



# THE JOURNEY

VOLUME 3

LifeWay Press®  
Nashville, Tennessee



SESSION 1

# IMMERSED IN THE WORD

Immersing ourselves in God's Word provides  
the foundation for our identity and life.

## REFLECT

Welcome to *The Life*. The goal of this study is to help you answer the question, “What does a disciple *do* as a follower of Jesus?” Throughout the following sessions, we’ll examine how disciples of Jesus imitate Him by immersing themselves in God’s Word, remaining connected to God through prayer, living in community with other believers, understanding how a Spirit-filled life can lead to transformation, serving others for the advancement of His kingdom, and using their lives to spread the gospel into the world. In this session, we’ll begin by discovering Jesus’ approach to Scripture as God’s Holy Word and practical steps we can take to imitate Him in this activity.

---

*Which element in the description of the study above are you most excited about? Why?*

*How can a better understanding of spiritual disciplines strengthen our relationship with God and increase our ability to participate in His redemptive purposes in the world?*

---

## PRAY

Begin the session by connecting with God through prayer. Use the following guidelines as you speak with Him:

- Ask God to open your hearts and minds to hear what He has to say through His Word today.
- Thank God for His Word, which is described as perfect, restorative, trustworthy, wise, right, clear, insightful, pure, sweet, and helpful.
- Ask God for wisdom and understanding as you seek to gain a deeper understanding of God’s Word.

## INTRODUCTION

Who is Jesus? Do a quick Internet search and you'll find many different answers. Some of those answers will be quite specific, while others will leave you with more questions than answers. Regardless, you're bound to land on some controversy and disagreement.

Perhaps a better way to answer this question is to go to God's Holy Word. Scripture, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, points to Jesus. Simply put, the Bible is about Jesus. It's not about us and what we must do—it's about Jesus and what He has already done. And while of course it is crucial for Christ-followers to read the Bible, *how* we read the Bible may be even more important. John Calvin says this about reading God's Word:

The Scriptures should be read with the aim of finding Christ in them. Whoever turns aside from this object, even though he wears himself out all his life in learning, he will never reach the knowledge of the truth.<sup>1</sup>

When we find Christ in Scripture we will know better how to be His followers. We will be able to communicate with Him and know who He is. And though the Bible isn't about us, we will begin to understand who we are in relation to Christ. In God's Word we find that we are both more broken than we dare let on and more loved than we dare let in. In God's Word, we find our true identities, the most authentic version of ourselves. It's only when we immerse our entire lives in God's Word that we begin to live the lives God designed and desires for us.

---

***What have you heard others say is the primary reason to read the Bible?***

***How does this description of the Bible differentiate it from other books throughout history?***

---

During this session, we will explore how we can be saturated and immersed in God's Word in a way that transforms how we see God, ourselves, and the world around us.

## KNOW THE STORY

After Jesus' resurrection, Luke 24 describes the story of two disciples traveling to Emmaus. On their way, a man joined them. Unbeknown to them, this man was Jesus Himself. He asked the disciples about their conversation, and they told Him how they were troubled with Jesus' death and the news that His tomb was empty. Jesus responded in verse 25,

<sup>25</sup> “How unwise and slow you are to believe in your hearts all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Didn't the Messiah have to suffer these things and enter into His glory?” <sup>27</sup> Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted for them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

**LUKE 24:25-27**

As they continued on their journey, Jesus reminded them of the Old Testament Scriptures and prophecies that revealed all that would happen. Jesus told the confused disciples that all of Scripture was revealing who He was. They had no reason to be troubled because He was who He said He was and accomplished what God had sent Him to accomplish.

A few verses later in the same chapter, Jesus then presented Himself before all of the confused and troubled disciples. And in the same way, Jesus encouraged them by saying,

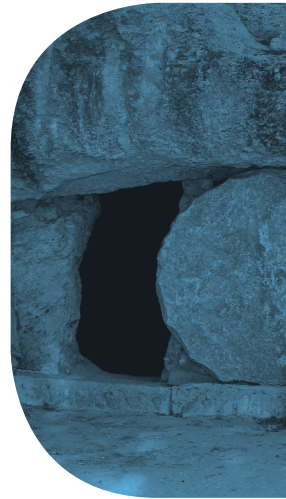
<sup>44</sup> Then He told them, “These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” <sup>45</sup> Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup> He also said to them, “This is what is written: The Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead the third day, <sup>47</sup> and repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> And look, I am sending you what My Father promised. As for you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high.”

