
▷ INTRODUCTION

Scripture affirms the reality that God wants a relationship with us. He has promised that we will find Him when we seek Him (Jeremiah 29:11-13). So today we begin an intentional search for more of God. We want to explore and understand how God looks at us and what He thinks about us. We also want to begin to understand His love for us.

▷ HOLY HABIT—RELATIONAL BIBLE READING

RELATIONAL BIBLE READING is the first *Holy Habit* we will explore and put into practice. It is the spiritual discipline of systematic Bible reading for the purpose of knowing God.

The first step in a planned reading program is to learn the difference between informational and relational reading. Informational reading seeks to learn data, details, or abstract information. Relational reading seeks to know God better and to build the relationship with Him.

RELATIONAL BIBLE READING is based on two biblical principles:

- “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13, NIV, see also Deut. 4:29).
- “But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself” (John 12:32, NIV).

There are three key questions which help make Bible reading relational:

- What does the passage tell us about God?
- What does the passage tell us about ourselves and God?
- How does the passage help us walk with God?

▷ SUGGESTED PRAYER

Dear Lord, I come to you seeking to grow in my walk with you. I commit myself to this seven week journey of seeking a closer and more intimate relationship with you. Thank you for loving me and accepting me in that love. I claim the promise that you will be with me and seek to open my life to you. I pray this and thank you for hearing my prayer, in Jesus' name. Amen.

▷ TODAY’S OBJECTIVE

Today we explore two basic principles about searching for God. He has promised that when we seek Him we will find Him. And Jesus told us that we would be drawn to Him when He is lifted up. So we want to put these two principles to work and focus on our search for God.

▷ INVITATION PRAYER

Dear Loving Father, I come to you this morning seeking for more of you. Open my mind and my heart as I turn to your Word and reflect on your invitation to seek you. Send your Holy Spirit to help me find you as I study today. Amen.

▷ MEMORY VERSE

Below you will find the first of two memory verses for this week. Choose the version you want to use. (Feel free to choose a different version if your favorite is not included below.) Then write out the passage and reference on a card to carry with you throughout the day. Start out by repeating it several times now and at the close of your study time today. Try to be word perfect. Use the card to review the memory verse several times during the day and reflect on this passage and what it means to you.

Jeremiah 31:3 (NIV)—“The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.’”

Jeremiah 31:3 (KJV)—“The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, ‘Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.’”

▷ BIBLE READING AND REFLECTION

It is now time to turn to the Bible and reflect on what God’s Word has for us today. We want to explore how to know Him better.

READ JEREMIAH 29:11-13—(Again choose a Bible version which is most meaningful to you.)

What are the key points in this passage that speak to your heart today?

What does this passage say about God and what He wants for you?

READ JEREMIAH 31:3—Imagine God speaking these words to you.

What does this passage tell you about God's love for you today? What picture of God comes to your mind as you read these words?

In what ways would you like God to draw you to Him today?

READ JOHN 12:20-33—Use your imagination to picture the scene described in this passage.

In what ways can you identify with the Greeks who wanted to see Jesus? Who can be the Philip and Andrew in your life to help you know Jesus?

FOCUS ON VERSE 32. In what ways do you want to see Jesus “lifted up” today?

▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

Close your study time with prayer. You may want to pray something like this:

Father in Heaven, I come to you today thanking you for your love that draws me to you. I seek to walk with you today. Help me to think about you and your love throughout this day. Send your Holy Spirit to guide every part of my life today. Amen.

▷ TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

Our goal today is to explore what it means to hunger for God. We want to recognize the desire to know God which He placed within each one of us. This hunger helps us seek Him. The more we recognize this hunger, the more we will seek for God.

▷ INVITATION PRAYER

Almighty God, Something inside me draws me to you. I thank you for that as I come to seek and find you. Speak to me in your Word. Send the Holy Spirit to show me your will for me today. Amen.

