



Series Guide



This Series Guide is intended to help you meaningfully participate in a preaching series and gain a better handle on God's Word. Following an introduction to the book, series, or sermon, each week contains:

- Sermon Title and Passage, and space for Sermon Notes
- Passage's Main Points: Exegetical Focus, Theological Principles, Redemptive-Historical Focus
- Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary (i.e.,
- *New!* > Daily Bible Readings accompanying sermon themes.
- Life Group Discussion Guide: Summary and Questions¹

For maximum utility, don't skip the parenthetical references. Look 'em up and learn how all of Scripture is God's interconnected special revelation. Some of the best insights are often found in wrestling through the references.

Additional Resources: Sermon Guide, Manuscript, Parents Pages, Podcast, Fridge Magnet

- Sunday Sermon Guide and Manuscript are on the app under "Home" and at fccgreene.org/sermonguide. For additional study help and further explanation, Scott's manuscripts typically have extensive footnotes.
- Parents Pages (for Kids and Middle/High School students) and the Worship Guide are on the app under "Study Guides" and at fccgreene.org/studyguides. Starting early 2026, the Kids lessons will be included in this Series Guide.
- The Weekly Bible Study Podcast, posted every Thursday, helps prepare for next Sun. Available on the app under "Watch" > "Media," on YouTube (youtube.com/fccgreene), or fccgreene.org/wbsp.

¹ We've done our best to plan sermon titles, passages, points, etc. but such synchronicity between plans and execution rarely happens perfectly. Main differences might be: (1) Passage's Main Points, which will at least be similar to eventual sermon points, and (2) Sermon Titles, which are planned thematically in the Series Guide but may be changed by the preacher, who chooses a representative phrase from the passage as the eventual title.

- Don't forget to pray with and for your church! The 2026 Fridge Magnets are available at The Hub and fccgreene.org/2026fridgemagnet.



Helping People Find and Follow Jesus

Praise God for His many blessings and pray He will move in power in our church in 2026!

SUN – Thank God for another great worship service! **Pray for opportunities** this week to preach the gospel, tell the story of God's work in your life, and hand someone an Invite Card!

MON – Thank God for opportunities to grow! **Pray for our weekly ministries**—Life Groups, Re:gen, Marriage Ministry, Pillar YA, and 180 Students—that we will grow in grace. See you at Life Group!

TUE – Thank God for those who serve! **Pray for our elders, staff, missionaries, and for one another**—for God to strengthen and encourage us for Kingdom mission. Send a text of encouragement to someone today!

WED – Thank God for community partnerships and outreach opportunities! **Pray for our community and school outreaches** to create Kingdom fruit. Help out at your next campus-specific outreach!

THU – Thank God for His many blessings that sustain us even when life is hard! **Pray for generous hearts** that joyfully give to fuel gospel ministry and meet growing needs in every campus and ministry.

FRI – Thank God for His faithfulness in the past year! **Pray for God's favor and guidance with emerging opportunities**—sync'd curriculum, Catalyst expansion, Colombian church plant, Residents preaching/serving, producing resources and training leaders, Admin/Ops Director, Jan 2027 Launch of 4th Campus

SAT – Thank God for a Perfect Savior! **Pray for God to use our singing, prayer, and preaching** to strengthen us for another week of gospel service. See ya there—don't forget your Bible and Series Guide!

Engage in Worship • Serve on the Team • Connect in a Small Group • Pray and Study the Bible Pursue Generosity • Identify with Christ • Tell the Story

Pillar Breakouts

As Pillar Young Adults often sync with Sunday mornings and use this Series Guide, here's the basic plan for breakout groups, Pillar Peeps. Be done by 8:30p (when you get done, please be respectful of groups that are still going).

- (1) How is everyone doing?
- (2) What stuck out from the text? Thoughts or questions?
- (3) What is one next step or takeaway for your life?
- (4) Pray for one another.

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FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
**NEW CITY
CATECHISM**



Introduction to NCC

“New City Catechism: Basics of Christian Beliefs in 52 Weeks” is a series we began in August 2023 that uses a catechetical (‘teaching by word of mouth’) Q&A format and that we occasionally squeeze in among other series until we someday finish all 52. See fccgreene.org/ncc for more.

Introduction to Wks/Qs 24 & 25

The catechism’s back-to-back questions press us into the very heart of the gospel: *Why did the Redeemer have to die, and does His death truly secure full forgiveness?* Scripture answers both with one reality—Christ’s willing, substitutionary death. The One who made all things entered our alienation, bore our guilt in His body, and was made “sin” so that we might be made righteous. In these two weeks, Paul shows that Christ’s death was both necessary and effective: the Holy One died because justice required it, and His death fully reconciles sinners, removes their guilt, and grants them complete forgiveness in Him.

Memory Verses for New City Catechism are specific to each week. See below.

Sun, Nov 23, 2025 – Wk/Q 24: “Why Was it Necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to Die?” (Colossians 1:15-22, esp vv 21-22)

New City Catechism Answer

Since death is the punishment for sin, Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God. By his substitutionary atoning death, he alone redeems us from hell and gains for us forgiveness of sin, righteousness, and everlasting life. (Kids Version: Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God.)

