



JOURNEY CHURCH

LIFE



THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

START DATE

MONTH
DAY
YEAR

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LIFE

JOURNEY
C H U R C H

“

I have come
that they may
have life...

...and have it
to the full.

[WORDS OF JESUS]

”

10:10

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Jesus made quite a few audacious claims.

In the tenth chapter of the Gospel of John, he makes one of his boldest.

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” - Jesus

When we think about God or church or Christianity...**LIFE** is not a word that springs to mind.

But imagine if what Jesus said is true.

What if the life we are looking for really can be found by following Jesus?

Over the next few weeks, we are going to take a look at what a life following Jesus really looks like.

We'll be answering questions like:

Why am I here?
 What is Jesus really offering?
 Where do I start?
 How do I hear from God?
 How can I break free?
 Who can help me?
 What's my purpose?
 How can I make a difference?
 What's next?

We've put together this guide to help you do something daily to help you connect with Jesus, learn from the Scriptures, and put these ideas into practice.

I want to encourage you to do three things:

1. **Use this guide to stay engaged every week.**
2. **Attend or watch the Life Teaching Series.**
3. **Find a group to walk through the journey together.**

Jesus is making claims. He is offering a different, sometimes difficult way.

But he promises it leads to life. And not just any life. A full life.

The life we are all meant to live. The life you are looking for.

I believe that everyone is created to live in a relationship with God.

Without that relationship there will always be a hunger, an emptiness, a wandering, a feeling that something is missing.

So, try it or try again. Go deeper. Go all in. Come follow him.

Take Your Next Step,

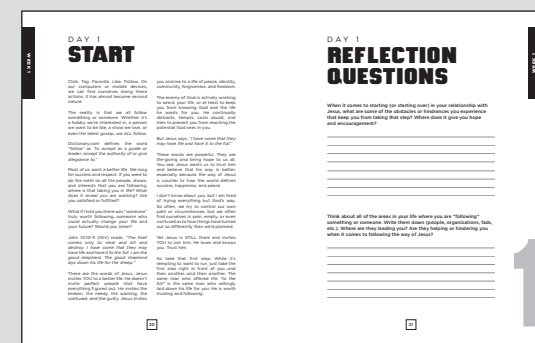


Scotty Priest
 SENIOR PASTOR
 Journey Church Colorado

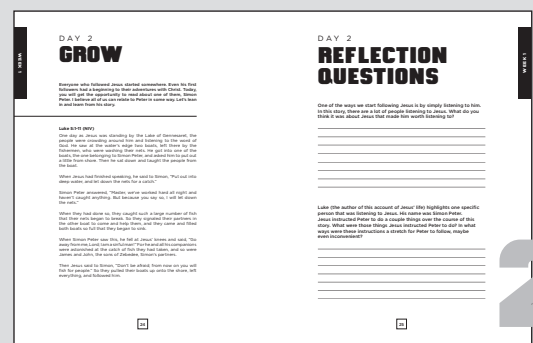
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

We here at Journey are excited to put this guide in your hands. We are also aware you might be wondering what to expect in the pages that lie ahead. Here's an overview of what to expect and how you can use this guide effectively.

Overall, there are **five total weeks** of content directed at helping you grow in your relationship with Jesus and finding your place at Journey. Each week is anchored around a specific theme and accompanied by a five-day rhythm.



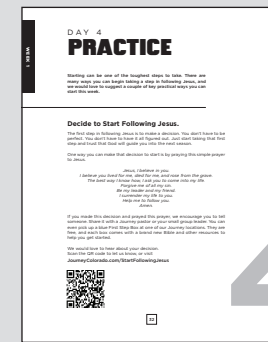
DAY 1 **START** each week with some written thoughts by a Journey Staff Team member.



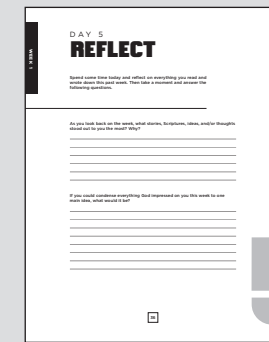
DAY 2 **GROW** by reading and processing through a story in the Bible.



DAY 3 **RELATE** to another Journey member by reading a part of their life story.



DAY 4 **PRACTICE** the weekly theme.



DAY 5 **REFLECT** on what you've learned over the course of the week.

At the end of the five weeks, we will lay out the foundation of a **Next Steps Plan** you can put together.

The heart of Journey is always to help you take your next steps with Jesus, and our prayer is that this guide propels you into the next season God has for you. In light of that, approach this guide with these suggestions:

Set aside at least 15 minutes each day. More than 15 minutes never hurts.

Ask Jesus to speak to you.

Write down your thoughts and observations.

Find a group of people to go through this guide with you.

Watch the Life Teaching Series messages that coincide with each week.

Commit to five days each week. But if you can't, do what you can. God still loves you.

Enjoy.

WEEK

1

WHERE DO I START?

2

HOW DO I HEAR FROM GOD?

3

HOW DO I BREAK FREE?

4

HOW DO I CONNECT?

5

HOW DO I MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



WEEK 1

WHERE DO I START?



RELIGION SAYS,

**Change and
you can join us.**

JESUS SAYS,

**Join us and
you will change.**

**“Come, follow me,”
Jesus said.**

MATTHEW 4:19

DAILY PRAYER

Begin each day in a moment of quiet reflection. As you pray, start with the simple yet profound words below. This humble request opens your heart to his guidance and wisdom, setting a tone of receptivity and attentiveness for the day ahead.

**“Jesus, please
speak to me because
I am listening.”**

MESSAGE NOTES

DATE / /

DAY 1

START

Click. Tag. Favorite. Like. Follow. On our computers or mobile devices, we can find ourselves doing these actions. It has almost become second nature.

The reality is that we all follow something or someone. Whether it's a hobby we're interested in, a person we want to be like, a show we love, or even the latest gossip...we ALL follow.

Dictionary.com defines the word "follow" as *"to accept as a guide or leader; accept the authority of or give allegiance to."*

Most of us want a better life. We long for success and respect. If you were to do the math on all the people, shows, and interests that you are following, where is that taking you in life? What does it reveal you are wanting? Are you satisfied or fulfilled?

What if I told you there was "someone" truly worth following...someone who could actually change your life and your future? Would you listen?

John 10:10-11 reads, *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."*

These are the words of Jesus. Jesus invites YOU to a better life. He doesn't invite perfect people that have everything figured out. He invites the broken, the needy, the wanting, the confused, and the guilty. Jesus invites you and me to a life of peace, identity, community, forgiveness, and freedom.

The enemy of God is actively working to wreck your life, or at least to keep you from knowing God and the life he wants for you. He continually distracts, tempts, casts doubt, and tries to prevent you from reaching the potential God sees in you.

But Jesus says, *"I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."*

These words are powerful. They are life-giving and bring hope to us all. You see, Jesus wants us to trust him and believe that his way is better, especially because the way of Jesus is counter to how the world defines success, happiness, and peace.

I don't know about you, but I am tired of trying everything but God's way. So often, we try to control our own path or circumstances, but we often find ourselves in pain, empty, or even confused as to how things have turned out so differently than we'd planned.

Yet Jesus is STILL there and invites YOU to join him. He loves and knows you. Trust him.

So take that first step. While it's tempting to want to run, just take the first step right in front of you...and then another...and then another. The same man who offered life *"to the full"* is the same man who willingly laid down his life for you. He is worth trusting and following.

DAY 1

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

When it comes to starting (or starting over) in your relationship with Jesus, what are some of the obstacles or hindrances you experience that keep you from taking that step? Where does it give you hope and encouragement?

Think about all of the areas in your life where you are "following" something or someone. Write them down (people, organizations, fads, etc.). Where are they leading you? Are they helping or hindering you when it comes to following the way of Jesus?

Do not despise these
small beginnings,

**for the
Lord rejoices
to see the
work begin.**

Z E C H A R I A H 4 : 1 0 (N L T)

DAY 2

GROW

Everyone who followed Jesus started somewhere. Even his first followers had a beginning to their adventures with Christ. Today, you will get the opportunity to read about one of them, Simon Peter. I believe all of us can relate to Peter in some way. Let's lean in and learn from his story.

Luke 5:1-11

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon Peter, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

When Jesus had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

Simon Peter answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." So they pulled their boats up onto the shore, left everything, and followed him.

DAY 2

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

One of the ways we start following Jesus is by simply listening to him. In this story, there are a lot of people listening to Jesus. What do you think it was about Jesus that made him worth listening to?

Luke (the author of this account of Jesus' life) highlights one specific person that was listening to Jesus. His name was Simon Peter. Jesus instructed Peter to do a couple things over the course of this story. What were those things Jesus instructed Peter to do? In what ways were these instructions a stretch for Peter to follow, maybe even inconvenient?

DAY 2

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Peter made the choice to be obedient to what Jesus asked when it came to letting down his fishing nets. The result was that he got to experience a miracle firsthand. In other words, the blessing was on the other side of Peter's choice to listen and follow Jesus' instructions. What do you think Peter's experience of Jesus would have been if he chose NOT to listen and follow? How did Peter's decision to obey change the course of his life?

When it comes to starting (or starting over) your relationship with Jesus, what is it about Jesus and his message that draws you to him? Like Peter, are there some decisions you are going to have to make in order that you can experience God's blessing on the other side?

**We pursue
God because,
and only
because, He
first put an
urge within us
that spurs us
to the pursuit.**

A. W. TOZER

DAY 3

RELATE

Today, you will get the opportunity to read Susan's story of starting, and restarting, her relationship with Jesus. All of us have a story where we began to follow Jesus, or maybe some of you reading this are considering taking that first step. No matter where you are, enjoy getting a glimpse into Susan's life.

When I was in high school, I was invited to attend a gathering of students with a Christian organization geared toward students. I had a crush on the boy who was involved with that organization, so I went to one of their gatherings. I had a great time, and I ended up getting very involved. Eventually, at one of the camps this ministry put on, I started my relationship with Jesus by declaring him as my leader and Savior.

Things took a turn just before high school ended. The boy I had a crush on completely broke my heart. His father, who was our student ministry leader, cheated on his wife and left her for his secretary. From that experience, I felt deceived, tricked, lost my faith, and ended up walking away from my relationship with Jesus.

I continued to search to fill a void in my life that I didn't understand. I went to all kinds of churches, but they didn't feel right. Eventually, I decided church and Jesus/God were not real.

That was when I found paganism and became a Wican. This was it for me, because I could understand it! I did

not simply rely on faith to believe what I didn't understand. With the spells and rituals, I was in control of my life... everything in it and around me. I felt superior, as if I had found the "truth," and all those Christian believers were sad and stupid. Everything was based on karma, positive and negative energy (multiplied by 3), and doing good. The universe was my god, the sun was the father, and the moon was the mother. I was essentially an atheist, and I raised my children with these values. Ironically, there were times I would drive down the highway and see signs with God's message and I would say, *"Stop coming for me. I'm not interested in your religion."* Yes, I would find myself praying to God as an atheist!

Then came a turning point as my 32-year marriage was about to end. I couldn't find a way to make it work after the last 13 unbearable years of struggle. My children, who I depended on, had grown and left. I felt defeated.

I confided in my boss, who had previously been my neighbor and friend, about my struggles. Next thing I know, she invited me to church. I

couldn't say no because my job and relationship with her were on the line. So I went home and told my husband we were going to church.

We did go...and it felt right. Maybe it was because I was so lost and defeated. My husband and I discussed our experience, and we felt like God was speaking directly to us. We both wanted to go back and try it again, so we did.

That Sunday, the two of us sat in the back as if not to draw attention. Then something definitely happened. God met me exactly where I needed. After the service, my husband and I both went to the park down the street and sat at a table. I said, *"I can't explain it but I'm in!!!"* This was it for me! God was so real to me in that moment. He spoke to us exactly where we needed in every service after that. We couldn't believe it.

Even outside the church services, God answered our needs. A friend invited me to a ladies' Bible study. I began learning all this stuff about the Bible that I didn't know before or even understood. My relationship with Jesus was not just a belief based on "blind faith," as I thought previously.

I guess God was losing his patience and decided he was going to get a "two for one" situation. Not only did I restart my relationship with Jesus, but my husband became a Christian also! And it even gets better. My grown children witnessed the miraculous change in my husband and me (to say it lightly). They saw our love, commitment, and faith... and they found their way to having a relationship with Jesus. Even beyond our children, my sisters as well as my husband's are now finding their faith with Jesus. I can't help but look back and thank God for all that he has done in me and around me.

