

# La Coeur



## The Ultimate Cleanse

Cleaning our hearts and minds of the worldly toxins,  
replacing them with Truth and intimacy with God

In an effort to grasp what it means to love the Lord with all your "heart"

Kay Wills Wyma



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# La Coeur

...A cleanse where the heart meets God and literally transforms.

In today's health/body-image obsessed world, cleansing is one of the hottest trends around. We're told that any one of "a variety of celeb-endorsed regimens promise not only to help you lose weight, but to flush your body of so-called toxins, too. These poisonous invaders, from processed foods and pesticides to alcohol and "free radicals," supposedly make us sick, fat, and generally miserable (even if we don't know it) and prevent our bodies from being the lean, disease-fighting, cell-regenerating machines they're meant to be."<sup>1</sup>

But as to their effectiveness ... the jury is still out. According to the medical community, "there's little scientific evidence that cleansing actually rids the body of toxins."<sup>2</sup> Still, people love them. A quick diet change can kick start desired healthy living and better food choices.

Inasmuch as pesticides, process foods, sugar, and fat invade our bodies through food consumption, how much more are our minds infested with even worse through non-stop messaging. Messages of inadequacy, pressures to be or look a certain way, and the incessant "spin" in almost every aspect of life can leave our minds wallowing in the ways and wisdom of the world. And it leaves us feeling sick or tired or worn out, wondering what we need to do next in order to be okay.

So why not approach our thoughts/spiritual life in the same way we do our physical healthy living by doing a cleanse. Our heart and our mind are healthiest when completely engrossed and anchored in God's love for us. So, in this cleanse, it won't be about withholding, but pouring on sustenance... food for the mind. And unlike a physical health cleanse, the jury isn't out on this topic. Intimacy with God absolutely rids our minds of toxins, replacing them with Truth.

One of the way the Lord has chosen to reveal himself to us is His written word. Scripture. The Bible. Most homes have a copy. In fact, it is widely considered to the best selling book of all time. It has estimated annual sales of 100 million copies and has been a major influence on literature and history, especially in the West where it was the first mass-printed book.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/06/28/is-the-cleanse-trend-actually-healthy.html>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

But, let's start by admitting that we tend to have a weird relationship with this book. Although found in most homes, few have read it cover to cover. Most people come at it sporadically, sometimes with fear or trepidation, sometimes with confusion, often with expectations – usually heavy expectations of how we're supposed to do something that we aren't or guilt over doing something we shouldn't.

What if we considered the Bible for what it is ... a love story.  
What if we took ourselves out of the spotlight and read it to know God?  
What if we used the Bible as the tool for a spiritual cleanse?

Instead of juicing, how about reading? Instead of starving, how about eating – bites of Scripture every day for the next 30 days. But unlike kale, that actually is bitter and actually does taste like dirt (just sayin'), tasting and consuming Scripture fills our souls, never lacking, always promising more.

So, what do you say? Are you up for trying a new kind of cleanse? The Chef sure hopes so. He has sacrificed much so you and I might know just how much He loves us. His meals might have the look of a rigid program, but they are actually measured to perfection – to satisfy the deepest longings of which we dare to speak ... our desire to be known and loved.

#### **Four Week Overview:**

These next four weeks will wean you from looking to yourself for all the answers (a product of the famous "Fall" in Genesis 3) and move you toward dependence on God and therefore independence from the ways of the world.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD." Isaiah 55:8

"The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7

Feels better already.

Also, when you read Scripture, try to really get your eyes off yourself by reading it as God's story about himself, revealing himself to you so that you can truly experience intimacy with Him. So instead of reading something like the Ten Commandments as a list of do's and don'ts ... consider for a moment the fact that they might actually describe the essence of God. A description, of sorts, about His character traits that are never self-focused, that are always just, that never lie, cheat or lust. He is at the center of all He asks of us because it is only through Him we can truly live.

"...yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live." 1 Corinthians 8:6

"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength." Paul speaking in Philippians 4:12-13

So, this heart cleanse will focus on:

Week 1: Old Testament Tales

Week 2: Psalms

Week 3: Words from a Minor Prophet

Week 4: Words from The Savior

The days outlined each week will have a chapter of Scripture for you to read.

