-2 (James 1:22-25 is another good passage for this practice).

**1Blessed is the man^a
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
2but his delight is in the law^b of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.**

Instructions: As a group work through each step of the S.O.A.P. process. Take turns to read through Psalm 1:1-2. Use a different translation for each reading. Then answer the questions that follow each step.

Step One - **Prepare your heart:** Close your eyes, take a couple of deep breaths, reflect on your state of mind, acknowledge it to God.

Step Two - **Scripture:** Read the passage of Scripture.

- Reading One: Read slowly and pause after each phrase.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Trainer's Note: Another option is to have each person read the passage once with no comment. Read it in a variety of translations, especially NLT & CSB. Go to Psalm 1:1-2 on Biblehub.com and click on "parallel" to see the verses in parallel translations.

Step Three - **Observation**: Each time you read answer one of the questions that follow. Be sure to write down your answers.

1. Reading Two: What is the main idea of the passage?
2. Reading Three: Read the verse in the CSB. What does the word "Blessed" mean?
3. Reading Four: Read the verse in the NLT. How would you describe the "Blessed man"? What doesn't he do and what does he do?

Step Four - **Application**: Keep reading and writing and answer the following questions.

4. Reading Five: What does it look like to delight in something? What does it look like to meditate on something day and night?
5. Reading Six: What step could you take in the next 72 hours to delight and meditate on God's Word?

Step Five - **Prayer & Pass it on!**: Write out a prayer in response to God speaking to you through His Word. Then take turns sharing how you will apply this in the next 72 hours.

Optional Question: What are some other ways to go D.E.E.P.E.R. using the S.O.A.P. method?

Trainer's Note: Examples may include:

- Circle or underline things you want them to specifically look for.
 - Circle the things that a blessed man does
- Have the group come up with the questions.
 - What questions do you have about the passage?
- If it is a narrative, have people use their different senses to observe. For example, What would you hear? What would you see? What would you smell? What would feel? What would you think?
- Use the four questions.
- Experience/practice - Have everyone answer the questions and write down their answer on their own. Then have the person to the right of the reader share their answer. This gets everyone involved.
- Experience/Practice - After you've explained the goal of engaging in Scripture for several weeks start asking others to share why we spend time in Scripture.

- After you've demonstrated S.O.A.P. and given people the opportunity to experience it you can start adding to their understanding. Start explaining the purpose of preparing the heart and why it is so important. Share different ways to think about application. Eventually have members practice leading the Scripture engagement time.
- Give opportunities to engage on their own time.
- Go deeper slowly and incrementally, adding elements of depth as you progress.
- Give away the process.

Transition: Let's look at some basic principles and pitfalls to keep in mind when you are training people in Scripture engagement.

Principles

1. Communicate the "why".

Why is Scripture engagement so important? What does it achieve in our life? Why did God give us his Word? What is the goal of being in God's Word?

Knowing the "why" creates motivation. It creates the neurotransmitter dopamine in the brain which is crucial for motivational control. If this isn't firmly established in our hearts, we just won't make it a priority, we will continually try and fail or do it for all the wrong reasons.

Here are a few simple ways to communicate the why.

Trainer's Note: Have these available on a handout. They will also be available on the Disciple-Making Pathway web page on our website. Time permitting, you may have table groups wrestle with a question about the "why" such as, "What emphasis do each of these have?" or "Which of these is most helpful to you?" or "Which stirs or motivates you the most? Why?" or "What other reasons are there for engaging Scripture?"

- Have a simple phrase or two you repeat each time you come to the Word that reminds people of the "why".
 - Through His Word we experience intimacy with God and life transformation (Chris Conley).
 - Through His Word we shepherd our hearts to repent and believe in the gospel.
 - Through His Word we come to know Him, believe Him, and obey Him.
 - Through His Word he changes us into His Image so we can show the world what he is like.
 - Through His Word we spend time with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do what he did.

****Have a few of these phrases in your hip pocket to use in your house church. Right now pick out one you will commit to start using in your house church or come up with one of your own.**

- Have a few go-to verses that remind us of the “why”.
 - 2 Tim. 3:16-17
 - Joshua 1:8-9
 - Psalm 119:9-11
 - 2 Tim. 2:15

2. Remind yourself and others of the gospel.

- I often hear people say, “I don’t want this to become a burden for me or others”.
- Whenever we are challenged in our walk with Christ it is easy to shrivel up with feelings of guilt and shame. Therefore, we need to continually remind ourselves and others of the gospel. Our identity is not wrapped up in our performance. Our righteousness comes from Christ.
- Remind them that God doesn’t love them more or less based on how much time they spend in Scripture. But spending time with God in His Word does open up the door for us to discover the abundant love God already has for us and to respond in worship.

