



COLLEGE FRESHMAN

Discipleship Essentials Pathway

Discipleship Essentials Pathways

NEW VISION

DISCIPLESHIP ESSENTIALS PATHWAY

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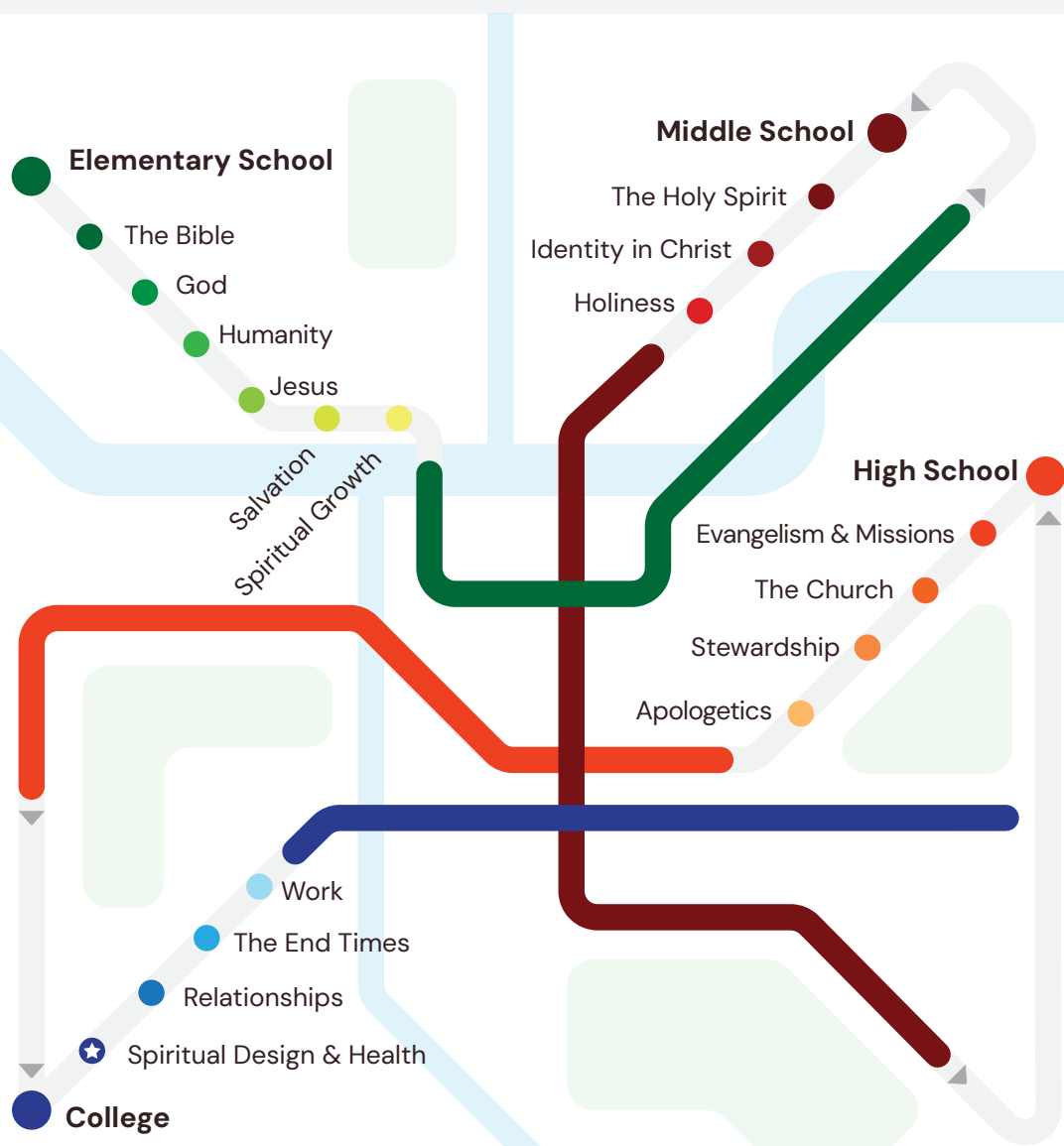
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Resting in Faith

System Map

LEGEND

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School
- College



Discipleship Essentials Pathway

Detailed Overview

Elementary Schoolers

- Kindergarten: The Bible
- First Grade: God
- Second Grade: Humanity
- Third Grade: Jesus
- Fourth Grade: Salvation
- Fifth Grade: Spiritual Growth

Middle Schoolers

- Sixth Grade: The Holy Spirit
- Seventh Grade: Identity in Christ
- Eighth Grade: Holiness

High Schoolers

- Ninth Grade: Evangelism and Missions
- Tenth Grade: The Church
- Eleventh Grade: Stewardship
- Twelfth Grade: Apologetics

College Students

- Freshman: Spiritual Design & Health
- Sophomore: Relationships
- Junior: The End Times
- Senior: Work

Introduction

Note: You may be a young adult going through this Pathway on your own. That is awesome! If you would like, continue through the Pathway on your own; but you may also consider doing so with a small group leader, friend, or mentor. This is also an opportunity to invite someone in your family to study with you. Feel free to reach out to the College or Young Adult Team for help or guidance as you walk through your own discipleship journey.

To be a follower of Jesus means that we are to lead others to follow Jesus too. Contrary to the spirit of the famous “The Buck Stops Here” placard on President Harry S. Truman’s desk, Jesus’ desk placard might have said something like “You’re One Link in a Long Chain.” To be a *disciple* of Jesus is to be a *discipler* of others, just as Jesus told us in what is known as the Great Commission:

Then Jesus came to them. He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end.”
– Matthew 28:18–20

Often, when we think of people discipling to fulfill the Great Commission, we think of men and women discipling other men and women at coffee shops, a collegiate minister discipling students at the student union, or perhaps a church staff discipling its members on the church campus. All of that is true, of course, but one of the most important places for discipleship is our homes. Whether you are a young adult planning on discipling others in the future, or you are a parent, grandparent, family member, or mentor, your calling is discipleship. As a Christian, God has called you to disciple others. This is the central point of what God told His people Israel through Moses:

“The commandments I give you today must be in your hearts. Make sure your children learn them. Talk about them when you are at home. Talk about them when you walk along the road. Speak about them when you go to bed. And speak about them when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:6–7). This is what we want to help you with through the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway*.

How to Use the Discipleship Pathway

The *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* is built on a framework of seventeen modules to be used one per year. This book includes Module 14: Spiritual Design and Health and is designed for freshman-age college students or young adults. Modules 1–6 are to be used for kindergartners through fifth graders. Modules 7–9 are to be used with sixth through eighth graders. Modules 10–13 are to be used with ninth through twelfth graders. And finally, Modules 14–17 are to be used with college-aged young adults. Throughout the seventeen modules, you will have the opportunity to engage with the core doctrines of the Christian faith and many practical aspects of following Jesus.

Each module contains twelve lessons, one for each month beginning in August and ending in July of the following year. Here’s how to use the *Pathway*:

The First Week of August

STEP ONE

Choose a day and time when it is easiest to block out about fifteen minutes for a weekly devotion. You can do this alone, with family, friends, or a small group. Of course, if you already have a regular devotion time, that would be the best time to choose.

STEP TWO

During your family devotion time in the first week of August, open the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* book to August’s content.

STEP THREE

Begin by reading the catechism to your family. A catechism is a method of instruction based on a question-and-answer format that has been used throughout church history. The catechism provides the main idea that your family will focus on for the month. You may notice definitions or further definitions provided. These are provided to help you learn these important terms.

STEP FOUR

Next, read the Bible story, either from the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* book or from a Bible. The CSB is used in Modules 14 through 17.

STEP FIVE

Now, it is time to read the devotional.

STEP SIX

Next, find the memory verse and prayer prompt for week 1. These will provide your focus for the rest of the week. Begin by reading the memory verse a few times, saying as much as you can by memory as you do. Then, close your devotional time in prayer, using the prompt as a guideline for what to pray about. Of course, you can pray about more than that, but at least pray about the topic provided.

