

Sermon Notes

"Reconsider"
December 1, 2019



Seeking God
in Solitude



Finding God
in Friendship



Celebrating God
in Community



Reflecting God
in Relationships

Reflection Questions *(please use these individually or in groups)*

Sermon Reflections:

1. Have you received any "surprise news" recently that has altered your life? Ask God to speak to you if it is intended to lead to a new direction.
2. Are you preparing yourself to hear from God by living in faithful obedience and compassionate mercy?
3. Thank God that Jesus is the one who rescues people from their sins!
4. Think of someone you know who is in the middle of a difficult season of life and pray that he/she would be reminded that God is with him/her.

Devotional Reading & Inward Reflection

- **Luke 1:26-38 | How is the message Mary receives similar to Joseph's? How is it different?**
- **Micah 6:6-8 | Joseph and Mary were incapable of grand offerings, but how do their lives match what we read in v. 8?**
- **Isaiah 43:18-19 | What is one of your favorite stories from Scripture in which God does a new, unexpected thing? Why?**
- **Matthew 9:1-8 | How do you think this man's life change after receiving healing and forgiveness from Jesus?**
- **Luke 7:36-50 | What does this story teach us about forgiveness?**

Self-Care Disciplines *(from Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foster)*

December Discipline: Study | Repetition (p.64-65)

Study is a specific kind of experience in which through careful attention to reality the mind is enabled to move in a certain direction. The mind will always take on an order conforming to the order upon which it concentrates. Perhaps we observe a tree or read a book. We see it, feel it, understand it, draw conclusions from it. And as we do, our thought processes take on an order conforming to the order in the tree or book. When this is done with concentration, perception and repetition, ingrained habits of thought are formed.

Study involves four steps. Repetition, concentration, comprehension, reflection. Repetition regularly changes the mind in a specific direction, thus ingraining habits of thought. We may smile condescendingly at the old teaching method of recitation, but we must realize that sheer repetition without even understanding what is being repeated does affect the inner mind. Ingrained habits of thought can be formed by repetition alone, thus changing behavior.

We will use the story of Jesus' birth in Luke 2 as a case study. Repeatedly read Luke 2:8-20 this week. Once a day is preferable. The goal is simply to get familiar with the passage. In the coming weeks, we will move into the concentration, comprehension, and reflection of this passage to see how we can best "study" a text holistically.