

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 07

The Blessings of Obedience

If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God:

You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country.

The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks.

Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed.

You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out.

The Lord will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven.

The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

The Lord will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the Lord your God and walk in obedience to him. Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will fear you. The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity—in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground—in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you.

The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. The Lord will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom. Do not turn aside from any of the commands I give you today, to the right or to the left, following other gods and serving them.

Deuteronomy 28:1-14

CONTEXT

Have you ever considered how desperately God wants to bless you? Take time to sit and ponder that His heart's posture towards you is one of generosity and celebration? In the same way that we function with the law of gravity, "what goes up, must come down," God has given us spiritual laws that have been designed to give us life to the fullest.

As we begin our Vine Journal practice this week, we will be diving into the book of Deuteronomy, which is the fifth book of the Pentateuch and made up of, in large part, a series of speeches by Moses that reiterate the law given to him by God at Mount Sinai, providing guidance and reminders to the Israelites about their covenant with Yahweh.

We see here in Deuteronomy 28 Moses' final words to the Israelites before they enter the Promised Land. In this divinely inspired exhortation Moses outlines the blessings that will follow the Israelites' if they choose to obey the Lord's commands. It is fascinating how many times the Israelites made poor choices and yet God still continues to share His abundant desire to bless them. These blessings include prosperity in the city and the country, fruitful harvests, successful livestock breeding, protection from enemies, and the establishment of Israel as a holy people set apart by God.

As Pastor Loren shared in his sermon a few weeks ago, we may know what God has said, we may think we know His commands, but unless we let Him speak anew and afresh, directly to us and allow His voice to be heard in our lives, we may miss His tender-hearted tone as He communicates with us. These commandments are a gift stemming from God's love for us and His immense desire to see us flourish as His children.

In the big picture of the gospel narrative, Deuteronomy 28:1-14 fits within the broader theme of covenant blessings and curses that run throughout the entire Bible. Importantly, the passage is a foreshadowing of the culmination of this principle in Jesus' teachings about the blessings of obedience and the spiritual prosperity found in Christ. While the New Covenant through Jesus forever shifts the focus from material to spiritual blessings, the underlying principle remains: God honors faithfulness and obedience.

Do you believe that God is looking for ways to enrich your life? Luke 12:32 says, "*So don't be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom.*" It makes our Heavenly Father greatly happy to give us the things of His Kingdom. Hope, healing, peace, joy, provision.

Our prayer for you this week is that you would experience the Father's overwhelming desire to bless you which has been unlocked by the sacrifice of Jesus and received through our listening to His voice and obeying His commands. We pray you would understand more deeply the tender-tone of His voice and receive His words to you today.

Day 01

28 If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. ² All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God:

Deuteronomy 28:1-2

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

³ You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country.

⁴ The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks.

⁵ Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed.

⁶ You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out.

Deuteronomy 28:3-6

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

⁷ The Lord will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven.

⁸ The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

Deuteronomy 28:7-8

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 04

⁹ The Lord will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the Lord your God and walk in obedience to him. ¹⁰ Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will fear you. ¹¹ The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity—in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground—in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you.

Deuteronomy 28:9-11

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 05

¹² The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. ¹³ The Lord will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom. ¹⁴ Do not turn aside from any of the commands I give you today, to the right or to the left, following other gods and serving them.

Deuteronomy 28:12-14

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.)
