

8 GRACE SUNDAYS: Spiritual Vitality

August 1, 2021

Week 5 Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ: [Jeremiah 17:5-8](#)

REFLECT: Spiritual vitality is the result of other things-smaller decisions and disciplines that you incorporate into your life. As you live your life faithfully, step by step with God - spiritual vitality will come. But part of gaining spiritual vitality is regularly putting yourself in the right spiritual environments to grow. What are the best environments for your growth? How consistently do you put yourself there?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Quiet your heart and mind. Humbly and honestly do an evaluation of your soul- are you spiritual a dried up river bed or running with streams of living water? Praise God that however you feel today, He is able to make even the driest soul run with overflowing rivers. Ask Him to take your roots deeper and to fill you over the next days and weeks.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

DISCOVER: [Grace Church mission, vision and values](#)
[8 Grace Sundays](#)

Day 2-

READ: [Mark 4:1-20](#)

REFLECT: Jesus often told parables, using ordinary objects that the crowds would recognize to convey deeper truths. Parables are stories with a point, though sometimes it was difficult for the people then (and now!) to understand. In the parable of the sower, Mark records Jesus' words of explanation which is so helpful! Who is the Sower? What is the Seed? What were the different types of Soil? How has your Soil changed throughout your life? How would you describe your Soil today?

PRAY: Praise God that He does the work of sowing and growing! Ask Him to help you gain consistency and passion for the practices that will keep your Soil receptive to Him and His Word.

Day 3-

READ: [John 7:37-39](#); [Ephesians 3:16](#); [Philippians 2:13](#)

REFLECT: Spiritual vitality is not a matter of willpower; it is the result of the Holy Spirit changing you from the inside out. Which parts of you would you like to see change? How have you surrendered your strengths, your weaknesses, your talents, your gifts, your personality, your experiences to God? Do you trust Him to do a new work, a fresh work, a transforming work in your mind, heart, and soul?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Praise God for the Spirit who works in you! Get in a posture of surrender (bow down, hands open, etc.) and let the words of this old hymn draw you into prayer:

*Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee.
Take my moments and my days;
let them flow in endless praise*

TAKE IT FURTHER!

LISTEN: [Take My Life and Let It Be](#)

Day 4-

READ: [John 7:37-39](#); [Philippians 3:12-16](#)

REFLECT: Spiritual vitality takes a long time to cultivate. It's a series of steps. There's a theological word for this process called sanctification. It's a long road- one decision at a time to just do the next right thing. What is the next right step for you?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Sometimes we rush into the next decision without pausing to ask God about it. And sometimes we remain frozen in place without asking God what He might want to do. Return to that posture of surrender confident that He has a next right step lined up for you to take today! Ask Him to give you the patience, the courage, the wisdom... all that you need to move forward.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

DISCOVER: More information about [Next Steps](#) at Grace Church

Day 5-

READ: [Psalm 92](#)

REFLECT: Oswald Chambers says, "whether or not you are exhausted will depend on where you get your supplies." If you are counting on temporary sources of energy to give you spiritual strength that's going to run out. Remember, your soul is satisfied in environments that engage you with eternity. Worship, study, prayers, gatherings with other believers quench your thirsty souls. You don't do these things to earn spiritual brownie points, you do them to stay spiritually energized. The world parches your soul, but heaven hydrates your thirsty heart.

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Identify the things in your life that are leaving you thirsty. Which things are water for your soul? How will you be more intentional about the life-giving things of God and surrender the temporary things the world is offering?

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: [10 Signs the Pace of Your Life is Out of Control](#) and [How to Become the New Spiritual You](#) from Relevant.

8 GRACE SUNDAYS: Accessible Biblical Truth

August 8, 2021

Week 6 Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ: [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)

REFLECT: What is your view of the word of God? What do you think it is useful for? What does Paul say about it in this passage? Take time to think through the words (teach, expose, correct, train).

