

# Scripture: An Out-of-Doors Book

## INTENTION

*Nature plays a decisive role in moving us ever closer to God. The intention of this practice is to begin to sense that movement by reading Scripture in a new way. Perhaps Scripture is meant to be read outdoors!*

## PRACTICE

- With your Bible, wander outdoors in creation until you find a place in the natural world that "calls" you, a place where you will be assured of some privacy.*
- As you find your place - as it "calls" you - perform a small ritual in recognition of crossing into sacred space. This can be very simple: cross a creek, pass by a stone, walk across a field or through a gate, pass under a canopy of branches, move from sun into shadow or actually create a line in the ground with your foot or with stones that you then step*
- across. As you perhaps say a short prayer, you are acknowledging that you are entering sacred space in any of these ways.*
- When you have found your place, settle in and pay close attention to what is going on around you. Notice the plants, the trees, the soils and grasses, birds, sounds and smells, colours, movements, water. Note and enjoy whatever happens to capture your attention in this environment.*
- Take your time: acknowledge in your own way that everything around you was created by God and is sustained by this same Creator.*
- When you feel that you "know" your surroundings well, sit down (If you are not already), and pick a Scripture passage to read. You may want to choose a favourite passage, a new passage that you just happen to open to, or you may think of one that seems appropriate to the place and moment. One suggestion is Psalm 104.*
- Begin to read the Scripture passage slowly, out loud. As you read, pay attention not only to the content of the passage - its story or meaning but also to the effect of the Bible's words and your voice on your surroundings. How do you imagine creation itself is hearing the words of its own Creator? How do you experience the words spoken out-of-doors?*
- Stop when you like; listen to the silence; notice and watch for signs of how creation hears the Word in this silence.*
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- Also take time to notice your body and your own inner feelings. How are you experiencing Scripture, in body, mind, and spirit, as you read aloud in nature?*
- Notice how the words rise out of silence and fall back into silence. In what ways do you share with nature the "hearing" of these words? Leave with a quiet, short prayer of praise or thanksgiving for God's Word and for the temple of the creation that has embraced you during this time.*
- As you cross back over or pass your marker of sacred space, know that you are carrying something sacred from creation back into "normal" life.*