That's it! You're done.

You will notice that each lesson concludes with a next step, a challenging thought, or reflection questions. These are for you to use during the week and on the rest of the devotion days of the month.

During the week, look for opportunities to talk about the main ideas of the catechism, Bible story, and devotional that you covered. The goal is to keep God at the top of your mind and deep down in your heart. Also, continue working on memorizing the memory verse and praying for the topic of the prayer prompt.

The Second, Third, and Fourth Weeks of August

STEP ONE

During your devotion time in the second, third, and fourth weeks of the month, go over the catechism again, perhaps memorizing it along with the memory verses.

STEP TWO

You do not need to read the Bible story or devotion again, but of course, you can if you want.

STEP THREE

Spend more time working on the memory verses.

STEP FOUR

Close your time in prayer, once again using the prayer prompt as your baseline.

The First Week of September

Once the calendar flips to September, it's time to move on to the next lesson, repeating the process. Then, once July arrives, it will be time to get Module 15 to begin using that next August.

A FEW FINAL TIPS

If you have multiple people going through different modules, that's awesome! Go through the lesson with the youngest student in the first week, and move to the second youngest the next week, and so on. Review together as needed, and turn your prayer prompts into a prayer list!

If you miss a devotion one week, that's okay! Give yourself grace and pick back up next week. Consistency over the long term is the key.

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If you use the *Pathway* in a group setting, try to encourage questions as a part of your time as you grow more comfortable. Dialogue is always better than monologue when it comes to discipleship.

If you are starting your journey using the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* with this Module, you might consider using what you have missed during Christmas break, Spring break, or the summer as a short-term intensive, covering one lesson per day instead of per month, and forgoing memorizing the memory verses. Of course, there's also nothing wrong with starting right where you are and moving forward without ever looking back!

If you already have a devotional plan, or if you find one along the way, feel free to couple it with the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway*. Do both on the same day or choose a second day to stretch your discipleship efforts further throughout the week.

The *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* doesn't provide you with all the answers about our faith, but it should give you a solid framework from which you can explore additional questions as they come up.

The Gospel Message

In the beginning, God created the universe (Genesis 1:1). He formed light and darkness, land and sea, fish and birds, plants and animals. But on the final day of creation, He saved His best work for last: He made people. God created us in His image (Genesis 1:27) and designed us to love, trust, worship, and follow Him.

However, God didn't force us to love Him; He gave us a choice. We can choose to trust and obey Him or we can go our own way. When we choose to go our own way instead of God's way, that's called *sin*, and sin breaks our relationship with God. The Bible tells us: "Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory" (Romans 3:23). The bad news is that our sin separates us from God, and we cannot fix this problem on our own. We need help.

The good news is that God, in His great love, made a way for us to be forgiven through Jesus. God sent Jesus, His one and only Son, to live a perfect life and take the punishment for our sins by dying on the cross (John 3:6, 2 Corinthians 5:21). Even though he physically stopped breathing and died, He didn't stay dead. On the third day, He rose again, defeating sin and death so we could have new and eternal life in Him. Why is this important? Jesus did for us what we could never do for ourselves – pay the price for our own sin.

Through Jesus' death and resurrection, a restored relationship with God has been offered to us. To accept this offer, we turn away from sin and choose to put our faith in Jesus as both Savior and Lord. The Bible tells us: "If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9). To break that down, We trust Jesus as Savior, because His death in our place is the only way we can be forgiven for our sins. We trust and follow Jesus as Lord, meaning we submit to His ultimate authority and allow Him to lead our lives. When we trust Jesus for our salvation and submit to His authority as Lord, we receive forgiveness and are saved from the power and punishment of our sins.

If you're ready to follow Jesus, here's what you need to do:

01

Admit that you are a sinner in need of forgiveness.

02

Believe that Jesus is God's Son, who died for your sins and rose again.

03

Confess Jesus as your Savior and Lord, choosing to follow Him daily.

The following is an example of what to pray if you are ready to put your faith and trust in Jesus as your Savior and Lord today. The words themselves aren't special. It's your heart behind them if you believe it.

Dear God,

I know that You created me in Your image to love, trust, and follow You. But I confess that I have sinned against You. I have chosen my own way instead of Yours, and my sins have separated me from You. And I know that I cannot fix this problem on my own.

Thank You for loving me so much that You sent Your Son Jesus to die on the cross for my sins. I believe that He paid my punishment, and I believe that He rose from the dead, defeating sin and death so that I could have new life in Him.

Today, I turn away from my sin and I surrender my life to You. I ask for Your forgiveness and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. Please change my heart, help me to follow You daily, and give me the strength to live for You.

Thank You for Your love and the gift of salvation.

In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

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If you just prayed that prayer for the first time, don't keep it to yourself, share it with someone! Tell a parent, guardian, pastor, or trusted Christian friend. They would love to celebrate with you, encourage you, and help you to take your next steps in following Jesus.

Designed with a Purpose

What is my purpose?

As can be seen in the world, different people choose to do different things with their lives. However, for believers, even though it might look different from person to person, the ultimate purpose of life is to work to give glory to God and to lead others to Him through love.

Bible Story

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It’s no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden.

¹⁵ No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

— Matthew 5:13–16

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

In today's culture, there is significant emphasis on job and career choices, often accompanied by the weight of expectations. Given the value of money in our economy, this focus is understandable—it's simply how the world operates.

The key questions that arise are: How will I earn money? How can I secure a job that elevates my status? How can I support myself? How can I prepare for a future family? It's normal to struggle with these questions, but we need to approach them differently than society does. Life is about more than just a big paycheck or fame. While these aspirations aren't inherently wrong, chasing them can distract us from finding our true purpose.

The encouraging news is that God's wisdom offers guidance for these questions and many more! As followers of Jesus, our ultimate goals are defined by Him, not the world. In Matthew 5, Jesus tells us that our purpose is to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. In His time, salt was essential for preserving and flavoring food. So, being salt means standing up for

what is right, preserving God's truth, and living in a way that enriches the world around us. Being light entails showing Christ's love, sharing the gospel, and reflecting His character in a dark world.

When we think about our future, we must be courageous in embracing our God-given gifts and making decisions based on those strengths, rather than solely on personal desires. If we conform to worldly values and compromise our Christ-like character, we risk becoming ineffective in our mission. However, if we align our work with how God has empowered us and seek to glorify His name above our own, we remain committed to a mission with eternal significance.

Throughout Scripture, it is clear that we were created to bring glory to God. This principle should guide us as we consider what to do with our lives. Ask yourself: what can you do with the gifts, talents, and desires God has given you that will bring Him the most glory? That is the ultimate goal of life.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

So, whether you eat or drink,
or whatever you do, do
everything for the glory of God.
— 1 Corinthians 10:31

Prayer

Ask God for His help to bring Him
glory with whatever gifts He has
given you.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

One and the same Spirit is
active in all these, distributing
to each person as he wills.
— 1 Corinthians 12:11

Prayer

Thank God for giving you the exact
skills, talents, and gifts He wanted
you to have.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

But as it is, God has arranged each
one of the parts in the body just as
he wanted. — 1 Corinthians 12:18

Prayer

Ask God to help you use your
skills, talents, and gifts to build up
the church.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

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.
— Romans 8:28–29

Prayer

Ask God to help you remember
that your core identity is not based
on your gifts, but rather on being
shaped in Christ's image.