PRAY/PRACTICE: Ask God to open His word to you in a way that teaches you, Exposes you, Corrects you, and trains you in your journey following Jesus. Pray that his word comes alive in your life. Make a plan-schedule time to Find Your Chair every day this week to use this READ plan.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: [How To Read 2 Timothy](#) from the Bible Project on RightNow Media. [Need a *free* RNM account? Sign up [here](#)!]

Day 2-

READ: [Nehemiah 8](#)

REFLECT: How did the people react to the reading of the Law of Moses? Why did Nehemiah tell them to celebrate? How do you typically respond when you hear or read God's word? What do you find hard? What do you find compelling?

PRAY: Ask God to fill you with a desire for His word and for the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and understanding as you read.

PRACTICE: Find a friend and share with them something that you read in God's word this week!

TAKE IT FURTHER!

DISCOVER: [Grace Church mission, vision and values](#); [Grace Church Statement of Faith](#)

Day 3-

READ: [Hebrews 4:12](#); [Psalm 119:105](#)

REFLECT: How does the author of Hebrews describe the Word of God? The imagery of something piercing our bodies, or piercing our souls is pretty extreme! Have you felt exposed or convicted by the Word? Psalm 119:105 assures us that the Word also guides us. How do the conviction and guidance of the Word work together?

PRAY: Praise God for revealing himself to you through His Word, for convicting you, for encouraging you, for challenging you. As you pray, take time to pause and reflect on the ways God uses His word in your life and use those thoughts to guide you into thanksgiving, confession and to asking Him to lead you deeper into His Word.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: [How to Read the Bible](#), from the Bible Project on RightNow Media [register for *free* [here](#)!]

Day 4-

READ: [1 Peter 1:22-2:3](#)

REFLECT: Peter references the Word of God a few times in these verses. What is the work of the Word? How does he describe the Word? Remember, Peter is writing a letter to churches to teach them and to encourage them. What do you learn from Peter? How are you encouraged?

PRAY: [Psalm 19](#) is a beautiful song of praise to God about His Word. Read or listen to the psalm and then use it to guide your prayer time.

Day 5-

READ: [Ephesians 6: 10-20](#)

REFLECT: Paul closes his letter to the church in Ephesus with a strong word of boldness and encouragement. Reflect on each piece of armor and its purpose. In particular, notice the difference between the function of the pieces of armor and the function of a sword.

PRAY: Praise God that He equips you to stand firm in this life, in this broken world!

PRACTICE: Take a few minutes to reflect on what you have learned this week- open your journal write down what God has been revealing to you in His word.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

LISTEN: Tim Mackie (creator of the Bible Project) has a series of sermons on the Making of the Bible in his podcast, [Exploring My Strange Bible](#).

8 GRACE SUNDAYS: Outward Focus

August 15, 2021

Week 7 Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ: [Matthew 28:16-20](#)

REFLECT: You may know this passage as “The Great Commission.” It tells us that our job as disciples of Jesus is to make more disciples. In heaven, we can worship, fellowship, and care for one another forever, but we won’t be reaching the lost - that’s limited to this lifetime. How many hours per week would you say you spend making disciples? How could you increase that number?

Many people have life goals that they work hard to accomplish (land their dream job, become parents, overcome generational trauma, earn a PhD, etc.). What is one life goal you could set for yourself relating to discipleship?

PRAY/PRACTICE: Every single person you’ve ever crossed paths with is someone Christ died for! Pray and ask God to give you a face/name that you can share the gospel with. Pray for them and make yourself available to them.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: Before you share the gospel, make sure that you’re prepared. Check out this [90 second explanation](#) of the gospel from The Village Church.

Day 2-

READ: [John 20:21](#)

REFLECT: We are part of God’s rescue mission! Why did God the Father send Jesus to earth, and what does that mean about you in light of this verse?

What motivated God to send Jesus? (Hint: [John 3:16](#)). How much love do you have for those who don’t follow Jesus yet? How could you increase your love for them?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Come up with a few people (or groups of people) that you feel like Jesus may have “sent” you to specifically. What is one thing you could do for each of them that would help open their hearts to the gospel?