### **How do I start?**

First, begin by making a commitment. You don't have to bite off more than you can chew. Simply commit to spending time with God each day for the next four weeks. It could be 5 or 50 minutes. Don't stress or worry about it. Take the Nike approach and JDI ... Just Do It.

Then, grab a buddy. Not to sit with you and go through Scripture or prayer with you, but to give you some firm accountability. Communicate with them each day using any of the amazing technological tools at your fingertips. You could talk by phone on a day you want to share and get feedback. You could just email or text to let them know that you held up your end of the bargain. You might even enjoy emailing and sharing with your buddy what God has been teaching you. This would be what people call "journaling". When you email it, you have it for yourself too – What a bonus!!

Next, set a time to open God's Word. You may not be a morning person, but for this exercise ... become one! Commit to getting up 15 minutes earlier than you normally would (15 minutes!!). Find a quiet spot and ask God to prepare your heart and mind for time with Him. Are you moaning or groaning at the thought of lugging your head off the pillow a few minutes earlier than normal?? This cleanse will be good for you.

If you're the type of creative person that is inspired by crafty tools – head on over to Office Depot and get yourself some note cards and rings (assuming, of course that you already have a hole punch), or a small three ring binder and paper to go in it, anything you can personalize and make cute. Tools like these are great to house verses that might have impacted you, or to journal what God has taught you – or maybe come to clean with what you've learned about yourself.

The keys to this exercise are:

- 1) Commitment
- 2) Honesty
- 3) Commitment
- 4) Accountability
- 5) Commitment
- 6) 100% openness
- 7) Commitment
- 8) Leave any guilt/judgment/pre-suppositions behind and center your gaze on what's ahead!!

This cleanse promises to change your life. Not because of any effort you might put into it, but because God promises us ...

"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things." Jeremiah 33:3

By the way, He always (ALWAYS) does what He says he's going to do.

Each day includes prompt questions. They're short and invite you into the process with only minimal hand-holding – which might be different than what you have normally done in studying the Bible. But don't worry. This is a chance for **you** to interact with Scripture as you read it.

Each day also includes space for you to "journal" your thoughts as you go through the readings. It's a good idea to keep an account of what God is showing you. Research has shown that the more senses you use in learning, the longer you will retain the information. So even a phone call to your accountability party might be a good idea at some point. Reading (eyes), speaking (mouth/maybe taste 😊), hearing your friends response and the words out of your own mouth (ears), writing/journaling (touch) ... I'm not sure if we could get to a smell function, but 4 out of 5 isn't too shabby.

Stick to your guns. Stay the course. The hardest part will be the beginning week. So take it one day at a time. If you snooze your clock, find some other times during the day... alone. The day isn't over until your head hits the pillow and your eyes are shut.



# La Coeur



## The Ultimate Cleanse

### **Commitment**

Below is a spot for your signature. (Only sign if you're committed to the cleanse.)  
There is also a spot for your accountability partner to sign. Feel free to sign for them,  
but you must get their permission.

Have fun, and get ready to understand why this book, the Bible, is living and new every  
morning. Stay the course and you just might be surprised at this books insatiability!

I commit my next four weeks to completing the La Coeur Cleanse

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Name

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Date

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Name

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Date



## *La Coeur - Week 1. ☆ Old Testament Tales*

Don't be afraid to spend time in the Old Testament. Not only is it full of engaging stories, the Lord God Almighty skillfully and purposefully uses it to reveal his love, his glory, his justice, his commitment to his people, his patience, his faithfulness ... this list could (and does) go on for eternity.

The Old Testament consist of 39 books – some history, some Psalms, some prophesy – all great. We have some great resources and tools at our fingertips to provide an overview. Gotquestions.com (we will touch on a few others as we go), offers the following to get us started:

The Old Testament is divided into five sections: the Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy), the historical books (Joshua through Esther), the poetic books (Job through Song of Solomon), the Major Prophets (Isaiah through Daniel), and the Minor Prophets (Hosea through Malachi). The Old Testament was written from approximately 1400 B.C. to approximately 400 B.C. The Old Testament was written primarily in Hebrew, with a few small sections written in Aramaic (essentially a variation of Hebrew).