Introduction

Why did the Redeemer have to die? Paul answers by placing our salvation inside the massive Christology of Colossians 1:15-23. The One who is before all things, through whom all things exist, and in whom all things hold together is the very One who entered our alienation. Humanity’s problem is not minor moral missteps but hostile rebellion that placed us under the penalty of death. No philosophy, therapy, or religious effort can bridge that gulf. Christ died willingly, bearing our guilt in His body of flesh, so the holy Creator could reconcile sinners and present them blameless before God.

Colossians 1:15-22 (*This week’s Memory Verses in italics.*)

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. 21 *And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of*

*flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.*²

Exegetical Focus

- The before/after contrast (“once... now...”)² is the structural backbone of the text.
- Reconciliation occurs “in his body of flesh by his death,” rooting salvation in the incarnate, substitutionary suffering of the true Image (vv 15, 22).
- “In order to present you holy and blameless” supplies the purpose and teleology (end/goal) of Christ’s death.

Theological Principles

- Death is God’s just punishment for sin; therefore only a death—from a perfect sacrifice—could satisfy divine justice.
- Reconciliation requires substitution (vicarious satisfaction): the innocent Redeemer bearing the penalty of the guilty.
- Salvation is entirely God’s initiative—Christ willingly dies, and God graciously restores rebels to covenant fellowship.

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- Christ’s death fulfills OT sacrificial patterns.
- The true Image restores fallen image-bearers.
- The movement toward eschatological (end times/judgment) presentation is a key Pauline redemptive arc.

See fccgreene.org/ncc for a link to the NCC web app, which includes additional commentary, kids song, and suggested prayer.

Sermon Notes

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Paul's hymn exalts Christ as the "image of the invisible God" (v 15) and "firstborn of all creation," meaning not that He was created, but that He holds sovereign rights over it. By Him "all things were created... and [also] for Him" (v 16); He is both the source and goal of all reality, and "in Him all things hold together" (v 17). Yet this cosmic Christ is also the crucified Christ, who "made peace by the blood of His cross" (v 20). The Creator entered His creation to reconcile sinners "once... alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds" (v 21), transforming them through His "body of flesh by His death" (v 22). This is the heart of substitutionary

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atonement: the Holy One bore our unholiness so that we might be presented “holy and blameless and above reproach before Him.” Reconciliation is not God sweeping sin under the rug; it is God ripping up the floorboards and rebuilding the entire house. Redemptive-historically, this fulfills the promise of reconciliation first glimpsed in Eden’s loss (Genesis 3:15), enacted through the sacrificial system (Leviticus 17:11), and perfected in the cross (2 Corinthians 5:18-21). Christ is both the true Image restoring what Adam ruined (Romans 5:12-19) and the final Temple in whom “all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (v 19; cf John 1:14). Hermeneutically, Colossians 1 teaches us that we must always read creation, fall, and redemption as one continuous story with Christ at the center—He is the hinge of all history, where cosmic order and personal salvation meet. Practically, this means that every sphere of life—our thoughts, habits, work, and relationships—exists “for Him.” If Christ reconciled us at infinite cost, then holiness isn’t an optional extra but the natural overflow of gratitude for grace and proof of new life in Christ: we live now in light of our certain future—one destined for being presented blameless before His throne.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Genesis 3:1-24
- Tue – Leviticus 16:1-34
- Wed – Isaiah 53:1-12
- Thu – Romans 5:6-21
- Fri – Hebrews 9:11-28 and Hebrews 10:1-18
- Sat – 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 (tomorrow’s sermon passage)

Life Group Summary

Paul explains that our alienation was so deep that only Christ’s death could reconcile us. We weren’t just lost and needed a little help finding our way back; in our pride we picked a fight with the One who holds the universe together, which is never a winning strategy for dealing with our brokenness. Like most of my home repairs, our sin makes a mess far bigger than we could ever clean up. But the Holy Creator entered our hostile world, bore our guilt in His body, and now presents us holy and blameless. This passage calls us to reject false saviors and trust the sufficiency of the cross of Christ. For in Christ, God’s reconciling work of grace is

complete and relational—He brings us back to Himself! Groups should consider how this frees believers from self-reliance and strengthens hope. Paul invites us to lift our eyes from a keyhole view of salvation to a mountaintop panorama of God’s mercy in sending Christ the Creator-Redeemer-Sustainer of our souls!

Life Group Discussion Questions

- (1) According to Paul, what does it mean that we were “once... alienated and hostile in mind” (v 21), and how does that shape our view of humanity?
- (2) How does the phrase “in his body of flesh by his death” (v 22) clarify why Christ’s physical, substitutionary death was necessary?
- (3) What does it reveal about God that reconciliation originates with Him, not us?
- (4) How does “in order to present you holy and blameless” shape the believer’s view of sanctification?
- (5) What false “redeemers” or modern philosophies tempt people to seek reconciliation apart from Christ?
- (6) How does remembering your “once... now...” transformation strengthen perseverance and daily gratitude?

