

Spiritual Growth Resource

What? Guided Sermon Study Sheet

Why? Many people today fail to realize that to have Christ shaped in us requires intentional effort. Spiritual formation into the character of Christ is a shared work of God, through the Holy Spirit, and intentional activity on our part.

Why this resource? The singular greatest resource available for growth into the character of Christ is the Holy Bible. Regular reading and application of the Bible will be the most important activity you will ever do to grow as a man or woman of God. However, having others come alongside to offer understanding and fresh insight into how to apply the Bible to your life has always been valued – even in the days of the Old and New Testament.

Chosen carefully, great sermons by respected and trusted teachers and preachers of the Christian faith provide the opportunity to be “mentored” in your reading and understanding of the Bible. This *Guided Sermon Study Sheet* structures your time with the Bible in such a way that your reading and application of God’s word will be more thoughtful and intentional in its application to life. Simply, this resource seeks to engage you more deeply with the Bible.

How much time will this take? Thoughtful and intentional use of this resource should take no less than 1 hour for most people. Rushing through this resource minimizes its usefulness. Of course, each person will decide how many sermons will be studied in each week. A healthy plan of spiritual growth will include at least one sermon a week.

Are there other considerations? Yes. For maximum benefit schedule a regular time of one hour each week. Decide now that you will not do this exercise “when I have a free moment.” Spiritual growth is too important to leave to chance. Additionally, think through where you will do this. This should be a place free of interruptions and distracting noises. For optimal value, meet with one or two others who will read the same sermon each week and share with one another your written responses to the questions, noting on your worksheet any helpful insights from others. The sharing process should move through one question at a time rather than one person simply sharing all their responses at once.

What is the process? Begin with a simple prayer: *“God bless this time alone with you, your word and this teaching (the sermon). Open my mind and heart to a fresh encounter with you and guide me to greater obedience in my life today. Amen.”* Open your Bible to the passage noted at the beginning of the sermon. Read that passage. You may want to read the entire paragraph in the Bible where the passage is located. Read one sermon, selected by you from suggested books below. Read carefully, thoughtfully and at a pace that is best for you. Don’t rush through the reading or skim read. Then take the *Guided Sermon Study Sheet* and work carefully back through the sermon answering each question. Conclude the hour with this prayer: *“Thank you, Father for this time with you today. Amen.”*

Where do I begin – what sermon collections should I purchase? Care should always be taken to select sermons from trusted preachers and teachers in the Christian faith. There is much available that is unhelpful – even potentially dangerous to a healthy faith. In doubt, ask your pastor for suggestions. I suggest that you begin with these collections, available from Amazon.com and other online retailers:

“And God Spoke to Abraham: Preaching from the Old Testament” by Fleming Rutledge
“The Collected Sermons of Fred B. Craddock” by Fred B. Craddock