

# 5 LENTEN QUESTIONS

A SERIES WITH BISHOP WRIGHT

## Q1: HOW DO I GET CLOSER TO GOD? | SELF EXAMINATION REFLECTION GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUPS/INDIVIDUALS

These reflection guides are designed to supplement the Bishop's videos for use in a small group Bible study. They are created for the leader's ease of use, and with links to free web-based resources.

### REFLECTION

Bishop Wright mentioned that one step in knowing God better is knowing ourselves better, and self-examination is the key to opening ourselves to that knowing. We all have blind spots, and sometimes we are adamant that we actually have the clearest sight in exactly the areas we are missing the truth. When we miss, we injure others, which is ultimately a sin against God.

### SCRIPTURE

**Read Matthew 7:1-12.** This passage on self-examination comes right after a passage about traditional Lenten practices (prayer, fasting, almsgiving in ch 6) and right before a promise that if we ask, seek, and knock, we'll receive. Lenten practices alone may not produce wisdom or help us get closer to God, but coupled with self-examination, God desires to give us what we seek to be closer to God.

**Read Acts 9:1-19.** Saul absolutely was convinced that he was right, but then he was made aware of how his convictions "diminished other members of the human family," and ultimately were a sin against God. Self-examination opened Saul up to gaining new understanding. Reflection was jarring, but led to a new way of being, the way of love.

### DISCUSSION

- How do you know God better? What practices help you?
- How well do you know yourself? What do you do in order to see and work on your own blind spots?
- How do you challenge yourself to think deeper, better, or deeper, rather than ideas that are comfortable and affirming of what you already think? How can you make room for God's liberation from the "comfort of conviction"?
- Which Scripture passage stuck out to you and what might God be speaking through it to your life circumstances today?
- Discuss/wonder about the role of doubt as a healthy foil to the potential negatives of uninterrogated conviction.

### ARTICLES

Choose one of these articles/videos about Adam Grant, author of "Think Again" referenced by Bishop Wright for further consideration.

<https://www.today.com/video/-think-again-author-adam-grant-wants-everyone-to-reconsider-their-assumptions-100301381678>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ruthgotian/2021/02/02/is-that-the-best-solution-think-again-says-adam-grant/?sh=655a410d56b2>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/31/opinion/change-someones-mind.html>

### PRAYER

Spend 15 minutes praying the Examen today, and perhaps daily this week. The Examen is an ancient practice consisting of five parts that helps us see God's presence and discern God's direction for us.

More here:

<https://www.stmichaels-vt.org/ignatian-prayer/>

### TAKE-AWAY

Read an article from a news source, author, theologian that is outside of your typical sphere of voices. If you are white, follow an online magazine written by and for people of color. If you are of a particular political persuasion, follow a voice from a different political persuasion. Keep an open mind and listen for VALUES rather than opinions. You might find the values are similar, and there's common ground.