Nov 30, 2025 – Wk/Q 25: “Does Christ’s Death Mean All Our Sins Can Be Forgiven?” (2 Corinthians 5:16-21, esp v 21)

New City Catechism Answer

Yes, because Christ’s death on the cross fully paid the penalty for our sin, God graciously imputes Christ’s righteousness to us as if it were our own and will remember our sins no more. (Kids Version: Yes, because Christ’s death on the cross fully paid the penalty for our sin, God will remember our sins no more.)

Introduction

Few verses capture the gospel’s heart as clearly as 2 Corinthians 5:21. Whereas I tend to imagine God forgives me the way I forgive my kids—until they repeat the same mistake—praise God that He doesn’t forgive partially! So Paul doesn’t offer a slogan but a sweeping explanation of how complete forgiveness is possible for sinners. The God who makes new creations (v 17) and reconciles rebels (vv 18-20) does so through a breathtaking exchange: the sinless Christ is made “sin” so that sinners might “become the righteousness of God.” Because Christ fully paid sin’s penalty, God no longer counts trespasses against His people. The Redeemer’s death doesn’t merely reduce guilt; it removes it entirely and replaces it with His own righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 (*This week’s Memory Verse in italics.*)

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Exegetical Focus

- Forgiveness rests on God's initiative—"all this is from God"—and His refusal to "count" trespasses against His people (vv 18-19).
- The ambassadorial appeal (v 20) shows the relational aim of reconciliation and sets up the logic of substitution in v 21.
- "He made him to be sin... so that we might become righteousness" reveals a double exchange: imputation of our sin to Christ and His righteousness to us.

Theological Principles

- Christ's substitutionary death fully satisfies God's justice (penal substitution/propitiation), securing complete pardon.
- Justification involves imputation (forensic righteousness)—God credits righteousness to the believer apart from works.
- New creation life flows from reconciliation: forgiven people now live for Christ, not themselves.

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- 2 Corinthians 5:21 fulfills the sacrificial imagery of the OT—sin-bearing, transfer, cleansing (Genesis 3:21; Leviticus 16; Isaiah 53).
- The failed "nearer redeemers" of the law give way to the true Redeemer who perfectly accomplishes reconciliation.
- This great exchange anticipates the final verdict of the last day—no condemnation, only righteousness.

See fccgreene.org/ncc for a link to the NCC web app, which includes additional commentary, kids song, and suggested prayer.

Sermon Notes

Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary

Paul's words reach the heart of the gospel here: "He died for all" (v 15) so that those who live "might no longer live for themselves but for him." Christ's death not only frees us from sin's penalty but also breaks sin's power. This isn't spiritual Febreze; it is sin removal down to the studs. In Christ we become "a new creation" where "the old has passed away" and "the new has come" (v 17). And not only that, but God Himself took the initiative—"in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself" (v 19)—and then entrusted that message to us, His redeemed ambassadors. But the entire paragraph culminates in the breathtaking exchange of verse 21: "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." In that one sentence, we see the center of redemptive history—what

theologians call substitutionary atonement and imputed righteousness. It is the sin-bearing, righteousness-giving exchange at the heart of the gospel. The sinless Son became what we are so that we might become what He is (Isaiah 53:4-6; Galatians 3:13). Hermeneutically, this verse teaches us to read every sacrificial shadow—from Eden’s covering skins (Genesis 3:21) to the spotless lambs of Exodus and Leviticus—as arrows pointing to this great exchange. And practically, when we grasp that God “no longer counts our trespasses against us” (v 19), it changes how we live and love: we no longer live for ourselves but for the One who loved us first. The reconciled now become reconcilers, living proof that grace transforms rebels into ambassadors of mercy.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Isaiah 1:10-20
- Tue – Psalm 32:1-11 and Psalm 103:1-14
- Wed – Isaiah 53:4-6
- Thu – Romans 3:21-26
- Fri – Galatians 3:10-14 and Philipians 3:7-11
- Sat – Matthew 1:1-17 (tomorrow’s sermon passage)

Life Group Summary

Paul teaches that forgiveness is complete because Christ bore every sin and God now counts righteousness—not guilt—to those who are ‘in Him.’ The “great exchange” of 2 Corinthians 5:21 is the center of the gospel—our sin placed on Christ, His righteousness placed on us. It’s like God swapped our bankruptcy with Christ’s spotless credit record, a trade so lopsided it can only be called grace. This truth comforts the guilty, confronts self-righteousness, and commissions believers as ambassadors of reconciliation. Groups should reflect on how full forgiveness changes identity, obedience, and engagement with others who need God’s appeal of grace.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What does Paul mean by God “not counting their trespasses” (v 19), and how does that challenge self-condemnation?

- (2) How does ambassador imagery (v 20) clarify the relational purpose of forgiveness?
- (3) What is the significance of the great exchange—Christ “made sin” and believers “made righteousness”—for understanding complete forgiveness (v 21)?
- (4) Which sins are hardest for you to believe are forgiven, and what does this passage say to that struggle?
- (5) How does imputed righteousness reshape your approach to obedience, identity, and assurance?
- (6) Who needs to hear God’s appeal of reconciliation through you, and what step will you take?