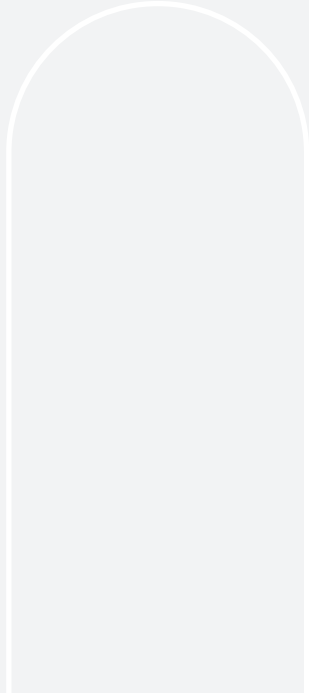
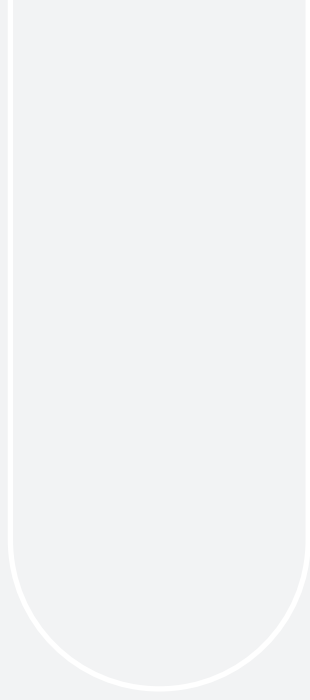
Next Steps

How has God gifted you? List at least ten areas/things in which you are gifted below.

How have you used these areas to bring glory to God?

Notes:

AUGUST



Knowing God's Will

How can I know God's will for my life?

When people refer to God's will, they might mean one of two things. First, they might mean God's *revealed* will, which is His desire for the world and humanity as stated in Scripture. Second, they might mean God's *hidden* will, which includes the parts of life that are not directly addressed in God's Word, but can be found by living in alignment with the parts of God's will that have been revealed.



Further Inspection

We do not always know God's will for our lives; we don't have a clear picture of God's future plans for us. However, we do know how we should live day by day. We should walk with God in daily obedience.

Bible Story

¹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship. ² Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

— Romans 12:1–2

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

Where should I work? Who should I marry? What school should I attend? These are all questions believers might ask as they seek God's will for their lives. As important and as common as these questions are, however, God doesn't always provide direct answers. Sometimes we must trust that God is working out a plan for our lives, even when we cannot see exactly what that might look like.

With this in mind, the best way to discover how to live according to God's will in these areas is by seeking to understand and abide by His revealed will. God's revealed will include things that He has laid out in Scripture about how we are to live. Some examples include the commands to honor our parents or that sex is reserved for marriage only. Although in our society, these requests can sometimes seem "outdated" to us, God invites believers to trust that He knows what is best. He is inviting His people to believe that because He created us, the commands given to us in

His word can function as a sort of owner's manual for us. He made us, so only He can know what is best for us.

This is what Romans 12:1–2 calls attention to. When believers offer their lives as a sacrifice before God rather than just doing the things this world says are best, transformation begins to happen. In this process of transformation, we begin to look more like Jesus as the Holy Spirit that lives in us begins to renew our minds. Although we may not always understand why God asks us to live and behave in certain ways, as believers, we trust that His commands are for our good. As we do this, we become more and more capable of testing and approving what God's will is for our lives. Although it may not be clearly laid out for us in His word, seeking to know Jesus and look more like Him changes our desires over time. As this happens and we continually seek His face in prayer, we are able to live within His will for us.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

Rejoice always, pray constantly,
give thanks in everything; for this
is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
— 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

Prayer

Ask God to help you be joyful,
pray regularly, and overflow
with gratitude.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

For God has not called us to
impurity but to live in holiness.
— 1 Thessalonians 4:7

Prayer

Ask God to help you live in holiness
in all areas of your life.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

A person's heart plans his way, but
the Lord determines his steps.
— Proverbs 16:9

Prayer

Ask God to help you follow Him and
His commands even above your
heart's desires.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

Those who know your name
trust in you because you have
not abandoned those who seek
you, Lord. — Psalm 9:10

Prayer

Thank God that He wants you to
know His will and that He is always
present with you to point you to it.



Reflection Questions

01 Why do we desire to know God's plans for our lives?

02 Why is it hard to trust God with our future?

03 Why *should* we trust God with our future?

Notes:

SEPTEMBER

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Gifted to Encourage

What are spiritual gifts?

Spiritual gifts are abilities or talents given uniquely to each believer by the Holy Spirit to help build up and encourage the church. These gifts include teaching, service, wisdom, and prophecy. It is every believer's responsibility and privilege to use their spiritual gifts to serve the body of believers.

Bible Story

¹ Now concerning spiritual gifts: brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be unaware. ² You know that when you were pagans, you used to be enticed and led astray by mute idols. ³ Therefore I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶ And there are different activities, but the same God works all of them in each person. ⁷ A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good:

⁸ to one is given a message of wisdom through the Spirit, to another, a message of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another, faith by the same Spirit, to another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit ⁹ To another, faith by the same Spirit, to another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ To another, the performing of miracles, to another, prophecy, to another, distinguishing between spirits, to another, different kinds of tongues, to another, interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ One and the same Spirit is active in all these, distributing to each person as he wills.

¹² For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and we were all given one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Indeed, the body is not one part but many.

— 1 Corinthians 12:1–14

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

Have you ever been a part of a group project where you did all the work? Or maybe you were the one who wasn't participating, allowing someone else to do your part. For the person who is taking on the full workload, it's very frustrating. This is because the design and scope of the project was meant to be accomplished by a team, not just one person. Success hinged on many people working together toward a common goal. So it is with the church.

The New Testament devotes time to discussing spiritual gifts in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and 1 Peter 4. A few examples include: administration, discernment, evangelism, exhortation, faith, giving, helps, hospitality, knowledge, leadership, mercy, serving, teaching or shepherding, and wisdom. This is not an exhaustive list; there may be more spiritual gifts. Other gifts or miraculous signs, such as speaking in tongues, visions, healing, raising the dead, and prophesying, are called biblical "sign" gifts. Believers universally acknowledge their existence, as the Bible clearly describes these events.

However, opinions differ regarding their purpose and whether we should still experience them today.

While we may not understand everything about spiritual gifts, namely how many there are, how some are used, and if all of them still exist, one thing that we do know for sure is their purpose: the glory of God and the spread of the gospel to all people. To accomplish this goal most effectively, everyone in the body of believers must do their part. And this is where the group project metaphor breaks down. Whereas one person may be able to do all the work for a project and earn a good grade for everyone, no single believer can accomplish the goal of expanding the kingdom of God here on earth. Although nothing can stop God's purposes, God is most honored and His purposes are accomplished most successfully and beautifully when all believers do their part according to the specific gifts that the Spirit has given them. In this way, God receives the most glory and the gospel is advanced.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good. — 1 Corinthians 12:7

Prayer

Ask God to show you in what ways the Spirit has gifted you.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God. — 1 Peter 4:10

Prayer

Ask God to help you serve others with the spiritual gifts He has given you.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

If I speak human or angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I can move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing.

And if I give away all my possessions, and if I give over my body in order to boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.
— 1 Corinthians 13:1–3

Prayer

Ask God to help you follow Him and His commands even above your heart's desires.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing

into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness.
— Ephesians 4:11–13

Prayer

Thank God for giving others different spiritual gifts than you have so that together we can all play a critical role in Him building the church.



