



Thrive  
Sukkot 2023

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# D A Y O N E

## *Forward & Introduction*

### **DAY 1 - Forward: by Gary Durham Jr.**

The dictionary describes Thrive this way: to grow vigorously; to gain in wealth or possessions; to progress toward or realize a goal despite or because of circumstances. This definition does a good job of capturing the positive aspects of thriving, but it doesn't paint the whole picture. You can't grow vigorously without pain and even sometimes, suffering because of the growth. You can't gain something new, without having outgrown something old, or in some cases, losing it altogether.

As you pursue God's plan for you, to realize His goals for your life, it demands that unhelpful things be cut out so the work of transformation can take place. This perspective doesn't sound as fun as the positive alone, but it's necessary and you can't have one without the other. Focusing only on the positive aspects of thriving, without having counted the whole cost does us the disservice of creating unrealistic expectations in our minds. This can be a dangerous position to find yourself in because it has the potential to set you up for failure, disappointment, discouragement, depression, anxiety and giving in to fear.

We need to set the record straight so we can be prepared for when, not if, the trials come and we learn what it really means to Thrive. There is no vigorous growth without pain. There is no gain without loss. There is no goal worth pursuing that doesn't involve giving up some

things you used to do or like. There is no reward worth having without sacrifice.

1 Corinthians 13:11 reads, "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul describes the roles within the body are for equipping the saints for ministry "till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). The goal is maturity, to reach the full measure of Messiah. But why? The next verse gives the answer in that we should no longer be like inexperienced children in our beliefs.

As you progress through this devotional, you'll be challenged about what it means to Thrive as a child of God growing into the fullness of our Messiah. Kraig and Heather have done a phenomenal job of capturing real life examples while bringing in spiritual truth of both sides to the thriving equation. You may be in situations right now that are causing you to Thrive, but all you are experiencing is the painful side of the thriving reality. Hang in there! Not all growth is pleasant while it's happening but take heart in the fact that your LORD and Savior sees you and is encouraging you and desires to strengthen you through the trials.

The Chinese bamboo tree spends the first four years growing roots under the surface without any visible sign of growth being observed from the surface. It would be easy to think that nothing is really happening at all. But then in the fifth year, growth takes place at a remarkable rate, as much as 90 feet in five weeks! Without the root system firmly established, growing at that kind of rate

would be detrimental to the tree and would easily fall over or break. With those root systems firmly in place, however, massive amounts of growth can be easily experienced and enjoyed.

Likewise, we must do the hard and often thankless work of cultivating the right biblical foundation within our hearts and minds to grow into the fullness of Yeshua. On this devotional journey, you will be challenged to do just that. Learn what it means to give God glory for the wonderful things He's done in your life, and how you can use your testimony about that work to potentially lead others to Thrive in Messiah. The road can be hard, and the journey long, but the rewards can last for eternity.

Will you take this journey with us and share with others your story?

## **DAY 1 - Introduction: by Kraig & Heather Dorney**

The Lord gives and the Lord takes, blessed be the Name of the Lord. The theme for this year is "Thrive." Our discussion of this topic since December of '22 has grown wider in what this means. A year ago, we may have described thriving as a tangible and measurable success. One that is visible to the outside world and undoubtedly, unmistakably attributed to the Father. But as is true to the nature of God, He has a way of showing up and taking this broken vessel and making it Thrive.

In the midst of chaos, I (Heather) was walking down the stairs in our home during a particularly trying part of our year, and I called out to the Lord, "How is this thriving?!" I was at the end of my personal strength. I didn't see the fruit of the struggle. I was in the trenches of doubt when

the Lord spoke to me, "This is thriving. It is in your weakness that My strength is made perfect." I stopped in my tracks, "This is thriving." And I stopped right there and gave praise to the Lord of my strength and the King of my future. For those whose trust is the Lord, when things seem to be falling apart they're actually falling into place and setting the stage for the glory of God to be displayed.

This year we are inviting you to let go of surviving on your own. Let go of the control of your life and hold on to the concept of thriving right where you are, because that's where God is. Life is happening right now. Each situation you encounter is preparing you for the next. Thriving isn't a passive experience, and we were made to THRIVE!

Please take time this week to meditate on the suggested scriptures, read our thoughts, fill in the journal prompts and check out the QR code links.

Our prayer for you is that you Thrive!



