

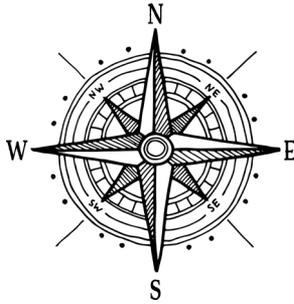
The year of
ADVENTURE



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INTRODUCTION

There is an invitation echoing through Scripture, whispered in the quiet moments and shouted in the miraculous ones: “Come, follow Me.” It has always been more than a call to belief, it is a call to adventure.

From the very beginning, God has been writing a story filled with movement, risk, faith, and wonder. He calls ordinary people out of comfort and into trust, out of fear and into purpose. Following Jesus was never meant to be safe, predictable, or contained, it was meant to be alive. It was meant to stretch us, awaken us, and lead us into deeper dependence on Him.

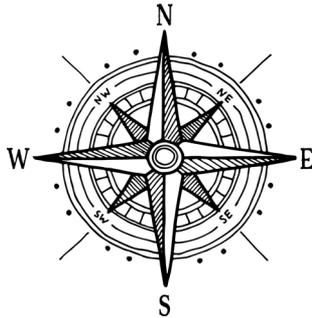
This year, we are stepping into a Year of Adventure. Not an adventure defined by adrenaline or chaos, but one rooted in obedience, surrender, and abiding. An adventure where faith looks like taking the next step even when the whole path isn't clear. Where worship becomes our compass. Where trust replaces control. Where we learn to walk the way we talk.

An adventure with Jesus doesn't promise ease, but it does promise His presence. It doesn't remove the unknown, but it fills it with hope. As we open this book together, our prayer is that you would rediscover the joy of following Him daily, the courage to say yes again, and the wonder of a life fully yielded to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

This is the Year of Adventure.....

Month 1

THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM



BOOK: LUKE

SYNOPSIS

Every Kingdom has a King, and the King dictates the laws of the Kingdom. Our King shapes reality and created the world that we live in. As we go through this month our mission is to wrap our hearts and minds around the Heavenly Kingdom and the values of our King.

LUKE

The book of Luke is the gospel written to the Greek, Hellenistic world. Luke will consistently attempt to shift the worldview of Greek readers from faith in their chaotic, poorly behaved gods to the kingdom of the one true God and faith in the person of Jesus. Luke uses passages like Luke 6:17-49 to flip the Greek readers' world upside down and see that the true God, Jesus Christ, is not hungry for power or in a battle with other entities, warring for influence over the world. Jesus is the God of service and love, that comes not for his own elevation but to lift up the world and to establish a Kingdom that is ordered and good.

FULLY SURRENDERED

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take.” Proverbs 3:5-6

Growing up, I had countless opportunities to see Jesus move in miraculous ways. I was raised in the middle of a revival, watching legs grow out, seeing spirits of oppression broken, and witnessing lives permanently changed because people encountered the King and chose, some for the first time, to walk in His Kingdom.

Throughout every journey the Lord has taken me on so far, I’ve realized something important: it’s possible to stand right next to the Kingdom of God, to say all the right things, to talk a good talk, and still try to rule our own kingdom at the same time. It’s much easier to say we want God to have His way than it is to actually live surrendered. But if we want to fully walk in the Kingdom of Heaven, surrender is something we have to learn.

I am 24 this year, and over the last couple of months my common phrase has been, “I can literally feel my frontal lobe developing,” haha. When I was younger, I loved the thought of things like skydiving. But recently, when I was presented with the opportunity to go, it was like every bit of my adventurous side disappeared. The longer I considered why, I realized it wasn’t that I didn’t feel safe, it was that I didn’t feel in control. Flying through the air attached to a giant piece of plastic makes me feel more out of control than I would ever like to be. It fascinates me how, the older we get, or maybe the longer our frontal lobes develop, the harder it becomes to do things that make us feel like we’ve lost control.

Walking in God’s Kingdom can sometimes feel the same way. When we decided at our church that this year would be themed the “Year of Adventure,” I’ll admit I felt both relieved and terrified. I found myself in an internal wrestle, excited for whatever was coming, yet equally afraid of not knowing what was next.

After a lot of honest processing with the Lord, He told me, “Jordan, you can either get on this train or hang off the side, but either way, we’re moving.” I laughed and told the Lord I would much rather get on.

It’s easy to say that we want things God’s way while still trying to hold the reins of control. The truth is, many of us end up barely hanging on to the train, getting hit with debris, all for the sake of staying in control.

Throughout my life, I’ve already gotten to live quite the journey. And you know what? God has never failed me yet. The moments I struggle the most are the times when I try to stay in control. The truth is, there is only one Kingdom, and there is only one King. He sees the beginning and the end. He formed every part of you and knows you completely.

This King’s name is Jesus.

He wants our full trust, our full surrender, and He loves to take us on a journey. So this month, I encourage you to find the places in your life that feel easiest to control and release them to the One who holds it all. He cares for you far more than you ever could care for yourself.

Let Him take you on an adventure of a lifetime, because living in the Kingdom of Heaven, rather than just talking about it, is so much better.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What areas of your life are easiest for you to trust God with, and which are hardest?

What’s one practical step you can take this week to move from talking about faith to actively walking it out?

A CALL BACK TO THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them.” Revelation 21:3

The gospel was never meant to be domesticated. Somewhere along the way, we shrank it down, softened its edges, and made it safe enough to fit inside a private prayer and a personal testimony.

We reduced a Kingdom announcement into a self-help message. We traded a coronation for a comfort blanket.

But the gospel Jesus preached was not simply, “Your sins are forgiven.” It was, “The Kingdom of God has arrived.” Forgiveness is not the headline. The King is.

Jesus did not come merely to rescue individuals from hell; He came to reclaim the earth for heaven.

Repentance wasn't about moral improvement, it was about changing allegiance.

A new government had arrived.
A new reign had begun.
A new way of life was now possible.

The good news was not, “You can go to heaven when you die.” The good news was, “Heaven has come to you.” The Kingdom Was Always the Point. Jesus preached repentance and forgiveness in light of the Kingdom. Why? Because forgiven people without Kingdom purpose become spiritually self-absorbed. But forgiven people who know they belong to a King become dangerous, in the best possible way. We were saved so that through us, heaven could invade earth.

So that the love, justice, mercy, peace, and authority of God could be made visible, here and now.

Paul says it plainly: “The purpose of this was to unveil before every throne and rank of angelic orders in the heavenly realm God’s full and diverse wisdom revealed through the church.” (Ephesians 3:10–12, TPT)

Read that again.

The Church is not God’s backup plan.
We are the billboard of heaven, the proof that the King still rules.
This plan wasn’t improvised. It was eternal.
Heaven and Earth Are Colliding - In Us.

From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture tells one story: God refuses to stay distant. The Kingdom is not a place you escape to. It is a reign you live under. Heaven and earth overlap in born-again humanity.

God didn’t just save your soul, He reclaimed territory.

Kingdom means He is the King, and we are the dominion where His rule is expressed. Not someday. Now.

The theologian Walter Kaiser called it the Promise Plan:

1. I will be your God
2. You will be My people
3. I will dwell with you

That promise echoes through Abraham, Israel, Jesus, the Church, and finally explodes into fulfillment: “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them.” (Revelation 21:3)

God never wanted a distant people who admired Him from afar.
He wanted a people who embodied Him.

When the Gospel Shrinks, the Church Weakens; when we miss the message of the Kingdom, forgiveness of sins becomes a self-centered gospel.

It sounds spiritual, but it's incomplete.

The story becomes:

- How much God loves me
- How Jesus died for me
- How God forgave me
- How God wants a relationship with me

All of that is true but when isolated, it removes responsibility, mission, and communal identity. It produces consumers instead of citizens.

The Kingdom gospel creates a people, not just saved individuals.

A Church that transcends ethnicity, economics, gender, and status. A body meant to display the reign of Jesus in real time.

Paul says it boldly: “And now we, his church, are his body on the earth and that which fills him who is being filled by it!” (Ephesians 1:22–23, TPT)

The Church is not optional. It is essential infrastructure for the Kingdom.
From Me to We: A Required Re-Identification.

The Spirit is confronting a mindset shift right now from me to we. From personal survival to Kingdom advance. Here's what the Me Gospel produces:

Self-Preservation

Jesus becomes a spiritual escape hatch, “get out of hell free.” Risk is avoided. Faith is minimized. Suffering feels like betrayal. The goal is safety, not sovereignty. Rescue matters more than allegiance

Self-Dependence

“I'll handle it myself.” Independence masquerades as strength, but it resists community. Others' success feels threatening. Authority feels dangerous. This mindset builds walls instead of families.

Self-Centered Faith

A private Jesus with no public implications. Church is optional. Community is negotiable. Sin is reduced to “what I did wrong” instead of “what I've become.” Conscience replaces community. Isolation replaces formation.

Sin, biblically, is not just bad behavior, it is the loss or distortion of the image of God. Not merely doing the wrong thing, but being something less than we were created to be. The Gospel of the Kingdom (WE)

Jesus said it clearly: “This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations.” (Matthew 24:14)

Not the gospel of self-improvement.
Not the gospel of private spirituality.

But the gospel of the King and His reign. This gospel doesn’t ask, “How does this benefit me?” It asks, “How do we reflect the King together?”

The call of the Kingdom is not comfort, its commission.
Not escape but embodiment. Not me but we.

The King has come.
The Kingdom is here.
And the world is waiting for a Church that believes it.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Where has my understanding of the gospel been shaped more by personal comfort than by allegiance to Jesus as King?

If the Kingdom of God has truly arrived, what areas of my life is Jesus inviting to come under His reign more fully?

What would it look like for heaven to invade earth through me this week, practically, visibly, and courageously?

LIVING AS THE KINGDOM OF GOD

“Again he (Jesus) asked, “What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.” Luke 13:20–21 (NIV84)

In the period of history that Jesus walked the earth, the people of Israel were extremely familiar with kings and kingdoms. Israel had their own king and had been under the rule of conquering kings throughout their history, but they still struggled comprehending the kingdom of God. In fact, the central part of Jesus’ ministry was presenting the kingdom of God. It was His message to the very end of His earthly ministry. He spent His last days on earth preaching and teaching about the kingdom of God. After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. Acts 1:3 (NIV84)

For most 21st century, westernized, American Christians, the concept of Kingdom living is foreign to their history, thinking, or comprehension. We talk about “the Kingdom” and read scriptures about “the Kingdom,” but perceiving ourselves as living in an actual kingdom is something we largely struggle with. For American Christians, our cultural heritage is one of rebellion against a king or kingdom life. The American revolution established in our society a cultural bias against kings and kingdom rule. Our culture promotes Democracy and representative rule, where we should get a voice in what we do; it is ingrained in our American DNA. So, for Christians to embrace a king and his kingdom rule is extremely foreign to us.

Jesus wants to help us grasp his kingdom truth. The opening verse from Luke that we started this devotional with expresses a clear image of what Jesus was wanting his followers to grasp. His kingdom is not one of external rules or enforced laws by a suppressing authority, but it is one of an internal ruling character and Spirit growing and producing a way of life regardless of all external physical reality. Jesus explained to the Jewish Pharisees as recorded by Luke, “Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of

God would come, Jesus replied, “The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, 21 nor will people say, “Here it is,” or

“There it is,” because the kingdom of God is within you.”

Luke 17:20–21 (NIV84)

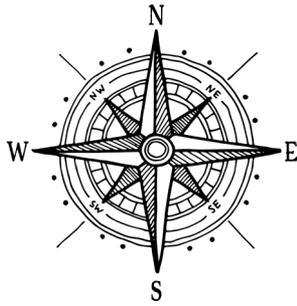
God’s New Testament Kingdom is a kingdom of internal Spiritual rule. The transforming and motivating Spirit of our King lives and abides inside of us, working like yeast in the woman’s dough. He, the Spirit, is constantly in agreement with God and his Word, causing us to change our motives and understanding of priorities. Notice the example was of a whole bowl of dough, not little pieces of dough. His love abides and is demonstrated in God’s people as they exhibit God’s Kingdom rule and will, expressing itself through them as a body or community to the world around us. Christians are to be a demonstration of God’s kingdom just like Jesus was a demonstration for us. It is for us to wrap our minds and hearts around this truth because Jesus died to bring forth our expression of the Kingdom of God for everyone to experience and embrace. The Kingdom lives within the believer. As we live our lives according to our King, then our King’s values are expressed in our world around us by us. So we are God’s Kingdom in the earth today.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Just how strong is your internal motivation to truly live in a true kingdom? Remember that in a kingdom it is the King who always decides what is right and what we do to be right

What is it that you can do to help the Kingdom express itself through and in you today?



MONTH 1

HOPE AT HOME DISCUSSION

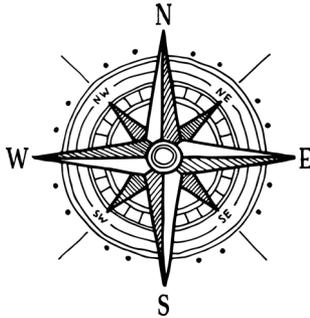
How does Jesus in the Gospel of Luke challenge common ideas of power and kingship (e.g., in Luke 6:17-49)?

What values of God's Kingdom stand out most to you as different from the world's values, and why?

How might embracing the "upside-down" Kingdom described in Luke change the way you interact with others this week?

Month 2

MISSION



BOOK: ACTS

SYNOPSIS

Life is meant to be lived on a mission from God. Every human has been formed from the foundations of the Earth with a purpose and a calling. Our heart for this month is that you would either begin to discover your mission from God, or to clarify your mission to an even greater mission. The church on mission will storm the gates of Hell and continue to make the world look more like Heaven

ACTS

The book of Acts is the story of the spread of the gospel message and the forming of the early church. This book is most likely written by Luke (the author of the book of Luke). Luke writes about the early persecution of the church and follows Paul's three, multi-year, missionary journeys. The book sets us up to understand that the coming of Jesus is followed by the actions of His church and the fulfillment of the great commission.

BECOMING AN OUTPOST OF HEAVEN

*“I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”
Matthew 16:18*

When Jesus declared, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18), He was not describing a building, a weekend service, or a religious institution. The word He used was Ekklesia, a Greek term referring to a strategic assembly of people commissioned to advance the ideology and influence of their government into new territory.

In other words, Jesus wasn’t launching a club. He was establishing a Kingdom strategy.

Throughout Scripture, God’s mission has always been to bring Heaven’s order into the earth. From the first mandate in Genesis to “be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28), humanity was assigned to become carriers of Heaven’s culture. The mission is clear: extend God’s goodness into every corner of creation. But the mission only becomes reality when supported by strategy.

