

STEP ONE PRAY for the Holy Spirit to reveal God's Law and Gospel themes to you.

STEP TWO READ the Bible passage repeatedly until you can retell it in your own words.

John 1:6-8, 19-28 ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. ²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.



STEP THREE REVIEW a Bible Commentary to understand the passage's common meaning.

The theme for this week's (Advent 3) Scripture readings is joy. This the reason behind the pink candle on the Advent wreath. In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah announces joy for all the broken-hearted. He says, "I am full of joy in the Lord, my God." In the second reading, Paul recommends: "Always be joyful." In this week's Gospel (John 1:6-8, 19-28) the Baptist's task is "to bear witness to the light," the light of Christ that enlightens our hearts with an inner serenity of being in God's presence. The Baptist is just a voice that witnesses the coming of the light (Christ) into the world. The Gospel invites us to let our lives be embraced by the Messiah's light. A light that creates in us a pervasive sense of well-being, a sense of peace and joy. Even in the midst of the dark times in our lives, even where there is great loss, the light of Christ produces joy in our hearts. Joy is a basic element of the inner transformation of Christ's light. "The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17). God made us for joy, but without the light of Christ we settle for pleasure. Advent is a time to remember the message of the Angels at the birth of the Christ Child - "I bring you good news of great joy."


STEP FOUR IDENTIFY GOD'S LAW

As you reread the passage, keep asking...*How does God's Law in this passage point out what I am unable to do without Christ?* It may be helpful to underline those words/phrases that speak to you as God's Law. If God's Law is implied in the passage, what is the implication?

Possible Law: *Darkness is our distrust in God. We falsely think we can see in the dark...we have adjusted to life without light. On our own, we do not know light.*

God's Law message for me is:

STEP FIVE IDENTIFY GOD'S GOSPEL

As you reread the passage, keep asking...*How is God's Gospel (Christ crucified and risen) in this passage freely offering me a new life with God?* It may be helpful to circle  those words/phrases that speak to you as God's Gospel. If God's Gospel is implied in the passage, what is the implication?

Possible Gospel: *The darkness of death did not overcome Christ Jesus. Christ's light offers us peace of mind and joy of heart.*

God's Gospel message for me is:

STEP SIX PRAY

Pray that the Holy Spirit might:

- + Bring into my life the power of Christ's death to change what I am doing or not doing.
- + Bring into my life the power of Christ's resurrection for me to live a new life with God.

Meditation Words: "testify to the light" "believe through him" "I am not worthy"