## DAY TWO

# Hoping & Waiting

### **DAY TWO - AM: Hurry Up and Wait**

Read Acts 1

Our Heavenly Father, our Abba, is not slow as some would count slow (2 Peter 3:9). He does all things in His time. God is Creator of time and is Lord of all time. In our linear thought, we may struggle with time. "Will I have enough time before Shabbat to grab something from the store?" "If time allows, I'd love to get together with a friend." "I ran out of time trying to get everything done." "I wasted my time on entertainment." "I was not on time for that event." We are all familiar with this concept of time and never seem to have enough of it. But what if, in our world of fast food, fast internet, and fast communication, our Father in heaven is asking us to slow it all down? The greatest commands are these, to love God and love others. Time, and all the daily things we do to fill it, are maybe a little less important than the bigger picture of the Lord and His commands to us.

We live in a microwave world, and our Father's timing is probably closer to a crockpot. But if you compare the two meals, the slow-cooked meal is always superior, while the microwave meal leaves us lacking nutrients and wanting. Waiting on the Lord will produce the best results. Jumping in front of the Lord may give us things faster but can produce a lot of heartache and hardship while having missed the point. So often it is in our waiting that His plans are made perfect. It is in our waiting that God works all things together for our good and His glory. It is in the waiting that our strength is renewed (Isaiah 40:31).

Considering Acts 1, so much of Yeshua's ministry was the disciples and His followers waiting for what amazing thing He would do next. In Acts 1 He asked them to wait again for the Helper. Due to their history with Yeshua, they gladly waited for the Holy Spirit to come. And whatever that meant, they knew they would witness the fullness of God. Our relationship with the Father must be such that we will gladly wait on Him because we know, without a doubt, what He has in store is much better than we can imagine. Waiting on the Lord is where we will Thrive.

We do not wait aimlessly and without hope. As the disciples gathered in the upper room, they were anticipating the next thing. In their waiting, they had hope in what was to come. To answer the question "How do you Thrive in the waiting," you Thrive by hoping in the Lord. Waiting is not a passive move. Read that again. Waiting is not a passive move. It is a strategic move. If you've ever watched a predator stalk prey, waiting is the key; and the predator isn't taking a nap.

What were these men and women doing while they were waiting?

Acts 1:14, "These [the disciples] all with one mind were devoting themselves to prayer..."

Acts 1:24-26, the disciples chose Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot.

These people were not twiddling their thumbs in waiting. They were active participants. They were preparing for what was coming. This upper room experience for the disciples was a training ground for the future. And what a future it was about to be!



This week, we invite you to slow down. Please taste and see that the Lord is good. Meditate on Him. Give yourself the challenge of being quiet before our King. Listen to Him in silence for five minutes each morning and write down what He says to you. When you’re finished with this exercise, move on to the journaling prompt.

Consider an experience you had where your every expectation was “GO forward full steam ahead” only to have the door shut hard in your face and all your forward progress halted. Did you push through? Did you wait for directions? What were the consequences (good and bad) of this experience?

Read Isaiah 40:29-31; Psalm 62

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## **DAY TWO - PM: The Waiting Place**

Waiting is a common theme in our lives. We have sayings like “Good things come to those who wait,” or “Don’t count your chickens before they hatch.” We teach our children to wait their turn. We wait in lines and at stop lights. It’s all around us. Short waiting, let’s say like waiting for a traffic light to turn green, can even test our patience. Longer waiting is even harder. Waiting for a loved one to turn to the Lord for salvation or for healing from a long-term illness. Regardless of length, waiting is a true test of our character. Waiting on the Lord is also a common theme in scripture. Abraham was given a prophecy that his descendants would be more numerous than the stars and sand, and his wife was barren (Genesis 15). Joseph waited in jail to be remembered (Genesis 40). Joshua waited 40 years to enter the promised land (Joshua 1). David waited many years to be king after being anointed by Samuel (1 Samuel 16, 2 Samuel 1). Elijah waited for rain (1 Kings 18). Scripture is full of accounts of people waiting on the Lord, the Lord coming through, and it being even better than imagined.

I (Heather) am a far cry from calling myself a gardener. I put plants and seeds into the ground and they grow because God is faithful. I water the ground, pull the weeds, and I wait. What assurance do I have that in a short amount of time I will see the plants push through the ground, or a flower bloom? I have faith that the things I have done will produce fruit because I have seen it happen before. Soil + Seed + Water + Time = Plant. This is an equation that I have seen happen time and time again.

When we try out this ‘waiting on the Lord’ thing, we will start to see patterns that will increase our faith and we

learn to trust Him in the process of waiting. At first, it's small things. It's trusting in God for patience to deal with a difficult work colleague and realizing at the end of the day, you dealt patiently with him. It's asking God for help in understanding a difficult task and being able to figure it out. When we see these patterns, our faith begins to grow and our trust in the Lord increases. Once faith and trust are in place, waiting on the Lord becomes an easier task. Basically, the more we do it the better we get at it.

