Practicing Jesus’ Way: Scripture

*“Renewing our minds and developing a biblical imagination”*

***Jesus’ Way***

 **Thoughts and perspective shaped by Scripture.**

The Word of God is foundational in following Jesus and practicing Jesus’ way of living. Jesus *is* the Word (John 1). And Scripture is God’s word. And Jesus practiced Scripture. Many times in the gospel accounts, Jesus responded to confrontations with quotes from the Old Testament. He knew it well enough to quote it from memory. Jesus also frequently used imagery and ideas from the Old Testament when he spoke, revealing that his perspective and imagination were thoroughly shaped by Scripture. This same Old Testament familiarity and shaping are evident in the other New Testament authors. Scripture was as important for them as it is for us. But as important as Scripture is in our lives, it is *not* our source of life – that is only Jesus (John 5).

***Embracing Jesus’ Way***

 **Reading/listening.**

There’s no alternative to the regular practice of reading through the whole Bible. A verse here or there is similar to watching a few seconds of a new movie – it doesn’t mean very much if we don’t know the whole story. In reading/listening to the whole Bible, we come across things that we didn’t know we needed to hear from God. We grow in perspective and wisdom as we see how God is working to bring the whole story together as well as how He works in people’s lives along the way. We become a more discerning people in our daily lives.

 **Memorization & Meditation.**

In memorization and meditation, we intentionally practice thinking about Scripture. We open ourselves to what God has *spoken*, which then becomes a word He is *speaking*. Along with reading, this practice helps Scripture become a lens through which we bring our world into focus in big and small ways. When we memorize Scripture, we have passages at our disposal at all times and can bring them to mind at any time, just like Jesus did.

 **Study.**

Studying is a more intellectual aspect of practicing Scripture involving *learning* and *submitting*. We *submit* our own ideas to *learn* what Scripture actually meant to its authors and audiences and then what it means to us today. We *submit* ourselves to others from whom we can *learn* (1 Timothy 2). Resources for study include the teachings of others – sermons, books, etc. In our highly academic culture, it is worth remembering, however, that James said “Not many of you should be teachers” (James 3). The capacity to teach is a misguided priority. Christlikeness is the goal even of study.

 **Getting Started.**

* Reading Suggestion: 3/3 Monday-Friday. (3 Chapters in the Old Testament and the New Testament each week day.) This gets you through almost the entire Old Testament in one year and the New Testament 3 times.
* Memorization/Meditation Suggestion: Pick one meaningful passage to memorize. See how many times each day you can bring it to mind and adjust your thoughts and actions based on how the passage speaks to your immediate circumstances.

 **Keys to remember:**

* Scripture is foundational, but has no life for us. Only Jesus is life. (John 5)
* Scripture is an important means and *the* standard for the renewal of our minds (Romans 12).
* Ultimately, we practice Scripture to *see and think like Jesus* that we might *act more like Jesus*.