Devotional Accountability:

What were some of the principles you discovered as you read the devotional passages? Did looking at the paragraphs and individual sentences help understand the flow?

APPLYING THE WORD

List as many reasons as you can as to why we should study the Bible.

What do you think is the primary reason for studying?

The primary purpose for the scriptures must be rooted in God’s primary purpose for us. What is that? Loving God with our whole being.

Matthew 22:37-38 (NIV)
Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." 38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

We were created to love God. This is our first and foremost reason for existence. If this is true, then God’s Word primarily exists to help us do precisely that.

How can reading scripture help us develop a deeper love for God?

Through scripture God reveals:

- His wonderful, holy character
- His deep love for us
- The sacrificial extent he is willing to go to show us grace
- How to be restored to relationship with him
- How to live in peace with him
- How we can partner with him in ruling creation
- Words of encouragement, hope, and rebuke when we need it
- How to live effectively in this world
- The wonderful future he has prepared for us if we believe
- etc.

How can you not develop a deeper love for God as you discover these truths?
Take a quick scan through Psalm 119 (Longest chapter in the Bible)
This Psalm is broken into sections based on the Hebrew alphabet. Every sentence of each section starts with the corresponding letter.

What is the one dominant theme through the entire Psalm?
The incredible value of the Word of God

Why do you think the psalmist was so passionate about scripture?
What does it reflect about his relationship with God?

If we claim to LOVE GOD, what effect should that have in how we obey the word of God?

How would you describe the relationship between LOVE and OBEDIENCE?

Why does the word “obey” typically evoke a negative connotation for us?
Often obedience implies something we are forced to do or else we will be punished.

The idea of obedience sometimes conveys “expectations” that must be lived up to as opposed to a loving relationship. Is that the sense you get when you think about obedience and the Bible?
When parents give children instructions, they do “expect” them to obey. But the motive behind the command is usually rooted in a love for the child and a desire to help that child stay safe or mature.

Though a parent’s command may be rooted in love, do children always see this? Why or why not?

Is it possible for a child to “obey”, but not express “love” to the parents? Give an example.

Is it possible for a child to convey “love”, but not “obey”?
There may be exceptional times when a child disobeys as an act of love for their parents, but these would be extremely rare. In 99% of the time or more, it is not possible to love and disobey at the same time.
Obedience without love is meaningless to God.
Love without obedience is impossible with God.
Obedience flows out of love, and when you obey, you deepen your love for God.

Consider the implications of the following verses.

John 14:15 (NIV)
If you love me, you will obey what I command.

John 14:21 (NIV)
Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me.

John 14:23 (NIV)
Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching.

When we choose to disobey Christ’s teachings, it is never an issue of “failing to live up to expectation”, it is always an issue of not loving Jesus. How might that perspective change our perspective of sin and obedience?

Often we simply view sin as something wrong we do, or something right we don’t do. We rationalize that some sins aren’t “that bad” and do not really hurt anyone. But when we consider every sin is an act of rejecting and not loving Jesus, a personal rebellion against him as Lord of our lives, it reveals sin as something that attacks our relationship with God and our very reason for existence – loving God.

Why does God tell us to do anything? Does he “need” anything from us? Can we make God’s life better in any way?

Acts 17:24-25 (NIV)
The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

God needs nothing from us. He is complete apart from us and we can not improve his life in any way. We exist simply because God is a god of love and therefore he enjoys relationships and spreading his love to others.
Why then does Jesus command anything of us? Look at the verses below to determine the motive behind the commands of God.

1 Peter 1:15-16 (NIV)
But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

1) **To Reflect his Holiness**
so that we will have greater joy in our life and relationship with him.

Why is it so important to God that we be holy as he is?

James 1:22-25 (NIV)
Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

2) **To be Blessed**
God’s word gives us freedom from deception and dysfunctional ways of approaching life. With freedom comes righteous and blessing in everything we do.

How does obeying the word bring blessing into our lives?

Why then do we not thoroughly embrace every teaching in the bible? Why do we sometimes choose to go against what the bible teaches us?

Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)
Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

3) **To Represent**
his love, purposes, and teaching to others

How does disobedience affect the mission of Christ?
If obeying the commands of Jesus is something that is an expression of our love for Christ and transforms who we are and how we live, then knowing these commands becomes paramount. Studying the word of God is not for intellectual stimulation, but for relationship and renewal.

We need then to go beyond STUDY to APPLICATION.

*2 Timothy 3:16* (NIV)
*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,*

Below are a few tips to help apply scripture.
**TEACH, REFUTE, CORRECT, TRAIN:**

**TEACH**
Teaching focuses on presenting truth.
- Does the passage teach you anything about the character of God?
- Does the passage teach you anything about yourself and your relationship with God?
- Is there a truth revealed that you can teach to others as you go through your day that will encourage them in their relationship with God?

**REBUKE/REFUTE**
Refuting focuses on exposing wrong beliefs.
- Is there a false belief system that this passage refutes?
- Is there a perspective you have that God wants to change?
- Is there a false belief about God being promoted that needs to be corrected?

**CORRECT**
Correcting focuses on changing a sinful lifestyle.
- Are you presently doing something or have a sin in your life that God wants to correct?
- Is there a sin within your church family that God is calling you to lovingly address?
- Does God want to redirect you in any area of your life?

**TRAIN**
Training focuses on embedding godly habits or spiritual disciplines.
- Is there a spiritual lifestyle God wants to embed in your life?
- Is there a spiritual discipline he wants to strengthen?
- Is there a higher purpose God wants to work out in your life?
MAKE ANY APPLICATION SPECIFIC

You don’t need to create a “To Do” list every time you walk away from the Word of God. Sometimes God just wants to encourage you and remind you that he loves you. The application then is simply to receive his love and encouragement and say “Thank you!”.

But when God does speak and call for change or action, you need to respond. This is called obedience. Your application then should be very practical and very specific.

For example: “I will talk to my co-worker today and ask their forgiveness for how I treated them yesterday.”

What are some examples of times when God spoke to you through scripture and you found a very practical way to apply it?
Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. James 1:22 (NIV)

DAY 1

Read Colossians 1:15-23

Focus on what this passage TEACHES.

What truths is this passage teaching about Jesus?

What truths does it teach about you?

How might these truths impact your relationship with God today?

Is there any specific way you can apply this passage today?
Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. James 1:22 (NIV)

DAY 2

Read Job 40:1-14

What false perspective does Job have that God is going to REFUTE?

How does God expose Job’s false belief about God?

What is Job’s response in chapter 42?

Have you ever questioned God’s goodness and justice?

How might this passage correct your perspective?

Is there any specific way you can apply this passage today?
Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. James 1:22 (NIV)

DAY 3

Read Genesis 20:1-18

What behaviour does this passage hope to CORRECT?

Have there been times when you lied to protect yourself

What does that sin reveal about your trust in God?

How does it affect your relationship with him?

Is there any specific way you can apply this passage today?
Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. James 1:22 (NIV)

DAY 4

Read Romans 13:1-5.

How can this passage TRAIN us for righteousness?

What right behaviour does this passage want to encourage as a regular discipline in our lives?

In what ways have you not applied this principle?

What can you do this week to embed this principle in your life?

Is there any specific way you can apply this passage today?
Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. James 1:22 (NIV)

DAY 5

Read John 9.

What does this passage want to TEACH about Jesus and life?

What false belief does this passage want to REFUTE?

What sinful approach to life does this passage want to CORRECT?

What approach to righteousness does this passage want to TRAIN into our lives?

Is there any specific way you can apply this passage today?