But what do we do in the waiting place, where we often find ourselves? Like the disciples and followers in Acts 1, they were waiting on the Lord. They were praying earnestly. They were finding a replacement disciple. It was many days, so I'm sure they were cooking and eating, shopping, bathing, sleeping, and cleaning. They kept busy. After all, there were more than 100 people! But in these everyday tasks they were waiting on the Lord. Isaiah 40:31 reminds us to wait on the Lord and He will renew our strength. Waiting can cause fatigue, despair, and doubt. Waiting can cause us to ask questions like, "Did I hear the Lord correctly?" or "Maybe I missed the next cue." or "Did I misunderstand?"

We have these amazing historical accounts to encourage us. Even when our own experience is limited, we can glean from the waiting of others who have gone before us. By becoming familiar with scripture, and sitting at the feet of those who have wisdom, we can be encouraged. By trusting in the Lord while we wait, we are exercising our faith and growing our assurance and trust in our loving Father.

Let's recount the ways the Lord has renewed our strength in our waiting.

Think of a time when God gave you the answer you were dreading. Describe how His plan ended up being better than the one you had and how your faith and trust in an All-Knowing Father grew and caused you to Thrive.

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Testify of something you are still waiting for today. Consider how your previous situations are strengthening you for this waiting place and what you are learning through it. Take some time to pray about this and share this prayer request with another person. Ask them about what they're waiting on. Pray together.

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## DAY THREE

# Jesus Take the Wheel

### **DAY THREE - AM: Who's the Driver of Your Life?**

Read Acts 2:1-36

Two years into our marriage, Heather and I found ourselves blessed with two children, both in diapers, taking a trip to Gettysburg, PA. We were on our way to visit family and see the infamous battlefields. Along the way, we were anticipating various traffic hazards like Chicago, which is a BIG BLACK HOLE of traffic delay and confusion. During a wonderful, now heartwarming, moment stuck in stopped traffic on I-90 eastbound through Chicago, with two screaming children in tow and in desperate need of toilet facilities, we vowed to never travel through Chicago at that time of day again.

We anticipated flat tires, the tools needed if we broke down, jumper cables, and the possible reckless, inattentive driver. However, we were not prepared for the change in weather conditions as we came into the Appalachian Mountains.

Being from Minnesota, we get late fall and early winter driving; however, we don't typically have to deal with the woes of ice. Somewhere around the Ohio/Pennsylvania state line, as we began climbing the ascent, the weather got colder with a little rain. My tires were new and everything on our van was prepared for the trip, so we felt secure. We were driving in the middle lane of a 3-lane turnpike with a car to our right and a pickup with a trailer to our left. As we climbed at 75mph together, we

came to an overpass and instantly the drivers around us lost control and began spinning in every which way.

My first thought was, "Lord, I have my babies and my bride with me. Please take the wheel!" As if the hand of God appeared right before our eyes, the car to our right gently, and as if by supernatural design, spun out of our lane and rested calmly on the right-hand shoulder. One disaster avoided. The next concern was the pickup and trailer. The trailer was causing the truck to jackknife horribly. At one point I think the vehicle was an inch away from hitting us. This vehicle also gradually drifted to the left shoulder and rested calmly with no one hurt. As for us, our van stayed in the middle lane, straight as an arrow, true and confident, being led by Yeshua's amazingly capable driving skills! The only collateral damage was our elevated blood pressure.

As we covered yesterday, Peter and the disciples needed to WAIT for the incredibly steady, faithful hand of God to equip them and empower them to succeed before they could overcome. If we can define "Thrive" in terms of bearing fruit, the fruit of obediently waiting allowed the Pentecost story. Acts 2:1 reads, "They were all together in one place." Why? Because Yeshua told them to WAIT (Acts 1:4) until the appointed time.

Let's look a bit further back in time to David's writing in Psalm 37. Evil doers, scoffers, and those seeking David's life were surrounding him; Psalm 37 was his response. When all the pressure was coming down upon him, he wrote in verse 7a, "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him." From the Hebrew perspective, the concepts of "rest" and "wait" mean to stand dumbfounded and astonished! The context of this Psalm is to stand



dumbfounded and astonished at what the Lord would do for those who wait for Him. And what does He do? We see the reward in verse 11, “But the humble will inherit the land and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.”

In order for the first century disciples to be equipped for explosive growth, they needed Yeshua to “take the wheel,” and once He did, OH BOY. The darkness of this world could not comprehend what just hit them.

You and I carry on the call of the Kingdom through the power of the Holy Spirit. This morning read and reflect on Psalm 37:3-6. Discuss and journal our call to dwell in the land, cultivating goodness and committing our way to the Lord, trusting God will prepare you for explosive growth! Consider areas of life that prevent you from cultivating goodness and committing your way to the Lord.