Jesus’ use of the word Ekklesia reveals that the Kingdom advances not by accident, but by deliberate design. Families, businesses, communities, and faith gatherings are meant to become outposts of Heaven. A strategic Kingdom franchise placed in the world to model, multiply, and enforce the will of God “on earth as it is in Heaven” (Matthew 6:10). When we adopt this mindset we can expect the promise of “the gates of hell not being able to take us out” applies to our efforts.

Your household is not merely a residence. It is an embassy.
Your business is not merely a revenue engine.
It is a Kingdom deployment center.

Your gatherings are not merely relational moments. They are strategic councils where Heaven's ideology is discerned and enacted.

This is the rhythm of Avoda work, worship, and service united into one seamless expression of Kingdom stewardship. When Nehemiah rebuilt Jerusalem, he did not separate spiritual passion from strategic action.

He prayed, but he also planned (Nehemiah 2:11-18). When Jesus discipled the Twelve, He poured out revelation, but He also organized a multiplication model (Luke 10:1-3). When the early church faced new challenges, they responded with Spirit-led structure (Acts 6:1-7). Heaven always advances through people who carry mission and strategy.

You have been placed where you are in your family, your business, and your city as a living outpost of Heaven. Your assignment is not passive. It is architectural. Build systems that reinforce Kingdom values. Shape environments where Heaven's culture becomes normal. Lead with intentionality so the atmosphere you carry becomes the atmosphere you create.

This is the call of the Ekklesia:

To be a people who host Heaven and strategically extend it.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Where has God positioned me to function as an outpost of Heaven in my home, business, or relationships?

What strategic structures or rhythms are needed to help Heaven's culture take shape in these places?

How can I intentionally blend work, worship, and service this week to embody the Ekklesia Jesus envisioned?

GOD'S STRATEGY IS TRUST

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

Proverbs 3:5–6

When I first started my agency, the Lord told me something that honestly felt impossible. He said, “Don’t market.” I remember sitting there thinking, “How are we supposed to grow if we’re not promoting anything?” It felt backward and completely opposite of how business is “supposed” to work. But God wasn’t trying to teach me another business idea from a leadership book. He was trying to teach me trust.

As I walked this out, I began to notice something beautiful. When I slowed down long enough to really listen to the Holy Spirit, He gave me tools, ideas and direction that I never could have come up with on my own. Clients showed up without me chasing them. Opportunities opened in ways I couldn’t have predicted. And little by little, I realized that the strategy God was building into me wasn’t about visibility or hustle. It was about learning to follow His voice above my own understanding.

Through Storyteller Factory, I’ve seen again and again that the most powerful way to build anything in the Kingdom is to stay close to God. When we listen first and act second, things line up. When we trust instead of striving, peace replaces pressure. And when we let God guide the story, He writes it better than we ever could.

Trust really is God’s strategy. Not because He needs it, but because we do. Trust shapes us. It reminds us that we’re not building something for God, but building something with Him, it keeps our hearts soft and our steps steady. And it helps us remember that the best results come from obedience, not effort.

As a church and as followers of Jesus, our mission and strategy begin here. We listen. We trust. We follow. And we let God lead the way.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5–6



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Where am I still relying on my own plans more than God’s voice?

What is God asking me to trust Him with right now that feels uncomfortable or uncertain?

How would my leadership or ministry shift if trust became my first response instead of my last resort?

“FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT DISPENSERS”: A WINNING STRATEGY

“You didn’t choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name.”
John 15:16 (NLT)

In my daily work, I often think about strategy, how to plan and take action to reach certain goals. Over the years, the Lord has lovingly taught me to apply that same intentionality to my spiritual life: to write down my vision, goals, and strategy for my walk with Jesus at the start of each year.

As my family and I continue to grow in Him, He challenges us not only to seek His plan for our own lives, but also to ask for His vision and goals for the body of Christ and for the nations. Each year, I am reminded that God has divine strategies for His people—plans that align with His purposes and reveal His heart.

The word strategy simply means “a plan of action to achieve a particular goal.” So I invite you to pause and ask: What is your goal for 2026? What is God calling you and your family to pursue this year? Have you sought His heart for our community and our nation?

As I’ve prayed over these questions, the Lord placed a simple yet powerful strategy in my heart, found in Galatians 5:22–23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

What if, in 2026, we each chose to become “Fruit of the Spirit Dispensers”? Every day would become an opportunity to pour out the fruit of the Spirit—to show love where there is hurt, joy where there is sorrow, peace where there is conflict, patience where there is frustration, kindness where there is harshness, goodness where there is need, faithfulness where trust is fragile, gentleness where there is pain, and self-control in the face of temptation.

I am reminded of home in Africa, where fruit stands line nearly every street corner, offering nourishment and refreshment in every season. What if we, too, became like those fruit stands, offering the refreshing fruit of the Spirit at every corner of our communities, throughout every season of the year?

This is the Lord’s winning strategy for us in 2026: to be carriers of His presence and dispensers of His fruit. When we do, our families will be nourished, our communities refreshed, and our nations renewed.

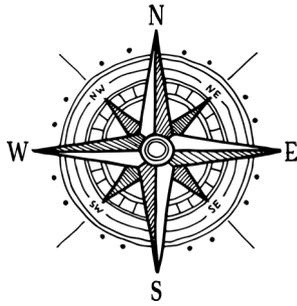


REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Will you choose to be a “Fruit of the Spirit Dispenser” this year?

Will you seek the strategy for your family and our community and become one who refreshes and nourishes those around you?

Will you go through each of your days this month asking and seeking the Lord what fruit of the Spirit those around you need to pick from the tree of your life?



MONTH 2

HOPE AT HOME DISCUSSION

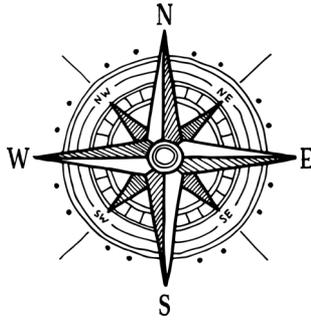
What examples of the early church's mission in Acts inspire you the most, and why?

How do you sense God clarifying or revealing your personal mission or calling right now?

What risks did the early believers take to advance the gospel, and what risks might God be asking you to take?

Month 3

CULTURE



BOOK: DEUTERONOMY

SYNOPSIS

We were never called to hide from culture, we were called to create it. From Genesis 1 where image-bearers are told to fill the earth and subdue it, to Revelation where every tribe, tongue, and nation is singing around one throne, the Bible's story is God raising up a people who don't run from the world but redeem it. Jesus ate with sinners without becoming one. He touched lepers without catching their disease. He entered the mess and left it more holy than He found it. This month we're stepping into that same mandate: not to build Christian bubbles or to blend in until nobody can tell the difference, but to live so fully alive in Jesus that our workplaces, our neighborhoods, our dinner tables start carrying the fragrance of a different Kingdom. A Kingdom where power serves, money blesses, words heal, and love refuses to stay quiet.

DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy is far more than Moses' final speeches; it is the covenant renewal moment where God gathers His people on the brink of the Promised Land and declares, in essence, "This is who I am, this is who you are, and this is the culture of My Kingdom." Through sermons, laws, blessings, and warnings, Moses rehearses God's mighty acts, reminds Israel of their tendency to forget, and lays out the heart of covenant life: love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. What emerges is breathtaking, God is not a neutral deity; He has deep preferences for justice, mercy, holiness, generosity, and wholehearted devotion, and He refuses to share space with idols or oppression. As you read, notice how often Moses says "remember" and "be careful," because this book is designed to shape a people whose very way of life makes the nations ask, "What kind of God makes people live like this?" Deuteronomy is the Old Testament heartbeat of Kingdom culture, and centuries later Jesus will quote it more than any other book when He summarizes the entire Law.

HONOR IS A CHOICE, NOT A FEELING

*“Love one another with brotherly affection.
Outdo one another in showing honor.”
Romans 12:20 ESV*

To create a kingdom culture, we must submit ourselves to the Lord’s request in loving one another, and the way we do this is to honor. How can we then honor those around us? Above all else, we must recognize that honor is not a feeling but a choice. We have a decision in every moment to act in honor or not, and this decision is what sets us apart as children of God. The emotion behind the decision is not what defines us, and that is the hardest part to overcome. Our earthly culture often associates our feelings as what defines us, and, by extension, the temptations and selfish desires of our flesh deceive us into thinking our longing for His presence will never be fully realized.

This perception, in consequence, puts us into a mindset that if we do not have the same desire to honor as we desire to watch our favorite show or meet a friend for coffee, then to act in honor would be to live a lie. How cruel and twisted the enemy can make our lives. To honor, in spite of our feelings, is to offer an obedient heart and will to the Lord. We do not have to feel happiness when staying longer at a friend’s house to clean the dishes for them because the honor is being poured out and the blessing received.

Now, as children of God, we can choose to honor and create a kingdom culture of authentic and honest relationship, a culture where our emotions do not drive us to act, but our wills and reverence in action cause our emotions to follow the honor we pour out. We must look at the selfish desire to not act in honor and speak to it with authority: “You do not define me, and you will submit to the decision of honor I make here and now.”

The hope to look forward to, as we continue to make decisions to honor in spite of our feelings, is to witness our emotions forced to align with our

actionable pursuit, and we will become the refined children of honor and integrity we truly desire to be.

Reflect on areas of your life that the enemy has lied to you that you cannot honor, based on the lack of emotion attached to them.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What are practical ways you can now begin to show honor?

How will our decisions to honor each other, in spite of our feelings, create a kingdom culture?

KINGDOM CULTURE

*“Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is
in heaven.” Matthew 6:10*

Many books have been written on the topic of Kingdom Culture. It’s a massive concept! To be fair, you probably do need a book to explore it fully. But in this short devotion, I’d like to offer a very simplified thought exercise on what I think of when I think about Kingdom Culture. Can I ask you to do something?

Take the next 15 seconds and think about what Heaven looks like.

Go ahead what will it be like, look like, sound like?

Awesome. Thank you for taking the time to do that.

Here’s the devotion: Whatever you were just thinking about... do that here. That’s it. That’s Kingdom Culture. Whatever is happening in Heaven is meant to be happening here on Earth. That’s literally the assignment Jesus gave us when He taught us to pray, “on earth as it is in Heaven.” So when we talk about “Kingdom Culture,” we’re actually talking about the culture of our Father’s house (where He lives) being exemplified and seen in the family of God on Earth (where we live for now anyway).

Revelation 11:15 says “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ...” This is the end goal, Heaven’s culture filling Earth’s reality.

I try to be a pretty practical guy, so to say this plainly: If it’s happening in His domain, it should be happening in ours. And if it’s NOT happening in His domain, it shouldn’t be happening in ours. Think back to what you pictured when you imagined Heaven. Maybe you thought: There’s no sickness. Then we should believe for healing here, not with pressure, but with expectation.

There's no arguing. Well then, maybe we should cut that out here, too. There's no striving for position. Okay! So we can stop fighting for position here as well.

The list goes on: no depression, no fear, no anxiety. Perfect love. Hope that doesn't run out. Worship that doesn't stop. Creativity. Purpose. Purity. Joy. A whole functioning economy of Heaven — but it's pure and all under a perfect King.

Maybe the hardest part of bringing Kingdom Culture into the Earth is simply believing it's possible. But not only is it possible — it's our mandate. It is our assignment as ambassadors of another realm. And if that ever feels too complicated, then just do what we're always supposed to do, go back to Jesus. He already gave us the secret: Look up. See what the Father is doing. And then...just do that.

“The Son can do nothing by Himself; He can only do what He sees His Father doing...” John 5:19



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

If I'm being honest, where am I living more like an earthly citizen than a Kingdom ambassador? What parts aren't matching up?

How can I replicate the atmosphere of my Father's house, honor, joy, unity, healing, love, in my own home and church this week?

KINGDOM CULTURE CARRIERS

*“Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is
in heaven.” Matthew 6:10*

Everywhere we go, we step into a culture shaped by values, rhythms, priorities, and tasks. After traveling in Thailand over the past 2 months this has become especially clear. Each place has its own way of greeting, gathering, celebrating and communicating. Culture is created by what people collectively care about and see value in.

In the same way, the Kingdom of God has its own culture. It is not defined by where you're from, your personality, or preference, but by the character of Jesus. When Jesus teaches us to pray “Your kingdom come,” He is inviting us to bring Heaven's culture into earthly spaces like our homes, workplaces, friendships, churches, and our thoughts. Kingdom culture is not built by accident. It's built by intention. It grows wherever believers choose to value what God values.

The theme I've seen that translates into every language that builds Kingdom culture is a servant heart, humility, forgiveness and love.

Where the world values status, the Kingdom values **SERVANTHOOD**: Servanthood is a characteristic of living like Jesus. Jesus came not to be served but to serve. It calls believers to put others first, showing God's love through that.

Where society prizes self-promotion, the Kingdom elevates **HUMILITY**: Jesus showed us true humility. He washed feet, served others before Himself and laid down his own life for us. Humility builds bridges where pride builds walls. It allows heaven's culture to break through earthly division.

Where people choose offense, the Kingdom offers **FORGIVENESS**: In the kingdom, forgiveness is a foundational thing because as believers,

we are called to extend the same grace that God has shown us. It frees our heart from bitterness and reflects the transformative love of Christ toward others.

Where culture often says hate your enemies, Kingdom says LOVE above all. Love is the language of Heaven. It's how God communicates His heart to the world. Love speaks fluently in every culture, no translation needed. When we love like Jesus, we carry Heaven into every conversation, every act of service, every place we step.

When we live in serving, humility, forgiveness, love and many other attributes of Jesus, we begin to carry the culture of Heaven wherever we go. When Heaven's culture invades the earth through us, people can't help but be drawn to the King Himself.

I believe as we keep our gaze fixed on Him, the Creator of heaven and earth, kingdom culture will flow from us. As we stay captivated by Jesus and what he did for us on the cross, we are Kingdom culture creators.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”
Matthew 6:10



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How can you carry the culture of Heaven into your everyday relationships and routines?

How can you practically bring Heaven's culture into the spaces you influence this week?

What aspects of Jesus's character do I want to reflect more clearly this year?

CREATING CULTURE

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35

cul·ture

the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group.

My grandfather was the youngest of 11 children whose parents were Mexican immigrants. They were raised on the west side of St. Paul, Minnesota where there was a Mexican Catholic Church, Mexican super mercados, Mexican owned restaurants & businesses, and the street signs were all in Spanish. Growing up, we frequently visited the family on the West side & had a yearly family reunion. 43% of the state of Minnesota has Scandinavian heritage/ancestry; (our other grandparents were Swedish, Norwegian, & Irish), but we don't know nearly as much about those cultures as we do about Mexican culture. Jose Cruz took time to tell stories, instill the values, & live a “Mexican” life in front of his family.

