

BETTER TOGETHER: I need TOGETHERNESS

June 6, 2021

Week 1 Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ: [Ephesians 2:11-22](#)

REFLECT: First, take a moment to reflect on the transformation that Christ's sacrifice on the cross has made on your life so far. Next, how does knowing Christ bring peace, reconciliation, and oneness to people with different experiences, races, ages, and preferences?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Take time to pray about whom God might be bringing closer into relationship with you that is different than you in some way. Pray for connection over faith in Christ.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ or LISTEN: "[Race and Cross](#)" - a John Piper message further elaborating on how these verses relate to racial reconciliation

Day 2-

READ: [Ephesians 4:1-16](#)

REFLECT: Who are the people in your life who have impacted you the most spiritually? How have they helped you to understand the truth and built you up in the Lord? How have you invested into someone else in this way?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Send a thank you note to one of the people you thought of that has impacted you spiritually with some spiritual encouragement. As you write- thank God for their impact on your life!

Day 3-

READ: [1 Corinthians 12:12-27](#)

REFLECT: Each person in the church has an important role to play in the community which makes us better together. What "body part" are you in the church? What are your gifts and talents that you can use to serve others?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Praise the Lord for how he has gifted you! Ask Him how you should be using your gifts in the church in our new reality. Take one step to invest more in the church.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

LEARN: The CORE class at Grace highlights the mission, vision and values of the church, including the importance of the body. Find out more and [register](#) today!

READ: More information on the spiritual gifts can be found [here](#).

Day 4-

READ: [Hebrews 10:19-25](#)

REFLECT: How have you drawn near to Christ in the last year? How do you draw near to others spiritually? What does it look like to encourage others in following Jesus?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Send some Christian friends a text and ask how you can be praying for them specifically, then pray for them!

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: This article from the Gospel Coalition summarizes why it is important for the church to gather together: "[The Church Gathered](#)"

Day 5-

READ: [Galatians 6:1-5](#)

REFLECT: What does it look like to help others carry burdens or walking with them as they turn away from sin? How can you either invite someone to help you carry a burden, or make yourself more available to carry someone else's burden?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Pray about the reflection questions above and take one step to invite someone into your burdens, or express your availability and desire to help with someone else's burden.

BETTER TOGETHER: I Need Transcendence

June 13, 2021

Week 2 Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ [Exodus 19: 9-16](#).

REFLECT: What does worship mean to you? Think about how you prepare for worship. What is your attitude during worship, are you reverent or too “casual” with your posture to God? What do you observe about the Israelite’s preparations to worship in this passage of Exodus?

PRAY: Pray that the Holy Spirit comes and helps you prepare your heart for worship of God the Father and Jesus. Before any worship time invite the Spirit into your heart and realize who God is and why you worship him.

Day 2-

READ: [2 Chronicles 12: 9-10](#)

REFLECT: Bring your best! In the scripture reading today Rehoboam, who became the King of Israel after Solomon died, replaced the gold shields with bronze after Egypt plundered the Temple. Not only was bronze of lesser value, but God had instructed the shields to be made of gold. How have we replaced our best worship with something less? How can we make our worship of great value to God?

PRAY: Pray that God shows you what is of great value to him in your worship. Seek to bring your “best” to God in worship.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

LISTEN: To [What A Beautiful Name!](#)

REFLECT: How can music help you to bring your best to God?

Day 3-

READ: [Matthew 15: 8-9](#), [1 Corinthians 13: 1](#)

REFLECT: What is Jesus saying about the actions and the motives of the Pharisees and Scribes? Paul in 1st Corinthians is pointing out that you can *appear* very “spiritual”- say and sound the right way- but your heart can be far from God. Do you ever find yourself tempted to just put on the right face?

PRAY: Ask God to examine your heart and help you to draw near to him sincerely. Ask the Holy Spirit into give you the Power to worship in Spirit and Truth!

Day 4-

READ: [Romans 12: 1-2](#)

REFLECT: What does the word sacrifice mean to you? To the people Paul was talking to in the letter to the Roman church knew sacrifice meant the animal dies. Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice- He had to die so that we might live. Then, Paul said, “present your bodies as a living sacrifice,” How can we be living sacrifices to God?

PRAY: Ask God what you need to give to him so that you can be a living sacrifice. What do you need to lay on the alter so you can glorify him with your life?

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: [Living Faith At Work](#) on Rightnow Media.

REFLECT: How can we daily live out our faith and glorify God in our everyday life? Do we have to be a Pastor to make a difference for God?

Day 5-

READ: [Psalm 95](#)

REFLECT: Think about God as your Creator, your Redeemer and the one who can and will restore all things! Worship Him with your whole heart!

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Read the Psalm aloud and let it be your prayer to God. Then find a favorite worship song and just sit in His presence for a few minutes.

