



## CONNECT BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING

- How have you been finding reading the Bible?
- Did God speak to you at all this week as you were reading his word?
- If you want, you can watch and discuss the Bible Project Video on the Biblical ideas of sacrifice and atonement—it's a great explanation of why holiness matters! <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/sacrifice-and-atonement/>.

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## PRACTICE LEARN TO SEE AND SHARE THE BEAUTY OF SCRIPTURE

Whether in the story of Exodus, the poetry of Isaiah, or the letters of Peter, Scripture is clear that we are *priests*. God has freed us, just like he freed the Israelites. He's called us to be "a holy priesthood," to reflect his holiness by our holiness.

How should that change the way we read God's word? Scripture is meant to transform us, to help us become more like the holy God we reflect to the world. We read Scripture *attentively*, because we become like what we pay attention to. As priests, we want to think, feel, speak, and act like God. And so, like a child learns by paying attention to her parent, we come to God's word attentive and ready to learn.

Depending on who you are, you'll pay attention differently—but the important thing is to pay attention. If that means taking notes, take notes! If that means painting a picture of a biblical story, get out your watercolors! (Studying Scripture through making art is as old as Christianity itself). Half of learning to read the Bible is learning how you pay attention best. Take twenty minutes with your group and do the following exercise, to give people a sense of what a joy paying attention to Scripture can be.

First, read Exodus 12:1-42 out loud, and pray that God would show you the beauty of his word. Then, take fifteen minutes to each silently pay attention to this passage. People should feel very free to study the passage however seems most likely to hold their attention; we've provided some possible ways to approach the passage below. Once the fifteen minutes are over, come back together and discuss what you saw!

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## SOME IDEAS . . . *WAYS CHRISTIANS HAVE FOUND BEAUTY IN GOD'S WORD*

- Visualize what's going on. If you'd like, imagine asking Christ about what you're seeing.
- Journal questions about the passage. Ask God about anything that confuses you in the passage, or any way that the Scripture doesn't seem to line up with your experience of the world.
- Journal praise to God for what's going on in the passage. Use poetry if you want.
- Select a single chunk of the passage and meditate on it; close your eyes and consider it deeply, repeat it to yourself, consider each word individually and why it might be put there.
- Chart out the structure of the passage. Do you see patterns? Repetitions? Any breaking of the patterns? Why might those be there?
- Try to memorize any verses that particularly stand out to you. Try to get them word for word; it will make you pay more attention to the word choices. If this helps, consider trying to memorize a longer passage (or even a whole book!)
- Look for something in the passage that doesn't make sense on a first reading, or which is surprising. Try to make sense of it.
- Pray, using the passage as a starting place.
- Repent, using the passage as a starting place.
- Draw a scene from the passage. As you do, ask yourself: what details am I adding? Why? Are they hinted at in the passage? (It's fine if not; but it's a helpful question, and will make you notice things you wouldn't otherwise).
- Write a song or poem using imagery from this passage.
- Ask yourself: why did God put this here?
- Ask yourself: Does this passage remind you of anything else you've read in Scripture? Why might that connection be there?
- Ask yourself: how does this passage point towards Jesus?

"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another." (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Our hope for you is that you will increasingly see the glory and beauty of God when you read Scripture, and that you'll be transformed by it. We want this for you not only because knowing God is the greatest joy life has to offer, but also because the world around you needs to see God through you.

Pray with us this week that you will find the face of God as you study his word, and that you'll be transformed more and more into his image. Take a moment to pray for one another (as priests should!), and include in your prayers the request that each of you encounter God this week, in Scripture and in prayer.

### **Discipleship Check-In**

- Have you read your Bible consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're praying to share Jesus with this week, and what's one way you can love them well?