The Old Testament deals primarily with the relationship between God and the nation of Israel. The Pentateuch deals with the creation of Israel and God establishing a covenant relationship with Israel. The historical books record Israel's history, its victories and successes along with its defeats and failures. The poetic books give us a more intimate look at God's relationship with Israel and His passion for Israel to worship and obey Him. The prophetic books are God's call to Israel to repent from its idolatry and unfaithfulness and to return to a relationship of obedience and spiritual fidelity.

Perhaps a better title would be the First Testament. The word "old" tends to give the idea of "outdated" or "not-relevant."<sup>3</sup>

If you've never read the Bible cover to cover, Genesis is a great place to start. Maybe even consider a One-Year Bible. But for this exercise, we'll bite off a small piece. Abraham's story ... and only a bite.

***Begin any time you open God's Word with a simple prayer,***

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.gotquestions.org/Old-Testament-Survey.html#ixzz38CgdoHyg>

***"Lord, open my eyes and ears to your Word today so that I might be used to bring glory and honor to your name."***  
*... or something like that. Namely, get your eyes off yourself and ask Him to reveal Himself to you.*

**Day 1:** Read Genesis 12.

Consider what you learn about God in this chapter, what you learn about Abraham, what you learn about obedience. Ask the the 5-W questions, "Who, What, When, Where & Why." Most importantly, what do you learn about God? Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

Read the passage being studied. Mark any ideas that are repeated, character traits exhibited, anything that sticks out to you.

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**Day 2:** Read Genesis 13.

Consider what you learn about God, Abraham, faith, conflict resolution, and yourself in this chapter. Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

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**Day 3:** Read Genesis 14.

Consider what you learn about God (how He rescues *us*), Abraham, Lot and yourself in this chapter.

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

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**Day 4:** Read Genesis 15.



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**Day 6:** Read Genesis 17.

Consider what you learn about God, circumcision, Abraham, obedience, and yourself in this chapter. As you consider these things, jump forward to Jesus and the “circumcision” of our hearts available through Him.

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

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**Day 7:** Read Genesis 18.

Consider what you learn about God, Abraham, Sarah and yourself in this very interesting chapter. What do you think about Abraham’s interaction with God in verses 16-33?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

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Take time on Day 7 to reflect upon what you've learned about God during the week. Also consider His role in your life, any areas in your life you need change, any areas of forgiveness, any areas where you can trust him more fully.

Here's just a taste of what you might learn about God through these Old Testament stories:

- He sees all (Cain & Abel)
- He clothes us (Adam & Eve)
- He pursues us (Cain)
- He is just (Cain)
- He is worthy of honor (Cain & Abel)
- He desires relationship with his creation (Enoch)
- He hates evil (Noah)
- He provides (Noah, Abraham)
- He keeps his promises (Abraham)
- He listens to and considers our requests (Abraham)
- He knows the plan for our lives (Abraham)
- He is the giver of blessings (Isaac & Jacob)
- He knows the past, present and future (Joseph)
- He sets apart from the beginning (Moses' parents)
- He offers salvation (Moses)
- He has power of every earthly power (Moses)
- He has authority over life and death (Moses)
- He has complete control over nature (Israelites)
- He is the victor, a mighty warrior (Joshua)
- His name/reputation is known throughout the nations (Rahab)
- He works through broken people (Gideon, Barak, Jephthah, Samson, David)
- He is in control (all)



- He calls those who listen (Samuel)
- He shares his plans before they happen (Samuel and the prophets)
- He loves his people (Samuel)
- His ways are not our ways (all)
- He is TRUTH (all)

The list goes on...

CONGRATULATIONS!!! You've just spent an entire week putting God's time ahead of your own!! Don't think your effort is small. It will grow and grow and you continue to pursue Him. And... you'll be surprised at the result!

Did you miss a day this week?? No worries. Shrug it off and begin the next day fresh and free of guilt. This exercise is to build your relationship with God – eyes on Him and off you. If you spend time heaping guilt on your head for lack of effort/commitment consider for a moment where your eyes are resting when guilted yourself.



Once you're done with La Coeure, come back to Abraham's story and let God reveal wonderful secrets about himself, especially as you consider Abraham & Isaac's walk to Mt. Moriah as compared to God & Jesus and their walk to Golgatha. (The ending is a little different ... There was no ram as a rescue from the ultimate sacrifice.)



