

**Called to Lead:**  
Yourself and Others  
January 26, 2021  
Topic: Scripture

Vision for Called to Lead:

One person has sought to summarize the Christian life as: “living for God through Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

- What will it take to live for God through Jesus Christ for your whole life?
- What will it take (to use Ezra’s language) to be led by God, to lead yourself, and to lead others towards God and for God through Jesus Christ?
- What is the shape of being led by Him, leading yourself, leading others?
- What are the most basic building block for this?
  - \*\*\*The first building block is Scripture. Without growing understand and love of Scripture, there are going to be limits on our joy and God using us.

### Scripture

One of [Robert] M’Cheyne’s [Scottish Pastor] abiding concerns was to encourage his people, and himself, to read the Bible. To one young man, he wrote, “You read your Bible regularly, of course; but do try and understand it, and still more to feel it. Read more parts than one at a time. For example, if you are reading Genesis, read a Psalm also; or if you are reading Matthew, read a small bit of an Epistle also. Turn the Bible into prayer. Thus, if you were reading the First Psalm, spread the Bible on the chair before you, and kneel and pray, ‘O Lord, give me the blessedness of the man’; ‘let me not stand in the counsel of the ungodly.’ This is the best way of knowing the meaning of the Bible, and of learning to pray.”<sup>2</sup>

1. What is the path for Scripture enabling us to be led, lead ourselves, and lead others towards God and for Him through Jesus Christ? 4 aspects (from Van Mastricht)<sup>3</sup>
  - a. Affirm the Divine Authority of Scripture
    - i. <sup>1 Thes 2.13</sup> And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. Also: Heb 4.12, 2 Tim 3.16, 2 Peter 1.20-21, Eph 2.20 (Hos. 1:1; Joel 1:1; Jonah 1:1; Mic. 1:1, etc.)
    - ii. We must be persuaded with certainty that God has spoken to us in the bible.
      1. If not, try to lay out your personal issues and ask for help

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<sup>1</sup> Petrus van Mastricht, *Prolegomena*, ed. Joel R. Beeke, trans. Todd M. Rester, vol. 1, Theoretical-Practical Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), 63.

<sup>2</sup> D. A. Carson, *For the Love of God: A Daily Companion for Discovering the Riches of God’s Word.*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 11.

<sup>3</sup> The following from Van Mastricht, 1.181-201. He lists 10 uses but these seem like the primary four.

- iii. How do we come to this confidence?
  - 1. Character of Scripture; evidence that is “in” Scripture<sup>4</sup>
  - 2. Intellectual arguments about the reality of Scripture; evidence about Scripture<sup>5</sup>
  - 3. Internal persuasion of Holy Spirit as we pursue God through His Word by faith: “faith becomes knowledge”<sup>6</sup>
- b. Develop a love for God’s truth. This is really our goal; we love God, so we want a heart level love and engagement with His Word.
  - i. Ps 119.127 Therefore I love your commandments above gold, above fine gold.
  - ii. Lk 24.32 They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?”
  - iii. Also 2 Thess. 2:10, 1 Peter 2:2; Job 23:12, Ps. 1:1–2; 19:10
  - iv. Affection for the scriptures as they are God’s very words to us.
  - v. Develop an appetite for the scriptures.
  - vi. Become regular part of our life: use it, enjoy it, regularly be sustained by it, delight in it, be moved by it. (Col. 3:16; Amos 8:12; Ps. 42:1–2; John 6:27)
    - 1. Example: main character in *Greyhound* (movie), *The Good Shepherd* by C. S. Forester (book)
  - vii. Manner of loving
    - 1. Rooted to heart: Ps. 119, Luke 24.32
    - 2. New every day, hunger and thirst. Everyday.
    - 3. Greater than any other book, sweeter, wiser, more valuable. Privilege it over all others.

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<sup>4</sup> We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverend esteem of the Holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man’s salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it does abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God: yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts. Westminster Confession of Faith 1.5

<sup>5</sup> Items to consider: how Jesus viewed Scripture, presence of eyewitnesses (Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*), historical reporting, manuscript evidence, dating of writing, evidence against the view “the Bible was just written by the winners,” etc. We covered some of this in Sermon on Luke 1.1-4 (Grace Hill: 9/13/20), also there are two chapters on Scripture in Keller, *Reason for God*.

