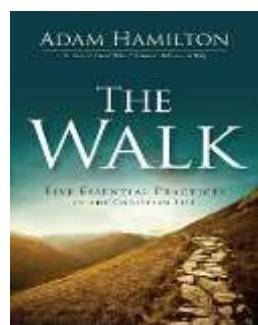


Worship Engagement and Devotion for week of January 17, 2021

Psalm 119:103-105, 2 Timothy 3:10-17

The Walk: Five Essential Practice – *The Importance of Study*



"How do we walk with Christ—daily follow him, grow in him, and faithfully serve him? In the Gospels, Jesus modeled for us the Christian spiritual life. The apostles taught it in their writings. And the Church has, through the last 2,000 years, sought to pursue this Christian spiritual life. In *The Walk*, Adam Hamilton focuses on five essential spiritual practices that are rooted in Jesus' own walk with God and taught throughout the New Testament. Each of these practices is intended as part of our daily walk with Christ while also being an essential part of growing together in the church. Each week we will explore one of these practices, its New Testament foundation, and what it looks like to pursue this practice daily in our personal life and together in the life of the church. Deepen your walk with Christ as we explore the five essential practices of worship, study, serving, giving, and bearing witness to our faith."

Study, Paying Attention and Listening for God's Voice

*"After worship and prayer, if we would walk with God and become the people God wants us to be, we have to learn to pay attention and to listen. With the constant noise of life bombarding us, we often find it hard to hear the voice of God. But when we pay attention and listen in the ways described (Bible reading methods shared in chapter 2 of *The Walk*), we find our lives enriched, and we hear God speaking to us in many ways.*

Scripture records what the biblical authors heard God saying to them as they listened to the Spirit. It is the testimony and reflections of God's people concerning their experiences of God's deliverance, God's discipline, God's grace, and God's will. It is the primary witness we have to God's Word that became flesh in Jesus Christ. As we read it, illumined by the Spirit, we hear God speak through it."

Respond to this simple invitation: *"Open your Bible and read it, starting with the Gospels. Start with five verses a day, but, as you grow, consider five chapters a week. Read on your own. But also find or form a small group or Sunday school class to study and grow together. Do this and I can promise you will hear God speaking to you, you'll grow deeper in your faith, and you'll find yourself in a closer walk with God as you follow God's lead."* – Adam Hamilton, *The Walk: Five Essential Practices of the Christian Life*, page 62

Questions for Reflection:

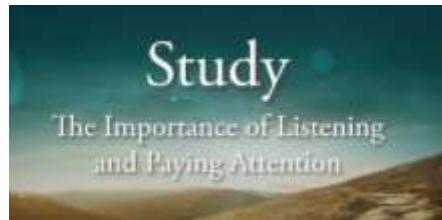
- Reflect on your walk with Jesus up to now. Give thanks for your journey so far.
- Hamilton highlights five ways we may read the Scriptures: reading for understanding, reading for formation, praying the Scriptures, Lectio Divina, and Bible study with others. Which ways are most familiar/comfortable for you? Which are new experiences you might consider trying? How does God speak to you through scripture as you explore these ways of reading Bible verses?
- How do you hear God's voice through nature? How does God speak to you through the arts? How have you experienced God's voice through other people?
- What do we learn about the importance of study and listening for God in this week's scripture readings? What stands out for you as you read these scriptures?
- Why is it important to read Scripture both together with others and on our own regularly?

Practice the spiritual discipline of study and listening for God by reading Five Verses of Scripture a Day.

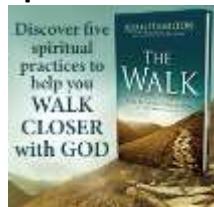
Read scripture on your own and get connected with one of our Walk groups to read, study and grow together.

Explore various methods of reading scripture. Listen for the word of God as you read.

Continue practicing the spiritual discipline of worship and prayer by praying and thanking God 5 times each day.



Spiritual Practice: Study and Listening for God



Try one or more of the following methods to enrich the ways you explore scripture during the week. More details and additional suggestions can be found on Faith United's Bible Study Resource webpage – <https://www.myfaithunited.org/bible-study-resources/> and Spiritual Practices 101 webpage - <https://www.myfaithunited.org/spiritual-practices/>.

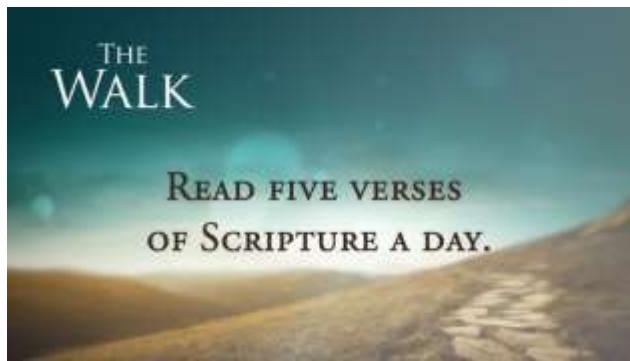
This Bible translation guide may also be a helpful resource for reading the Bible -

<https://www.myfaithunited.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Bible-Comparison-Chart.pdf>

Throughout the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, we find encouragement to regularly study, meditate on, contemplate, and memorize God's word. In Bible study, we come to know what the Bible says and discover how it intersects and applies to our lives today. Adele Calhoun writes in her book *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, "Studying the Scripture can equip, guide and reveal how to live in life-giving ways that deepen our friendship with God and others." Try the following suggestions to practice studying scripture and listening for God's voice.

1. Look for a theme as you read:
 - a. Read a chapter of the Bible and give it a title.
 - b. In your own words write what the chapter is about.
2. Read a passage of Scripture and ask yourself three questions as you read:
 - a. What speaks to my heart? Draw a heart beside those words.
 - b. What new thought or idea comes to me? Draw a light bulb next to those words.
 - c. What does Scripture move me to do? Draw a hand beside the action you are feeling led to take.
3. Choose one or two questions and record your responses in a journal:
 - a. What stirs, touches, or inspires you as you read this passage?
 - b. What stands out for you in these passages? What "speaks" to you?
 - c. What reassurances, words of comfort, or hope do you find in this message?
 - d. What does this passage say about God?
 - e. What does this passage say about us?
 - f. What does this passage say about the relationship between God and human beings?
 - g. What does God want us to learn from this passage?
 - h. What stirs you as you read this passage?
 - i. How can we use this lesson in our daily lives? What practical steps will you take?
 - j. What does this passage say about myself and God's will for my life?
4. Use art supplies to illuminate your understanding of scripture. Read a passage of scripture then use art supplies to create a picture of what this passage reveals to you about your faith journey, God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit.
 - a. How do you see yourself in this picture?
 - b. What thoughts and feelings does this reflection stir in your heart?
5. Pray the Scriptures by reading a short passage, reflect on its meaning, then use the words of the Scripture to form a prayer.
6. These Spiritual Practices 101 videos provide suggestions on other ways to explore scripture?
 - a. SOAP Bible Study Method – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5882XKvzM4>
 - b. Lectio Divina - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7A8mzw21AI>

Check out the Worship Engagement and Devotion from January 10 for suggestions on the spiritual practice of worship and prayer.



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