

THE CHURCH

AT BROOK HILLS

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO PERSONAL WORSHIP (Using the Brook Hills Bible Reading Plan)

Find a quiet place to be alone with God (Matthew 6:6). All you need is a Bible and a way to record your thoughts. As you begin, pause to praise God and express your desire to know Him more (Jeremiah 9:23-34). Then open your Bible and ask Him to teach, correct, and train you in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16). Make sure that this time does not become mechanical or monotonous. Focus on being with God, engaging in His Word, and responding to His Spirit (Psalm 63:1-8).

READ

Typically, you will read two chapters of Scripture each day. You may walk through the steps below after reading one or both of the chapters. Either way, read each chapter slowly, carefully, prayerfully, thoughtfully, humbly, and joyfully. As you read, look out for verses that you may want to memorize, and begin memorizing. Also, periodically review verses you have already memorized.

EXAMINE

After you read the Bible, spend time reflecting on what it says and means. Ask the following questions and write down some of your thoughts in response. You don't necessarily have to answer every question. Just use them as a guide to help you examine what you have read.

- What is happening in this passage?
- What words, phrases, or ideas seem particularly important?
- What does this text teach you about the gospel?
 - (Character of God) What does this text teach you about God?
 - (Sinfulness of Man) What does this text teach you about man?
 - (Sufficiency of Christ) What does this text teach you about who Christ is and why we need Him?
 - (Necessity of Faith) What does this text teach you about trusting and following Christ?
 - (Urgency of Eternity) What does this text teach you about the hope of heaven or the horror of hell?

APPLY

After examining the Word, apply it to your life. Ask the following questions based upon the text(s) and write down your thoughts in response. Again, you don't have to answer every question.

- What sin(s) do I need to repent of and/or avoid?
- What truth(s) do I need to believe?
- What command(s) do I need to obey (what do I need to give up, stop doing, start doing, or continue doing)?
- What principle(s) need to change the way I think, speak, and/or act, and how will I implement this change?
- What relationship(s) do I need to establish, strengthen, or change?
- By the power of God's Spirit, what can I do *today* to apply God's Word to my life?

PRAY

Pray according to your examination and application of the text(s), asking God to change your heart, mind, attitudes, actions, and relationships based on the time you've spent in His Word. Let this specific praying lead you more generally to...

- Praise—Worship God for who He is.
- Repent—Confess your sin to God and acknowledging your need for Jesus.
- Ask—Intercede for particular needs in your life and other's lives.
- Yield—Surrender your life to following Jesus wherever and however He leads you.

Conclude your time alone with God by committing to share what He has taught you with at least one other person (your roommate, spouse, child, coworker, friend, small group, etc.). Specifically pray through your schedule for the day (or the following day if you are spending this time at night), asking the Lord to direct you by His Spirit in everything you think, say, and do. Finally, ask the Lord for opportunities to share the gospel with others, ask Him for courage to obey, and then be ready to take advantage of the opportunities that He provides.

A Sample Journal Entry

February 9

(READ) Genesis 42

(EXAMINE) In Genesis 42, Joseph's brothers travel to Egypt because of their famine. Unbeknownst to them, Joseph (their brother whom they first decided to kill but then sold into slavery) is the one who is distributing the grain to those in need. This chapter is a good reminder that even in the most difficult of circumstances, God is in control. God has used Joseph's difficult circumstances to make him a leader in Egypt, and God is now using Joseph to provide for his family in the middle of their difficult circumstances. God is sovereign over everything, and God is always faithful to His people.

(APPLY) I want to trust God in the middle of this trial that I am walking through in my life. I don't understand why this is happening, but I believe God is sovereign and in control. I also believe He is faithful, and I know that He will provide for me in the middle of it all.

(READ) Mark 12

I am going to memorize Mark 12:30. It reads, "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."

(EXAMINE) So much is happening in Mark 12 as different religious leaders try to confront and trap Jesus on different issues. Jesus says many important things in response to them, but verses 29-30 seem most important. There, Jesus tells the scribes that the most important commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. He continues, saying that the second most important commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself.

God is the only One who is worthy of our love, worship, and devotion. God made men and women with different faculties: a heart to have emotion, a mind to think, strength to do, and a soul that is eternal, and we are commanded to love God with the fullness of all of our faculties. This is the first and greatest commandment; every other area of obedience flows out of this. Even loving others as ourselves is clearly connected to loving God with all of our being.

(APPLY) I want to see loving God as the greatest and first call on my life. I want to love Him with all of my mind: studying His Word daily, thinking about Him and learning about Him continually. I want to love Him with all of my heart and soul, having affection for Him that is greater than any other affection I have in this world. I want to love Him with all of my strength, obeying Him all day long and loving others as He has loved me.

I can think of several people that I am far from loving well. Specifically, I think of my dad and brother; I can grow so impatient with them. I also think of John and Susan, co-workers that I know don't have a relationship with Christ. I have not yet shared the gospel with them, and in this way I have not shown love to them. How is my lack of love for others connected to my lack of love for God?

I repent today of both my lack of love for God and my lack of love for others. I need Jesus to give me the kind of love that He commands here. I continually need a renewed mind, heart, soul, and strength so that I might love God with the fullness of all my faculties.

(PRAY) O God, guide my steps throughout the day, I pray. Help me to trust You as I walk through this trial. And use me to share your love in the gospel with John, Susan, and anyone else you put in my path. Give me courage to speak when you give me an opportunity to share, and grant me the words to say in that moment. Help me to love You as You alone deserve to be loved.