

Following Jesus Together

**Apathy: Fighting for Zeal
3-week plan**

Throughout these three weeks, we'll spend some time fighting for zeal in Jesus through practicing lectio divina, singing, listening to God's word taught, and serving others.

As we walk through this plan, we are intentionally pushing back against the enemy of apathy. Too often we can view apathy as a feeling of neutrality when in reality, apathy is really disobedience that needs to be repented of.

So as you work through this guide, view this as your 3-week guide to repent of your apathy. Let's not settle for disobedience, but instead, press into the abundant life made available to us now in and through Jesus - to be with Him, to become like Him, and do the things He did.

Research shows it takes about 3 weeks to develop a habit, so it's our hope at the end of these three weeks that we create sustainable practices to more closely follow Jesus as we do this together with others in our LifeGroup.

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Coming up is STC Weekend. Serving reminds us that our lives are best spent when spent on others. Take some time in prayer now, asking God to use these serving opportunities to focus your attention on others and not on yourself.

If you haven't yet - sign up at STCWeekend.com

Week 1

Day 1 - An Introduction to Lectio Divina

Meditative Bible reading like lectio divina reminds us of the reality of God's presence working in us, through us, and around us. The more we see this, the more we chip away at our apathy and move towards a deeper zeal for the Lord.

READ

Psalm 1

Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
but his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.
The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

DO

Read through the article "[What is Lectio Divina?](#)" in the back

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- What's one thing you learned about lectio divina?

Week 1
Day 2 - Lectio Divina

Meditative Bible reading like lectio divina reminds us of the reality of God's presence working in us, through us, and around us. The more we see this, the more we chip away at our apathy and move towards a deeper zeal for the Lord.

READ

John 15:7-11

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

DO

Practice lectio divina over what you just read.

Relax

Read - What stood out to you?

Reflect - What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

Respond - What is this passage calling you to do? What is this passage calling you to pray for?

Rest

If need be, refer back to the article, "[What is Lectio Divina?](#)" in the back.

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- How was practicing lectio divina today?

Week 1
Day 3 - Lectio Divina

Meditative Bible reading like lectio divina reminds us of the reality of God's presence working in us, through us, and around us. The more we see this, the more we chip away at our apathy and move towards a deeper zeal for the Lord.

READ

1 John 1:1-4

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

DO

Practice lectio divina over what you just read.

Relax

Read - What stood out to you?

Reflect - What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

Respond - What is this passage calling you to do? What is this passage calling you to pray for?

Rest

If need be, refer back to the article, "[What is Lectio Divina?](#)" in the back.

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- How was practicing lectio divina today?

Week 1 Day 4 - Lectio Divina

Meditative Bible reading like lectio divina reminds us of the reality of God's presence working in us, through us, and around us. The more we see this, the more we chip away at our apathy and move towards a deeper zeal for the Lord.

READ

Psalm 119:9-16

How can a young man keep his way pure?
By guarding it according to your word.
With my whole heart I seek you;
let me not wander from your commandments!
I have stored up your word in my heart,
that I might not sin against you.
Blessed are you, O Lord;
teach me your statutes!
With my lips I declare
all the rules of your mouth.
In the way of your testimonies I delight
as much as in all riches.
I will meditate on your precepts
and fix my eyes on your ways.
I will delight in your statutes;
I will not forget your word.

DO

Practice lectio divina over what you just read.

Relax

Read - What stood out to you?

Reflect - What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

Respond - What is this passage calling you to do? What is this passage calling you to pray for?

Rest

If need be, refer back to the article, "[What is Lectio Divina?](#)" in the back.

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- How was practicing lectio divina today?

Week 1 Day 5 - Lectio Divina

Meditative Bible reading like lectio divina reminds us of the reality of God's presence working in us, through us, and around us. The more we see this, the more we chip away at our apathy and move towards a deeper zeal for the Lord.

READ

Psalm 19:7-11

The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure,
making wise the simple;
the precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure,
enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the Lord is clean,
enduring forever;
the rules of the Lord are true,
and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey
and drippings of the honeycomb.
Moreover, by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.

DO

Practice lectio divina over what you just read.

Relax

Read - What stood out to you?

Reflect - What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

Respond - What is this passage calling you to do? What is this passage calling you to pray for?