TAKE IT FURTHER!

DISCOVER: [Grace Church mission, vision and values](#)

Day 3-

READ: [1 Corinthians 9:19-23](#)

REFLECT: Paul followed in Jesus' footsteps of living a radically outward focused life. What would you have to change about your life to make it outward focused? What causes you to hesitate to make those changes?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Authentic spiritual formation always leads to great passion and concern for lost people. Examine the spiritual growth you have gone through in the last year – has it increased your concern for the lost? Was it mostly focused inward or outward? What would it take for your concern for the lost to increase exponentially over the next year?

Day 4-

READ: [Genesis 12:1-3](#)

REFLECT: Our blessings were never meant to end with us. When God made a covenant with Abraham, God told him that he will be blessed so that others might be blessed through him. How do you use your blessings to bless others? In what way could you use your blessings to welcome others into God's family?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Praise God for the blessings in your life – list them out and get specific. As you thank him for each one, ask if there is a way for you to bless others with that blessing.

Day 5-

READ: [Luke 15](#)

REFLECT: These three "lost" parables teach us that God is in permanent search mode for every lost, irreligious, wayward person. And because of that, we should never stop looking outside the walls of our church for people who are far from God. How will you join God in that search over the next month? If you are attending church in person, how can you work to make new attendees feel like they are being welcomed home?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Invite someone to come to church (or watch online) with you this Sunday!

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: "[Seeking and Saving the Lost](#)" a devotional from Ligonier Ministries

8 GRACE SUNDAYS: All In
August 22, 2021
Week 7

Day 1-

READ: [Romans 12:1-6](#)

REFLECT: Today we will reflect on #1 of Pastor Derek's 3 All-in declarations: "In my humility I will serve." What are some ways that people tend to think more highly of themselves than they ought (especially in the church setting)? Out of all these ways, which one(s) are you most susceptible to? Our measure of faith (as well as gifts and abilities) were not generated by our own efforts but "assigned" to us by God. How does understanding this assist you in having a right and humble view of yourself? How may lack of humility (pride) have a negative impact on your service in the church?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up* ([James 4:10](#)). Ask God to show you how you struggle with pride. Spend time journaling on this topic. Spend time in confession and asking God to renew your heart.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: "[Think of Yourself Less](#)" by Jason Meyer from Desiring God

Day 2-

READ: [Ephesians 4:11-16](#)

REFLECT: Today we will reflect on #2 of Pastor Derek's 3 All-in declarations: "In my connectedness I will function" ([Romans 12:4-5](#)). What does this passage say about the benefits of connectedness? What did you gain from this passage concerning your importance to the church? How would you rate your connectedness to the body of Christ? What steps could you take to be more connected?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Read the passage again and identify things to pray on behalf of the church (Example: Unity). Now spend time praying for these things. Pray for specific people!

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: Begin watching your [Divine Design](#) by Chip Ingram on RightNow Media. [Need a *free* RNM account. Sign up [here](#)!]

Day 3-

READ: [Ephesians 2:19-22](#), [1 Peter 2:4-5](#) and [2:9-10](#)

REFLECT: What do these passages say about who you are? How do these passages impact how you see yourself and your calling?

PRAY: Today, spend time praying for the growth and health of God's church that we might truly reflect being the "holy temple of the Lord" and "a dwelling place for God."

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: Watch "[Your Gifts are Meant for Others](#)" by John Piper

Day 4-

READ: [Romans 12: 6-8](#), [1 Corinthians 12: 4-11](#)

REFLECT: Today we will reflect on #3 of Pastor Derek's 3 All-in declarations: "In my giftedness I will contribute." What is your reaction when you hear that God has given you a Spiritual Gift? Why did God give you a Spiritual Gift? As you read through the list of Spiritual Gifts, which gift(s) do you feel you connect with the most? Could it be that this/these are your gifts?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Pray for the flourishing of God's gifts in the church for the benefit of all and the benefit of God's mission.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: Descriptions and scriptures for the [Spiritual Gifts](#) .

