

# trinitychurch

OF THE NAZARENE

## Devotional Reading Guide

September 30 - October 27, 2019

James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter,  
Psalms 111-120



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## **About this Guide**

This monthly devotional is designed to guide our reading through every book of the Bible between 2018-2019.

Each week, we will read several chapters of Scripture. You are encouraged to spread out this reading by incorporating it into your daily devotional practices. Remember, this is not homework we are obliged to complete, it is spiritual formation that we make time to invest in. God wants to meet with you!

Two pages are set aside in this booklet for each week's reading. The first page offers a brief devotional reflection to help you begin thinking about how to apply the reading.

The second page is devoted to your own reflections. Questions are provided to help you engage the reading both thoughtfully and personally. However, do not limit yourself to these questions or to the space provided: allow the Holy Spirit to guide how you engage and respond to God's Word.

Thank you for joining us on this journey. May God bless you as you read God's Word more and more!

## **Growing Together**

God's Word is meant to be studied together. While we hope that this devotional guide will be a valuable tool to your personal study of Scripture, we also hope that you will join us in continuing to reflect on God's Word at Trinity each week.

On Sundays, our morning and evening Worship Celebrations will provide more detailed teaching about the passages that you have read. They will also be a space for us to ask questions and reflect on how God is calling us to respond to God's Word.

Weekly Connect Group meetings and Bible Studies also present a great opportunity to regularly reflect with sisters and brothers in Christ on passages as they are preached in worship. If you would like more information on how to get connected, please contact our church office:

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## **Prayer of Illumination**

*(Can be said prior to Bible reading)*

Collect for Purity: *Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## **September 30-October 6: James**

### *Faith Without Action Is Dead*

Imagine you decide to have a picnic with your friend. It's a beautiful day and you pack your lunch with excitement. You look forward to being outside, enjoying the sun, and talking with your friend. You're so excited, in fact, that you decide to walk to the park.

On the way, you pass a man on the side of the road. He has a gaunt face and he's plainly not eaten well recently. Had he eaten at all? Beside him is a worn cardboard sign that must have been used to ask for help, but the man isn't holding it up anymore. Maybe he's been ignored for so long that he feels invisible...

What do you do next?

That's the kind of question that James asks the early recipients of his letter, and that's the kind of question God asks us:

Do our actions reflect the faith we profess in Christ?

Do our lives actually look like Jesus?

We all know that our actions reflect our character. What we do is a reflection of what we actually believe. Think about how the Pharisees objected to Jesus healing on the Sabbath. These religious leaders prided themselves on following the law—a law that was meant to guide Israel to love God and love other people. How hypocritical was it to profess faith in a God of love while simultaneously objecting to healing?

Have you ever noticed hypocrisy in the world? How did it make you feel? Have you ever noticed hypocrisy in yourself?

As you read the letter of James, what is God saying to you? What comes to your mind as you think about the intersection of your faith and your actions?

## Questions for Reflection

How can you thank God for this Word that you have read?

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What do these passages teach us about God?

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What do these passages teach us about humanity?

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Write down a verse that stood out to you from the book of James.  
How can you keep that verse with you this week?

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Was anything about the reading confusing to you? If so, what questions might you want to ask to help bring understanding?

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How is God calling you to respond to what you have read?

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## Memory Verse of the Week

*Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

— James 2:15-17 (NIV)

## **October 7-13: 1 Peter**

### *Good Overcomes Evil*

We like to protect ourselves, don't we? Self-preservation is assumed throughout human cultures around the world. We all acknowledge that no one should be bullied or abused, so we encourage self-defense. If you push me, I'll push you. If you hit me, I'll hit you back. If you don't respect me, I won't respect you.

We can see self-preservation all around us: from children fighting on a playground to the international relationships between countries in conflict. Self-preservation and self-defense make sense. After all, if we don't stop thieves, won't they go on stealing? We *should* stand up against injustice. We *should* work to prevent abuse. Leviticus 24:19-20 even says that a person who injures someone else should receive the same injury in return: an eye for eye. Such fairness is naturally attractive to us.

And yet, the apostle Peter reminds us of something amazingly countercultural: "When they hurled their insults at [Jesus], He did not retaliate; when he suffered, He made no threats. Instead He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly." In fact, though Jesus could have saved Himself, He didn't. Though He could have defended Himself, He didn't. And He redefined those Levitical laws too: Do not resist an evil person. Love your enemy.

Peter repeatedly encourages Christians to follow in the footsteps of Christ. Repay evil with blessing (3:9). Do good deeds among those who accuse you (2:12). Peter knew that encountering the goodness of Christ in Christians can lead others to glorify God. So, the apostle also says, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have," (3:15). We are to do this with gentleness and respect. Are you ready to answer evil with good? Are you ready to tell others about your hope?

## Questions for Reflection

How can you thank God for this Word that you have read?

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What do these passages teach us about God?

