

Take The Journey

A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL BY TOMMY KIEDIS





Take The Journey: DAY ONE

“Put out into the deep...”

— Luke 5:4

If 380 sailors of a crew of 510 died on one voyage, wouldn't you be concerned? That actually happened! The sailors were victims of scurvy. Haven't heard of it? You don't want it. Symptoms include bleeding gums, loose teeth, bulging eyes, stiff joints, bad bad breath, and death.

Scurvy was common among sailors until Dr. James Lind discovered the cure in 1747. The remedy was unbelievably simple: add more citrus to a sailor's diet.

“One practice made all the difference.”

Giving sailors a daily supply of Vitamin C helped them survive and thrive. Easy fix, right? Not so. It took the British Navy more than forty years to issue the order to provide the necessary supply of lemon juice to their ships.

As I reflect on my own walk with God, read the accounts of God's people, and interact with friends at church who have a vibrant walk with Jesus, one practice makes all the difference:

*“People who experience God
read their Bible daily.”*

Reading the Bible is my citrus, my Vitamin C for the soul. Let me tell you why.

THREE BENEFITS OF READING THE BIBLE

God supplies a hundred reasons to read His word. Here are three:

Reading the Bible will bring great emotional health.

Who doesn't get beat up and knocked down in life? People disappoint us. Tough times visit us. Black clouds of bad moods descend upon us. But God is there to “pick you up.” He does this through the Bible. King David said, “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.” In other words, reading your Bible is going to give you a sense of God's presence in your life and a better emotional state during your week.

Reading the Bible will help you align your day with God.

There are two things that God values above everything: His reputation and His word ([Psalm 138:2](#)). When you read the Bible you begin to align your life with God's word.

Reading the Bible will give you God's directions and good success.

Life is complex. You can try to figure it out on your own or you can follow the directions. God's says, “Great blessings belong to those who love the Lord's teachings...they grow strong, like a tree planted by a stream—a tree that produces fruit when it should and has leaves that never fall. Everything they do is successful.” ([Psalm 1:1,3 ETRV](#))

A BIBLE-READING PLAN THAT WORKS

Many people don't read the Bible because they don't know how, they don't think they have the time, and they don't know where to begin. We're going to solve that over the next five days.

Remember those sailors? They needed their Vitamin C. When it comes to the Bible, you need your SOAP. SOAP is an acronym that stands for **S**cripture, **O**bservation, **A**pplication, and **P**rayer. Here is a brief explanation of the SOAP method from Wayne Corderio:

S is for Scripture

Open your Bible to your daily reading plan (more on that later). Take the time to read the passage and let God speak to you. When you are done, look for one verse that particularly spoke to you. Write it down.

O is for Observation

Observation is looking closely to discover things you did not previously see. What is God showing you in this scripture? Ask the Holy Spirit to "open your eyes," to teach you and reveal Jesus to you. Paraphrase the verse. Write it down in your own words.

A is for Application

Personalize what you have read, by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, revelation of a new promise, or corrections for a particular area of your life. Write how this Scripture can apply to you today.

P is for Prayer

This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this Scripture, or it may be asking God for greater insight on what He is revealing to you. Write out your prayer. Remember, prayer is a two-way conversation. Take time to listen to what God has to say!

NOW YOU GIVE IT A TRY

Read the passage on the next page. Don't rush this. It's your daily citrus! Once you read it, follow the SOAP method. I'm praying for you, asking the Lord to open your eyes to see what He has for you today in His word.

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." Matthew 6:25-34 ESV

Scripture: What is the one verse that God used to speak to you?



Observation: What did you discover in this verse? What is God saying to you? Try writing out the verse in your own words (paraphrase it).



Application: How does this apply to your life right now?



Prayer: Take time to ask the Lord to help you do what He revealed to you.



A CLOSING THOUGHT

Thanks so much for taking this journey with me. God will use it to change your life.

You have heard this proverb before haven't you?

*"Give a man a fish and you feed him
for a day. Teach a man to fish and
you feed him for a lifetime."*

This week, we are learning and re-learning "how to fish." As Wayne Cordeiro notes, reading the Bible in this way "re-patterns the way we think and transforms the spirit of the mind. Then, when we face similar situations as Jesus did, we begin to respond in the same way."

We'll continue our journey tomorrow -- and it is going to be great. I am going to share with you one big reason why people "jump ship" (stop their daily Bible reading). More importantly, I am going to give you three "secrets" for staying the course. Until then, stay on the journey.



Take The Journey: DAY TWO

“Train yourself for Godliness.