▷ MEMORY VERSE REVIEW

Take out **your** card on which you wrote out yesterday's memory verse (Jeremiah 31:3), or go back to page 6 in this manual, and review what you began memorizing yesterday. Then reflect on what this passage says about you and your walk with God. You may want to write down some of these thoughts below:

▷ BIBLE READING AND REFLECTION

Now it is time to explore what the Bible tells us about hungering for or wanting to know God.

READ PSALM 63:1—How does this passage compare with your desire to know God better?

List some of the ways in which you want to know God better:

READ PSALM 34:8—What picture does this passage create in your mind? In what ways would you like to “taste and see that the Lord is good?”

READ MATTHEW 14:13-23—Imagine what it would have been like to be present that day. What parts of this story speak to you?

Why do you think Jesus wanted to be alone? Why do you think He hungered for time with His Father?

▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

You may want to close your study time with a prayer something like this:

Heavenly Father, I hunger for more of you. Help me taste your goodness today. Help me see you in the circumstances around me. Take this day and fill it with your presence. I claim your promise to be with me. Amen.

▷ TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

Today, we focus on Jesus' birth and identity. We want to discover what this part of Jesus' story tells us about how God seeks for us and how important we are to Him.

▷ INVITATION PRAYER

Father in Heaven, Help me learn from Jesus and His life. I open my heart and mind to you. Show me your love as I read your Word. Help me to know Jesus better. Amen.

▷ MEMORY VERSE REVIEW

Today, we again review Jeremiah 31:3. Once again, review this verse from page 6, and reflect on how this passage helps you understand how God sees you. Make notes below on anything that stands out in your mind:

▷ BIBLE READING AND REFLECTION

Now we turn to God's Word for today's study and reflection. We want to focus on the story of Jesus' birth and what the names given to Him mean.

READ MATTHEW 1:18-25—Use your imagination to think about what Joseph might have thought as the angel talked to Him. What would you have felt and thought if you had been Joseph?

READ MATTHEW 2:1-12—Imagine what it would have been like to have been there and watch the Wise Men or Magi come to see Jesus. What does their worship tell you about Jesus?

READ LUKE 2:1-20—Focus especially on verses 10-11. What do these verses point out about Jesus?

GO BACK TO MATTHEW 1:21, 23—How do the two names, “Jesus” and “Immanuel,” impact you?

What does the story of Jesus birth mean to you? What does it say to you about God’s desire to have a personal relationship with us?

▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

Close your study time with a prayer like this:

Loving Father, Thank you for Jesus’ birth and for giving your Son to be my Savior. Help me to know the reality of “God with me.” Show me your love. Help me to open my life to your presence today. Amen.

▷ TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

Our study focus for today is on how Jesus treated the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. We want to explore the impact Jesus had on her life and discover how God could do something similar in our lives.

▷ INVITATION PRAYER

Almighty God, Help me to see Jesus' compassion as I read and reflect on this story. Speak to my heart and surround me with your love. Teach me to worship you, and help me surrender to you. Amen.

▷ MEMORY VERSE

Today we start on a new verse to memorize, Psalm 34:8. Follow the same process from Sunday, and write the verse and reference on a card to help you review and reflect on this passage throughout the day.

Psalm 34:8 (NIV)—“Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.”

Psalm 34:8 (KJV)—“O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.”

▷ MEMORY VERSE REVIEW

We also need to review Sunday's verse (page 6) once again. By reviewing it several times over a number of days and weeks, we transfer the passage to our long term memory and further integrate it into our thinking and lives.

▷ BIBLE READING AND REFLECTION

It is now time to turn to the Bible and explore what God wants to teach us about how He reaches out to us.

READ JOHN 4:1-9—Have you ever felt like an outcast? What does this part of the story tell you about Jesus and the way He treats people? How do you think Jesus would relate to you?

READ JOHN 4:10-14—What does the “living water” Jesus talked about mean to you, and how would you like to experience it in your life?

READ JOHN 4:15-26—Are there times when you feel like God is getting too close to the issues in your life? What can you learn from this story that will help you be open to God?

What does it mean to worship God in spirit and truth? How can you apply this concept to your life?

READ JOHN 4:28-30, AND 39-42—Reflect on what the Samaritan woman shared with the people around her? What is the importance of a personal experience with God, and what implications does this have for your life?

