



**spiritual
practice
of study**

tempechurch.org | Tempe, Arizona

THE GIFT OF A FOCUSED MIND

The Life with God Bible defines the spiritual practice of study as "the intentional process of engaging the mind with the written and spoken word of God and the world God has created in such a way that the mind takes on an order conforming to the order upon which it concentrates."

The practice of study invites us to engage our minds in our pursuit of a deeper life with God. Our intellect is an incredible avenue through which we can encounter God. Study is not merely memorizing facts or learning about the word of God from various sources, study is an expansive process. Study encourages us to discover again and again that there is always more to the nature of God than we can comprehend through one reading or one observation. This is good news. There is always more for us to discover and learn about God and with God.

A HUMBLE PRACTICE

The Renovare Institute emphasizes the need for humility when we engage in this practice. "The discipline of study first demands a humble spirit, recognizing that the chief end is not merely to amass information, but to experience it, learn from it, and be changed by it. It is vital to study not only books, but also those things around us such as nature, relationships, events, and cultural values. Through the steps of study – repetition, concentration, comprehension, and reflection – a person emerges transformed, in awe of the beauty of God and the world around them."

When we approach scripture, creation, or any aspect of the world around us with our mind's intent on learning from God through critical observation, it is essential that we are humble. We need God's direction and prompting to guide us. We need one another to guide us. We need those who possess wisdom and insight in areas where we may lack understanding to guide us. We need to be open to learning even if our observations or another's perspectives challenge our assumptions. Like Jesus, we must study with a desire to grow in wisdom. Like Mary, we must study at the feet of Jesus and hold all our insight in the context of our relationship with him.

A PRAYER FOR STUDY

Consider reciting this prayer when you enter your time of study...

God, we pray that we will enter this time of study of your word with you as our guide. We ask that you will cultivate in us the humility necessary for us to engage this practice with thoughtfulness and care. We want to grow in wisdom and understanding of who you are. We want to deepen our love for you and others through this practice. We pray we will hear your voice and allow what we hear to shape us.