Rest

If need be, refer back to the article, "[What is Lectio Divina?](#)" in the back.

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- How was practicing lectio divina today?

Week 1 Day 6 - Lectio Divina

Meditative Bible reading like lectio divina reminds us of the reality of God's presence working in us, through us, and around us. The more we see this, the more we chip away at our apathy and move towards a deeper zeal for the Lord.

READ

2 Timothy 3:12-17

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

DO

Practice lectio divina over what you just read.

Relax

Read - What stood out to you?

Reflect - What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

Respond - What is this passage calling you to do? What is this passage calling you to pray for?

Rest

If need be, refer back to the article, "[What is Lectio Divina?](#)" in the back.

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- How was practicing lectio divina today?

Week 1 Day 7 - Lectio Divina

Meditative Bible reading like lectio divina reminds us of the reality of God's presence working in us, through us, and around us. The more we see this, the more we chip away at our apathy and move towards a deeper zeal for the Lord.

READ

Psalm 119:97-98, 103-104

Oh how I love your law!
It is my meditation all the day.
Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies,
for it is ever with me...
How sweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth!
Through your precepts I get understanding;
therefore I hate every false way.
Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.

DO

Practice lectio divina over what you just read.

Relax

Read - What stood out to you?

Reflect - What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

Respond - What is this passage calling you to do? What is this passage calling you to pray for?

Rest

If need be, refer back to the article, "[What is Lectio Divina?](#)" in the back.

Reflect on questions in the Week 1 Review on the next page.

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- How was practicing lectio divina today?
- After completing the Week 1 Review, what was one thing the Lord taught you this week?

Week 1 Review

What's the Lord been showing you this week through these practices?

Were any daily prompts especially difficult? Why is that?

How might you press into these practices more to fight for your zeal in Jesus?

Week 2

Day 1 - An Introduction to Singing

Singing reorients us to who we are in Christ despite what our feelings may say. Through this practice, we use our bodies to cultivate a deeper love for the Lord.

READ

Psalm 34:1-3

I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
let the humble hear and be glad.
Oh, magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt his name together!

DO

Read through the articles, resources [“Why we Sing at Gatherings”](#) and [“How to Cultivate a Heart of Worship”](#) in the back.

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- What’s one thing you learned from today’s article?

Week 2
Day 2 - Sing

Singing reorients us to who we are in Christ despite what our feelings may say. Through this practice, we use our bodies to cultivate a deeper love for the Lord.

READ

Psalm 150

Praise the Lord!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens!
Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his excellent greatness!
Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with sounding cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

DO

Spend some time listening to a song or two from [Midtown's Spotify playlist](#) (search: midtowncolumbia). Meditate on the words being sung. Sing out loud. Place yourself in a physical posture of worship, whether that means raising your hands, getting on your knees or laying down on your face.

If need be, read the resources "[Why we Sing at Gatherings](#)" and "[How to Cultivate a Heart of Worship](#)" in the back.

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- How was practicing the discipline of singing today?

Week 2

Day 3 - Listen to a Sermon

Listening to God's Word preached regularly shapes us to be a people zealous for good works. The more we listen attentively to His Word and obey it, the more we conform ourselves to be more like Him.

READ

James 1:22-25

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

DO

At some point today, listen to the sermon "[Apathy](https://midtowndowntown.com/sermons/category/apathy)" from our What's Killing Me series (<https://midtowndowntown.com/sermons/category/apathy>)

What stood out to you from the sermon?

By God's grace and through His Spirit, how can you apply this sermon to your life today?

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- What's one thing you learned from the sermon?

Week 2
Day 4 - Sing

Singing reorients us to who we are in Christ despite what our feelings may say. Through this practice, we use our bodies to cultivate a deeper love for the Lord.

READ

Psalm 96:1-6

Oh sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth!
Sing to the Lord, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.
Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples!
For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be feared above all gods.
For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols,
but the Lord made the heavens.
Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

DO

Spend some time listening to a song or two from [Midtown's Spotify playlist](#) (search: midtowncolumbia). Meditate on the words being sung. Sing out loud. Place yourself in a physical posture of worship, whether that means raising your hands, getting on your knees or laying down on your face.

If need be, read the resources "[Why we Sing at Gatherings](#)" and "[How to Cultivate a Heart of Worship](#)" in the back

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- How was practicing the discipline of singing today?