<sup>6</sup> See last phrases of fn #4. Also: “...the Lord took dramatic action to enable us to be reborn, regenerated, to regain our lost relationship with him, to live once more the way he intended us to. He both provided this way back to health, and also *speaks* of it to us, telling us about it, enabling us to learn about it and to know what we need to know to gain its benefits. How does this speaking work? By way of the Scriptures and the church, of course: but how does it happen that we *believe* the Scriptures? Here too, then there is something like a faculty or process at work; only this time the process in question is not part of our natural, created epistemic equipment. It is instead a special and supernatural work of God. Once again we must call this work by its proper Calvinist name: it is the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. ... According to Calvin, the chief work of the Holy Spirit in us is the production of faith. And faith, he says, is a kind of knowledge: ‘a firm and certain knowledge of God’s benevolence towards us, founded upon the truth of the freely given promise in Christ ...’ (Institutes, 3.2.7)” Alvin Plantinga, *Analytical Theist*, p. 348-349. (italic in the original)

4. All of it. Read all of it, not just parts.
- viii. This should yield effects: Gratitude for all God's benefits as learned through it, Greater love to study, Desire for it in all its presentation to us: bible study, sermons, etc.
- c. Fully engage Scripture What's involved
  - i. Hearing (Neh. 8:1–7; Luke 10:38; Rom. 10:17),
    1. Prepare: humility, turn away from impeding thoughts, long for it, pray
    2. disposition: attention, intention of will to follow, with faith, with hope, with reverence, with humility,
    3. afterward: remember, consider, repeat, hold on to
  - ii. Reading (Deut. 17:18; Josh. 1:8),
  - iii. Scrutinizing (John 5:39) and ruminating (Ps. 23:2; cf. Lev. 11:3; Ps. 119:97, 148),
  - iv. Examining and investigating (Acts 17:2; 1 John 4:1),
  - v. Consulting, on more obscure things, with those who are more experienced (Deut. 17:8ff.; Acts 8:30–31; Matt. 13:36),
  - vi. Conversing or making joint inquiry with others (Luke 18:31; 24:27; Deut. 6:7).
  - vii. This full approach is
    1. Commanded
      - a. Deuteronomy 6:6–9; Joshua 1:8–9; Isaiah 8:20; and Psalm 1:2 (but in the latter, see John 5:39); Colossians 3:16; and Jude 17
    2. Shown by Example
      - a. such as David (Ps. 119), Job (Job 23:12), the eunuch (Acts 8:28), the Bereans (Acts 17:11), and Timothy (2 Tim. 3:14–15)
- d. How to interpret
  - i. prayer
  - ii. purity of your life
  - iii. submissiveness to God
  - iv. constant and methodical approach: regular and systematic
  - v. the analogy of faith: Scripture interprets Scripture
    1. The clear passages provide the tools for interpreting the obscure. Augustine says in *On Christian Doctrine* (bk. 3, ch. 25), “where the thoughts are set down more openly, there we should learn how to understand them in the obscure places.”<sup>7</sup>
  - vi. Doing it. For as Bernard of Clairvaux says, “Whoever rightly reads the divine Scriptures turns its words into deeds” (*Treatise on the Right Order of Life*).<sup>8</sup>
  - vii. Basic Approach
    1. These two things, at least, should be asked of every subject and text:
      - a. first, what truths it contains to form our judgment;

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<sup>7</sup> Van Mastricht, 1.195.

<sup>8</sup> Van Mastricht, 1.195.

- b. second, what good things it contains to stir up our affections and likewise to correct our morals.<sup>9</sup>
  - 2. Questions to ask yourself as we read the Scriptures: what to praise God for, what do I need to confess, how are my desires out of line with God's, what to thank God for, what to do?
- 2. Two False paths with Scripture [Ross]
  - a. Speculation about what God has not revealed. Speculative work is going beyond God's revelation and often will be for our intellectual curiosity or boasting. It can easily become about us. There is more than enough to work with in what He has revealed. God revealed what he revealed for a reason. It is what is important; it is related to our everyday life.
  - b. Merely concluding or emphasizing that Scripture has so much "mystery." "We can't be sure, we don't know, who knows." No, God has spoken, and communicated. The big Mystery is in what God has not communicated and he has reasons for that, and, as appropriate, he will reveal it in glory. There is some mystery in Scripture, but it is more in the "how" or "why" than in the "what." But let's attend with full purpose to what God has communicated. We can know what we need to know and believe and do. The real mystery is what is beyond Scripture but that is for glory.
- 3. Difficult issues call us to press into Scripture, not to move away from it:
  - a. Difficult issues, like gender inclusion, etc., are not solved by letting go of the Scripture (and e.g. making all words "people" instead of "man,") but by pressing into the Scriptures and translating them more faithfully, grammatically, contextually in every place. We solve all problems by pressing into Scripture, (not by turning away) and holding on to two things:
    - i. Scripture is authoritative: it will always have things that cross us and our culture because if it did not, then either we would be the authority or we would have arrived at "Glory" with every perfect and set right. The first is not true; the second is "not yet."
    - ii. Scripture is sufficient: if we humbly (our growing posture) but thoroughly (our growing skill) search the scriptures, we will find the answers God has given us for our needs. At times they may not yet be fully satisfying but they will be sufficient.
    - iii. For example: in 2 Tim 3.17 NET vs. ESV. So Greek word for human/man (anthropos) needs to be given attention and care to be translated either as "people" or "human" (as NET), or as "man" (ESV), based on grammatical and theological reasons.
      - 1. ESV: All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,<sup>17</sup> *that the man of God* may be complete, equipped for every good work.