ATTEND: Sign up to the [CORE class](#) at Grace church and learn more about the church, the mission, and how you are gifted as part of the body of Christ.

Day 5-

READ: [John 15:1-8](#)

REFLECT: "The Lord's work done in human energy is not the Lord's work any longer" (Francis Schaeffer). What stands out to you in these passages today? What is the Lord saying to you?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Ask God to show you the next right step to take in your church. How might He be calling you to volunteer, to serve, the church and others? Find out more about [Next Steps](#) at Grace Church!

8 GRACE SUNDAYS: Authentic Relationships

August 29, 2021

Week 9 Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ: [Genesis 2:18-23](#); [Matthew 22:36-39](#)

REFLECT: God knew that Adam needed someone. God knows that we need someone too. God designed us for relationships. In fact, Jesus says the greatest commandments are to love God *and* love others. God brings people into our lives for our good, for their good, and for His glory. What does a God-centered relationship look like? What does it mean to you to have authentic relationships with people?

PRAY/PRACTICE: Think about your most meaningful relationships. Ask God for his continued protection and love in them. What about the relationships that didn't work out? What got in the way? Ask a special blessing for everyone involved. Forgive them.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

CONNECT: Take a step toward authentic relationships by joining a [LifeGroup](#)!

Day 2-

READ: [2 Timothy 1:6-7](#)

REFLECT: The Bible tells us over and over to not be afraid, in all kinds of situations. Fear can get in the way of building new relationships, especially when God is calling us to something or someone hard. What positive impact, could believing that you are God's child and are meant to share His love, have on all your relationships? What does an ideal relationship look like to you? What attributes of Jesus do you want others to see in you?

PRAY/PRACTICE: Remember that each person you encounter was made in the image of God. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a heart of compassion and love toward whomever you meet today and to fill you with courage to share His love in all your relationships.

Day 3-

READ: [1 Corinthians 13](#)

REFLECT: Paul describes here a self-sacrificing love that bears all, believes all, hopes all and endures all. This is the love of God for you! And this is the love God calls us to show one another. How has receiving love changed you? What do these adjectives describing love look like in practical day-to-day living?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Brainstorm the people you will see today. Now brainstorm some ways you can show love (think words, actions, mannerisms, etc). Ask God to give you opportunities, courage, and genuine love for the people you meet today.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

STUDY: Love Does is a powerful book from Bob Goff. Find [videos and a study guide](#) on RightNow Media. [Need a *free* account? Sign up [here](#)!]

Day 4-

READ: [John 13:34-35](#)

REFLECT: Yesterday you read Paul's description of love in 1 Corinthians 13. Today, you're reminded that love is a sign to the world that Jesus has transformed your life. In what ways do you find it easy or hard to show love? Ask yourself some hard questions: Do non-Christians receive love from you? Do strangers receive love from you?

PRAY/PRACTICE: Ask God to fill you with His love so that you can grow in authentic love for others in your life.

TAKE IT FURTHER:

LISTEN: [By Our Love](#)

REFLECT: In the 1960s a Catholic priest wrote a hymn based on John 13:35- *they will know we are Christians by our love*. There is a line that says, "and we'll guard each man's dignity, and save each man's pride." How does one go about doing that? How has that been done for you?

Day 5-

READ: [2 Timothy 1:1-7](#)

REFLECT: Some of the authentic relationships we need to invest in involve someone who is further along in their Christian faith (a mentor) or someone whom we can bring along in the faith (a mentee). How did Paul do this for Timothy? How has someone done this with/for you in the past?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Ask God to give you the name of someone with whom you can build an authentic relationship of spiritual growth and care. Write down any names that come to mind and invite them to have coffee, take a walk, play racquetball or something else!