— Susan

DAY 3

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

In what ways are you able to relate to Susan's story of starting, or starting over, in your relationship with Jesus?

As you reflect on your own story of beginning your journey with Jesus, even if you are in the midst of it right now, what are some key moments you can point back to where you saw God work? Are there any key people that helped you along the way?

If someone else wanted to start, or start over, in their relationship with Jesus, what are some steps you would encourage them to take?

If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved.

ROMANS 10:9-10 (NLT)

DAY 4

PRACTICE

Starting can be one of the toughest steps to take. There are many ways you can begin taking a step in following Jesus, and we would love to suggest a couple of key practical ways you can start this week.

Decide to Start Following Jesus.

The first step in following Jesus is to make a decision. You don't have to be perfect. You don't have to have it all figured out. Just start taking that first step and trust that God will guide you into the next season.

One way you can make that decision to start is by praying this simple prayer to Jesus.

*Jesus, I believe in you.
I believe you lived for me, died for me, and rose from the grave.
The best way I know how, I ask you to come into my life.
Forgive me of all my sin.
Be my leader and my friend.
I surrender my life to you.
Help me to follow you.
Amen.*

If you made this decision and prayed this prayer, we encourage you to tell someone. Share it with a Journey pastor or your small group leader. You can even pick up a blue First Step Box at one of our Journey locations. They are free, and each box comes with a brand new Bible and other resources to help you get started.

We would love to hear about your decision. Scan the QR code to let us know, or visit JourneyColorado.com/StartFollowingJesus



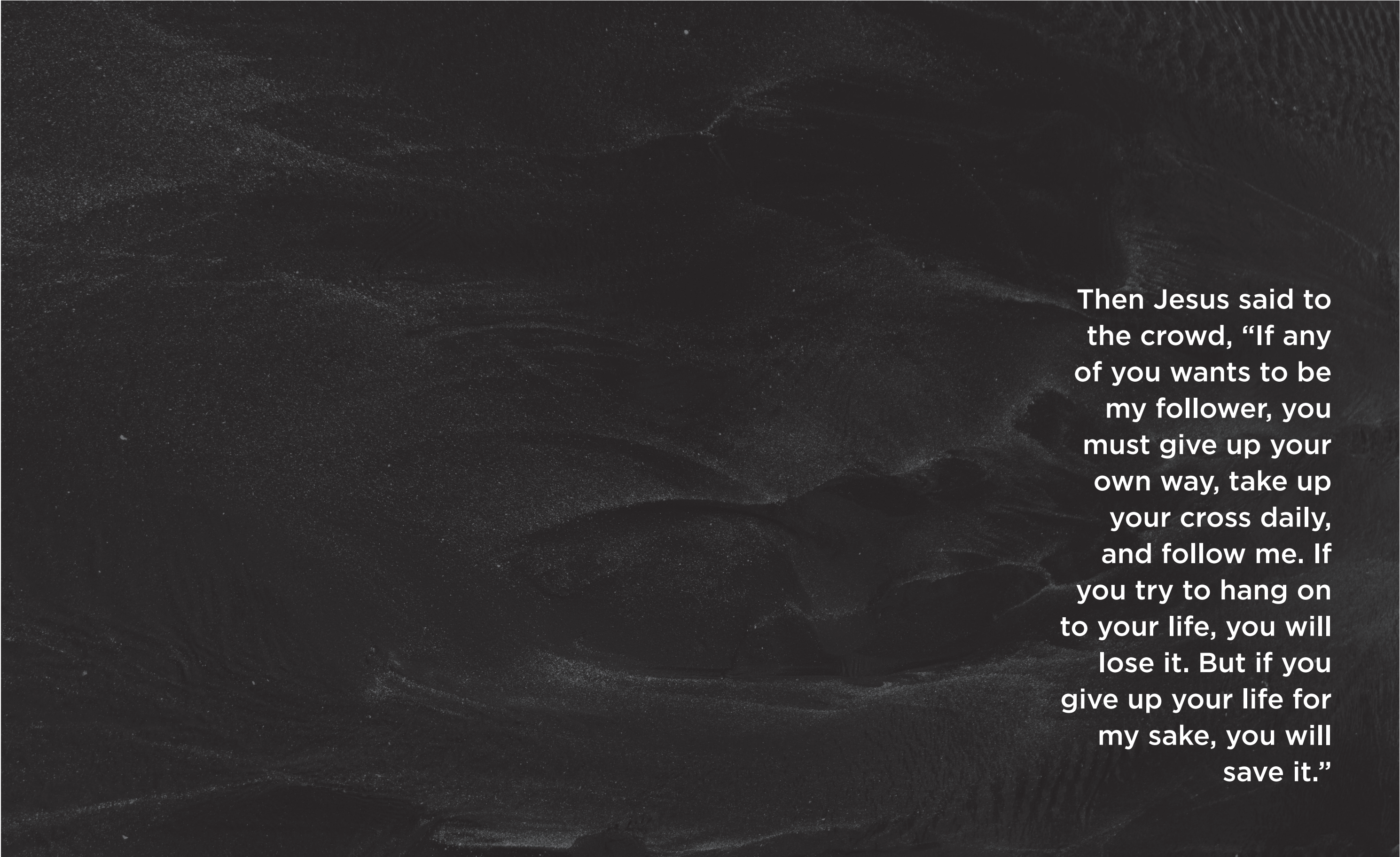
Get Baptized.

Baptism is a great next step to take after you start following Jesus. Baptism is an outward expression of an inward decision you made. It is not necessary for salvation, but it is a powerful way to publicly identify with Jesus...his death, burial, and resurrection.

If you have not been baptized, Journey would love to help you take that next step. We offer baptisms the second Sundays of the month at all our locations.

Scan the QR code to register online or visit JourneyColorado.com/Baptism





Then Jesus said to the crowd, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.”

DAY 5 REFLECT

Spend some time today to reflect on everything you read and wrote down this past week. Then take a moment and answer the following questions.

As you look back on the week, what stories, Scriptures, ideas, and/or thoughts stood out to you the most? Why?

If you could condense everything God impressed on you this week to one main idea, what would it be?

All of us have a step God is asking us to take when it comes to starting or starting over in our relationship with him. What is that step you sense God is wanting you to start? Why?

Write out a prayer you personally want to pray based on the reflections of the past week.

WEEK

- 1 WHERE DO I START?
- 2 HOW DO I HEAR FROM GOD?
- 3 HOW DO I BREAK FREE?
- 4 HOW DO I CONNECT?
- 5 HOW DO I MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



WEEK 2

HOW DO I HEAR FROM GOD?



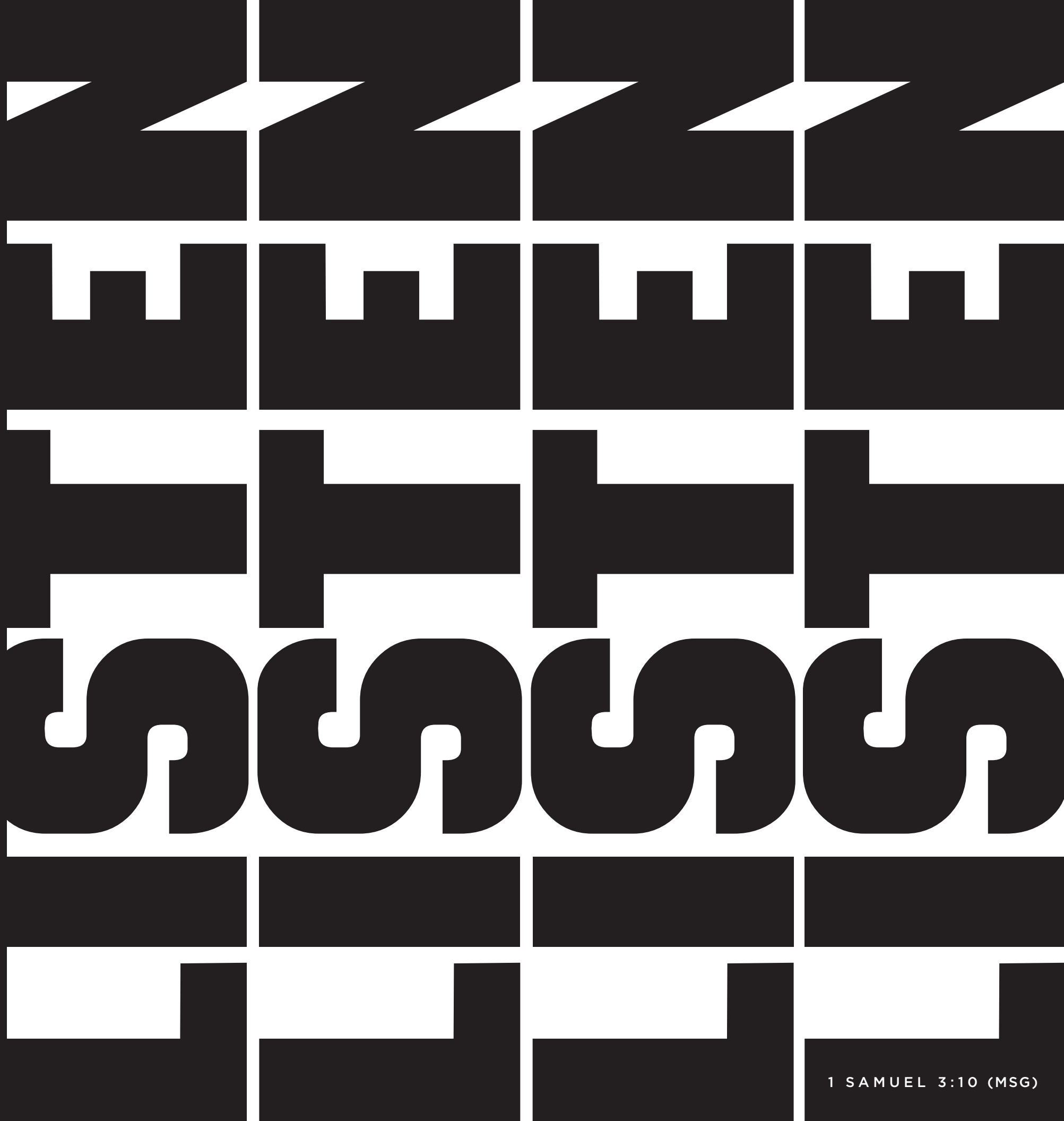
PRAYER

The assumption of biblical prayer is that God's action always precedes my request. The aim is not to get God in on what I think he should be doing.

Rather, the aim of prayer is to get us in on what God is doing, become aware of it, join it, and enjoy the fruit of participation. — **Tyler Staton**

PRAYER

**Samuel
answered,
“Speak,
Lord.
I’m your
servant,
ready to
LISTEN.”**



DAILY PRAYER

Begin each day in a moment of quiet reflection. As you pray, start with the simple yet profound words below. This humble request opens your heart to his guidance and wisdom, setting a tone of receptivity and attentiveness for the day ahead.

**“Jesus, please
speak to me because
I am listening.”**

MESSAGE NOTES

DATE / /

DAY 1

START

As we start this week's devotion, it is crucial to understand that hearing from God is one of the most profound experiences in the Christian faith. It affirms his presence and guidance in our lives, and it offers us comfort and direction. But how do we recognize his voice amidst the noise of our modern daily lives? The Bible offers us timeless principles to cultivate a listening heart.

1. A Posture of Readiness

In 1 Samuel 3:10, we see young Samuel responding to God's call with, *"Speak, for your servant is listening."* Samuel's response highlights the importance of a willing and open heart. Being ready to hear from God requires a posture of humility and expectancy. Each day, we can echo Samuel's words, inviting God to speak into our lives with a heart prepared to listen.

2. Knowing His Voice

Jesus reassures us in John 10:27 (ESV), *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."* This intimate relationship between the shepherd and his sheep symbolizes our connection with Jesus. As we spend time in Jesus' presence, we become familiar with his voice. Just as sheep recognize their shepherd's call, we learn to discern God's voice through our ongoing relationship with him. This involves regular prayer, worship, and meditating on his Word.

3. Guidance in Every Step

Isaiah 30:21 (ESV) promises, *"And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left."* This verse reassures us that God's guidance is available even in the little things of life. By staying attuned to his voice, we can navigate life's twists and turns with confidence. God's guidance is often subtle, requiring us to quiet our hearts and minds to discern his direction.