**LUKE 24:44-49**

---

*What are some truths we can take away from these two passages?*

---



## UNPACK THE STORY


### SCRIPTURE REVEALS JESUS

He taught them how to understand Scripture and how all of redemptive history is pieced together and culminated at the cross. In verse 27, we read that “beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted for them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures” (Luke 24:27). Jesus used the Scripture to give these disciples hope in the resurrection. Jesus had previously told them that He would die and be resurrected. When He presented Himself to the disciples, He revealed that all He had taught them had come true. Jesus of Nazareth is the Lord Christ—the Son of God.

---

*Discuss some of the events in the few days surrounding Jesus’ death and resurrection. What was it that made the disciples lose hope and doubt what Jesus had taught them?*

*When are you most likely to lose hope or doubt what Scripture teaches? Discuss how being immersed in Scripture turns that doubt into hope?*



Jesus is recorded quoting Scripture 78 times in the New Testament.

---

This wasn’t the first time Jesus used Scripture. In Luke 4, Jesus was led out into the desert and was tempted for 40 days by God’s enemy, Satan. Of the three recorded temptations, Satan attacks Jesus’ identity and begins two of them with “If you are the Son of God ...” (vv. 3,9). Satan essentially dares Jesus to prove His identity by doing something amazing: turning stones to bread and jumping off the temple so the angels can catch Him. Because Jesus had immersed Himself in Scripture, He doesn’t have to prove His identity to Satan. Instead, He counters each temptation with the truth of Scripture.

We see this all throughout the Gospels. Jesus knew Scripture. Even as a young boy, He learned it. He memorized it. He meditated on it. And then as an adult, He allowed it to influence His ministry in countless ways. Jesus is recorded quoting Scripture 78 times in the New Testament.

---

*Read Psalm 119:9-16 out loud in your group. How would it affect believers’ lives who meditated and hid God’s Word in their hearts on a daily basis?*

---

## SCRIPTURE REVEALS WHO WE REALLY ARE

Even though all of Scripture points to Jesus—and we read it with the intention and expectation of finding Jesus in Scripture—it doesn't mean we can't find anything useful in Scripture concerning ourselves. The opposite is true. When we immerse our lives in God's Word—through faith in the living Word that is Jesus and through immersing our lives in the written Word that is the Bible—we find an unshakable identity from which our entire lives can flow. Look at how these passages describe the Scripture's usefulness in the believer's life:

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

**2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17**

The word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart.

**HEBREWS 4:12**

---

*What do these verses tell you about how God's Word shapes us?*

---

Just as all of Scripture points to the cross of Jesus and the identification of Him as God's Son and the coming Messiah, we too can find and embrace a new identity when we immerse ourselves in God's Word. When we read the Bible with the expectation of finding Jesus, we'll begin to see that through faith in Him and His works we are adopted into God's family as His children and are given new identities. Sadly, we often forget this truth and have to be reminded of it daily. If we're not memorizing and meditating on God's Word on a consistent basis, we cannot expect to fend off Satan's attacks. The more we study God's Word, the more we learn about this our identities and what God expects from us as His children.

---

*What are some challenges believers face when they read the Bible? Discuss some ways they can overcome these challenges?*

---



The more we study God's Word, the more we learn about our new identities and what God expects from us as His children.



Charles Spurgeon, a well-known preacher from the 19th century, once said: “As the rain soaks into the ground, so pray the Lord to let His gospel soak into your soul.”<sup>2</sup> It is the repetitive pounding of the moisture into the earth that transforms it from a parched, dusty, hard ground to rich, moist, useful soil. When God’s Word saturates into our thirsty souls, we will experience transformation.

Perhaps a better metaphor would be one that happens in the kitchen. Consider how meat is often saturated (sometimes for hours) in a marinade so that it will be more tender and flavorful. With that imagery in mind, consider what it would be like to saturate your entire life in God’s Word in such a way that it transforms you from ordinary to extraordinary, much like a piece of meat gets completely transformed after it has been saturated in a great marinade.