It is not impossible to create the culture of Heaven here on earth; we don't have to strive for it, but we do have to be intentional. We don't need to worry about saying just the right thing on social media, or packing out stadiums for church. It starts small and simple, in our homes, & with the people we interact with everyday. I was surrounded with Scandinavian culture, so I caught a little of it, but another culture was intentionally taught, and that is what I became the most like.

“Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”

Romans 12:2 If you want to change the culture around you, start with yourself. Begin each day talking with God; ask Him questions, ask for wisdom, ask Him to make you more like Jesus, ask Him to let you see what He sees, and to love like He loves.

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35

The ripple effect of God’s love is astounding, and if we would truly believe it, and live it, and show it, we will see the culture of Heaven invade this earth in ways we’ve only dreamed of thus far.

Here’s a few more “kingdom culture” verses just for fun. Dig into them for yourself and begin building heaven’s culture in your heart and in your home.

- John 17:15-19
- John 18:36
- Colossians 3:2
- Philippians 3:20
- 2 Peter 1:4
- 1 John 4:4

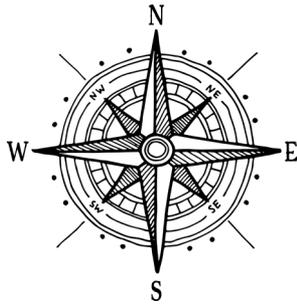


REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What “culture” have I unintentionally absorbed from the world around me, and what culture is God inviting me to intentionally build within my home and heart?

How consistently am I creating space each day for God to transform my thinking, through conversation with Him, Scripture, and practicing love?

Where in my daily life can I intentionally demonstrate the love of Jesus in a way that might ripple outward and influence the culture around me?



MONTH 3

HOPE AT HOME DISCUSSION

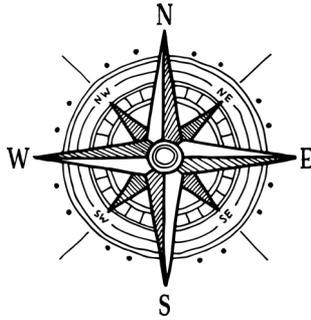
In what ways does Deuteronomy show God shaping a distinct culture for His people rather than isolation or assimilation?

Where in your daily life (work, neighborhood, social media) are you tempted to either hide from culture or blend into it?

What specific cultural issue or environment do you feel called to redeem rather than retreat from?

Month 4

WORSHIP



BOOK: PSALMS

SYNOPSIS

Worship isn't a song we sing; it's a life we surrender. From Genesis altars to Revelation's endless hallelujah, Scripture screams one thing: everything we are exists to glorify God. The way we work, love, eat, forgive, fight, rest—every breath gets to be an offering when it's aimed at His glory. This month we're moving away from the idea that worship only starts when the lights go down and the band kicks in. Real worship starts when we wake up and say, "Jesus, You're worth it all—take every piece of today."

PSALMS

Psalms is God's worship playlist handed to His people so we would never have to guess what honest conversation with Him sounds like. One hundred and fifty Spirit-inspired songs, prayers, laments, celebrations, and battle cries that cover every plane of human experience—mountain-top joy, dark-night-of-the-soul grief, furious questions, quiet trust, and everything in between. This isn't a polite prayer book; it's raw, messy, beautiful humanity talking to a God who can handle our loudest anger and our softest whisper. As you read, notice that nothing is off-limits: doubt, delight, vengeance, praise, depression, deliverance—all of it gets sung back to the One who already knows our hearts better than we do. Jesus quoted Psalms more than any other book because He lived these prayers, and now He invites us to step inside them too. So don't just read Psalms—pray them, sing them, shout them, weep them; let them teach your soul the vocabulary of heaven until worship isn't something you turn on; it's who you become.

A LIFE OF WORSHIP

“Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” **Romans 12:1**

When we hear the word worship, many of us immediately think of singing songs in church. And while music is a powerful expression of worship that God is worthy of, worship is so much more than that. Scripture reveals that worship isn't just a moment, a genre, or a preference, it's a way of life. God doesn't desire only our voices on Sundays; He wants our hearts, our obedience, and our daily devotion with every breath we have. Worship can be defined as honoring and loving something in a selfless way, involving our whole self in praise, thanksgiving, and reverence. We were designed to give that worship fully to God alone. And when it comes to Him, worship cannot be half-hearted. A true life of worship requires counting the cost and becoming fully convinced—body, soul, and spirit—that He is worthy of it all.

A.W. Tozer described worship as “a redeemed heart, occupied with God, expressing itself in adoration and thanksgiving,” adding that true worship is being so deeply in love with God that the idea of transferring affection never even exists. That is what an all-in, sold-out life of worship looks like, and God is worthy of it ALL.

1. Worship Begins With Who God Is

A life of worship flows from a right understanding of God's nature—that He alone is worthy of everything we are. “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things” (Revelation 4:11). When we recognize God as Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer, worship flows naturally. When we minimize God, worship becomes shallow—but when we magnify Him, worship becomes our lifestyle. He is worthy not just because of what He gives, but because of who He is: holy, faithful, and unchanging.

2. Worship Is Lived Through Obedience

True worship is expressed through surrender. “Present your bodies as a

living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1). Worship isn’t built on emotional moments, lights, or even our favorite songs, it’s built on daily obedience. As we abide in God and obey His Word, our ordinary actions; how we speak, forgive, give, work, love, and live become sacred acts of worship.

3. Worship Shapes Our Priorities and Affections

What we worship shapes what we desire. Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21). When God is at the center, our desires shift toward what is eternal rather than temporary. Worship teaches us to trust God in every season—on the mountaintop or in the valley—and to release control into His hands. As Scripture reminds us, “Out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks” (Luke 6:45). What we fill our hearts with will eventually flow out of us and shape who we become.

4. Worship Declares God’s Worth to the World

Our worship is also a witness. Jesus said, “You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14–16). When our lives reflect reverence for God, others see His worth displayed through us. Our faith becomes visible, not just spoken. A life of worship invites others to Jesus and gives glory to the Father. The world is watching and longing to see sons and daughters fully surrendered; living as a living sacrifice and bringing heaven to earth. Let us declare God’s worth with our whole lives, for His glory and for all the earth to see.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

If someone observed my daily life, would they see worship to God reflected in my choices and how I live?

What areas of my life might be holding me back from a full surrender to God?

What areas of my life might compete with God for my attention, affection, or my allegiance?

What are 3 things I can give God praise for right now?

ALLEGIANCE

“These people make a big show of saying the right thing, but their heart isn’t in it. They act like they’re worshipping me, but they don’t mean it. They just use me as a cover for teaching whatever suits their fancy.” **Matthew 15:9**

I’ve always loved sports. I grew up in northern Indiana, about thirty minutes from Chicago, which meant we felt justified rooting for teams from either state. Because of that, I grew up cheering for the Bulls, the Colts, and the Cubs. In my mind, Michael Jordan is the GOAT, Peyton Manning is one of the greats, and the Cubs—well, for most of my life—were the lovable losers. I’m sure I just lost some of you. Some would argue stats, others opinions, and we’d probably end up agreeing to disagree.

I have a few hats and jerseys from my favorite teams that I still enjoy wearing around town. And whenever I do, people make assumptions. Approval or disapproval comes quickly, because a jersey is a public statement. It tells everyone where your allegiance lies. In many ways, worship works the same way.

When we worship, we’re making an outward declaration of loyalty. The world is watching, especially in moments of stress, loss, disappointment, and suffering, to see who or what truly has our allegiance. That’s why people sometimes ask, “How can you still believe in God after everything you’ve been through?” They ask that question because allegiance is rare. Most people change loyalties when things stop working for them.

Too often, God is treated like a genie, useful as long as He delivers. But when He doesn’t perform on demand, people look for another option. Worship, at its core, declares something different. It says: God is who He says He is, regardless of circumstances. My allegiance isn’t built on outcomes; it’s rooted in trust. But here’s the tension: not everyone who sings a song or says the right things has actually given God their allegiance. God isn’t looking for people who just wear the jersey, He wants people who are in the game. When Jesus confronted the Pharisees, this was exactly His issue.

They knew the language. They had the look. They wore the uniform. But their lives didn't match their words.

Matthew 15:9 (MSG) says it this way: “These people make a big show of saying the right thing, but their heart isn't in it. They act like they're worshipping me, but they don't mean it. They just use me as a cover for teaching whatever suits their fancy.” We all know this kind of fan, the one who says, “We lost the game,” or “We've got to do better next week,” as if they were actually on the field. They know the players, the stats, the language, but they've never taken a hit, never trained, never played a minute. They wear the jersey, talk the talk, and stay safely on the couch. Jesus is confronting that same posture in worship. He's calling us out of armchair faith, out of performance without participation, words without obedience, sound without surrender. Worship isn't proven by volume or vocabulary; it's revealed by allegiance. And allegiance is shown when our actions back up our declarations. I don't want to be someone who sings about heaven on Sunday and lives disconnected from God the rest of the week. I want my life to say something clear; that my allegiance belongs to Jesus, and that I won't change my loyalty when it gets uncomfortable or costly. True worship doesn't stay silent. It shows up in how we love people, how we live with integrity, how we speak about God, and how we remain faithful when circumstances don't make sense. Worship is the visible, lived-out declaration that Jesus—not comfort, success, or control—has first place. When we worship, we are telling the world exactly where our loyalty lies. And the question isn't whether we're wearing the jersey, the question is whether we're actually in the game.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

In what areas of your life is it easiest—and hardest—to show that your allegiance truly belongs to Jesus, especially when circumstances are uncomfortable or disappointing?

What's one practical way your worship could move from “wearing the jersey” to “being in the game” this week—through obedience, integrity, or how you love others?

HE WANTS WORSHIPPERS

*“Sing to the Lord a new song. Sing His praises in the assembly of the faithful.
O Israel, rejoice in your Maker. O people of Jerusalem, exult in your King.
Praise His name with dancing, accompanied by tambourine and harp.
For the Lord delights in His people; He crowns the humble with victory!”*
Psalm 149:1–4

There is a wonderful and wondrous exchange of delighting in the Lord and being delighted by Him when you worship. What an awesome thought, that in something solely for His purpose and His glory, He would give us a blessing in return.

Last November, I had the opportunity to be part of a songwriting camp for the local church. Before the camp started, we began with a message where I heard this quote, which fully rocked my perspective on God and worship. It said, “God doesn’t need more songs, He wants more songwriters. He doesn’t really need worship, He wants worshippers.”

You know that moment in your brain when everything makes sense and doesn’t all at once? Yeah, that’s what was happening to me! See, for most of my life, worship was mainly centered on how well I could perform for God, whether that was in how well I behaved, how efficient I was in school or work, or how well I could sound when I sang. My focus was on the thing, not the King. Because of my mindset, I was always so frustrated as to why I felt so distant from God in worship. However, through that message, the heart of God was so evidently revealed to me, that from then on, I changed the way I viewed worship entirely.

Freedom was found when I realized that God does not need the thing, but He wants the person who created the thing, me! Thank you, Jesus, for this reality! God’s strongest delight is not in what you bring, what you do, or even in what you create for Him. His delight is purely in YOU. YOUR worship. YOUR heart. YOUR spirit. YOUR DNA.

We get to enter His gates boldly with praise and thanksgiving because we know just how much we are delighted in by the Father, and that the prerequisite of giving Him what He is worthy of was already fulfilled the day we gave Him our hearts. As you worship, in whatever way you choose to express it, I pray that the delight you take in Him is never based on striving for approval, but always rooted in your identity as His kid. He delights in you!

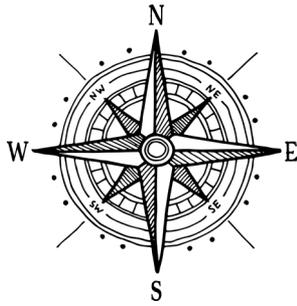


REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How does the reality of knowing you are delighted in change the way you approach worship?

What ways can you shift your mindset in order to enter His gates with freedom and boldness?

How does the concept of being undignified before the Lord feel easier because of this reality?



MONTH 4

HOPE AT HOME DISCUSSION

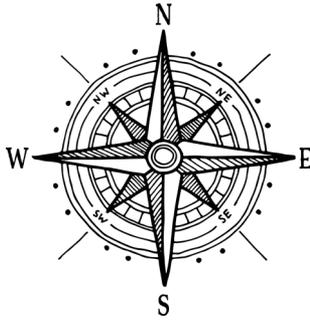
Which Psalm most honestly reflects your current emotional or spiritual state, and why?

How does the raw honesty of the Psalms (lament, anger, joy, doubt) reshape your understanding of what worship can include?

In what ordinary moments of your day could you turn everyday activities into acts of worship?

Month 5

BEATITUDES



BOOK: MATTHEW

SYNOPSIS

The Beatitudes are not a sweet little pep talk; they are the entrance requirements Jesus posted at the front gate of the Kingdom of God and the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount. Blessed are the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the hungry-for-righteousness, the merciful, the pure, the peacemakers, the persecuted; because only hearts that have run out of self-saving strategies are ready to see the Kingdom of God. Jesus is not listing suggestions for super-spiritual people; He is describing the family resemblance of every citizen of heaven. We cannot strut into God's presence on our own terms. The Kingdom belongs to those who know they need Jesus, and the crazy paradox is that the moment we own our lack, the whole treasury of heaven swings wide open. The Beatitudes aren't just beautiful; they're the narrow door we all have to walk through to see God.

MATTHEW 5-7

Matthew 5–7 is Jesus climbing a mountain, sitting down like the new Moses, and delivering the constitution of the Kingdom of Heaven in three chapters. This isn't advice for super-Christians; it's the description of normal Kingdom life, the way things look when King Jesus actually rules in human hearts. Here He flips every worldly value on its head (blessing the broken, redefining greatness as servanthood, raising the bar on anger, lust, marriage, truth-telling, money, worry, and judgment), then hands us the narrow road that leads to life. As you read, feel the weight of the impossible standard, then hear the whisper underneath every command: "I'm not just giving you a law; I'm giving you Myself to live it through you." The Sermon on the Mount is the ultimate Kingdom key; it exposes how far we fall short and, at the same time, invites us to build our entire lives on the words of the One who perfectly embodied them.

THE BEATITUDES PROJECT

Matthew 5: 1-10

The Sermon on The Mount has always been my favorite piece of the bible, and over the years The Beatitudes right at the beginning of this amazing teaching, have come alive to me in a fresh way.

