

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 12

The God Who Is There

1

*Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.*

2

*Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.*

3

*A voice of one calling:
"In the wilderness prepare
the way for the Lord;
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.*

4

*Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.*

5

*And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,
and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."*

6

*A voice says, "Cry out."
And I said, "What shall I cry?"
"All people are like grass,
and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of
the field.*

7

*The grass withers and the flowers fall,
because the breath of the Lord blows on them.
Surely the people are grass.*

8

*The grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of our God endures forever."*

Isaiah 40:1-8

CONTEXT

Have you ever felt abandoned? Felt as if you are left alone to face the trials of this life alone? Have you ever felt displaced in a season or struggled to make sense of your circumstance? If you answered yes to any of these questions, be comforted, because this is how the children of Israel felt when Isaiah penned these words.

Isaiah 40 is addressed to the Israelites during the Babylonian exile. The Babylonian Empire, under King Nebuchadnezzar II, had destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 586 BC, leading to the deportation of many Israelites to Babylon. The exiles had no choice but to leave their homes, and in their lives faced profound disillusionment, feeling abandoned by God and uncertain of their future. Though most of us have not experienced the same in our Western/American context, the feelings of desertion are shared by many. It is in the midst of this that God declared - and continues to remind us of - His supremacy, comfort, and assurance. Those truths ring just as true now as they did 2600 years ago for the children of Israel.

This is the hope of the Gospel. That in the midst of our desperation, our trials, and our tribulations, we serve a God who not only comforts us and reassures us of His presence but also reminds us that “all things have been laid under His feet.” This does not negate evil, suffering, or pain. Rather it gives us hope that this world will one day be made right and all of our tears will be wiped away.

As you go through this week’s devotional, we pray you encounter the comfort, reassurance, and powerful reminder of God’s supremacy over the situations you face. May you be reminded that he He is with you, for you, and behind you.

Day 01

***“Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.***

2

***Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the Lord’s hand
double for all her sins.***

Isaiah 40:1-2

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

***“A voice of one calling:
“In the wilderness prepare
the way for the Lord^[a];
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.^[b]***

Isaiah 40:3

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

*Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.*

Isaiah 40:4

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 04

***“And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,
and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”***

Isaiah 40:5

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

“6

A voice says, “Cry out.”

And I said, “What shall I cry?”

***“All people are like grass,
and all their faithfulness is like the flowers
of the field.***

7

***The grass withers and the flowers fall,
because the breath of the Lord blows on them.
Surely the people are grass.***

8

***The grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of our God endures forever.”***

Isaiah 40:6-8

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.)