— 1 Timothy 4:7

The second day of a new workout regimen is not quite as exciting as the first day. But it is incredibly important. Day two sets the pace.

GIVING GOD OUR BEST

Bob picked up his phone on the second ring. He wasn't surprised to hear Sam's question: "What time are you heading to the gym?"

Bob and Sam were both approaching forty. Having seen too many friends go soft around the middle, they determined that was not going to happen to them. Gym workouts were now a regular part of their routine.

You don't need to be a fitness fanatic to understand the relationship between exercise and health. Exercise is necessary to be at our best physically. The same is true in the spiritual realm. It takes spiritual exercise to be spiritually fit. We maintain our spiritual health so we can honor God in all we do ([1 Corinthians 10:31](#); [Colossians 3:17](#))

SPIRITUAL TRAINING IS ESSENTIAL

When Paul urged his young friend Timothy with the words, "Train yourself to be godly" they both understood the implications. "Train" comes from the Greek word, *gymnázō*. You don't have to be a scholar to see the word "gym" embedded there. *Gymnázō* meant "to train with one's full effort," like an intense, sweat-soaked workout at the gym. Paul had that kind of intensity in mind when it came to knowing God and serving Him better.

"It takes disciplined effort to grow."

In high school, future NBA legend Larry Bird shot 500 free throws every morning at 6 a.m. That is why he stood unnerved at the foul line with the game in the balance. He was ready. Whether it is Bird, Jordan, or LeBron, Olympic figure skating champion Shizuka Arakawa, or Jamaican speedster Usain Bolt, they all know the importance of disciplined practice. We do too.

Most of us start the Christian life with a strong desire to spend time in God's word, but then life gets busy. Our passion fizzles, and we lose steam. I think of the words of the journalist G.K. Chesterton:

"The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried."

— GK Chesterton, *What's Wrong With The World*

WHY DO WE STOP OUR SPIRITUAL WORKOUTS?

Physical workouts are important. Nobody argues that point. It is just that God says spiritual workouts are more important ([1 Timothy 4:8](#)). If spiritual training is vital to spiritual health, why do so many skip the workout or quit once they start? One big reason is distractions. Richard Foster captures the essence of this battle when he writes:

“In contemporary society our Adversary majors in three things: noise, hurry, and crowds. If he can keep us engaged in “muchness” and “manyness,” he will rest satisfied.

— Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline

My men's group was supposed to meet today. Unfortunately, two of us had conflicts in our schedules. We're all busy guys. It would have been easy to blow off the meeting, but recognizing the danger of "muchness" and "manyness" we pulled out our calendars and rescheduled. Take a look at your life. Is it noise, hurry, or crowds that is most likely to pull you away from your spiritual workout? What will you do about it?

THREE ESSENTIALS TO EFFECTIVE WORKOUTS

When I observe people who have a long pattern of staying spiritually fit, they share three things in common:

They work from a plan.

People who are spiritually fit find a Bible reading plan and stick with it. They are not slaves to it, but they recognize how it helps them. [Click here](#) for a reading plan.

They employ the buddy system.

God says, “two are better than one” ([Ecclesiastes 4:9](#)). Whether it is a [Yada Group](#) at Spanish River or a [Life Group](#) of men or women, working with someone helps.

They make themselves accountable.

I have a prayer partner who helps me consistently pray, a reading partner who helps me reach my reading goals, and a small group of guys who help keep me honest about my walk with God. My life is better because of these accountable relationships.

Which of these three essentials can best help you stay spiritually fit? Check out the links above or [click here](#) so we can provide some assistance.

THE S.O.A.P. BIBLE-READING PLAN

Now that we have highlighted the importance of your spiritual workout, let's get to it. The heart of our five-day journey is learning to use the SOAP method for reading our bibles. SOAP is an acronym that stands for **S**cripture, **O**bservation, **A**pplication, and **P**rayer.

S is for Scripture

Open your Bible to your daily reading plan (more on that later). Take the time to read the passage and let God speak to you. When you are done, look for one verse that particularly spoke to you. Write it down.

O is for Observation

Observation is looking closely to discover things you did not previously see. What is God showing you in this scripture? Ask the Holy Spirit to "open your eyes," to teach you and reveal Jesus to you. Paraphrase the verse. Write it down in your own words.

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Personalize what you have read, by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, revelation of a new promise, or corrections for a particular area of your life. Write how this Scripture can apply to you today.

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This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this Scripture, or it may be asking God for greater insight on what He is revealing to you. Write out your prayer. Remember, prayer is a two-way conversation. Take time to listen to what God has to say!