What are the Beatitudes? The Beatitudes are a series of announcements or blessings at the beginning of The Sermon on The Mount. Jesus lays out to his followers what life looks like now that the “Kingdom of Heaven” has come. The Beatitudes and The Sermon on the Mount are in essence “Jesus’ Creed”. His manifesto of what life with God looks like.

The Beatitudes flip the script on what we think blessing/success/achievements look like and invite us to be present to a new way of being in the world.

The most quoted version of the Beatitudes appears in Matthew’s gospel.
Matthew 5: 1-10 NIV

*Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them He said:
“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

What is blessing?

The word we translate as “blessed” in this text means to be “favored, fortunate or happy”. To be blessed was to be a privileged recipient of divine favor. There’s just one problem with Jesus’ announcement.

Poor people don't look favored! Those who mourn aren't fortunate or happy. They're crushed. Their knees buckle under the weight of their own sadness. And today, the meek don't inherit the earth, the meek don't inherit anything. They get walked on, pushed around, and taken advantage of.

Jesus calls blessed all of the things that conventional wisdom would call cursed, unfortunate, or unfavorable. So what is Jesus doing by announcing these as blessings? We may have grown up thinking that the Beatitudes are another biblical list of things to attain to achieve a blessed life. But Jesus is turning this on its head and says that if your life isn't following your instructions, if you are stuck at the bottom, then you've got Me. You might want certainty and answers but what is offered is presence.

God is on your side! You are blessed when ache, lack and longing are your experience. But it doesn't finish there. We are invited into a life of showing mercy, of pure motives from an undivided heart, of peacemaking and being willing to suffer for it. All is grace, but these words aren't passive. Within the Beatitudes is the invitation to live out this way of Jesus, we can change the world....or at least our little piece of it.

The Beatitudes are an invitation to Encounter God's presence, To be Transformed by His presence and to Embody the way of living with Jesus and the upside-down Kingdom.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Matthew uses the phrase "Poor in Spirit" whereas in Luke's account Jesus simply says "Blessed are the Poor". Have a think about what poverty of spirit is and if you've experienced times in your life when you've identified with that.

Try memorizing your favorite version of The Beatitudes. It's not a long scripture and it's a good prayer and meditation practice. We engage the Scriptures so that we might become more and more the kind of people God intended us to be all along.

If you'd like to know more about something I curated called The Beatitudes Project please visit Thebeatitudesproject.com

Thanks, Stu G

BEATITUDES // LIVING THE BLESSING

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
For they shall be filled. *Matthew 5:6*

- **Definition:** A state of supreme happiness, fulfillment, or “blessedness”. The word comes from the Latin *beatus*: “happy” or “blessed”.
- **Nature:** Typically understood as a spiritual or ultimate happiness that is deep, authentic, and lasting, often associated with a right relationship with God or living a righteous life.
- **Qualities:** These qualities often seem counterintuitive to worldly success (e.g., blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, the persecuted) but lead to true fulfillment.

‘Beatitudes’ is ascribed to two portions of scripture:

1. The first section Matthew 5:3-12 of our Lord’s lengthier, multi-chapter Sermon On The Mount (5:1 – ‘He went up on the mountain’) through 7:29;
2. Luke’s account, sometimes referred to as the Sermon On The Plain (Luke 6:17 ‘..He came down with them and stood on a level place..’). The sermon concludes at the end of that chapter - 7:49.

Some think Matthew and Luke were writing about the same one event. I support the opinion Jesus logically would have presented similar critical/profound truths to more than one group of followers during his ministry.

RECOMMENDATION: Read the Beatitudes within their full ‘Mount’ and ‘Plain’ sermons: Matt 5:1-7:29 and Luke 6:17- 49. I don’t know that the Beatitudes were ever intended to be carved out of their context. Those blessings are framed by the fullness of some tough truths, for our success and benefit.

This morning as I was praying I felt the Lord point to the truth that our lives, in His will and by His grace, positions us to be living epistles: 2 Cor 3.... clearly you are an epistle of Christ,...

Considering that, I humbly put forth my opinion that we can, and ought to be, living beatitudes to a world desperate and hungry to see the beauty of the Kingdom in all things: in meekness, in mercy, in our hunger for God, and yes, even in persecutions and hard times.

I personally love this particular beatitude – a posture and a promise: Matthew 5:6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.”

I want to be hungry for God, for His plans and purposes. I want my life built upon the solid rock so that WHEN, not IF the storms of life come, I’ll be found standing, in Him, His timing, His will. That’s Matthew 7:24-29, spoken by our Lord minutes after He had ‘beatitued’ His listeners.

Being hungry and thirsty for righteousness is a blessing. Making and keeping ourselves hungry is our challenge.

Prayer: Lord, I want Your will for my life, each and every day. I offer my will to You as a reasonable sacrifice. You’re not asking too much. You gave it all.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What thrills you? Excites you? Captures your attention? How’s that working out for you?

What might be something that could be adjusted in your walk with the Lord?

Which of the Beatitudes stands out to you?

BEATITUDES // FROM ORDINARY TO HOLY

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:3

The day Jesus sat down on that hillside, something sacred happened. Something quiet, something gentle. Crowds gathered not because they were important, but because they were hungry. Not for food, but they were hungry for hope. They were ordinary people with ordinary worries, people like you and me.

And Jesus looked at them. Really looked at them. He didn't see categories, or labels, or what society said they were worth. He saw their hearts. He saw stories. He saw the ache beneath the surface that no one else noticed. And He began to speak words that lifted the weight off their shoulders. Words that told them they mattered, and ones that offered a new kind of kingdom. One where honor wasn't earned by status, but it was given through surrender. Where value wasn't tied to perfection, but it was tied to His presence.

The people who sat around Him that day weren't spiritual experts. They were the ones who felt like they were falling behind. The ones who showed up with questions and maybe even sometimes wondered if God even noticed them anymore. And yet, Jesus called them blessed. He called their lives holy ground.

That hillside reminds us that God's Kingdom is not built on polished resumes or flawless faith. It is built on hearts that simply show up. Tired, honest, and hopeful for something more. Jesus still speaks to people just like those gathered that day... and people just like you.

Where you feel ordinary, He declares purpose.
Where you feel unseen, He draws near.
Where you feel empty, He whispers that you are blessed. Not because of what you can offer, but because of who He is.

He isn't waiting for your most confident version. He meets you in the version that woke up this morning, with doubts, hopes, and everything in between. The hillside wasn't a stage. It was a place where the forgotten were seen, and where the ordinary discovered they were deeply loved. And He sits beside you the same way today. Close, patient, unhurried, and calling the very places you hide.....blessed. The hillside is still open. And He is still calling the ordinary into something holy.

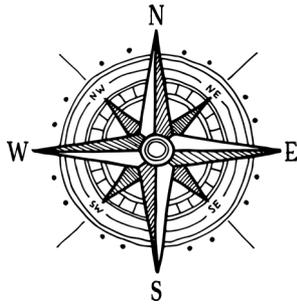


REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What part of your life feels “ordinary” or overlooked, and how might Jesus be speaking blessing over it?

Where do you feel tired, fragile, or not enough, and what would it look like to let Jesus sit with you there?

How might your day change if you believed Jesus meets you as you are, not as you think you should be?



MONTH 5

HOPE AT HOME DISCUSSION

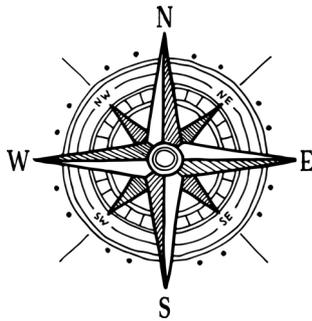
How does Jesus' description of "blessed" people reveal our need for Him rather than self-sufficiency?

In what area of life are you currently experiencing poverty of spirit, mourning, or persecution—and how might that be an invitation to Kingdom blessing?

How does the Sermon on the Mount both expose your inability to live perfectly and point you to Jesus as the One who lived it for you?

Month 6

KEYS TO THE KINGDOM



BOOK: GALATIANS

SYNOPSIS

Jesus said He would build His church and the gates of hell wouldn't stand a chance, then He handed the keys to a bunch of messy fishermen and said, "You unlock it." The Kingdom of God doesn't break in through bigger stages or louder platforms; it breaks in through surrendered hearts that dare to live the Sermon on the Mount in real time. Faith like a child, forgiveness that refuses to keep records, prayer that actually moves mountains, love that lays down its life; those are the keys. This month we're not waiting for heaven to come down. We're picking up the keys Jesus already gave us and walking straight into the locked places: our families, our cities, our fears, our future, and watching the Kingdom swing wide open.

GALATIANS

Galatians is Paul snatching the keys of the Kingdom back from every religious gatekeeper who ever tried to add a single extra rule to what Jesus already finished. He declares that the door to God's presence swings wide open by faith alone—no circumcision, no law-keeping, no pedigree, no performance—just trusting the crucified and risen Son. This letter is a Kingdom manifesto: the old way of proving yourself is dead, and the new way of living as already-accepted sons and daughters is alive by the Spirit. As you read, watch Paul hand you the same keys Jesus gave the church: the key of grace that unlocks adoption, the key of faith that unlocks power, the key of love that unlocks fruit that law could never grow. Galatians isn't just defending the gospel; it's arming us to walk out of every prison of rules and start unlocking Heaven on earth for everyone still trying to earn what God has already freely given.

ACCESS TO THE KINGDOM

*“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,
but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members
of the household of God.” Ephesians 2:19*

We’ve all heard the phrase, “You have a seat at the table.” What a true and beautiful image. There is a place set with your name on it that has been prepared just for you. It’s not a place you have to earn, prove you’re worthy of, or strive for. You simply have to show up and take your seat.

I remember driving down a beautiful back road one day this fall, feeling so overwhelmed by His goodness. With tears streaming down my cheeks, I uttered a simple prayer, “Thank you so much, Jesus, for a seat at the table that’s not dependent on how hard I work for it.” His response still brings tears to my eyes: “Sweet girl, you don’t just have a seat at the table. You have a room in My house. You have a couch you can curl up on beside Me and find rest. You aren’t just visiting for a meal where you sit at the table and then get up to leave. You’re My daughter. You have access to the entire house.”

Romans 8:15–17 says, “You will never feel orphaned, for as He rises up within us, our spirits join Him in saying the words of tender affection, ‘Beloved Father!’ For the Holy Spirit makes God’s fatherhood real to us as He whispers into our innermost being, ‘You are God’s beloved child!’ And since we are His true children, we qualify to share all His treasures, for indeed we are heirs of God Himself. And since we are joined to Christ, we also inherit all that He is and all that He has.”

Orphans don’t have keys to inherit, but children do. We are adopted into the family of God, and as His children we have access to the inheritance of all He is and all He has. We have access to the Kingdom. God doesn’t want us to show up as orphans who lack the natural advantages that come with being a son or daughter. We have ownership and the privilege of representing our Father.

He's given us keys. These keys allow us to walk into the house freely, talk strategy with our Dad, rest our heads on His shoulder, open the fridge and take the nourishment we need for the day, sit at the table, retreat to our room, and invite people in.

You are not an orphan. You are an adopted co-heir with Christ—a beloved son or daughter—and your Father has proudly offered you keys to His Kingdom. These keys give you access to limitless resources, healing, strategy, peace, joy, rest, confidence, and more.

Oh, let us not just know this with our minds, but let it take root in our hearts. My prayer is that this truth shapes the way we show up every day... in the workplace, in our church, with our families, and in the most intimate moments of simply resting in the arms of your Father.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

In what areas of your life are you still approaching God like an orphan instead of a beloved child with full access to His house?

What “keys” has God placed in your hands that you haven’t fully used or stepped into yet?

How would your daily posture change if you truly believed you had a room in God’s house and unlimited access to Him?

THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

*“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” **Matthew 16:19***

Peter stood at the threshold of revelation, dust clinging to his sandals, when Jesus posed the question that would change everything: “But who do you say that I am?” Not “who do others say?” But you, what do you believe in the depths of your being? “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

In that moment, heaven broke through. The Father Himself had whispered truth into Peter’s heart, and with Peter’s declaration, Jesus extended something extraordinary: KEYS. A kingdom principle that still echoes through eternity: when we truly recognize Jesus as King and yield to His rule, He entrusts us with the keys of ACCESS to His Kingdom and AUTHORITY to bring that Kingdom to earth.

KINGDOM ACCESS

The moment we declare Jesus as Lord - truly declare it, not just with our lips but with the surrender of our lives - the Kingdom door swings open. This isn’t earned through our performance or perfected through flawless theology. It’s revelation. When we align ourselves with that truth, we’re ushered through a doorway that was locked to us before, granted entrance into God’s ruling reality. Through Jesus, the barrier of sin is removed, the veil is torn in two, and we gain direct access to the Father’s presence.

Access means we’re no longer outsiders looking in. We become chosen sons and daughters, citizens of heaven, ambassadors of the King, while still on earth. We move from religion’s rules and rituals to relationship - brought inside, into intimacy, into partnership with God Himself.

With access to the kingdom, we’re no longer subject only to earthly limitations. We can draw on heaven’s resources, operate by heaven’s power, and see from heaven’s perspective.

We step into a reality where heaven touches earth, where the impossible becomes possible, and where we partner with the Father to make earth a more heavenly place!

Without access, we're locked out - separated from the very source of life and authority. But with it, we shift from servant, to friend, to co-heir. Like Jesus, we see what the Father is doing and we replicate it on earth (John 5:19-20). We don't just learn about the kingdom, we experience it, and it changes us from the inside out. Access requires what Peter demonstrated, simple, declarative faith. "You are the Christ" and the door swings open. That access deepens through a lifetime of surrender and choosing His ways over ours, moment by moment. But Jesus didn't stop at swinging open the door. He gives access and then extends AUTHORITY. Access is the invitation; authority is the commission. The same revelation that grants us entrance also equips us for influence. Jesus invites us to operate within the kingdom, to represent His rule, to carry His authority into every area of our lives.

This is where many of us stall. We gratefully accept access - salvation, forgiveness, eternal life. But we leave the second key untouched, uncertain of how to operate within it. Here's the tension: people often want positions of authority before they're ready for the responsibility of authority. But kingdom authority doesn't work that way. Jesus grants authority to those who have proven faithful in small things, who have walked through refining fires, who have learned to die to themselves and pick up their cross daily.

Authority in the kingdom isn't about spiritual bravado. It's about maturity. It's about a life so aligned with Jesus that we can be trusted to represent Him accurately. When Jesus transmits authority to us, He's appointing us as His representatives, His ambassadors. As we walk faithfully in the access He's given, growing in intimacy and obedience, He entrusts us with increasing authority - not all at once, but as we faithfully steward each season. When we walk in His ways faithfully, in obedience, we move with heaven's backing. We bind what heaven binds. We loose what heaven looses.