## *La Coeur – Week 2: Aaaaahh, The Psalms*

How's morning working for you?? Maybe sitting outside one day, or tuning in a little classical background music... you could enjoy his creation *while* spending time in His Word.

This week, let's peruse a few Psalms.

Psalms are songs. They were written by many faithful followers of God. David, one of the Old Testament kings, composed at least 73. Moses wrote Psalm 90. A few of the psalms are author-unknown. But all of the Psalms represent relationship – authentic, lay it all out there, relationship.

There are several *types* of Psalms. In [www.soniclight.com](http://www.soniclight.com), Dr. Constable provides a terrific resource when you're looking for a little background information. Here you can learn about the authors, history, context, etc. of Psalms (and other books of the Bible). Types of Psalms include: Laments, Praise, Enthronement, Pilgrim, Royal, Messianic, and Wisdom/Didactic. Historically the psalms cover a period of about 1000 years, from the time of Moses (ca. 1400 B.C.) to the Israelites' return from exile (ca. 450 B.C.).

This week, we will check out a few ... like an small appetizer to cleanse our thoughts and fill them with things of the Lord. Don't forget to ask God to open your eyes and ears to what He has to teach you each day.

### **Day 1:** Read Psalm 1.

What do you think it means to "meditate" or to be "planted by streams"? What do you think the Psalmist means by saying the leaf "does not wither". How might these words encourage you today. And, most importantly, what do you learn about God in this Psalm?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

Read the passage being studied. Mark any ideas that are repeated, character traits exhibited, anything that sticks out to you.

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**Day 5:** Read Psalm 51.  
Take some time after reading this Psalm to confess specific sin. What do you learn about God and forgiveness/restoration in Psalm 33? How can you apply it in your life?  
Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

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**Day 6:** Read Psalm 33.  
Consider what you learn about God in this Psalm. What specific descriptions noted in this Psalm can help you trust/believe in God? What can you apply in your life today?  
Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

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Make note of God's attributes you've learned about this week:

Ex. Psalm 1:    God's counsel is wise  
                      God's Law can be meditated on day and night  
                      God walks with us  
                      His Word is strong

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How's your accountability? Have you been consistent in maintaining contact? Nothing earth shattering, just a note to let him/her know you are in fact keeping up with your side of the bargain.

You're doing GREAT!!! Keep on keepin' on. God has so much to reveal about his unsurpassable love for you.



## *La Coeur - Week 3, Words from a Minor Prophet*

14 DAYS!! You've been spending time with God for two weeks straight. Have you started to realize that the more time you obediently spend with Him, the more time you WANT to spend time with Him??!

This week, we'll take a peek into the section of the Bible known as the Prophets. There are the Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel & Daniel) and the Minor Prophets. I'm going to consider that we all don't know too much about these guys, so here's a helpful little chart from Bible.org. (a terrific resource for tough questions and background info).

| <b>Comparison of the Four Major Prophets</b> |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
|  | <b>Isaiah</b>                                   | <b>Jeremiah</b>  | <b>Ezekiel</b>   | <b>Daniel</b>  |
| Propheesied To:                              | Jews in Judea                                   | Jews in Judea and captivity  | Jews captive in Babylon                                    | Jews captive in Babylon and Gentile kings  |
| Concerning :                                 | Judah and Jerusalem (Isa. 1:1; 2:1)             | Judah and Nations (Jer. 1:5, 9-10; 2:1-2)                          | The whole house of Israel (Ezek. 2:3-6; 3:4-10, 17)        | Israel and Gentile Nations (Dan. 2:36ff; 9)  |
| During the reigns of:                        | Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah (kings of Judah) | Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah (kings of Judah) | Zedekiah (king of Judah); Nebuchadnezzar (king of Babylon) | Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah (kings of Judah). Nebuchadnezzar (king of Babylon) |
| Dates:                                       | 740-680 B.C.                                    | 627-585 B.C.   | 592-570 B.C.   | 605-536 B.C.   |
| Historical Setting:                          | 2 Kings 15-21; 2 Chronicles 26-30               | 2 Kings 22-25  | Daniel 1-6   | Daniel 1-6   |