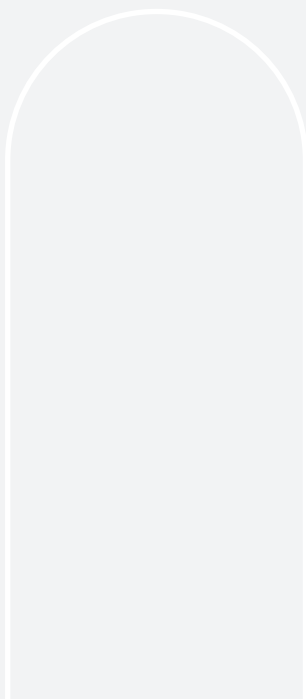
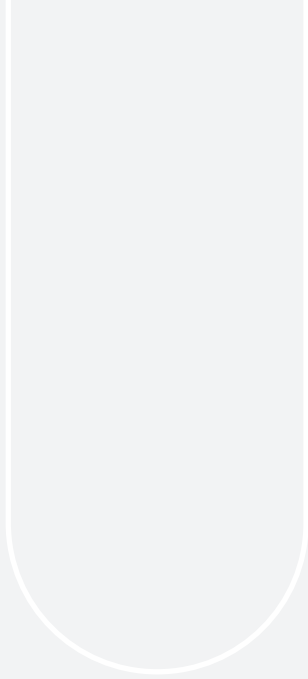
Next Steps

If you're unsure of your spiritual gift, New Vision has a resource you can use to help identify it. Scan this QR code for a direct link.



You can also take an alternate online quiz (such as one on spiritualgiftsassessment.org). Once you discover your spiritual gift, take a step to put it into action. If you need additional help, reach out to a leader or pastor for guidance on finding a place to serve.

Notes:



My Motivation for Serving

What is my motivation for serving?

In the Gospels, Jesus reveals to His followers that the tendency of all people to pursue their own glory is not the way to true fulfillment. Instead, true fulfillment is found through serving others, just as Jesus came to do.

Bible Story

³⁵ James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached him and said, "Teacher, we want you to do whatever we ask you."

³⁶ "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked them.

³⁷ They answered him, "Allow us to sit at your right and at your left in your glory."

³⁸ Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you're asking. Are you able to drink the cup I drink or to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

³⁹ "We are able," they told him.

Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink, and you will be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with." ⁴⁰ "But to sit at my right or left is not mine to give; instead, it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

⁴¹When the ten disciples heard this, they began to be indignant with James and John. ⁴²Jesus called them over and said to them, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in high positions act as tyrants over them." ⁴³"But it is not so among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you will be your servant," ⁴⁴"And whoever wants to be first among you will be a slave to all." ⁴⁵"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 10:35–45

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

In Mark 10, James and John approach Jesus to ask Him for fame and glory. Although we tend to roll our eyes at these brothers, we should be quicker to relate to them. In this passage, James and John revealed a desire that we far too often share: the desire for success. At this point, they still did not understand why Jesus had truly come and what He was on earth to do. However, in this passage and others like it, Jesus clearly shares with them that His purpose and the purpose of those who follow Him is to live life as a sacrificial servant for the glory of God and the good of others.

In a famous sermon, Martin Luther King, Jr. called this the “drum major instinct.” This is the human desire to “be out front, a desire to lead, a desire to be first, to be seen.” In our flesh, we all desire to pursue our own praise and glory. Although many of us view the request of James and John in this story as foolish, we often feel the same desire deep within us. We seek to make things—even good things—about ourselves instead of about God. Jesus takes the opportunity to tell these brothers about what it means to be truly

successful. These words are just as relevant today in a world where so many of us pursue success and our own renown. Jesus says that pursuing greatness is not necessarily bad if we view greatness through the correct lens. Greatness is about following the example of Jesus and choosing to pursue servanthood over our glory. What is truly great is doing all we can to make the name of Jesus known through serving and loving others.

With this in mind, all believers are called to serve somewhere using the gifts that God has graciously given them. We are called to honor the gifts and talents we have received from God by offering them back to Him in service of His church and the people He has created. The funny thing about living for ourselves is that it may feel good in the moment, but the feeling is ultimately fleeting. We will never be satisfied that way. When we serve, we work as a part of a Kingdom that will last forever. In doing so, true fulfillment will be found by following Jesus’ example and living a life that is modeled after the purposes God has set for us.

WEEK ONE**Memory Verse**

Giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.
— Ephesians 5:20–21

Prayer

Ask God to give you a servant heart that delights in putting others above yourself.

WEEK TWO**Memory Verse**

Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people, knowing that you will receive the reward of an inheritance from the Lord. You serve the Lord Christ.
— Colossians 3:23–24

Prayer

Ask God to remind you that when you serve others, you serve Jesus.

WEEK THREE**Memory Verse**

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.
— Matthew 5:16

Prayer

Thank God for giving you the privilege to use your good works to point others to Him.

WEEK FOUR**Memory Verse**

But it is not so among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you will be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you will be a slave to all. — Mark 10:43–44

Prayer

Ask God to give you a deep and genuine humility in all your relationships.

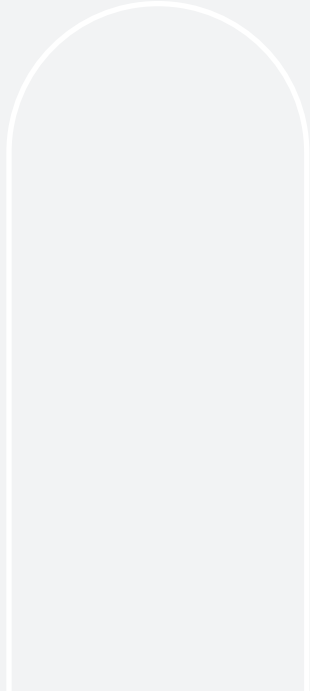
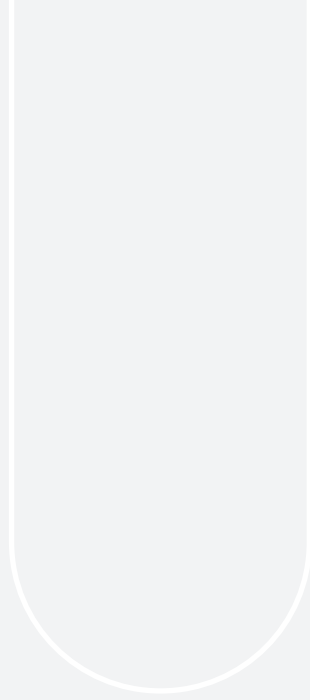


Challenging Thought

Serving like Jesus ultimately means dying to your desires and giving your life up for others. You will sacrifice time, money, and energy for someone else. What does that mean for you?

Notes:

NOVEMBER



My Opportunities to Serve

Where should I serve?

Where you choose to serve has less to do with the specific place that you are supposed to be, and more to do with opportunities that God has put in front of you to use your gifts for His glory and to further His kingdom. A good model that Scripture offers for serving is to think about it in the context of your church, your community, and your world.

Bible Story

⁴ Now as we have many parts in one body, and all the parts do not have the same function, ⁵ in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another. ⁶ According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: If prophecy, use it according to the proportion of one's faith; ⁷ if service, use it in service; if teaching, in teaching; ⁸ if exhorting, in exhortation; giving, with generosity; leading, with diligence; showing mercy, with cheerfulness.

— Romans 12:4–8

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

What if your nose decided it wouldn't smell any longer, but instead wanted to be an instrument to walk upon? What if your eyes decided they didn't want to be used as tools of vision any longer? What if your arm wanted to be a lung, or your knee wanted to be a collarbone? Silly examples, but with a point.

A metaphor that Scripture uses again and again when it comes to spiritual gifts is the parts of the body. Just as one person's body has many parts with different functions, so it is with the Church. There are many members of both your local church and the global Church, and God's plans are best accomplished when all of the members of that church are working together. We all must do the part that God has gifted us to do. We shouldn't look enviously at someone else's service, nor should we sit on

the sidelines. We are all needed, and as Paul shares in Romans, whatever your "part" is, that is what you are called to do in the context of the Church. If you do not know your giftings, you can take a spiritual gifts test or ask God to reveal ways He might be leading you to serve.

As mentioned above, Scripture reveals that the best model to consider when it comes to serving is in the context of your church, community, and world. This is found most clearly in Acts 1:8, where the words of Jesus are recorded. He tells His followers, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Jerusalem was the area where His followers lived. When thinking about your Jerusalem, you can ask yourself how your local church needs your gifts. Judea and Samaria referred to the community surrounding Jerusalem, where there were unbelievers and people of different faiths. In your local community, whom do you see that you can serve? Finally, Jesus says that they would be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. When you think of the world, are there specific things or places that God has put on your heart? Maybe He is calling you to serve Him somehow in that place or thing.

