

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

DEVO

JULY 7 - 11, 2025





Read **Hebrews 4:12**

Grounded in Scripture

If you grew up in the church in the 20th century, you may have learned this Sunday School chorus:

“The B-I-B-L-E, yes, that’s the book for me!
I stand alone on the Word of God, the B-I-B-L-E!”

While the lyrics don’t tell the whole story (Jesus is also called the Word of God), being grounded in Scripture is key to a healthy Christian faith. The words within this holy book are foundational to our beliefs and are a source of wisdom, strength, and encouragement.

The term “grounding” is a trendy concept in the field of wellness. It refers to being connected to the earth by spending time outdoors; taking off our shoes and making physical contact with the grass and dirt. The theory is that being grounded in this way is good for our overall physical and mental health.

Similarly, being grounded in Scripture is essential for our spiritual health. In spiritual terms, we can think of grounding as being firmly rooted and established in our faith. One of the ways this happens is through reading and meditating on Scripture. When we immerse ourselves in the Bible and invite the Holy Spirit to help us understand

and apply it, we develop a strong personal connection to God. This happens as we study Scripture on our own, as we talk about Scripture in small groups, and through the public reading of Scripture in church services.

Mary Hill, the founding president of what is now Azusa Pacific University, was a Bible scholar and teacher. In addition to her leadership responsibilities, she taught Bible classes. But her understanding of the Bible was not just academic. One of her mottos was: “The whole Bible for the whole life.” She understood that spending time studying and meditating on Scripture was essential for a grounded spiritual life.

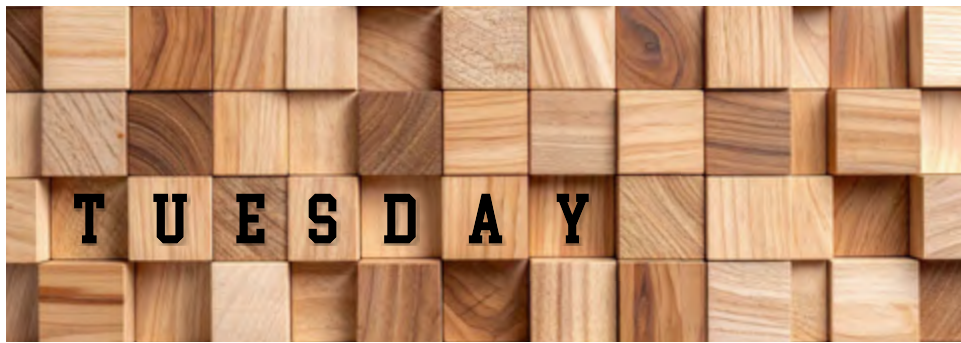
REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

To what extent is your faith grounded in Scripture? This week take the opportunity to spend more time reading Scripture than you normally do. (One way to do this is to read the full chapters of the verses referenced in this devo.)

PRAYERS

Emre and International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES)

Praise for Emre’s upcoming visit to Glenkirk! Coming with him will be Pam, a long-time friend and colleague not only of Emre’s but also of Pastor Tim Fearer, our interim pastor before Tim Peck came to us. Please pray for safe and secure travels for Emre and for Pam.



Read **Hebrews 12:1-2**

Scripture as Story

People approach the Bible in different ways. In my grandmother's home, a little box shaped like a loaf of bread sat on the kitchen table. Inside were cards with Scripture verses printed on them. Each morning she would pick a random card to meditate on throughout the day.

My grandmother used the Bible as a source of daily inspiration. Others view the Bible as a guidebook, a source of spiritual truth, or even a rulebook. The Bible does inspire, guide, reveal truth, and provide behavioral and moral guardrails to follow. But the overarching theme is the story of God as a four-act play:

“Creation—God created the world and everything in it and it was good. When God created humans, they were made in God's image and God said they were *“VERY Good!”* (Genesis 1:31, emphasis added). The Earth was full of God's *shalom*, ... the kind of peace in which everything works according to God's intention. ...

“Disruption [Fall]—Humans rejected God's rule and leadership [by deliberately disobeying God's commands]. Their actions declared they believed they were wiser than their Creator. This resulted in sin and brokenness entering creation and disrupting everything. Every inch of the Earth was touched by the brokenness. ... [The result was] physical and spiritual death for humanity.

“Redemption—[God] is angry towards the sin and brokenness, but so deeply loves creation [and implements] a master plan for redeeming the world. ... Through the person of Jesus Christ, God comes to renew the world and restore God's people. The death and resurrection of Jesus inaugurate and unlock the power of the Kingdom of God and humans are invited to join in the mission of redemption.

“Restoration—God has promised to renew the *whole* world, and the Bible gives us a peak into this glorious future. The restoration of all things will take place when Jesus returns to ... usher in righteousness and justice. ... God's perfect *shalom/peace* will cover the earth and God will purge this world of evil once and for all.” (Stephanie O'Brien)

This is why the author of Hebrews speaks of Jesus as *“the Pioneer and Perfector”* (NIV) or *“the Author and Finisher (NKJ) of our faith”* (12:2).