In your last few minutes together, spend some time discussing ways that someone’s life can be transformed by immersing himself or herself in Scripture. If there are specific passages or personal stories that come to mind be sure to share those with the group. This exercise will help you see the variety of ways in which the Bible speaks and hopefully inspires believers to delve more fully into His Word.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

1. John Calvin, *The Gospel According to John 1–10* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, Co., 1961), 139.  
2. Charles Spurgeon, as quoted at [spurgeononline.com](http://spurgeononline.com). Accessed April 29, 2015.



In addition to studying God's Word, work with your group leader to create a plan for personal study, worship, and application between now and the next session. Select from the following optional activities to match your personal preferences and available time.

## ↑ **Worship**

- Read your Bible. Complete the reading plan on page 16.
- Spend time with God by engaging the devotional experience on page 17.

## ➡ ← **Personal Study**

- Read and interact with "Marinade Instructions" on page 18.
- Read and interact with "The Transforming Power of Scripture" on page 20.

## ← ➡ **Application**

- Memorize Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart."
- Spend time journaling. Just as Jesus countered each of Satan's temptations by quoting Scripture, Jesus often turned to God's Word as the authority for His life. Journal about a time when God's Word spoke to you and you did something differently as a result. What happened? How did it impact your perception of Scripture?
- Share with others. Take time to contact a few people this week with encouragements from Scripture. This could be people within your group or those outside your group that you sense need an encouraging word.
- Other:



# WORSHIP

## READING PLAN

Read through the following Scripture passages this week. Use the space provided to record your thoughts and responses.

### Day 1

2 Timothy 3:10-17

### Day 2

Psalm 19:1-14

### Day 3

Joshua 1:1-9

### Day 4

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

### Day 5

Psalm 119:89-112

### Day 6

1 Peter 1:13-25

### Day 7

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

## IMMERSE YOURSELF IN GOD'S WORD

Perhaps you are wondering: *How do I immerse myself in God's Word? What does that look like day-to-day?* This week find a verse that you want to soak in and get to know. If you don't have one on the top of your mind, use one from the daily reading plan on the previous page. Follow the steps below and answer all the questions before your group meets again.

Your passage: \_\_\_\_\_

### Memorize and Know Scripture

*Write this passage from memory below.*

*How would you explain this passage in your own words?*

### Meditate and Believe Scripture

*What does this passage say is true about God?*

*What does this passage say is true about you?*

### Exercise and Apply Scripture

*How are you believing or not believing in the truth of this passage?*

*How can you show someone else the truth of this passage?*

## MARINADE INSTRUCTIONS

For marinade, or God's Word, to completely saturate something, or someone, there are four things that need to happen. We need to get in, get under, get through, and get transformed.

**Get In:** Just like an item needs to get into the marinade and be completely soaked, we've got to get into Scripture. First, once we begin a relationship with Jesus, we receive God's Spirit who enables us to understand Scripture in a way we never could before (see 1 Cor. 2:14-15). Second, when we grasp that the story of God revealed in Scripture spans from eternity past to eternity future, we begin to understand that our lives are actually a storyline within God's Story. We find the context for who we are as we begin to let God narrate and shape our existence through His Word. Finally, over time, we will actually begin to get into Scripture like we do a great book or movie. We actually look forward to it. We desire it!

*Have you ever thought about your life being a storyline within God's story? How does that make you feel?*

*What are typically the biggest distractions from you getting in the Word and allowing God to be the narrator of your life?*

Every story about God's people throughout Scripture is a story about your spiritual family tree. If you are a Christian you have been adopted into God's family. Their story is yours. Every label that has been given to God's people has been given to you. Through faith in Jesus, this is just a partial list of who you are:

- God's child (Gal. 3:26)
- Part of "a chosen [people], a royal priesthood, a holy nation," and a treasured possession (1 Pet. 2:9)
- A "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17)
- A member of "the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:27)
- God's friend (John 15:15)
- A citizen of heaven (Phil. 3:20)
- An ambassador for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20).

**Get Under:** Just like an item benefits from being completely under the marinade, we need to get under Scripture. It's been said that we can't understand Scripture until we stand under it. This means that the posture of our hearts can't "stand above" Scripture, picking and choosing what we like and don't like as we read it. Rather, we must "stand under" Scripture and allow the posture of our hearts to

be open to God's Word to have authority over us. Much more than just reading Scripture, we must let Scripture read us (see Heb. 4:12).

