

# LISTEN: TRAINING GUIDE

## *Abiding Practices for Missional Communities*

*Listen: Intentionally tuning our entire being to hear from God in his Word that we may intimately know him, love him, and be changed by his redemptive plan for our lives.*

### WHY WE LISTEN

Listening to the Scriptures is a daily duty and delight for believers that shapes us into the image of Christ. The word “duty” may bring up negative connotations in your mind. However, obedience to the Scriptures is the fruit of encountering the living God through Listening to the Scriptures. The good Father gives his children this command early in the story such that they may freely worship him and continually speak of his greatness. In [Deuteronomy 6:4-9](#), God says,

*“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”*

So how are we to love God with all of our heart, soul, and might? This command tells us that we are to love God through getting his words into our hearts. We come to love God by intentionally tuning our entire being to him through the frequency of his Word. We delight to store up his words in our hearts and speak of it to our families and neighbors for the joyful fruit that it will bear.

We Listen to the Scriptures to be transformed by God through the Scriptures by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul reminds us that we are not to be conformed to the world but transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we may discern the will of God ([Romans 12:2](#)). We do this by setting our minds on Christ, seeking his Kingdom first, laboring with the Holy Spirit to crucify our fleshly desires, and resting in Jesus. All of this sounds wonderful but we cannot do it apart from intentionally tuning our entire being to hear from God; to know him, to love him, and to submit to his redemptive plan for our lives.

As we intentionally Listen to the Scriptures, we continually find ourselves delighting in the Lord as we realize he is telling us the narrative of eternity and our place in his story. He made us, he loves us, he knows us, and he has written our story. With this in mind, we joyously echo [Psalm 119:103](#), “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” Our affections and appetites are transformed. Like a deer panting for water, our souls thirst for and are satisfied by the living God.

In Listening to the Scriptures, we are sustained by the glorious good news of the gospel. How marvelous and wonderful it is that the creator and sustainer of the universe would stoop down to make himself known to a wayward people so that we might know him and love him. From Genesis to Revelation, we hear the true story of a gracious and loving God who does exactly that. We ultimately know the Lord and ourselves better through Listening to the Scriptures.

### HOW WE LISTEN

One way we would encourage you and your Missional Community to Listen to the Scriptures together would be through the *Abiding Practice Journal* and the same Bible reading plan. By choosing a common reading plan, you can daily Listen to the same Scripture passages and discuss what you have heard in God’s Word.

We begin our time of Listening to the Scriptures individually with an “Emotions Check-In.” Essentially we ask, “What emotions am I currently experiencing and why?” Though feelings are not the foundation of our Listening, they are gifts from the Father to help us find an abundant Savior who satisfies our every need. This practice helps address any ways we might be tempted to believe a lie about what is true of God in light of the Scriptures.

After the “Emotions Check-In,” there are five questions with three primary goals: to reveal God’s nature, to reveal who we are and what we are to do, and then to grow in a gospel-driven community. These are some of the questions we ask of the Word:

- What has God done in these Scriptures?
- What is true of God in light of these things?
- What is true of me in light of these things?
- What am I to do in response?
- How can I engage God & others with these things?

For more information on these questions and how to Listen to the Scriptures individually, check out the introduction of the *Abiding Practice Journal*.

## Family Gatherings

A Missional Community is a family of servant missionaries sent to make disciples in the everyday stuff of life. It is important to emphasize that your Missional Community is not a Bible study. However, you will study the Scriptures together as a Missional Community family with the goal of obeying the Scriptures together. What does this look like on a practical level? We would suggest you mix it up and engage each of the following on a seasonal basis:

- Sermon Reflection Questions
- Scripture Memory & Meditation
- Study a book of the Bible

This list is not exhaustive but gives a great foundation for how to Listen to the Scriptures as an MC family.

## DNA Groups

The “D” in “DNA” refers to Discovering Jesus in the Scriptures. This is where our individual practice of Listening to the Scriptures becomes communal. When your DNA Group engages in Listening to the Scriptures together, we encourage you to use the “DNA Group Meeting Notes” section in the *Abiding Practice Journal*. There you will choose one chapter of the Scriptures to engage together and spend time slowly reading. From there, you can answer the same five questions as before. Finally, pray for the Spirit to help you apply them to your life and write out what he leads you to in the “Acting With Accountability” section of the journal.

## Neighborhoods To Nations

One way we can Listen to the Scriptures in this rhythm is by memorizing Scripture passages to aid in our evangelism efforts. Another way would be through financially supporting Bible translation efforts around the world so that those who do not have access to the Scriptures in their own language would have the chance to Listen to the Scriptures. Taking it a step further, your MC could begin Listening to the Scriptures with not-yet-believing neighbors or international students on local college campuses.

## LISTENING RESOURCES

We have plenty of resources that we would love to provide if you have any questions about how to practically do some of these things. Simply email us at [mc@summitcrossing.org](mailto:mc@summitcrossing.org).

### Recommended Sermons

[Listen](#) - Paul Whaley

[How to Find Gold in God's Word](#) - John Piper

### Recommended Books

[Living by the Book: The Art and Science of Reading the Bible](#) - Howard G. & William D. Hendricks

[How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth](#) - Douglas Stewart & Gordon Fee

### Recommended Articles

[Don't Just Read Your Bible](#) - Jonathan R. Bailey

[If You Love God, Listen to Him](#) - Jimmy Needham

### Recommended Resource

[Abiding Practice Journal](#) - Summit Crossing Community Church

## **SAMPLE COMMITMENT**

Below is a sample commitment that you may find useful as you seek to Listen to the Scriptures in your Missional Community. Please feel the freedom to use these ideas or come up with your own.

## **LISTENING COMMITMENT**

Missional Community Leaders: The Obamas and The Trumps

Date of Commitment: January 2023

Date to Reevaluate Commitment: June 2023

### **Commitment**

Our Missional Community is committed to Listening to the Scriptures together using the Chapter A Day Scripture reading plan and the *Abiding Practice Journal*.

### **Family Gatherings**

We will review the passage from that day as a group using the five questions in the *Abiding Practice Journal*.

### **DNA Groups**

We will Listen to the Scriptures by:

- Discussing what we have heard from the Lord as we have Listened individually
- Confessing sin the Lord has revealed to us through his Word
- Encouraging one another with gospel truth from the Word

### **Neighborhoods To Nations**

We will partner with missionaries sent from Summit Crossing who are currently working with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Africa.

- We will raise money each month to support their family.
- We will read their newsletter together during our next Family Gathering.

### **Conclusion**

Listening to the Scriptures is one of the most rewarding abiding practices we engage in both individually and communally. "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)). When our hearts are gripped by God through his Word, our actions reflect his nature. When we Listen to the Scriptures, we hear the very voice of God meeting us where we are. May we daily quieten our minds and hearts that we may hear from God and be transformed by God through Listening to the Scriptures.

**LISTENING COMMITMENT**

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