

A STUDY  
FROM JERSEY CHURCH

# *Renewed*

LIVING  
WITH PEACE



1

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# RENEWED

Living with Peace

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### APRIL 12

DEVOTIONALS 03

GROUP GUIDE 09

*REALITY*

*Romans 5:1;8:1, 15-17*

### APRIL 19

DEVOTIONALS 16

GROUP GUIDE 22

*REDEEMED*

*Ephesians 1:7-10*

### APRIL 26

DEVOTIONALS 28

GROUP GUIDE 34

*RIGHTEOUS*

*Romans 3:21-26*

### MAY 3

DEVOTIONALS 40

GROUP GUIDE 47

*READ*

*2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12*



# **DEVOTIONALS**

## **LIVING IN YOUR NEW REALITY**

## DAY 1

Colossians 1:21-22

*Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds as expressed in your evil actions. But now he has reconciled you by his physical body through his death, to present you holy, faultless, and blameless before him.*

There is a “once” and a “now” in your story. Once, there was distance between you and God - not just behavioral distance, but a hostility that ran deep into the fabric of your thinking. Your mind was not neutral territory; it was enemy-occupied ground. But notice what Paul says: God has reconciled you. Past tense. Accomplished fact. Through the physical, bloody, costly death of Jesus, the war is over.

What strikes me most about this passage is the word “present.” God doesn’t just forgive you and leave you where you are. He presents you - like a bride walking down the aisle, like a masterpiece unveiled in a gallery - holy, faultless, and blameless before Him. This is not what you will become someday if you try hard enough. This is what you already are in Christ. The work is finished. Your standing before God is not a future hope dependent on your performance; it is a present reality secured by His grace. When your mind replays your failures this week, remember: there is a “once,” and there is a “now.” You live in the “now.”

- **What “once” thoughts - old narratives about who you were or what you’ve done - are you still allowing to define you, even though God says there is a “now”?**
- **Ask God to help you see yourself as He sees you - holy, faultless, and blameless because of Christ. Pray that the truth of your reconciliation would sink deeper than the lies of your past.**

## DAY 2

Ephesians 2:13–14

*But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who made both groups one and tore down the dividing wall of hostility.*

Peace is not something you manufacture through better circumstances or more disciplined thinking. Peace is a Person, and His name is Jesus. Paul tells us that Christ Himself is our peace - not just the source of it, but the very substance of it. He didn't negotiate a truce; He tore down the wall. The hostility between us and God, the barrier our sin erected, has been demolished by the blood of Christ.

Here's what this means on a practical level: when anxiety whispers that you are far from God, when shame insists that the distance is too great, you can answer with the gospel. You have been brought near. Not by your efforts, not by your emotional state, not by how well you prayed this morning - but by the blood of Christ. That blood speaks a better word than all your fears combined. The wall is down. You are not far away anymore. You are near, and you are held, and the peace you long for is not a feeling you must chase - it is a Person you already possess.

- **In what areas of your life are you still trying to “get close” to God, as if the wall were still standing? How would it change your prayers and your daily posture if you truly believed you are already near?**
- **Thank Jesus for being your peace and for tearing down every barrier between you and the Father. Ask Him to quiet the voices that tell you that you are far away, and to help you rest in the nearness He has secured.**

## DAY 3

1 John 3:1

*See what great love the Father has given us that we should be called God's children - and we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it didn't know him.*

John doesn't just say we are called children of God, as if it were an honorary title or a metaphor. He says, "and we are!" This is not aspirational language. This is identity language. You are not trying to become a child of God. You are not on probation, waiting to see if you'll make the cut. If you are in Christ, you are - right now, today - a son or daughter of the King.

The world doesn't understand this. It doesn't know what to do with people who are loved not because of what they produce, but because of whose they are. The world's economy runs on performance, on image management, on earning your place. But the Father's love doesn't work that way. It is given, not earned. It is lavish, not conditional. And it makes you His child - fully, finally, forever. When fear-based thinking creeps in this week, when you start to feel like an orphan scrambling for security, come back to this verse. See what great love the Father has given you. You are His. That is not up for debate.

- **Do you live more like an orphan trying to earn approval, or like a child who knows they are loved? What would change in your daily life if you truly believed you are a beloved son or daughter of God?**
- **Ask the Father to reveal to you the depth of His love - not as an idea, but as a felt reality. Pray that the Spirit of adoption would bear witness with your spirit that you are His child, and that this truth would reshape how you face the day.**

## DAY 4

Hebrews 10:19–22

*Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus - by a new and living way he has opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh) - and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water.*

The writer of Hebrews invites us to do something that would have been unthinkable in the old covenant: draw near to God with boldness. Not timidity. Not fear. Boldness. Why? Because Jesus has opened a new and living way through His own flesh. The curtain that once separated sinful humanity from a holy God has been torn in two. Access has been granted - not because we are worthy, but because He is.

Notice the phrase “full assurance of faith.” This is not presumption; it is confidence rooted in what Christ has done. And notice what has been dealt with: an evil conscience. The writer knows that one of the greatest barriers to drawing near to God is not external - it is internal. It is the voice of condemnation that says, “You can’t come to Him. Not after what you’ve done. Not with the thoughts you’ve had.” But the gospel silences that voice. Your conscience has been sprinkled clean. You are invited - no, commanded - to come boldly into the presence of the King, not because your record is clean, but because His blood has made you clean.

- **What keeps you from drawing near to God with boldness? Is it shame? Fear? A sense that you need to “clean up” first? How does the truth that Jesus has already opened the way change your approach to prayer and worship?**
- **Thank Jesus for opening the way into the Father’s presence through His blood. Ask Him to silence the condemning voices that keep you at a distance, and to give you the courage to draw near with full assurance of faith.**

## DAY 5

2 Corinthians 5:17

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!*

This is one of the most quoted verses in Scripture, and for good reason - it is breathtaking in its scope. If you are in Christ, you are not a refurbished version of your old self. You are not the same person with a few upgrades. You are a new creation. The old has passed away. It is gone. Finished. And the new has come - not someday, not eventually, but now.

Here's the challenge: our minds often lag behind our new reality. We know the truth in our heads, but our thoughts still replay the old scripts. We still identify with the old patterns, the old shame, the old fears. But Paul is saying: that is not who you are anymore. The person you were before Christ - that person is dead. You are new. And the work of renewing your mind is learning to think in alignment with who you already are. It is not about becoming new; it is about believing you are new and living from that truth. This week, when the old thoughts come - when regret and shame and fear knock on the door - answer them with this: I am a new creation. The old has passed away. I live in the new.