Simply put, where do you see a need that you can meet? Where can you be used as a part of the Lord's body? Serving can be a long-term commitment or meeting a one-time need that you have been made aware of today. If there is an open door, God might just be leading you to walk through it and partner with Him in furthering His kingdom in those places.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

Above all, fear the Lord and worship him faithfully with all your heart; consider the great things he has done for you. — 1 Samuel 12:24

Prayer

Ask God to help you fear and worship Him, so that you will be attentive to the opportunities to serve all around you.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember,

I am with you always, to the end of the age." — Matthew 28:19–20

Prayer

Ask God to help you look for ways to serve Him and others wherever you go throughout each day.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

The warden did not bother with anything under Joseph's authority, because the Lord was with him, and the Lord made everything that he did successful. — Genesis 39:23

Prayer

Ask God to help you find ways to serve Him and others even in unpleasant or difficult situations.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

"And the King will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" — Matthew 25:40

Prayer

Ask that God would open your eyes to the needs of others around you.



Next Steps

The links to serve at New Vision and to the local ministry partners of New Vision are included below. Consider asking God how and where He might be leading you to serve.

newvisionlife.com/serve

newvisionlife.com/missions

Notes:

Handling Hard Times

How do I handle hard times?

The Bible clearly states that hard times will be a part of life here on earth. However, believers are not without guidance on how to navigate these challenging times. Jesus taught His followers to focus on the hope of eternity and how these trials might sanctify us so that we can find value in the hard things God allows us to experience.



Further Inspection

Hard times will happen, but they weren't what God desired for us. The storyline of Scripture reveals that God did not create the world with brokenness, pain, and sin; however, the first people desired to be like God rather than honoring Him as God. Because of Adam and Eve's rebellion, sin and brokenness entered God's creation, leading to sickness, pain, and evil. Although none of these were part of God's original intention for humanity, God often takes things meant for evil, and uses them to accomplish His good purposes.

Bible Story

¹ Be gracious to me, God, for a man is trampling me; he fights and oppresses me all day long. ² My adversaries trample me all day, for many arrogantly fight against me. ³ When I am afraid, I will trust in you. ⁴ In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?

⁵ They twist my words all day long; all their thoughts against me are evil. ⁶ They stir up strife, they lurk, they watch my steps while they wait to take my life. ⁷ Will they escape in spite of such sin? God, bring down the nations in wrath.

⁸ You yourself have recorded my wanderings. Put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?

⁹ Then my enemies will retreat on the day when I call. This I know: God is for me. ¹⁰ In God, whose word I praise, in the Lord, whose word I praise, ¹¹ In God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mere humans do to me?

¹² I am obligated by vows to you, God; I will make my thanksgiving sacrifices to you. ¹³ For you rescued me from death, even my feet from stumbling, to walk before God in the light of life.

— Psalm 56:1–13

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

We all know life is hard at times. Sometimes, it feels like the ground has shifted beneath our feet, and the light at the end of the tunnel has gone dim. Maybe you've been walking through a season of loss, anxiety, betrayal, or unrelenting pressure. You're not looking for clichés—you want understanding. You want hope that doesn't just live on a pretty poster, but one that anchors you when everything around you is breaking.

Let's be honest—suffering is real. The Bible never downplays it. In fact, it gives us words for our grief. David, the man after God's own heart, cried out in anguish time and time again in the Psalms. "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?" (Psalm 13:1). Jesus Himself wept, groaned, and sweated blood in the garden of Gethsemane before His crucifixion. Your tears are not signs of weakness—they are sacred to God. Psalm 56:8 reminds us, "You [God] have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle."

You are not alone in your questions. It is *okay* to ask God why. It is *okay* to feel the weight of the pain. God is not threatened by your honesty.

Like a loving Father, He invites your cries—not just your praises. Instead of pretending like everything is okay when hard things happen, God asks us to come to Him to find comfort and be reminded of His love for us. We can also be reminded of these things through surrounding ourselves with godly community and being committed to staying in God's Word so that we can be reminded of the truth of who He is. It is okay to not be okay in some seasons, but there is hope to be found in who God is and the abundant life that He offers us.

And here is good news: our suffering is not meaningless. God never wastes pain. Romans 8:28 tells us that He works *all things*—even the most broken, gut-wrenching things—for the good of those who love Him. That "good" isn't always immediate comfort. The "good" that He works doesn't mean the season is good. But God will use it. Sometimes it's deeper faith, greater compassion, stronger character, or a closer walk with Jesus. And in eternity, God will wipe every tear from our eyes, and suffering will be no more (Revelation 21:4). That is not a wishful thought—it's a perfect promise.

Practical Guidance for the
Hard Times:

Lean on Godly Friends.

Do not isolate yourself. God designed us to carry each other's burdens (Galatians 6:2). Share with people who will listen without judgment and point you back to the truth.

Fight to Stay Connected with God.

Even when you don't feel it, keep praying. Keep opening your Bible. Even short, honest prayers like, "Lord, I need You," hold power. God honors the seeking heart.

Embrace Lament (Crying Out to God).

Lament is a holy language. Read Psalms aloud. Let them become your words. You are joining a long line of saints who brought their brokenness to the throne.

Seek Wise Counsel.

There is no shame in getting help. God can work through Christian counselors and pastors to bring healing and perspective. Sometimes, clarity comes through another's voice.

Remember Truth.

Write down verses of hope and keep them where you can see them. When your feelings scream lies, speak the truth of God's Word out loud. Let truth be louder than pain.

Give Yourself Grace.

Healing is not linear. Some days you may feel strong; others, undone. That's okay. God is patient, and He walks at your pace.

WEEK ONE



Memory Verse

He will cover you with his feathers; you will take refuge under his wings. His faithfulness will be a protective shield. — Psalm 91:4

Prayer

Ask God to help you trust that He is faithful even in the darkest of days.

WEEK TWO



Memory Verse

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness." Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me. — 2 Corinthians 12:9

Prayer

Ask God to use the trials in your life to refine you and produce Christlike character.

WEEK THREE



Memory Verse

And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope. This hope will not disappoint us,

because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. — Romans 5:3–5

Prayer

Pray that you would find hope in the midst of your sufferings.

WEEK FOUR



Memory Verse

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. — Proverbs 3:5

Prayer

Ask God to remind you that He is in control, and He is working for your good.



Next Steps

If you are walking through a challenging season, consider talking with a biblical counselor to help you see and trust God in the midst of what you are facing. You can find more resources, including information on connecting with a biblical counselor, on our website: **newvisionlife.com/care**.

We are here to support you in every way, so if you are seeking a counselor or therapist outside of New Vision, please reach out to us for a list of recommendations.

Notes:

Handling Grief

How do I handle grief?

One of the many hard realities of life on earth is the reality of grief. Grief comes as a result of loss in any way, such as the death of a loved one, the end of a relationship, or unmet expectations. When these things happen, believers are encouraged to trust that God can handle the resulting questions and emotions.

Bible Story

²⁸ “Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

— Matthew 11:28–30

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

Did you know that there are more Psalms of lament than any other type? A lament is an expression of grief or sorrow. The biblical writers of the Psalms were well acquainted with grief, loss, and similar emotions. Although the circumstances that led to these emotions may have looked different, the Psalms serve as a perfect place to find solace in times of grief you may experience.