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## **DAY THREE - PM: Backseat Drivers**

Read John 4:7-45

Since the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, the “hated” Samaritans lived in the land of Israel. They caused horrible trouble for the Jews as they returned from Babylon, commissioned to rebuild the Temple and the Wall of Jerusalem. The Samaritans were a result of the remnants from the scattered northern tribes bred to Babylonian transplants sent by Nebuchadnezzar who hated the fact God was bringing the Jewish people back into their inheritance. In the days of Ezra, the Samaritans sent word back to King Artaxerxes warning that once Jerusalem was rebuilt and reestablished, the Jews would not send tribute and would rebel against the king. Generations of animosity should reveal the controversial nature of Yeshua ministering to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well (John 4:7-45).

Yeshua communicates to the woman the concept of worshiping God in spirit and truth. I love this story so much as it shows the complexity of the Gospel and the simplicity of the Gospel at the same time. This enigma confounds the wise and sets free the humble. It occurs while the woman tries to rationalize her historical knowledge, the Jewish-Samaritan hatred, the reality of differing religious centers and practices, and her knowledge that the Messiah is coming. To all of this, Yeshua simply said, “I who speak to you am HE”. That’s all it took. She BELIEVED and then TESTIFIED to all about the man who knew the story of her life.

There are two concepts we want you to consider this afternoon.

First, it is God who causes the GROWTH.

When Yeshua revealed to the woman who He was, her faith grew. It is by His Spirit, not our might, knowledge, ability, or the best intentions, it is by His Spirit that growth occurs. This concept is so embedded into His Kingdom which is established by His Ruach HaKodesh, His Holy Spirit, abiding in you and you abiding in Him. Yeshua spoke exclusively of this in John 15:1-11. The Apostle Paul states in 1 Corinthians 3:6, "I planted, Apollos watered, but GOD caused the growth."

This powerful principle of God causing growth, through His Holy Spirit, is the very same way by which you and I Thrive. Take for instance Acts 2. The disciples received the Ruach/Spirit and as a result the Gospel went forth and 3000 people received faith leading to salvation. This is explosive growth, and it is what you have been created for.

The second concept to consider is the power of MULTIPLICATION.

As soon as the woman at the well heard Yeshua say, "I am HE," she dropped her water bucket and ran. She went to testify to ALL who would listen saying, "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done. Is this not the Christ?" Because she testified, many in Samaria believed and Yeshua stayed in the region for two more days communicating the Truth of the Kingdom.

One could say the woman at the well was living a life contrary to Yeshua's best for her. Despite everyone knowing her sin and shame, it was this woman who dropped everything and took the message of Messiah to the people. Yeshua declares in John 12:23-26, "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains

alone; but if it dies it bears much fruit.” The woman believed and shared her testimony with others. What about Peter? Yes, the Peter who betrayed Yeshua three times. In Acts 2 we find this same man boldly proclaiming the invitation of the Gospel to thousands resulting in many salvations.

The Kingdom of God thrives because His Spirit abides within His Kingdom. We independently Thrive when His Spirit is within us. Then, as a seed surrendered to the ground grows, more seeds are realized. Multiplication!

We see the first century exploding in growth because the awaited Spirit, the Helper, the God who dwells within His people, had arrived causing transformation in lives.

Is His spirit abiding in you today? Examine yourselves to see if your life, your thoughts, and your actions are in line with the Spirit and Truth of the Kingdom of God. Are you being a backseat driver trying to take control away from the Holy Spirit? Take some time to confess to the Lord and to a friend whatever is hindering you.

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DAY THREE

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# DAY FOUR

## *Common Unity*

### **DAY FOUR - AM: The Testimony of a Bondservant**

Read Acts 2:37-47

Have you ever felt the fire of God's presence fill your heart and mind? I'm not sure if any of us have felt Him quite like on the day of Pentecost. The power of the Holy Spirit fell on the multitude, burning within them, searing their consciousness, and compelling them to ask Peter, "Brethren, what should we do?" This is an action statement, a response to a massive movement of the Lord. As a seed falls and dies, it doesn't simply fall and become nothing. NO, it falls and takes action! Roots grow, the foundation is established, the preparation for growth is ignited, and then comes the fruit. Taking action was the result of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the first century believers.

Do you find yourself asking, "what's the next step?" If I said, "Share your testimony," how would you respond? Check this out: Every time you share what God has done in your life you invite people to know God in a powerful way. Sharing the faithfulness of God is an invitation to others inviting them to repent. Without repentance it is impossible for a person to please God or even be in relationship with Him. It's surrendering your will for His and doing a spiritual 180, a transformation from living for self to living for God as His bondservant.

Deuteronomy 15:16-17 brings us into the ancient Hebrew relationship between a master and a slave. As you read this passage, you will see the servant has

undergone some sort of transformation. The service he renders is no longer one of dutiful obligation, but rather of loving devotion. He's no longer simply outwardly complying; he's 100% committed to his master.