- **What “old” thoughts or identities are you still carrying around, even though God says they have passed away? What would it look like to live today as the new creation you already are in Christ?**
- **Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see yourself as God sees you - a new creation, fully alive in Christ. Pray for the courage to let go of old identities and to walk in the freedom of who you have become through the gospel.**

# REALITY

ROMANS 5:1;8:1, 15-17

APRIL 12, 2026

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## MAIN POINT

In Christ we are no longer defined by condemnation or fear. We are justified and at peace with God and called to live from that new spiritual reality.

## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.*

Have you ever noticed that when the world around you gets quiet, your mind often gets louder? Without external noise and distractions, our thoughts often run rampant. Regrets replay. Conversations are reimagined. Fear shows up uninvited and shame reminds us of things we wish we could forget. Even if we seek to avoid those thoughts, they tend to surface on their own.

As believers, we may question why our thoughts continue to feel so tangled. Shouldn't we be experiencing peace in Christ? Today, we are considering a crucial truth. Before our minds can be renewed, we must understand the new reality we live in.

- **Where does your mind go when the world around you gets quiet?**
- **How do you typically respond to these thoughts? Why?**

## UNDERSTANDING

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

**> Have a volunteer read Romans 5:1 and 8:1, 15-17.**

Paul begins Romans 5 with a statement of reassurance about peace. Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This is foundational. For those in Christ, peace is our position, whether we feel it or not. The conflict between God and our sinfulness has been resolved. We no longer seek to earn God's approval or fix our standing with Him. We have been made right with him completely through Christ. Anxious and shame-filled thoughts are often rooted in the belief that something remains wrong between us and God. Romans 5:1 reminds us of the truth that if we are in Christ, we are at peace with God, no matter our current thoughts or feelings.

- **What would change if you firmly believed you had peace with God every day?**
- **What level of anxiety do you experience when you think of how God views you? How might you return to the truth to remind yourself of your reality in Christ?**

In Romans 8:1, we are again reminded there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Paul didn't say there is less condemnation or delayed condemnation. There is no condemnation. Condemnation fuels shame, distorts the mind, and whispers that we are defined by our worst moments. Although we might not always feel it, condemnation no longer exists for those in Christ.

- **Where do you wrestle with feelings of condemnation?**

Living with a renewed mind begins with agreeing with what God says is true. There is a difference between condemnation and conviction. Conviction is from the Holy Spirit and is meant to refine us as a means of sanctification. Christians can and should receive conviction while rejecting condemnation. As our minds are renewed by the Word, we can reject condemnation and respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

- **How would you describe the difference between condemnation and conviction? How might you answer condemning thoughts with the truth of Scripture?**

In verse 15, Paul shifted from what we are free from, to what we are freed into. We have not received a spirit of fear, but the Spirit of adoption, as children. We are no longer slaves but we are sons and daughters who belong to the King. Often, fear-based thinking springs from forgetting our true identity. Knowing you are a child of the King changes how you see hardship, discipline, and uncertainty. Those in Christ are heirs with Him who do not face life alone.

- **Do your thoughts more often reflect fear and insecurity or belonging and security? What contributes to this pattern?**
- **Read Mark 1:11. What does this mean for those in Christ?**

The Spirit reshapes our minds as we fill them with the truth of God's Word. He reminds you that you are loved, secure, and held in God's hand. A renewed mind learns to listen to His voice over the voices of the world or even the thoughts in our own heads.

- **How does regular time with God prepare us to listen to the voice of the Spirit over the voices of the world?**

## APPLICATION

*Offer the following action steps for the application of God's Word.*

- **How do the passages we've studied today challenge your typical patterns of thinking?**
- **How can we remind one another of the truth of God's Word when we find it hard to believe?**
- **How does trusting in our own freedom in Christ free us to tell others about Him?**

## PRAY

Thank God for the reconciliation He established through Jesus so that you now live as a child of the King. Ask God to reveal the places you have not lived in the light of your reality in Christ and ask Him to help you do that each day.

**ROMANS 5:1**

5:1 Commentators differ over whether chap. 5 belongs thematically to the first major section of Romans or to the Christian life section, chaps. 6–8. It has connections to both. Paul in 5:1–11 uses “we” and “us” as he explains the benefits that those who are justified possess. Justification is just one of many ways of speaking about salvation. In this division, Paul showed how justification involves reconciliation. Justification speaks to our sound legal status before God while reconciliation describes our repaired relationship to God in more personal terms. We were at war with God, relationally alienated from him, but he reconciled us by his Son (v. 10). We have peace in some manuscripts can be read as “let us grasp the fact that we have peace.” This peace is an objective, settled fact because Jesus has accomplished it once and for all.

**ROMANS 8:1-17**

8:1 There is no condemnation for believers because they are not under the law (6:14), and they have been released from the law (7:6). They can now serve God in the “newness of the Spirit” (7:6).

8:2–3 The believer’s freedom comes from Jesus’s incarnation and his work as the sin offering and by the Holy Spirit’s operation in providing life. The Second Person of the Trinity, the Son, took on humanity. He did not cease to be God but took on a real human nature (without sin) and became the perfect offering. He fulfilled the law’s demands in his life and in his death and broke sin’s power in a human body on the cross.

8:4 Christians can now live a new way of love. “Love ... is the fulfillment of the law” (13:10). They can live freely in keeping with the Spirit.

8:5 Paul described the two kinds of people: two different kinds of existence or two “mind-sets.”

8:6 The outcome of the two ways of thinking are explained: death versus life and peace.

8:7–8 Unregenerate people (Gk en sarki; lit “in the flesh”) are hostile to God and unable to submit to God’s law because they lack God’s Spirit, which makes submission possible.

8:9–11 Christians are in a new realm, for the Spirit indwells them. The Spirit’s presence is the mark of Christ’s ownership. The Christian’s physical body will still die because of sin’s effects (unless the Lord returns before death; 1Co 15:50-57). The pledge and promise of the Spirit is that he will raise us as he did Jesus. Now the Spirit provides life and righteousness.

8:12–13 Freedom brings an obligation. If a person lives to the fallen nature, death is his destiny. The Christian is empowered by the Holy Spirit to stop doing the sinful deeds of the body. He can mortify the flesh and its activities, and he lives.