3. Find out where people are at in their journey with Scripture before you start training.

Trainer’s Note: Ask, “Why is this so important?” Add some of the reasons that follow.

- If you don’t know where people are in their journey you may not scratch where they are itching. You run the risk of discouraging them with too big of a challenge or you may not be challenging them enough.
 - Don’t assume you know. It is human nature to project that we are farther along than we really are.
3. Start where people are at and ask, what’s the next step? Don’t move on until they’ve mastered the step. Progress slowly, incrementally, always with the goal in mind.
- a. **SLIDE:** For example, if they don’t have any time in the Word, what might be the next step in which they can experience a win?
 - i. Give them one verse that you know is easy to understand and apply. You may give them one verse a day or one they repeatedly read each day. You can do a simple search like “Scripture verses on practical Christian living”. [Here is a list that I found on the internet.](#)

ii. Here are a couple of examples:

1. **Romans 12:1** ESV

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

2. **1 John 2:15** ESV

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

3. **Matthew 6:33** ESV

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

iii. Once they've demonstrated some mastery build on that success with a next step.

1. The next step might be to observe the text by highlighting significant words or ideas. It might be a word that is repeated, or a word they don't understand or a key word or phrase.

When you meet with them ask what they have highlighted and why.

One of the beautiful things about the S.O.A.P. method is that you can easily add layers of complexity and depth once you've mastered the basics. As you are discipling your house church members start as simple as possible. Don't add complexity until you are convinced the majority of your disciples have mastered each skill.

Here are different layers of the onion you can add over time.

Trainer's Note: Have your table groups read through each section. Each person should identify what might be a good next step in each area for them personally and for their house church meetings.

Scripture: Read & Record	
Layer 1:	Simply read or listen to the text.
Layer 2:	Add heart preparation. Throughout your training, introduce one or more ways to prepare your heart to receive God's Word.

Layer 3:	Introduce Bible translations. Show them online Bible tools that allow for parallel readings using different translations (biblehub.com, bibleref.com, biblegateway.com, youversion.com). You can also listen to the Bible at these sites.
Layer 4:	Discover the context and write out a summary of the book context or chapter context. You must understand the context of a verse to interpret it correctly. The easiest way to do this is to either have a good study Bible that has book introductions or use an online tool. As they gain experience and confidence train them to consider the literary, historical, cultural, geographic and theological context. Bibleref.com, Biblegateway.com and Biblehub.com are my go-tos.
Layer 5:	You may get some questions about Bible translations: Word for Word to Paraphrase. The link below is a helpful guide to finding the right translation. https://www.olivetree.com/blog/a-guide-to-finding-the-right-bible-translation/
Observation	
Layer 1:	Read the passage and then write a brief summary of the central idea(s).
Layer 2:	Highlight things that stand out to you. It could be something that is repeated, important to the story, stirs questions, things that convict you, etc.
Layer 3:	Use the 4 Questions for your observations.
Layer 4:	Learn to create your own questions using the who, what, when, where, how, and why. See Priority Time, pages 31-34 for examples of questions.
Layer 5:	Introduce Scripture Engagement methods such as journaling scripture, memorizing scripture, storying scripture, picturing it, engaging through art, praying scripture, etc. You can discover more about these methods and more at the Abide Bible Initiative .
Application	
Layer 1:	Simply answer “How will I apply this passage within the next 72 hours?” or “What will I stop doing or start doing in the next

	72 hours?”
Layer 2:	Answer these questions: 1) What are the implications for us today? 2) How does this apply to me? 3) How will I apply this passage within the next 72 hours?
Layer 3:	Ask the journalistic questions applied to your life (start with “what” and “how”). What should I do or believe? How should I apply this truth? Who needs this truth? When should I apply this truth? Where should I apply this truth? Why should I apply this truth?
Layer 4:	Learn to create specific application questions on your own based on the main idea(s) of the passage.
Layer 5:	Use 2 Tim. 3:16-17 as a framework for personal application: • Teaching - What should I know? • Reproof - What should I stop? • Correction - What should I change? • Training - What should I start?
Layer 6:	Think through how the truth might be applied to these groups of people: • Individual • House Church • Church • World
Prayer & Pass it on	
Layer 1:	End your time in the Word in prayer.
Layer 2:	Write out a prayer in response to your time in the Word.
Layer 3:	PASS IT ON: Talk about Scriptures with Others. • Why might this be important? • If you don’t use it you lose it! • We are called to share the Word. It’s how the gospel message spreads and lives are transformed.
Layer 4:	Write down on a 3 x 5 card the key takeaways from the Word each day. Make it a goal to share with at least one person one of your key takeaways. Once you’ve shared the takeaway, cross it off your 3x5 card.

