
SUMMER BIBLE JAM 2017

DRAWING NEAR TO GOD

FIELD MANUAL

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INTRO

Summer Bible Jam is an annual quest that we take as a church that is intended to strengthen personal Bible reading and to deepen our love for and enjoyment of the Scriptures. As pastors we believe strongly in the preaching of God's Word and we often recommend various books and resources—but there is no substitute for what takes place in our lives, when we personally encounter God through His revealed Word! Without a personal study and prayer life, we simply will not grow sufficiently in our discipleship.

Summer Bible Jam has sought to impart understanding about the main storyline of the Bible (Bible Jam 2016), how to develop regular reading habits (Bible Jam 2015), and this year it is seeking to draw us near to the active presence of the Holy Spirit. Throughout Scripture God has revealed that He desires to “dwell among us” and for us to “draw near” to Him. There is no greater vehicle to do that, than the inspired Word of God being read under the leading and promptings of the Holy Spirit.

The “Drawing Near Field Manual” is intended to provide you with quick access to some essential tools and habits that will strengthen your ability to draw near to the presence of God through your times of Bible reading. Take careful note, however, that the goal of this year’s Summer Bible Jam is encountering the presence of God through the Word of God! This is much more than checking off a daily box that says I read my Bible today. The box to check off this time is the “I encountered God in my Bible reading today!”

--WARNING--

This manual is not the Holy Spirit, but is merely an aid in turning your attention to the nearness of the Holy Spirit’s voice and presence. Drawing near to God is not the doing of a check list, it is an intangible encounter with a living person in the inner man.

To help reach our goal this year, the “Drawing Near Field Manual” (and resources available through the Summer Bible Jam online) are designed to lead you through 3 elements:

- **SEEING** | gaining an accurate awareness and understanding of what the Bible says
- **SAVORING** | lingering and pondering and soaking in the truths and thoughts of Scripture
- **ENCOUNTERING** | experiencing the nearness of God, as the Holy Spirit leads us into the presence of God through the Word of God

“...there is wisdom in both ways of traveling through the Bible: the steady march – two, three, or four chapters a day, showing you the great contours of God’s grand design – and also the slow march, where you read only one or two verses but some biblical picture settles into the core of your being and you consciously nestle into your own place in the palm of God’s hand. This slow meditative reading of a small text again and again may lead to an experience like being in a dark room when suddenly someone releases the blinds. The blinds fly up, the light rushes in, and you see all sorts of things that you didn’t see before.”

J.I. Packer & Carolyn Nystrom, “Praying”, p. 91

“...strong Christians are created not by sermons and by books alone, but by a personal encounter with the word of God, the Bible itself.” **John Piper**

SEEING

READING A PASSAGE

“...linger long enough over the Scriptures themselves and ask enough questions and look at things from other angles and spend enough brainpower and pour out enough prayers that they make amazing and true discoveries for themselves from the text. This is what makes spindly cattail Christians into oaks of righteousness.” **John Piper, “Ask Pastor John Ep. 1045”**

PRAY FOR GOD'S HELP

"Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law"
Psalm 119:18

KNOW WHAT YOU'RE READING

What genre? When was it written and to whom?
Where is this setting in the storyline of Scripture?

READ SLOWLY AND ASK QUESTIONS WHILE YOU READ

- See the GOSPEL:
What does this passage tell me about God and His character?
What does this passage tell me about man and the world and its condition?
What does this passage tell me about Jesus Christ and salvation?
What does this passage tell me about the main point of the Bible?

- See the ORIGINAL INTENT of the writer:
What did the original readers understand from this passage?
Who is the writer and where does this passage fit in God's storyline?
What's going on with the original hearers?
How are the original people supposed to respond to this passage?
- See the MAIN POINT:
What's the big idea of the passage?
What are the key words in the passage?

READ AND RE-READ

Read for an overview

Read to search out details

Read a section or entire book 3 or 4 times -- then consider how to apply it

SAVORING

LETTING A PASSAGE READ YOU

THOUGHTS & QUESTIONS TO ALLOW THE PASSAGE TO 'DRAW NEAR TO YOU'

- How does this passage convict me or instruct me or enlighten me?
- How is faith stirred in my heart?
- How do I feel the love and nearness of God?
- How is hope awakened in me? How does that touch my future, my fears, my plans, etc.?
- How am I encouraged?
- How does this speak to my priorities, my ambitions, my cravings?

- **Am I actively believing what this passage teaches? Am I taking this seriously? If I really believed this how would it affect me or change my life experience? If I forget this how will it impact my attitude, my priorities, my relationships?**
- **Are there personal examples to emulate or avoid? Are there commands to obey? Are there promises to believe? Are there warnings to heed? Is there wisdom to learn?**
- **What does this mean for my relationship to God? To myself? To this or that person or group? To this or that behavior or habit? To my friends, to the culture? (from Tim Keller)**
- **Is there something I should stop doing or start doing in light of this passage?**

“It is not right to settle for mere mental assent to doctrines about Jesus, because that does not honor him. There should be love, trust, delight, and longing after the full enjoyment of him. The only way to get that is to study the Word, meditate to the point of delight, and then experience inward love and joy and also life-change.” **Tim Keller, “Prayer”, p. 159**

ENCOUNTERING

EXPERIENTIALLY DRAWING NEAR TO GOD

“...in all our effort to see more and more of the glory of God, we are aiming, by that seeing, to savor the God we see. That is, we are always aiming to experience spiritual affections in our heart wakened by the spiritual sight in our minds.” **John Piper, “Reading the Bible Supernaturally,” p. 102**

The Bible is not merely seeking to inform us about God or life or the acts of God in the past. It is seeking to impart life and expression and experience in our current time and place. It is often calling for a response to what we've read and pondered.

- Let your heart overflow in prayer, adoration, worship, affection, or song
- Express your joy or gratitude or celebration to God
- Confess how you are convicted
- Yield to God in brokenness and surrender

- Seek godly sorrow that stirs up, expresses, and walks in repentance
- Write out a devotional thought from the passage
- Journal a thought that God gives you from your waiting on the Lord
- Re-write the passage in your own words
- Intercede for specific people God shows you, for the world, for the church, for God' mission
- Take steps of faith under the leading of the Holy Spirit
- Be sensitive to spiritual gifts like prophecy, faith, words of knowledge or wisdom, etc.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to other passages for further insights

“Meditation is thinking a truth out and then thinking a truth in until its ideas become ‘big’ and ‘sweet,’ moving and affecting, and until the reality of God is sensed upon the heart.”

Tim Keller, “Prayer,” p. 162

FOR MORE RESOURCES OR TO REGISTER YOUR DISCIPLESHIP GROUP
WWW.LAKEVIEWCHRISTIANCENTER.COM/SBJ2017