### Minor Prophets, Their Order in the English Bible

|          |            |              |               |
|----------|------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Hosea | 4. Obadiah | 7. Nahum     | 10. Haggai    |
| 2. Joel  | 5. Jonah   | 8. Habakkuk  | 11. Zechariah |
| 3. Amos  | 6. Micah   | 9. Zephaniah | 12. Malachi   |

### Their Grouping According to the Exile and The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah

| Group   | Book                        | Approximate Dates |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Pre-Exilic Prophets of Israel</b>                | Jonah (preached to Nineveh) | 780-850           |
|   | Amos                        | 765-750           |
|   | Hosea                       | 755-715           |
| <b>Prophets of Judah</b>                            | Obadiah                     | 840               |
|   | Joel                        | 835-796           |
|   | Micah                       | 740-690           |
|   | Nahum                       | 630-612           |
|   | Habakkuk                    | 606-604           |
|   | Zephaniah                   | 625               |
| <b>Post-Exilic Prophets of the Returned Remnant</b> | Haggai                      | 520               |
|   | Zechariah                   | 515               |
|   | Malachi                     | 430               |

This week, we'll spend time in one of the Minor Prophets, the book of Hosea. You're reaching the point, now, where you can come up with contextual questions yourself. Use the provided questions each day purely as a guide ... if you need one. Let God be your guide. Take notes on the concepts, revelations that you God is making known to you ... specifically and uniquely to you. Then do us all a favor and share it! We could all benefit from what the Lord is showing you.

**Day 1:** Read Hosea 1.

Today, any time you start a new book of the Bible, take time to make note of the 5 w's. (who, what, when, where, why). You can skip this part, but it might leave you wondering. Reference always helps us grasp more about a situation, thus opening your eyes to context.

Also, keep notes this week on what you learn about Hosea, his wife, God, yourself ... Jesus. Have you noticed that even though his actual name has yet to be spoken, his story is in plain view for us all to see ... if our eyes are open. Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

Read the passage being studied. Mark any ideas that are repeated, character traits exhibited, anything that sticks out to you.

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**Day 2:** Read Hosea 2.

What do you learn about the Israelites, about yourself, about God in this chapter?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

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**Day 6:** Read Hosea 13.

We're skipping ahead (you can certainly read the chapters in between if you are so compelled!) What does God reveal about Himself? How does this affect you, today?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

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**Day 7:** Read Hosea 14.

Hosea ends with encouragement to repent and hints to the redemption at hand. What do you learn about God in this chapter? What admonition does the prophet leave us with? How does that relate to our heart?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

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Make note of God's attributes you've learned about this week:

Hosea 1:

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keep going... (in your journal 😊)

WOW!!! **21 DAYS!!!** Did you know research has proven that it takes 21 days to form a new habit?! There you have it. You've solidified your new habit of spending time with God (as if you needed reinforcement to hang with the Almighty... your Creator, greatest ally, love, support, refuge, sanctuary ... the list goes on!)





## *La Coeur – Week 4: Time with The Savior*

Most of us probably feel the most comfortable in the New Testament, especially the Gospels. They are a known quantity and seem to be much more welcoming/loving than the sometimes confusing/harsh stories in the Old Testament.

Hopefully the journey on our heart cleanse has shown us that the entire Bible is open and ready to share wonderful insight into God's character. The New Testament records one of the most endearing and life altering aspects of God ... His Redemption, all-sufficient Redemption named Jesus.

### The New Testament

The New Testament is divided into five sections: the Gospels (Matthew through John), history (the book of Acts), the Pauline Epistles (Romans through Philemon), the General Epistles (Hebrews through Jude), and prophecy (the book of Revelation). The New Testament was written from approximately A.D. 45 to approximately A.D. 95. The New Testament was written in Koine Greek (common Greek, the everyday form of the Greek language in the first century A.D.)

