

DISCOVER EVERY

THE DAILY BIBLE READING GUIDE FROM SCRIPTURE UNION

QUARTERLY

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EXTRA

scriptureunion 
HELPING PEOPLE MEET GOD EVERY DAY



Welcome

EXTRAS has been created as an additional resource to use with Scripture Union's daily devotional *Discovery*. It is an excellent tool for small group Bible study and can also enhance your own individual Bible reading. These questions will encourage you to dig deeper into the meaning of the Scripture passages you have read during the week.

1. Simply defined, Bildad's theology of God is one of cause and effect; turning from him brings destruction – repentance brings restoration. In what ways was that theology faulty as he related to Job? How does it fall short for believers in light of what Christ has done?
2. How would you answer if someone suffering asked you the questions Job asked in Job 9:2? In Job 9:14? In Job 9:29?
3. Job asked God to let him know why he contended against him (10:2). What might be answers to that question, not just for Job, for anyone who is struggling?
4. Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. How would you describe that kingdom? What is its importance?

1. The disciples were to bring the same message Jesus preached – that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (4:17). Called to do the same, how do you bring that message? What actions and words can you use to encourage those around you who are seeking that kingdom?
2. Jesus spoke of persecution to come. Throughout history, countless Christians have been hated. Even today, followers of Christ are persecuted. Describe times in history or the present when the actions of Christians have warranted hatred from the world. When have they not?
3. What are some of the costs in succumbing to the fear of persecution (or even of rejection or ridicule)? What reasons are there for perseverance?
4. Jesus considered the nature of his generation and found it wanting. In what ways would his assessment compare to our generation?

1. Despite Jesus' ministry in some places, unbelief continued there. In what ways is this similar in our day and how should we be relating to much of the world's current disregard and neglect of his teaching?
2. In what ways is the Son's knowledge of the Father the same as ours as his sons and daughters? How is it different?
3. When the 5000 were hungry, Jesus miraculously fed them. Yet, in another instance he did not provide for his disciples when they were hungry, allowing them instead to gather grain on the Sabbath and provoke the Pharisees. What reasons might he have had to treat these two situations differently?
4. Matthew writes of Jesus' fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. What would his readers have understood as significant about a "bruised reed he will not break" and a "smoldering wick he will not quench?" How can that encourage us still today?

1. Zophar's premise, simply put: Job was suffering, therefore, he had sinned – and his punishment was just. Where is there truth in Zophar's thinking? How does his thinking fall short?
2. In our own relationships with those who are suffering, how do we avoid offering platitudes that are “proverbs of ashes,” like Job accused his friends of offering him?
3. Pitying Job's lack of knowledge about the afterlife, how would you encourage him today with what those who trust in Christ know to be true about death and resurrection?
4. Witnessing the added sorrow that Job's friends caused him, what are meaningful ways to encourage someone experiencing extreme heartbreak/suffering?

1. Job affirmed that the righteous holds to his way (17:9). Why was this true for him? How do you know is it true for believers today?
2. Job's word for Redeemer was goel. What significance did it have in ancient Hebrew custom? In what ways does that deepen our appreciation of the word?
3. Job found no comfort in the empty (and judgmental) words of his friends. What impact did this have on Job and how did he respond?
4. Paul wrote to the church of God that was in Corinth. In what ways is his word for church (ekklesial) important even today to appreciate what the church of God is?

- 1.** In what ways do denominations divide the Christian community and in what ways do they show distinctions of character and ministry? In what ways do you see the existence of denominations advancing or impeding the advance of the kingdom?
- 2.** In what ways is the gospel the message of the cross? Why is the cross necessary in the gospel?
- 3.** A highly educated man, able to debate or argue for the gospel, Paul chose to simply present Christ crucified. How should we pattern our own gospel message after his?
- 4.** In what ways would you describe the milk as opposed to the solid food of the gospel? For what reasons might it be difficult for some Christians to receive solid food?

Week Eight

Psalm 8;
1 Corinthians 3:18 – 7:11

1. What is challenging, and also encouraging, in God's testing the quality, and not the quantity, of our work?
2. In your community of faith, do you have people concerned for their individual rights at the expense of bringing God glory? How might those kinds of attitudes be addressed?
3. Why do you think Paul spent more time relating to sexual sin than any other sin he lists?
4. Paul addressed issues related to sexual immorality and marriage, a matter about which the Corinthians had written to him. How might his advice have helped this new church and its members?