Trainer's Note:

Throughout your training, introduce one or more of these ways to prepare your heart to receive God's Word. Jesus modeled the practice of silence, solitude, and sabbath.

1. Start by acknowledging who God is. Rehearse the four Gs: God is Great, Glorious, Good, and Gracious. Ps. 23 he makes me lie down by green pastures. Psalm 46:10 - Be still and know that I am God.
2. Record your state of mind. I.e. "I'm distracted right now". "I'm tired and unfocused". "I'm eagerly looking forward to spending time with you, God." What you are doing is exposing your heart to God. You are being honest with him.
3. If you're not quite ready and focused, take a few deep breaths, relax your body and settle in. Thank God that he loves you fully no matter what state of mind you are in.
4. Sing or listen to a worship song.
5. Use 1 Thess. 5:16-19 to guide your thoughts toward God. List something you can rejoice about, something you are thankful for and then express these things to God in prayer.
6. Read James 4:6-9 and ask "What is God calling us to do in this passage?"

Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." **7** Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **8** Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

7. Close your eyes and recite Psalm 46:10a, "Be still and know that I am God". Keep repeating the phrase but drop a word from the phrase each time you repeat it.

4. Leverage and maximize all your vehicles. What are your vehicles?

Use all your vehicles for training and leverage them in a way that's appropriate for that vehicle. What you can do in a discipleship group is different than what you can do in your house church meeting.

a. House Church Meetings

- i. Do continual ongoing training by modeling and incorporating elements of S.O.A.P. in your house church meetings.
- ii. HC meetings are best for demonstrating, explaining, and experiencing Scripture engagement.

iii. Whenever you are doing content time it is an opportunity to demonstrate, explain, and experience Scripture engagement. If you are very intentional with the process and keep using the vernacular of the S.O.A.P. process people will catch on quickly.

1. For example, start by reminding people of the “why”, and what you're trying to achieve.
2. When you are reading Scripture, remind them this is God’s Word, he wants to speak to each of us through his Word. Let’s prepare our hearts to listen to him. Then do one of the prepare your heart exercises.
3. During your exploration of Scripture, be very intentional in pointing out the S.O.A.P. process. How might you do this?
 - a. If you give a handout of questions outline them using S.O.A.P.
 - b. When you are observing the text point out the type of questions you are using and why.
 - c. Ask, “What journalistic question would you ask of this text?”.
 - d. What are the 4Qs and which one might help explore this text?
 - e. Remember, when we are applying the Scriptures we are asking the journalistic questions but applying them to ourselves. For example, who does this apply to? When should I apply it? How should I apply it?
 - f. What kind of prayer response does this Scripture illicit?
 - g. Who else in your life needs to hear this truth? When and how might you share this truth?
4. You want to teach them to fish for themselves not always feed them fish. Rather than always giving them questions, have the group come up with questions. Ask them, “What questions would you ask of this text?”

b. Discipleship Groups

- i. In Discipleship Groups you can focus more on the last three letters of DEEPER: Practice, Expose, Reflect (Replicate).
 - ii. In a Discipleship Group, you can challenge more, expect more, and go further because, typically those in Discipleship Groups are the ones who are leaning in. They are your fastest-growing shoots.
- c. Worker/Leader Meetings
 - i. Even a worker/leader meeting can be a venue for training in Scripture engagement.
 - 1. Remind them that they are no longer Timothys but are becoming Pauls and Barnabuses. They are setting the pace and providing an example for others to follow.
 - 2. Keep them accountable for this whole process. Ask them where they are at in their Scripture journey. Even more importantly, ask what God is teaching them and saying to them in their Scripture engagement. Are they reaching the goal?
- d. Asynchronous Platforms; asynchronous means “at different times”. What can people do on their own at any time?
 - i. APPS - There are tools like group apps (Slack, Band, etc.). We now have Church Center where you can set up your group. Websites and curricula that people can leverage for the “in-between times”.
 - ii. WEBSITE - [Disciple-making Pathway Resources on our website](#)
 - iii. Give them responsibility, assignments, and expectations that they can work on during the week on their own.
 - iv. Then make sure you follow up on those assignments. They will expect what you inspect.
- 5. Do everything you can to make Scripture engagement a communal experience. We need people lifting our arms, filling our sails, patting our backs, and spurring us on.
 - a. Over time, move them from a receiver to a participant and finally to a giver. Or put another way, move them from being a trainee to a trainer, and then a trainer of trainers.

