

## Explore the Bible

Series: Flourish

Senior Pastor Andrew Gardener | 21 February 2021

### Part One | Growing Big People

Ps. Andrew shared that our vision is to grow big people, which is derived from Paul's challenge to the church in Ephesus: "built up until we all reach the unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12-13)

- When you hear about "growing" or "being mature", what do you think are the signs of growing or being mature?
- In your Christian life, what are the important things and/or people that help you to grow in faith?
- Reflect on Ps. Andrew's questions to us: is our faith too dependent on Sunday gatherings? Is it too dependent on a pastor, a preacher, a worship team?

Ps. Andrew said, *"when you are going through the hardest time in life, someone else's faith is not going to cut it for you. If you want your faith to survive in the years ahead you are going to need to take personal responsibility for deepening and developing your own spirituality."*

We will hear about the six disciplines of our Spiritual Formation Toolkit in this sermon series, which are the practical resources for us to deepen, develop and decentralise our spiritual foundations: **(1) Explore the Bible; (2) Take Time to Pray; (3) Live in Community; (4) Cultivate Spiritual Friendships; (5) Connect Work and Faith; and (6) Share Your Faith**

- Which of the six disciplines do you think you are practising well, and which of them do you need more practice on?

### Part Two | Exploring the Bible

Ps. Andrew said, *"What is the most amazing thing about the Bible is that it presents one story, one narrative. It is a collection of writings from different periods in history and culture, yet it is a cohesive narrative that drives forward one message, one story, one focus."*

- What does your Bible reading habit look like?
- What kind of book is the Bible in your eyes?
- What do you usually expect when you are reading the Bible?

Ps. Andrew said, *"the Bible is not a self-help book – the Bible is not predominantly about you. This is about Jesus. It is his story found within history. And what is so*

*compelling and so captivating is that the more you understand his story, the more we are able to find our story within it."*

### **Part Three | The Toolkit**

Ps. Andrew encourages us that, *"Begin to see the Bible as each book contributing something to the melody of Jesus. It's the symphony of Scripture. So we have a responsibility to know how each book contributes to the story, and how each book fits into the overarching narrative. Only then can we really see Jesus true and well, and only then do I believe we are reading the Bible true and well. And that is what this part of the Spiritual Formation Toolkit is all about."*

- Have you ever finished reading the whole Bible?
- How do you find it if you have done that? If you haven't, what makes it difficult to finish the whole Bible?
- Do you find the 66 books of the Bible contribute something and needed in the story of Jesus? Which books do you find the most difficult to be related to the story of Jesus and why?

The toolkit provides two parts: "action steps" and "going deeper", which contain both practical and accessible resources for you to start exploring the Bible: (please visit <https://vinechurch.life/resources/toolkit> for full details)

1. Learn about different ways to read the Bible and put it into practice
  2. Get started on a daily reading plan
  3. Develop a rhythm of regular prayerful reading: Lectio Divina
  4. Join the annual ONE Campaign - A 40 Day Gospel Reading Plan
  5. Study the Bible with a group or another person
- Take a look at the toolkit, which steps do you find interesting to practice?
  - Invite your group, your family, or your friends to do that together!

Read Luke 24:25-32, Ps. Andrew said, *"Jesus goes back to the OT Scriptures and explains to them what everything in the OT says about him. He helps the disciples hear the whole symphony of Scripture, so they can understand who Jesus truly is. Notice how the disciples respond: their hearts were burning. Jesus opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. We are going to do this together as a church right now."*

### **Prayer:**

Pray that Jesus will open our minds to understand the Scriptures, and our hearts will be burning when Jesus opens the Scriptures to us. Also pray that we will strengthen our daily spiritual disciplines and we can move into the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.