Week Nine

Psalm 9;
I Corinthians 7:12 – 8:13;
1 Samuel 1:1 – 2:36

1. In what practical ways can your community of faith support individuals whose spouses are not believers? How can you encourage their children?
2. What does Paul mean when he calls the Corinthian Christian who abstained from eating meat of animals sacrificed to idols weak and not strong? Where in today's culture might we be called to love and respect our weaker brothers and sisters and keep from causing them to stumble?
3. Deeply distressed and weeping, Hannah called on the LORD of hosts (LORD of the mighty armies) as she prayed in the temple. For what reasons would Hannah have chosen that significant title for God?
4. Elkanah and Hannah took their son Samuel to serve in the temple when he was weaned – he would have been between 3 and 5 years old. We are told that, as they left the temple, the child was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli the priest. In what ways do you see that children can serve God, even at a young age? How can your church provide opportunities for them to be his helpers?

1. For what reasons would the word of the LORD have been rare, with no frequent vision, in the early days of Samuel? In what ways is this different to the way we hear from him today? Why?
2. Eli instructed Samuel to respond to God's voice, "Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.' When are the times when believers should offer up those words to God?
3. Israel had again failed in her responsibility to bring the glory of God to the nations. In what ways did he show the Philistines his glory himself?
4. With the ark returned, Israel rejoiced – and again disobeyed God. (Read Leviticus 1:3; 22:19, and Deuteronomy 12:5-6). Even so, God received the Israelites' sacrifices and did not punish their disobedience. What can we learn about the nature of God from this?

1. In Deuteronomy 17, we see God's instructions should the people of Israel decide they want a King. What was wrong with Israel's request? In what ways can the church be in danger of being like Israel?
2. Saul came from a wealthy and prominent family, was tall and handsome. What was missing in Scripture's description of him that would be critically important for a king of Israel? Why do you think such a man would be God's choice to rule?
3. Saul would find two men by Rachel's tomb who would tell him that his father's donkeys had been found and that his father was now worried about him. At the terebinth tree of Tabor, Saul would meet three men carrying three young goats, three loaves of bread and a skin of wine - and he would be given two loaves of the bread. What do you see in the fulfillments of Samuel's prophecies that would make them unavoidably significant for Saul?
4. The condition set by the Ammonite Nahash for the covenant sought by the men of Jabesh Gilead was that he would gouge out all their right eyes, and thus bring reproach on all Israel. The name Nahash means serpent or snake. In what ways does that condition remind you of how Satan would deal with God's saints even today?

Week Twelve

Psalm 12;
1 Samuel 13:1 – 15:35;
Matthew 13:1-17

1. Saul's army had scattered, and Samuel had not come to Gilgal as expected. Fearful about the great Philistine army, Saul offered a burnt offering. In addition to not waiting for Samuel, what were Saul's sins and their implications?
2. Because of what Amalek had done to Israel (Exodus 17), God instructed Saul to utterly destroy all that the Amalekites had and to kill men and women, infants and nursing children. Many find this instruction hard to understand. Why might God have instructed them to do this?
3. Samuel asked Saul, "Why did you not obey the voice of the LORD?" Reading Saul's story and his response to Samuel, how might your answer differ from his? What heart's attitudes motivated his actions? In what ways are we tempted by those same heart's sins today?
4. After reading the parable of the sower, how should we be praying, not just for those who preach on Sunday mornings, but for those listening in the pews?

1. How is the parable of the sower applicable, not just to unbelievers, but to those who have already come to faith in Christ? How can you apply this parable to those who are a part of the church?
2. In the parables of the hidden treasure and the costly pearl, Jesus taught what great value he places on those he came to redeem. What intentional ways does your church use to tell visitors, show youth, remind your widows and widowers of their great worth?
3. The disciples asserted that they understood all of Jesus' parables. One wonders if their understanding grew as they continued under his teaching. What truths in Scripture have become clearer or deeper or greater for you as you have journeyed with Jesus?
4. Returning to Nazareth where he had grown up, Jesus was not welcomed or thought of very highly. He taught in the synagogue, but because of the people's unbelief, he did not do many mighty works there. Why might this have been the case and in what ways might we become so "familiar" in our faith that we miss key truths about Jesus?

- 1.** John was dead, and Jesus had withdrawn to a desolate place by himself. Consider the sacrifice and compassion of Jesus, who looked not to his own need, but to the needs of others.

- 2.** It has been said that it is easier to jump out of the boat than it is to walk on the water. What might be commended about Peter's "little faith?" What causes little faith? In what ways can little faith grow into great faith?

- 3.** At times, there are traditions or ways of doing things in a church that some cling to, but that others find difficult. In what ways can those traditions stand in the way of unity? What steps might be taken to enable all to fully participate in worship and ministry?

- 4.** Jesus commended the Canaanite woman for her great faith and gave her what she desired. What things were indeed great about her faith?