Week 2
Day 5 - Sing

Singing reorients us to who we are in Christ despite what our feelings may say. Through this practice, we use our bodies to cultivate a deeper love for the Lord.

READ

Revelation 15:2-4

And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

“Great and amazing are your deeds,
O Lord God the Almighty!
Just and true are your ways,
O King of the nations!
Who will not fear, O Lord,
and glorify your name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come
and worship you,
for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

DO

Spend some time listening to a song or two from [Midtown's Spotify playlist](#) (search: midtowncolumbia). Meditate on the words being sung. Sing out loud. Place yourself in a physical posture of worship, whether that means raising your hands, getting on your knees or laying down on your face.

If need be, read the resources “[Why we Sing at Gatherings](#)” and “[How to Cultivate a Heart of Worship](#)” in the back.

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- How was practicing the discipline of singing today?

Week 2

Day 6 - Listen to a Sermon

Listening to God's Word preached regularly shapes us to be a people zealous for good works. The more we listen attentively to His Word and obey it, the more we conform ourselves to be more like Him.

READ

Titide 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

DO

At some point today, listen to the sermon "[The Things You Don't Do Do Things to You](https://www.midtownlexington.com/sermons/personal-liturgy-the-things-you-dont-do-do-things-to-you)" from our [Personal Liturgy](https://www.midtownlexington.com/sermons/personal-liturgy-the-things-you-dont-do-do-things-to-you) series ([midtownlexington.com/sermons/personal-liturgy-the-things-you-dont-do-do-things-to-you](https://www.midtownlexington.com/sermons/personal-liturgy-the-things-you-dont-do-do-things-to-you))

What stood out to you from the sermon?

By God's grace and through His Spirit, how can you apply this sermon to your life today?

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- What's one thing you learned from today's sermon?

Week 2
Day 7 - Sing

Singing reorients us to who we are in Christ despite what our feelings may say. Through this practice, we use our bodies to cultivate a deeper love for the Lord.

READ

Colossians 3:12-17

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

DO

Spend some time listening to a song or two from [Midtown's Spotify playlist](#) (search: midtowncolumbia). Meditate on the words being sung. Sing out loud. Place yourself in a physical posture of worship, whether that means raising your hands, getting on your knees or laying down on your face.

If need be, read the resources "[Why we Sing at Gatherings](#)" and "[How to Cultivate a Heart of Worship](#)" in the back.

How might you bring this posture of worship to Sunday Gatherings?

Reflect on questions in the Week 2 Review on the next page.

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested ideas:

- How was practicing the discipline of singing today?
- After completing the Week 2 Review, what was one thing the Lord taught you this week?

Week 2 Review

What's the Lord been showing you this week through these practices?

Were any daily prompts especially difficult? Why is that?

How might you press into these practices more to fight for your zeal in Jesus?

Week 3

Day 1 - An Introduction to Serving

Serving reminds us there's joy in making decisions that benefit others even if we don't feel like it. Life is best spent when spent on others, but to develop this awareness, it requires self-discipline.

READ

Galatians 5:13-15

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

DO

Read through the article, [“Becoming a Person Who Enjoys Doing What Others Need \(Even When You Don't Feel Like It\)”](#) in the back

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- What's one thing you learned from today's article?

Week 3

Day 2 - Serve

Serving reminds us there's joy in making decisions that benefit others even if we don't feel like it. Life is best spent when spent on others, but to develop this awareness, it requires self-discipline.

READ

Philippians 2:2-11

complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

DO

Serve someone today by doing something for them you otherwise would not have done.

If need be, read through the article, "[Becoming a Person Who Enjoys Doing What Others Need \(Even When You Don't Feel Like It\)](#)" in the back.

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- Who will you serve today that you would not have otherwise served? Once completed, what was that experience like?

Week 3
Day 3 - Serve

Serving reminds us there's joy in making decisions that benefit others even if we don't feel like it. Life is best spent when spent on others, but to develop this awareness, it requires self-discipline.

READ

Luke 6:32-36

“If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

DO

Serve someone today by doing something for them you otherwise would not have done.

If need be, read through the article, [“Becoming a Person Who Enjoys Doing What Others Need \(Even When You Don't Feel Like It\)”](#) in the back.

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- Who will you serve today that you would not have otherwise served? Once completed, what was that experience like?

