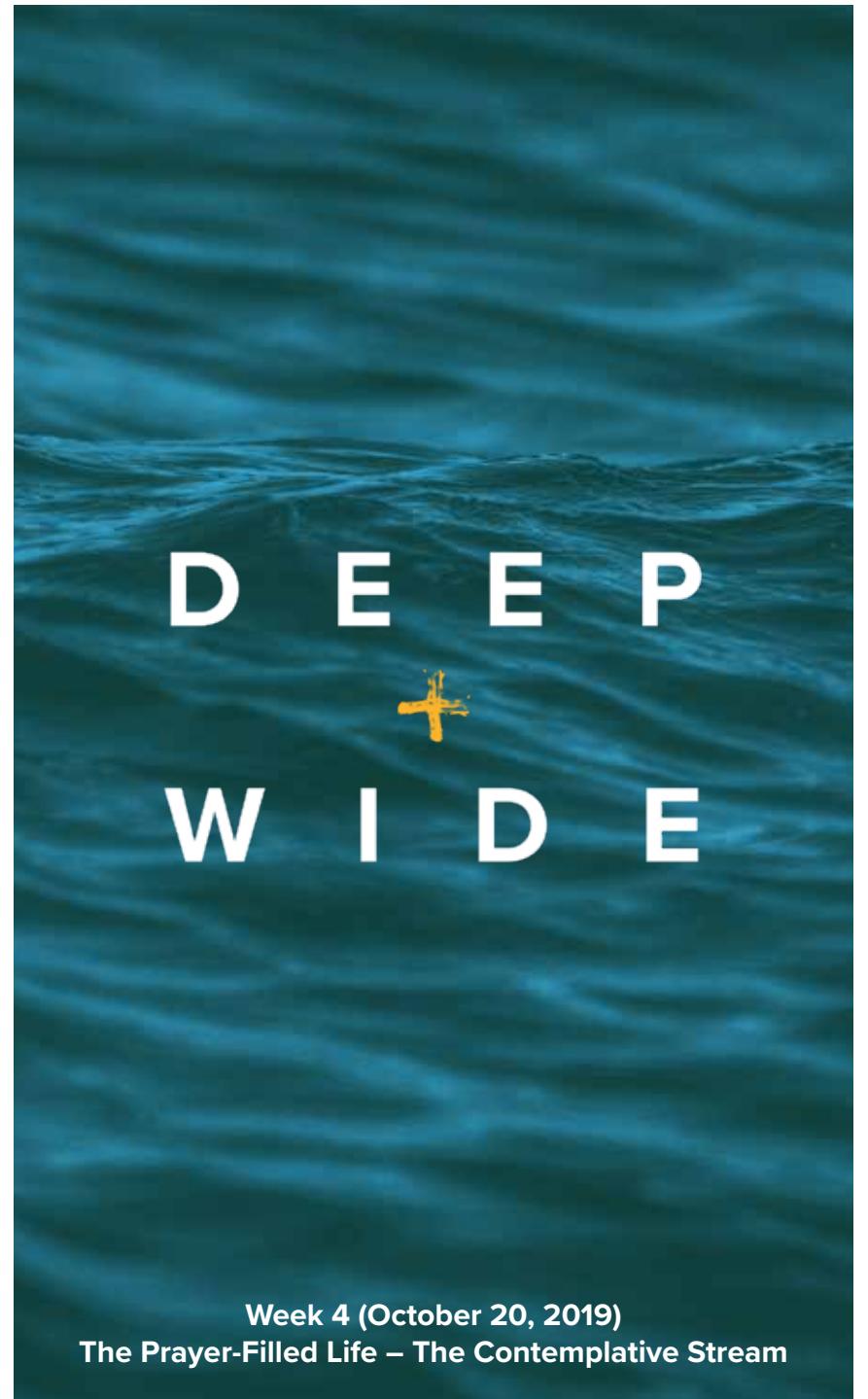


## NOTES & QUOTES



## **CONNECT** (BUILD RELATIONSHIPS)

1. What is something you love? Something that now, or at one time, brought you much joy and that you easily gave a lot of your time, energy and attention to.
2. Is there a place or time when you experienced extended silence in your life? Do you enjoy, resist or avoid being alone or in silence?
3. When you are alone, what tends to come to the forefront in your mind? What sense of God do you have when you are alone? Is there anything that you could do to develop that awareness?

## **THRIVE** (EXPLORE BIBLICAL TRUTH)

4. Read Mark 1:35, 6:46, and Luke 5:16. Why do you think Jesus pursued solitude and prayer regularly, especially during the busy and stressful times? How did solitude and prayer benefit him or was he just giving us an example to follow?
5. Read Matthew 14:22-23 and Luke 22:32-36, 39-46. What impresses you the most about these passages? Sometimes we see Jesus retreat and pray by himself, other times he brings friends. Why do we need both solitude and community when it comes to developing a prayer-filled life of spiritual intimacy with God?
6. Whenever Jesus had to make a significant decision, we find him alone in contemplation and prayer. In the days that preceded Jesus calling his disciples, the Bible tells us, "...Jesus went out to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). What process do you use when you are facing a big decision? In addition to solitude and prayer, what other elements might be helpful to add?

## **COMMIT** (BE ON MISSION)

7. You might conclude that the central focus of Jesus' life was developing his relationship with the Father. It was out of this intimacy that Jesus drew the strength, wisdom and power he needed to pursue the mission and ministry God had given him. Often, we pursue ministry and mission first and then come to God exhausted. What can we learn from Jesus' example?
8. In the Contemplative Stream, learning to pray is likened to falling in love. It's really just about spending time with someone who has captured our affection and attention. Richard Foster describes it as "the steady gaze of the soul upon the God who loves us" (*Streams of Living Water*). Do you understand this way of describing prayer? How would you explain it in your own words?
9. In the message there were six suggestions given about how we can swim deeper in the Contemplative Stream (I.e. "Give yourself a spiritual time out" or "Pray and ask God for ... NOTHING"). Can you name all six? Which ones do you find intriguing or intimidating? What other discipline(s) might you add to further develop the contemplative side of your faith?

### **Pause, Ponder & Meditate**

#### **What is the Contemplative Stream?**

A life of loving attention to God.

#### **Why should we explore it?**

Because through it we experience the presence of God that brings peace and rest in a world of troubles, restlessness and pain.

"Be still and know that I am God."

Psalm 46:10