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<sup>9</sup> Petrus van Mastricht, [\*Prolegomena\*](#), ed. Joel R. Beeke, trans. Todd M. Rester, vol. 1, Theoretical-Practical Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), 198.

2. NET: Every scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>3:17</sup> *that the person dedicated to God* may be capable and equipped for every good work.

iv. Amen. אָמֵן (Hebrew: left to right) > ἀμήν (Greek: right to left) > Amen (English)

1. In 2 Cor. 1.20 “amen” means Jesus is why we have a firm, steadfast “yes” to God’s promises to us. Don’t let silliness with words pervert the grammatical, linguistic truths that God wants us to live by.

#### 4. Scripture Goals

- Be constantly changed and renewed by the Scriptures. Spiritual, heart level engagement.
  - a. Seek to comfort, encourage, stir yourself up by them, and do so for others.
- Read through whole Bible. Breadth of all God’s Word.
  - a. Use whole bible list to check off (see below)
  - b. Use a reading plan
- Know the story: Read so you can *tell* the whole story of the Bible. Learn it to Use it.
  - a. Understand the breadth and depth of the story of Scripture. Can you tell the big narrative?
  - b. Use the “chapters” of Creation, Fall, Redemption, Glory
  - c. Use the structure of Covenants: God set up a covenant with Adam and Eve (Gen 2.16-17) but they broke it, so he graciously made covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and fulfills them all in Jesus, so that we might have the fullness of relationship with him in a new heavens and new earth.
- Seek to grow in your understanding of how Old Testament and New Testament connect and relate to each other.
- Apply the different parts of Scripture to your life and to others in different situations and seasons.
- Create and keep notes and files on the topics, themes, and applications you find in Scripture.

#### 5. Moving Forward:

##### 1. Standing:

- a. Read Devotionals that tell you about Scripture

##### 2. Walking:

- a. Read Scripture yourself and if helpful, use a devotional that helps you understand the main points and applications.
- b. Have a plan to have read through all the Bible in the next two years.
- c. Read Scripture using different English versions
- d. Write down verses that strike you. Journal about them.

##### 3. Running:

- a. Read Scripture yourself and ask for and use resources to answer your own questions.

- b. Write down your questions about Scripture but especially about how passages are impacting you. Ask for help about your questions.
  - c. Learn to appreciate and use every genre of Scripture.
  - d. Read a short book (like Philippians) or a chapter (like Genesis 1-2, or 3-4) every day for a week or two. Write down what you are finding.
  - e. If you are able to read in a different language, you will find new things.
4. Marathon:
- a. Read Scripture and write your own notes and comments that apply Scripture to yourself and to others
  - b. Find Scripture's own words to topics like "sin" and "redemption." Make lists that you can come back to. Use what you are learning in prayer.
  - c. Keep track of the themes you find in Scripture. Track them down; trace them out. How can this help you? How can it help others?
  - d. Spend focused time on a certain passage, a book of the Bible, or theme that has become important to you. How might you share what you are learning with others. What's the main point? How does it intersect our lives?
5. Resources:
- Share your journey with Ross or session and ask about what are the best resources to pursue next.
  - Keller, Songs of Jesus. A Psalms Devotional. <https://timothykeller.com/books/the-songs-of-jesus>. You read the Psalms and then consider his thoughts.
  - <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/read-the-bible/>
    - Or in Book form: Carson, D. A. *For the Love of God: A Daily Companion for Discovering the Riches of God's Word*. Vol. 1. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998.
  - Logos.com, laridian.com, or other Bible Software. Q: are you a digital person or a paper person? Benefits to both. But collect free books monthly from Logos, and at some point you will also want to do searches for words and ideas in Scripture. Software often makes working with different English versions easier. Ignore the Logos marketing engine; don't be pressed to spend money. But some resources (different Bible versions, commentaries, etc.) can help significantly. Ask Ross for demo if you like. Only if it saves you money: <https://partner.logosbible.com/click.track?CID=436658&AFID=488942>
  - Face to Face: Praying the Scripture for Intimate Worship, vol. 1 and 2, by Kenneth Boa
  - Reading Plans
    - Two Year plan: <https://media.thegospelcoalition.org/static-blogs/tgc/files/2010/12/TGC-Two-Year-Bible-Reading-Plan1.pdf>
    - One Year plan (M'Cheyne): [https://media.thegospelcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/09151141/RtB\\_Reading-Plan\\_2020.pdf](https://media.thegospelcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/09151141/RtB_Reading-Plan_2020.pdf)
  - Reading Check Lists: If you primarily use short reading plans in Youversion, use this to make sure you cover all the Bible.
    - <http://goodshepherdlowell.org/bibrdgck.pdf>
    - <http://www.ntresources.com/blog/documents/BibleRdgChart.pdf>