I've seen this play out in quiet, unremarkable moments. Praying over a friend paralyzed by anxiety and watching peace settle where fear had reigned, binding the enemy's lies, loosing the truth of God's presence. Speaking forgiveness into a situation bound by bitterness and shame, watching someone step into freedom they thought was impossible.

Standing in the gap for a marriage on the brink, binding the forces of division, loosing reconciliation and hope.

This authority isn't reserved for prayer closets or church services - it's meant for boardrooms and kitchen tables, for difficult conversations and daily decisions. Every arena of life becomes an opportunity to represent the King and bring heaven's reality to earth. The keys work together. Access without authority leaves us as spectators in the Kingdom. Authority without access is impossible. But when we hold both keys - when we declare Jesus as Lord and walk in obedience to His ways - we become dangerous to the gates of hell. We become agents of heaven's invasion into earth's darkness. We step into circumstances waiting to be turned on, closed in, and set free.

Peter didn't have all the answers. He would stumble spectacularly. But he had revelation, and he had surrender. That was enough for Jesus to entrust him with the keys. And in time, through failure and restoration, Peter grew into the authority he'd been given - mature, tested, ready. It's still enough.

Who do I say that He is? And once I've answered that question with my whole life, will I dare to pick up the keys He's offering and use them for His glory? The kingdom is waiting. The door is open. The keys are extended. Will we step into both the access AND the authority Jesus died to give us?



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Which key do you find yourself hesitating to pick up - access or authority? Are you living as an outsider to the Kingdom, keeping God at arm's length rather than stepping fully into the intimacy and partnership He offers? Or have you gratefully accepted access but left the second key untouched, uncertain how to walk in the authority Jesus has extended to you in your everyday life?

What would it look like in your specific context - your workplace, your home, your relationships - to bind what heaven binds and loose what heaven looses?

Where is God inviting you to represent His Kingdom this week? What anxiety needs to be bound with peace? What shame needs to be loosed with forgiveness? What division needs heaven's reconciliation?

ACCESS GRANTED

*“I give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven.
Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you
loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 16:19*

What a statement, what a declaration, what an honor, what a responsibility it was to hear these words of Jesus. Can you imagine being Peter and hearing Jesus say to you, “I give you the keys of the kingdom!” In our vernacular, that is equal to someone saying, “I give you the keys to the city, to the nation.” This simple phrase carried great authority and responsibility. Originally it was spoken to the apostle Peter, but it is also spoken to us as the Church. We, as the body of Christ, have been given the keys to the kingdom. Keys are symbolically and practically speaking of access and authority. We have been given access and authority.

One of the keys of the kingdom we have been given is access to health and wealth. In heaven there is no sickness and no poverty. Deuteronomy 7:15 says, “The LORD will take away from you all sickness...” Health and healing is a key of the kingdom. Healing is a mystery, not a mastery, but what never changes is that healing is a key to the kingdom that has been placed in our hands.

Deuteronomy 8:18 says, “Remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.” I had an open vision one time where the Lord showed me a room with every currency stacked on shelves along a wall, and I was told you have access to this room. We have been given the keys to produce wealth, and it is accessed through the key called generosity.

Finally, the Lord has given us keys called authority. Luke 10:19 says, “Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” We, as the church, have been given authority over every enemy. This is a kingdom key we have been given, but we must exercise it.

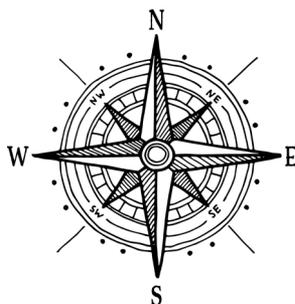
Friends, being given keys to the kingdom is for us to exercise our authority and to unlock access to health and wealth. We, the Church, have been given the keys to the kingdom. Keys are declarations, not decorations. Our responsibility is to use the keys we have been given to bless those around us. We, as a Church, have been given the keys to the kingdom.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How can you exercise the authority you have been given?

What key do you hold that you have not used lately?



MONTH 6

HOPE AT HOME DISCUSSION

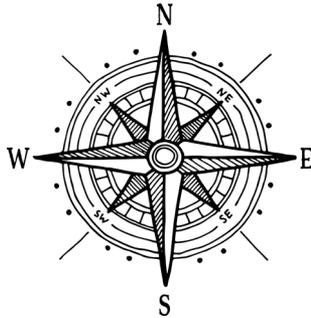
Where in your life are you still tempted to earn God's favor through performance rather than resting in grace?

How does Paul's strong warning against adding anything to the gospel (like circumcision or rules) speak to modern ways we might unintentionally turn grace into performance?

How does the message of freedom in Galatians empower you to unlock Kingdom reality in locked places (family, fears, city)?

Month 7

GENERATIONS



BOOKS: EZRA/NEHEMIAH

SYNOPSIS

God never works in one generation and then clocks out; He's writing a story that spans grandkids to great-grandkids. From Abraham hearing "through your offspring all nations will be blessed" to Psalm 145 promising "one generation will commend Your works to another," Scripture is obsessed with relay-race faith. The Kingdom advances when gray hair refuses to retire, young believers refuse to despise wisdom, and every age locks arms instead of drawing lines. This month we're killing every spirit of generational isolation. We're becoming a people where kids prophesy, dads repent, moms dream again, and grandparents still carry the boldest faith in the room; together, redeeming people, cities, and nations until the earth looks like the family of God

EZRA/NEHEMIAH

Ezra and Nehemiah are not just comeback stories for exiles; they're masterclasses in generational obedience and Kingdom building that outlives your own lifetime. These two books follow a remnant who return from Babylon with zero illusions that they'll see the full glory of the temple or the final security of Jerusalem's walls—yet they lay stones, teach Scripture, and rebuild gates anyway, because they know the promise isn't just for them, it's for their kids and their kids' kids. Here we watch God raise up priests who re-establish worship, leaders who re-covenant the people to holiness, and everyday families who choose faithfulness in a culture that's moved on without them. As you read, feel the weight of generational thinking: every prayer you pray, every offering you give, every boundary you re-set is a brick in a wall your grandchildren might one day lean on when the battle gets fierce. Ezra and Nehemiah hand us a Kingdom key most people drop—the key of long obedience in the same direction, trusting that the God who finishes what He starts is perfectly okay using our chapter to set up victory for future generations.

GENERATIONAL LEGACY

One generation shall commend Your works to another.” Psalm 145:4

Generational legacy has everything to do with family, whether we like what we inherited or not. Throughout the Old Testament, God pays close attention to lineage. People are often introduced by who came before them because what is passed down matters, faith, obedience, even brokenness. Every generation leaves something for the next. Legacy isn't a trendy word; it's the accumulated weight of lives lived before us and the foundation future generations will stand on. God has always intended legacy to shape those who come after us. Not everyone comes from a past worth celebrating. You can't rewrite what came before you. (My family knew dysfunction long before it had a name.) But in Jesus, the story doesn't end with what you were handed. The gospel doesn't erase the past, it redeems it. What was fractured can be healed. What was broken can be rebuilt. And what was passed down in pain can stop with you. In Christ, you are not trapped by history; you are invited to help write a new one. No one is exempt. Every season of life is forming a legacy right now. Every decision, prayer, and act of obedience reaches further than you realize.

Exodus 3:15 (NKJV) “This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.” Psalm 78:3–4 (TPT) “We will not hide [His works] from the rising generation.” God calls us to remember the story, who He has been and what He has done, so the next generation doesn't have to guess at His faithfulness. Remembering becomes the floor we stand on as we decide what to build. Legacy requires intention, prayer, repentance, courage, and sometimes the breaking of generational patterns.

When John and I were first married, the Holy Spirit led us to examine the legacy we had inherited. Some of it was rich. Some of it needed healing. We spent many hours on our knees asking God what should stay and what needed to stop with us. The pruning was painful—but what God birthed, and continues to grow, is something only He could do. Four things I have learned about legacy: **1: You have to identify it.** Ask God what He has actually called you to build, not what sounds impressive or what others expect. you were created on purpose, with specific gifts, for this moment.

Ask Him what story He is writing through your life for the sake of future generations. **2. You have to live it:** Legacy isn't something you declare, it's something you demonstrate in the ordinary, unseen places. How you love, forgive, repent, and endure matters. The Jesus you follow today becomes the faith others inherit tomorrow. There are eyes on your life. What will they learn? **3. You have to tell it:** Faith grows when stories are told (Psalm 145:4). Tell them how God showed up. Tell them when it was hard. Tell them why you still trust Him. Silence robs the next generation of courage. **4. You have to teach it:** Legacy will happen one way or another, but I would rather be intentional. I would rather disciple the people God has placed in my care than let the world shape them. My children never really knew my dad, but I can teach them his legacy of generosity, holding loosely what God has given and giving freely to those in need. Legacy lives when it is taught on purpose. Some of the Legacies I Am Intentional to Live, Tell, and Teach

A legacy of home: where people feel safe, welcomed, and known.

A legacy of His presence: learning to recognize and remain with God.

A legacy of prayer: not as a last resort, but a way of life.

A legacy of family: built on covenant, grace, and commitment.

A legacy of table: always making room for one more.

A legacy of story: telling the truth of God's faithfulness.

A legacy of others: living outward and making space for the next generation.

If there is one thing I hope you take from this, it's this: your life matters more than you think. Your faithfulness matters. Your obedience matters. You don't have to be perfect, you just have to be willing. Choose to let Jesus redeem what you were handed. Choose to live the story you want told long after you're gone. And choose to build a legacy that points every generation forward to the faithfulness of God.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What parts of your family story do you sense God inviting you to redeem, heal, or bring to an end?

Where might God be calling you to live more intentionally so your everyday faith becomes a gift to the next generation?

What story about God's faithfulness do you need to begin telling, so those coming after you don't miss it?

A LIVING LEGACY

“Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation.” Joel 1:3

I know God cares for us as individuals; He wants us to live victoriously through His Spirit. But I believe this life isn't about us. In fact, I'm convinced that God cares more about the legacy we leave to other generations, especially our family.

There are so many ways we can leave a generational legacy. There are three specific ways that come to mind at this moment: character, spiritual, and financial.

I remember when our kids were growing up, we had a written message on the refrigerator; it read, “Character is best revealed in an unguarded moment.” Now if that doesn't mess with you on a daily basis, I don't know what will. I truly believe character is taught through example. I was always amazed by my own father's character, and it both challenged and motivated me to be the same for my family. What's interesting is that the Bible suggests that hardship can produce endurance, which in turn builds character. I'll share how God did that for us next.

Spiritually, Leslie and I believed it was important to have our children experience God's Word, worship, and prayer—not just at church but also in our home. They needed to have their own faith, and not just their parents'. We all had the opportunity to trust God fully when our oldest son fought for his life after being diagnosed with leukemia. Our kids got to see miraculous acts of God almost on a daily basis. The ultimate miracle is that, though the doctors gave him very little hope, he's alive today, nearly 23 years later. Those stories will glorify God through countless generations. It will be a foundation of faith for all of us. And yes, it built character.

Many of us are familiar with Proverbs 22:6: “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

I wonder how many have read verse 7: “The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender.” Now that’s interesting. Financially, I believe God is

warning us as parents not to be conformed to this world and its ways. God led us decades ago to get debt-free, and our children knew it by seeing us sacrifice through many of their growing-up years. They saw us budget and challenge them with contentment. I think Rebecca, at a very young age, showed how this went to the next generation when she proclaimed one day that when she gets married, her husband will love Jesus and be on a budget. While that certainly gave us a good laugh, we also understood that she had been watching and listening. That’s generational legacy.

It’s so important to share our experiences, along with the truths that God shows and teaches us through it all, to the next generation. We can’t let them die with us.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

In what ways can you pass down a generational legacy?

What evidence of this have you already seen in your own family?

GOD IS ALL ABOUT THE GENERATIONS

“One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty.... They tell of the power of your awesome works”

Psalm 145:4–6

God is all about the generations. He’s all about the long game. He sees the **G**end from the beginning, and He is the Alpha and Omega, which means the beginning and the end. So many times we fixate on our own story—what we’re doing right now, what we are supposed to do, how things affect us personally. Me me me! My calling, my purpose, my agenda, my dreams, my vision, etc. However, God is all about the whole story, the whole community, and generations after generations. In Psalm 145 it says that one generation will commend (praise) God to another. It means that we will tell of His works, which is actually prophetic! As a prophetic community, us telling stories of God’s work in our lives becomes someone else’s prophecy. What God is doing in this generation will be like the foundation floor of what He wants to do in the next generation as His kingdom is advanced.

Anna and Simeon, two elderly people worshipping and praying in the temple, received prophetic words from God, then saw baby Jesus when Mary and Joseph walked into the temple to dedicate Him. Can you imagine? This is the highlight of their lives: to see and prophesy to Mary and Joseph about Jesus. But just one generation later, the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh on the day of Pentecost, with signs, wonders, and miracles following. Their highlight—the Holy Spirit upon them—was God’s foundation for that next generation. This does not minimize their importance. They were on the cutting edge of what God was doing in their time, and without them Mary and Joseph would not have had their prophetic words to carry them into the next season.

All of this was written down by Luke, who took it upon himself to write an in-depth account of all that God had done.

I love Luke's account because he makes sure his audience knows that everyone received the opportunity to experience and be a part of what God was doing—young to old.

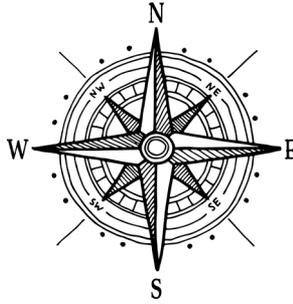
An older priest named Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth, Mary a young teen, and her husband Joseph were all a part of God's marvelous works. Not only that, but they commended God's works to another generation by telling what God did to their children and those around them. Can you imagine for a moment a young boy with a few loaves and fish later telling his children and grandchildren the amazing miracle that happened with his little offering and Jesus' blessing? God is all about including every generation, and that's our cue, right? Be the fellowship and community of believers in this generation, posturing ourselves to join in what God is doing now and commending His amazing deeds to the next generation!



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What is something that God has done in your life that is worthy of praise?

Who is someone—younger or older—who could benefit from hearing the story of God's work in your life? Write it down and make a plan to tell them this week.



MONTH 7

HOPE AT HOME DISCUSSION

What examples of generational faithfulness (or unfaithfulness) in Ezra/Nehemiah challenge or encourage you?