Introduction

While it's not exactly the kind of birth announcement a modern PR firm would design, Matthew's opening chapters reveal the arrival of Israel's long-awaited King in the most unexpected way—not with royal fanfare but in quiet, humble beginnings. Through genealogy, virgin birth, and Gentile worship, God displays sovereign faithfulness to His covenant promises and surprising grace toward outsiders. Jesus is the true Son of Abraham who blesses the nations, the greater Son of David who reigns forever, and Immanuel who dwells with His people. Advent calls us to behold our King with reverence and joy, trusting that God's purposes unfold through Scripture, history, and even ordinary obedience.

Series Memory Verses – Matthew 1:21-23

21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

Sun, Dec 7, 2025 – “King Among Us: The Book of the Genealogy of Jesus Christ” (Matthew 1:1-17)

Matthew 1:1-17

1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3 and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, 4 and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, 5 and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, 7 and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, 8 and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, 9 and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, 10 and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, 11 and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. 12 And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, 13 and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, 14 and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, 15 and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, 16 and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. 17 So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

Exegetical Focus

- Verse 1 identifies Jesus as “son of David, son of Abraham,” anchoring His kingship in covenant history.

- The three movements (1:2-6a, 1:6b-11, 1:12-16) trace covenant, kingdom, exile, and restoration, showing divine sovereignty over history.
- Verse 17 summarizes God's ordering of time into structured epochs, highlighting purposeful redemptive design.

Theological Principles

- God's covenant promises unfold across generations, proving His faithfulness despite human failure.
- The Messiah comes through a line of both saints and sinners, revealing salvation by grace alone.
- Divine sovereignty governs history (providence working out His eternal decree); God shapes every era for His redemptive purpose in Christ.

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- Jesus fulfills the Abrahamic covenant as the promised seed who blesses the nations (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:16).
- He is the true Davidic King whose throne endures forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Isaiah 9:6-7).
- Exile and restoration foreshadow the gospel: God preserves His people and His King through judgment and renewal.

Sermon Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Matthew opens with “the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (v 1), tying Jesus to the two great covenant promises: that Abraham’s offspring would bless all nations (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:16) and that David’s throne would endure forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16). The names in this genealogy include heroes and failures, kings and exiles, men and women, Jews and Gentiles, the righteous and the scandalous, showing that God weaves His purposes through all kinds of people. It reads less like a polished resume and more like a dysfunctional family group text, which is exactly the kind of situation God loves to redeem. Even through judgment—“the deportation to Babylon” (v 11)—God preserved the Messianic line until “Jesus... who is called Christ” (v 16). Hermeneutically, Matthew’s structuring of history into three sets of fourteen (v 17) teaches us to see God’s sovereign ordering of time and events, like Paul’s “when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son” (Galatians 4:4). This genealogy reminds us to read Scripture as one redemptive story: through Abraham, David, exile, and restoration, God was always pointing to Christ—and if God can weave His perfect plan through such a complicated and often compromised family line, then we can trust He is also weaving His good purposes through our own story of brokenness, even when it feels more like a tangled knot than a neat timeline.

- Mon – Genesis 12:1-9
- Tue – 2 Samuel 7:1-17

- Wed – Isaiah 9:1-7
- Thu – Galatians 3:7-16
- Fri – Ruth 4:13-22 and Psalm 89:19-29
- Sat – Matthew 1:18-25 (tomorrow's sermon passage)

Life Group Summary

Matthew's genealogy shows that Jesus is the promised King who fulfills God's covenants to Abraham and David. Across generations marked by sin, failure, and exile, God preserved the Messianic line and ordered all history toward Christ. The mix of righteous and unrighteous, insiders and outsiders in Jesus' ancestry highlights God's grace, reminding believers that salvation rests on His character-born promises, not human merit. Jesus is not embarrassed to stand in the middle of a messy family tree—good news for those of us who would rather not have all our relatives listed in print! This passage strengthens confidence in God's providence and invites gratitude for a Redeemer who enters our broken story to restore it.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What details in Matthew 1:1-6 highlight Jesus' connection to Abraham and David, and why does Matthew begin this way?
- (2) What stands out about the people included in the genealogy, and how does that broaden our understanding of God's work in history?
- (3) How does the structure of three sets of fourteen (1:17) point to God's sovereign ordering of redemptive time?
- (4) Why is it significant that God preserves the Messianic line through moments of sin, scandal, and exile?
- (5) Where have you recently doubted God's providential ordering of your circumstances, and how does this genealogy correct that?

- (6) How can we pray for you as you seek to trust God's hand in the long story He is writing in your life?
-

Family Advent Lesson – Week 1 – Hope

This week, read: Isaiah 7:14 • Micah 5:2–5 • Matthew 1:18–25 • Matthew 2:1–6

Family Connection: At Christmas, we celebrate the moment when God's promised Savior finally came. For hundreds of years, God's people waited with hope for the Messiah He promised, the One who would rescue His people from sin and bring salvation to all who trust Him. Even when life felt dark or uncertain, they could hold on to hope because God is faithful to His Word.