Week 3

Day 4 - Listen to a Sermon

Listening to God's Word preached regularly shapes us to be a people zealous for good works. The more we listen attentively to His Word, the more we conform ourselves to be more like Him.

READ

Revelation 2:4-7

I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.'

DO

At some point today, listen to the sermon "[Losing Your Fight](http://midtownwonotch.com/sermons/losing-your-fight)" (midtownwonotch.com/sermons/losing-your-fight)

What stood out to you from the sermon?

By God's grace and through His Spirit, how can you apply this sermon to your life today?

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- What's one thing you learned from the sermon today?

Week 3

Day 5 - Serve

Serving reminds us there's joy in making decisions that benefit others even if we don't feel like it. Life is best spent when spent on others, but to develop this awareness, it requires self-discipline.

READ

Romans 12:3-8

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

DO

Serve someone today by doing something for them you otherwise would not have done.

If need be, read through the article, "[Becoming a Person Who Enjoys Doing What Others Need \(Even When You Don't Feel Like It\)](#)" in the back.

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- Who will you serve today that you would not have otherwise served? Once completed, what was that experience like?

Week 3
Day 6 - Serve

Serving reminds us there's joy in making decisions that benefit others even if we don't feel like it. Life is best spent when spent on others, but to develop this awareness, it requires self-discipline.

READ

Romans 12:9-18

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

DO

Serve someone today by doing something for them you otherwise would not have done.

If need be, read through the article, "[Becoming a Person Who Enjoys Doing What Others Need \(Even When You Don't Feel Like It\)](#)" in the back.

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- Who will you serve today that you would not have otherwise served? Once completed, what was that experience like?

Week 3
Day 7 - Serve

Serving reminds us there's joy in making decisions that benefit others even if we don't feel like it. Life is best spent when spent on others, but to develop this awareness, it requires self-discipline.

READ

1 Peter 4:9-11

Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

DO

Serve someone today by doing something for them you otherwise would not have done.

If need be, read through the article, "[Becoming a Person Who Enjoys Doing What Others Need \(Even When You Don't Feel Like It\)](#)" in the back.

Reflect on questions in the Week 3 Review on the next page.

TOGETHER

Reach out to others in your LifeGroup working through this track to share what you learned.

Suggested idea:

- Who will you serve today that you would not have otherwise served? Once completed, what was that experience like?
- After completing the Week 3 Review, what was one thing the Lord taught you this week?

Week 3 Review

What's the Lord been showing you this week through these practices?

Now that the 3 weeks are over, what does it look like for you to practically fight for your zeal in Jesus daily? What practices can you implement daily/weekly? Share this with others in your LifeGroup to hold each other accountable.

If this plan was especially challenging, feel free to start back from the beginning or modify the plan to focus more time on one practice.

When you're finished, we'd love to hear how the Lord grew you in these three weeks. Share with us your story at teaching@midtowncolumbia.com

APPENDIX

What is Lectio Divina?

For the first 1,500 years of church history, lectio divina (Latin for “divine reading”) was the primary spiritual practice people used to be with Jesus. Since most people were illiterate, the reading of Scripture in the church Gathering each week was vital for spiritual growth with a focus on being attentive and listening to God’s Word.

With that in mind, lectio divina is not an exercise in primarily in mentally critiquing or exegeting a text for the sake of pulling out information, rather, this practice exists to further your relationship with Jesus as He invites you into His presence through His Word.

To practice this, walk through the following steps (or movements) in order. You’ll notice this is similar to our [how to study the Bible post](#), with an emphasis on practicing the presence of God.

Relax

This requires a quiet preparation of the heart. Turn off your phone, get away from distraction, slow down, and take a deep breath. We want to unbusy our minds so we can make room to hear the voice of God.

Read (Lectio)

Read a Scripture passage slowly. Imagine the original author is speaking it to you. If it’s a narrative, imagine you’re in the narrative watching this story first-hand. Consider paraphrasing the passage in your own words.

What words caught your attention?

What phrases stand out to you?

Reflect (Meditatio)

Read the Scripture slowly a second time. Reflect on how the passage/words/phrases might apply to your life. What does the passage reveal about people? What does this passage reveal to us about God? Ask the Spirit for wisdom and discernment.

Is it relevant to something that you are going through?

