



# Growing as Disciples and Stewards

## Introductory Comments

In Psalm 119, the psalmist shares this important truth for our lives as growing disciples and stewards. The psalmist says: “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:103-105 NRSV

For growing disciples and stewards, the faith/discipleship practice of study and immersion into God’s word is essential. It is essential not only for knowledge gained by study, but just as importantly, through the study of God’s word, we are engaged in God’s presence and grace through scripture. Study enables us to deepen a relationship with God which in turn nurtures a life that is informed by God’s presence in our faith journey. In other words, what better way is there to contemplate life and faith issues than gathering around God’s word.

Discipleship might be described as connecting the dots between life and faith. The study of God’s word helps us make those connections. These connections can be understood as how we live in and live out God’s grace and love as we move through our faith and life journey. As we study, we become more acquainted with the joy and delight of God’s working in our lives, especially through the abundant gift of grace in Jesus Christ. It is this grace-full gift that fills us with hope and promise for our lives. But it is also through this lens of grace that one’s study of scripture informs the discernment of what is constantly happening in life.

Through a study of scripture, we encounter God’s promise, nurture, and guidance for our lives. We hear the promise of God’s life-giving grace in Christ for our lives. We encounter the nurturing presence of God’s word for our faith journey. In the midst of promise and nurture, God’s word provides guidance as to what it means to live in and live out life in the context of God’s love and grace in Christ. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 reminds us of this teaching nature of God’s word. “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.” Through the faith/discipleship practice of study, we can be engaged in God’s grace and gather around God’s word to explore questions such as, “How does God’s grace inform how I live as God’s baptized?” “How do I connect my faith with difficult life questions?” “What does it mean to be a disciple and what difference does it make?”

Through the study of scripture, we are also equipped to live in and live out God’s grace amidst of all relationships and contexts of life. We are informed as to what it means to be God’s people of grace in family, church, community, work, neighborhood, and the world. The intentional practice of studying God’s word is essential to connecting the dots of life and faith. Paraphrasing the psalmist, indeed, God’s word is a lamp to our feet and a light for our path as growing disciples and stewards.

# Bible Study

*Psalm 119:103-105, Luke 10:38-42*



Have you ever had a Bible Study on Bible Study? The focus of this discussion is not actually “Bible Study” but on the essential nature of the faith/discipleship practice as it relates to growing as disciples and stewards. The scripture passages from Psalm 119 and Luke 10:38-42 point us to the very center of the importance of study and immersing oneself in scripture. The theme running through both these passages is God’s promise, nurture, and guidance for our lives as disciples.

Psalm 119 reminds us of the nature of God’s word and what it means for one’s journey in faith and life. As we consider the words of the psalmist, we must also consider the context of Psalm 119. In this psalm, the psalmist celebrates God’s law and commandments in light of promise, nurture, and guidance for Israel. For the psalmist, God’s word is lifegiving, providing nurture and guidance in life. The psalmist words and phrases such as sweet, sweeter than honey, light, and lamp are used when referring to God’s word. God’s word is seen here as essential for life. In this psalm, the psalmist reminds us that in God’s word we are made aware again and again of God’s presence and love in our lives. It is a presence and love that is life giving. It is a presence that continually nurtures us in a growing faith. There is also another aspect to this nurturing word. The psalmist reminds us that it is the wisdom of God’s word that provides direction and guidance for us as we live in and live out God’s grace as growing disciples and stewards. The psalmist uses the reference of lamp and light to help us understand this aspect of promise and direction.

The text from Luke’s gospel relates a conversation with Mary and Martha. Jesus had been invited to the home of Mary and Martha who were sisters. While Martha busied herself with the tasks of hospitality, Mary attended to the teachings of Jesus or as Luke says: “...who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to what he was saying.” Verse 39. Martha, who was busy with her tasks, took note of what her sister was doing and asked Jesus to tell Mary to help her. To this request, Jesus answered, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need for only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.” Verse. 41

The point of this story is not to downplay serving and hospitality, but rather emphasize the importance of nurture and growing in God’s word. Could Mary’s action be called “study”? The answer is a resounding yes. This story reminds the disciple that study and gathering around God’s word is integral in the growth of a disciple and steward. Study presents opportunities to grow in faith and connecting the dots with everyday life. As such, study enhances one’s serving as awareness grows as to the meaning of living in and living out God’s grace in Christ.

# Bible Study Discussion Questions

## *Psalm 119:103-105*

- Why do you think the psalmist uses the word “sweet” and the phrase “sweeter than honey to my mouth” when describing God’s word? What does this description of God’s word amid one’s life and faith journey mean to you?
- What meaning, do you think, does the psalmist’s description of God’s word being a lamp to one’s feet and a light to one’s path have in the context of connecting the dots of life and faith as one seeks to be living in and living out God’s grace in Christ?

## *Luke 10:38-42*

- What importance do you think the story of Mary and Martha has concerning the discipleship practice of “study” and gathering around God’s word?
- How do you think the study of God’s word informs serving?
- Serving and study are both discipleship practices. Do you think one is more important than the other? Why or why not?
- What impact do you think the discipleship practice of study has on a growing disciple and steward?