Hope is not merely wishful thinking. It is a confident trust in God's promises. The same God who sent Jesus still fulfills His promises to His people today. When we feel afraid, disappointed, or unsure, we can remember that Jesus is our hope. He has come, and He will return to bring all things under His perfect rule.

Discuss Together:

- What are you hoping for this Christmas?
- Why is waiting for God's promises sometimes hard?
- How do we know God will always keep His promises?
- How can we share hope with someone who is sad or struggling this week?

Do Together: Bake and decorate Christmas cookies as a family. As you wait for them to come out of the oven, talk about how God's promises are worth waiting for. Deliver some to neighbors or friends to share hope and kindness.

Pray Together: "God, thank You for keeping Your promises. Thank You for sending Jesus, our hope and Savior. Help us to trust You while we wait for Him to make all things right. Amen."

Sun, Dec 14, 2025 – “Spirit-Conceived King: You Shall Call His Name Jesus” (Matthew 1:18-25)

Matthew 1:18-25

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Exegetical Focus

- Verses 18-19 show Joseph’s crisis and righteousness, revealing the tension between law and mercy.
- Verses 20-21 reveal divine initiative in the Spirit’s conception and the mission of Jesus: “He will save His people from their sins.”
- Verses 22-23 demonstrate prophetic fulfillment in the virgin conception and the identity of Jesus as Immanuel.

Theological Principles

- Salvation begins with God’s initiative (effectual grace), not human ingenuity; the incarnation is the work of the Spirit.
- Jesus’ name reveals His mission: the Lord saves His people from their sins (definite atonement/particular redemption).
- Immanuel affirms that redemption brings God’s presence (incarnation) into human experience.

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- The virgin conception fulfills Isaiah 7:14 and marks a new-creation moment.
- Jesus is the divine Son whose coming unites temple, prophecy, and presence (John 1:14).
- Joseph's obedience anticipates discipleship in the new covenant age.

Sermon Notes

[illegible]

Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary

Joseph's crisis, that Mary "was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit" (v 18), was met with God's sovereignty, for He sent an angel to reveal that this child is the Savior: "you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (v 21). Even when righteous (v 19), Joseph's plans were collapsing like my banded home 'repairs,' but God was quietly building something better and lasting. Matthew explains that this was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy that the virgin's son would be "Immanuel" (v 23), meaning 'God fully with us,' not cheering from the sidelines but stepping into the mess with sleeves rolled-up in incarnate nearness. This illustrates both Christ's mission and identity—He is the divine King come to save His people, even if His royal identity remained largely unrecognized at the time. Hermeneutically, this passage teaches us how to read the Old Testament through the lens of Christ, since the promise of a child in Isaiah 7:14 ultimately points to Jesus, just as John 1:14 explains that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Like Joseph, our obedience flows from trusting God's redemptive plan even when it upends our expectations—and that means when life feels uncertain or costly, we can walk forward in faith knowing that Jesus is both with us and for us, for obedience is almost always showing up faithfully more than it is moments of mountaintop grandeur and red-carpet glamour.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Isaiah 7:1-17
- Tue – Luke 1:26-38
- Wed – John 1:1-14
- Thu – Psalm 130:1-8
- Fri – Exodus 14:10-31 and Isaiah 9:1-7
- Sat – Matthew 2:1-12 (tomorrow's sermon passage)

Life Group Summary

Joseph's dilemma is a collision of conviction and confusion where doing the right thing feels anything but straightforward. We tend to imagine God as distant when life unravels, but Christmas reminds us the opposite is true—God is always near because He has come as Savior. In Joseph's moment of crisis, God intervenes

to reveal that Mary's child is conceived by the Spirit, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy that the virgin's son will be Immanuel. The incarnation means that God Himself enters our world to redeem and dwell with His people. Like Joseph, believers respond to God's saving initiative with trust, obedience, and confidence in His redemptive plan. Our obedience may feel small, ordinary, slow, or even confusing, but God delights to work His extraordinary purposes through everyday faithfulness.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What does Matthew emphasize about Joseph's character in verses 18-19, and why is this important?
- (2) What stands out about the angel's message regarding the child's identity and mission?
- (3) How does the virgin conception reveal both divine initiative and fulfillment of prophecy?
- (4) Why is "God with us" central for understanding the purpose of the incarnation?
- (5) Where is God calling you to obey before you fully understand, as Joseph did?
- (6) How can we pray for you as you seek to walk in trusting obedience to God's revealed Word?

Family Advent Lesson – Week 2 – Love

This week, read: Exodus 34:6–7 • Lamentations 3:22–24 • John 3:16–17 • 1 John 4:7–11

Family Connection: God showed the greatest love by sending His Son, Jesus, to live among us, die for our sins, and rise again. Jesus's birth demonstrates God's covenant love, a love that saves His people from sin and unites them to Himself forever. Because God loved us first, we can love others by His grace.

At Christmas, we celebrate the love that gives, forgives, and serves. God's love transforms us and equips us to love even those who are hard to love. Everyone needs to know of His saving love through Christ.

Discuss Together:

- Who are the people you love the most?
- What is God's greatest act of love for us?
- How much must God love us to give His Son for His people?
- How can we show God's love to others this week?