4. Daily Conversations with God

Psalms 5:3 (ESV) encourages us to bring our requests before God each morning, *"O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch."* Starting our day with prayer sets the tone for a day lived in communion with God. It's in these moments of stillness and devotion that we lay our concerns before him and wait expectantly for his response. This daily discipline of prayer helps cultivate a sensitivity to his voice throughout the day.

5. Engaging with Scripture

God's primary means of communication is through the Bible. It is a living document that offers wisdom, encouragement, and direction. Regular engagement with Scripture not only informs us of God's will but also tunes our hearts to his voice. By studying the Bible, we learn to recognize the patterns of God's communication and align our lives with his truth.

In conclusion, hearing from God is not an elusive spiritual experience reserved for a select few. It is a daily reality for those who cultivate a listening heart, engage with his Word, and live in obedience and trust. As we posture ourselves like Samuel, listen for his guidance like Jesus' sheep, seek his direction as promised in Isaiah, and begin each day in prayerful expectancy as the Psalmist, we will increasingly recognize and follow God's voice. Let us remember the promise of James 4:8 (ESV), *"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you."* In seeking Jesus, we find the clarity and direction our souls deeply long for and the best life we could ever ask for.

DAY 1

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How can you create a consistent morning routine that includes time for prayer and listening to God? Identify specific steps you can take to ensure that you start your day by bringing your concerns before God and waiting expectantly for his guidance.

Think about a current decision or situation where you need God's direction. How can you actively listen for his voice and recognize his guidance in this context? Think about and write down some practical ways to remain attentive to God's subtle prompts and confirmations in your everyday life.

Draw near
to God,
and He will
draw near
to you.

JAMES 4:8 (ESV)

DAY 2

GROW

Samuel was known as one of the greatest prophets in the Bible. A good portion of his ministry happened during the time of King David, the greatest king Israel ever had. But a lot of his ability to hear God's voice and speak on God's behalf started when he was a young boy, learning under a priest named Eli. As you read the story below, pay attention to Samuel's posture and response.

1 Samuel 3:1-10

The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the Word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.

One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called Samuel.

Samuel answered, "Here I am." And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The Word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

A third time the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

DAY 2

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

One of the key ingredients when it comes to hearing from God is our posture. In other words, our approach and attitude are important. What is it about the simplicity of Samuel's posture that jumps out to you? Do you see this same posture in your life? Why or why not?

We cannot underestimate Eli's part in helping Samuel recognize and hear God's voice. Why is it still just as important today that we have godly people in our lives to help us learn to hear God's voice? Have you ever had someone play the role of an Eli in your life? What are some of the biggest takeaways you learned from them?

Jesus himself prioritized hearing his Father's voice. Take a look at Mark 1:35. In reading this verse, what can you learn from Jesus' example? If this relationship was vital in Jesus' life, what would you envision it could do for your life?

God, give us grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things
which should be changed,
and the Wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.
Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
Taking, as Jesus did,
This sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it,
Trusting that You will make all things right,
If I surrender to Your will,
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with You forever in the next.

S E R E N I T Y P R A Y E R

DAY 3

RELATE

Today, you will have the gift of reading Joe's story, and how hearing from God was key during one of the darkest times in his life. What an honor it is that God wants to speak to us, and no matter what the circumstances we are facing in life, what a gift it is that we can hear from him.

Faith in Jesus became real when I was 15.

My dad suffered from a rare lung condition that resulted in the need for surgery. As a teenager, I was oblivious to the seriousness of the situation. Initially, surgery seemed to go well, but the following weeks turned into a nightmare. My dad's condition went from bad, to worse, and then to hopeless.

Ultimately, an undetected infection resulted in my dad's death while doctors struggled to save him in a last-ditch operation. I was crushed.

Weeks passed, and my only solace was the thought of my dad, a follower of Jesus, being in heaven. Shell-shocked from what I saw in those last few hours with my dad, I was comforted by the thought that he wasn't suffering anymore. Otherwise, I was bewildered and overwhelmed with grief. How does a teenage kid move beyond stuff like this?

But that's not all.

About two weeks after my dad's passing, I went back to school. After class one day, while walking home, I was hit by a car. The last thing I remember was stepping out into the street. I didn't see the car coming in my direction.

I woke up several days later in a hospital. My body was broken and filled with severe pain. I knew things weren't looking good. I was being evaluated for internal bleeding. After witnessing my dad's death, I expected nothing but the worst — I was about to die.

Lying there, I burned with anger. I was terrified. Death was coming for me, and I felt helpless.

I can't recall if I actually yelled out loud or thought the words in my head, but my conversation with God was direct.

"God, what's next? What are you going to do to me now? I fully expect the worst from you!"

Desperation followed.

"God, I know I can either be against you or for you. I need you. Please help!"

Then, something happened. I felt a sense of overwhelming peace. It's hard to put into words. At that moment, I felt the presence of God. It was enough. It was everything.

"Joe, give this to me."

I heard that in my spirit.

I eventually climbed out of that dark moment and began a long road to recovery. I wrestled with my grief, but God became prominent and real.

I remember clinging to Hebrews 12:1-2 in that season.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

I learned a simple truth through those Bible verses — keep my eyes on Jesus, and that will fuel a drive to persevere through whatever may come. While these tragic events derailed my life in many ways, things could have easily spiraled further out of control. My relationship with Jesus made all the difference.

I often reflect back on that time in my life. It was a pivotal moment when faith became real. Jesus became real.

To this very day, I hang on to the words I received from God in the hospital, *"Joe, give this to me."* They've carried me through so many seasons. I've learned that running toward God in our hardest moments, giving him our struggles, is where we find strength and comfort. Indeed God runs toward us when we are hurt. He is ready to take our grief and give us peace.

— Joe

DAY 3

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

In what ways are you able to relate to Joe's story of hearing God's voice, conversing with God, and/or having God speak to you through the Bible?

When it comes to you personally, what are some key moments you can point back to where you experienced hearing from God? When were there times where you remember struggling to hear from God?

If someone else asked you how they can hear from God, what are some steps you would encourage them to take?

My sheep
recognize my voice.
I know them,
and they

FOLLOW ME.

JOHN 10:27 (MSG)

[WORDS OF JESUS]

DAY 4

PRACTICE

Hearing from God is one of the most profound experiences in the Christian faith. There are many ways you can begin hearing from God. Here are a couple of key practical ways you can start this week.

Read the Bible Regularly

Reading the Bible is one of the primary avenues God has allowed us to know and hear from him. It can seem daunting to start or develop a consistent habit of reading because of how vast the Bible is. Below are some resources that will help guide you.

Book of Mark Reading Plan

The first resource is a reading plan we have through the Book of Mark. It's a 16-day plan that has you read one chapter a day through the life and teachings of Jesus.

See Appendix on page 148.

Bible App

The Bible App (Bible.com) has a variety of reading plans, ranging from 2 to 365 days. There are plans that walk you through books of the Bible, plans that help you engage different topics you might be experiencing, and some that take you through the whole Bible. There is something for everyone. Check it out!

Scan the QR code to download the Bible App.

[Bible.com/App](https://www.bible.com/app)



Develop a Consistent Prayer Habit

Prayer is simply having a conversation with God. Frank C. Laubach describes prayer this way: "Prayer at its highest is a two-way conversation and for me the most important part is listening to God's replies." Prayer was such a central part of Jesus' life that the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1). The disciples saw the power of Jesus' life flow out of his prayer life.

The reality is that God wants us to spend time in prayer. It doesn't have to be well-thought-out prayers or require hours of time removed from the world.

It can start off small.

It can be setting aside five minutes.

It can be turning off the car stereo and conversing with God during your drive.

It can start off as a daily prayer every morning: "Jesus, please speak to me, because I am listening."

P.R.A.Y. Guide

One tool we share to help create a framework for prayer is found in the acrostic PRAY.

Praise
Repent
Ask
Yield

When you begin learning to pray, this is a great guide to get you going. You can find more information on the PRAY tool in the Appendix.

See Appendix on page 149.

Whether you turn to the right or the left,
your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying,

**“This is the way;
walk in it.”**

DAY 5 REFLECT

Spend some time today to reflect on everything you read and wrote down this past week. Then take a moment and answer the following questions.

As you look back on the week, what stories, Scriptures, ideas, and/or thoughts stood out to you the most? Why?

If you could condense everything God impressed on you this week to one main idea, what would it be?

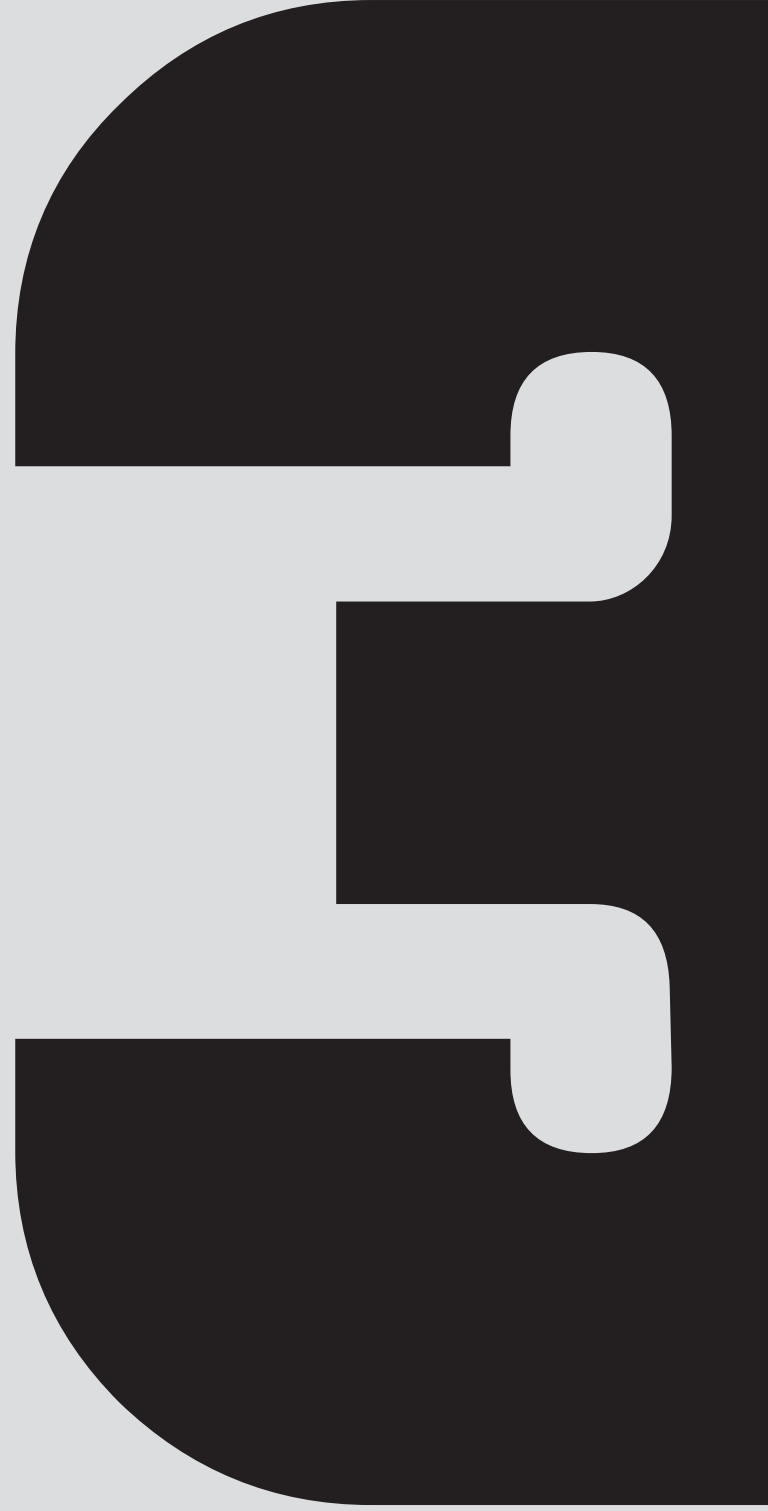
All of us have a step God is asking us to take when it comes to hearing from God. What is that step you sense God is wanting you to start? Why?

Write out a prayer you personally want to pray based on the reflections of the past week.

WEEK



- 1 WHERE DO I START?
- 2 HOW DO I HEAR FROM GOD?
- 3 HOW DO I BREAK FREE?
- 4 HOW DO I CONNECT?
- 5 HOW DO I MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



WEEK 3

HOW DO I BREAK FREE?