Agriculturally speaking, repentance is the act of breaking up the compacted ground, loosening it up so that it has a place to receive a seed, which is God's word. It's surrendering your way so He can have His way. Doing this willingly, like the bondservant, provides the good soil needed, which is the first step toward bearing abundant fruit. Without this step of repentance, the seed falls on hard, weedy, and infertile soil ultimately leading to spiritual fruitlessness; and hence being without an inheritance.

We see this clearly in the process of baptism (Romans 6). Through baptism we become like Yeshua in His living and dying, His service and worship, and His ultimate surrender. Repentance is our ultimate, initial surrender in being like Yeshua. In this step, we surrender our pride, "justifiable" anger against someone, and our right for revenge. Through repentance, the soil of our heart becomes fertilized and a hospitable place for the Holy Spirit to dwell.

Peter responded to their question "What should we do?" without hesitation. He said, "REPENT, and each of you be baptized in the name of Yeshua and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). What Peter said is imperative in order for the eternal Kingdom to be established within us. Peter communicates this gift of God, the Holy Spirit, which they are to receive, is a promise that has been given by God for all who call Yeshua their own. Paul communicates that the Holy Spirit is the seal of our inheritance, a picture of us being

the possession of God. It is through repentance one becomes eligible for inheritance. Think about it, this spiritual inheritance declares what you are in line for, where you are going, who your family is, what your family has done, and who will be in the Kingdom to come. Inheritance is everything.

In Acts 2:17, Peter references the Prophet Joel, who by the Word of God proclaimed God's Spirit would come, filling the hearts of men with dreams and visions and bringing together those who were once far off. His kingdom is being established in our hearts. Peter and the disciples were living this promised moment. They had received the promise, the gift of God, His Holy Spirit. (See Jeremiah 31:31-34; Joel 2:28-29; Zechariah 12:10.)

The power of a promise either transforms us into people who Thrive or people who shrink away because of broken promises. Think about the promises given to you. Broken promises are clearly seen all around us on an everyday basis. Unkept political promises, broken business contracts, devastated marriage covenants, or a missed appointment to spend time with your child. We are all familiar with the pain of broken promises. Promises kept bring affirmation and success, bringing you into security and great hope. The faithful family serving the Lord together, a devoted young couple inspired by seasoned marriages, and business owners who selflessly serve their employees and their clients are all examples of Yeshua's provision and promises kept. These promises set the world around us on fire and inspire many to follow the example of surrender through repentance.

It is IMPOSSIBLE for us to Thrive in this life if we do NOT receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and believe the



promises of God for us. Here is a list of “I am” statements found in the “Bondage Breaker,” a book written by Neil Anderson. Each of these statements are compiled from scripture.

- “I have been justified” (Romans 5:1)
- “I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)
- “I am God’s workmanship” (Ephesians 2:10)

Yeshua has given us His Spirit and His promises so we will Thrive. Was it hard to say these promises over yourself? Do you believe this is what Yeshua believes about you?

Read these scriptures and write down the actions you can take: Galatians 5:1; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. Surrender any unbelief in your quiet time and return to these scriptures in future days and months.

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## **DAY FOUR - PM: Are You a Leaf Peeper?**

Every year Colorado hosts millions of tourists all seeking one attraction that may surprise you. With all the mountains and valleys, assorted wildlife and endless miles of streams, trails, lakes, and ski slopes (downhill skiing in Colorado is a must!), an attraction you may not have considered is the brilliant and breath-taking fall colors. These fall colors earn an income reaching hundreds of millions in state revenue from people, traveling thousands of miles, known as Leaf Peepers.

The “quaking” Aspen trees turn brilliant gold and have a fragrance that will bring gladness and joy to all, even those cold-weather haters. Although drawn in by their external beauty, their underground structure is far more amazing. Aspen trees share a common root system (rhizome) allowing them to group together over hundreds of acres, forming large families. These groups have the same genetics, turn colors at the same time (despite their varied altitudes of 5,000-11,500 ft), and can quickly regrow and regenerate after devastating wildfires due to their supportive root structure. By God’s incredible design, these trees are one of our world’s largest organisms and people flock to them every year to enjoy their beauty and aroma.

Read Acts 2:42-47

Daily, Peter and the disciples were giving themselves to the body, teaching them about the Good News of Messiah and His love for them. Their numbers quickly grew and they developed a vibrant root system! They were hanging on to everything the Holy Spirit was revealing, understanding gained, relationship restored, and physical healing. Yet, they were not only receiving, they were also

giving. And they gave a lot! "... and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need" (verse 45).