8:14 The leading of God’s Spirit is his providential sanctification (Ps 23:3). It is common to all believers, it is constant, and it will bring the believer to glory (Rm 8:17). The leading of the Spirit is not mystical direction or ecstasy. It is the Spirit’s empowerment for mortification of fleshly desires (v. 13).

8:15–16 The Holy Spirit is not an agent of bondage but is instead the means of our adoption into God’s family. By the Spirit we have a consciousness that God is our Father. It is the mark of a Christian to cry out to his Father in prayer. The Spirit also gives us assurance of our status and therefore of our salvation. Abba is an Aramaic word meaning “father.” Jesus used it in prayer to God the Father (Mk 14:36).

8:17 All God's children are his heirs and coheirs with Christ. We are joined to him in suffering but also in our future destiny. As he is in glory (1Tm 3:16; Heb 1:3; 2:7, 9–10) so we will be glorified with him.

# **DEVOTIONALS**

## **REDEEMED**

## DAY 1

Romans 8:1-2

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.*

There is a particular kind of freedom that comes not from escaping consequences, but from knowing they have already been absorbed by someone else. Paul's declaration here is absolute: no condemnation. Not "less condemnation." Not "conditional pardon pending good behavior." No condemnation. The verdict has been rendered, and it is final.

Yet how many of us live as though the trial is still ongoing? We rehearse our failures as though presenting evidence against ourselves. We carry guilt as though the sentence has not yet been passed. We approach God with the posture of defendants awaiting judgment rather than children who have been declared free. The law of the Spirit has set us free - past tense, accomplished fact. The ransom has been paid. The breach has been resolved. What remains is not to earn our freedom but to live in the reality of it. When condemnation whispers today, remember: that voice no longer has legal standing. Christ has already answered every charge.

- **What specific guilt or shame do you continue to rehearse, even though God has declared you free from condemnation?**
- **Ask God to help you distinguish between the conviction of the Holy Spirit (which leads to repentance and restoration) and the condemnation of the enemy (which leads only to shame and paralysis). Thank Him that in Christ, condemnation has no claim on you.**

## DAY 2

Colossians 2:13-14

*And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive with him and forgave us all our trespasses. He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it away by nailing it to the cross.*

In the ancient world, when a debt was paid in full, the certificate documenting that debt was not simply filed away or marked “satisfied.” It was publicly canceled - often by driving a nail through it and posting it where everyone could see. The debt was not hidden or minimized. It was displayed as fully and finally resolved.

This is the image Paul uses to describe what Jesus did on the cross. Every sin, every failure, every obligation we could never fulfill - all of it was written down, itemized, legally binding. And then Jesus took that certificate and nailed it to the cross. Not to shame us, but to cancel the debt. Not to remind us of what we owe, but to declare that the account is closed. The lavish grace of God does not ignore our sin; it absorbs it. It does not pretend the debt was small; it pays it in full and then tears up the receipt. When you are tempted today to pull out the old ledger and start tallying what you owe, remember: the certificate has been nailed to the cross. There is nothing left to pay.

- **What would change in your relationship with God if you truly believed the certificate of your debt has been permanently destroyed?**
- **Confess any ways you have been living as though the debt is still outstanding. Ask God to help you receive the fullness of what He accomplished on the cross - not just forgiveness, but the complete cancellation of everything that stood against you.**

## DAY 3

### Psalm 103:10-12

*He has not dealt with us as our sins deserve or repaid us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his faithful love toward those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*

The psalmist reaches for the largest measurements he can imagine to describe the scope of God's grace. Not a few feet. Not a reasonable distance. As high as the heavens are above the earth. As far as the east is from the west - a distance that has no end, no point of convergence. This is not the language of someone describing a modest gift. This is the language of someone overwhelmed by abundance.

And yet we are so practiced at minimizing grace. We believe God has forgiven us, but we qualify it: "He's forgiven me, but I still have to live with the consequences." "He's forgiven me, but I'm sure He's disappointed." "He's forgiven me, but I need to make up for it somehow." The psalmist would say: you are shrinking what God has made infinite. He has not dealt with you as your sins deserve. He has removed your transgressions as far as the east is from the west. There is no asterisk. There is no fine print. The grace is as lavish as the distance is vast. When you are tempted to measure God's grace by your own sense of what you deserve, remember: His measurements are not yours. His love is higher. His forgiveness is farther. His grace is richer than you can imagine.

- **In what areas of your life are you still trying to "make up for" what God has already fully forgiven?**
- **Thank God for the immeasurable scope of His grace. Ask Him to expand your capacity to receive what He has so lavishly given, and to help you stop shrinking His grace to fit your own sense of what seems reasonable.**

## DAY 4

Romans 8:28-30

*We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.*

Notice the progression Paul traces here. It is not a sequence of possibilities or probabilities. It is a chain of certainties. Those He foreknew, He predestined. Those He predestined, He called. Those He called, He justified. Those He justified, He glorified. Every link is secure. Every step is accomplished. Paul even uses the past tense for glorification - something that, from our perspective, has not yet happened. But from God's perspective, it is so certain that it can be spoken of as already done.

This is the anchor Paul offers when life feels chaotic and purposeless. You are not drifting. You are not outside of God's plan, trying to find your way in. You have been called according to His purpose. And that purpose is not vague or uncertain. It is specific: you are being conformed to the image of His Son. Every circumstance, every trial, every confusing season is being worked into that purpose. Not because everything that happens is good, but because God is working all things together for good - for those who are His, for those who are included in His plan. When anxiety whispers that your life is random or that God has lost track of you, return to this passage. You are known. You are called. You are being conformed. And you will be glorified. The plan is in motion, and it cannot fail.

- **What current circumstance in your life feels chaotic or purposeless? How might God be using it to conform you to the image of Christ?**
- **Ask God to help you trust His purpose even when you cannot see it clearly. Pray for the faith to believe that He is working all things together for your good and His glory, even in the midst of confusion or difficulty.**

## DAY 5

1 Peter 1:18-19

*For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb.*

Peter wants his readers to understand the currency of their redemption. Not silver. Not gold. Not any perishable thing that could be earned, saved, or accumulated. The price was blood - the precious blood of Christ. The word precious here carries the sense of something beyond valuation, something whose worth cannot be calculated because it is utterly unique.

This tells us two things. First, it tells us the seriousness of our condition. God did not look at our bondage and offer a casual solution. He sent His Son. The cross was not God doing the bare minimum. It was God going to the uttermost. Second, it tells us the value God places on us. You were not redeemed with something expendable. You were redeemed with something irreplaceable. The life of the Son of God was the price paid for your freedom. When you are tempted to believe that you are worthless, that your life doesn't matter, that God barely tolerates you - remember the price. The value of something is determined by what someone is willing to pay for it. And God paid everything.