THE GOSPEL IS THIS:

**We are more
sinful and flawed
in ourselves than
we ever dared
believe, yet at the
very same time...**

**...we are more
loved and
accepted in Jesus
Christ than we
ever dared hope.**

TIMOTHY KELLER

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.

GALATIANS 5:1

DAILY PRAYER

Begin each day in a moment of quiet reflection. As you pray, start with the simple yet profound words below. This humble request opens your heart to his guidance and wisdom, setting a tone of receptivity and attentiveness for the day ahead.

**“Jesus, please
speak to me because
I am listening.”**

MESSAGE NOTES

DATE / /

DAY 1

START

In March of 2020, COVID hit and changed our lives as we knew it. At the time, I was a junior in college out in Southern California. I was loving my education, thriving on campus, and I had just started dating my now husband, Sam. Fast forward a year and a half later, and any hope I held on to disappeared. I waited two years to return to campus, found hope in every restaurant opening, and dreamed about graduating with all my best friends. Instead, I was met with our college graduation being canceled, we never returned to campus, and for the first time in my life, I didn't know if there was light at the end of the tunnel. I had lost all control over my plans.

Maybe you find yourself in a similar situation, feeling like you have been fighting something for so long. Maybe it is a sin you don't know if you will ever get through. Maybe you are stuck in a pattern of negative thoughts and you don't know if they will end. Or you have been trying so hard to leave something behind you just don't know if you are strong enough to do it. You find yourself right where I was, unsure if you would ever see the light at the end of the tunnel.

During this time, I found myself so desperate for Jesus. I clung to him harder than I ever had before. I asked him to get me to the end of the tunnel every day for two years.

In Scripture, Jesus says, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life"* (John 8:12 ESV). In my most desperate, darkest times, I was met with an even kinder response than I had been asking for. God showed me he doesn't wait for us to reach the end of the tunnel. He meets us right in the middle, in the darkest parts of our hearts, and shines his light, carefully guiding us out.

The same is true for your darkness today. Scripture says, *"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery"* (Galatians 5:1). I can't promise you will never walk through another tunnel again, or that you will never struggle with negative thoughts, sin, or bad habits. But I can promise you that when you let our God into the darkness, the **freedom** he promises is light. 2 Corinthians 3:17 says, *"Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."*

My prayer for you today is that you lay your sin, habits, and darkness at the feet of Jesus and become so captivated with who our God is that you don't even realize the tunnel. Eventually, you look around and find yourself on the other side, more free than ever.

DAY 1

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

As you step into this week and take inventory of your life, what are some things that God may want you to break free from? Are there any areas or issues you have been fighting for a while?

Inviting Jesus into our mess can be something we avoid or something we were taught never to do, but it is the very thing that he invites us to do. How can you invite Jesus to meet you in the middle of your tunnel, your darkness this week? Do you have any fear or uneasiness taking this step? Why or why not?

I have discovered this principle of life — that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?

**Thank
God! The
answer is
in Jesus
Christ
our Lord.**

ROMANS 7:21-25 (NLT)



DAY 2
GROW

A huge part of Jesus' ministry on earth were miracles in the form of healings. The good news is that Jesus is still healing people. He is still helping people experience the freedom of breaking free. Today, you will read a story of one of Jesus' healings. It will encourage you, but also challenge you to take that next step toward freedom.

John 5:1-15

Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"

"Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me."

Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat."

But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"

So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?"

The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.

DAY 2
**REFLECTION
QUESTIONS**

As the story unfolds, we find Jesus engaging a man who is described as an "invalid." Jesus asks him, "Do you want to get well?" To be honest, the answer seems pretty obvious. Why do you think Jesus would ask him this question? Was there something deeper Jesus was getting at? Is there something in your life you are desperately wanting to "get well" from?

Jesus is willing to heal the man, but in order for the "invalid" to experience the miracle, he has to actually do what Jesus said: "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." For most of us, when it comes to leaving behind sin, bad habits, hang-ups, and misguided thinking, we love the idea and dream of breaking free — but the real struggle comes in trusting Jesus and doing some hard work. What makes the pursuit of breaking free so hard? Is the struggle real for you? Have you experienced the freedom that comes after doing the "hard work of heart work"?

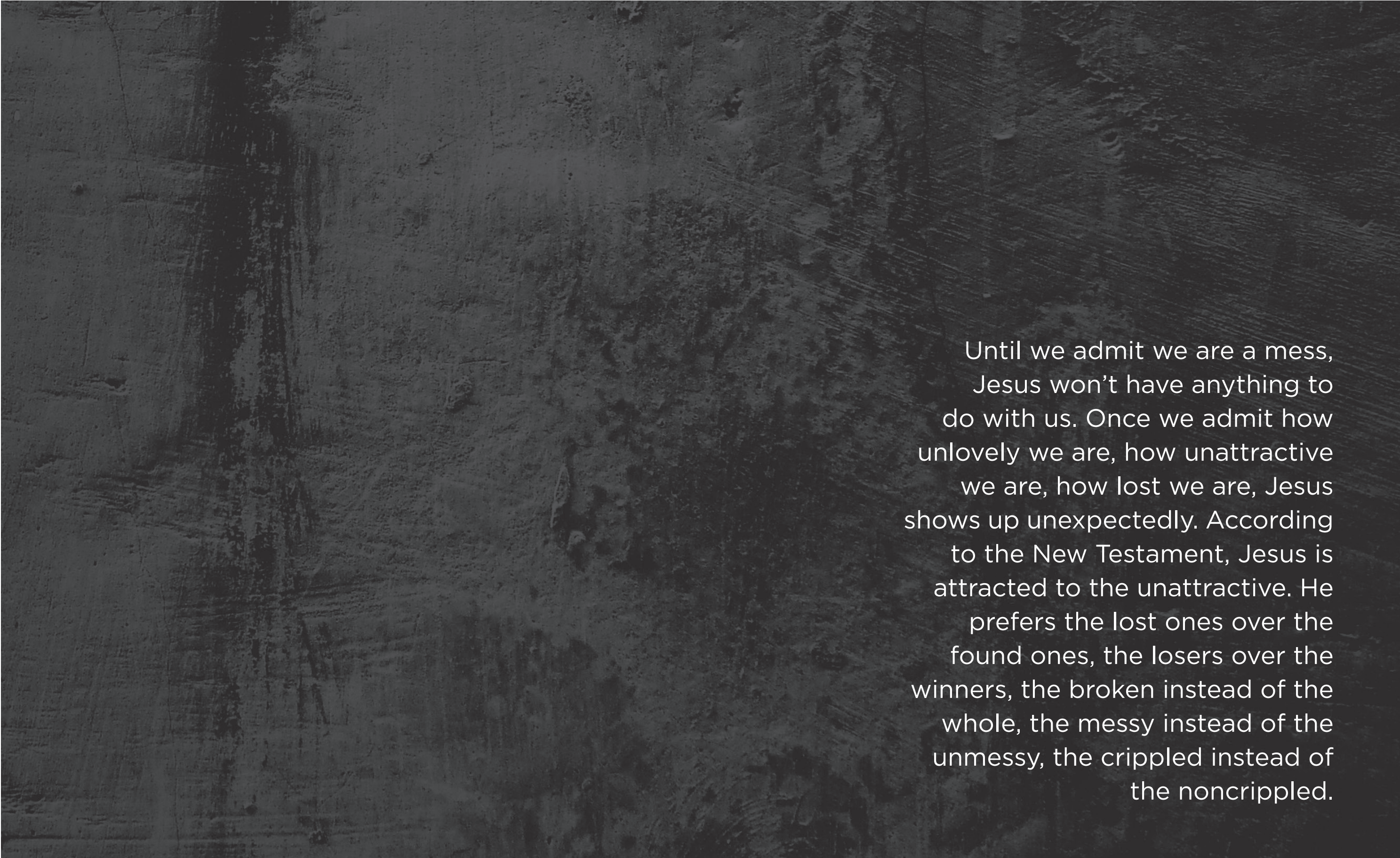
DAY 2

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Jesus later comes back for one last conversation with the man he healed. He encourages him to “stop sinning or something worse may happen.” Jesus is speaking from a posture of love. If we continue to live in sin, bad habits, and misguided thinking, at what cost could that come the longer we wait? What impact will it have to those we love around us? With this in mind, is it easy to understand Jesus’ heart for us all to “break free”?

**When we sin
and mess up our
lives, we find that
God doesn’t go
off and leave us
— he enters into
our troubles and
saves us.**

EUGENE PETERSON



Until we admit we are a mess,
Jesus won't have anything to
do with us. Once we admit how
unlovely we are, how unattractive
we are, how lost we are, Jesus
shows up unexpectedly. According
to the New Testament, Jesus is
attracted to the unattractive. He
prefers the lost ones over the
found ones, the losers over the
winners, the broken instead of the
whole, the messy instead of the
unmessy, the crippled instead of
the noncrippled.

DAY 3

RELATE

Stories of people “breaking free” from sin, bad habits, and misguided thinking are powerful. Their vulnerability and effort are inspiring as they allow God to take them through the hard work of heart work. Enjoy reading this story from George. It reminds us that Jesus is always offering us a better, deeper life with him.

Two and a half years ago, I arrived in Colorado with a promise to myself that I would return to faith in Jesus, as atonement for the sins of my past. My previous life was marred by the consequences of cyclic substance abuse as I attempted to escape haunting memories through perpetual sedation...until God found me in my despair, slowly pulling me through the trials that brought me to the beginning of 2023.

Relinquishing all expectations, I attended the first Journey Church Crash Course session of that year with a true desire to find those who were broken, outcast, or in the same state of despair that I was familiar with. It was there that I met one of the key figures in my journey to restoration, Justin. He invested heavily in me, providing guidance as I became more involved in service to the needs of the church.

A quarter into the year, a situation at work had me back in another cycle, and I began to lose myself. Without maturity of faith, I started drowning in the bottom of another bottle. The next several months went by in a worsening downward spiral, and by the time June rolled along, I had taken many steps backward, distancing myself from God.

But a proposition from Justin had me at a turning point. He felt led to start a Bible study in the coming semester

and asked me to be the co-leader. As he tells the story, I thought about it for a while, calling him several evenings in a drunken stupor over the next month to ask why he would pick me to help lead. With no concrete answer to my question, Justin recounted that on the fourth ask, I simply agreed, promising to show up sober to the meetings.

It was a rough start, but eventually I found my way with handling the care aspect of the study. I brought food each night the group met and checked in with members throughout the week. At the conclusion of our first semester, I realized that I had stopped thinking about work as much, and instead was looking out for the group.

Aside from fulfillment through purpose, Justin finally gave me a real answer as to why he was so intent on having me lead. The spiritual maturity I thought to be lacking was unearthed in the process of serving the group members directly. In the first few months of working with me, Justin recognized my capacity to love others. The Bible study was simply the arena that provided the opportunity for me to use my gifts and discover my purpose. Committing to the responsibility was my next step in my journey through faith, and I am grateful to have found a group of people to walk the path with.

— George

DAY 3

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

In what ways are you able to relate to George’s story of struggle, even if the specific issue you are facing might be different?

