

BIBLE READING PLAN

to begin to understand why Foster Care exists and why we, as believers, are called to care for the fatherless.

There are many ways to read the Bible. Through the course of this reading plan, the REAP method will be utilized. REAP stands for read, examine, apply, and pray. REAP is a straight forward way to process what you're reading, either on your own or with a small group of people.

Biblically, caring for the fatherless is shown as an overflow of God's heart. Our story, in fact, is one of being adopted, blood-bought children of a living God and loving Father. Therefore, it is essential that we understand the nature of our story, of God, as well as the ultimate beginnings of foster care to understand why we engage with this population of youth.

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THE FALL

READ GENESIS 3

EXAMINE

- What are the effects of Adam and Eve's sin?

- With God?

- With each other?

- With themselves?

- With creation?

APPLY

- In light of Adam and Eve's responses to their sin, what would you say your natural response to your sin is?

- How do you think each of these broken relationships (with God, each other, one's self, & creation) inform the causes of Foster Care?

PRAY

Pray through the passage and your application. Pray that God would use this passage to remind us of our own brokenness, the world's brokenness, and our desperate need for Jesus.

BROKENNESS

READ EPHESIANS 2: 1-10

EXAMINE

- How does Paul describe us when we were living in the ways of the world?

- Who saved us? According to what?

- What does this passage say about man? What were we created to do?

APPLY

- What are the “passions of your flesh” you often follow over following the Lord?

- What does it look like to live alive for Christ?

- If God is the only one who could fix our brokenness, who do you think could fix the brokenness of the world? According to what?

PRAY

Pray in thanksgiving that though we were deserving of wrath, God, in His great love and mercy, brought us to life. Pray that we would rejoice that we were created in Christ to do good works. Pray for God to reveal to you what these good works look like in relation to the world and it's brokenness.

GRACE

READ ROMANS 5:15-21

EXAMINE

- Write down every observation you make about the similarities and differences between Adam and Christ. What is the main point of these comparisons and contrasts?

- What does grace mean?

- How is the “free gift” of grace different than the trespass, and what do each result in?

APPLY

- What is a gift? According to your definition, do you believe that God’s grace is a gift?

- How does God giving us the free gift of grace affect the way you live and care for others?

PRAY

Pray that you would truly believe that no matter how deep in the power of sin we have sunk, that God’s grace is deeper still. Pray that we would remember that we have been given this free gift of grace not to fall back into a spirit of slavery, but instead so that we would remember that we are God’s children and that it would transform the way we live and love.

SALVATION

READ EPHESIANS 1: 1-6

EXAMINE

- What are we blessed with?

- When did God choose us and for what?

- What is the purpose of His will?

APPLY

- Do you think of your salvation as adoption?

- How does considering this impact the wonder you experience being a part of God's family through Jesus?

PRAY

Pray for an overwhelming sense of gratitude that your salvation was predestined and that you were adopted into God's family.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

READ LUKE 15: 11-32

EXAMINE

- Describe the younger brother. What did he do? How did he treat his father?

- Describe the older brother. What did he do? How did he treat his father?

- How did the father in this story respond to each of the brothers?

APPLY

- Which brother do you identify with the most and why?

- In repentance, what do you assume you will find when you turn home to God through Jesus Christ?

- When looking at this passage and how the father in this story reflects our Heavenly Father, is your assumption of how our Father will respond true?

PRAY

Thank God that He is our good, good dad. Thank Him that He sees us when we are wayward, He feels compassion on us, He chases after us, He embraces us, He clothes us with Christ's dignity of which we do not deserve, and He celebrates us. Thank Him that His love and presence is not dependent on our obedience.

ATTRIBUTES OF MAN

READ GALATIANS 4:3-7

EXAMINE

- What was the price that God paid for our liberation and adoption?
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- Who are we in light of our adoption?
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APPLY

- What does it look like for you to live in the family of God and belong to God as our Father?
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- What privileges are we afforded as an heir through God?
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- How does this scripture inform our engagement in the broken system and families of foster care and adoption?
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- Can we expect a high cost for our care of children from traumatic backgrounds and families who are fostering or have adopted?
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PRAY

Pray as a child to their Abba. Pray in thanksgiving that our identity is no longer a slave, but instead a son or daughter. Pray that you He would teach you what it looks like to live as an heir and that we would recognize that it is because of His love alone that we have the power to extend love to others.

MERCY

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

EXAMINE

- How is God's mercy displayed in this passage?
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- What does mercy mean?
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- What does it mean to be a new creation as described in these verses?
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- What are our roles?
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APPLY

- Do you believe that God saved us “not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy” (Titus 3:5)? Why or why not?
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- How do we fight against the lie that our salvation is works-based and that we were deserving of our salvation?
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- How might this false belief impact our motivations for caring for others or jumping into hard spaces?
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- How do we live as ambassadors of Christ, given the ministry of reconciliation?
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PRAY

Pray to our merciful God. Pray that we would understand that we deserved the wrath that was poured out on Jesus. Pray that His mercy would usher us to share His message of reconciliation and inform the way we enter into others' brokenness.

SANCTIFICATION

READ COLOSSIANS 3

EXAMINE

- Who is this passage directed toward?
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- Paul says we are being “renewed in the knowledge after the image of its creator”. What process is he describing?
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- What commandments do we see here?
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APPLY

- What does it look like for you to set your mind on the things that are above instead of below? Simultaneously, what does it look like for you to put your sin to death?
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- God gave us our justification and adoption and the Holy Spirit of God works in us and through our obedience to sanctify us. In what ways could this process reflect the process of a child entering the home of a foster or adoptive family?
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PRAY

Pray in thanksgiving to our Father who has not just called us sons and daughters but who wants so much more for us than just those titles. Thank Him for transforming us and using both joy and sorrow to reveal parts of our hearts that He is persistent to mold to be more Christ-like.

HOPE

READ REVELATION 21: 1-8

EXAMINE

- What are we seeing?
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- How is God described?
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- Where will His dwelling place be?
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- What is He doing and what will He do?
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APPLY

- Our hearts long for this New Earth that promises eternal relief, restoration, and renewal, but we often run to things that immediately ease our pain or satisfy our desires. What are those false places of refuge that you find yourself running to?
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- The new creation is the place where the effects of the fall are reversed. How does this future hope effect you daily in both your joy and gladness, and in your sorrow?
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- How does this hope affect the way we enter into brokenness?
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PRAY

Pray and thank God that Jesus has been raised from the dead and will come again. Thank Him that we have a living hope that is both to come and is for us today. Pray and ask that He would help you to see His words as “trustworthy and true” so that we would cling to this hope above all and in every circumstance.

RESTORATION

READ ISAIAH 58: 10-12

EXAMINE

- What does God ask of us?

- What does He promise will come if we obey?

- What does God say it looks like to be a restorer?

APPLY

- What does it look like for you to spend yourself on behalf of the marginalized? Do you find that sometimes you want to give out of convenience instead of sacrifice?

- What would it look like to live your life in such a way that others would call you a “restorer of streets”?

PRAY

Thank God for inviting us to participate in restoration on earth and ask Him what this looks like for you.