

VINE

V

VERSE

I

IMMERSE

N

NOW

E

ENGAGE

WHAT IS A VINE JOURNAL?

The inspiration for Vine Journaling comes from an ancient practice called “Lectio Divina”. This Latin term simply means, *divine reading*, or in other words, a way of becoming immersed in the Scriptures very personally. With the vision of Life Church in mind, which is to help people know and follow Jesus step by step, the leadership of LCB believes this established and ancient practice will be of deep value in helping our Church family to know Jesus intimately and have found great benefit and enjoyment from this tool in approaching God’s word.

This Vine Journal is a tool for deepening your relationship with God. It is made up of four movements that aim to assist and facilitate your time spent with God. Throughout this time of reflection and communion with God, remember that we are loved by a God who longs to meet with us. His character is one of grace and truth as He desires for us to be formed in the image of His son Jesus, who willingly gave of Himself fully so that we could commune with Him eternally. In this regard we truly do “love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19 NIV)

THE FOUR MOVEMENTS

Verse

“Man, does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matt 4:4 NIV) How do we as Jesus followers, made in the image of God, who is both body and Spirit, live healthy integrated lives? After all, Jesus did promise us that He came to give us life to the full! In the same way that it is important to nourish our physical bodies it is also important to nourish our spirits. We do this by consuming the word of God.

In this first movement of VINE journaling, we ask that you focus on the chosen passage, sit with God’s word - not moving quickly past it, contemplate it, and enjoy the sweetness of His words like honey on your lips (Psalm 119:103). We believe that our hearts are formed by what we give our attention to. So give your attention to the scripture! You can do this by reading the passage slowly, reading it again, pausing often to linger on meaningful words and phrases. Allow God’s word to sink into your heart and take root into the soil of your soul.

Immerse

Focus on depth over breadth. In this second movement of VINE journaling we want to immerse ourselves into the scripture. This might involve closing our eyes and using your imagination in a holy way to picture what it would be like to be present at the time when the scriptural account took place. Awaken your senses...what must it have smelled like to be in the room with Mary breaks her perfume at Jesus’ feet, how tired must the disciples have felt after walking all day, try to picture yourself in the story. During this imaginative prayer exploration we’d like to also encourage you to read the passage in varying translations, reference a commentary, or participate in a word study (meaning, look up the Greek and or Hebrew words and meanings of the word or phrase that stands out to you). It is in this pursuit of God that we deepen our relationship with Him. It is also in this practice where we experience the work of the Holy Spirit to renew our minds by “the washing of the word” (Ephesians 5:26).

Now

In the third movement we experience the beauty of a relational God. He wants us to not just know about Him, He desires us to truly know Him. During the “Now” movement, we ask the Holy Spirit, “Now what?” Is there application of the passage you have read for your own life? What is the Lord teaching you directly through His word and the insights you have received about Him, the Kingdom, and how to live? How is it moving from perception to practice, by calling you to love God, yourself, others, and the world more holistically? Listen with open ears and an open heart to what the Lord has to say. Write down what you hear and sense. Oftentimes writing thoughts down helps them to take shape and helps us to connect with them.

Engage

In this final movement, focus on Him and thank Him for His living word that you have received in this time of prayer and reflection. Perhaps you feel like putting on worship music or continue to process through journaling. Allow yourself the freedom to engage with the Lord in the way He wants you to engage with Him! Finally, archive this time with the Lord in a place where you can easily and frequently reflect on it during the day and in the future. Summarize what you feel the Lord has revealed to you and taught you. This will help cement this encounter into your heart and memory to build your faith in every season!



WEEK 06

Wisdom in the Midst of Trials and Temptations

¹ James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations:
Greetings.

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. ⁶ But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸ Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

⁹ Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. ¹⁰ But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. ¹¹ For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.

¹² Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

¹³ When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

¹⁶ Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. ¹⁸ He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

James 1:1-18

CONTEXT

How do you respond when the circumstances of life don't play out the way you had hoped? Maybe a day set aside for vacation starts with a flat tire. The promotion was given to someone else. Someone you trusted betrays you. No matter the gravity of the situation, have you ever considered that though you can't often control the circumstance itself you can decide what your response will be?

In James chapter 1 he shares with us a surprising option for when trials come our way. Though we may be justified to complain, grumble, or feel sorry for ourselves, he presents us considering these trials as pure joy.

The Epistle of James is a book in the New Testament attributed to the brother of Jesus and a leader in the early Christian church. The book is believed to have been written between 45-62 AD, making it one of the earliest New Testament writings. James addresses his letter to the "twelve tribes scattered among the nations," indicating its primary audience as Jewish Christians living outside Judea. These first century believers would have been facing trials such as cultural ridicule, persecution and the threat of death.

James 1 serves as an introduction to the main themes of the letter, setting the tone for the practical and ethical teachings that follow. This first chapter emphasizes the importance of faith in action, encouraging believers to remain steadfast in trials, to seek wisdom from God, and to be doers of the word, not just hearers. This mirrors the overarching theme of the book which calls the reader to live out one's faith through righteous behavior and good works. The emphasis on practical faith aligns with Jesus' teachings in the Gospels, particularly the Sermon on the Mount, and echoes the Old Testament's wisdom literature, such as Proverbs.

In our modern context it is important to remember the themes of perseverance and faithfulness in the midst of trials as we journey on the road of Christ-likeness and discipleship to our savior and rabbi, Jesus.

Our prayer for you this week is that you would receive the hope that comes through perseverance as you experience the presence and nearness of your savior regardless of the amount of trials you might be currently facing.

Day 01

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James 1:2-4

VERSE (Write out the passage.)

IMMERSE (Reflect on the passage.)

NOW (What is the application from the passage?)

ENGAGE (Pray, ponder and become a practitioner of God's word.)

Day 02

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. ⁶ But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸ Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

James 1:5-8

VERSE (Write out the passage.)

IMMERSE (Reflect on the passage.)

NOW (What is the application from the passage?)

ENGAGE (Pray, ponder and become a practitioner of God's word.)

Day 03

⁹ Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. ¹⁰ But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. ¹¹ For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.

James 1:9-11

VERSE (Write out the passage.)

IMMERSE (Reflect on the passage.)

NOW (What is the application from the passage?)

ENGAGE (Pray, ponder and become a practitioner of God's word.)

Day 04

¹² Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

James 1:12

VERSE (Write out the passage.)

IMMERSE (Reflect on the passage.)

NOW (What is the application from the passage?)

ENGAGE (Pray, ponder and become a practitioner of God's word.)

Day 05

¹³ When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

¹⁶ Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. ¹⁸ He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all He created.

James 1:13-18