- **How does knowing the specific price of your redemption - the blood of Christ - change the way you see yourself and your worth before God?**
- **Thank God for the costliness of your redemption. Ask Him to help you live today in the freedom that was purchased at such a price, and to see yourself through the lens of what He was willing to pay rather than through the lens of your failures or feelings.**

# REDEEMED

EPHESIANS 1:7-10

APRIL 19, 2026

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## MAIN POINT

Because we have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus and forgiven by the riches of God's grace, believers can live with a renewed mind anchored in the peace found in God's redemptive plan.

## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.*

Over the years there have been numerous instances of data breaches where personal information was compromised. These can lead to identity theft, accounts accessed by strangers, money taken illegally, and other personal information stolen. When this happens, people often feel violated and unsettled. You must go through the process of changing passwords and resetting your security, and yet, you may still feel uneasy or anxious. The breach may have been resolved but the anxiety lingers on because you know a repeat offense is possible.

Spiritually, many believers live this same way. The breach has been dealt with and the price for sin has been paid. Our forgiveness is secured and yet anxiety, shame, and regret still linger. Today we are studying a passage where Paul wrote to anchor believers in the deeper reality that we are not only forgiven, but also redeemed.

- **When have you experienced some kind of data breach and how did it make you feel?**
- **When your mind gets quiet, do your thoughts reflect security or spiritual anxiety?**

## UNDERSTANDING

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

**> Have a volunteer read Ephesians 1:7-10.**

Paul didn't say redemption is a possibility. He clearly declared that believers have redemption through His blood. Redemption means one has been bought back, rescued at a cost, or released from bondage. Jesus did not provide a temporary or partial fix of your sin problem. A renewed mind begins by agreeing with what God has already accomplished.

- **What is the difference in living in attempt to be redeemed and living in the truth that you have already been redeemed?**

Going on, Paul tied redemption to the riches of God's grace. The work of Jesus on the cross wasn't God doing the bare minimum, but an abundant display of His mercy. We often believe in grace for others more readily than for ourselves. When we have been forgiven but continue to rehearse our failures as if they define us, we miss Paul's point.

- **Where are you limiting the grace God has already declared abundantly in your life?**

As your mind is renewed, you must learn to replace a scarcity mentality with gospel abundance. The more you grasp the lavish grace of God, the more peace grows in your heart and mind.

- **What changes would you experience if you were focused on God's generosity over your ideas of His disappointment?**

When our lives feel chaotic or meaningless, we don't have to let our thoughts spiral into anxiety. Our redemption in Christ securely anchors us in purpose as we trust that God is working out His complete plan for our good and His glory as Paul wrote in verse 10.

- **How does trusting God's plan of redemption impact your level of anxiety?**

If you are in Christ, you are redeemed and forgiven in God's unfolding plan. A renewed mind acknowledges that sin has been fully forgiven and peace comes from knowing you have been covered by grace. A renewed mind regularly revisits redemption and reminds oneself that your past doesn't define you. You are defined by the finished work of Jesus on the cross and His redemptive grace.

- **How are you prone to look back at things Christ has already redeemed?**
  
- **What daily practices can help anchor your thoughts in His redemption rather than your regret?**

## APPLICATION

*Offer the following action steps for the application of God's Word.*

- **What truth from this passage can you speak back to your anxious or condemning thoughts?**
- **How does understanding God's redemption change the way you view your past mistakes or failures?**
- **Who in your life needs to hear that redemption is available through Christ?**
- **What is one practical way that you can remember your life is part of God's bigger redemptive plan?**

## PRAY

Praise the Lord for His redemptive plan. Thank Him that His grace is sufficient and that He lavishes it on you abundantly. Confess the ways that you have tried to hoard grace and commit to receiving what He wants to give you freely.

**EPHESIANS 1:7-10**

1:6-8. Paul moved from the benefits we receive through God's plan of salvation to the benefit God receives: the praise of His glorious grace. When we realize how magnificently God has displayed His grace, we can't help but praise Him. Our inclusion in God's gracious plan (He favored us) occurs only in living union with Christ (in the Beloved), God's Son. Because of His grace, the Father's love for His Son Jesus has overflowed toward us ("in love," 1:4). Redemption referred to the payment of a price (ransom) in order to set slaves free. Paul taught that the death of Christ was the price paid to free sinners from their bondage to sin. The basis of redemption is the riches of His grace, God's limitless mercy. One result of redemption is forgiveness. Punishment is no longer due to we who deserve it, because Another was punished in our place. The term lavish means more than enough. God's rich grace toward undeserving sinners has overflowed like a mighty waterfall. Thus redemption brings to us who receive it the wisdom and understanding we need to live right.

1:9-12. God's plan is more inclusive than the salvation of individuals. He will bring everything together in the Messiah. Everything will be recognized as submitting to the authority of Jesus Christ. Nothing and no one will escape. Paul was not teaching universalism here, that every person will eventually be saved. Rather, one day every part of the universe will be renewed and brought into subjection to its true Lord. Through redemption and adoption into God's family, Christians have become His special possession. Paul repeated terms he had already used to stress the settled nature of God's plan. As we have seen, God's choice of persons for adoption brings Him praise (1:5). In the same way, His redemption of sinners and making them His inheritance brings praise to His glory.



# **DEVOTIONALS**

## **RIGHTEOUSNESS IN CHRIST**

## DAY 1

Isaiah 64:6

*All of us have become like something unclean, and all our righteous acts are like a polluted garment; all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities carry us away like the wind.*

The prophet Isaiah gives us one of Scripture's most uncomfortable diagnoses: even our best efforts at righteousness are like filthy rags before a holy God. This isn't meant to discourage us into despair, but to free us from the exhausting illusion that we can clean ourselves up enough to stand before God on our own merit. The spiritual audit Isaiah describes here reveals what we often try to hide - that the gap between our best and God's holiness is not something we can bridge through moral effort or religious performance.

But here's the grace hidden in this hard truth: once we stop trying to present our own righteousness, we become ready to receive His. The person who finally admits their best isn't good enough is the person who can finally rest in the righteousness that comes as a gift. Isaiah's words prepare us for Paul's "but now" - the moment when God steps in with a solution we could never manufacture ourselves. Your failures haven't disqualified you. They've positioned you to receive what only grace can give.