Does growth come without giving? Can a seed multiply without dying? Here, we learn a very important truth about what it means to Thrive. Their growth had feet and they were moving! No one had needs unmet. In fact, meals were being shared freely, houses were utilized for hospitality, and a beautiful aroma of gladness and sincerity was being experienced. They displayed the love for one another they had received, as a single and vast organism being supplied by the same nutrient; God's love.

God's family is a living, holy, sustained, and nurtured root system that you have been invited to be a part of. Yet, in order for the organism to Thrive as a collective, each one of us must Thrive individually.

Read John 15:1-11

The only way we Thrive, individually and corporately, is to be 100% supplied by Yeshua our Root (Vine). Pay close attention to John 15:8, "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so PROVE to be My disciples." For you "Greekys" out there, γίνομαι is translated to mean "to cause to be." The word is pronounced, "ghin'-om-ahee". It's from this Greek word we derive the word, "generate," meaning "to create or bring to pass." In the Father's sight, we are to PROVE ourselves disciples. Disciples are those who bring to pass the same love and character that Yeshua has brought to them.

A strong body produces strong limbs, and strong limbs produce a strong body. This simple structure is so

complete and complex. Still, we don't always feel like we are thriving. We are susceptible to fire and disease, and sometimes need those around us to be strong when we are struggling. During this time, all we may need is for our Kingdom family to invite us for dinner, share a word of encouragement, stand in the gap, provide shelter in the storm, and remind us of God's love. This is how we Thrive, Church!

When was the last time you saw someone struggling and said, "Come to my place today. I want to spend time with you." Or "I see you and I want you to know I am praying for you. Do you need anything?"

If you find yourself in a place of struggle, you have an obligation to reach out for the support you need. The body is composed of strong limbs supporting each other. You are strengthening the body when you seek out the help and the support you need from God's family.

The early church did these things, and their number was being added to everyday. How long will it be before the world stops traveling to Colorado, leaf peeping, and instead comes to your home to experience the Kingdom of God thriving in your life?

Today, if you're hurting in any way and it is robbing you of spiritual growth, seek counsel and find shelter in your spiritual community. If you see someone in need, reach out and ask how you can help. Be willing to share what God has given you by journaling the strengths you have to serve others. Consider where you are in life and how that can be an asset to the Kingdom. Write out your thoughts.



DAY FOUR

*Additional Notes*

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DAY FIVE  
*Living & Working*

**DAY FIVE - AM: The Daily Grind**

“Life is like a grindstone; whether it grinds you down or polishes you up depends on what you’re made of.”  
Jacob M. Braude (1902-1977)

Polishing stones. Have you ever done it? It takes time. It involves coarse sand at first, eventually moving to a finer sand. The rocks tumble around and around in a cylinder. It takes a long time. With each step, harsh edges are removed, and a smooth surface is revealed. It is kind of like our everyday walk with Yeshua, learning how to follow the Spirit, and flourishing under obedience to the Father. The beauty of this relationship with the Lord doesn’t develop overnight. It takes time, and some of these moments can be painful. As our rough edges are removed, we are reminded that we are no longer our own. 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold new things have come.”

When things become new, it’s exciting.

Read Act 3:1-12

We read here about Peter and John. This new way of living was really growing on them. The Holy Spirit was upon them! They were preaching the Good News of the Messiah. They were healing in the name of Yeshua. They didn’t have much, but that didn’t matter. What they carried with them was hope. Even with the ridicule and

scoffing of the religious leaders, the first century church was on fire! Their focus wasn't on what they needed to eat, although they still needed to eat. Their focus wasn't on where they would live, although they needed shelter from the harsh heat of Jerusalem in spring. What we do see in this first century church was their intense focus on the Lord. They were unmovable, unstoppable, and uncompromised. Their priorities were bigger than themselves. And boldly they stepped forward into the new things.

As they were a conduit for these miraculous healings, they were very careful to point the bystanders to the true Healer and to show them a path of restoration and repentance.

Read Acts 3:13-26

When things become new, it's scary. We are creatures of habit. Most people order familiar food at restaurants. When we are stressed and overwhelmed, we regress to old routines. When the excitement weans, uncertainty may grow. In these opportunities we see a big step toward faith. Hebrews 11:1 explains, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." In this place of faith, we exercise at an entirely new level. It goes beyond, "Lord, where did I set my keys down?" to, "Lord, how am I going to navigate my parent's terminal illness, these relationship struggles, my wandering heart?" Life gets real fast. Somewhere between exciting and terrifying, we find the great Comforter of our souls. Our prayer life becomes a priority. Our faith isn't merely a crutch, but a wheelchair! Soon, we don't know how the rest of the world does life, but this is the only way we know how.



