

This discussion series, “Full of Life in a Crazy Busy World,” was based on a four part sermon series given at Cottonwood by Pastor Pat Schultz in September 2014.

You may contact the church office or go to the sermon archives on our website to listen to the sermons if you so desire.

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The four parts included are:

- 1. Signs of life**
- 2. Journaling God’s Word (SOAP)**
- 3. Prayer (And the Just Sow It Bookmark)**
- 4. Serving Others**

Signs of Life

Part 1 - Full of Life in a Crazy Busy World

Icebreaker: What is one thing you spend time doing today, that you never spent any time doing 10 years ago?

Read 1 John 5 out loud, taking turns reading a couple verses at a time.

Discussion Questions:

1. 1 John 5:3 is one of those verses that can catch us off guard be confusing at times. How have you seen the truth that God's commands are NOT burdensome on your life? When was a time when the opposite was true? Why do think that we tend to fluctuate back and forth on this (obeying God being a burden vs. obeying God not being a burden) at times?
2. 1 John 5:4 says that, "every child of God defeats this evil world?" What have been essential and helpful practices to you being able to grow in saying "No" to temptation and living in victory over the world?
3. 1 John 5:13 is usually quoted in the context of 'being certain that we'll go to Heaven.' But how do you think this verse applies to experiencing (eternal) life here and now? What does 1 John 1:1-4 add to your understanding of experiencing eternal life now?
4. What are a few things that keep you busy and away from experiencing the life God desires for you to experience in Him? How has the change in the way we use technology (phones, internet, social media, etc.) been a factor in your busy-ness?
5. 1 John 5:21 talks about staying away from idols. An idol is anything that takes God's place in your heart. What do you tend to prioritize instead of God and spending time with him (in the Bible, prayer, etc.)? What is one step you could take to make spending time with God a higher priority?

Prayer: Please pray for the person on your left based on their answer to question #5.

Journaling God's Word
Part 2 – Full of Life in a Crazy Busy World

Icebreaker: When is the best time of the day for you to spend undistracted time reading the Bible and praying?

Journaling helps a person record what God is speaking to them personally from the Bible. The SOAP Method of journaling is a helpful tool, described by Wayne Cordiero in his book "The Divine Mentor."

Discussion:

1. This home group discussion is intended to help each member practice spending time reading the Bible, hearing from God and recording what they learn. A large part of the time won't be "discussion" as much as a 'quiet time' of reading and journaling and then sharing what each person learned.
2. S.O.A.P. is a simple tool you can use to hear from God in His Word and record what God is teaching you. Journaling in this way has the potential to help you grow spiritually. Read the attached hand-out and then let's take some time all together to try it out! Start by pick out a chapter or two of Scripture to read from your Bible Reading plan. Otherwise a few suggestions are: Deuteronomy 8 & 11, Ephesians 2-3, 1 John 4-5, or John 15.
 - a. Other than a Bible here is what you need: A pen/pencil and a journal (any notebook will work or just use some blank paper for this time).
 - b. Take 10-20 minutes to read a portion of scripture.
 - c. Take the next 30 minutes to us the attached handout to journal using the S.O.A.P. method.
 - d. Take the last 20-40 minutes to read aloud what your wrote in your journal. (Everyone takes a turn. No preaching allowed! Discuss what you've heard in an easy-going and encouraging way.)

Assignment: Bring your Bible and journal to future Home Group meetings and come ready to share a verse and a few thoughts from your journal about how God spoke to you. This is a great way to 'encourage each other as we meet together!' (Heb. 10:25)

Bonus question: How do you think taking time to read the Bible and Journal will help make you more "Full of Life in a Crazy Busy World?"

Prayer: Pray for the person next to you to make time to read God's Word this week and to be changed by the truth he/she reads. Thank God for what He spoke to you today!

HOW TO S.O.A.P.

Journaling is a powerful way to grow in your relationship with God! Not only does it help you take some necessary time to think about, meditate on and really understand what God is saying to you in a portion of scripture, it is also a record of how you are growing in your walk with Christ! The following description is based on the S.O.A.P. method described in “The Divine Mentor” by Wayne Cordeiro. The S.O.A.P. method is a just a tool, but a good one, to help a person grow in their walk with God.

S: Scripture

Take your time, reading prayerfully, and allow God to speak to you personally. Look for a verse that particularly speaks to you and write it in your journal. Write out the reference and the verse.

O: Observation

What do you think God is saying in this verse? Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal the meaning to you. Paraphrase and write this scripture down in your own words. Record any observations you make using the questions below as a general guide.