***Take a step back and think about how you approach Scripture. When are you most likely to "stand above" Scripture as described here?***

When we stand above Scripture and the posture of our hearts has more authority in our lives than God's Word, it is tempting to believe partial truths or even lies about ourselves rather than the truest things that God says about us.

**Get Through:** Just like the marinade over time begins to work its way through the item being marinated, we need to let Scripture get through us. Often, people focus on getting through a specific length of Scripture at a time or over the course of a season. For example, while it is wonderful to get through the entire Bible in a year, you may experience a greater impact when you focus more on one passage or biblical truth at a time. Sometimes we need to read and let in the same passage of Scripture for weeks before it really begins to get through and change us.

Let the truth of God's Word get through every layer of who you are. Let it soak into your heart, your mind, and your memories. Re-examine the list of verses on the previous page and pray that God would allow you to trust in this identity for yourself. Take hope in the truth that if you are in Christ, God has given you a new story, a new narrative, that describes you.

***Which identifying mark from the list do you find most difficult to believe?***

**Get Transformed:** Just like marinade tenderizes and transforms anything that soaks in it for a long time, God's Word transforms any person who immerses his or her entire life in it. The exponentially beautiful truth of Scripture is that, unlike mere marinade that eventually reaches its limit in transforming an item, there is no limit to the transforming power of God's Word in our lives. We could spend every minute of the rest of our lives soaking in Scripture and we would continue to be transformed through God's Spirit into the image of Jesus more and more.

***How have you seen the transforming power of Scripture, either in your life or in the life of someone you know?***



## THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF SCRIPTURE

As anybody who has ever marinated a piece of chicken, fish, steak, or vegetable knows, it's not enough to just have marinade sitting on the shelf in the same room as the item. The same is true for a Bible that merely sits on a shelf. In fact, it's not enough to simply open up the bottle of marinade. The same is also true for simply opening up the Bible and expecting deep transformation.

Jesus was saturated in the truth of God's Word clearly and continually. He knew who He was and the life God designed and desired for Him to live. He experienced every moment of His life knowing God and being known by Him. As a follower of Jesus, it's essential that we too immerse ourselves in God's Word so that our entire lives can be transformed into the truest lives that God has for us.

Let's take a closer look at a passage we studied in the group time:

<sup>12</sup> The word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart. <sup>13</sup> No creature is hidden from Him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.

**HEBREWS 4:12-13**

***Is there an area of your life that currently needs the penetrating and transforming power of God's Word?***

***What does verse 12 mean when it says God's Word is "living and effective"?***

The word *sword* in verse 12 requires some additional attention. This metaphor suggests that the Bible functions much like a surgeon's scalpel when a doctor carefully identifies the location for the incision, penetrates the flesh with the depth that's required, and with great accuracy cuts out the infected area. Similarly, and with the Spirit's guidance, God's Word is a tool that clears away the infected parts of our hearts, transforming us to look more like His Son.

***Is this a helpful metaphor? How have you experienced Scripture locating infected areas of your heart?***

There are millions of books in print today that are being read throughout the world. Most of us only have the time to read just a few of those each year—and only some of those ever have any kind of meaningful impact on our lives.

The Bible is different. It's on another level than all the other books we can get in our hands. Why? Because it's the very Word of God that tell us about Himself and guides us through life. It's living and active. We don't read it so much as we experience its transforming power.

<sup>105</sup> Your word is a lamp for my feet  
and a light on my path.

<sup>106</sup> I have solemnly sworn  
to keep Your righteous judgments.

<sup>107</sup> I am severely afflicted;  
LORD, give me life through Your word.

<sup>108</sup> LORD, please accept my willing offerings of praise,  
and teach me Your judgments.

<sup>109</sup> My life is constantly in danger,  
yet I do not forget Your instruction.

<sup>110</sup> The wicked have set a trap for me,  
but I have not wandered from Your precepts.

<sup>111</sup> I have Your decrees as a heritage forever;  
indeed, they are the joy of my heart.

<sup>112</sup> I am resolved to obey Your statutes  
to the very end.

**PSALM 119:105-112**

***How does this passage describe a life that's dependent upon God's Word?***

***How would it change your relationship with God if you allowed Him to narrate your life using the words of Scripture?***