Another place in Scripture that speaks to this topic is the book of James. At the beginning of the book, the author says, "Consider it pure joy...whenever you face trials of many kinds." Although this sounds great in theory, anyone who has experienced grief knows that this feels impossible in those moments when you are not able to see a way forward. So often, as Christians, it is easy to feel like this verse means that you must live from a place of complete joy and happiness all the time, no matter the circumstances. However, this verse was not meant to be a call to pretend like everything is fine when

it isn't. Instead, it's a reminder that amid grief, there is joy to be found because of the God who is in it with you. First, you can trust that God is big enough to handle the difficulty of the emotions that you are facing, because He created them. As Jesus' words from Matthew 11 reveal, He wants to offer rest to those who need it and show them a better way forward. Second, you can trust that God will use the grief you are enduring for your ultimate good, even if that good is just to make you look more like Him.

The Bible never promises a life without sorrow, but it does promise that God will never leave you in it. Jesus Himself wept (John 11:35) and understands your pain intimately. Instead of feeling the need to be the Christian who "has it all together," today you can rest in the fact that even when you don't, Jesus is inviting you to find rest in Him. Take your grief to Him, and allow Him to give you rest as He helps you figure out the way forward.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

"I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world." — John 16:33

Prayer

Ask God to help you rest in the truth that He has overcome the world, even if it might not seem like that at times.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

Therefore we do not give up. Even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day. For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. So we do not focus on what

is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
— 2 Corinthians 4:16–18

Prayer

Ask God to help you fix your eyes on the hope of eternity as you work through grief.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.
— Revelation 21:4

Prayer

Thank God that one day He will remove all brokenness and pain.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

The Lord is near the brokenhearted; he saves those crushed in spirit.
— Psalm 34:18

Prayer

Thank God for being near you in your grief.



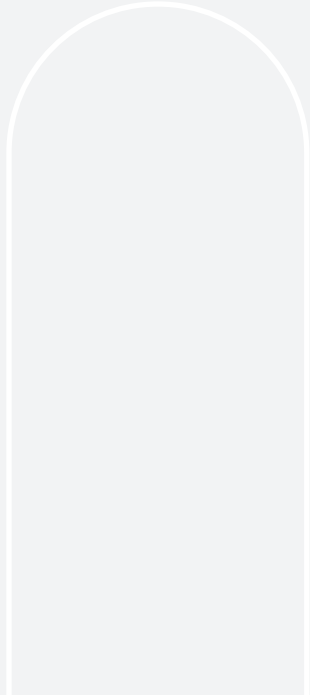
Next Steps

Take time to sit down in a quiet place with a journal and a pen. Spend time writing out the emotions that you are experiencing and bringing them before God. Allow Him to reveal Himself to you in your pain.

Notes:

FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY



Handling Disappointment

How do I handle disappointment?

If you are experiencing disappointment in any area of your life or have before, you are not alone. The book of Psalms is filled with the words of people who were disappointed in some way. However, it is also a reminder of how to redirect your mind away from disappointment and toward God's faithfulness.

Bible Story

¹ As a deer longs for flowing streams, so I long for you, God. ² I thirst for God, the living God. When can I come and appear before God? ³ My tears have been my food day and night, while all day long people say to me, "Where is your God?" ⁴ I remember this as I pour out my heart: how I walked with many, leading the festive procession to the house of God, with joyful and thankful shouts.

⁵ Why, my soul, are you so dejected? Why are you in such turmoil? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God. ⁶ I am deeply depressed; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. ⁷ Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your billows have swept over me. ⁸ The Lord will send his faithful love by day; his song will be with me in the night—a prayer to the God of my life.

⁹ I will say to God, my rock, “Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about in sorrow because of the enemy’s oppression?” ¹⁰ My adversaries taunt me, as if crushing my bones, while all day long they say to me, “Where is your God?” ¹¹ Why, my soul, are you so dejected? Why are you in such turmoil? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God.

— Psalm 42:1–11

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

Sometimes, as Christians, it is easy to feel like you should always have it all together and only be happy and optimistic, no matter what your circumstances are. Although joy is certainly a by-product of knowing and walking with Jesus, there will also be times when disappointing things happen. The reality of life on this earth is that there is brokenness and things that feel difficult to explain. In spite of this, joy can be found in the character and faithfulness of God.

In Nehemiah 8:10, the famous verse says, “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” This verse is a reminder that joy is not meant to be an isolated emotion. God gives joy to His people to give them the strength to navigate a way forward in the midst of a broken world. The writer of Psalm 42 exemplifies this perfectly. He is expressing deep grief and sorrow, remembering how far he had fallen from his past. Despite this, he reminds himself to return to the Lord. To combat his fear and disappointment, he reminds himself that his greatest hope is found in God. This is a hope that will come

through on what it promises. So often, hope is found in the things of this world that promise to give what we think we need. However, this hope will always fail you and will never truly deliver the things that it says it will. The only thing worthy of placing your hope in is the promises of God. The writer of Psalm 42 places his hope in God because he has found Him to be faithful before and trusts that He will be faithful again. This is how Scripture calls God’s people to respond in times of disappointment.

Practically, this means allowing yourself the space to grieve, to feel disappointed, or to acknowledge that things are not okay—without believing that your faith is broken because of it. It means learning to bring your honest emotions to God in prayer, just like the psalmist did, and refusing to let shame convince you that sadness and faith cannot coexist. It might look like journaling your prayers during hard seasons, surrounding yourself with a community that will point you back to truth, or choosing to worship—even when you don’t feel like it.

These simple acts of faith are very important! They will re-focus your heart on God's unchanging character and take your eyes off yourself. God is the source of hope and will help anchor you in His promises, even when your circumstances are still uncertain. Focus on Him.

As the Psalmists do, talk to God often. The feelings that may come are valid and are worth bringing before the Lord. However, remember the key: always return to His faithfulness as you walk through seasons of disappointment. God will work it out. It may not look how you want it to, but trust that He is doing something you cannot quite see or understand.

WEEK ONE



Memory Verse

Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. — Philippians 4:6–7

Prayer

Thank God that He is always present, He is ready to listen to your troubles, and He wants to pour His peace all over you.

WEEK TWO



Memory Verse

But those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not become weary, they will walk and not faint. — Isaiah 40:31

Prayer

Ask God to help you trust in Him amid your disappointments, and to receive strength from Him.

WEEK THREE



Memory Verse

Return to a stronghold, you prisoners who have hope; today I declare that I will restore double to you. — Zechariah 9:12

Prayer

Ask God to fill your mind and heart with hope, especially when you experience setbacks in life.

WEEK FOUR



Memory Verse

We are afflicted in every way but not crushed; we are perplexed but not in despair; we are persecuted but not abandoned; we are struck

down but not destroyed.
— 2 Corinthians 4:8–9

Prayer

Thank God that your setbacks and disappointments in life don't have the last word; He does.



Next Steps

Spend time meditating on how God has come through for you before. Think through how you have seen Him come through for the people of the Bible. If God did it before, He will do it again.

First, write five times in the Bible that God was faithful to His people. Then, write down the ways you have seen God be faithful in your life.

Notes:

Handling Success

How do I handle success?

When we think of success, most think of having money or influence. However, Jesus defined success very differently. As believers, success is meant to be handled humbly, with the understanding that all good things are gifts from God.

Bible Story

⁵ Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus,
⁶ who, existing in the form of God,
 did not consider equality with God
 as something to be exploited.
⁷ Instead he emptied himself
 by assuming the form of a servant,
 taking on the likeness of humanity.
 And when he had come as a man,
⁸ he humbled himself by becoming obedient
 to the point of death— even to death on a cross.
⁹ For this reason God highly exalted him
 and gave him the name
 that is above every name,
¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus
 every knee will bow—
 in heaven and on earth
 and under the earth—
¹¹ and every tongue will confess
 that Jesus Christ is Lord,
 to the glory of God the Father.

— Philippians 2:5–11

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

When it comes to success, there are two different ways that Satan often tries to make us fall. Maybe you are someone who is tempted to believe that the good things in your life have truly come from the work of your own hands. You feel that you have worked hard to get where you are, and your own grit and determination got you there. Or maybe you are someone who struggles with the temptation of false humility. Your desire is for people to look to you and see someone who offers gratitude to God alone for the things that you have and does not take credit for anything. Although these attitudes look very different from the outside, they are rooted in pride, or a desire for others to think highly of you.