- What does the verse say?
- What is the context of the verse?
- Who is speaking?
- Who is it written to?
- Is it a command to be obeyed?
- Is it a statement of truth?
- Is it a statement about God’s character?
- Is it a promise? Or a warning?

A: Application

Personalize what you have read by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Journal how this scripture can apply to you today, using the questions below as a general guide.

- What is God asking me to do in response to this verse?
- What in my life needs to change as a result of this verse?
- Do I need to think or act differently?
- What can I be thankful for related to this verse?

P: Prayer

This can be as simple as asking God to help you apply this scripture, or it may be to ask for greater insight on what He may be revealing to you. Thank Him for what he is teaching you through this verse. Remember, prayer is a two-way conversation. Be sure to listen to what God has to say and journal about it. Tell Him your worries and concerns, and let him carry your burdens. Thank Him for all He’s done in your life. Also, pray for people on your “Just Sow It” list.

An example of a way to Format Your Journal is included on the next page.

Try to journal using the S.O.A.P. method each day of the week. If you miss a day, don’t worry. Don’t feel guilty, and don’t let it bog you down. Just skip over the days in your Bible reading plan that you missed. Don’t try to catch up—unless you have extra time.

Just pick up on the corresponding date and continue on your journey. God is a God of fresh beginnings!

Format Your Journal:

Date _____ **Chapters/Portion of Scripture I Read** _____

S – (Scripture – one verse that impressed me) _____

O – (Observation – see hand out for questions that help) _____

A – (Application – again, see handout for helps) _____

P – (Prayer – see handout) _____

Prayer and the “Just Sow It” Bookmark
Part 3 - Full of Life in a Crazy Busy World

Icebreaker: If you had the freed to spend 24 hours doing whatever you wanted this weekend. What would you do?

Discussion Questions:

1. Read Philippians 4:6-7. Right now, do you tend toward “Worrying/being anxious” or do you tend toward “praying about everything?” How have you experienced the promise in this passage?

2. What keeps you from spending time talking to God (i.e. praying) about what is going on in your life: your concerns, doubts, fears, wishes, problems or dreams? How often do you pray about sharing your faith with other people?

3. What inhibits you the most from helping to bring more friends and neighbors to Christ?
 - Fear of rejection, fear of failure, fear of the clumsy or awkward moments, fear of being a pest.
 - Don’t want to take the “Amway” approach (having not made time for a relationship, the only time they hear from me is when I’m inviting them to church).
 - It seems like too much work.
 - Just too distracted by the obligations, pressures and pursuits in my own life to notice them much.
 - I don’t think I’m very good at it – evangelism probably isn’t my gift. I find it hard to trust God and step out of my comfort zone.
 - Other _____.

4. In John 4:35, Jesus said, *“Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, **lift up your eyes and look at the fields**, for they are already white for harvest!”* Take a moment to “lift up your eyes and look at the fields”. What are the names of the 3-6 people whom you have contact with regularly and live within 30 minutes of you right now that you think may need the *blessing* of a saving relationship with Jesus Christ?

Write their names here or on a “Just Sow It” Bookmark. Commit to praying for them each day this week. This is a great place to start in sharing your faith! Pray for people who need to know Jesus!

5. Paul said this in 1 Cor. 9:22, *“I have become all things to all men so that **by all possible means** I might save some.”* What ‘possible means’ are within reach so that you may help influence these persons to Christ? What steps can you take over the next 8 weeks in hopes of being a doer, not just a hearer of these scriptures? (see the back of the Blessing List Bookmark for some ideas)?

6. How do you think taking time to pray and specifically for people on your “Just Sow It” bookmark make you more “Full of Life in a Crazy Busy World”?

Prayer: Please pray for the person on your left based on # 4 & #5.

Serving Others

Part 4 - Full of Life in a Crazy Busy World

Icebreaker: Each person share a verse and a few brief thoughts from your personal Bible reading and journaling this week.

Read Philippians 2:1-17

In small groups of 4-6 people:

1. What are some key components of unity as listed in verses 1-4? Are any of them particularly challenging for you?
2. How are you challenged by the “attitude of Christ” (as listed in verses 5-11)?
3. How do you think does serving your spiritual family, the church, can help you to better maintain this “attitude of Christ”?
4. Verse 3 says, “Think of others as better than yourselves.” Jesus echoed this to his disciples, “*Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*” (Matthew 20:26-28) What is one way you could serve your family (or roommates) in this way this week?
5. What is one way you could serve your church family in this way this week?
6. How do you think taking time to serve others might make you more “Full of Life in a Crazy Busy World”?

Prayer: Review your answers to #4,5 or 6. Pray for each other based on these answers. You may use this sample prayer if you wish: