

Forty Weeks ~ Sacred Story



Week Twenty Encouragements & Wisdom

E & W reflections are additional helps for your Sacred Story prayer journey. Reflect on them ahead of your prayer exercises for the week or outside of your fifteen-minute prayer windows during the week.

MEMORY Chapter and Exercises During the Day—Dynamically Linked

The chapter on Memory you are learning this week is a *very dynamic* part of the Sacred Story prayer method. It has links to what you experience during the day.

Memory—“Memory” has two time frames, present and past. There is the immediate time frame—what happened that day. And there is the historical time frame—how the event of the day touches on earlier life events.

Events—You seek consciousness of the daily events that disrupt your freedom and peace. You become conscious of them *as they happen* (the present context) and pray for God’s grace about *why they happened* (the historical context). The event might be a person who caused you upset or anger; a temptation (to lust, envy, greed, anger etc); a moral failure, a violation of a Commandment; or a trigger to your passive or aggressive narcissism.

Example 1—I have used this example already but I will restate it here. A friend of mine was very angry that someone who promised to drive to a dinner did not pick her up. The level of her upset was noticeable. (Of course, it is upsetting when these things happen but we in Sacred Story want to become conscious of why we are upset). So I asked her why this event (present tense) seemed to be so upsetting (historical context). She was given an immediate insight: “Oh my goodness, my dad was an alcoholic and he always promised to do things for me or take me places and forget his promise when he started drinking.”

Example 2—Remember a time when you have publicly spoken negatively about someone in such a way that you intended to cause your listeners to think less of this person, or even spurn them. Perhaps it was a time when you were gloating about how you got even with someone by besting him or her in some way (aggressive narcissism) or rejecting him or her in some way (passive narcissism). When I find myself doing this, I can ask God; “Why am I doing this” and “when did this type of behavior begin in my life?” If I can catch myself before speaking, I can ask God the same questions.

Example 3—Think of an addictive, chronic, sinful habit or yours. We all have one or more and we have them to greater or lesser degrees. Perhaps we can use an example of lust. A sexual lust might be “triggered” by an event or one may allow oneself to intentionally cultivate lustful thoughts by something imagined, watched, read, etc. Most everyone will experience these triggered or cultivated lusts. Instead of just letting it grow, or conversely getting paranoid or guilty about it, let it become an opportunity for personal growth in understanding. Look at the “type,” “temptation” and “context” of the lust. It has some link to you and your history and can reveal something important about where you hurt and where you need healing. Become conscious of it and ask God’s inspiration to both understand it and also to find a grace-filled way to satisfy the hunger/hurt it promises to fulfill.

Application—Our *Sacred Story* disciplines call us to take note of events in the course of our day like the ones just described. We seek God’s inspiration to “get behind” the events so we can understand our angers, addictions, fears, narcissism, lusts and vices—so we can grow in hope, freedom, peace AND grow too in our ability to forgive others.

Persons not “in training” with *Sacred Story* would just continue being angry with the person who forgot us, keep talking negatively about the object of our scorn, or go on lusting because “everyone does it.”

Those of us in training with *Sacred Story* seek understanding of how different things connect in our lives. We ask God’s inspiration to become conscious of *how* and *why* we act as we do so we can grow spiritually. Becoming conscious and asking God’s inspiration requires attention and discipline.

We seek consciousness and ask God’s inspiration so we can grow spiritually and not just keep making the same mistakes over and over without ever understanding why I behave the way I do. When I begin to understand the “why” then I can ask God for help to grow and be healed.

I stop in the course of the day to note these significant events—to log them in my heart’s memory—and then bring them to prayer during the “memory” times of my *Sacred Story* prayer.

Growth for Example One—The individual in example one might soon discover that if they want to grow spiritually and stop reacting with hostility each time someone forgets to do something for them, they need to work with God’s grace to forgive the alcoholic father for his weaknesses.



Growth for Example Two—The individual in example two can become conscious of negative talk. Also, they can learn to hold their tongue when they want to speak negatively or cruelly about someone. In both instances they can learn where their own heart might be wounded for them to speak cruelly or hurtfully about others. They might, by grace, start to remember when they first started covering their own pain by hurting other people with their speech. They may also need to seek God’s forgiveness for the times they have used negative speech and injured other people’s reputations.

Growth for Example Three—The individual in example three, by becoming conscious of lusts and noticing when they happen, what they promise to satisfy, and what one *feels* when they are

resisted, can discover very significant things about their past and about relationships. They can begin to learn when the lusts first happened and how they might be connected to what makes relationships complicated or difficult for them. They can also learn how to ask God’s for help in “heart-healing” so they can grow in freedom and peace and be more available for relationships that can truly satisfy.

Conclusion: So the “Memory” in Sacred Story prayer is memory of things during the day. It is memory of how they link to things from one’s past. Also it is the memory during the *memory* part of *Sacred Story* prayer for cultivating consciousness of the events and asking God’s inspiration so these memories reveal the ways you need forgiveness and healing—so you grow in wholeness, freedom and peace—so the energy of your life produces fruit that endures to eternity.

