

How to Read God's Word Contemplatively as a Group

- ◇ We'll start with prayer, then silence. Relax and let go of the busyness and junk of the day.
- ◇ We'll read the Bible passage aloud one time. Then we'll be quiet for a while as we individually listen to God's leading and to His Word.
- ◇ Write the passage (if you want to).

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- ◇ We'll read the passage aloud several more times.

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- ◇ After a little while, we'll begin to talk about what we sense God is showing us in this passage.
 - ◇ Try to limit your comments to what God is showing you *right here, right now*. Try to avoid "retweeting" something you heard in another Bible study or sermon in the past.
 - ◇ We'll start with sharing 1-2 words of insight. Then as we feel led, we'll share a sentence or two.

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- ◇ Let these questions guide your thoughts:
 - ✓What does it say about God?
 - ✓What does it say about mankind?
 - ✓What does it say about living to please God?
 - ✓What can you change in your life to obey these words from God?
 - ✓Does someone you know need to hear about this passage?

How to Read God's Word Contemplatively On Your Own

- ◇ Quiet your heart and mind. Simply ask God to block out (and help you to block out) thoughts that don't relate to what He wants to say to you right now. Create your own sense of "holy space."

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- ◇ Concentrate on the verse by reading it slowly (or listening to it being read). Focus on each word.
 - ◇ If you want to, copy the verse word-for-word. It helps you slow down and appreciate each word.
 - ◇ Jot down words or concepts that you begin to see, connections that you can make in the verses (repeated concepts/words, words that "jump out at you," etc.).
 - ◇ Read the verse silently in your heart as if you are having a one-on-one conversation with God. Read slowly, lingering over each word.
 - ◇ Ask God about the verse. "What does this part mean to me, Lord?" "Give me insight." "Fill me with your understanding, Lord."

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- ◇ Personalize it by saying the verse/praying it back to the Lord. For example, "Lord, I want to rejoice always; help me to pray continually and give thanks in all circumstances...."