- **What "righteous acts" have you been unconsciously relying on to feel acceptable to God? What would it look like to stop presenting those and start receiving Christ's righteousness instead?**
- **Ask God to show you where you're still trying to earn what He's freely offering. Thank Him that His standard is high enough to require a Savior and His love is deep enough to provide one.**

## DAY 2

Philippians 3:8-9

*More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them as dung, so that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ—the righteousness from God based on faith.*

Paul had every credential the religious world valued—the right lineage, the right education, the right zeal. If anyone could have stood before God on the basis of their own spiritual resume, it was Paul. And yet he calls all of it “dung” compared to the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ. This isn’t false humility or religious posturing. This is a man who has done the math and realized that even his most impressive achievements add up to exactly zero when it comes to standing righteous before a holy God.

What Paul discovered - and what transforms anxious performers into peaceful receivers - is that there are two kinds of righteousness, and only one of them matters eternally. There’s the righteousness we try to build through our own effort, which always leaves us wondering if we’ve done enough. And there’s the righteousness that comes from God through faith, which is complete the moment we receive it. The peace you’re searching for isn’t found by adding more to your spiritual resume. It’s found by tearing up the resume entirely and resting in what Christ has already accomplished.

- **What spiritual credentials or moral achievements are you still tempted to lean on for your sense of acceptance before God? What would it feel like to consider them “loss” compared to knowing Christ?**
- **Thank God for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ. Ask Him to help you release whatever you’re still clinging to as a source of righteousness apart from Him.**

## DAY 3

### 2 Corinthians 5:21

*He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

This verse contains what theologians call “the great exchange” - the heart of the gospel in a single sentence. Jesus, who never sinned, took our sin upon Himself. We, who have never been righteous, receive His righteousness as our own. It’s not a partial trade or a temporary arrangement. It’s a complete, permanent exchange that happens the moment we place our faith in Christ. Your sin - all of it, past, present, and future - was placed on Him at the cross. His righteousness - perfect, complete, and permanent - has been placed on you through faith.

This is why the spiritual audit anxiety so many believers carry makes no sense in light of the gospel. The audit has already been run - not on your record, but on Christ’s. And He passed perfectly. When God looks at you as a believer, He doesn’t see your failures and shortcomings. He sees the righteousness of His Son. This isn’t legal fiction or divine pretending. This is the reality purchased by the blood of Jesus and declared over everyone who believes. You don’t have to wonder if you’re good enough. In Christ, God has made you the righteousness of God.

- **How does understanding “the great exchange” change the way you think about your standing before God? What anxious questions does this truth answer?**
- **How does understanding “the great exchange” change the way you think about your standing before God? What anxious questions does this truth answer?**

## DAY 4

Titus 3:4-7

*But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, he saved us - not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy - through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. He poured out his Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior so that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.*

Paul's words to Titus cut through every form of spiritual performance anxiety with surgical precision: God saved us "not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy." Notice the past tense. This isn't something we're working toward or trying to maintain. This is something God has already accomplished. The justification Paul describes isn't probationary or conditional on our continued performance. It's a completed work, given by grace, that makes us heirs with the hope of eternal life.

The kindness and love of God appeared not because we finally got our act together, but while we were still falling short. He didn't wait for us to clean up our record before He stepped in. He stepped in precisely because our record could never be cleaned up by our own effort. And having justified us freely by His grace, He poured out His Spirit abundantly - not as a reward for good behavior, but as the seal and guarantee of what He has already declared over us. You are not working your way into God's family. You have been adopted into it by grace, and nothing you do or fail to do can change your status as an heir.

- **Where are you still living as though your salvation depends on works of righteousness you must perform? How would your daily life change if you truly believed you've been justified by grace alone?**
- **Thank God for His kindness and love that appeared while you were still a sinner. Ask Him to help you live today as an heir, not as someone still trying to earn their inheritance.**

## DAY 5

Hebrews 10:10-14

*By this will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time. Every priest stands day after day ministering and offering the same sacrifices time after time, which can never take away sins. But this man, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. He is now waiting until his enemies are made his footstool. For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are sanctified.*

The writer of Hebrews paints a vivid contrast: the Old Testament priests stood day after day, offering the same sacrifices over and over, because those sacrifices could never fully accomplish what they symbolized. But Jesus, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down. The work is finished. The sacrifice is complete. There is nothing left to add, nothing left to repeat, nothing left for you to contribute to make it more effective.

You are not in a perpetual cycle of trying to re-earn God's approval through repeated spiritual performances. You have been perfected forever - not by your ongoing effort, but by His one offering. The anxiety that whispers "did I do enough?" is answered by the finished work of Christ. He sat down because there was nothing left to do. And you can rest because His rest is your rest. The spiritual audit is over. The verdict is in. And the Judge Himself has declared you righteous through the blood of His Son.

- **What does it mean for your daily walk with God that Jesus "sat down" after offering one sacrifice for sins forever? How does this truth speak to your areas of spiritual anxiety?**
- **Thank Jesus that His sacrifice was enough - once for all time. Ask God to help you live in the rest that comes from knowing the work is finished, and that your standing before Him is secure not because of what you do, but because of what Christ has done.**

# RIGHTEOUS

ROMANS 3:21-26

APRIL 26, 2026

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## MAIN POINT

Peace in the mind grows when we understand our righteousness comes from Christ, not from our own efforts.

## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.*

Every year during tax season people feel anxiety over having the details of their financial records under scrutiny by the government. Even if they have done their taxes correctly, there is the lingering idea that they may have missed something and end up being penalized for their mistakes. Unfortunately, many people live their spiritual lives this same way. Feeling like God is constantly auditing their lives causes stress and anxiety. Every mistake feels like a mark against them and every failure feels like they don't measure up.

When the mind gets quiet, this spiritual audit has us wondering "Did I do enough?", "Am I good enough?", and "Does God still approve of me?" Romans 3 speaks directly into these fears. The peace of God doesn't come from maintaining a perfect record. It comes from receiving righteousness that God Himself provides.

- **What emotions do you deal with during tax season?**
- **Why is the thought of being audited stressful?**
- **When your mind gets quiet, what do you tend to focus on?**

## UNDERSTANDING

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

**> Have a volunteer read Romans 3:21-26.**

Think about something you've received that you didn't have to work for, pay for, or earn in any way. That is the same imagery Paul used to describe the righteousness of God. The free gift we receive through faith in Jesus is life-changing and powerful, yet it is not a result of anything we can possibly do. Paul describes it as a gift for a reason.