It is here, in the “every day,” we find ourselves now. Some seasons feel like the drone of monotony, and other seasons find us jumping from one crisis to another. Regardless of what that looks like, we are called to put off the old self and put on the new. The rocks I have pulled out of the polisher look very different from the rocks I put in. I don’t throw those polished rocks into the garden, or to pave a path. Those polished rocks go on shelves, and they are appreciated so much more. After a little time of refining and a few trials, we look different. To Thrive we must look differently than we did. We go through our “every day” with the joy of the Lord and the hope of our Salvation. Our “every day” becomes a display of the faithfulness of a loving Father. It is our testimony of how Yeshua changed our lives. And this is, after all, how we bring people into a knowledge of salvation.

Journal about your everyday life. Look at it through the lens of God’s training ground for amazing things to come. How have you been trained by God’s faithfulness in your life? Write about how His faithfulness allowed you the freedom to put off the old and bring in the new.

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## **DAY FIVE - PM: When God Wrecks Your Plans**

Our Father is loving. His ways are higher. God's writing the story of our life, history, and the future. We get to read accounts, both in scripture and history, about the struggles and victories. As time passes, we get a new perspective of what the Father is doing, appreciate the struggle through the pain, and the outcomes are better than we could imagine. But sometimes we find ourselves in the middle of the story. We don't know the outcome. We are attempting to make the best of a situation despite what we see, understand, or imagine. It is in this place that we found our friends from Ukraine.

On a cold winter morning, February 24, 2022, before 5:00 am, the sun hadn't yet peeked through the horizon. The stillness of the crisp air kept birds in their nests, and animals in their burrows. The few people who were awake trucked slowly to start their day. Yet, this would be the beginning of a very different life. This morning, Ukraine woke up under attack. Their president declared Martial Law and encouraged the men to stand up and fight for their country.

Approximately one million women, children, and elderly left the country in that first week. Families were torn apart. Homes and buildings were destroyed. Of those who stayed, the cost has been countless. The war crimes are heinous. The brutalities are never ending. The sirens scream that another air raid is occurring. Children sleeping in tunnels and basements. Many people are freezing through the winter. Food and clean water are scarce. Creature comforts are lost. Yet, we were made to Thrive.

Many pastors have stood their ground on the eastern front. They have seen the coolness of their fellow citizens toward the Gospel for years. They know life is temporary and the future of their neighbors is dismal. How will they know about eternal life? How will they see Yeshua in suffering? These pastors have trusted in the Father and stayed. Preaching the Good News, proclaiming healing to the sick and dying. Their churches are going strong and have become spiritual hospitals for the spiritually sick. People are being physically fed and supported. They are receiving the Living Water and being baptized. This wasn't their plan, yet Yeshua is being made famous. Faith has taken a very real role, and it is contagious. It is over 500 days of war without an end in sight. Some days there are great victories, but others are left with overwhelming sadness. Yet, we were made to Thrive.

Read Acts 4:1-4

Though imprisoned, the followers of Yeshua continued to proclaim the one message that everyone on earth needs to hear: Repent. God loves you. Give up what you cannot keep to gain what you cannot lose.

God wrecked their plans, and they were unashamedly running toward the One they loved. No longer were they concerned about what they should eat or drink. They were transformed and they needed to testify about this amazing transformation.

How has God wrecked your plans in order to line them up with His?

Journal about it.



D A Y F I V E

*Additional Notes*

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## DAY SIX

# *Thrill of Living vs Fear of Dying*

### **DAY SIX - AM: Great Growth Comes Through Great Adversity**

Beneath the dense weave of oak, hazel, elm and ash, there is a small bush that thrives in adversity. Among the rocks and crags of sun starved, cold conditions there is an evergreen that flourishes. Growing in all soil types, this plant was readily available and used for bedding, food, architectural structures, roofing, and ornament. It was sold, being the livelihood for many farmers. It was the plant that would determine the success or failure of winter survival for animals and people in Northern Europe. The beautiful fragrance of its burning resin filled the spring air as the plant would populate through the forests and moors. Someday, this plant would be named hæddre (heather).

Heather is a flowering evergreen native to Northern Europe. Producing thousands of flowers on each plant, it attracts bees and grazing animals. It blooms in late summer providing a purple hue over the heaths, it does not lose its leaves, nor does it go dormant in cooler months. In the spring, farmers will start these heaths on fire, burning the undergrowth and unwanted plants. The fire causes heather's oils to spark and pop, which helps the heather seeds to germinate and encourage new shoots to come up. The other plants don't survive, but heather flourishes!