Does it bring to mind a struggle that you have been dealing with?

Do certain people come to mind that God may want you to reach out to or reconcile a relationship with?

Is there a strong sense of a movement or change that needs to happen?

Respond (Oratio)

Read the Scripture a third time. Scripture reminds us that we can approach His presence confidently, so make this conversational with God.

Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling?

Where are you resistant or want to push back?

What do you need to pray for?

The aim of our response is obedience. If the passage prompts you about a poor relationship, go seek reconciliation. If the passage reminds you to be thankful about something specific in your life, then respond in thankfulness. If you're anxious/overwhelmed about something in your life, present it to the Lord. If the passage prompts a specific sin in your life, confess that sin to God knowing He is faithful and just to forgive you.

Rest (Contemplatio)

After reading, rest and wait in His presence. Allow some time for His Word to sink into your soul. Before you're done with this practice, you might want to consider writing down what the Lord showed you as a reminder throughout the day.

It's important to remember, the aim of this practice is to just "be" with God. We're not trying to "get something out of it" so much as we want to simply sit in His presence.

Like other practices, this will seem challenging at first. Stick with it. Eventually, this will get easier as you commit to tending to this practice regularly.

Why We Sing at Gatherings

During Gatherings, we devote a lot of time to singing together and worshipping God. Have you ever wondered why we invest so much time this way? Why spend a large portion of our time singing songs? The answer to this question can be found by looking at who God is. Once we understand who He is, we can understand why worshipping Him every week as a family is so vital.

1. Worship as rebellion

When we sing together, we are intentionally reminding ourselves of truths that say, “Jesus is King; all these other things in my life are not. My career, my family, my wallet, my sex life, and my passions can’t compare to who Jesus is.” The world constantly barrages us with what we should worship through music, TV, movies, and social media. But worship is a defiant act of rebellion against those forces. That’s why we sing these songs. Because we all are tempted to worship anything that is not God, we need reminders constantly. So every Sunday, we worship to remind ourselves that He alone is worthy of our worship. He alone is worthy of our praise. He alone is worthy of our adoration. He alone is worthy of our worship.

2. Worship as reorienting

Although we might intellectually know these truths about God, we don’t always feel that way. Our devotion often wavers based on our circumstances or emotions. Worshipping God through song is one way we fight back against our unbelief and reorient ourselves back to Him. When we sing we are saying, “My feelings may not be all there and I’m having a hard time singing this song but I don’t care. Jesus is Lord no matter how I feel.” This was the Psalmist plea in Psalms 42-43. He both acknowledges how he feels and then reorients himself back to God, “Why are you so downcast O my soul? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, my salvation and my God.”

3. Worship as a reminder to others

Here’s part of what makes corporate singing set apart from just singing in your car: people need to hear you sing. They need to know Jesus is King over their feelings and their passions too. When you sing at the Gathering, even if it’s wildly out of tune, you’re telling others, “Join me in this.” It’s a way of encouraging others and being missional by inviting others into the goodness of God every time you sing. That’s why the Psalmist can say in Psalm 34:3, “Oh magnify the LORD with me, let us exalt his name together!”

So next time you walk into a Gathering, focus on the words we’re singing. These words are meant to remind you how great your Savior is; so invite and expect the Spirit to change your heart and the people around you.

**What keeps you from worshipping whole-heartedly during a Gathering?
How can you ready your heart for worship the next time you attend a Gathering?**

Cultivating a Deeper Heart of Worship

We love watching people get baptized at our church proclaiming that Jesus is King. We watch them physically get into a pool, get baptized in water, rise up declaring they were dead in sin, and now alive in Christ. They were covered in sin, but are now washed clean.

This is not an uncommon idea in the Scriptures. God commands us to do with our bodies things that reflect and enact internal reality He's working in our spirit.

Baptism is one example.

Communion is another. Jesus could have said, "As often as you think of me, *imagine* bread broken that represents my body and wine that represents my blood." But He didn't say that. He said, "Take and eat. Drink. Physically remember with your body that I am your portion, your fill, your satisfaction. That my body broken and blood poured for you is just as vital for life as food and drink are to your body."

Confession is another. When it comes to faith, God could have said just believe in me. That's all. But that's not what the Scripture says. Romans 10:9 - "*if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*"

The Psalms are full of commands and descriptions of responding with our bodies:

Psalm 95:6

Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

Psalm 134:2

Lift up your hands... and bless the Lord!