Do Together: Give a gift to someone in need: a donation, food, or a card for someone who is sad. Talk about how God's love leads us to give generously.

Pray Together: "God, thank You for loving us so much that You gave us Jesus. Help us to share Your love with others this week. Thank You for making us part of Your family. Amen."

Sun, Dec 21, 2025 – “King of the Nations: They Fell Down and Worshiped Him” (Matthew 2:1-12)

Matthew 2:1-12

1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: 6 “And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.” 7 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” 9 After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. 12 And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Exegetical Focus

- Verses 1-2 show God revealing the King to Gentiles through supernatural guidance.
- Verses 3-8 contrast Herod’s hostility and the religious leaders’ apathy with genuine worship.
- Verses 9-12 display God’s faithful leading and the Magi’s joyful, costly worship.

Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary

The Magi came asking, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?” (v 2), showing that Christ’s kingship reaches beyond Israel. Remarkably, the people who responded best were the ones farthest from the center of religious power. While Herod schemed in fear (vv 3–8), God led these Gentiles by a star until “they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy” (v 10) and “fell down and worshiped him” (v 11). Herod had all the information but none of the worship; the Magi had partial knowledge but hearts ready to bow. This fulfills prophecies like Micah 5:2 and Isaiah 60:1–6, where nations bring tribute to the King. Hermeneutically, the contrast between Herod’s hostility and the Magi’s worship shows the dividing line of history: either rebellion or submission to Christ (Psalm 2:10–12). This passage reminds us that true wisdom is not in worldly knowledge but in bowing before the child-King who is Lord of all nations, not by having all the right answers but by having the right posture. If we worship Him today, it is not just with words, but by gladly offering Him our loyalty, our decisions, and our treasures, for worship is not an event but a daily reorientation of life as we hand over the throne we keep trying to sit on.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Numbers 24:15–19
- Tue – Isaiah 60:1–6
- Wed – Psalm 72:1–11
- Thu – Romans 15:7–13
- Fri – Revelation 21:22–27 and Genesis 12:1–3
- Sat – Colossians 1:15–23 (tomorrow’s sermon passage)

Life Group Summary

The Magi's journey reveals God's initiative in drawing the nations to His King. They sought Him because He first sought them, much like our own stories whether we realize it or not. While Herod rages and the religious leaders remain indifferent, God leads humble seekers to Christ with joy. Their worship, though imperfect in understanding, fulfills prophecy and models the only proper response to Jesus' universal reign. Worship is rarely convenient, but always worth the journey. The gifts they bring symbolize allegiance and honor to the newborn King. This passage calls believers to resist the pride or apathy that opposes Christ and to offer their lives in joyful, surrendered worship to the true King. Every heart feels the prideful tug of Herod's rebellion and divine draw of the Magi's worship; Christmas is God's quiet call of grace to silence the rebel and strengthen the worshiper.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What details in verses 1-2 show God initiating the Magi's search?
- (2) What contrasts emerge between Herod, the religious leaders, and the Magi?
- (3) How does the star's guidance reveal God's grace toward the nations?
- (4) Why is the Magi's worship a fulfillment of prophecy and a preview of Christ's universal kingship?

- (5) Where might you be responding to Christ with indifference or hesitation rather than joyful worship?
- (6) How can we pray for you as you seek to offer your loyalty, time, and treasures to Jesus this week?
-

Family Advent Lesson – Week 3 – Christ (Christmas Day)

Read: John 1:1–34 • John 20:30–31

Family Connection: Today we celebrate the birth of Jesus, God's perfect gift to His people. Jesus was born like us but lived without sin. He revealed God's glory and made a way for us to have forgiveness and new life through His life, death, and resurrection.

Christmas reminds us that God always keeps His promises and that His love is beyond our understanding. Jesus is God's gift of grace and truth for all who believe.

Discuss Together:

- What makes you most excited about Christmas?
- Why did John the Baptist want everyone to know about Jesus?
- Who can we tell about Jesus's story this Christmas?
- How can we continue celebrating Jesus after Christmas Day?

Do Together: Pray as a family for those who need to hear about Jesus, then talk about one way you can share His story this week.

Pray Together: "God, thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior. Help us celebrate Him with joy and share His story with others. Thank You for the gift of Your Son. Amen."

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CATECHISM



Introduction to NCC

“New City Catechism: Basics of Christian Beliefs in 52 Weeks” is a series we began in August 2023 that uses a catechetical (‘teaching by word of mouth’) Q&A format and that we occasionally squeeze in among other series until we someday finish all 52. See fccgreene.org/ncc for more.

Introduction to Wk/Q 26

Paul lifts our eyes from personal salvation to the cosmic scope of Christ’s redeeming work. Colossians 1:15-23 shows that Jesus is not only the Savior of sinners but the Lord of creation who reconciles “all things” through His cross. Christ is the true Image, Creator, Sustainer, and Head of the new creation, and His death begins the renewal of everything ruined by the fall. This passage calls believers to worship the unrivaled Christ and to persevere in the gospel that restores the world.

Memory Verses for New City Catechism are specific to each week.
See below.