- **Salvation is a free gift. How does this impact your daily life?**

The manifestation of the righteousness of God in us is brought to light apart from the law—not works that go along with the Old Testament law. Paul addressed a common ideology in his day—the belief that faith in Jesus needed to be combined with certain works or law following. This ideology put Gentiles at a disadvantage. Yet no moral tradition or religious law is an exception to the gift of salvation by faith through grace. The path to salvation is the same for all.

- **What are some ways people try to earn God's favor?**
- **How do you tend to think about righteousness: something you need to earn, or something you can only receive as a gift from God?**

The two stand in opposition. Righteousness that can be earned does not exist in part or in whole. The religious leaders of Paul's day had become experts in preaching the importance of working for righteousness. As a result, people had become wrongly burdened and weighed down by a way of life that only fed the sin

of pride as people worked to earn God's favor by their own efforts. This mindset conflicts with the truth of righteousness being a gift that anyone can receive from the Father.

- **How does remembering that all people come to God in the same way change how you view others?**

We receive the gift of righteousness through faith in Jesus because it is God's great love for us that sent Jesus to the cross. Through the blood of Jesus, we are forgiven. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are empowered to live in righteousness. That is the very good news of the gospel that Paul wanted the believers in Rome, and us, to fully understand.

- **Why do you need the reminder that the Holy Spirit empowers believers to live in righteousness?**

It is crucial to recognize that we have no righteousness apart from Jesus Christ. We are all sinners by nature. This gift we have been given is ours to accept because, in God's great love, He offers the redemption we desperately need. Sin still exists and yet redemption abounds for those who accept the gift of righteousness by faith. It is one great evidence of God's unlimited, powerful love.

- **What fears or regrets might dissipate if you truly believe the cross settles your standing with God?**
- **What practical step can help remind you daily that your righteousness comes from Christ alone?**

**APPLICATION**

*Offer the following action steps for the application of God's Word.*

- **What thoughts most threaten your peace with God (e.g., guilt, fear, regret)?**
  
- **What is one lie your mind sometimes believes about your standing with God that Romans 3:21-26 clearly refutes?**
  
- **In what situation have you been trying to prove your worth instead of resting in His grace?**
  
- **What spiritual habit can you put into practice to keep the truth from today's study at the forefront of your mind?**

**PRAY**

Thank the Lord for His great love and gift of righteousness. Confess the ways you get caught up in trying to earn God's favor by your own works. Commit to trusting in Him and living in the fullness of His love.

**ROMANS 3:21-26**

3:21. Few passages in Scripture are as rich in theology and as important for understanding salvation as this portion of Romans 3. Paul had established that all people have sinned and that the law is inadequate for salvation. What then? What is the hope? Paul's answer would have surprised many people. Apart from the law God has revealed His righteousness. Last week's lesson explained the law's function: it reveals sin (see Rom. 3:20). The law diagnoses the spiritual disease of sin. This lesson shows God provides the healing apart from the law. Though the law is inadequate to save a person, it does testify to God's means of salvation. The Old Testament serves a valuable role in our faith.

3:22. The phrase in verse 21 "attested by the Law and the Prophets" is parenthetical, and Paul returned to his point in this verse with the words that is. He clarified that God's righteousness is through faith in Jesus Christ. Righteousness is first and foremost an attribute of God, but it is also an activity of God. He is in the business of making us righteous. God desires fellowship with us, and in order to enjoy that fellowship He makes believers right. Faith is the key to salvation. The offer of salvation is available by faith, as to all who believe indicates. The word for believe and the word for "faith" in the Greek language are from the same root. To "believe in" is to "have faith in" something or someone. The English word believe is inadequate to convey the force of the Greek word. Faith involves intellectual assent as well as a thorough commitment of a believer's life.

3:23. Paul repeated the need for salvation. People of every race and gender need to be saved because all have sinned. God's righteousness is pure. Our sin renders us completely incapable of reaching Him. The task of righteousness, of accessing the glory of God, is completely beyond our ability. Glory is a difficult word to pin down but essentially means

“the full weight” of God’s attributes. Glory is God’s splendor. It defines, in part, who God is. In Jewish thought Adam and Eve possessed God’s glory before they sinned. Now, through Jesus Christ, God is restoring His glory in His people.

3:24. This verse clarifies the result that “all who believe” (v. 22) enjoy. Justified means “to be declared right with God.” The context is judicial; the scene is a courtroom. The divine judge declares all who believe to be innocent. Freely translates a Greek word meaning “gift” and underscores the difference between the attempt at salvation by works and the free offer of God. This offer of salvation is the pinnacle of His grace. Nothing surpasses it, and nothing is more important than for us to experience it. Being declared right with God comes only through His grace. Knowing we have this gift relieves our fear and grants us peace. The means by which God grants justification is through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

3:25-26. Propitiation is a term borrowed from the sacrificial system and the temple. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest would sprinkle blood over the ark to atone for the nation. By this rite sins were deemed expiated; people became reconciled to God and God’s wrath was averted. But human sins could not literally be atoned for by the death of animals. “For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Heb. 10:4). Thus Jesus came to accomplish what no priest slaying an animal could ever hope to accomplish: full satisfaction of God’s requirements for atonement. God the Father “made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).



# **DEVOTIONALS**

**READ**

## DAY 1

Psalm 119:105

*Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path.*

There is a particular kind of darkness that comes not from the absence of light in the room, but from the absence of clarity in the mind. You know what the next step in front of you is - but the path beyond that? Unclear. The future is shadowed, the way forward uncertain, and no amount of staring into the distance seems to help. Most of us have stood in that place more than once. And it is precisely into that kind of darkness that the psalmist speaks.

Notice that he does not say God's Word is a floodlight that illuminates everything at once - the whole road, all the way to the destination. He says it is a lamp for his feet and a light for his path. In the ancient world, a lamp held at foot level did not light up the horizon. It showed you the next step. And then the next. That is how God's Word guides us - not by giving us a complete map of our future, but by giving us enough light for the step directly in front of us. The invitation is to trust the Lamp rather than demanding the full blueprint.

This is one of the most practical truths about Scripture that a believer can internalize. When life feels uncertain and the way forward is unclear, the first question is not "what should I do?" - it is "what does the Word say?" Not because the Bible contains a direct answer to every specific situation, but because consistent time in Scripture builds the kind of wisdom, discernment, and trust in God that shapes every decision we make. The light accumulates. The more we walk by it, the more familiar its guidance becomes.

