



Love Matures: Copying Jesus in the Habits of Renewal

Resource for Habit #1 - Scripture

THE SQUID APPROACH¹

Listening to the Whole Story for the Wholeness of Life

The goal of the SQUID Approach is to provide a basic framework to help you engage scripture in a way that helps you understand the Biblical story, its implications for all of life, and your place within that story.

The aim is to provide some helpful patterns of Bible engagement to help you encounter the living God by intentionally listening to His word. Just as a dinner table is only as meaningful as the meals shared around it, this approach to reading scripture is only valuable in so far as it contributes to a relational encounter with God.

Consider this method as calamari on the table as you feast with God. It contributes to the fellowship, but it's not nearly as valuable as the relationship!

We've chosen the word "SQUID," as an acronym to describe each step of this approach:

S – Summarize: Creatively summarize this part of God's Story in a way that helps you remember and retell it to others.

Q- Questions: What questions do you have about this part of the Story?

U- Understood: Imagine how the original audience would have understood what God was revealing.

I – Implications: What are the implications for all of life?

D – Do: How is God inviting you to respond?

¹ With much gratitude, this resource was adapted from our friends at Redemption Tempe.

SQUID Approach: Step-by-Step

1) **Summarize**: Creatively summarize this part of God's Story in a way that helps you remember and retell it to others.

For example, you could:

- Summarize this section in your own words
- Make an outline with bullet points
- Draw a diagram
- Artistic Expression: poem, song, pictures, etc

The goal is to help you remember this part of the story, emphasizing the significant actions and themes rather than intricate details. Feel free to be as simple or creative as you like while summarizing this part of the Story.

2) **Question**: What questions do you have about this part of the Story?

Make a list of questions about the things you don't understand in the text. Seek to answer some of these questions as you prayerfully read scripture and use the resources in your study Bible. Don't just ask questions about God, but ask these questions to God in prayer.

Also, it's vitally important that we listen to scripture in community. Therefore, if you are in a small group, bring the questions up for the group to prayerfully discuss together.

The goal isn't to comprehensively answer each question, but to grow in your understanding of God's Word. Feel free to ask any questions of the text, but also learn to be comfortable with the fact that not all questions can be answered, and that's okay.

Goal: to clarify what you don't understand about the text.

3) **Understood**: Imagine how the original audience would have understood what God was revealing to them.

The Bible was written in a different historical time, place, language, and culture. Rather than immediately applying scripture to your life, spend some time trying to imagine how the original audience would have understood these words. Although it's impossible to be completely objective as we engage scripture, it's important to try to understand the original purpose for which this part of scripture was written.

Goal: To understand why this part of the story originally written.

3) **Understood** (continued):

Helpful Questions:

- What's happening in the historical and cultural context of this passage?
- What was God revealing about himself, his people, and/or his world in this text?
- What does this text reveal about God's mission in the world?
- What's the big message of this book of the Bible, and how does this particular text fit within the overall story of the Bible? (Consider viewing a video from <https://bibleproject.com/> on any book you find yourself reading)
- How does this text point to Jesus and his Kingdom?

4) **Implications**: What are the implications for all of life?

Once you have a sense of what God was doing in the original context, reflect on the implications for life today. Many people tend to only apply the Bible to their individual life, but the Bible is the True Story of the whole world, and gives us a lens through which to view every aspect of life.

Take a few moments to prayerfully reflect on the implications for the various domains of life. Here are a few categories to think through:

- Work
- Family
- The Church Community
- Politics
- Specific cultural issues (i.e. technology, sanctity of life, racism, etc.)

Prayerfully choose one or two of these to reflect on.

Goal: To see all of life, all for Jesus.

5) **Do**: How is God inviting you to respond?

Remember that the Bible is not a dry textbook. As you read scripture, listen for what God brings to your mind and heart, and try to discern how he wants you to respond. Draw near to the relational God who knows you, and makes himself known through Scripture. Listen for his personal invitation to you. What parts of the text is he drawing you to? In light of what you have read, what do you sense God inviting you to do? He might be inviting you to sit in silence, repent of specific sins, tangibly serve a friend, weep over the brokenness of the world, etc.

5) **Do** (continued):

Listening to God takes practice, and it's very possible to distort what he's saying. Therefore, please remember that the Holy Spirit won't lead you to do anything that's contrary to his Word. Also, it's important to get counsel from other believers as you listen to God in community.

Goal: To listen and obey.

Advice for Reading:

Whole mind. As you read Scripture, engage both the linear, logical aspects of your mind as well as the imaginative, creative aspects. God gave you both; love him with both.

Whole heart: Engage your emotions as you read. Try to empathize with the experience of the people in the Bible. Seek to encounter God, knowing his heart and sharing your deepest emotions with him.

Whole story: Since the Bible is the True Story of the whole world, it's important to read and understand the whole arc of this story. Rather than focusing on one or two verses, try to understand the meaning of larger portions. Studying individual verses is good, but always keep verses in the context of whole paragraphs, paragraphs in context of the whole books, and whole books in the context of the larger Biblical story.

Whole life: The Bible speaks to more than our individual lives; it's the lens through which we understand the whole world. It has implications for the way we engage work, family, society, and every cultural issue we wrestle with. The Bible doesn't have a specific verse for every issue, but provides us a lens through which to look at all of life.