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What do these passages teach us about humanity?

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Prayerfully write down the reason for your hope in Christ. Is that easy or difficult for you? Invite God into this conversation.

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Was anything about the reading confusing to you? If so, what questions might you want to ask to help bring understanding?

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How is God calling you to respond to what you have read?

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## Memory Verse of the Week

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. — 1 Peter 2:9-10 (NASB)*

## **October 14-20: 2 Peter**

### *The Grace and Patience of God*

When I was younger, I developed a pretty poor understanding of God and of salvation. I certainly believed in God, but I didn't really know who God was. I knew that I had to ask for forgiveness when I sinned, but I didn't really understand what God's grace was.

As a teenager, I had a sense that God would damn anyone who didn't ask to be forgiven for every sin that they had committed. As wrong as I was, I suppose that made sense on some level: all sin is evil and God can't let evil into eternity. But my view of God was woefully incongruent with Scripture. I didn't really see a patient God of love and grace; I saw a rigid God who wouldn't hesitate to smite you if you disobeyed.

I bring this story up because 2 Peter could have dispelled all these misconceptions about God. Peter says something extraordinarily profound: God want's to save people! God wants "everyone to come to repentance." How amazing is that! This phrase actually echoes 1 Timothy 2:4 and it presents a stark contrast to what I had believed as a teenager. God wasn't waiting around to judge nor condemn me. God wanted to save me! God wants me to come home to God. God is patiently waiting.

I wonder: Do we act as though God wants everyone to come to repentance? Do we treat people as though God loves them? As though God wants to save them? Would our actions and language change if we treated people as though they were Christ?

I know that I often fail to treat others as Christ calls me to treat them, and I also know that God has shown incredible grace to me. God is patient and God wants all people to come to repentance. Let's prayerfully be on the lookout for ways God wants us to tell others the Good News of our savior, Jesus Christ.



## Questions for Reflection

How can you thank God for this Word that you have read?

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What do these passages teach us about God?

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What do these passages teach us about humanity?

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Do you need to extend God's grace to someone in your life?

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Was anything about the reading confusing to you? If so, what questions might you want to ask to help bring understanding?

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How is God calling you to respond to what you have read?

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## Memory Passage of the Week

*But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

— 2 Peter 3:8-9 (NIV)

## **October 21-27: Psalms 111-120**

### *Lighting the Way*

When I was first dating my wife, I did a lot of driving. I lived on Vandenberg AFB, but she lived in Lompoc. So, as often as I could, I would drive the fifteen minutes into town to visit her. Naturally, I always stayed as long as our parents would let me, and that often meant that it was pretty late by the time I finally drove home. And there's one thing we all know about our weather on the central coast: it can produce a lot of fog when it wants to.

During some weeks, it seemed like every time I opened Felisha's front door, I was confronted with a wall of fog that prevented me from even seeing my car on the street. Needless to say, she made me text her when I got home safely.

Driving in the fog is a very interesting experience. Areas you know well become mysterious. The inability to see into the distance can lead to feeling confined. It's especially scary to drive in at night.

Life is often like driving into the fog. We know we're going forward, but we don't really recognize our surroundings. All we can do is watch carefully and follow the road as close as we can. Still, we can't do either of those things without light.

Psalms 119:105 tells us that God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. That's a pretty profound statement, isn't it? It also gives us a necessary change in perspective. Our culture is constantly telling us how we should plan for our future, to pursue our goals and dreams. Yet we confess that our future is not in our own hands, but in God's. We may not even know what tomorrow brings because sometimes we just can't see farther than a few feet ahead of us. But God's Word is a light that ensures we'll never fall off the path if we continue to trust God's direction.

## **Questions for Reflection**

How can you thank God for this Word that you have read?

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What do these passages teach us about God?

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What do these passages teach us about humanity?

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How has Scripture proven to be a light in your life before?

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Was anything about the reading confusing to you? If so, what questions might you want to ask to help bring understanding?

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How is God calling you to respond to what you have read?

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## **Memory Verse of the Week**

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

— Psalm 119:105 (NASB)

## Our Logos Journey

In January of 2018, Trinity Church of the Nazarene began a two year journey to deeply engage God's Word. We chose to use the Greek term, *logos*, to name this journey because *logos* literally means "word." In the Christian tradition, *logos* not only refers to God's Word—the Holy Scriptures of the Bible—but also to God's Word made flesh: Jesus Christ.

We are convinced that God wants us to invest ourselves more deeply in God's *logos*. As we draw near to Christ and invest ourselves in the study of Scripture, we know that God transform us to better love God, each other, and others in our community.

Over these two years, we will be reading all 66 books of the Bible, engaging them in Worship, and studying them through weekly Bible Studies and Connect Groups. This guide will direct our reading every month, offer some devotional thoughts each week, and encourage space for reflection.

We hope that you will join us on this exciting *Logos* journey!



*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God. — John 1:1*