- **Where in your life right now do you most need the light of God's Word? What specific area of uncertainty or confusion could you bring to Scripture this week?**
- **Lord, I confess that I often try to see the whole road before I take the next step. Teach me to trust Your Word as the lamp for my feet - enough light for today, enough guidance for right now. Give me the discipline to open it daily and the faith to follow where it leads. Amen.**

## DAY 2

### Psalm 19:7-8

*The instruction of the LORD is perfect, renewing one's life; the testimony of the LORD is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise. The precepts of the LORD are right, making the heart glad; the command of the LORD is radiant, making the eyes light up.*

David wrote Psalm 19 in two movements - first marveling at what creation declares about God, then turning his attention to something he considers even more remarkable: the Word God has spoken. The heavens declare God's glory, David says. But the law of the Lord is perfect. Creation tells us God exists and is powerful. Scripture tells us who He is and how to know Him. For David, the Word was not a burden to carry but a treasure to celebrate - and the language he reaches for to describe it is almost breathless in its enthusiasm.

Look at the accumulation of what he says Scripture does: it renews life, makes the inexperienced wise, makes the heart glad, and causes the eyes to light up. These are not the descriptors of a document that people dread opening. These are the descriptors of something genuinely life-giving. And the reason David can speak this way is that he has experienced it firsthand. He is not describing Scripture theoretically - he is describing what it has actually done in him. The Word has renewed him when he was depleted. It has guided him when he was lost. It has given him joy when circumstances offered none.

The challenge for many of us is that we have not yet accumulated enough firsthand experience with Scripture to speak about it this way. We know it is important. We believe it is true. But we have not yet developed the kind of consistent, intimate engagement with it that produces the transformation David is describing. That transformation is available to every believer - but it requires showing up. Day after day. With open hands and an expectant heart.

- **When have you experienced Scripture renewing your life or making your heart glad in a specific, personal way? What made that encounter with the Word different from routine reading?**

- **Father, give me the kind of love for Your Word that David had - not a dutiful obligation but a genuine delight. Open my eyes to see the treasure that is already in my hands. Renew my life through Your instruction, and make my heart glad in Your truth today. Amen.**

## **DAY 3**

Joshua 1:8

*This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to meditate on it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do.*

Joshua has just been handed one of the most daunting assignments in the history of Israel. Moses - the man who led the nation out of Egypt, who spoke face to face with God on Sinai, who carried the law down from the mountain in his own hands - is dead. And now God looks at Joshua and says: you're next. Lead two million people into a land inhabited by fortified cities and formidable armies. Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged. And do not let this book of instruction depart from your mouth.

The instructions God gives Joshua in this moment are striking. He does not give him a military strategy. He does not promise him superior weapons or an easier enemy. He gives him a Word and tells him to meditate on it day and night. The Hebrew word for meditate here carries the idea of murmuring - speaking the words quietly to yourself, turning them over and over in your mind the way you might turn a stone in your hand. Not a quick scan of the text, but a slow, deliberate, sustained engagement that allows the Word to move from the page to the mind to the heart to the mouth.

The promise attached to this practice is significant: then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do. Not prosperity in the shallow sense of ease and comfort, but the deep flourishing that comes from a life aligned with the Word and will of God. Joshua's success in the conquest of Canaan was not ultimately a military achievement - it was a spiritual one. He was a man of the Word, and the Word directed every step. The same principle holds for every believer facing their own daunting assignment: the path to fruitfulness runs through the Word.

- **What does it look like practically to meditate on Scripture rather than simply read it? What would change about your relationship with the Bible if you moved from reading to meditating?**
- **Lord, I want Your Word to shape not just my thoughts but my instincts - to be so deeply internalized that it directs my steps even when I am not consciously thinking about it. Teach me to meditate, not just to read. Let Your Word be always on my lips and always in my heart. Amen.**

## **DAY 4**

James 1:22-25

*But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like someone looking at his own face in a mirror. For he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of person he was. But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who acts — this person will be blessed in what he does.*

James is nothing if not direct. He does not ease into this point or soften its edges. If you hear the Word but do not do it, you are deceiving yourself. The deception James has in mind is the subtle, comfortable illusion that familiarity with Scripture is the same as formation by it. It is entirely possible to know the Bible well - to be able to cite passages, to follow along easily in a sermon, to feel spiritually engaged in a Sunday morning service - and still walk away unchanged. Hearing is not the finish line. Obedience is.

The mirror illustration James uses is both funny and convicting. You look in the mirror, see something that needs attention - a smudge, a hair out of place - and then walk away and immediately forget what you saw. Nothing changes, because looking was not followed by action. James says this is what it looks like to hear the Word without doing it. The Word shows us something true about ourselves - something that needs to change, something to believe more deeply, something to put into practice - and we nod along in agreement and then walk out the door and carry on exactly as before.

The alternative James describes is the person who looks intently into the Word and perseveres in it. Not a glance but a gaze. Not a visit but a sustained, ongoing engagement that leads to action. This is what 2 Timothy calls training in righteousness - not a single corrective encounter with the Word but a long, patient, consistent practice of hearing and obeying that gradually shapes the whole of a person's life. The blessing James promises is not for the hearer. It is for the doer.

- **Is there an area of your life where you have been a hearer of the Word but not yet a doer? What would obedience look like in that specific area this week?**
- **Father, forgive me for the times I have walked away from Your Word unchanged - for hearing without acting, for nodding without obeying. Give me not just a love for reading Your Word but the courage and will to do what it says. Make me a doer today. Amen.**

## **DAY 5**

Romans 10:17

*So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.*

This is one of the simplest verses in all of Paul's writing, and one of the most consequential. Faith comes from hearing. And hearing comes through the Word of Christ. In its original context, Paul is explaining how the gospel reaches people who have never heard it - someone must go and proclaim it, and faith is the response to that proclamation. But the principle is broader than the initial moment of salvation. Faith, in the ongoing sense - the daily, sustained trust in God that carries a believer through every season - is fed and strengthened by the same source: the Word.

Think about what this means practically. When your faith feels thin, when trust comes hard, when doubt crowds in and certainty feels distant - the prescription Paul points to is not trying harder to believe. It is exposure to the Word. Faith is not manufactured by

willpower. It is grown by hearing. Every time you open Scripture and read the promises of God, every time you sit under the preaching of the Word, every time you meditate on a passage until it moves from your head to your heart - you are feeding the very thing that is depleted. You are giving faith the nourishment it needs to grow.