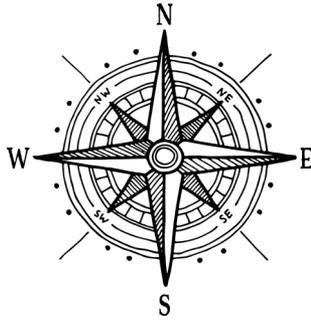
How are your current choices (prayer, giving, obedience) building something that will outlast your lifetime?

Where have you seen generational isolation in the church, and how can you help bridge that gap?

What legacy of faith do you want the next generation to inherit from you, and what step can you take this month toward that?

Month 8

COMMUNITY



BOOKS: CORINTHIANS

SYNOPSIS

Christianity was never designed to be a solo sport. From the upper room where they were all together in one place to the countless “one another” commands scattered across the New Testament, the Bible keeps shouting: we’re in this together. The Kingdom doesn’t fully show up in lone rangers; it shows up when broken, ordinary people choose to stay at the table, carry each other’s burdens, speak truth in love, and refuse to let anybody walk alone. This month we’re stepping into real, messy, glorious, life-giving community because that’s where Jesus loves to have dinner, heal hearts, and change the world—one living room, one gathering, one shared meal at a time.

CORINTHIANS

If you want to know what real Spirit-filled, cross-shaped, multi-generational community actually looks like in the middle of the mess, plant yourself in Paul’s two letters to the Corinthians. First Corinthians is the family meeting nobody wants to have (divisions, immorality, lawsuits, gift-envy, disorder at the table), yet Paul refuses to walk away because the gospel is strong enough to heal even the most dysfunctional people. In chapters 12–14 Paul argues that every member matters, every gift is needed, and love never fails. Then 2 Corinthians feels like the tear-stained follow-up letter after the hard conversation actually worked; Paul opens his heart wide about suffering, weakness, reconciliation, and generous giving, proving that the power of the new covenant isn’t in having it all together but in a people who keep choosing humility, forgiveness, and open-handed love when it costs them everything. Together these letters destroy every fantasy of a perfect church and replace it with something far better: a family of forgiven sinners who bear with one another, boast in their weaknesses, and display the beauty of Jesus precisely because they stay at the table when it’s awkward. Corinth proves there’s no community too broken for the gospel to make stunningly whole.

CALLED INTO COMMUNITY

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”
Hebrews 10:24–25

When we moved to Tennessee to be close to family and become part of Hope UC, we left behind jobs, a church we loved, and the friends we had made over several years. Like many who step into a new season, one of our biggest questions was: What will community look like now? What will it look like here? What we discovered was a group of people who, though different in many ways, were also surprisingly alike. We came from different places, carrying different traditions, vocations, cultures, and ideas. Yet somehow, we found ourselves forming a community—something real, something alive, something we were all longing for.

If you ever doubt that people deeply desire community, or “common unity”, think about this: 6–7.

By itself, it means nothing. But it spread everywhere. It makes people laugh, raises questions, and somehow creates connection. You can be in a crowd of strangers, and when those numbers pop up, suddenly everyone joins in the motion together. A moment of unity from something so simple.

Or think about Forrest Frank and the dance that goes with Your Way’s Better. I’ve seen people of all ages, cultures, and states do that dance. I bet you can picture it now. These might not fit the traditional definition of community, but they have brought groups of people together. They’re recognizable. They pull people in. They create shared experience.

But community is meant to be more than fun moments, it’s meant to bring truth, life, and belonging. I want to be part of creating that kind of community: one shaped by Christ, filled with His presence, and open enough that others can find safety and connection within it.

God placed each of us on the earth to reflect His holiness and brilliance. Isaiah 61:3 says we are “a display of His splendor.” 1 Peter 2:9 reminds us that we are “a chosen people... God’s special possession,” created to declare His praises—the One who called us out of darkness into His wonderful light.

Is community perfect?

Not yet.

But is it worth it?

Absolutely.

Because when we come together—encouraging one another, calling out the good in one another, and lifting one another toward love and good deeds—we display the splendor of the God who brought us together in the first place.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

In your current season of life, what does “showing up” for community look like for you? (Is it consistency, vulnerability, serving, listening, inviting others in?)

Think about the people who helped you feel welcomed when you first arrived somewhere new. What did they do that made a difference, and how can you offer that same gift to someone else?

Hebrews 10:24–25 calls us to “spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” What is one practical way you can encourage someone this week?

Do you believe God has placed you in this community “to display His splendor” (Isaiah 61:3)?

What part of His character do you feel called to reflect?

CREATED FROM A CONVERSATION

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.’”

Genesis 1:26

If you close your eyes and listen closely, you can almost hear it. Not the noise of life, the whimper of deferred hope, or the bustling of dreams. You can hear something older, something deeper. You can hear the echo of a conversation that predates oceans, galaxies, and gravity. Before there were sunrises, God was already speaking, and He wasn't talking to an empty universe. He spoke within Himself: Father, Son, and Spirit came face to face to face. From that ancient fellowship came the words that would forever call out to us.

Genesis 1:26 tells us that “...God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.’” Did you catch that? Creation began with a conversation. A lonely God did not make you.

You were dreamed up inside a relationship so perfect, so joyful, so overflowing that it could not keep it to itself. You were born from community and designed to live in community. It was your destiny with community that became the foundation of the world.

No wonder your heart lifts when someone remembers your name. That's why laughter feels like medicine and why the right people can make you feel more alive. That also explains why isolation bruises the soul; you weren't built to carry life alone.

I must admit, when left to my own devices, I default to isolation. I genuinely love people, but I often dread the interaction in advance. It's usually in hindsight that I love it. My wife would make “fun plans,” she'd say, “with friends.” I used to make her life miserable for planning my social calendar. In the days leading up to the evening, I would be passive-aggressive, then active-aggressive, and meaner than I care to admit.

Once we arrived, I'd smile widely, laugh, and act as if I had been looking forward to the night. Then, as God would have it, I actually enjoyed the night. On the drive home, I'd rant about what a great time I had. My wife wasn't impressed. After 30 years of marriage, I can now temper my pre-exposure dread. After all, I was built for this.

When I am the most healthy version of myself and most aligned with God's heart, community fuels me. It is not always neat and polished. It's never easy. Sometimes it tastes like filet mignon. Other times it tastes like boiled asparagus. However, it is always sacred and nourishes the soul.

Every time you take the risk to open your life and refuse to hide, you are stepping back into the design that has always been on you. You're echoing that first divine conversation.

You're reflecting the God who said "Us."

Hear this gently: your soul remembers where it came from, and it longs to return. Community is not a place to belong. It's your origin story.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What does it change for you to realize you were created out of a conversation—born from divine relationship rather than divine isolation?

Where do you sense God inviting you to open your life again—whether through friendship, church, or simply letting someone in?

What act of community (encouraging, forgiving, listening, serving) helps you most reflect the image of the God who said, "Let Us"?

LIVE LIFE TOGETHER

*“Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.
Live in harmony with one another.” Romans 12:15–16*

When I was a kid, my family moved around a lot. In fact, I went to 9 different schools from kindergarten to 12th grade. I was often the “new kid,” which meant building community was tough... I guess you can say it gave me “thick skin,” but it also made me realize how important community is and what I needed to do to build it!

Webster’s Dictionary defines “community” as a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society... Community might happen because of a location—like the same school or workplace. It might happen while enjoying the same interest, like playing pickleball, working out, or volunteering for the same charity event or fundraiser.

How does the Bible define community?

In Romans 12:15–16, the Bible says, “Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another.”

That means we are supposed to **LIVE LIFE TOGETHER!!**

Community is about something bigger—it’s about linking arms together, strengthening each other, challenging each other, working toward big goals together, and making things happen that we can’t do by ourselves.

As important as community is, it is not always easy... like when I moved around as a kid, it can take work! Here are two important things I have learned about building community:

Be Intentional: Community doesn’t usually happen by accident. We each have to be intentional to make a call, send the text, schedule a lunch, attend a home group... we only have ourselves to blame if we aren’t in “community.”

Understand that community takes time: Community doesn't happen overnight. It takes time to build community, make memories, and experience life together. The more you share life with each other in community, the stronger the community becomes!

When we're in community together, especially in a church environment, it creates a space for us to grow as individuals AND as a community. In a home group, you might encourage someone else in their gifting, or someone might offer a different point of view regarding a situation you're walking through. In our church services, we are sitting under the same teaching and same revelation as a community! That keeps us moving in the same direction and focusing on the same things!

Community is IMPORTANT but takes time and being intentional, so why not start TODAY with one action that will build a stronger community for tomorrow!

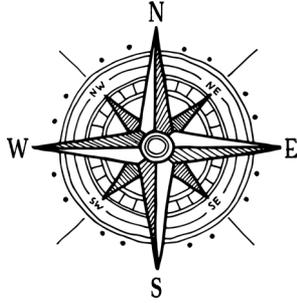


REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What is one thing you can do this month to build community?

Think about one person you can invite to be in community with this month...

When will you get their number to connect?



MONTH 8

HOPE AT HOME DISCUSSION

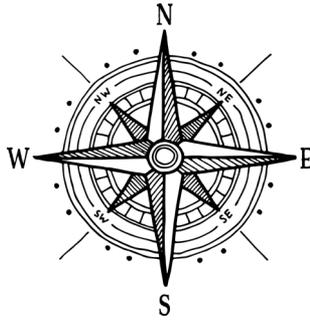
What makes the Corinthian church's messiness encouraging for understanding community?

How has authentic Christian community already shaped or healed you, and where do you still long for it?

What practical step can you take this month to move toward deeper, life-giving community?

Month 9

THE CHURCH



BOOK: EPHESIANS

SYNOPSIS

Jesus didn't just die to save a bunch of individuals; He died to birth a new humanity called the Church. Scripture never pits the one against the whole; Paul calls us living stones being built together, members of one body, a chosen people, a royal priesthood. Your personal walk with Jesus is real, but it only finds its full purpose when it's welded into the rest of us. The world won't see the fullness of Christ in any single one of us; it sees Him when we're joined, fitted, loving, forgiving, and refusing to scatter. This month we're falling in love again with the messy, beautiful, unstoppable Bride that Jesus is coming back for—because the Church isn't just important, it's Plan A, and there is no Plan B.

EPHESIANS

Ephesians is Heaven's aerial shot of the Church Jesus is building, the masterpiece Paul can't stop marveling at even while sitting in a Roman prison cell. This letter zooms out to show us God's eternal plan: a blood-bought, Spirit-filled, multi-ethnic, radiant Bride making the wisdom of God known to every power and principality. Then it zooms in to show how that cosmic dream actually lands in living rooms, marriages, parenting, workplaces, and spiritual warfare—because the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is now at work in a people who've been sealed, seated, and sent together. As you read, watch Paul hand the church the master set of Kingdom keys: unity forged at the cross, maturity built by speaking truth in love, warfare won by standing shoulder-to-shoulder in prayer, and a walk so worthy that the world has no category for the kind of love it sees.

“THE CHURCH” THE CALLED-OUT ONES

*You are no longer strangers...but members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone...in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit” **Ephesians 2:19–22***

When most of us hear the word church, we immediately picture a building—a steeple, a sanctuary, or a place we go on Sundays. But when the New Testament talks about “the church,” it never uses the word *kyriakon doma* (“the Lord’s house”). Instead, it uses the word *ekklesia*, which means “assembly” or “called-out ones.”

Here’s what’s interesting: *ekklesia* originally wasn’t a religious term at all. It referred to citizens called out of their homes for civic purposes—people summoned for a purpose beyond themselves. So when Jesus and the New Testament writers used the word *ekklesia*, they weren’t describing a building at all. They were describing a people called out to carry His Spirit, fulfill His mission, and establish His Kingdom on earth—together, in unity, faith, and power. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, “Upon this rock I will build my *ekklesia*, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” The early believers didn’t go to church — they were the Church. We are the Church.

In the Old Testament, the experience of God’s presence was tied to a physical location. Whether it was the tabernacle, the temple, or the sanctuary, the Spirit of God filled a place. But everything changed when the New Covenant Church (the *ekklesia*) was born in Acts 2. The Holy Spirit descended with wind and fire, just as He filled the tabernacle and temple with glory—but this time, He didn’t fill a building. He filled people. That was the moment when the called-out ones became the dwelling place of God Himself.

In Exodus 25:8, God said, “Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.” But in Acts 2, we became the sanctuary—not just a place where God dwells among us, but within us. GOOD GOD!

Romans 8:11 declares,

“The same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead now lives within you.”

Jesus told His disciples in Luke 24 that the Spirit was coming and they would be endued with power. And sure enough, that same Spirit now dwells in power within us—the ekklesia—God’s called-out people.

You and I are now literally the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the same Spirit that empowered Jesus to walk in authority, healing, and deliverance now lives inside you. That’s why Jesus said:

Mark 16:17–18

And these miracle signs will accompany those who believe (the ekklesia):

- They will drive out demons in My name.
- They will speak in tongues.
- They will be supernaturally protected from danger.
- They will lay hands on the sick, and the sick will recover.

You carry the Spirit of the living God into every place where you see hell on the earth. You are the sanctuary of God. You are the temple of the Holy Spirit. You are the called-out ones. You are the ekklesia!

This—this—is what it means to be “the Church.”



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How does knowing that the original meaning of ekklesia refers to “called-out ones,” not a building, change the way you see your role and identity as part of “the Church”?

If the same Spirit that filled the temple in the Old Testament now lives inside you, what does that mean for how you show up in your home, workplace, or community?

In what areas of your life or surroundings do you see “hell on earth,” and how might God be calling you—as His ekklesia—to bring His presence and authority into those places?

CREATED FROM A CONVERSATION

*“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” **Matthew 16:18***

Jesus said, “And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” Matthew 16:18 (NIV84) This statement by Jesus is well known but not always appreciated for what it promises. First of all, we need to know that “my church” is the ONE & ONLY thing that Jesus definitively stated He was going to build in the Bible. That alone makes it extremely significant to us, or at least it should.

Second, we need to understand that it was NOT Peter himself that Jesus would build his church on, but it was the confessed TRUTH that Peter saw in Jesus when he said, “Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’” Matthew 16:16 (NIV84) This revelation from God is crucial to understanding what Jesus was talking about. Peter, by revelation from God himself, knew that Jesus was the Son of God and the promised Christ, or Messiah. This knowledge was the foundation stone for all that Jesus was going to do in the world, for understanding about his church, and for gaining a righteous relationship with God.

