



SESSION 1

IMMERSED IN THE WORD

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



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

Psalms 19:1-14

Day 3

Joshua 1:1-9

Day 4

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Day 5

Psalms 119:89-112

Day 6

1 Peter 1:13-25

Day 7

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

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. Reexamine 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 chicken, fish, steak, or a 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:

¹² 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. ¹³ 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.

¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp for my feet
and a light on my path.
¹⁰⁶ I have solemnly sworn
to keep Your righteous judgments.
¹⁰⁷ I am severely afflicted;
LORD, give me life through Your word.
¹⁰⁸ LORD, please accept my willing offerings of praise,
and teach me Your judgments.
¹⁰⁹ My life is constantly in danger,
yet I do not forget Your instruction.
¹¹⁰ The wicked have set a trap for me,
but I have not wandered from Your precepts.
¹¹¹ I have Your decrees as a heritage forever;
indeed, they are the joy of my heart.
¹¹² 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 on God's Word?

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