Sun, Dec 28, 2025 – NCC Wk/Q 26: “What Else Does Christ’s Death Redeem?” (Colossians 1:15-23, esp vv 19-20)

*Yes, this is almost the same exact passage as Wk/Q 24, but with a different emphasis.

New City Catechism Answer

Christ’s death is the beginning of the redemption and renewal of every part of fallen creation, as he powerfully directs all things for his own glory and creation’s good. (Kids Version: Every part of fallen creation.)

Colossians 1:15-23 (*This week’s Memory Verse in italics.*)

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 *For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,* 20 *and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.* 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Exegetical Focus

- Vv 15-17 reveal Christ’s supremacy over creation: the Image of God, the firstborn, Creator, and Sustainer of all things.
- Vv 18-20 pivot to His supremacy in redemption: Head of the church, firstborn from the dead, the fullness of God dwelling in Him, and the reconciler of “all things” through the cross.
- Vv 21-23 apply cosmic reconciliation personally: alienation replaced with peace, holiness, and the call to persevere in gospel hope.

Theological Principles

- Christ alone holds divine supremacy in creation and redemption; nothing stands outside His lordship.
- Redemption is both personal and cosmic: Christ restores sinners and inaugurates the renewal of the created order.
- Perseverance is the evidence, not the cause, of genuine reconciliation; hope anchors steadfast faith.

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- Christ fulfills the “image” lost in Adam and restores creation’s purpose (Genesis 1:26-28; Romans 5:12-19).
- His cross achieves the peace foreseen by prophets who longed for universal restoration (Isaiah 53; Romans 8:19-23).
- The hymn reveals Christ as the true Temple in whom God dwells, reconciling heaven and earth (Leviticus 17:11; John 1:14; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

See fccgreene.org/ncc for a link to the NCC web app, which includes additional commentary, kids song, and suggested prayer.

Sermon Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary

Our view of salvation is often too small, like trying to admire the Grand Canyon through a keyhole. Paul throws the doors open to show that the gospel's greatness is not only that sinners are saved, but that "all the fullness of God" dwells in Christ, and through him God is reconciling "all things... by the blood of his cross." This passage expands our view from personal redemption to cosmic restoration: the One who created "all things" (vv 15-17) now reorders that same creation from chaos to peace (vv 19-20). Paul shows that the incarnation is the true temple where God's glory dwells (v 19; cf Exodus 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Ezekiel 44:4; John 1:14), and the cross is the altar where heaven and earth are reconciled, where all of Scripture's scattered beams of light now converge on one bright focal point. In Christ, God's purposes in creation and redemption meet and are fulfilled—He is both Creator and Redeemer, Sustainer and Savior, for no other Savior embodies cosmic-scale authority and cross-shaped humility. Redemptive-historically, Colossians 1:19-20 reveals that the peace forfeited in Eden (Genesis 3) is being restored in the new creation inaugurated at the cross and guaranteed by the resurrection. As Romans 8:19-21 explains, the whole creation now groans in hope of this renewal, and Ephesians 1:10 declares that God's plan is "to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth." For us, that means Christ's lordship extends over every part of life—our hearts, our work, our world—for there are no 'do not enter' rooms in the house of following Christ. To belong to Him is to live already under the reign of reconciliation, waiting for the day He makes all things new (Revelation 21:5).

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Genesis 1:26-31 and Psalm 8:1-9
- Tue – Romans 5:12-21
- Wed – Romans 8:18-25
- Thu – Ephesians 1:7-10
- Fri – Hebrews 1:1-14 and Hebrews 2:5-9
- Sat – Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5
(tomorrow's sermon passages)

Life Group Summary

Most of us naturally shrink the gospel down to our size, but in Colossians 1:15-23, Paul stretches it back out to God's perspective, expanding our vision of Christ's redemption beyond individual salvation to the renewal of the whole created order. The One who made all things is also the One through whom God is reconciling all things by the blood of His cross—restoring creation for the joy of His people and to the glory of His name. If He can hold galaxies together, His sustaining power can surely hold your life. Believers once alienated now stand holy and blameless before God and are called to continue in the gospel that forms, sustains, and directs their hope. Groups should reflect on how Christ's cosmic lordship shapes worship, identity, perseverance, and engagement with a world He is renewing. Christ's work is bigger than our anxieties, broader than our plans, and stronger than our fears—exactly what weary disciples need to remember.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What stands out in the way Paul describes Christ's supremacy over creation in verses 15-17?
- (2) How does Paul contrast the Colossians' former alienation with their present reconciliation in Christ?
- (3) How do verses 18-20 show that Christ's cross is the hinge of both personal salvation and cosmic renewal?
- (4) What does it mean that all the fullness of God dwells in Christ, and how does that correct false views of spiritual "fullness"?
- (5) Where does your hope need expansion to match the cosmic scope of Christ's redeeming work?
- (6) How can we pray for you as you seek to live under Christ's reconciling and renewing lordship?

7 HABITS

Introduction

The early church grew not through spiritual shortcuts or emotional spectacle but through steady devotion to God's appointed means of grace. Acts 2:42-47 shows believers committing themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. Ephesians 4:11-16 reveals that Christ Himself provides the gifts that build His body, and 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5 roots ministry in the sufficiency of Scripture. These passages together show that the Spirit matures God's people through ordinary, God-appointed, Christ-centered rhythms of Word, worship, fellowship, and mission.