The Gospels give us four different, yet not conflicting, accounts of the birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Gospels demonstrate how Jesus was the promised Messiah of the Old Testament and lay the foundation for the teaching of the rest of the New Testament. The book of Acts records the deeds of Jesus' apostles, the men Jesus sent out into the world to proclaim the Gospel of salvation. Acts tells us of the beginning of the church and its rapid growth in the first century A.D. The Pauline Epistles, written by the Apostle Paul, are letters to specific churches - giving official Christian doctrine and the practice that should follow that doctrine. The General Epistles compliment the Pauline Epistles with additional teaching and application. The book of Revelation prophesies the events that will occur in the end times.<sup>4</sup>

This week, we'll skip around the Gospels, enjoy a little taste of Jesus and look at a few lives as they intersect Him. Knowing that even though we might not be seeing Jesus face to face, He walks with us – like he did when He was on earth – every day.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.gotquestions.org/New-Testament-Survey.html#ixzz38CqGKDwU>

**Day 1:** Read Luke 1

Consider what you can learn about and from Zechariah, Mary, and Elizabeth in this chapter? What do you learn about God and his promises? What about faith and obedience?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

Read the passage being studied. Mark any ideas that are repeated, character traits exhibited, anything that sticks out to you.

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**Day 2:** Read Matthew 8.

Consider what you learn about faith as it relates to the leper, the Centurion, the sick, the disciples, the demon-possessed and you. What do you learn about Jesus in this chapter?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

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**Day 3:** Read Mark 7.

Consider what you learn about God in this chapter ... even from the far-reaching observation in verses 6-7. How might this relate to the Church (to us) today? What do you learn about faith from those Christ heals in this chapter? What can we learn?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

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**Day 4:** Read John 3.

Consider what you learn about God, Jesus, Nicodemus, John and yourself through this passage? How do you let these truths affect your life?



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**Day 6:** Read Mark 10.

Consider what you learn about God, Jesus, the characters in this chapter. What does it teach you about faith, preconceptions, God’s Law, Jesus’ power?

How can you let Truth penetrate and change the way you live life?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

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**Day 7:** Read Luke 24.

What does this prayer teach you about Jesus, about God and about us. What do you learn about God’s power and His desire for us? Look at verse 45, remember his power as you approach him every day.

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

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CONGRATULATIONS!!!

You've finished the "La Coeur Cleanse"!

Don't stop here. Keep it up. Stay anchored in His Word.  
Grow deeper and deeper in intimacy with God, using Him as your guide.

*"For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him  
who knocks, the door will be opened."*

*Matthew 7:8*

Excerpt from a letter written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in 1936 to his brother-in-law Rudiger Schleicher.

First of all I will confess quite simply – I believe that the Bible alone is the answer to all our questions, and that we need only to ask repeatedly and a little humbly, in order to receive this answer. One cannot simply read the Bible, like other books. One must be prepared really to enquire of it. Only this will it reveal itself. Only if we expect from it the ultimate answer, shall we receive it. That is because in the Bible God speaks to us. And one cannot simply think about God in one's own strength, one has to enquire of him. Only if we seek him, will he answer us. Of course it is also possible to read the Bible like any other book, that is to say from the point of view of textual criticism, etc.; there is nothing to be said against that. Only that that is not the method which will reveal to us the heart of the Bible, but on the surface, just as we do not grasp the words of someone we love by taking them to bits, but by simply receiving them, so that for days they go on lingering in our minds, simply because they are the words of a person we love; and just as these words reveal more and more of the person who said them as we go on, like Mary, "pondering them in our heart," so it will be with the words of the Bible. Only if we will venture to enter into the words of the Bible, as though in them this God were speaking to us who loves us and does not will to leave us along with our questions, only so shall we learn to rejoice in the Bible ...

If it is I who determine where God is to be found, then I shall always find God who corresponds to me in some way, who is obliging, who is connected with my own nature. But if God determines where he is to be found, then it will be in a place which is not immediately pleasing to my nature and which is not at all congenial to me. This place is the Cross of Christ. And whoever would find him must go to the foot of the Cross, as the Sermon on the Mount commands. This is not according to our nature at all, it is entirely contrary to it. But this is the message of the Bible, not only in the New but also in the Old Testament.

And I would like to tell you now quite personally: since I have learnt to read the Bible in this way – and this has not been for so very long – it becomes every day more wonderful to me. I read it in the morning and the evening, often during the day as well, and every day I consider a text which I have chosen for the whole week, and try to sink deeply into it, so as really to hear what it is saying. I know that without this I could not live properly any longer.

(Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy by Eric Metaxas