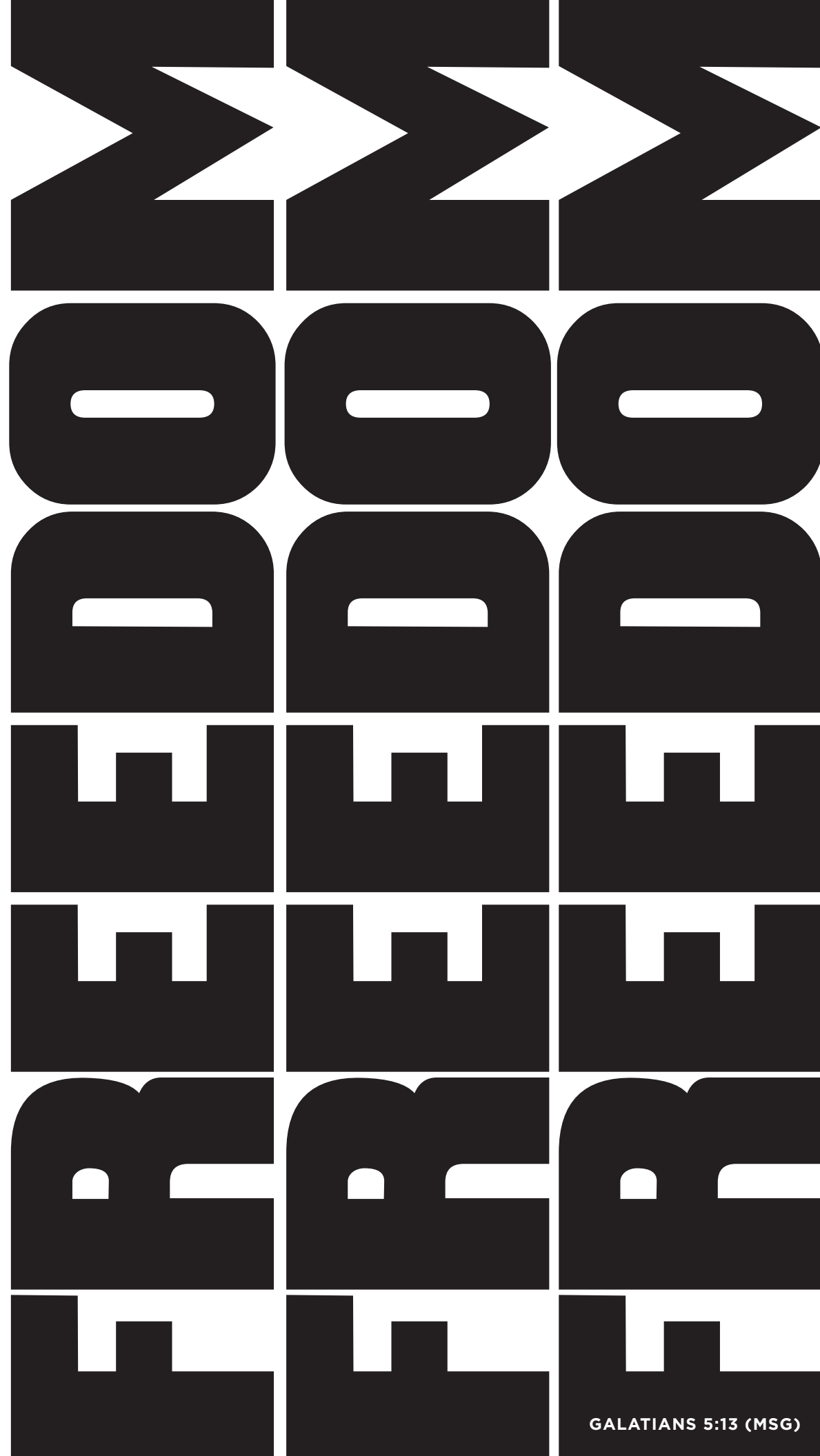
When it comes to you personally, what are some key moments you can point back to where you experienced breaking free from something? How are you able to see God’s grace and mercy evident during that season?

DAY 3

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

George's story reminds us that a huge part of breaking free is having others who follow Jesus believe in and love us through the mess. Why is it tough to break free alone? Do you have any people in your life that play this role?

If someone else asked you how they can break free, what are some steps you would encourage them to take?



It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don't use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love — that's how freedom grows.

DAY 4

PRACTICE

The message of Jesus is FREE and FREEING. Not only is our salvation free because of Christ's sacrificial love fully accomplished on the cross, but the power that raised Jesus from the dead is also living inside of those of us who have surrendered our lives to Christ (Romans 8:11). This power, the work of the Holy Spirit, is the same power that can help us break free. Here are a couple practices that can pave the way toward freedom.

Confess Your Sins to God and Others

The Bible says that when we confess our sins to God, we are forgiven (1 John 1:9). It also says that when we confess our sins to each other, we are healed (James 5:16). Forgiveness and healing both find their roots in confession.

Make it a regular or daily habit spending time asking God to forgive you. This is NOT a practice to experience shame and avoid condemnation. It's an act of leaning into the love that Christ has for you. Confess your sins out loud. Write them down. And then trust the promises found in 1 John 1:9 and Romans 8:1 ("For now there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.")

Taking it a step further, seek out a couple of loving, fellow followers of Jesus that you trust. We are only as sick as our secrets, and sharing with these trusted confidants can begin breaking you free from the power of the sin you are battling. Let these friends pray for you, encourage you, challenge you, and cheer you on as you change direction.

Seek Professional Counseling


At Journey, we believe in professional counseling. Sometimes we find ourselves in a place where we are stuck, and we need to enlist the help of a professional. If this is the case, we would encourage you to pursue Christian counseling.

We have a list of professional counselors we recommend. They have a variety of specialties (marriage, parenting, trauma, addiction, divorce, anxiety, etc.) and are located in different areas around south Denver. Reach out to a Journey pastor for a list of the recommended counselors, or follow the link to access the list yourself.

Scan the QR code to view Journey's counseling referral list.

JourneyColorado.com/Resource





Make this your
common practice:
Confess your sins to
each other and pray for
each other so that you
can live together

**whole
and
healed.**

JAMES 5:16 (MSG)

DAY 5 REFLECT

Spend some time today to reflect on everything you read and wrote down this past week. Then take a moment and answer the following questions.

As you look back on the week, what stories, Scriptures, ideas, and/or thoughts stood out to you the most? Why?

If you could condense everything God impressed on you this week to one main idea, what would it be?

All of us have a step God is asking us to take when it comes to breaking free. What is that step you sense God is wanting you to start? Why?

Write out a prayer you personally want to pray based on the reflections of the past week.

WEEK

- 1 WHERE DO I START?
- 2 HOW DO I HEAR FROM GOD?
- 3 HOW DO I BREAK FREE?
- 4 HOW DO I CONNECT?**
- 5 HOW DO I MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



WEEK 4 HOW DO I CONNECT?



95%

**of your success
and failure in life
is directly related
to who you spend
most of your
time with.**

**DR. DAVID McCLELLAND
HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

**AS
IRON
SHARPENS
IRON,
SO A
FRIEND
SHARPENS
A FRIEND.**

DAILY PRAYER

Begin each day in a moment of quiet reflection. As you pray, start with the simple yet profound words below. This humble request opens your heart to his guidance and wisdom, setting a tone of receptivity and attentiveness for the day ahead.

**“Jesus, please
speak to me because
I am listening.”**

MESSAGE NOTES

DATE / /

DAY 1

START

In February of 2015, I was sitting on a vinyl chair in an examination room. The doctor had sent me to get a mammogram and an ultrasound, and I had told my husband he didn't need to come — they don't give you results the same day, right? When I arrived at the office, I realized that my iPad was dead. About five minutes later, the battery on my phone died. I had left my glasses in my car so, not only could I not call or text anyone, I couldn't even read one of the ancient magazines in front of me.

But I did see the look on the technician's face when she finished the mammogram and brought me into that room. I knew the dread that I had experienced five days prior when I felt the lump probably wasn't me being paranoid. The radiologist came in and said, "So, this is cancer." I couldn't believe it — they hadn't even done a biopsy! How was he so nonchalantly certain about the diagnosis just from a picture and an ultrasound?

As I waited in that chair for my next steps, I put my head against the wall and prayed, "What do I do? What do I do?" I don't know what I expected to hear from God, but hearing, "I got this. Let people in," wasn't it. I prayed again and again, and I just kept hearing, "Let people in." That just seemed like such a weird thing to me in that situation and not something that had ever crossed my mind. What did God mean by "Let people in?" I was in a small group, a Bible study, and was part of the PTA! What more could I do?

That day began a journey that I am still on to this day. I realized that although I have always had a community around me, I rarely allowed people to see me as anything but a strong woman who was getting through everything easy peasy. God was directing me to the very thing I was going to need to get through that season: having a group of Jesus followers around me.

After that bout with breast cancer, I had two run-ins with ovarian cancer a couple of years later. I had to keep depending on people to take care of me, drive me to appointments, and pray for me when I couldn't. I experienced great fear as I faced my mortality, and great pain because of surgeries and side effects of chemo. I had a choice: I could go through it alone, full of fear and sadness, or I could go about it God's way, leaning on the amazing family and friends that I had in my life.

It wasn't always easy. People are messy. Making a decision to let people in isn't always safe emotionally, but it is where God wants us to live as his people. It is where we experience his tangible touch. The best part for me through that experience was that there was a lot of laughter in that dark time, and wonderful strong arms to hold me up when I couldn't do it myself. That is the gift of community.

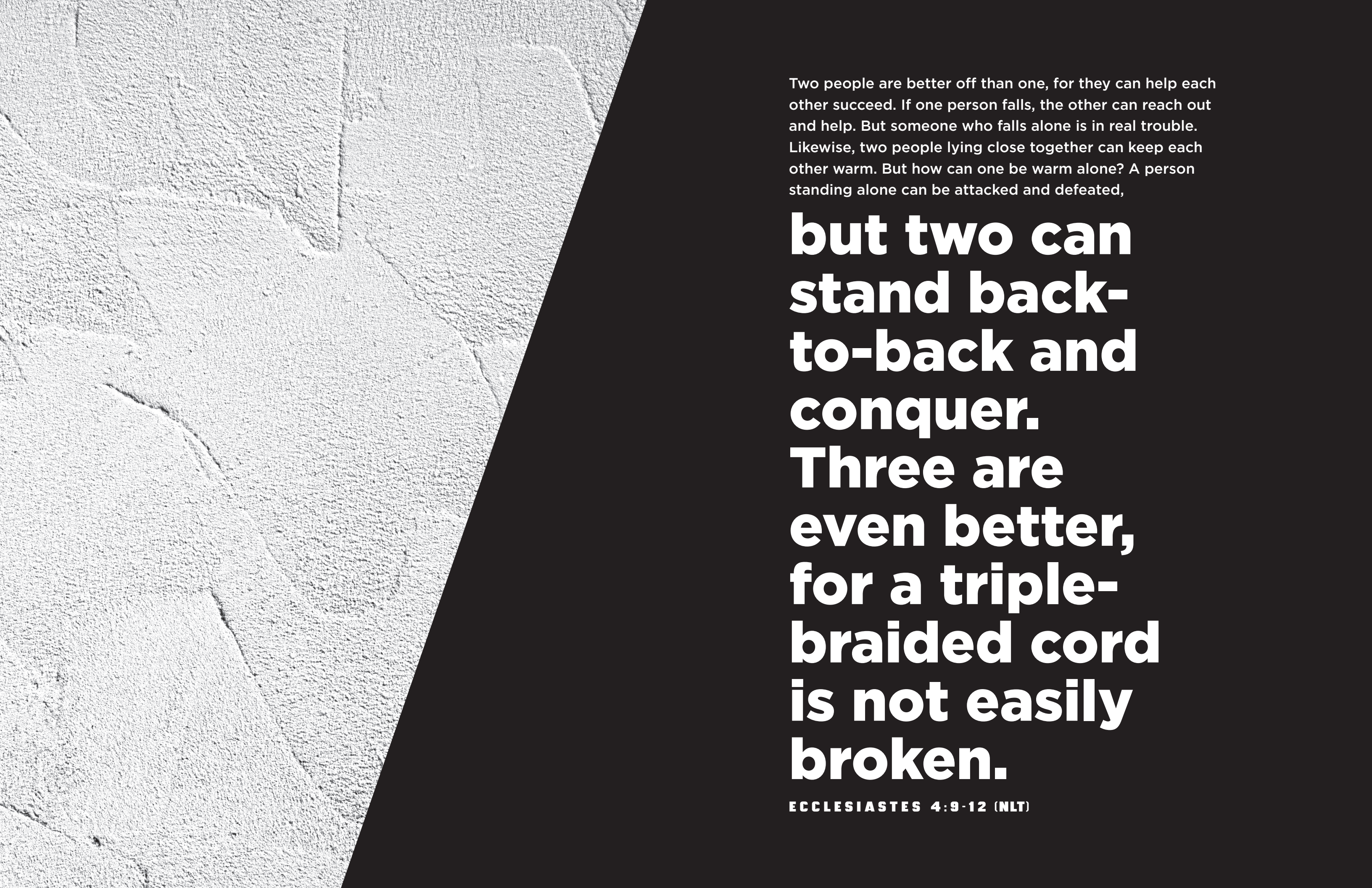
Take this week to sit in the quiet and let God speak to you as you explore this topic of connection and community. See what he is calling you to right now, and then take the risk! I promise it will be worth it.

DAY 1

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Read Hebrews 10:24-25 and 1 Peter 4:8-11. The theme of connecting with others who are also seeking Christ is woven throughout the Bible. The reason why is that community is a superpower. Why is connecting with other followers of Christ a superpower, something God knows we need? Has there ever been a season in your life where you have experienced it? If so, what was it about that community you aren't able to experience in any other environment?