Jesus approached things differently. He was pre-existent, which means that before He ever came to earth as a baby, He existed in eternity with God the Father. Despite this, He chose to leave heaven and humbly

come to earth for the sake of man. Jesus is the best example of success because of what He accomplished. Therefore, to be truly successful, believers must follow the example of Jesus. True success in this life and the next does not come from working hard or making others like you. Instead, true success is found by walking in humility, seeking God first, and loving others well. These things are the purpose of our lives as believers and those who are created in God's image.

So, how do we live this out? This means regularly checking the posture of your heart, especially when opportunities or recognition begin to increase. It means asking yourself whether your motivations are still rooted in love for God and others, or if they've quietly shifted toward self-promotion or comfort. Practically, this might look like turning down a chance to elevate your name if it compromises your witness, or using your influence to highlight the

work of others instead of yourself.
It means being willing to serve in
neglected or overlooked places, even
when you've been given a stage.
Faithful stewardship of success isn't
about avoiding opportunity—it's
about letting every opportunity point
back to the One who gave it.

When God gives you great blessings
that may even come in the form of
money or a platform, this humility
must remain. Believers are called
to remember that every good
gift comes down from the Giver.
Believers are called to steward
these gifts well.

WEEK ONE



Memory Verse

Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

— James 1:16–17

Prayer

Thank God for all the good gifts He has given you, none of which are deserved.

WEEK TWO



Memory Verse

But remember that the Lord your God gives you the power to gain wealth, in order to confirm his covenant he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

— Deuteronomy 8:18

Prayer

Ask God to help you remember that all the success you have comes from and through Him.

WEEK THREE



Memory Verse

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.

— Matthew 6:33

Prayer

Ask God to help you desire Him more than anything else, including success.

WEEK FOUR



Memory Verse

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. — James 4:10

Prayer

Ask God to help you walk in humility through any and all success you experience.



Next Steps

Every good gift comes from the Giver. What good things have you been tempted to believe you've earned on your own? How can you turn your success into glory for God instead of yourself?

Notes:

Caring for Our Mental Health

Does God care about our mental health?

Although the Bible does not explicitly mention mental health, it is present in different stories throughout Scripture. God created every part of the human being in His image, meaning He understands and cares for the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of who we are.

Bible Story

¹ Ahab told Jezebel everything that Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "May the gods punish me and do so severely if I don't make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow!"

³ Then Elijah became afraid and immediately ran for his life. When he came to Beer-sheba that belonged to Judah, he left his servant there, ⁴ But he went on a day's journey into the wilderness. He sat down under a broom tree and prayed that he might die. He said, "I have had enough! Lord, take my life, for I'm no better than my ancestors." ⁵ Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree.

Suddenly, an angel touched him. The angel told him, "Get up and eat." ⁶ Then he looked, and there at his head was a loaf of bread baked over hot stones, and a jug of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again. ⁷ Then the angel of the Lord returned for a second time and touched him. He said, "Get up and eat, or the journey will be too much for you." ⁸ So he got up, ate, and drank. Then on the strength from that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God. ⁹ He entered a cave there and spent the night.

Suddenly, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

¹⁰ He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Armies, but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are looking for me to take my life.”

¹¹ Then he said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the Lord’s presence.

At that moment, the Lord passed by. A great and mighty wind was tearing at the mountains and was shattering cliffs before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was a voice, a soft whisper.

— 1 Kings 19:1–12

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

In John 16, Jesus tells His followers they will have trouble in this world. The broken reality of life on earth affects everyone, though usually in different ways. For some, this reality comes in the form of mental health. Like Elijah, you may be someone or know someone who has dealt with feelings of no longer wanting to move forward. Or maybe you are familiar with anxiety or have experienced some other mental health issue. Sometimes a mental health struggle is directly related to the circumstances that are going on in life, and other times it isn't. No matter the cause, it is difficult to wrestle with why a good God might allow this type of suffering to persist in the life of a believer. Although there is no perfect answer to this question, God's response to Elijah in 1 Kings 19 can offer peace for those who find themselves in circumstances that might look similar.

In the middle of Elijah's darkest moment, an angel from the Lord appeared and began to serve him. God provided Elijah food and water, offering him comfort and strength. Although there is no place in the

text where it says that God took Elijah's hurting away or immediately fixed the situation he was dealing with, he did sustain and strengthen him through it. This shows that God does not shame us or believe that we have done anything wrong to cause a struggle with mental health. Instead, He comes alongside us and strengthens us as we walk through it. If you or someone you care about is walking through a mental health battle, be comforted that even when God does not take away the difficulties of this type of suffering, he comforts and sustains His people through it. In this process, there is great intimacy with your Creator.

Additionally, God in His goodness uses therapy and/or biblical counseling to point us back to truth and help us work through the things that may contribute to suffering in this way. If you personally are battling mental health, starting therapy and asking God to help you begin the healing process with a trusted counselor is a great way to open yourself up to experiencing something similar to what Elijah experienced.

Prioritize Rest and Nourishment.

Just as God provided Elijah with food and rest in his lowest moment, we are reminded that our physical needs matter in the midst of emotional and mental struggles. Make space in your life to slow down, eat nourishing meals, and get the sleep your body needs. Sometimes the first step toward healing is simply giving yourself permission to care for your basic needs, without guilt.

Seek Godly Support.

You were never meant to carry heavy burdens alone. Whether it's meeting with a biblical counselor, joining a support group, or confiding in a trusted friend or mentor, let someone walk alongside you. Often, God provides strength and encouragement through the presence of others who can speak truth and grace into your situation.

Stay Connected to God's Presence.

Even when healing feels slow or distant, remain connected to God. Create small rhythms in your day—like reading a Psalm in the morning, journaling a prayer at night, listening to worship music, or simply breathing deeply while praying and calling on His name—that keep you aware of His nearness. Like Elijah, you may not hear God in the wind or the fire, but in the stillness, His gentle whisper will remind you that you are not alone.

WEEK ONE



Memory Verse

Even when I go through the darkest valley, I fear no danger, for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me. — Psalm 23:4

Prayer

Thank God for always being with you through anything you experience in this life.

WEEK TWO



Memory Verse

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will hold on to you with my righteous right hand. — Isaiah 41:10

Prayer

Ask God to help you with whatever you experience in life, and for the wisdom to recognize when He provides help.

WEEK THREE



Memory Verse

God is our refuge and strength, a helper who is always found in times of trouble. — Psalm 46:1

Prayer

Thank God that He understands even our deepest, most difficult challenges, loves us, and is with us.

WEEK FOUR



Memory Verse

A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones. — Psalm 34:18

Prayer

Ask God to help you find joy in knowing Jesus, even when your circumstances are difficult.



Reflection Questions

- 01** Other than God, who can you turn to and discuss your mental health?

- 02** Have you walked through any mental health struggles, like anxiety or depression?

- 03** What helps you the most when you are struggling?

- 04** Which of the three practical tips are you best at? Which one is the hardest for you? Why?

Knowing God Cares

How can I know (trust) that God cares for me?

Scripture says over and over again that God cares for His people and for His creation. It was proven; God sent His son Jesus to die so that we might have the opportunity to live in eternal relationship with Him. In the act of giving His life, Jesus proved His deep love for us.

Bible Story

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand, since he is not the shepherd and doesn't own the sheep, leaves them and runs away when he sees a wolf coming. The wolf then snatches and scatters them. ¹³ This happens because he is a hired hand and doesn't care about the sheep.

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, ¹⁵ Just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ But I have other sheep that are not from this sheep pen; I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. Then there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life so that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."

— John 10:11–18

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

JUNE

Devotion

The passage in John 10 is a parable that Jesus called the *Good Shepherd*. A parable was a type of story that Jesus commonly shared with His followers that was used as a spiritual lesson. Often the characters in the parables represent someone else. In the case of this parable, the

Good Shepherd represents Jesus. The sheep are the rest of humanity, and the Father is God. Jesus shared this parable with many people after healing a blind man.

