

the IRRELIGIOUS LIFE

experiencing the inside-out spirituality of Jesus

Week 8: *EATING SCRIPTURE*

INTRODUCTION – Living In The Real World

“*Have you not read...?*”... Matthew 12:3, 5; 19:4; 21:42; 22:31;
Mark 12:10, 26; Luke 6:3; 10:25-29

UTILITARIAN READING – HOW NOT TO READ THE BIBLE FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH
We stunt our growth when we just use the Bible as a tool for...

1. Intellectual _____.
2. Moral _____.
3. Personal _____.

The Bible is written as a STORY because our _____ are a story. If we cut up the Bible into bits and pieces of information we have made it less real, less connected to our own lives.

But the Bible is not just a story – it is _____ story – the meta-narrative we find ourselves in. You have never met a nonparticipant in this story!

JESUS SCENE – The Alpha & Omega

Luke 10:26; Revelation 1:8-11

John 1:1-14; 5:39-40; John 6:27-69; Hebrews 1:1-3

The Bible is a portal, a window through which we can most clearly see Jesus, the Word of God enfleshed. Jesus is the _____ God uses to write his message of love to us.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE #7 – Eating (Spiritual Reading)

Jeremiah 15:16; Ezekiel 3:1-3

Revelation 10:8-11

Matthew 18:3

READING THE BIBLE FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION – SOME IDEAS...

1. LEARN the context (from the Bible, other books, and other Christ-followers). This is an ongoing task done best in spiritual community.
2. ASK God to guide you through each experience of Bible reading.
3. ENTER the text, using your imagination to walk through the story, experiencing the emotion, allowing the questions raised to become as real as any answers you're searching for. Allow your imagination to help you "rehydrate" the text, approximating the original form of the story, complete with smells, sights, and sounds.
4. PRAY through the text, reading a bit, talking to God about it, reading some more, etc..
5. MEDITATE on the text's main point of contact with your spirit.
6. ENVISION yourself living out the key lessons of the text in your life.
7. INVITE God to remind you of this vision throughout your day.

CONCLUSION – Balancing Eating With Exercise

BEWARE: Reading without application is like diet without _____. The very food that nourishes your body will eventually make you fat and unhealthy. Just eating more is not necessarily better!

Matthew 7:24

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS...

WARMING UP...

1. After briefly reviewing this week's message, share one thing that most challenged, convicted, or encouraged you.

LOOK TO THE BOOK...

2. Read **John 6:27-69**, but differently than usual. Have three people, one after the other, read through this passage *slowly* from three different translations while everyone else closes their eyes and puts themselves in the scene, listening to Jesus and noticing the reactions of those around him (see #3 – "ENTER the text", above)... a) What was your experience like *listening* to the words as early Christians would have done, rather than *reading* them as we usually do today? b) What part stands out the most to you from this passage? Why? c) In the context of first-century Israel, how are Jesus' words in **verse 29** a rather irreligious statement? d) What do you think Jesus means by encouraging people to *eat* him? (Compare **v. 40** with **v. 54**; also see **Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4; John 4:32-34**.) e) What do you think might be the significance of the order of Peter's words in **verse 69** – *believing* first, then *knowing*? How is that true in our lives?

SO WHAT?...

3. How would your life be different if you applied the principles of Jesus' teaching in this passage? Is that something you want? Can you imagine it? Now pray for it together.

Bruxy Cavey @ THE MEETING HOUSE – Sunday, March 12 / 19, 2006

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