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. At Journey we say, "When you get isolated, you get weird." In assessing where you are personally when it comes to being connected at Journey, are you taking steps in the right direction? Are there any obstacles or excuses that need to be removed? And if you are connected, is God calling you to be on the other side and reach out to someone that needs community?



Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated,

but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12 (NLT)

DAY 2

GROW

We believe that the life of following Christ was never meant to be lived alone. This reality has been true ever since the inception of this thing we call “the Church.” In today’s story, we are going to read about what the environment of the first church was like.

The backstory is that Christ has just been resurrected. He spent forty days with his followers, giving them proof of his resurrection, and teaching them more about the ways of following him. Jesus then ascended into heaven. Ten days later, an amazing event occurred. The Holy Spirit came, empowered the followers of Jesus in Jerusalem, and the Church began. And boy did it begin. In one day, the Church grew from 120 to over 3,000! You can read the whole account in Acts, chapters 1 and 2.

This is where we pick up the story in the following verses.

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

DAY 2

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

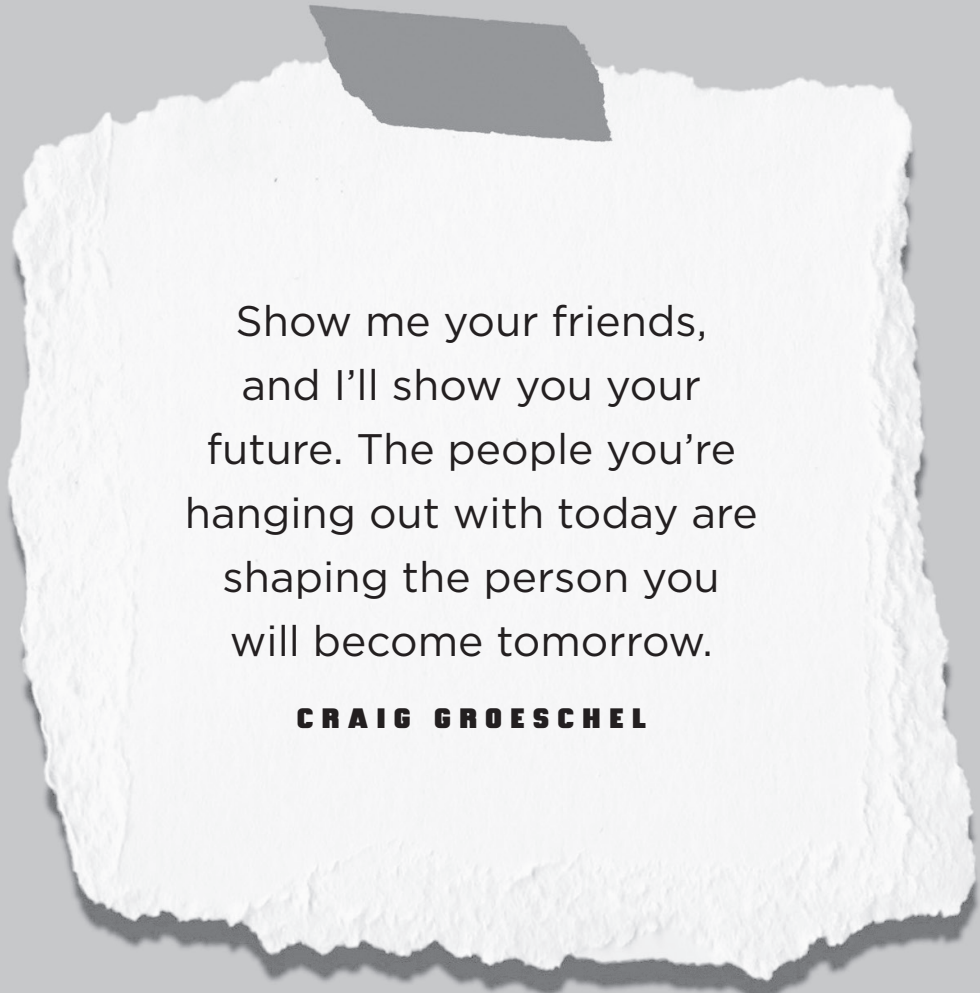
At its core, we need to understand that “the Church” is not a building we go to, but a Christ-centered family to which we belong. When you read these verses, how do you see this core understanding at work? As we understand being a part of the Church today, 2,000 years later, in what ways do you see similarities, and in what ways are there differences?

When it came to connecting, to being engaged in Christ-centered community, what did the initial Church prioritize? Are these priorities the same ones you are pursuing and prioritizing in your own life? Why or why not?

DAY 2

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

The German Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote about this idea of community: “The person who loves their dream of community will destroy community, but the person who loves those around them will create community.” It is one thing to dream about community, but it is quite another thing to create community. In what ways can you play a part in creating an amazing environment of connection at Journey?



Show me your friends,
and I'll show you your
future. The people you're
hanging out with today are
shaping the person you
will become tomorrow.

CRAIG GROESCHEL

RELATE

One of the biggest reasons people commit to starting and staying at a church is connection. This may be why you have chosen to make Journey your church. As humans, it is natural for us to value being part of a community with others we can relate to, be known by, and are genuinely excited to see us. Simply put, we want friends.

The story you are about to read is one of finding connection at Journey. Our hope is that this is part of your story too.

I grew up in the Catholic Church. My family has a long history of involvement in that religious tradition. To be honest, as a kid, it never felt like church was something to be excited about. Weekly mass, in my experience, felt mostly geared toward adults. It did not really seem to offer much in the way of comparing the Bible to everyday life, especially for kids.

Over time, as I got into my teens and twenties, I drifted away from any faith and desire to have a relationship with God. I tried to reconnect in the Catholic Church after I got married and had kids. But once again, it felt like we were going through the motions at church every Sunday. The experience was more of just a history lesson, with no real substance being taught about how God's teaching could be applied to everyday life. I drifted away from my faith again.

Going into my late twenties, thirties, and early forties, I struggled with depression and anxiety, accompanied with poor life decisions and failings. All

of this was having a negative impact on my personal life, friendships, and most importantly, my marriage. I was hurting people unintentionally, shutting my thoughts and emotions off from the world and my wife. Ultimately, depression and anxiety got the best of me. I hit rock bottom, and I ended up making an attempt on my life. By God's grace, I am thankful God protected me and did not allow me to leave my life on earth.

Shortly after this incident, my wife found out about Journey Church through some colleagues. She began attending services regularly, growing in her relationship with God, and serving weekly. I would attend from time to time, or watch services online remotely, but I was still having a hard time committing my life to God, as the depression and anxiety were still a part of me. I also struggled with a fear that God wouldn't want a relationship with me because of my troubles and the pain it had created for others.

While I was still struggling with depression, anxiety, and fear of failure, I found out that Scotty, the senior pastor of Journey Church, was going on a sabbatical because of struggles he was going through. The news surprised me. It also opened my eyes and changed my way of thinking.

When Scotty came back from his sabbatical, he delivered what was the most impactful sermon I have ever heard. Listening to Scotty talk about his own struggles with anxiety caught me off guard. With every word he spoke, I truly felt like God was speaking directly to me. I got goosebumps and found myself choked up with emotion. I knew right then and there that God had spoken to me with words that were going to change my life, setting me on a path toward building a new relationship with him. It felt like Jesus was ever so present in my life. I began to have more clarity, peace, and understanding of how much God loved me.

Today, I have daily conversations with God. Through these prayers, reading the Bible, and listening to teachings, I am doing my best to apply what God wants for me into everyday life.

One of the ways I have trusted God's direction in my life is by connecting with other people who have a relationship with God and have gone through a similar journey I have traveled. My wife and I are part of an amazing small group. This community supports and challenges us in both our spiritual and marital growth. They have helped me stay grounded while being used by God to strengthen my relationship with him. I can honestly say that there is a peace in my life that I have never experienced before. Being connected to a church and a small group has made all the difference.

— Matthew

DAY 3

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

In what ways are you able to relate to Matthew's story of connecting to a church, or even struggling to connect?

How is connecting to a church affected by connecting with other people's stories, others who have traveled the same life journeys we have?

If someone else asked you how they find community at Journey, what are some steps you would encourage them to take?

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

HEBREWS 10:24-25

DAY 4

PRACTICE

Connecting to a church, to a group of other men and women who are wanting to grow in their relationship with Jesus, is integral when it comes to experiencing “life to the fullest.” We need others to cheer us on, carry our burdens, pray for us, challenge us, and provide support as we pursue Christ. Here are a couple things we deeply believe in at Journey to help you connect.

Join a Group

The larger we get as a church, we want to fight to get smaller. In other words, it’s easy to get lost in a crowd, but small groups can be an environment where we can be known. We believe in small groups at Journey. Even if you can only give one hour a week, we would rather have you spend it with a Journey small group than a worship service. It’s true!

Scan the QR code to view our group directory or visit JourneyColorado.com/Groups



Experience Crash Course

Crash Course is a two-step series designed to get you connected to Journey, discover your purpose, and make a difference with your life.

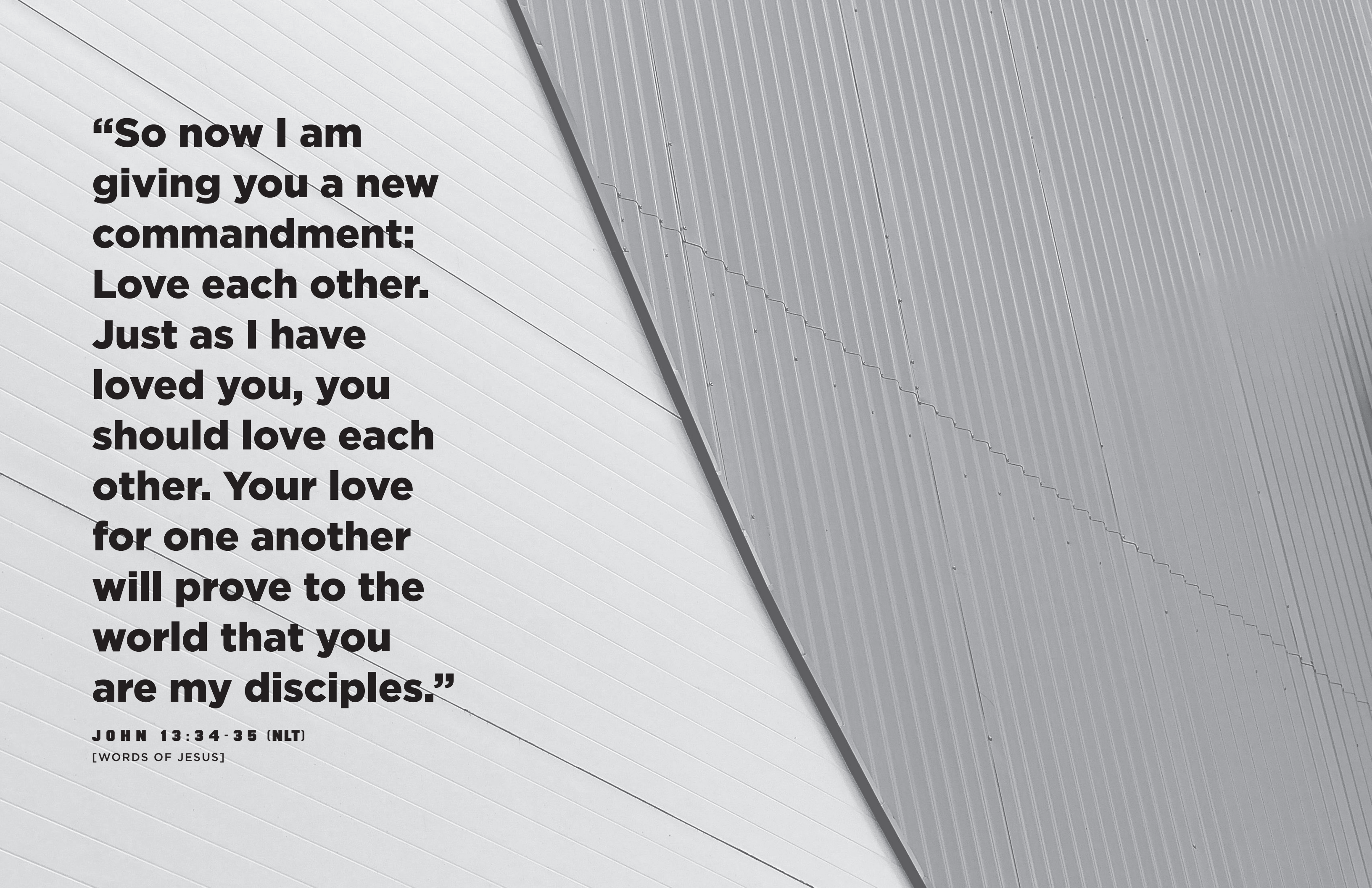
Step One is Membership Class, and it’s designed for you to learn about the vision, direction, and heartbeat of Journey, along with what it means to become a Journey member. Step 1 occurs on the first Sunday of the month at each Journey location.