In this parable, Jesus first says that the Good Shepherd lays down his life

for the sheep. This is in contrast to the hired hand who, when he sees trouble, runs away and abandons the sheep. This reveals Jesus as a protector of His people, who chose to withstand trouble and persecution for His people. Second, Jesus says that He lays down His life willingly, by His own decision. This is Jesus revealing that although He would die, He would not die because He did not have the power to avoid death. Instead, He willingly chose to die because He loved the sheep, and His death was necessary for His people to come into a true relationship with Him.

In all of this, it is clear that Jesus chose to die for all people. In doing so, He revealed His deep love for His creation. He did not have to leave heaven to come to earth and die, but He chose to give up His home in heaven to come to earth to set an example and then make a way for you to spend eternity with Him.

On top of this, Romans 5 reveals that Jesus chose to do this “while we were still sinners.” This means that Jesus chose you when you were at your worst point. There is nothing you have done, are doing, or will do that makes you worthy of knowing

Him. Your only way to access Him is through His sacrifice. Allow the reminder of that truth to be your encouragement that Jesus loves you more deeply than you know. Many people do not know and have not experienced a kind of love even close to the kind that Jesus demonstrated in His sacrifice for humanity. We must live each day from a place of security, not striving. When you truly believe that Jesus laid down His life for you, even knowing everything about you, including your mess, you can begin to walk in freedom rather than fear. You no longer have to earn His approval or wonder if you’re too far gone. Let this truth reshape how you approach your relationships, failures, and quiet time with God. Instead of hiding parts of yourself, bring them into the light, knowing you are already fully loved.

Jesus’ sacrifice can silence the voice of shame and remind us that our identity is not in what we do, but in who we belong to—the Good Shepherd who gave everything to bring us home. Take time to stop and soak in the weight of His sacrifice and what it says about how He feels about you. God cares about you—more than you can even imagine.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. — Romans 5:8

Prayer

Thank God for His great love for you, and ask Him to help you rest in it.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you.
— 1 Peter 5:6–7

Prayer

Ask God to handle whatever is going on in your life, knowing that He is good, He is all-powerful, and He cares deeply for you.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.
— John 3:16

Prayer

Thank God for the greatest proof of His care for you: the gift of eternal life that only comes through Jesus.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. — Romans 8:38–39

Prayer

Ask God to remove anything from your life that distracts you from the truth of His loving care for you.



Challenging Thought

While we were yet sinners, Jesus died for us. We were His enemy, and He gave us everything to have us. When are you tempted to believe God doesn't care about you? How can you better remember the truth of Jesus' sacrifice in those moments?

Notes:

Resting in Faith

Why is it important to rest?

God made us to work. He also made us to enjoy rest. God made the Sabbath as a gift for us. It is a holy day of rest and worship to remind us of His creation, provision, and salvation. Resting teaches us to trust God's care and find true rest in Christ.



Further Inspection

Sabbath comes from the Hebrew word *Shabbat*, which means "to cease, to end, to rest." The Sabbath was a command from God given to the Israelites in Exodus 20. God Himself rested from the act of creation on the seventh day. Christians honor the spirit of the Sabbath by regularly setting aside time for rest, worship, and renewal in Christ. Jesus fulfilled the law of the Sabbath, and only in Jesus can we find eternal rest.

Bible Story

²⁸ "Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

¹ At that time Jesus passed through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick and eat some heads of grain. ² When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "See, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath."

³ He said to them, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and those who were with him were hungry: ⁴ How he entered the house of God, and they ate the bread of the Presence—which is not lawful for him or for those with him to eat, but only for the priests? ⁵ Or haven’t you read in the law that on Sabbath days the priests in the temple violate the Sabbath and are innocent? ⁶ I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. ⁷ If you had known what this means, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸ For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

⁹ Moving on from there, he entered their synagogue. ¹⁰ There he saw a man who had a shriveled hand, and in order to accuse him they asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”

¹¹ He replied to them, “Who among you, if he had a sheep that fell into a pit on the Sabbath, wouldn’t take hold of it and lift it out? ¹² A person is worth far more than a sheep; so it is lawful to do what is good on the Sabbath.”

¹³ Then he told the man, “Stretch out your hand.” So he stretched it out, and it was restored, as good as the other. ¹⁴ But the Pharisees went out and plotted against him, how they might kill him.

— Matthew 11:28–30; 12:1–14

Discussion Questions

01 What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?

02 What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?

03 Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

JULY

Devotion

You will notice as you get older that the world never slows down. If anything, things continually get faster and busier. We always have things to do, events to attend, people to serve, friends to visit, family to see, and so on. But we must not forget to build Sabbath into our schedule; it's more important than anything we can do.

Jesus teaches that the Sabbath is a rhythm. During His ministry, Jesus often went away from the crowds to pray alone. Now, it wasn't that Jesus wasn't busy. He always had important things to do! But Jesus was an expert at maintaining a holy priority list: He knew the need for Sabbath.

In Matthew, Jesus taught that He gives rest. In a world that glorifies hustle and constant productivity, the invitation to rest sounds countercultural—almost irresponsible. But Jesus offers something better: rest for our souls. Rest is not earned. It's received. Sabbath is not a reward for finishing everything; it's a declaration that God is enough and our output does not define us.

The Sabbath calls us to stop, not because our work is done, but because God is our true provider. Notice: rest isn't a legalistic thing. We don't have to sit stagnant on Sunday or only go to church and do nothing else. Jesus served His disciples and taught the Pharisees that it was right to do good work, even on the Sabbath. God's command for us is to keep the Sabbath "holy." We must make sure we dedicate time and set it apart to focus and spend time with God. On the Sabbath, we pause to worship, to be still, to enjoy God's presence. In doing so, we remember who He is—and who we are.

In his book *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, John Mark Comer reminds us that Sabbath is not just a day off—it's a way of life, a resistance to the world's chaos. Sabbath is about delighting in God, delighting in what is good, and delighting in being alive. So what does this look like? It might mean turning off your phone for a few hours, sharing a slow meal with loved ones, going for a walk in nature, or reading Scripture not to *study* it, but to *savor* it. It could be playing worship music, journaling your prayers, or simply sitting quietly with a cup of coffee. Remember: you are loved not for what you do, but for who you are in Christ. Sabbath is a holy interruption—a weekly reminder that God is on the throne and we don't have to be. So rest, and let this week be marked not by what you achieve, but by how you receive.

WEEK ONE



Memory Verse

If anyone speaks, let it be as one who speaks God's words; if anyone serves, let it be from the strength God provides, so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything. To him be

the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. — 1 Peter 4:11

Prayer

Ask God to show you how He wants to use the spiritual gifts He has given you.

WEEK TWO



Memory Verse

Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different ministries, but the same Lord. And there are different activities, but

the same God works all of them in each person. — 1 Corinthians 12:4–6

Prayer

Ask God to help you be grateful and content with the gifts you have been given.

WEEK THREE



Memory Verse

Therefore, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment. — 2 Timothy 1:6–7

Prayer

Ask God to remove any fear you might feel concerning using your spiritual gifts and instead to rest in His power and love.

WEEK FOUR



Memory Verse

According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: If prophecy, use it according to the proportion of one's faith; if service, use it in service; if teaching, in teaching; if exhorting, in exhortation; giving,

with generosity; leading, with diligence; showing mercy, with cheerfulness. — Romans 12:6–8

Prayer

Ask God to use your gifts to bring encouragement and unity to the church.



Next Steps

If you find rest and Sabbath difficult, consider reading *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer, or learning about Sabbath through his video study on RightNow Media. Read or study with a friend or your small group for encouragement and accountability.

Notes:

Memory Verse Tracking Log



COLLEGE FRESHMAN





NEW VISION