BETTER TOGETHER: I Need Courage
June 20th, 2021
Week 3 Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ: [Hebrews 10:19-25](#)

REFLECT: What is this passage telling you about your access to God? How does this access benefit our daily lives? What do verses 19-23 have to do with verses 24-25?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: What are some ways you are fulfilling, or could fulfill, verses 24-25? This week, at the beginning of each day, ask God to show you how you can spur someone on to love and good deeds or how you can encourage someone. At the end of the day write down what God put on your heart (Even if it seems small or simple).

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: "[Being An Encourager](#)" - a quick training video from RightNow Media. [Need a *free* RNM account? Register for one [here!](#)]

Day 2-

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

REFLECT: What stands out most to you from this reading? Where did the courage of Peter and John come from? If you were put in the same situation, what would you have done? What would have to happen in you (or in your life) to be sure that your responses would be like theirs'?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Write down the situations or people you are (or may be) facing that will require courage. Ask God to begin preparing you for that day and ask God for courage for that day.

Day 3-

READ: [Acts 4:21-31](#)

REFLECT: After being threatened, where did Peter and John go? Why do you think they went there? What can we learn from what this gathering of believers prayed? What is God putting on your heart through this passage?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Here is a suggested outline for prayer based on the prayer you read today. Write your own prayer using this outline-

1. Acknowledge the Sovereignty and power of God
2. State the Problem
3. Recount how God has been working thus far
4. Make requests (such as for wisdom, courage, power etc.), that you may be able to fulfill your part.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: "[Four Ways to Encourage](#)" - a short article from the Word of Life Bible Institute

Day 4 -

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

REFLECT: Based on this passage, how would you describe God's purpose for His body (the church) and His path for accomplishing it? If you are actively involved in the body, what is the potential (for you and others)? If you are not involved, what is the consequence (for you and others)?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: 1. Ask God to give you greater insight into what your part in the church is or might be. 2. Read today's passage three more times 3. Write down any thoughts that come to mind.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: "[How to Have an 'Acts' Community](#)" - a short RightNow Media training video featuring Mark Batterson. [Need a *free* RNM account? Register for one [here!](#)]

Day 5-

READ: [Proverbs 15:22](#), [Proverbs 12:15](#), [Ecclesiastes 4:9-12](#), [Ephesians 6:2](#), [James 5: 16](#)

REFLECT: Read through these points from Pastor Derek's message on why we need the Courage of Others –

1. Some DECISIONS are too important to MAKE ALONE
2. Some TRIALS are too hard to BEAR ALONE
3. Some TEMPTATIONS are too strong to RESIST ALONE.

When it comes to decisions, trials, and temptations, would you say you generally face these things alone or involve others? What tends to keep you back from involving others? What changes do you need to make? What is your next step?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Reflect on what you have learned or what God has put on your heart this week. Spend time in worship and praise to God for what He has done.

BETTER TOGETHER: I Need a Stranger

June 27, 2021

Week 4 Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ: [Matthew 7:1-5](#)

REFLECT: Where has judgment kept you from engaging with strangers? How could strangers help you see your spiritual blind spots?

PRAY: Confess the judgment in your heart against strangers to God. Be specific. Ask God to bring a stranger into your life who could help reveal your spiritual blind spots.

Day 2-

READ: [Matthew 25:31-46](#)

REFLECT: How does your willingness to take in a stranger reflect your heart toward Christ? Reflect on verse 45 – what kind of feelings does this verse stir up in you? How might you take action to love “the least of these” in the future?

PRACTICE: Imagine every stranger you interact with today is Jesus in disguise. How will that change the way you interact with them?

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: “[Would You Let a Stranger Live With You?](#)”- an article by Lisa Chan

Day 3-

READ: [Matthew 5:43-48](#)

REFLECT: Why is it essential to go out of your way to love and greet those who you are not friends with? How can you be more attentive to greeting strangers in your life?

PRAY: Pray for the people in your life who are hardest to love. Ask God to give them good things (be specific!). Pray that God would show you how to love them like he loves them.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

PRACTICE: Who is the “stranger” within your church who you could invite into your life? Make a plan to engage them and ask someone right now to hold you accountable to it.

Day 4-

READ: [Romans 15:5-7](#)

REFLECT: Why do you think Paul names endurance and encouragement as the traits of God that grant Christians the ability to live in harmony? What does it actually look like to “welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you” in your life?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Praise God for welcoming you, just as you were, into his family! Confess any selfishness or sin that has caused you to not welcome others. Ask God to give you the endurance and encouragement it takes to live in harmony with everyone.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: “[Everyone You Meet Will Live Forever](#)” - an article by Matt Chandler

Day 5-

READ: [Philippians 2:1-4](#)

REFLECT: What would it look like to consider a stranger more important than yourself? How can you look out for the interest of strangers? Be as practical as possible!

PRACTICE: Choose one of your practical answers from the reflection questions, and ask God for the courage to do it today!