The third point to grasp is that this promise is one of a church NOT in a defensive posture but one in an aggressive, advancing attack mode. The promise is that the power, or authority, of Hades (the powers of the infernal region or Hell, the Devil) will NOT overcome (or be strong to its detriment or hold out against it) the advancing church. This is an optimistic promise or one of hope and excitement for what God is going to not only do for, but in and through, His children. The prophet Isaiah stated, “Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end...” Isaiah 9:7 (NKJV) This is also a word of expectation, hope, and overcoming power for the work of Jesus in this world through His people.

Along with these points of understanding, we need to hear the words of the writer of Hebrews. He says, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope

without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” Hebrews 10:23–25 (NASB95) We need to be perfectly clear that “his church” is NOT a thing of religious structure or ritual. It is not about formalized organization or form, but “his church” IS ABOUT a body of people gathered and fitted together to do his work in the earth. They are a family of worshippers in love with their Savior and their Lord. They are unwavering in their endorsement and commitment to the call of Christ to forsake fidelity to the world’s way and wholeheartedly embrace Jesus and his kingdom way of life.

We are called to “stimulate” each other to “love and good deeds.” We can’t do this by ourselves. We are called to not forsake “assembling together.” This phrase has a meaning in the Greek of being called together for the purpose of being built together so we can function together. It is a corporate calling and anointing that God gives to his church as they live in and follow his Spirit together to advance light and dispel darkness in this world. The promise is that His Church, NOT RELIGION, moving in his Spirit and by his Word corporately will win the war and become the Bride that Christ deserves. A people fully enveloped in the love of Christ and committed to him and being his church.

The Bible says, “but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. 4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you (plural you) is greater than the one who is in the world. (The world is obviously plural in thought)” 1 John 4:3–4 (NIV84) The Church, the ONE that Jesus builds, will win & overcome!



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How do you see “the church”? What is your true opinion? Do you love it?

What would hinder or slow down “the church” from becoming the promised church that Jesus wants to build?

LA IGLESIA / THE CHURCH

*“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”
1 Corinthians 12:27*

I don't remember the exact day I first started going to church as a child, but some memories are still very vivid. I remember walking into a place where people smiled at me, I heard uplifting music, and felt an atmosphere full of joy. At that time, I went simply because my parents went. Sometimes I would run off to play with my friends and hardly paid attention to the sermons, but little by little, those moments were shaping who I was and who I would become. Of course, one thing that always caught my attention was the food at the end of the service. I can still remember the taste of those simple boiled hot dogs with a little mustard... It still brings a smile to my face.

Among all those memories, there was one day that changed my story—the day I first understood that eternity existed. We were coming home from a church meeting in a yellow and black taxi in Montevideo, Uruguay, and when we arrived, I ran to my parents' room, sat on their bed, and said, “I want to spend eternity with Jesus.” I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior, not out of pressure or obligation, but simply because, in that moment, a child distracted by games and songs realized that God was real.

At first, I thought church was just a building, but over the years I realized it meant much more. Church is not a place—it's people. People called by God, redeemed by Christ, and filled with His Spirit.

As the Bible says:

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”
(1 Corinthians 12:27)

“In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.” (Ephesians 2:21)

Church is not made of bricks; it is made of lives. It is a living organism, not a rigid structure. It is the visible expression of God's love on earth. It is the family God gives us so we don't have to walk alone. Church is the anchor of harmony that holds our society together.

Today, nearly 35 years later, I watch my children going through the same process. They run through the barn, sing, laugh, and, of course, sometimes get distracted. But even in the midst of all that, I know God is shaping their hearts, just as He did mine.

Church not only shaped me; it is now shaping my children as well. What was once simply a place I went because my parents took me is now a legacy I want them to experience and understand.

Church is the home where we learn to love, forgive, serve, laugh, and even cry together. It is the space where God unites generations to continue writing His story. I didn't come from a large family, but through the church I came from a great family. I didn't have much connection with my uncles, but I still had many uncles with beautiful relationships. I didn't get to enjoy my actual grandparents, but I had so many grandparents—all because of the Church.

Throughout my life, I always found hugs and support from people who became those who, without titles or positions, mentored me, lifted me when I fell, and shared God's love with me. These brothers and sisters in the church became my family. They showed me what it means to be part of the Body of Christ: a place where no one is left out, where love replaces loneliness, and where the Holy Spirit unites different hearts under the same purpose.

If simple boiled hot dogs with a touch of mustard can still bring a smile to my face, how much more joy will the memories we are planting today in our community bring?

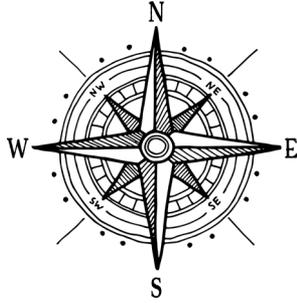


REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What things about church make you feel happy and safe?

How can you help someone else feel like they belong in our big family of faith?

What do you learn in church that helps you become a better person every day?



MONTH 9

HOPE AT HOME DISCUSSION

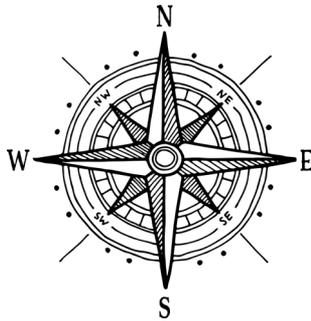
How does Paul's prayers in Ephesians reveal the power and purpose of praying Kingdom-sized prayers?

Where in your prayer life?

Who in your life needs you to stand in the gap this month with bold, Spirit-led intercession?

Month 10

THE JESUS WAY



BOOK: MARK

SYNOPSIS

There's a thousand ways to do religion, but only one way to do life: the Jesus Way. Scripture says He is the Way, and then spends thirty-three years showing us what that looks like in shoes and sweat. Humility that washes feet, love that forgives from a cross, power that never lords over, rest that refuses hurry, truth that never flinches yet never crushes the bruised reed. This month we're not trying to be better Christians; we're learning to walk, talk, eat, pray, serve, and bleed exactly like Jesus did. Because the world has seen plenty of fans of Jesus; it's starving for people who actually follow Him all the way home.

MARK

Mark is the shortest, fastest, most breathless Gospel because it's written for people who need to see Jesus in motion and then get up and follow Him today. From the first verse you're sprinting: "immediately" shows up over forty times as Mark drags us behind Jesus through Galilee dust, storm-tossed boats, demon-filled synagogues, and mountain-top revelations, all so we can watch how the Son of God actually walks with real people in real time. This isn't a gentle Sunday-school story; it's a discipleship manual that keeps asking the same gut-level question: "Who do you say that I am?" while showing that following Jesus means carrying a cross, losing your life to find it, and discovering that the Kingdom breaks in every time someone obeys even when they're terrified. As you read, notice how the disciples are constantly confused, afraid, and half-faithful, yet Jesus never fires them; He just keeps saying, "Follow Me," handing them authority over darkness, power to forgive, courage to leave the boat, and a mission that starts right where your feet are. Mark doesn't end with a tidy bow; it ends with trembling women running from an empty tomb because the story isn't over; it's now in your hands. So read Mark like a training film: watch how Jesus loved, served, prayed, confronted, rested, and suffered, then hear the risen King whisper, "You—yes, even you—follow Me."

HOLY SURRENDER

*“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, when he found one pearl of great value, went and sold all he had and bought it.” **Matthew 13:44-46***

The nature of Jesus has always been low, humble, and so unlike what humanity expected from a Messiah. Scripture reveals a Christ who kneels to wash feet, who touches the unclean, who heals the blind and the broken, a Messiah who carries a cross. He is the suffering Servant spoken of by the prophets, the compassionate King found among the poor, and the radiant Son whose glory is often seen in the places we overlook.

When the heart truly encounters this Christ, the One who goes lower still for the sake of love, there is only one fitting response: surrender. Like the man who sells all to buy the field or the merchant who gives everything for the priceless pearl, we recognize the unmatched worth of Jesus and count nothing too costly to lay down. The Jesus way requires capacities we did not know we possessed, a humility deeper than we imagined, and a willingness to give what is precious. This surrender is never loss... It's always joy. The joy of finding the Treasure worth everything.

To walk in this way is to seek a purity of heart that can perceive Him more clearly: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). It is a longing to make peace, a hunger and thirst for righteousness, an embrace of meekness, mercy, and poverty of spirit; nothing for gain or recognition, but for the achievement of purely Christ alone. Matthew does not speak merely of virtues, but very contours of the Son. This is the preference of the Father - He begot a Son of humility, mercy, lowliness, dependence. This is the nature of Jesus, the One in whom the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

Though Jesus will always be Highest, Holiest, exalted above all creation; He demonstrated lowliness because of His supreme holiness. It is precisely because He is high that He was able to go low for us: the perfect expression of love born from perfect holiness.

The Jesus way invites the heart into holy poverty, a relinquishing so complete that Christ Himself becomes its only boast. It calls for making space where the crucified and risen Christ may rest. This is not achieved by obligation, but from lovesickness. A heart that gives Christ its costly yes's and no's. Our desires and highest offerings become a living canvas upon which He writes His love.

This is the way of sonship: to be clothed not in self-accomplishment, but in the unadulterated righteousness of Jesus. The whole, holy, beautiful Christ. As we yield to Him in beautiful and sometimes painful surrender, we begin to behold more of Him. Beholding into becoming, and becoming leading to deeper beholding. Jesus being the journey and the destination - the well and the water, the path and the person, the lowly and holy King.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Once this treasure is found, how can we not give ourselves in response? That this surrender is the purest, holiest, and lowliest of offerings unto Him who gave it all.

THE WAY OF LOVE INSIDE YOU

*“And walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us
and gave himself up for us as a fragrant
offering and sacrifice to God.” Ephesians 5:2*

When my children were little and would misbehave, I would get face to face with them, hold their hands, and tell them, “I love you too much to let you behave that way. It leads to more trouble when you are grown, and it is not who you are. You are God’s, and that means you are...” I would go on to speak into their identity the loving qualities of Jesus that were counter to their misbehavior. Their eyes would widen as I spoke truth into their tiny beings, familiarizing them with Jesus’s loving mode of operation as their correct mode of operation also.

The Jesus Way – the selfless loving way – lives in people filled with the Holy Spirit. It is not something we strive for as much as it is something we yield to. The Jesus way is a loving, selfless approach to living that infuses our identity as God’s adopted sons and daughters. God determines our identity, just as he did Jesus’. Unfortunately, the world also tries to inform our identity, and the way to which we yield often looks more like a survival mode of self-preservation in response to the lies the world tells us: fearful, selfish, and indifferent.

The world tried to tell Jesus he was merely the illegitimate son of a poor carpenter from Nazareth. In reality, Jesus was part of the line of King David. More than that, he was God’s own son. He might not have fully understood his Divine identity as a small child, but as a twelve-year-old, Jesus knew he had to be in his Father’s house, the temple. As far as we know, it was from that time on that Jesus lived – and loved – as God’s son. In sonship, he lived an entire life of perfect love. As an outcast ministering to those on the fringe of society, in the garden alone and struggling, and on the cross rejected by men are just three examples. Love without exception became the Jesus way. Maybe the Jesus way of love was not spoken into you as a child. Sonship as an identifier might seem foreign.

Yielding to selfless love as a mode of operation might be difficult for you because the world told you you only have yourself, and loving is risky. Perhaps selfishness and apathy meant survival.

Know that yielding to the Jesus way of love, though challenging sometimes just as it was for the Lord, is more than surviving. It is a life of thriving. It is putting aside complacency, selfishness, and simple survival. It is living more fully in the redeemed identity God gives us. When faced with the option to thrive in the Jesus way of love, will you choose to yield?



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Who does Jesus say you are?

What is an unhealthy example of selfless love?

What is a healthy example of selfless love?

Is there an area where you can begin to yield to the Jesus way of love that is written inside of you?

THE JESUS WAY

*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. no one comes to the father except through me." **John 14:6***

We've all heard this scripture. It's everywhere, on refrigerator magnets, pillows, sweatshirts and t-shirts but truly slow your heart down and hear what Jesus is really saying. What does it look like to live "The Jesus Way?" Well, you can pretty much know that whatever your flesh wants to do.....you can count on the Jesus Way being the opposite of that!

In the book of Matthew, Chapters 5, 6 and 7 Jesus gives us the way to respond. Many scriptures back this truth up...so many that I could fill this page. I encourage you to really dig into them. It will change your life, I promise.

When someone hurts you, wrongs you.....**FORGIVE**

When someone hates you.....**LOVE THEM**

When someone curses you.....**BLESS THEM, PRAY FOR THEM**

Are you in need?.....**GIVE**

Ephesians 4:31 (TPT) says "Lay aside bitter words, temper tantrums, revenge, profanity and insults. But instead be kind and affectionate towards one another."

Let's be honest, those things are NOT your first reaction. But if you will lay yourself aside and decide to respond His way, watch what happens. That's why He said, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Real Life comes from Him and His ways. When you do things His way, He backs you up!! Your heart and mind feel clean, you have Peace and Joy, you can breathe Life in!! His Presence is so near, that is our reward.

We live in a world now that other gods are spreading hatred, murder and even worse. Can you imagine serving a god that wants you to teach your children to murder and hate anyone who doesn't think like you? Or what about a god that makes you live over and over until you get it right?

Our Jesus is so wonderful, gentle and kind. I will choose Him and His ways every time!!! We have to respond like Him and show those who don't know Him just how wonderful He is and that they can have Hope like you because of Him!! When you respond in the way Jesus teaches us to, you will shine and I promise those around you will notice!!

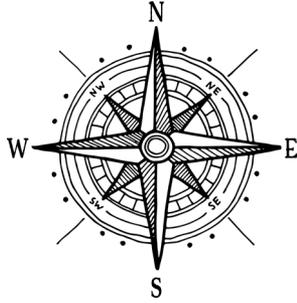
In my own life, I have had to practice this over and over but I have watched God do what I felt like was impossible because I chose to trust Him and His ways. I had someone in my life that was very hard on me. I worked so hard for their approval and could not seem to find it no matter what I did. So my response was to harden my heart against them and rebel against everything they stood for. When I got saved, the Lord started talking to me about forgiving them. I was so mad. I thought.... Are you kidding me? They need to ask ME for forgiveness!!! But the Holy Spirit wouldn't leave me alone. It took me 3 months to finally give in. I did go to that person and ask for forgiveness and you know what? It was so freeing!!!! My heart and soul felt a million times lighter. It sincerely changed my life. That relationship changed that day and I am so thankful. His ways are ALWAYS right. He truly is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and it is so good!!



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What has been a time in your life that you have responded in “The Jesus Way” even when you didn't want to? How did it turn out?

Is God asking you now in your heart to respond to something His way when it's hard or doesn't make sense?