This is the beautiful, practical logic that runs beneath everything we have considered this week. God's Word is God-breathed - it carries His authority and life. It is living and active - it cuts through confusion and reaches the heart. It teaches, rebukes, corrects, and trains. It is a lamp, a treasure, a guide, a mirror. And it is the very ground in which faith takes root and grows. As you prepare to gather with your church this Sunday and open these passages together, come with expectant ears. Come ready to hear. Because faith - your faith - comes from what is heard.

- **How consistently are you feeding your faith through regular engagement with God's Word? What is one practical change you could make this week to increase your time in Scripture?**
  
- **Lord, grow my faith through Your Word. When I am struggling to believe, remind me to open Scripture rather than retreat into my own anxious thoughts. Let my faith be strong because my hearing is steady, and let my hearing be steady because I keep returning to the Word You have so graciously given. Amen.**

# READ (BIBLE SUNDAY)

2 TIMOTHY 3:15-17; HEBREWS 4:12

MAY 3, 2026

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## MAIN POINT

God's Word is living and active and practical for daily life. Christians should recognize the importance of Scripture and be committed to knowing it and obeying it.

## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.*

### • **Who is the best listener you know? Why?**

Listening is a skill that some people do very well, but most people could do much better. Because communication is vital in any relationship, there are some skills we should intentionally work on to improve that involve both talking and listening. Poor communication can be an issue in our interpersonal relationships, and it can also affect our relationship with the Lord.

God uses His Word to speak to His people. The wise believer knows God's Word, listens to God's Word, and obeys God's Word. God gave us Scripture to guide us in relationship with Him. The Bible is full of instructions, warnings, and advice for daily living—available to all who choose to know it. Yet we all choose how we will approach God's Word and whether we will allow ourselves to be formed by the truths He communicates therein.

### • **What ways do you struggle to listen to the Lord?**

### • **Why would you say it is important to read the Bible regularly?**

## UNDERSTANDING

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

**> Have a volunteer read 2 Timothy 3:15-17 and Hebrews 4:12.**

One of the primary ways God speaks to us is through Scripture. Though written thousands of years ago, every word still matters and is relevant today. In describing the Word as “living and active,” the writer of Hebrews stressed how applicable it still is. Think about the times you’ve read God’s Word and immediately saw how it related to a specific situation you were facing right then. That’s how it continues to be “living” even all these years later.

God’s Word is also active. The word translated as “active” carries the implication of being effective or powerful. When we listen to God communicate to us through His Word and apply it to our lives, He equips us to live victoriously in the battles we face. The illustration of a sword speaks volumes. A two-edged sword is one that is sharp on every side. It can cut in any and every direction. That is what the Word of God does for believers. It slices through the junk of the world and the confusion of our lives to get to the heart of the matter.

- **Describe a time when God’s Word came to you as living and active. When have you felt like a sermon or message was written with you in mind?**

The God-breathed written words of Scripture are living, active, and profitable to those who hear and live by them. “God-breathed” means the Bible was inspired by Almighty God and He breathed it out to be recorded and followed by His children. Those who recorded the words of Scripture were not people who were simply being inspired or motivated to write something. There are many who have written works that seem inspired

or even anointed, but Scripture is different because every book of the Bible was literally breathed out by God. That is what sets it apart to be profitable as everything we need.

- **How does thinking about the Bible as breathed out by God affect the way you feel about it?**

These verses list several specific ways Scripture profits the person who studies and applies it. The first is by teaching. God's Word is truth, teaching us what we need to know both about God and humanity. In a world that constantly promotes lies and false teachings about God and people, we need to focus on truth and its application in our lives. When you aren't sure who or what to believe, it is profitable to recognize that Scripture alone is infallible and inerrant.

- **What are some lies of the world about God or people?**

Since no one is perfect aside from Jesus, we all need correction. It is easy to let wrong thinking or a bad attitude slip into your life. So, the way we accept correction is important. God's Word is the measuring stick that shows us where we fall short and what we need to do to get on the right path.

- **How has Scripture shown where to make a change?**

According to 2 Timothy, every believer is complete and equipped for the life God has for them. When you know and obey the Word, then you will reap the benefits that Scripture describes. This includes being complete as a Christian and equipped for the life that God has for you. Paul's emphasis on being complete and equipped reminds us that God's plans are bigger and more eternal in significance than

ours. When we surrender our plans to God's plans, He will do far greater with our lives than we could ever imagine.

- **How is God using Scripture to equip you for His purposes?**

## **APPLICATION**

*Offer the following action steps for the application of God's Word.*

- **Who will you talk to about God's Word this week? What is one thing you've learned that you will share with someone else?**
- **What new godly habit will you commit to?**
- **How will you memorize 2 Timothy 3:16-17?**

## **PRAY**

Thank the Lord for giving you His Word to teach and guide your life. Confess the ways you have neglected Scripture over the years and commit to devoting yourself to the Bible going forward.

**2 TIMOTHY 3:15-17**

3:15 The phrase give you wisdom for salvation means that Scripture could lead Timothy to the “knowledge of the truth” (2:25; 1Tm 2:4). Scripture has the power to bring people to faith.

3:16–17 Inspired means “breathed out by God.” Because Scripture comes from God himself, it is profitable in many ways, ultimately leading us to righteousness, maturity, and service. All Scripture refers to the OT, but by implication to the writings of the NT as well (1 Tm 5:18; 2 Pt 3:15–16).

**HEBREWS 4:12**

4:1–16 The author now drew the readers into examining their own personal faith as the Word of God shines its penetrating light upon the heart. Faithfulness begins with a proper internal disposition. The living and effective Word of God probes into the deepest part of a person like a surgeon’s knife to discern his innermost thoughts and intentions. God’s Word reveals to him both his ingrained wickedness and the saving way of faith. At that critical point, when the divine judge reveals himself through his Word, the hearer must make every effort to enter the divine rest by believing.

If the result of unbelief and disobedience to God is exclusion from divine rest, then the result of true faith and faithfulness to God is entrance into everlasting divine rest. Such a rest was not available through the ministry of Joshua in the OT since it was reserved for the ministry of the NT “Joshua.” The name Jesus is a Greek derivative of the Hebrew name Joshua, which means “the Lord is salvation.” The ministry of Joshua did not bring people Sabbath rest. Only through the superior ministry of Jesus the Son of God may a person enter divine rest. Only through the great high priest, who has come from heaven and identified with human beings in their weakness, may we approach the throne of grace with boldness.



