

Christian student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others.

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, we encourage you, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

Worshipping Together is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. frankstonrp.org.au bit.ly/WTrpcaf

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. airdrierpcs.org

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. bit.ly/WkBbl or bit.ly/3yrBbl

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week are drawn in part from commentaries on Mark by William Hendriksen, Kent Hughes, and John Blanchard

Worshipping Together



We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not to be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.



If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

Read, pray, repeat.

* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested a godly mother will lead her children

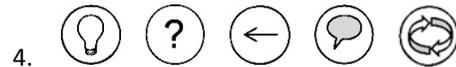
Reading Mark 9:1-13 Listen to Him!

Notes (See back page for authors)
Jesus takes Peter, James, and John with Him to a high mountain. There, Hughes notes, *Jesus was “transfigured,” more literally “metamorphosed.” For a brief moment the veil of his humanity was lifted, and his true essence was allowed to shine through. The glory which was always in the depths of his being rose to the surface for that one time in his earthly life. Or put another way, he slipped back into eternity, to his pre-human glory. It was a glance back and a look forward into his future glory!*

As the disciples see Jesus, he is talking with Elijah and Moses. Moses represents the OT Law, Elijah, the Prophets. Jesus is the One who has come to fulfil the law and the prophets (Matt 5:17). As the disciples witness this glorious conversation, God the Father comes down – not in human form, but the “glory cloud” of His presence covers them and the mountain. Then God spoke from the cloud, giving honour and glory to Jesus (2 Pet 1.:17). Are you listening to Jesus, God’s Beloved Son?

Jesus tells them He will rise from the dead, and only after that are they to tell of this account. Though they don’t yet understand “rising from the dead” – He would, and they did.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What happened to Jesus on the mountain?
 2. What did God the Father say?
 3. When did these 3 disciples tell of this account?



- Praise** Psalm 90b²
- Pray**
1. Commit you and your family in prayer to listen to Jesus, by God’s help
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

¹ You will notice we only have a printed guide for 6 days. We recommend each Lord’s Day you review the previous week’s readings and/or the previous or current week’s sermons and pray together

² Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

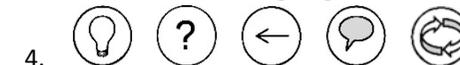
Reading Mark 9:42-50 The fire is not quenched...

Notes (See back page for authors)
In sharp contrast with welcoming a little child in Jesus’ Name (v. 37) and giving someone a cup of water to drink because of Jesus’ Name (v. 41), Jesus now speaks of the one who causes one of these little ones to stumble (sin). Their punishment will be worse than if they had a heavy donkey-pulled millstone (used for grinding grain) hung around their neck and were dropped in to the sea.

How bad will that punishment be? Jesus goes on to describe the place of eternal punishment – where unforgiven sinners will end up. It is a place of unquenchable fire, of unending destruction (the destroying worm never dies, always keeps destroying). To end up in hell is a horrible (but deserved) condition. For that reason, Jesus tells his disciples to take radical action. Hendriksen notes that *the lesson is this: sin, being a very destructive force, must not be pampered. It must be “put to death” (Col. 3:5)...Dilidallying is deadly. Halfway measures work havoc. The surgery must be radical. Right at this very moment and without any vacillation the obscene book should be burned, the scandalous picture destroyed, the soul-destroying film condemned, the sinister yet very intimate social tie broken, and the baneful habit discarded. In the struggle against sin the believer must fight hard. Shadow-boxing will never do (1 Cor. 9:27).*

Of course, these destructive, and in the sense negative, actions will never succeed apart from the powerful sanctifying and transforming operation of God’s Spirit in heart and life.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What is the place of judgement for unforgiven sinners like?
 2. What must we do in our fight against sin?
 3. How can we avoid going to hell?



- Praise** Psalm 90b
- Pray**
1. Pray that you and your family will be rescued from hell and used to rescue others
 2. Pray for your family
 3. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
 4. Pray for the reading and preaching of God’s word tomorrow

Reading

Mark 9:38-41 We tried to stop him

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Perhaps John was dealing with additional guilt in response to Jesus' words on servant leadership. Not only had he been guilty of arguing his case for being the greatest disciple, on another occasion, he now confesses, he had tried to stop a man from casting out demons in Jesus' name. Hughes suggests that *what was particularly galling was [this man's] success. He really was experiencing power through Jesus' name—a supreme irony in the light of [the disciples'] recent powerlessness!*

Jesus said not to stop him. In fact, He says, "Whoever is not against us is for us." This seems it could be contradicting what Jesus says elsewhere that "Whoever is not with us is against us." (Mt 12:30; Lk 11:23) Yet, instead of a contradiction, it's clear that this man, though not in the 12 or even the 72, is "with Jesus." The work he is doing, he is doing, "In Jesus' Name." Hendriksen notes that *with this man the phrase "in Christ's name" was not a magical formula; it was reality.*