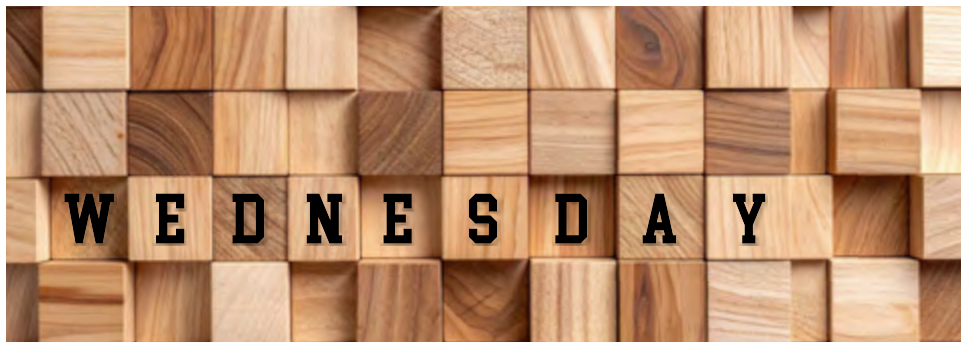
REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Reading the Bible in light of the bigger picture helps us recognize our role in the story more clearly. How do you fit into God's story? What are some ways you can participate more fully in God's redemptive work?

PRAYERS

Emre and International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES)

Ask the Lord to watch over Emre's wife, Feven, and 2-year-old son, Joah, while Emre is away. Pray for the university campus leaders whom Emre meets with regularly for training and spiritual encouragement. They're busy preparing for a fall conference.



Read **Romans 12:1-2**

Reading for Transformation

The saying “garbage in, garbage out” (GIGO) is often used to remind us of the importance of what we eat. What we put into our bodies affects how our bodies function and influences our general health. The same principle can be applied to our minds. It is staggering to consider the amount and variety of data our minds are exposed to on a daily basis.

In Romans 12:2 the Apostle Paul tells Christians, “*Do not conform to the ... world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*” Conforming and transforming are usually not words that we use on a daily basis. Paul is reminding us that what our minds consume and the things our minds are exposed to impact our thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, and, eventually, our actions. If we aren’t careful, we can be conformed to the world without even trying!

When we commit to follow Christ, we make a conscious decision to do things God’s way—to be “in the world” but not “of the world.” Paul tells us that this will require a transformation in our thinking, a renewing of the mind. This transformation is put into motion the moment we give our lives to Christ. At that moment, the Holy Spirit empowers us to change and grow to be more like Jesus.

One of the most effective ways to transform our minds is through the daily habit of reading the Bible. Studying, meditating, and memorizing Scripture will transform our thoughts and renew our minds. This is a spiritual discipline that is developed with time and effort. In his book, *Life Together*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes: “Often we are so burdened and overwhelmed with other thoughts, images, and concerns that it may take a long time before God’s Word has swept all else aside and come through.”

Everything we need to know to live a transformed life can be found in the Bible. But in order for it to renew our minds, thoughts, and actions, we need to immerse ourselves in the written Word on a regular basis.

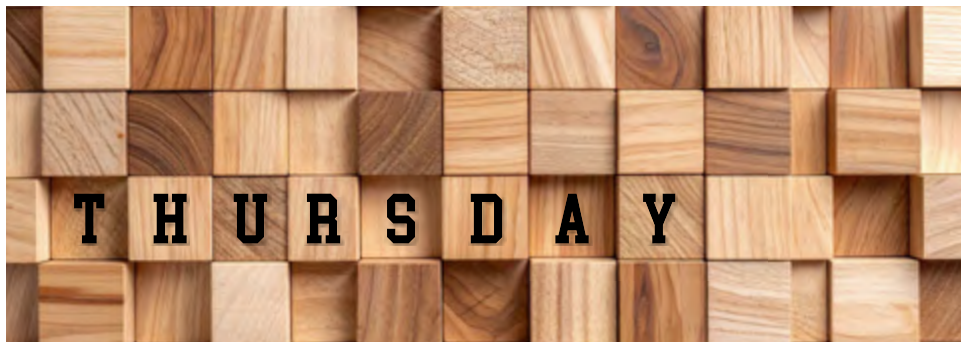
REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Consider an area of your life in which you are conforming to the world more than to God’s standards. Can you find a passage of Scripture that would help you move towards transformation in that area?

PRAYERS

Emre and International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES)

Because Emre’s wife was born in Netherlands, Emre needs a “family visa” to remain and serve the Lord in Turkey, despite having been born there, married there, and having a child there. Waiting for this visa has been long and difficult. Please pray that it will come through.