YOUR SOAP FOR TODAY:

Read the passage on the next page. *It is about your spiritual workout!* Once you read the passage, follow the SOAP plan. This is important! God is adding spiritual muscle to your life. I'm praying for you and so are the leaders of our church. We're in this together.

6 If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. 7 Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; 8 for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. 9 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. 10 For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

11 Command and teach these things. 12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. 14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. 15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. 16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1 Timothy 4:6-16 ESV

Scripture: What is the one verse that God used to speak to you?



Observation: What did you discover in this verse? What is God saying to you? Try writing out the verse in your own words (paraphrase it).



Application: How does this apply to your life right now?



Prayer: Take time to ask the Lord to help you do what He revealed to you.



A CLOSING THOUGHT

Way to go. We're two days into our five-day journey. God is going to reward this time of reading and applying His word. It is His promise ([Joshua 1:8](#)). Remember, we're teaching you to fish:

*"Give a man a fish and you feed him
for a day. Teach a man to fish and
you feed him for a lifetime."*

Tomorrow I will share one of my favorite stories. It's about the power of observation, which is such an essential part of the SOAP plan. Until then, stay on the journey.



Take The Journey: DAY THREE

*“Open my eyes, that I may behold
wonderous things out of your law.*

— Psalm 119:18 ESV

A couple of years before Lincoln became President, a budding young scientist entered the laboratory of Harvard Professor Louis Agassiz. The student with an appetite to learn was Samuel Scudder. He was a young twenty-something who wanted to be a zoologist.

“When do you wish to begin?” the professor asked.

“Now,” said Scudder.

“Very well,” came the professor’s happy reply.

Professor Agassiz reached up to a shelf and took down a huge jar of specimens. Pulling out a fish, he laid it on a tin tray and said:

“Take this fish and look at it . . . by and by I will ask you what you have seen.”

With the fish positioned and his instructions dispensed, the professor left the room. Scudder examined the fish. He looked and looked some more. “In ten minutes,” he said, “I had seen all that could be seen in that fish, and started in search of the professor.” The professor, however, had left the museum.

Scudder searched for his new mentor, but his efforts to find him proved fruitless. He returned to the laboratory and his "mute companion." Time crawled . . . thirty minutes, then an hour, then another hour. Finally, Scudder stopped waiting and started looking. He turned the fish over and around. He looked at it from the front and back, above and beneath, sideways and at three-quarters angle. He looked until he could look no more, and still no professor.

Scudder went to lunch. Returning from lunch he learned that Professor Agassiz would not return for several hours. The young man was dejected, but he looked some more. "I pushed my finger down its throat to feel how sharp the teeth were. I began to count the scales. . . ."

Then he had a flash of insight, "Draw the fish!" As he did he made new discoveries, seeing features he had not noticed earlier.

Just then the professor returned. Agassiz complemented Samuel's use of the pencil. "That is right, a pencil is one of the best of eyes." Then he asked about the fish:

"Well, what is it like?"

Samuel carefully reviewed and described the parts he saw. When he finished, Professor Agassiz waited as if he was expecting more. In a disappointing voice he said,

"You have not looked very carefully . . . look again, look again!"

With that rebuke the professor left. Scudder said, "I was piqued; I was mortified. Still more of that wretched fish! But now I set myself to my task with a will, and discovered one new thing after another, *until I saw how just the professor's criticism had been.*"

Evening came. The fish went back to its jar. The professor would hear of Scudder's findings in the morning. When the new day arrived, Samuel Scudder gave a verbal chronicle of his observations. This time his sightings were met with more pleasure from Agassiz. The student, no doubt relieved, asked: "What should I do next?" His heart sank when he heard the words:

"Oh, look at your fish!"

Once again Agassiz wandered off and Scudder went back to looking. This monotonous routine continued for three days. The student, without any aid but his eyes, continued to examine his fish.

"'Look, look, look,' was his repeated injunction."

“Look, look, look!”

This is day three of our journey. You may be feeling like Samuel Scudder: “I’ve seen all that I can see.” Let me play the part of Professor Agassiz and encourage you to look, look, look. An essential part of reading your Bible is learning to look!

HOW TO SEE WHAT OTHERS MISS

Observation (the “O” is SOAP) is essential for discovering the wisdom of God. King Solomon must have sounded like Professor Agassiz to his listeners. Solomon writes, “Seek it like silver; search for it like hidden treasure” Proverbs 2:4 (CEB).

Here are three ways to see (observe) what others miss:

Begin with prayer.

The Bible is a supernatural book. It takes supernatural help to understand it. So ask God! This is why the Psalmist prays the prayer we should pray every time we read God’s word: “Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from your word.”