Reflect on the memory verse for today, Psalm 34:8. How can we taste God’s goodness today?

▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

Close your study time with a prayer like this one:

Almighty God, Teach me to see myself as Jesus sees me. Help me to look beyond my sin to your love. Help me worship you in spirit and truth throughout this day. Use me to see others around me as Jesus sees me. Amen.

▷ TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

Today, we will focus on why Jesus came to this earth. He is God's greatest initiative to reach out to us and draw us to Him. We will begin to explore His purpose in coming to save us.

▷ INVITATION PRAYER

God in Heaven, Help me understand how much you love me. Open my heart and mind to the reality of your love and why Jesus came to live and die. Send your Holy Spirit to teach me today. Amen.

▷ MEMORY VERSE REVIEW

Today we review Psalm 34:8, the passage we began memorizing yesterday. Once again, use the card on which you have written this verse, and review and reflect on it throughout the day. What does this passage say to you?

▷ BIBLE READING AND REFLECTION

Now we turn to the Bible to study and reflect on what God wants to teach us **today**.

READ JOHN 17:3—This is part of Jesus' prayer. What does it teach you about why Jesus came? What is the source of our salvation?

READ JOHN 18:28-37—Use your imagination to picture the scene in Pilate’s judgment hall. Jesus was on trial. What does verse 37 tell you about why Jesus was there?

READ GALATIANS 4:4-7—Paul’s words clearly present the reason why God sent His Son. What does this passage say to you? What does it mean for you to know that you have the status and rights of a child of God?

▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

Close your study time with a prayer like the following:

God of Love and Salvation, Jesus came because without Him we had no hope. Teach us your love, and help us to live this day with that love in our hearts and minds. Send your Spirit to make that love real to us that our hearts might be in tune with you. Amen.

▷ TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

Today we focus on Jesus' invitation to discipleship. We will reflect on how He called the twelve to follow Him and explore on ways in which He invites us to follow and be with Him. A disciple is one who walks with, learns from, and lives in submission to a master in order to become like the master. Jesus calls us to discipleship.

▷ INVITATION PRAYER

God of heaven and earth, Teach me that you want me to abide with you. Open my heart that I might know you and submit to you as Lord and God. Teach me to follow you and help me to experience the adventure of discipleship. Amen.

▷ MEMORY VERSE REVIEW

Once again it is time to review the memory verse from page 12—Psalm 34:8. Spend a few minutes repeating this passage and reflecting on how God wants us to experience His goodness.

▷ BIBLE READING AND REFLECTION

We now turn to Scripture to explore and reflect on the ways in which God calls us to follow Him.

READ JOHN 1:35-46—Note that Jesus' call to His disciples begins with the invitation to "Come ... and see" (verses 39, 46). How have you experienced God calling you to "Come and see?"

Notice that the next step in the call to discipleship is to "Follow me" (verse 43). In what ways can you choose to follow God? How is His Spirit inviting you?

READ MARK 1:14-20—Notice that once again Jesus invites the disciples to follow Him. Also notice that the invitation came in the context of every-day life activities. How is God calling you to follow Him and in what areas of your life is that invitation coming to you today?

READ MARK 3:13-15—Notice that the final step to full discipleship is the invitation to be with Jesus. God calls us to the intimacy of His presence. He wants us to be with Him. In what ways and in what areas of your life can you be with Jesus?

▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

Close your study time with prayer. You may want to include the following:

Dear God, I want to respond to your invitation to follow and be with you. I choose to be your disciple. Teach me what it means to open my life to your Spirit. Help me live this day conscious of your presence and submitted to your guidance. Make this day one in which I learn to follow you more completely. Amen.

During this week, we have explored God's invitation to know and walk with Him. He has promised that we will find Him when we search for Him with all our hearts. We have committed this time to that search. Spend a few minutes in quiet reflection.

How has God touched your life during this past week?

What new insights have you gained in your relationship with God?

What difficulties have you found in your daily time with God?

What things have helped you in your daily time with God?

What spiritual goals do you have for the next week?