Step 2 is Discover Class. This interactive environment will provide the opportunity to discuss learnings from different online assessments, begin the process of discovering God’s purpose for your life, and offer practical steps to joining a Serve Team. Step 2 occurs on the third Sunday of the month.

Your simple next step is to register for Step One - Membership Class. Follow the link provided below. You will find more information on the webpage, along with a specific link for which Journey location you attend. Lunch is provided. Childcare is provided at select locations.

Scan the QR code to register online or visit JourneyColorado.com/CrashCourse



A black and white photograph of a corrugated metal roof. A dark, diagonal beam runs across the frame from the top left towards the bottom right. The background is the textured surface of the metal roof, with a repeating pattern of ridges and valleys. The lighting creates a gradient from light on the left to dark on the right.

**“So now I am
giving you a new
commandment:
Love each other.
Just as I have
loved you, you
should love each
other. Your love
for one another
will prove to the
world that you
are my disciples.”**

JOHN 13:34-35 (NLT)

[WORDS OF JESUS]

DAY 5 REFLECT

Spend some time today to reflect on everything you read and wrote down this past week. Then take a moment and answer the following questions.

As you look back on the week, what stories, Scriptures, ideas, and/or thoughts stood out to you the most? Why?

If you could condense everything God impressed on you this week to one main idea, what would it be?

All of us have a step God is asking us to take when it comes to connecting in community. What is that step you sense God is wanting you to start? Why?

Write out a prayer you personally want to pray based on the reflections of the past week.

WEEK

- 1 WHERE DO I START?
- 2 HOW DO I HEAR FROM GOD?
- 3 HOW DO I BREAK FREE?
- 4 HOW DO I CONNECT?
- 5 HOW DO I MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



WEEK 5


HOW DO I MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



You are able to do many
things. But be sure you

find the one thing
you must do.

HOWARD HENDRICKS



Let me tell you why you are here.
You're here to be salt-seasoning that
brings out the God-flavors of this
earth. If you lose your saltiness, how
will people taste godliness? You've
lost your usefulness and will end up in
the garbage.

Here's another way to put it: You're
here to be light, bringing out the God-
colors in the world. God is not a secret
to be kept. We're going public with this,
as public as a city on a hill. If I make you
light-bearers, you don't think I'm going
to hide you under a bucket, do you?
I'm putting you on a light stand. Now
that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a
light stand — shine! Keep open house;
be generous with your lives. By opening
up to others, you'll prompt people to
open up with God, this generous Father
in heaven.

MATTHEW 5:13-16 (MSG)

DAILY PRAYER

Begin each day in a moment of quiet reflection. As you pray, start with the simple yet profound words below. This humble request opens your heart to his guidance and wisdom, setting a tone of receptivity and attentiveness for the day ahead.

**“Jesus, please
speak to me because
I am listening.”**

MESSAGE NOTES

DATE / /

DAY 1

START

In the crypt of the St. Paul's Cathedral in London there is a simple plaque dedicated to Christopher Wren that reads, "Reader, if you seek his memorial — look around you." Wren was the humble architect who dedicated 35 years of his life to building the magnificent church that dominates the London skyline 300 years after his death. Each year, nearly two million people still come to marvel at Wren's masterpiece. St. Paul's was his legacy.

Seeing St. Paul's led me to ask, "How can I create something people will remember long after I am gone? How can I create a masterpiece? How can I make a difference?"

The Apostle Paul says that God is making my life a masterpiece, a cathedral. If you are like me, many days my life feels more like a shack than a cathedral. But my life is the foundation God is building on. St. Paul's Cathedral is actually the fifth church built on that site, the fourth cathedral having burned to the ground in the great London fire of 1666. If that old and crumbling church had never burned, Christopher Wren could never have built the spectacular building we see today. God's desire is to create something beautiful on top of the mistakes, the shortcomings, the failures of my life. God "has created us anew in Christ Jesus." My rubble does not thwart God's plans for my life.

The raw materials for the masterpiece God is building with my life are "the good things he planned for us long ago" (Ephesians 2:10 NLT). Jesus explained what these "good things" are — "Whoever wants to become great among you must become your servant...The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Matthew 20:26, 28). God is building his masterpiece through the things I do to serve others. If I want to make a difference in the world, if I truly want to leave a mark, a legacy, I do it through serving those around me. That is why, in his final few minutes with his friends on earth, Jesus wrapped a towel around his waist and washed the disciples' feet. We make a difference through service.

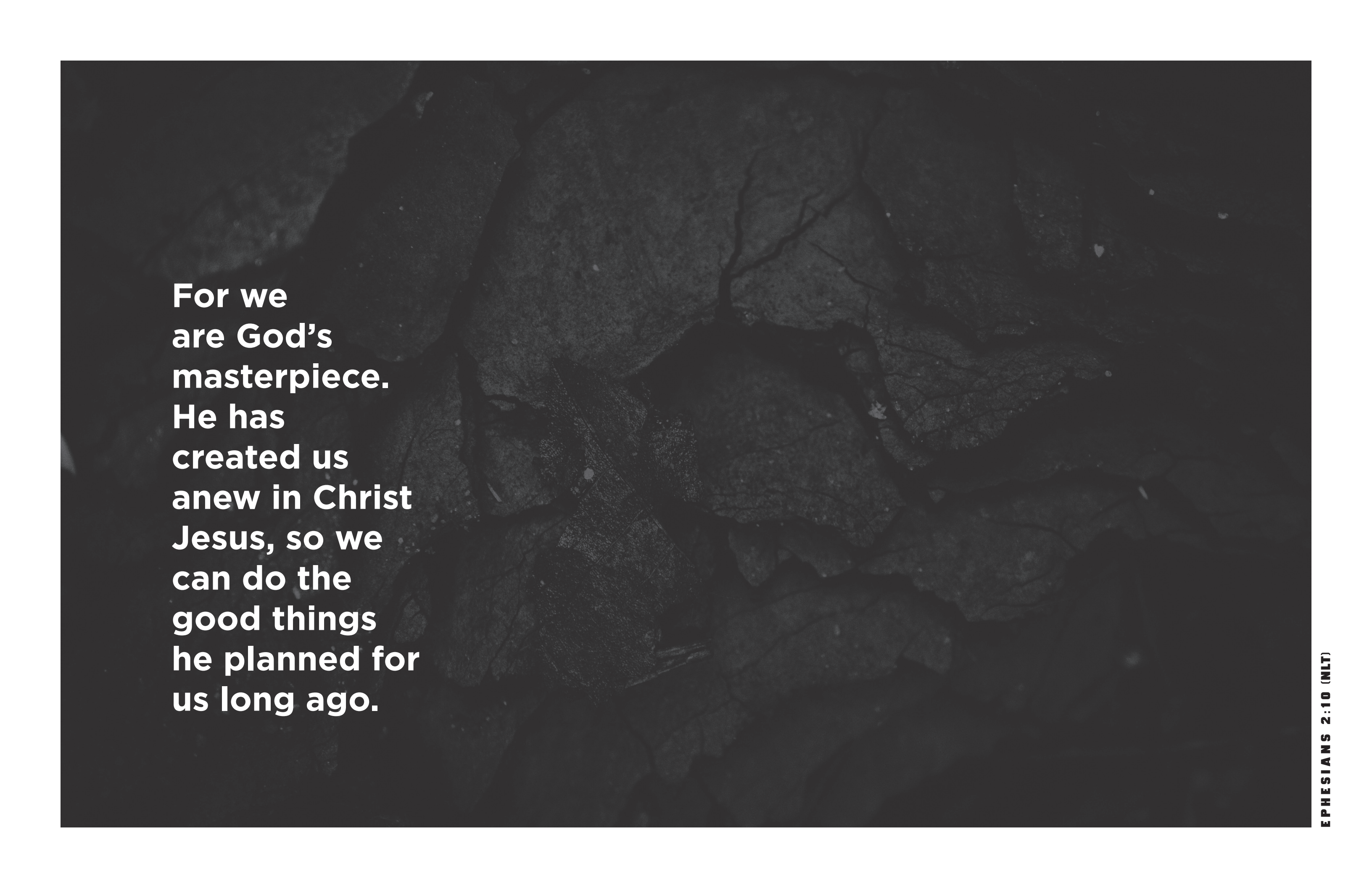
The "good things," the service, that Paul is referring to, however, aren't random acts of kindness. Paul says that God has planned specific ways for us to serve those around us long before we were even born. God invites us to join him in the work he is doing. He isn't just asking us to do good things — he is inviting us to join him in building a living cathedral with our lives. He has a plan for our masterpiece; we simply have to discover where he wants us to serve.

DAY 1

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

It is a humbling and honoring reality to know that God invites us to participate with him to make a difference in the world. When have you felt you were joining God in his work while serving others?

As this week starts, do you have a sense of where God is leading you to serve and make a difference? Begin to pray for God to open your eyes and direct your steps toward how he might use you.



**For we
are God's
masterpiece.
He has
created us
anew in Christ
Jesus, so we
can do the
good things
he planned for
us long ago.**

DAY 2

GROW

At Journey, we say you are never more like Jesus than when you are serving. Today, we invite you to read one of Jesus' greatest leadership moments. It was revolutionary at the time, and his actions still challenge us today on how we go about making a difference with our lives.

John 13:1-9, 12-15

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."

DAY 2

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

In Jewish culture, washing the feet of guests was a normal job. People wore sandals as they walked on dirt paths, and they would arrive at homes with dirty feet. The role of washing feet was relegated to the lowest servant in the home. Yet here was Jesus, God in flesh, washing the feet of his closest students. The irony is that it should have been the other way around. Do you understand Peter's initial reaction to Jesus' teaching moment? In what ways is this a crazy concept Jesus is introducing?

After Jesus was done washing the disciples' feet, he tells them that he has set an example that they need to follow. In the end, Jesus was not making it about washing feet as much as he was challenging them to deeply love people and make a difference through serving. Why is Jesus right? Why is it far from easy to follow his example?

DAY 2

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

We cannot leave this story without understanding that Jesus also washed the feet of Judas Iscariot, who he knew was going to betray him. Jesus served someone who he knew was going to turn his back on him. How does this challenge you even more when it comes to the depth of how you love others through serving? And if we served people to this extent, what difference would it make?

You are meant to do hard and holy things because they are the next thing to get us to the best thing.

— Ann Voskamp

DAY 3

RELATE

All of us, when our time comes to an end on this earth, would love to know that we made a difference with this one life God has given us, that our life mattered. This is something Jesus invites all of us to experience as part of the “full life” he referred to in John 10:10. Think about it: How amazing is it that we get the opportunity to work alongside what God is doing in the world and play a little part to impact eternity?

Jesus lets us know that serving is always the foundational act of making a difference. But embedded in this is the reality that God has also given each of us distinct passions, abilities...and a story. We have a story, a past, that can become a platform for others to see God’s goodness and grace.

Today, you will get the chance to read how God used someone’s past to make a difference.

The last childhood memory I have of my biological dad was when I was three years old. My mom remarried when I was five, and I was raised by her and a very abusive stepdad. We were not Christians, we never attended church, and we were extremely poor.

Our family experienced continued personal abuse at the hand of my stepdad. The older I got, the more often I had to defend myself, my sisters, and my mom from my abusive stepdad. As time went on, he became more violent with me, and to this day, I honestly believe he would have killed me had I not made the decision to move out of my childhood home when I was sixteen years old.

I started to work two jobs to support myself. I had even planned on quitting

high school so that I could continue to work those jobs. Things changed rather quickly after I moved out. My older sister located our biological dad. I met him a couple of months after I turned seventeen, and he talked me into moving to Nebraska to live with him so that I could finish my senior year of high school.