Memory Verses – Acts 2:42 & 47b

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 47 ... And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

**Sun, Jan 4, 2026 – “The 7 Habits as Ordinary Means of Grace”
(Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5)**

Acts 2:42-47

2 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Ephesians 4:11-16

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

3:14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 4:1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead,

and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 5 But as for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Exegetical Focus

- Acts 2:42-47 presents four Spirit-established practices (teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer) that mark genuine devotion and result in God adding to the church.
- Ephesians 4:11-16 shows Christ giving Word-centered leaders to equip the saints so that the whole body grows as each part works properly.
- 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5 grounds ministry in the God-breathed Scriptures and the command to “preach the word” as the church’s sustaining lifeline.

Theological Principles

- God alone establishes the means by which grace is given (ordinary means of grace; regulative principle); believers do not invent the channels of spiritual growth.
- Scripture, worship, prayer, fellowship, service, generosity, and mission are Spirit-empowered means for believers’ sanctification.
- The ordinary means are corporate by design: Christ forms His people through the gathered church, not isolated spirituality.

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- The means of grace continue God’s pattern of meeting His people through His Word and presence (Exodus 19; Nehemiah 8-9; John 1:14).
- Pentecost launches the Spirit’s age in which grace flows through instituted practices that echo temple, covenant, and prophetic ministry.
- Christ the ascended Head pours out gifts (Ephesians 4:11) so that His body matures toward the fullness of His own resurrected life.

Sermon Notes

Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary

True spiritual growth looks less like fireworks and more like everyday boring faithfulness. If it were a gym routine, most of us want a miraculous six pack after three pushups—but God trains us through repetition. In Acts 2:42, the early church “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers,” showing that grace flows

through God's appointed means, not manmade strategies. Though we search for spiritual hacks, God keeps pointing us back to His simple, time-tested patterns. These regular, God-designed rhythms of Word, fellowship, worship, and prayer are not religious extras but are the means the Spirit uses to nourish His people. In Ephesians 4:11-16, Paul explains that the risen Christ "gave... pastors and teachers" so that His body might be "built up" as each member "works properly." Grace is not a mystical feeling but God's life-giving power flowing through His Word, His people, and His ordinances. And 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5 reminds us that "the sacred writings... make you wise for salvation" and that the charge to "preach the word" anchors the church's strength in divine revelation, not human hype or creativity.

Redemptive-historically, this continues the same pattern by which God has always given grace—through His Word and His presence among His people (Exodus 19; John 1:14; Hebrews 10:24-25). The "ordinary" in ordinary means of grace is a reminder that God's work of transformation is usually not radical or emotionally charged, but steady and faithful sanctification—more like daily bread than lightning bolts. The Spirit does its best work in places we're tempted to overlook—in the quiet faithfulness of showing up Sunday after Sunday after Sunday. It is helpful—and even encouraging—to know that growth doesn't come by spiritual shortcuts but through faithful devotion to the regular God-appointed and Spirit-empowered means—God infusing normal with supernatural. We experience God's transforming grace as we worship together, hear and apply His Word, pray dependently, and share life in the body—all ordinary practices through which our extraordinary God makes us mature in Christ! It may not be glamorous, but it is glorious—for God is not about the fleeting fun of firecrackers that go boom once; He's about growing oak trees that bear fruit for a lifetime (Isaiah 61:3).

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Exodus 19:1-25
- Tue – Nehemiah 8:1-18; 9:1-6
- Wed – John 1:1-18
- Thu – Hebrews 10:19-25
- Fri – 1 Peter 4:7-11; Romans 10:14-17
- Sat – Hebrews 10:32-39 (tomorrow's sermon passage)

Life Group Summary

The ordinary means of grace remind us that spiritual growth comes through God's appointed channels, not through novelty or emotional intensity. In a world that chases the new, loud, and instant, God insists on steady, durable, and slow forming grace. Acts 2:42-47 shows a church devoted to Word, prayer, worship, fellowship, and generosity—the nuts and bolts of Christian stability. Ephesians 4 and 2 Timothy 3 anchor these rhythms in Christ's gifts and Scripture's sufficiency. Through these means the Spirit strengthens faith, cultivates unity, and matures believers into Christlikeness. Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is simply keep showing up. Groups should reflect on how steady, ordinary devotion to these practices nourishes perseverance and deepens love for Christ and His church.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What repeated practices do you notice in Acts 2:42-47, and what do they reveal about the church's priorities?
- (2) How does Ephesians 4:11-16 describe the way Christ Himself grows and strengthens His church?
- (3) How do these passages together show that spiritual growth is God's work through God's appointed means, rather than human strategies?
- (4) Why does Paul root all ministry in the sufficiency and authority of Scripture in 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5?
- (5) Where do you personally tend to seek spiritual growth through shortcuts rather than steady, ordinary obedience?
- (6) How can we pray for you as you commit to deeper devotion to these God-appointed means of grace?



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