

As we REGROUP for fall, here are weekly readings and reflections that you can use individually and a Groups Guide to reorient all of life around the worship of Jesus Christ as Lord.

REGROUP: WORSHIP

SEPTEMBER 10

Our first Discipleship Priority this year is to re-orient all of life around the worship of Jesus Christ as Lord. In your daily times of worship this week let this question guide your prayers: Lord Jesus, where am I invited to turn to you today?

DAILY READINGS

The notes for these readings are adapted from the ESV Study Bible published by Crossway.

Monday: Exodus 20:3-6 and 1 John 5:21

You shall have no other gods. Yahweh demands exclusive covenant loyalty. As the one true God of heaven and earth, Yahweh cannot and will not tolerate the worship of any “other gods” (Ex. 22:20; 23:13, 24, 32); in other words, monotheism, the worship of the one true God, is the only acceptable belief and practice. before me. This Hebrew expression has been taken to mean “in preference to me,” or “in my presence,” or “in competition with me.”

Tuesday: Psalm 115:4-8 and Romans 1:21-23

The root sin is the failure to value God above all things, so that he is not honored and praised as he should be. Human beings are foolish, not in the sense that they are intellectually deficient but in their rejection of God’s lordship over their lives. ... Even brilliant people who do not honor God miss the whole purpose of life and are therefore fools.

Wednesday: Jonah 2:8-9 and 1 Corinthians 10:14

Those who pay regard to vain idols refers to the pagan sailors, who prayed each to his own god (Jonah 1:5), but it is also a message to Jonah’s idolatrous fellow Israelites. Ironically, these sailors ended up experiencing God’s steadfast love, while Jonah ended up in the sea. Sacrifice . . . vowed recalls the actions of the sailors (Jonah 1:16), whom Jonah is now like. Salvation belongs to the LORD is Jonah’s confession that God is the sovereign source of salvation.

Thursday: Habakkuk 2:18 and Galatians 4:8-9

The slavery that the Galatians are in danger of embracing again is not just a matter of forfeiting sonship but of abandoning the true God. They would be returning to false gods (Gal. 4:8), to worldly principles and structures (Gal. 4:9–10). It would be as if they had never even heard the gospel from Paul (Gal. 4:11). ... Those that by nature are not gods refers to the demonic spirits that controlled the Galatians’ former religious practice (cf. 1 Cor. 10:20). To know God . . . to be known by God implies a personal relationship with God.

Friday: Isaiah 44:9-20 and Galatians 5:19-21

All . . . all . . . all . . . together. A sweeping assertion, without a single exception. do not profit . . . profitable for nothing. Pagan culture, based on idolatry, brings no benefit to anyone; nor can it prevent God from keeping his promises. Their witnesses are the worshipers of idols, in contrast with “my witnesses” in Isa. 44: 8. put to shame . . . put to shame . . . put to shame. The nothingness of idols dooms their worshipers to disgrace.

Saturday

Review and reflect further on passages from this week, allowing God’s presence through the Holy Spirit to comfort or challenge you as you seek him.

GROUP GUIDE

*As you regroup this fall, take some time at the end of your meeting to review your calendar and commitments. There is a **Connect Group Kick-off** that that groups are invited to on Sunday, October 8 at 4pm. We will share a light meal and hear more from Pastor Laurie about the focus of sermons and worship this year and from Pastor Chris on next steps for Connect Groups to grow together following Jesus.*

Welcome (15 minutes)

This summer – what was a source of life and refreshment to you? Where did you experience challenge or loss?

Word – 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 (40 minutes)

As you read the passage out loud, imagine that you are one of the new converts in Thessalonica. What is Paul saying about you and your story of faith? How would you feel hearing these descriptions?

Read the passage out loud again, but this time listen from your own experience. Which of these descriptions describe you right now? Which do not describe you?

What do these verses say about God, God's Spirit or Jesus?

Pastor Laurie preached about worship as turning from idols to the Living and True God. Tim Keller defined an idol as "Anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give. If we take Christianity out of it, an idol is the thing that drives your life." Talk as a group about this Biblical idea of idolatry – the ways you can relate to this, the questions you still have, or the insight it offers into those things that absorb your heart and imagination more than God.

This week, is there something that you need to turn from in order to serve the living and true God? How will you do this?

She also preached about a life oriented around Jesus as a life marked by hope and holiness. Where do you need God's Spirit to strengthen you this week either in hope or in holiness?

Worship (20 minutes)

Close your discussion with a time for worship and prayer. You may want to read Psalm 115:4-8 together, and then pray for the places you each shared that you want to turn in practical ways this week away from idols and into the hope and holiness of Jesus.

Witness (15 minutes)

This time at the end of the meeting is an important closing. Take the last 15 minutes to look ahead to further meetings together, or ways you are planning to serve, people you want to invite or are praying for to know Jesus. This Sunday, as you regroup from the summer, you may want to talk about your calendar this fall and the commitments to meet together.