



Week 8-"Breathe"

At the beginning of a New Year we tend to look at the areas of our lives that we want to change and grow in. We seem to know that there are areas in our life that need to change. In this week's message we explore what Christianity teaches, not about how we can change ourselves, but how we can lean into how God changes us.

1. What stood out to you from the message?
2. What has been your primary experience with Bible reading and prayer?
3. Discuss the analogy that reading the Bible is like breathing in, and prayer is like breathing out, oxygenating your soul. In what ways does your soul need fresh oxygen?

Read 2 Corinthians 4:1, 7-8, 16-18

4. In what ways do you find yourself forgetting that God is with you, that His grace, and love defines who you are?
5. How could a shift from what you see, to the unseen help you when you feel overwhelmed and anxious?

Sometimes our human nature, or a moralistic Christianity can turn Bible reading and prayer into something that overwhelms and suffocates us. It isn't meant to tell us who to imitate or what we should do, it was never intended to be that way. When we can read it through the good news of Jesus (the Gospel) our hearts can remember that God sent His Son to do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

His word never changes and reminds us to breathe in His life, grace, and peace. Here is a helpful tool to help you when reading scripture:

When you read the Bible Pray, Read, Think, Write, Pray:

- **Pray and ask God to speak to you through His word.**
- **Read until something stands out: a question, thought, reminder...**
- **Think about what stood out to you with God.**
- **Write it down.**
- **Pray and ask God to help it become real to you.**

6. What lens do you tend to read the Bible through, the lens of who to imitate and what you should do, or through the lens of the Gospel?

7. In what ways does a Gospel centered approach to reading scripture help you see that the Bible is a gift to help you?

8. How can this group help encourage you to use scripture reading and prayer to improve the way you connect with God?

We all forget to breathe sometimes, the circumstances in our lives can be so overwhelming, and God has given us His word to remind us of who He is. Prayer allows us to improve our conscious contact with God, to know He is always with us. Dane Ortlund says: *“To read Scripture is to read of Christ. To read it is to hear his voice. And to hear his voice of comfort and counsel is to hear an invitation to become the human being God has destined you to be.”*