Ask questions.

We see more when we ask questions of the passage. Ask context questions: The who, what, when, where, and why. Ask the structural questions: Are there repeated words and phrases? Are there questions asked or answers given? Are their figures of speech? Is there cause and effect? Ask the theology questions: Is there something new about God I need to learn? Is there a sin to confess? Is there a truth I need to ponder?

Read with a pencil.

In the same way Scudder saw more by drawing, you may see more by underlining, circling, or highlighting key words and phrases as you read.

Take your time. People who make discoveries are like Thomas Edison, they are diligent and they are patient. You don’t stumble onto gold, you search for it. That takes time.

THE S.O.A.P. BIBLE-READING PLAN

Today we've highlighted the importance of observation. So let's get to it. Remember, the heart of our five-day journey is learning to use the SOAP method for reading our bibles. SOAP is an acronym that stands for **S**cripture, **O**bservation, **A**pplication, and **P**rayer.

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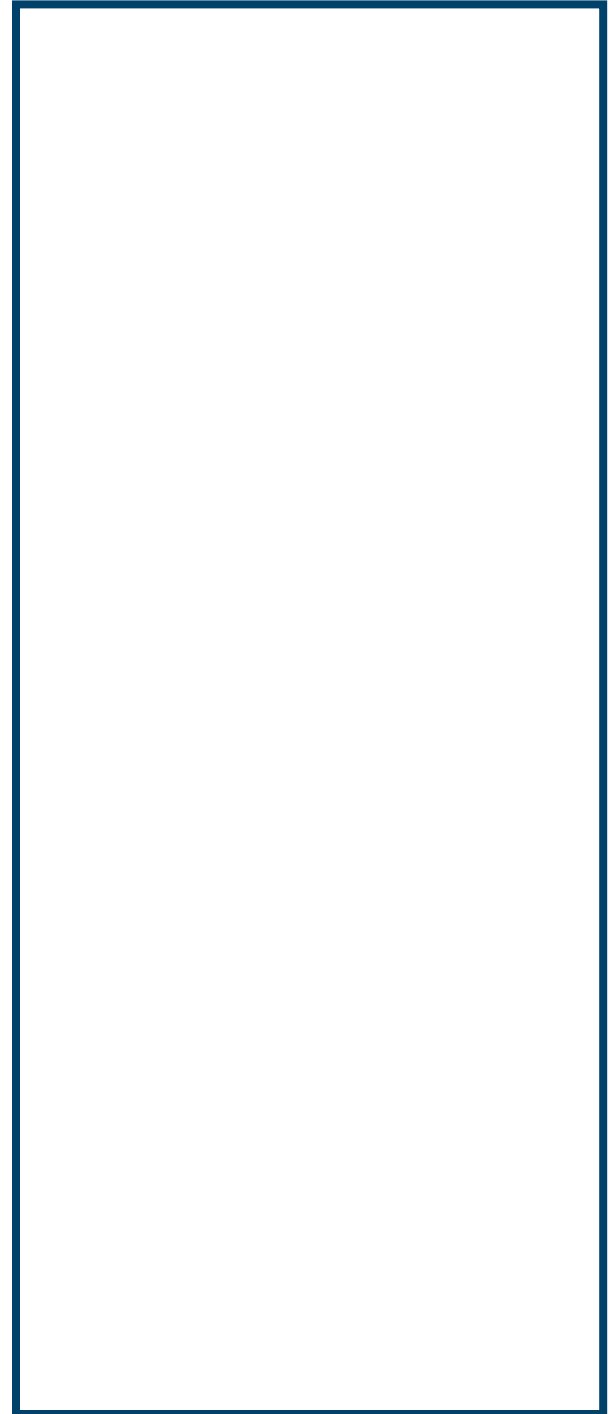
YOUR SOAP FOR TODAY:

Read the passage on the next page. *It is about seriously searching for the wisdom of God.* Once you read the passage, follow the SOAP plan. We know you don't have all day, but try devoting fifteen minutes. Today, I'm praying that God helps you strike gold.

1 *My son, if you receive my words
and treasure up my commandments
with you,*
2 *making your ear attentive to wisdom
and inclining your heart to
understanding;*
3 *yes, if you call out for insight
and raise your voice for
understanding,*
4 *if you seek it like silver
and search for it as for hidden
treasures,*
5 *then you will understand the fear of
the Lord and find the knowledge
of God.*
6 *For the Lord gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and
understanding;*
7 *he stores up sound wisdom for the
upright; he is a shield to those who
walk in integrity,*
8 *guarding the paths of justice
and watching over the way of his
saints.*
9 *Then you will understand
righteousness and justice and equity
every good path;*
10 *for wisdom will come into your
heart, and knowledge will be
pleasant to your soul;*
11 *discretion will watch over you,
understanding will guard you,*
12 *delivering you from the way of evil,
from men of perverted speech,*

Proverbs 2:1-12 ESV

Scripture: What is the one verse that God used to speak to you?



