

PRACTICE SCRIPTURE | Swimming at a Football Game

Discussion Guide

Life with God is not a legal contract built on duty, but a relational covenant (a promise) built on delight. This means that we are not striving in our own power to become anything or anyone other than who we are - instead, we are coming alive in Christ, and the Holy Spirit is transforming us as we live in him. The Bible is God's word to us, written through His listening, attentive children - and the power of reading scripture is not in the knowledge or wisdom it contains, but in coming to know the God who is speaking to us through it, and choosing to live out of His story instead of our own.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between a contract and a covenant?
2. Why are persistence and consistency important in a relationship?
3. What is the difference between striving for transformation and living in Christ?
4. What does God's story say about you?
5. Whose story are you living out of today?

WEEKLY PRACTICE:

Immerse yourself in Ephesians

Sunday – Read the entire book in one sitting

Monday - Read chapter 1 slowly

Tuesday – Read chapter 2 slowly

Wednesday – Read chapter 3 slowly

Thursday – Read chapter 4 slowly

Friday – Read chapter 5 slowly

Saturday – Read chapter 6 slowly

Sermon Notes

The authority of Jesus is exercised through the Bible

The Bible is not a list of rules

Life with God isn't a legal contract built on duty, but a relational covenant built on delight

The Bible is not an encyclopedia of spiritual principles

The Bible is not a book of heroes

The Bible is not a collection of pick-me-ups

“It is entirely possible to come to the Bible in total sincerity, responding to the intellectual challenges it gives, or for the moral guidance it offers, or for the spiritual uplift it provides, and not in any way have to deal with a personally revealing God who has personal designs for you. Not everyone who gets interested in the Bible and even gets excited about the Bible wants to get involved with God.” Eugene Peterson, *Eat This Book*

The Bible is not a product to be used but a story to be entered

The Bible is a library of writings, inspired by God, telling a unified story, with Jesus at the center

The story we live in, is the story we live out

Are you reading the Bible or is the Bible reading you?

“Do not expect to master the Bible in a day, or a month, or a year. Rather expect often to be puzzled by its contents. It is not all equally clear. Great men of God often feel like absolute novices when they read the Word. The apostle Peter said that there were some things hard to understand in the epistles of Paul (2 Peter 3:16). I am glad he wrote those words because I have felt that often. So do not expect always to get an emotional charge or a feeling of quiet peace when you read the Bible. By the grace of God you may expect that to be a frequent experience, but often you will get no emotional response at all. Let the Word break over your heart and mind again and again as the years go by, and imperceptibly there will come great changes in your attitude and outlook and conduct. You will probably be the last to recognize these. Often you will feel very, very small, because increasingly the God of the Bible will become to you wonderfully great. So go on reading it until you can read no longer, and then you will not need the Bible any more, because when your eyes close for the last time in death, and never again read the Word of God in Scripture you will open them to the Word of God in the flesh, that same Jesus of the Bible whom you have known for so long, standing before you to take you forever to His eternal home.”
Geoffrey Thomas, *Reading the Bible*

John 5:39-40, “You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”