Hendriksen goes on to note that *even today that spirit of narrow exclusivism is at times mistaken for loyalty to one's church or denomination... Let us follow the teaching of Jesus and, while maintaining what we ourselves regard as purity of doctrine, let us reach out the hand of brotherhood to all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ and build upon the firm foundation of his infallible Word.*

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What does John now tell Jesus?
2. Why did Jesus say they should not stop this man?
3. How can we demonstrate this unity with other Christians even across denominations?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 90b
1. Pray with your family that the church will grow in unity
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading

Mark 9:14-29 I believe, help my unbelief

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Coming down from the mountaintop experience, Peter, James, and John accompany Jesus to find the other disciples arguing with the scribes. Either the scribes were scorning Jesus' disciples for their failure to drive the demon from a young boy, or arguing for their own forms of casting out demons. Either way, when Jesus asks what the argument is about, everyone goes quiet.

Then, the boy's father comes to Jesus and explains what is happening. His faith is weak (as is the scribes' and the disciples') but he is hopeful Jesus might be able to do something for his boy. In response, Jesus calls on the man to believe that He will heal his son. Hendriksen notes how *very striking is [the] answer in which the tempest-tossed father pours out his very heart. He was certain of two things: a. that he did indeed have the kind of faith Jesus demanded; and b. that this faith was imperfect, beset by fears and doubts. ...* Jesus immediately drives the spirit from the boy and raises him up healed.

Jesus then tells the disciples their failure to drive out the demon was because they sought to do it without prayer. Although Jesus had given them authority over demons (Mk 6:7), it appears they thought they could do it on their own. No, they had to pray, even for the power to do what Jesus had given them ability to do.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What was wrong with this boy?
2. What was wrong with his father?
3. What was wrong with the disciples and the scribes?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 90b
1. Commit yourself and your family to seek God's help in prayer for all you do
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Mark 9:30-32 They will kill Him...

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Sometimes, it seems to us, the disciples were pretty thick. Jesus would give them clear instruction, and they simply can't understand. But, of course, we have the advantage of hindsight. We now know "the rest of the story." But they didn't yet. Remembering that, their confusion becomes less confusing.

Jesus takes them from the public ministry of restoring the demon-possessed boy to a private teaching time. Hendriksen suggests that *He needed privacy, so as to have the time and the opportunity for teaching The Twelve, so that they in turn, especially after his resurrection, would be able to convey the truths concerning Jesus and his kingdom to others. Specifically, he was teaching them the lessons of the cross.*

The disciples didn't understand, they were scared and confused, and perhaps hesitant to say anything, remembering Jesus' rebuke of Peter for protesting (8:32-33). These lessons are clear to us now, because they became clear to the disciples after Jesus had risen from the dead. And they wrote, and taught, about them with Holy Spirit breathed clarity so that we can know and believe and be saved. Jesus was, of course, killed for our sin, if we believe.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What did Jesus teach his disciples?
2. What was their response?
3. Did they eventually understand? How do we know?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 90b
1. Rejoice in prayer that Jesus was willing to be betrayed, killed and that He rose again
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Mark 9:33-37 If anyone wants to be first...

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Hughes comments that *the apostles had recently seen the unforgettable Transfiguration, followed by a marvelous healing episode at the foot of the mount, and now, while on the road, they heard Jesus' ominous words regarding his death (vv. 30-32). This was hardly the time for an argument. Nevertheless, they were engaged in heated debate about—of all things—who was "the greatest"! Unbelievable!*

Jesus does not rebuke them, at least not strongly. Instead He tells them to be servants. Even those in positions of God-given authority must search for ways to serve others rather than be served. Then, Jesus adds an object lesson for them. Taking one of the little children who, it seems, are often around Jesus, into His arms, Jesus calls them to take each other tenderly in arms as He is taking this child. Tender, serving, affection, is what Jesus calls them, and us, to. Not domineering authority.

Hendriksen notes that *Jesus is telling his disciples to forget all about rank, pre-eminence, prominence. Instead, they should concentrate their attention on the needs of one, any one, even just one, of such little ones; for example, the child which Jesus is now holding in his arms, or any similar one...To welcome such a little child "in Christ's name" means to treat it with all the love and consideration which he, Christ...has a right to expect of his followers. In doing this, they will be welcoming [them]... "for Christ's sake" (cf. 10:29)...And that is what Jesus wants, for he loves the little ones.*

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What are the disciples arguing about?
2. What does Jesus show them in response?
3. What does Jesus tell them in response?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 90b
1. Commit yourselves in prayer to serve others in Jesus' name
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member