That year, I started attending church with dad and heard about Jesus for the first time. We attended every Sunday and participated in many Sunday afternoon potlucks. I also went to the church’s youth gatherings on a regular basis. Even though the trajectory of my life had changed, I continued to struggle with the abuse I grew up with, especially the soundtracks in my head created by my stepdad. Soundtracks like, “You are good for nothing,” and,

“You will never amount to anything.” I believe those words would have come to pass had it not been for the decision I made to follow Jesus when I was seventeen years old, on Sunday, December 5, 1981.

I turned eighteen just before I graduated from high school in 1982. On the day of my graduation ceremony, I put everything I owned in the trunk of my car and moved to Southern California, where my uncle, my dad’s brother, had promised me a job that would help pay my way through college. I received \$300 in graduation gifts, and this paid for my gas to move and get started as an adult.

In California, I attended my uncle’s church. This is where I got the chance to meet my future beautiful bride, Becky, who was the senior pastor’s daughter. Since my uncle and her dad were best friends, Becky grew up around my cousins, aunts, uncles, and my grandmother. In fact, Becky’s grandmother and my grandmother were best friends. Becky still remembers the day when my grandmother told me that she didn’t know my sisters or me, but that she prayed for us every day. I attribute my journey with Jesus to a grandmother I didn’t know but who prayed for me every day.

Becky and I ended up dating for three years, were engaged for one, and

then got married in 1985. There are so many incredible testimonies of how my decision to follow Jesus changed everything. Honestly, I still struggle with some of my childhood trauma, especially the negative soundtracks in my head. But when I look back at my life today, it is obvious that the Lord heard my grandmother’s prayers, and he has been with me every step of the way.

I have two amazing adult children who married great spouses, and so far, they have given me six incredible grandchildren. Best of all, they love and are serving Jesus. I have been in ministry as a pastor since I was twenty-one years old. Currently, I am in the role of Care Pastor at Journey, and I could not be more fulfilled.

As I look back, there have certainly been a lot of highs and lows in my life, but I wouldn’t change a thing. Who would have thought that my dysfunctional childhood, where I never felt love, was simply equipping me to have a passion for caring for hurting people...giving me a heart to make sure everyone I serve in my family and church feels loved? I now count it all joy, including my pain. With the Lord’s help, that pain was turned into purpose, and I can honestly say my cup is truly full!

— Russ

DAY 3

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

In what ways are you able to relate to Russ? How has God used your story to equip you with the tools to make a difference with your life?

Corrie Ten Boom, a Christian from Holland who helped lots of Jews escape the Nazis during World War II, writes, "This is what the past is for! Every experience God gives us, every person he puts in our lives is the perfect preparation for the future that only He can see." What experiences and people has God put in your life to prepare you for something greater?

If someone else asked you how they can make a difference with their life, what are some steps you would encourage them to take?

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord. "They are plans for good and not disaster, to give you a

**FUTURE
AND A
HOPE."**

JEREMIAH 29:11 (NLT)

DAY 4

PRACTICE

There are many ways you can participate with God and make a difference with your life. Here are a couple ways we would love to encourage you to pursue.

Join a Serve Team

Serve Teams are what we call the different areas where our amazing members serve. We have a variety of ways in which you can serve based on your passions, abilities, and availability. These teams include Kids, Students, Welcome, Tech, Facilities, Admin, and more! The great thing is that you don't have to make any long-term commitments. Try an area out a couple times to see if it's a fit. We trust that eventually you will find a team where you feel like you are making a difference.

Scan the QR code to view our serving opportunities or visit JourneyColorado.com/Serve



Invite Someone to Journey

Invite someone in your life that you would love to see take a next step with Jesus to one of our Journey experiences. It could be a worship service, an event, or even a Journey group.

At Journey, we want to have a culture of inviting. It was a massive part of how Jesus engaged people, and it needs to be the same for us as his followers. We wholeheartedly believe that having the courage to invite someone you care about can be a next step God uses not only to change them, but also to change you.

Begin to pray for one person. Invite them to an upcoming Journey environment, and then simply trust God's work in their life.

Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

MARK 10:43-45

DAY 5 REFLECT

Spend some time today to reflect on everything you read and wrote down this past week. Then take a moment and answer the following questions.

As you look back on the week, what stories, Scriptures, ideas, and/or thoughts stood out to you the most? Why?

If you could condense everything God impressed on you this week to one main idea, what would it be?

All of us have a step God is asking us to take when it comes to making a difference with this one life that God has given. What is that step you sense God is wanting you to start? Why?

Write out a prayer you personally want to pray based on the reflections of the past week.

All of us on the Journey team are thankful you have taken the past five weeks to journey with us through the Life Series. Through all the thoughts shared, stories told, Scriptures given, questions asked, and steps provided, we hope you have been encouraged and challenged.

Our heart at Journey has always been to help people take their next step with Jesus. We deeply believe that whether we are 8 or 88 years old, we all have a next step to take. The step may be small, a huge leap of faith, or seem like a crawl, but either way...

...we all have a next step to take.

In Deuteronomy 2, we find Moses leading the Israelites as they have been wandering around in the wilderness for years.

Wandering. No plan, no purpose, no direction, just going through the motions.

Then God says to Moses, *“You have been wandering around in this hill country long enough; turn to the north.”* (Deuteronomy 2:2 NLT)

You have wandered and circled this mountain long enough.

But you were made for more than this.

Now turn and set your feet in the right direction.

Maybe some of you can connect with this. You have been wandering through life. No plan, no purpose, just going through the motions...**but you know you were made for more.**

Almost 1,500 years later, Jesus is speaking to a group of people who were seeking direction and purpose, and he tells them:

“I have come that they may have **life**, and have it to the **full**.” (John 10:10)

Jesus gives them a direction. Jesus gives us a direction.

Not to turn north, but to turn to him.

And that’s where we want to point you as we do one last exercise in this guide. **Take some time to go through the Next Steps Plan in the pages ahead.** It’s an exercise to help you celebrate steps you have taken with Jesus. It also serves as a guide to help you think through the next steps you sense God is nudging you to undergo.

You might not have a clear picture of a step you need to take. Or perhaps you can come up with a laundry list of items immediately. No matter what, don’t be discouraged.

Just take away one thing.

Take one step.

And see what God does.

*Show me the right path, O Lord;
point out the road for me to follow.
Lead me by your truth and teach me,
for you are the God who saves me.
All day long I put my hope in you.
Remember, O Lord, your compassion and unfailing love,
which you have shown from long ages past.
Do not remember the rebellious sins of my youth.
Remember me in the light of your unfailing love,
for you are merciful, O Lord.*

*The Lord is good and does what is right;
he shows the proper path to those who go astray.
He leads the humble in doing right,
teaching them his way.
The Lord leads with unfailing love and faithfulness
all who keep his covenant and obey his demands.*

Psalm 25:4-10 (NLT)

NEXT STEPS PLAN

Before we jump into the Next Steps Plan, there are a few things we need to remember.

First, God’s love for us is not based on our efforts, but solely on his grace and mercy. There is nothing we can do to make him love us more. This is good news!

Second, our relationship with Jesus is and will always be based on his unconditional love for us shown through the cross and resurrection. It’s not conditional where we have to fear that taking the wrong step or not enough steps will jeopardize the relationship.

Third, the Next Steps Plan is ultimately not a list of steps to check off, but a path. It’s meant to serve as a guide to help you grow in your relationship with Jesus.

Lastly, there is a responsibility we have to live this one life God has given us with intention. Coming up with a plan that is grounded in the Bible and directed by the Holy Spirit keeps us focused on living intentionally.

Now...let’s put together a Next Steps Plan.

The Plan

The Life Series guide has provided weekly suggested practices. Take inventory of these practices, and check off any steps you have taken or are currently taking.

- Started a relationship with Jesus
- Got baptized
- Read my Bible regularly
- Developed a consistent prayer life
- Stepped into a rhythm of confessing my sin to God and others
- Sought out professional counseling to break free from struggles
- Joined a group
- Participated in Crash Course
- Served on a Journey Serve Team
- Invited someone to a Journey environment

What key next steps have you taken in your relationship with Jesus that you celebrate? They can be from the list of suggested practices included or not included in this guide. They can also be recent or from years ago.

Now, take a moment and list some steps you believe are “next” to take. They can be steps you didn’t check off, or other steps you know are important to take. They could potentially revolve around forgiving someone in your life, having an important conversation, making a career decision, pursuing a mentor, or starting a healthy habit. List as many that come to mind.

From your next steps list, write down the three most important steps you sense God is nudging you to take.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Of those steps choose one. (You can come back to the other two later.)

The next step I am going to focus on is _____ .

- What practical ways can you implement this next step in your life? For example, it could be to download the Bible app, schedule a meeting, fill out a registration form, or any other practical step that is necessary.

- Is there a timeframe or a deadline you can put in place?

- Who are some trusted people in your life that you can share your plan with, who can help encourage you along the way?

Once you take that step, what are you going to do to celebrate? Celebrating is something God values. Different ways you can celebrate could be going to dinner at your favorite restaurant, taking a weekend vacation to the mountains, enjoying your favorite drink, or sitting down and watching your favorite movie. Whatever it is, have a plan to celebrate!

Finally, choose the next step and repeat the plan.

APPENDIX

How Do I Start Reading the Bible?

Starting to read the Bible is a great first step in learning how to follow Jesus. It can also be intimidating and confusing. One of the main questions we get from people who want to begin reading the Bible is, “*Where do I start?*”

We suggest beginning with the Book of Mark. Mark was a follower of Jesus and an eyewitness to his ministry and teachings. This is a great place to start your Bible reading journey.

1 Open to the Table of Contents and look for the book of “Mark”. It’s the second book in the New Testament section.

2 Starting with chapter 1, read one chapter a day for 16 days. There are 16 chapters in the book of Mark.

3 Each day you read, ask these three questions. Write down your answers if you prefer.

1. What story, verses, or words jumped out to you the most?
2. What connection do you see between the verses you read and your life?
3. How can you apply what you learned in your life today?

Daily Checklist

Day 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Pray	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Mark 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal
Day 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Pray	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Mark 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal
Day 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Pray	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Mark 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal
Day 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Pray	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Mark 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal
Day 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Pray	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Mark 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal
Day 6	<input type="checkbox"/> Pray	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Mark 6	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal
Day 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Pray	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Mark 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal
Day 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Pray	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Mark 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal
Day 9	<input type="checkbox"/> Pray	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Mark 9	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal
Day 10	<input type="checkbox"/> Pray	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Mark 10	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal
Day 11	<input type="checkbox"/> Pray	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Mark 11	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal
Day 12	<input type="checkbox"/> Pray	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Mark 12	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal
Day 13	<input type="checkbox"/> Pray	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Mark 13	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal
Day 14	<input type="checkbox"/> Pray	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Mark 14	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal
Day 15	<input type="checkbox"/> Pray	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Mark 15	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal
Day 16	<input type="checkbox"/> Pray	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Mark 16	<input type="checkbox"/> Journal

How Do I Start Praying?

Praying is simply having a conversation with God. But sometimes it might not feel that simple. Those closest to Jesus, his disciples, even asked him to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1). So we should never feel ashamed to ask the same question.

There are many different ways we can learn to grow in our prayer lives. One thing we like to use at Journey is a framework based on the acrostic PRAY. It’s not a formula, and it’s not the only way to pray. In the end, it’s a guide to help pave the way for a growing prayerful life.

The **PRAY** guide goes as follows:

P **Praise** Start by praising God. Praise God by speaking to his character (his greatness, faithfulness, goodness, etc.) and by sharing with him the things in your life you are thankful for (your health, provisions, relationships, etc.). This will get your heart in the right posture as you begin connecting with God in prayer.

R **Repent** Next, move into a short time of repentance. Repentance is the authentic activity of saying, “I’m sorry” to God and allowing him to forgive you. It is giving the space for God to reveal any sinful thoughts or actions in your life, admitting that you were in the wrong, and then committing to change for the better.

A **Ask** We all have things on our minds and hearts that we would like to ask God for. Use this time to share with God any specific prayer requests that you have. Write them down for future reference to see how God answered your prayers.

Y **Yield** The final step is to spend some time yielding to God. This simply means to stop and quiet your heart to hear from God. It is trusting your specific prayer requests to God, allowing him to answer them on his time and in his way. This is probably the most difficult step in prayer, but it’s worth the effort to make it a habit.

Using this as a guide, set aside a few minutes each day to **PRAY**. As you get more comfortable, feel free to spend more time praying. Hopefully, as time goes, praying will become less mechanical and more conversational. But just like any good habit or skill, we start somewhere.



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