- b. In other words, move them around the Discipleship Square.
- c. What are some things you've done or ideas you have to make Scripture engagement a group experience?

Pitfalls

1. People do S.O.A.P. in their heads. They don't write anything down. It's not going from their head, to their heart and out to their hands. I can't emphasize enough the value and importance of writing everything down you can. Do not cut any corners on this! Every step in the S.O.A.P. process should be written down. When I started doing this my engagement skyrocketed. Whenever I slack off, my engagement starts to wane. Write out your Preparation, your observation questions, your answers to the questions, your application questions, your answers to your application questions, your prayer, and who and when you will share this with.

NOTEBOOK: Develop a culture where using a notebook or journal is the norm. Refer to it constantly. Use it for recording and rehearsing prayer requests. Use it to remember decisions and commitments made by you and others.

If people don't have one. Give them one. If they come again without one. Give them another. Eventually, they get the picture.

SLIDE: There are many benefits to good old analog writing according to organizational guru, Michael Hyatt.

"In fact, [research shows](#) people who take notes on paper actually learn and retain more than those who use laptops. Why?

The reason is that handwriting:

- Engages different parts of your brain
- Forces you to more fully process your thinking
- Creates more and better memory cues for later recall
- Gives you an edge in understanding and remembering concepts

Manually writing notes and tasks, and processing your day and week on paper, engages your mind on a higher level".

2. People give up too easily and too quickly. There will be hard passages, dry sections of Scripture, and times when you just can't focus. Have faith that the treasure is there. The gold might be elusive at times but it will be found

eventually. Be patient with yourself and the process. If you have to sit and wrestle with a passage for days, that's okay.

3. People cut corners. You can trim off the ends. Just don't trim off the core. What's the core? The most important ingredients in the SOAP Method are your interaction with God's Word and your application of it to your life.
4. People lose sight of the goal. When this happens they drift into tangents and intellectual pursuits, or they function out of guilt or pharisaical pride.
5. People read more Scripture than they can meditate on. Therefore, they can't reach the goal of Scripture engagement: intimacy with God and life transformation.

Trainer's Note: Ask, "What other pitfalls have you experienced?"

Show SLIDE:

Share these statistics: On average, after three days, here is what we remember using different methods of learning (Alfred Munzert, *Intelligence Tests for Adults and Children*):

- Reading 10 percent
- Hearing: 20 percent
- Seeing: 30 percent
- Seeing and hearing: 50 percent
- Studying: 60 percent
- Reciting aloud: 70 percent
- Doing: 90 percent
- Memorizing with review: 100 percent

This information should challenge us to truly engage with Scripture with our entire being. This allows us to love God with our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The Israelites in Neh. 8 were very demonstrative in their approach and response to God's Word. They stood, read, listened, understood, wept, cried "amen", lifted their hands, feasted, fasted, confessed sins, separated themselves from foreigners, made booths, rejoiced, and worshiped the Lord. The Word sunk deep into their hearts. They truly met with God and he changed them!

Go and do likewise!

Trainer's Note: The remainder of your time will be spent in table groups. The groups will explore different ways to go D.E.E.P.E.R. with each ingredient of the S.O.A.P. process.

Instructions: In your groups, brainstorm different ways to train D.E.E.P.E.R. with each ingredient of S.O.A.P. Keep in mind your different vehicles or environments. What would it look like in your house church meetings, discipleship groups, or in-between times? How can you demonstrate each ingredient, explain each ingredient, experience each ingredient, practice each ingredient, expose each ingredient, and reflect and replicate each ingredient?

Here are some questions to help you:

1. D - How would you demonstrate S.O.A.P.?
2. E - How would you explain S.O.A.P.?
3. E - How would you experience each ingredient of S.O.A.P.?
4. P - How would you practice S.O.A.P.?
5. E - How would you expose weaknesses using S.O.A.P.?
6. R - How would you replicate the use of S.O.A.P.?

Trainer's Note: Let them know they will have more time to explore these and other questions when they meet with their huddle group.

Possible Huddle Group Questions:

1. How might you incorporate heart preparation into your house church?
2. How would you explain the goal of Scripture engagement?
3. How would you explain the six ingredients of Scripture engagement (i.e. S.O.A.P.+)
4. How might you demonstrate S.O.A.P. in your house church?
5. What are some simple ways to read Scripture during your meetings?
6. What are some ways to observe the text that gets people meditating on the text?
7. What are some ways to have your prayer time flow out of your Scripture engagement?
8. What are some ways to experience Scripture engagement during your house church meetings?
9. How would you train others to train people in using the S.O.A.P. method?
10. What are the next three steps you will take for training your house church in S.O.A.P.?