Observation: What did you discover in this verse? What is God saying to you? Try writing out the verse in your own words (paraphrase it).



Application: How does this apply to your life right now?



Prayer: Take time to ask the Lord to help you do what He revealed to you.



A CLOSING THOUGHT

You've been on the journey for three days. Way to go! The Psalmist said, "God, your words are sweeter than honey" ([Psalm 119:103](#)). May you find that sweet, sweet, satisfaction as you read.

Remember our goal this week:

*"Give a man a fish and you feed him
for a day. Teach a man to fish and
you feed him for a lifetime."*

Tomorrow we will talk about application, the "A" of SOAP. I am going to share another one of my favorite stories. It is so good! I also want to share a tip that will help you remember and do what you read. Until then, stay on the journey.



Take The Journey: DAY FOUR

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

— James 1:22 NIV

What started routine almost ended in tragedy.

Chicago Police Officer John Wrigley was thirty minutes from the the end of his shift when he and his partner conducted a late-night traffic stop.

The driver got out. He was agitated and aggressive. Efforts to calm him proved fruitless. A tussle ensued. Then the driver pulled a 9mm semiautomatic handgun and began firing at Wrigley. The officer was hit twice, one round pierced his arm, the other hit him square in the chest.

What should have been a hole in his heart ended as a mere bruise on his body. Wrigley was wearing a bullet-proof vest. Sadly, not every officer experiences this happy ending. An FBI analysis of police officer deaths reveals that:

*“Of the 46 officers killed by firearms in 2014,
11 were not wearing bullet resistant vests.*

Wrigley's experience and the FBI's analysis illustrate that it is not enough to know the life-saving truth about bullet-proof vests, an officer must put it on to reap the benefit. James' words echo in my ear:

*“Do not merely listen to the word, and so
deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*

Doing what God says is much more than blind obedience or cold duty. It is saying “Yes” to God because we know His word is true. It is saying “Yes” to God because we trust that He loves us. It is saying “Yes” to God because we want our obedience to honor Him and bless others.

APPLICATION MATTERS

Obedience is doing what God says. It is applying what we read from God's word to our lives. Application matters. We see this through the Scripture:

- “To obey is better than sacrifice.” 1 Samuel 15:22
- “Walk in obedience to all that the Lord your God has commanded you.” Deuteronomy 5:33
- “Do not merely listen to the word ... Do what it says.” James 1:22
- “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” John 14:15
- “Jesus answered him, ‘If anyone loves me, he will keep my word.’” John 14:23
- “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?” Luke 6:46
- “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.” 1 John 2:3
- Since doing what God says is so important, let's think about how to apply it.

HOW TO APPLY WHAT YOU ARE READING

To apply the Bible to our lives, we need to think Head, Heart, Hands.

Head: How does my thinking need to change?

Applying the Bible doesn't always mean "doing something." Sometimes it means changing the way we think about something. Read [Philippians 4:8](#) for an example of how God wants our thinking to change.

Heart: How does God want me to feel differently?

At times we can ignore the important part feelings play in our lives. Reading [Joel 2:13](#) helps us to see that God wants heart change, not just blind obedience. "Rend your heart" (feel it deeply) He says, don't just go through the motions of obedience. Feeling differently means sometimes sitting with a truth until it penetrates the soul.

Hands: What practical step does God want me to take?

Sometimes God's message is very straightforward: "Get 'er done now!" Read [Matthew 5:23-24](#) for a great example of what it means to take action immediately in order to practically apply God's word to our lives.

As we read the Bible and make observations, we must always remember to ask God how He wants us to apply it. Okay, let's get started on today's SOAP. First, a quick review:

THE S.O.A.P. BIBLE-READING PLAN

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S is for Scripture

Open your Bible to your daily reading. Take the time to read the passage and let God speak to you. When you are done, look for one verse that particularly spoke to you. Write it down. For this five-day journey, I have provided a daily Scripture passage for you to examine. Moving forward, you will need to establish a daily reading plan. Consider reading a chapter a day from Proverbs or John's gospel. Both can be easily read in a month.

O is for Observation

Observation is looking closely to discover things you did not previously see. What is God showing you in this scripture? Ask the Holy Spirit to "open your eyes," to teach you and reveal Jesus to you. Paraphrase the verse. Write it down in your own words.