Read **Colossians 3:16**

Reading for Spiritual Growth

In the early 2000s, church consultants Greg Hawkins and Cally Parkinson surveyed 1000 churches of varying sizes to determine what ministries and activities help people become fully devoted followers of Christ. They discovered that personal reflection on Scripture had the most impact by a large margin. They write, "... the power of being immersed in the Bible is undeniable. ... Reading and reflecting on the Scriptures is critical to spiritual growth."

They also discovered that fewer than half of the church attenders they surveyed open their Bibles every day, even those who were judged to be more spiritually mature. This hints at how challenging it can be to make Scripture reading a daily habit. Most of us experience seasons of life where we do well with reading the Bible and seasons when it is more difficult. Here are a few strategies that can be helpful in making daily Bible reading a regular part of daily life.

- Take the guesswork out of what to read. If you're reading this booklet, you've already discovered the value of a devotional or Bible reading plan. An excellent online resource is Lectio 365, a free devotional app that guides you through prayer and meditation on Scripture based on weekly topical themes.

If you have more time, consider The Bible Project, which creates studies based on biblical themes. Both resources are based on sound theology that is in alignment with our church's beliefs and values.

- Take the guesswork out of when to read. Try pairing your daily Bible reading with another daily habit. Maybe you read while having your morning coffee, or listen to the Bible on audio during a daily walk, or read for a set period of time after eating dinner.
- Join a Bible study or small group. One of the best ways to reflect on Scripture is through conversation with other believers. In addition to getting insight from others, this adds accountability and structure to our reading habit.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to be your reading Partner. Before you begin, pray that the Spirit will guide your understanding and reveal the truth found in what you are reading.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Think about your own experiences of reading the Bible. What gets in the way, and what helps you stick with it? Would one of today's strategies help you to be more consistent?

PRAYERS

Emre and International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES)

Antalya Evangelical Church, where Emre is on staff, has initiated ongoing training for potential church leaders. The focus is on developing Christlike character and deepening Bible knowledge. May God use this training to boost the church's growth and outreach.



Read **Psalm 119:11**

Scripture as Food for the Soul

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible and the theme of all 176 verses is the value of Scripture. Over and over the psalmist declares a commitment to follow God's law and lists the benefits of doing so. In verse 11 we read, *"I have hidden Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against You"* (NIV). Other modern versions of the Bible translate *"hidden"* as *"treasured"* (CSB) or *"stored up"* (ESV). How do we hide, treasure, or store up Scripture?

In addressing this question, Eugene Peterson suggests that we think of Scripture as food to be savored like a good meal. We take our time with it, we taste it, we chew it. We let it digest and do its work in us. One of my previous pastors liked to compare this to gnawing on a section of Scripture like a dog gnaws on a bone! Peterson suggests a four-step method: read the text, meditate on the text, pray the text, and live the text. In other words, we read the Bible differently than we read the news, a textbook, or a novel. We read it in a way that allows the Holy Spirit to settle the words deep in our hearts and minds.

There is a place for other types of Scripture reading; for example, when we are looking for what the Bible says about a topic, learning

about doctrine, or studying the history of the early church. But that kind of reading only gives us head knowledge. In order to deepen our relationship with God and learn how to live in a way that does not conform to this world, we need to read both with our heads and with our hearts.

The author of Hebrews recognized this ability of Scripture to change us, writing, *"For the Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart"* (Hebrews 4:12).

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Take a few minutes to read Psalm 119:1-11, using the four-step method. Read the text. Read it again, slowly digesting the ideas (meditate). Then pray through it—ask God to make it true in your own life. Consider how you might better live out what you have read.

PRAYERS

[Emre and International Fellowship of Evangelical Students \(IFES\)](#)

Please pray for Emre's work with the brothers who've established a media studio for production and/or translation of Christian video content for both children and adults in Turkey. Finally, Emre and his teammates are conveying the story of Jesus in their own language. Emre is also writing and singing worship songs.

Sources



- Ken Otto and Gail Wallace, *Mary Hill: Educator, Missionary, Pioneer* (Azusa, CA: Azusa Pacific University, 2018).
- Stephanie O'Brien's blog, "The 4 Parts of the Metanarrative," can be found at <https://millcitychurch.com/metanarrative/>. (This "Four-Act" analogy is widely used.) The version in Tuesday's devo is adapted by Stephanie O'Brien, Lead Pastor of Mill City Church, Minneapolis, MN).
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (San Francisco, CA: HarperOne Publishing, 2009).
- Greg L. Hawkins and Cally Parkinson, *MOVE: What 1,000 Churches Reveal about Spiritual Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011).
- Lectio 365 Devotional App: www.24-7prayer.com/resource/lectio-365/
- The Bible Project: www.bibleproject.com
- Eugene Peterson, *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2006).

These devotionals are written by a team of Glenkirk volunteers who represent a range of beliefs within the evangelical spectrum. As such, some of the expressed views may not necessarily represent those of pastoral leadership. If you find yourself challenged by a devo, explore why that might be and, should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Kate Wallace Nunneley at KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org. If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Kate.

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