MONTH 10

HOPE AT HOME DISCUSSION

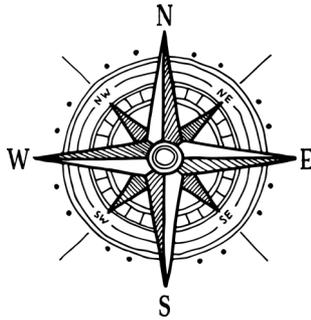
How does Romans redefine true power as the gospel that saves rather than human strength or achievement?

In what areas are you tempted to live from your own effort instead of the power of God unto salvation?

How can the truth of “no condemnation” in Romans 8 unleash Holy Spirit power in your life?

Month 11

THANKS- GIVING



BOOK: PHILIPPIANS

SYNOPSIS

Thanksgiving isn't just a holiday; it's a habitat. From the leper who came back shouting thanks, to Paul telling us to give thanks in everything, Scripture keeps pointing to one unshakable truth: gratitude isn't something we feel when life is good, it's the atmosphere we create even when life is hard. A grateful heart reorients everything; it turns manna into miracles, prisons into prayer rooms, scars into stories of a faithful God. This month we're killing entitlement and becoming a people overwhelmed by gratitude. The Kingdom is too glorious, Jesus is too good, and every next breath is too big a gift to live one more day acting like we're still owed something..

PHILIPPIANS

Philippians is a prison letter that somehow became the happiest book in the Bible, proof that gratitude isn't a feeling you wait for; it's a weapon you wield when chains are tight and the future is uncertain. Written by Paul while locked up under Roman guard, every chapter emphasizes joy, rejoicing, and thanksgiving because he's discovered the secret: Christ is enough, so every circumstance becomes an opportunity to magnify Jesus and give thanks. This little letter is a masterclass in Kingdom gratitude; Paul thanks God for people, for suffering, for lack, for plenty, for everything, because he knows that a thankful heart is one of the master keys that unlocks contentment, unity, peace, and gospel advance no matter what hell throws at you. As you read, watch how rejoicing and thanksgiving keep showing up as the antidote to anxiety, division, grumbling, and fear, and notice that the same God who supplied manna in the wilderness is still supplying all your needs according to His riches in glory. Philippians isn't polite encouragement; it's a battle cry for every believer to live thankful on purpose.

THE TABLE OF THANKSGIVING

“The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Every November, we gather around crowded tables to celebrate this wonderful holiday called Thanksgiving. And in the weeks leading up to this day, we spend countless hours planning and preparing, cooking and baking, cleaning and hosting. And as I was thinking about this idea of giving thanks, I’m reminded of another table, one Jesus set long before this holiday ever existed—a table where bread was broken, thanks were given, and the deepest kind of gratitude was shared.

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Travel back with me to this first table of thanksgiving. Jesus knows what’s about to happen. He knows the suffering he’s about to endure. But still, he sits around a table with his disciples, he shares a meal with them, and he gives thanks to God in spite of the circumstances. He demonstrates that thanksgiving is a heart posture based on our covenant with God.

And that heart posture of thanksgiving, rooted in God’s faithfulness and our relationship with Him, is exactly what the Lord’s table teaches us. This is where the term Eucharist comes from – which simply means “thanksgiving.” The Eucharist, or Communion, isn’t just a ritual; it’s a tangible reminder that everything we have, every blessing, every bite of bread, comes from Him.

When we take the bread and the cup, we are practicing a rhythm that trains our hearts to notice God's goodness in every part of our lives. If the Lord's table is a place of thanksgiving, then is it possible that our kitchen tables—with every ordinary meal we share at home—can echo that same grace? Is it possible that our ordinary kitchen tables can become sacred?

As a mother, I have the incredible opportunity to serve a mini-communion multiple times a day. We're breaking bread, pouring drinks, sharing snacks, and discussing the goodness of God. And in all of that sharing of food and conversation, my husband and I are shaping hearts. Our table becomes a training ground for gratitude. Thanksgiving, then, becomes a lifestyle when every meal (and snack) reminds us that all that we have comes from God.

As we gather around our tables with our spouses and children and extended family, let's pause to remember the first table – the one where Jesus gave thanks AND himself. Let's pause to remember God's goodness and give thanks. Let's allow our tables to become an extension of the Lord's table.

May every meal we share be a small act of worship and a practice of saying, 'Thank You, Jesus. Everything I have comes from You.'



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Looking at your own tables: How might the ordinary meals, snacks, and gatherings in your home become moments of thanksgiving and small acts of worship, like the Lord's table?

Heart posture of gratitude: In what areas of your life is it easiest—or hardest—to give thanks to God, even when circumstances feel difficult? How can remembering the covenantal faithfulness of God help shape your heart?

Family rhythms of gratitude: How can you involve your children or family in practicing gratitude at the table, not just on Thanksgiving, but as a regular part of daily life?

THE POWER OF THANKSGIVING

*As Jesus continued on toward Jerusalem, he reached the border between Galilee and Samaria. As he entered a village there, ten men with leprosy stood at a distance, crying out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" He looked at them and said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed of their leprosy. One of them, when he saw that he was healed, came back to Jesus, shouting, "Praise God!" He fell to the ground at Jesus' feet, thanking him for what he had done. This man was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Didn't I heal ten men? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" And Jesus said to the man, "Stand up and go. Your faith has healed you." **Luke 17:11-19 NLT***

I believe we've all familiar with this Scripture and the story about the ten lepers. I'd like to emphasize that while all ten were physically healed, only one, a Samaritan, returned to give thanks.

This act of gratitude led to a deeper, spiritual salvation. For the Samaritan, a blessing, not fully realized by the other nine, who were distracted by their new found health. The one leper's gratitude was just not a feeling, but an action that demonstrated his faith. Isn't it often the one who gives thanks who receives the fullest blessing? I pray we all begin to understand to the fullest extent the power of thanksgiving. Maybe you haven't thought of worship as giving thanks. True love is always expressed outwardly. So I'm not saying everyone expresses love in the same way. Everyone has a different personality. But I am saying you'll never be a worshiper if you're not grateful. Being thankful is what causes worship to come forth.

There are scriptural expressions of worship such as bowing, shouting, extending your hands, or clapping.

When we ask ourselves, "what proceeds gratitude" I would say that miracles proceed gratitude. Going back to Luke 17 verse 15 it says, "when the one saw that he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice".

This was his sincere act of worship. I've always believed that we should give thanks after we receive something, don't you? Was the way the one leper gave thanks appropriate? Before being healed, he was a social, physical outcast. After his miracle he no longer had to shout. "I'm unclean" before entering a room or coming up to a crowd of people. So yes, of course it was appropriate for him to fall down and give thanks!

Would it be appropriate for you and I to fall down on our face and with a loud voice thank God if we were made clean? Selah. As the one leper, weren't we all healed of a disease called sin? Isn't there something else that proceeds a miracle? Wasn't it out of obedience to go show themselves to the priest that healed all ten? It was in the going that healed them, not in the priest actually praying for them.

What's God telling you to do that you're not doing that could release a miracle which would release gratitude, which would release worship?

All of us have something to be grateful for. God has done miracles in our lives. Satan's plan is to get our eyes off what God has done in our lives. Would it be appropriate even if it's been 20 years since you've been saved, to fall down on your face and worship him? Sure it's appropriate! Think about what God has done for you. Give Him thanks! Ask the Lord to open your eyes to the many things He has provided for you through His boundless love. That's one of the ways we continue to live in his presence every day. If you and I take care of our level of gratitude, genuine heartfelt worship will follow.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

For whatever reason do you feel that your thankfulness has to some extent been diminished?

If you and I admit that our spirit of thanksgiving has been depleted, how do we start the process of renewing it?

THANKSGIVING: THE ANTIDOTE TO ENTITLEMENT

“Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18

We live in an age of increasing entitlement and dissatisfaction. Curated feeds and lavish lifestyles train us to measure our blessings against others’, convincing us we’ve come up short.

But true joy will never be found in what we accumulate, it’ll be found in Who and what we acknowledge: Our Father and His goodness to us. Thanksgiving will always be the most useful antidote to entitlement and the clearest pathway into joy.

The older brother in the story of the prodigal son (Lk. 15:25-32) struggled with entitlement. Here was a young man who seemed to have everything—his father’s love, a secure inheritance, and a place of honor. Yet when his wayward brother returned and the father killed the fatted calf to celebrate, the older son stood outside, seething.

The tragedy isn’t what the older brother didn’t have, it’s what he couldn’t see and didn’t say. He’d been in the father’s house all along, surrounded by his presence and provision, yet seemingly blinded by entitlement. The bitterness in his heart had locked him outside the joyful feast.

This is the lesson for all of us committed to our Father’s house: that we never become so familiar with His presence that we lose the wonder of the nearness we’ve been gifted.

We see a contrasting example in the Apostle Paul. As a devoted follower of Christ, he could have viewed his constant suffering as poor return for that devotion. Yet throughout his writings, we find him consistently choosing a life of thanksgiving that led to joy. He teaches us to do the same by:

1. Remembering Our Rescue - The older brother acted self-righteously, comparing his obedience to his brother's rebellion. But Paul never forgot our universal need for rescue: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). Remembering we are all sinners in need of a Savior keeps us from entitlement.

2. Recounting God's Faithfulness - The older brother forgot his father's past provision and presence, which skewed how he saw the present. Paul took the opposite approach: "He rescued us... and he'll do it again..." (2 Cor. 1:10 MSG). When we recount what God has done, thanksgiving and trust become our natural response.

3. Rejoicing with Others - The older brother's entitlement surfaced when someone else was celebrated. Instead of comparing ourselves with others, Paul encourages us to: "Rejoice with those who rejoice" (Rom. 12:15). We must ask ourselves: can we see from a Kingdom perspective? Or is it all about us? Entitlement asks, "What about me?" while gratitude declares, "Look what our Father has done!"

May the familiarity of God's presence never mute our marvel at the miracle that we belong to Him!

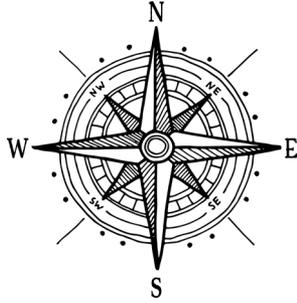


REFLECTION QUESTIONS

When have you felt entitled rather than grateful, and how did it affect your joy?

What blessings has God given you that you might've stopped noticing?

How can you celebrate someone else today, showing gratitude for how God is working in and through them?



MONTH 11

HOPE AT HOME DISCUSSION

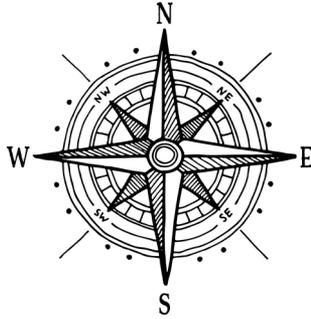
What images of Jesus in Revelation most reshape your view of Him as the triumphant King?

How does seeing the ultimate victory already won change the way you face present battles and suffering?

When John weeps because no one is found worthy to open the scroll (Revelation 5), how does Jesus' worthiness comfort you in moments when the world feels out of control?

Month 12

ADVENT



BOOK: ISAIAH

SYNOPSIS

Advent isn't just the countdown to Christmas; it's the heartbeat of the whole story. From the first promise in the Garden to the final trumpet in Revelation, Scripture is one long Advent, God refusing to leave us in the dark. Hope that invades silence, peace that disarms chaos, joy that breaks over a weary world, love that puts on skin and moves into the neighborhood. This month we're not rushing past the waiting to get to the manger; we're leaning into the ache, the longing, the holy tension of a people who know the King is coming, has come, and is coming again. Because only hearts that learn to wait well ever learn to worship well when He finally shows up.

ISAIAH

Isaiah is the grand cathedral of the Old Testament, a sixty-six-chapter thunder of judgment, comfort, and white-hot hope that keeps shouting one thing: the Holy One of Israel is coming Himself to rescue, rule, and remake everything. Written across centuries of exile and heartbreak, this book is one long Advent, training God's people to live with holy ache, eyes fixed on a promised Child-King who will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, and yet will first show up as a bruised Servant carrying our sorrows on a cross. Every valley lifted, every mountain brought low, every desert blooming, every wolf lying down with the lamb; Isaiah paints the full-color future of the Kingdom so vividly that when Jesus finally steps onto the scene in Galilee, He opens this very scroll and says, with the whole synagogue staring, says, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." As you read, let the prophecies wreck you, the servant songs break you, and the new-heavens-and-new-earth visions set you on fire; because Isaiah isn't just predicting Christmas morning; he's handing you the Kingdom key of Spirit-filled longing that turns waiting into worship, exile into expectation, and every dark season into a runway for the glory about to land. So come slow, come hungry, and let the prophet stir your soul until you're ruined for anything less than Immanuel, God with us, the Messiah who was promised, who came, right on time, came, and who, praise His name, is coming again.

Advent Bible Reading Plan

This year, take time to get into the Word with your family. With just a few minutes each day, let's dig into Scripture together—as individuals, families, and as a church.

Week 1

- December 1** - Isaiah 9:2–7
- December 2** - Isaiah 11:1–10
- December 3** - Micah 5:2–5
- December 4** - Genesis 3:14–15
- December 5** - Jeremiah 33:14–16
- December 6** - Isaiah 40:1–11
- December 7** - Psalm 130

Week 2

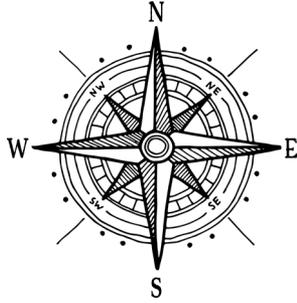
- December 8** - Isaiah 61:1–3
- December 9** - Malachi 3:1–4
- December 10** - Luke 1:5–25
- December 11** - Luke 1:26–38
- December 12** - Luke 1:39–45
- December 13** - Luke 1:46–55
- December 14** - Luke 1:57–80

Week 3

- December 15** - Matthew 1:18–25
- December 16** - Luke 2:1–7
- December 17** - Luke 2:8–20
- December 18** - Luke 2:21–35
- December 19** - Luke 2:36–38
- December 20** - Matthew 2:1–12
- December 21** - John 1:1–14

Week 4

- December 22** - Isaiah 7:14
- December 23** - Isaiah 53:1–6
- December 24** - Luke 2:1–20
- December 25** - John 3:16–21



MONTH 12

HOPE AT HOME DISCUSSION

The hall of faith in Hebrews 11 shows people who lived for eternity, what earthly thing are you tempted to overvalue?

How does Jesus as our perfect High Priest give confidence to approach God's throne in our weakness?

What eternal perspective shift do you need most as you finish this year and step into whatever God has next?



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