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YOUR SOAP FOR TODAY:

Read the passage on the next page. *It is about listening and doing.* Once you read the passage, follow the SOAP plan. Time is always in short supply, but try devoting fifteen minutes.

19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. 21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

26 Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. 27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. James 1:19-27 ESV

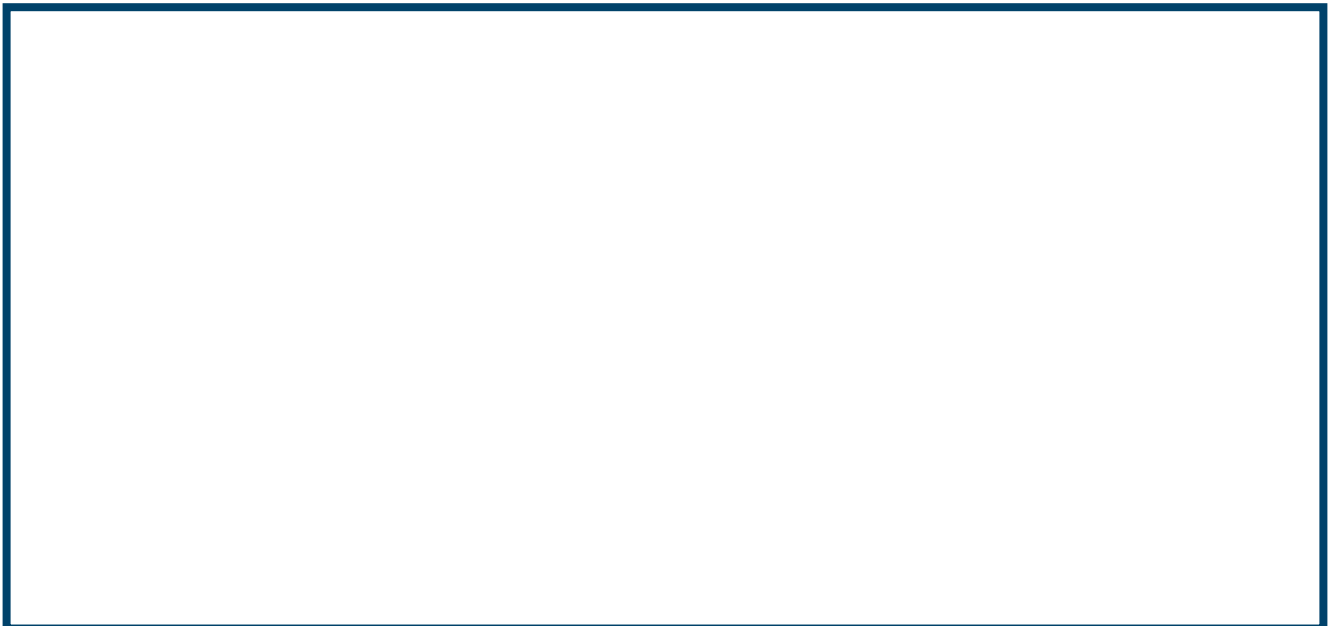
Scripture: What is the one verse that God used to speak to you?



Observation: What did you discover in this verse? What is God saying to you? Try writing out the verse in your own words (paraphrase it).



Application: How does this apply to your life right now?



Prayer: Take time to ask the Lord to help you do what He revealed to you.



A CLOSING THOUGHT

The finish line is in sight. Tomorrow we will conclude this little five-day excursion into the word of God. I'll provide a few "next step" opportunities you may find helpful. Until then, stay on the journey. God is taking us to new places . . . and we are learning to fish!

*"Give a man a fish and you feed him
for a day. Teach a man to fish and
you feed him for a lifetime."*



Take The Journey: DAY FIVE

"Ask, and it will be given to you.

— Luke 11:9 ESV

I grew up in South Florida -- without air conditioning and without a pool. There was no escaping the heat. It was hot in the daytime and hot in the nighttime. But I saw an oasis in this desert . . . our neighbor was getting a pool!

Oh yes!

I watched the hole being dug. I saw the gunite being sprayed over the re-bar skeleton. I gazed longingly as the pool filled with water. I could feel the temperature dropping as the water rose!

But there was a problem . . . this neighbor had not yet invited me to swim.

There I was, a seven-year-old kid, standing on the outside of the fence. I was a derby horse ready to break out of the gate. I wanted to soar off that diving board. I wanted to land with a refreshing splash in those cool blue waters.