Psalm 149:3

Let them praise his name with dancing,

Psalm 5:7

Through the abundance of your steadfast love, I will enter your house. I will bow down toward your holy temple in reverence.

The point is what we do with our bodies matters because we are embodied spirits. We all know this and have a category for this in all kinds of negative commands. Don't murder. Don't steal. Don't commit adultery.

But we don't always have a good working category for the positive commands - to use your body to shape your internal world.

Sometimes this can be hard or feel weird for us because we're worried about authenticity and not doing anything that doesn't feel right.

But it's not only that external responses to internal reality - although they do often serve as that - it's that our external responses help shape our internal reality. Our obedience to respond in these ways isn't only

always “inside-out” in that, we only ever respond from what we feel happening internally. Often times, we are called to respond externally first, to help us learn to respond internally on a heart level.

So when we take communion, we are physically/externally responding to a spiritual reality. We take the bread and wine, ask God to help us remember, and believe. It’s both a response to an internal heart level change and an opportunity to cultivate that heart as well.

Jesus tells us when we’re stuck in materialism and lack generosity, we should give as an act of obedience. Obedience with our bodies helps us cultivate a more generous heart because we are embodied spirits - our hearts and our bodies move together.

One translation of Psalm 34:1 - *I will praise the Lord no matter what happens*. Not just when I’m feeling it. But no matter what.

We know we shouldn’t strike out in violence even if we do feel like it. And in the same way, we *should* sing and rejoice even if we don’t feel like it.

Below are a few ways we can use our bodies to cultivate a deeper heart posture of worship:

1 - Lifting Hands

Psalm 134:2

Lift up your hands... and bless the Lord!

By lifting up our hands we’re saying - “God, I need you. My hands are empty. I need your grace. I need you to provide for me. I need your presence even if I don’t believe it right now in this moment. Help me push back against the unreality that you are distant from me.”

2 - Laying or Kneeling

One-hundred and thirty-one times in the Bible people are described or commanded to kneel or lay down and lie prostrate before God. If I had to guess this isn’t a common posture that we have, but if we read the Bible, it’s a position that we will find ourselves in when we meet Jesus. (Such passages include Ps. 22:28-29, Ps. 22:27, Ps. 29:2, Ps. 45:11, Ps 66:4, Ps. 72:11, Ps. 86:9, Ps 95:6, Ps 96:9, Ps 99:5).

This was the response when someone came into the presence of royalty or a King. This is, and will be, the involuntary reaction to being in the presence of God.

We don’t kneel - because we are so humble, but because we want to become humble. We move our bodies into positions of lowliness in order to cultivate an inward reality of humility.

3 - Dancing, Shouting, and Clapping

The final song in the Psalter is one of pure joy and celebration. It’s an anthem fit for the King:

Psalm 150

Praise the Lord!

Praise God in his sanctuary;

praise him in his mighty heavens

Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his excellent greatness!
Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with sounding cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

As you read the passage, notice the responses. We praise through dance. We praise by getting loud. We praise with every breath of our being. And the call of Ps 34:1 is to get after this type of worship even when you don't feel like it. We let our bodies help shape our hearts.

Becoming a Person Who Enjoys Doing What Others Need (Even When You Don't Feel Like It)

Serving reminds us there's joy in making decisions that benefit others even if we don't feel like it. Life is best spent when spent on others, but to develop this attitude, it requires self-discipline - rarely does it come spontaneously.

To press into this practice of serving, take some time meditating on the verses below. After that take some time mapping out how you might serve others you might otherwise not serve to do something you might otherwise not do.

Once completed, pray for the resolve to do what you planned and trust that God by His Spirit will use these opportunities to slowly shape you into becoming a person who enjoys doing what others need.*

Philippians 2:2-4

complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

Luke 6:32-33

“If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

Who can you serve? (That you might not necessarily want to serve.)	What will you do? (That you might not necessarily want to do.)	When will you do it?

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*For ideas to serve others, consider partnering with a [STC ministry](#)
(MidtownColumbia.com/servethecity)

For more ideas, check out your church's Sunday and weekly serving opportunities

MidtownDowntown.com/serve

MidtownLexington.com/serve

MidtownTwoNotch.com/serve