I began loitering. I tried wearing that wilted-flower look, just hoping she would invite me to "take a dip." It wasn't working.

One day, as I patrolled her fence gazing at the cool, blue waters, she spotted me -- and then she chided me,

*“Don’t just stand there
like a puppy dog. Ask
if you can come in.”*

I got the point. If you want to come in—just ask. I did . . . and I swam a lot!

Sometimes getting what we need is as simple as A-S-K-I-N-G for it. It is a lesson Jesus taught His disciples, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find.”

IS IT OKAY TO ASK?

Absolutely! God loves us. He is a good, good Father. As such, He invites us to meet Him in prayer. Here are three helpful thoughts:

Be real.

Prayer is not putting on a show. It is pouring out our hearts to God. You don’t need to use fancy language. The psalmist said, “Pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.” Psalm 62:8 ESV

Use a guide.

Sometimes it helps to use a prayer guide. ACTS is a good one. **A**=Adoration (spend time praising God); **C**=Confession (spend time naming your sins and asking forgiveness); **T**=Thanksgiving (recognize the goodness of God in your life and thank Him for it); **S**=Supplication (a fancy word for asking for what you need for yourself and others).

Keep it going all day long.

God tells us to “pray without ceasing.” That means anytime is a good time to pray: at work, at the gym, on a walk, in good times and bad. God wants an on-going relationship with us.

5 And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, 6 for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; 7 and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything?' 8 I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. 9 And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 11 What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; 12 or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" Luke 11:5-13 ESV

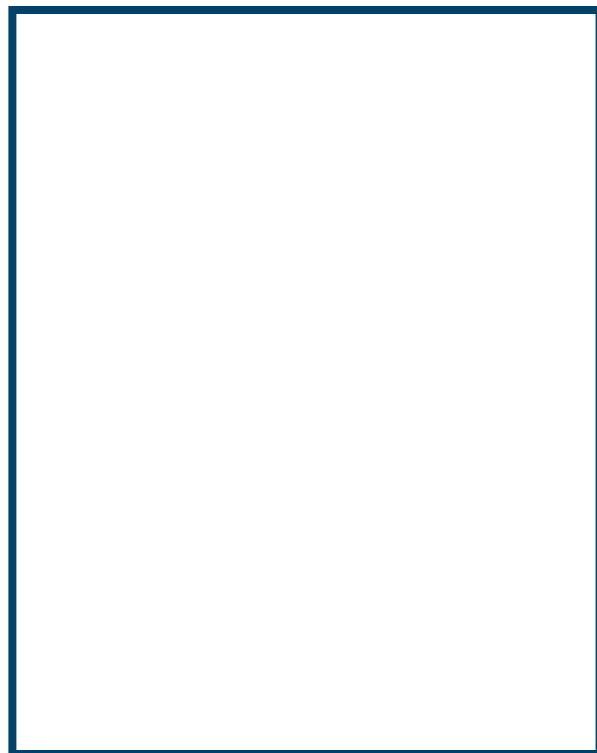
THE S.O.A.P. BIBLE-READING PLAN

SOAP is an acronym that stands for **S**cripture, **O**bservation, **A**pplication, and **P**rayer. [Click here](#) if you need a brief review of each point. One thing I love about the SOAP approach to reading my Bible is that God uses it to show me things I need. I'm hearing from Him!

YOUR SOAP FOR TODAY:

Read the passage on the left. *It is about the listening and doing.* Once you read the passage, follow the SOAP plan. Time is always in short supply, but try devoting fifteen minutes.

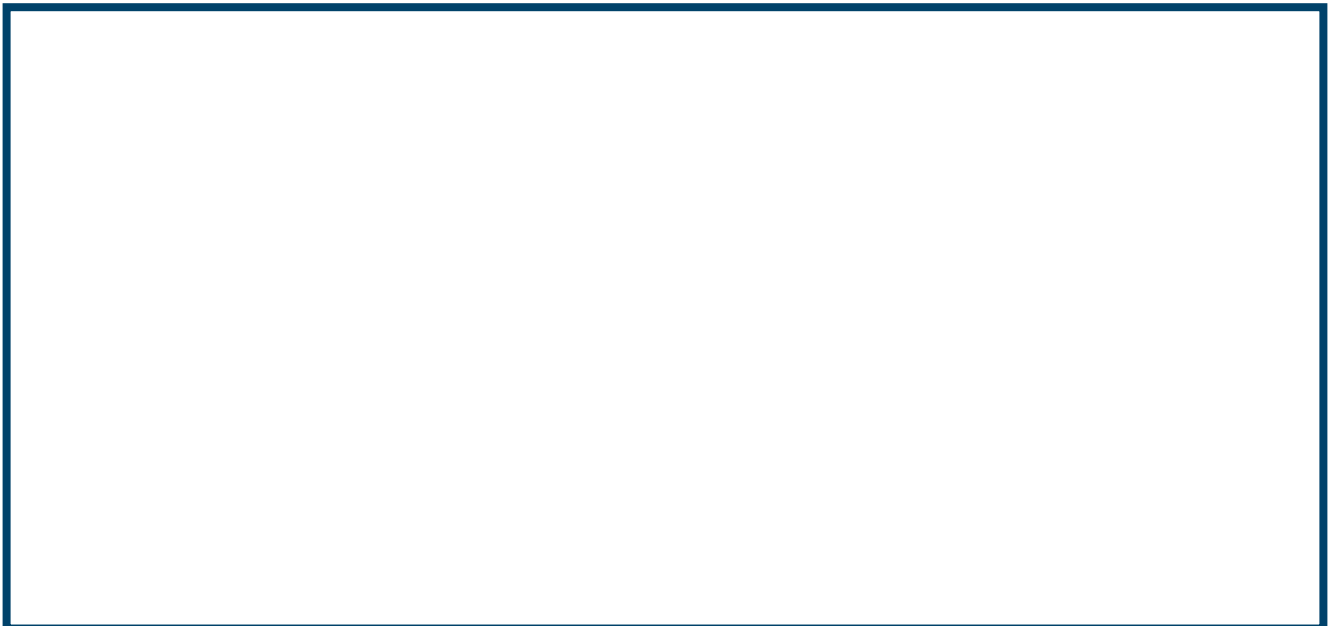
Scripture: What is the one verse that God used to speak to you?



Observation: What did you discover in this verse? What is God saying to you? Try writing out the verse in your own words (paraphrase it).



Application: How does this apply to your life right now?



Prayer: Take time to ask the Lord to help you do what He revealed to you.



THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING

Thanks for joining hundreds of others on this five-day journey. If you have found this time helpful and would like to continue the journey of growing with God, here are some suggestions:

1. Get on a regular Bible reading plan and use SOAP to discover more. You can [click here](#) for a simple, but powerful 20-day Bible reading plan.
2. Subscribe (it's free) to my daily devotional blog, [Don't Ask The Fish](#). You will receive a daily word of encouragement from God's word. Additionally, I'll post a daily Bible reading plan so you can study it using SOAP. [Click here](#), then check "Don't Ask The Fish - Devotional."
3. Join us this Sunday at Spanish River Church.

Of course, you can always visit [Spanish River Church](#) for help in taking some next steps. You can also search for insight on a variety of topics at [Don't Ask The Fish](#).

Notes

DAY ONE

1. Scurvy - The challenges of scurvy and the work of James Lind are well documented. I found significant help from the BBC (http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/lind_james.shtml) and from The James Lind Library (<http://www.jameslindlibrary.org/articles/james-lind-and-scurvy-1747-to-1795/>)
2. SOAP - I have been practicing a variation of the SOAP method for 40 years. It is the single-biggest difference maker in my relationship with God. The explanation for SOAP and the thoughts for "re-patterning the way we think" comes from Pastor Wayne Cordeiro. You can see more from Wayne by [clicking here](#).

DAY TWO

1. Gymnázō meant "to train with one's full effort" from HELPS word studies, [helpsbible.com](http://biblehub.com/greek/1128.htm) in <http://biblehub.com/greek/1128.htm>
2. Larry Bird from Drive: The Story of My Life, page 5.
3. "The Christian Ideal . . ." from G.K. Chesterton, What's Wrong With The World, page 19.

DAY THREE

1. Samuel Scudder's story, "Look at Your Fish," first appeared in Every Saturday: A Journal of Choice Reading (April 4, 1874) under the title, "In the Laboratory With Agassiz," by "A Former Pupil." You can find the complete story by [clicking here](#).
2. Some of the material from "Ask Questions" came from Creative Bible Study by Richards and Bredfeldt.

DAY FOUR

1. Officer John Wrigley's story from "A simple traffic stop . . . not it was a gun battle" in <http://www.cpdmemorial.org> (accessed March 30, 2016).
2. FBI statistics from "Bulletproof vests, seat belts not worn in police officer deaths" in USA Today, May 12, 2015. <http://www.usatoday.com> (accessed March 30, 2016).
3. Application questions adapted from [Creative Bible Teaching](#) by Lawrence O. Richards and Gary J. Bredfeldt. Chicago: Moody Press. 1998



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