You can probably imagine where we are going today: Flourishing under great adversity! We cannot talk about thriving without mentioning the challenges of life. The

harder we work toward a goal, the sweeter the victory. The greater the challenge that is overcome, the more satisfaction we feel. The world around us has many convinced that when things are too hard you should quit. We will lower standards to inflate achievement, rarely pushing people to do their best. Failure was once the great teacher. But in a society where everyone gets awards for participating, accommodations for a lack of effort, and social promotion, we find ourselves in a pool of mediocrity. That's not thriving! No one is motivated by stories of cutting corners, adjusting the bar, or changing the rules. We are inspired by the taste of sweet victory! We are inspired when we hear of situations in which someone thrives under difficulty.

Read Acts 4:5-20

Peter and John were brought in to be questioned. As the rulers questioned them as to how they were able to heal the lame man, Peter couldn't contain himself. He had to speak boldly of the gift of salvation through Yeshua alone. These men were uneducated and untrained by the standards of their day, yet the rulers and elders were amazed; these men had been with Yeshua. The fire of the Holy Spirit moved, and no one could deny it. The fragrance of the Spirit was unmistakable. Despite the efforts to control the spread, Peter and John were resolute. "We cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." These men were arrested and spent a night in jail, but they couldn't stop speaking about Yeshua. Peter and John were questioned, but they didn't back down. The standard wasn't lowered, inflated, or accommodated. Quite the converse; the trial, that was meant to slow the spread, did the opposite. And like the heather bush, this fire (adversity) only encouraged the Gospel to flourish.

We are made to Thrive. Imagine what could happen if we boldly proclaimed what the Lord has done in our lives and through our faith despite the hardships we have encountered. This fire we experience should not cause us to wither away like unwanted weeds, but our fragrance should fill the air with the beauty, life, and victory of what is to come. What trials are you facing in which you need to stand back and have a different, heavenly perspective? Take a moment to praise God in this fire by journaling about this trial and all the blessing that has come about from it. Give Him the glory and victory as you go through this trial.

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## **DAY SIX - PM: When Those Closest to You, STOP**

Read Acts 4:21-37

There is an incredible thrill in victory. The surreal moments with the lights, cameras, cheers, and the celebration; nothing is as sweet as this thrill. Peter and John had just returned to the faithful bringing the JOYS of victory. Great celebration broke out in their midst, and it sounded a lot like PRAISE (verse 24). Everyday life for the disciples brought daily persecution and attack. They expected a non-stop barrage of insults, hatred, and threats. As they experienced power over darkness all they could do was PRAISE! What had they experienced? Victory, the victory of Light over darkness. When we experience the hand of the Lord, mighty to save, the victory produces confidence, and confidence produces fruitful boldness (verses 29-31).

Growing up in an agricultural setting, I had the privilege of watching seeds come to maturity. After the seed was planted, I would wait and wait until I could see the tiny shoot poking just above the ground. Once that place broke ground, bam! That plant would reach for the sky and multiply in height in no time. It was almost as if nothing could slow it down. Yet after a week or two the seeds realized they had a competitor: weeds.

Weeds grow quicker than plants. They are more resilient than plants. They also benefit from the hard work the plant has done in breaking the soil. On the farm, we would run the cultivator (agricultural-sized weeder) through the soil grabbing the weeds which were trying to establish themselves in between the rows of seeds giving the seed the maximum amount of sunlight, nutrients, and space to grow large and choke out the weeds, instead of the other way around.

Read Acts 5:16

As the church was EXPLODING, reaching for the heights, from within came weeds planted in the same glory and power, but meant to steal from the body. A seed of righteousness thrives in spirit and truth, not lies and falsehoods. Ananias and Sapphira had every ability to hold back from their sale an agreed-upon amount of money and be completely honest. Instead, deception and dishonesty are what they brought forth. In Galatians 5 we learn that the fruit of the flesh sets its desire against the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:17-21). In other words, the weeds of the world set their intentions against the fruitful outcome of the seeds of God. James says we make ourselves enemies of God when we make ourselves friends to the world, therefore the Spirit is against such as these.

God's Spirit was against Ananias and Sapphira to the point of death. They never again were able to speak a lie, enjoy a sunset, speak a blessing, or even repent from their actions. God called forth from them their very lives as a result of their opposition to His will and their testing of His character.

How does this kind of rebellion enter a family sewn together by the grace of God? How can seeds so cared for and nurtured end up so far off track and contrary to the movement of Yeshua? It's a fair question. Many farmers have asked the same question, yet this is what happens.

Read Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43

Ananias and Sapphira allowed the deception of a lie to enter their hearts. They convinced themselves this harmless lie would not cause a problem and no harm

would be done to themselves or the godly ones around them. God cultivated them from among the fruitful seeds and look what happened. FRUITFULNESS!

Read Acts 5:14-16

Proverbs 9:10 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." We cannot establish what it means to Thrive in this life without talking about having the fear of the Lord.

The word we translate as "fear" comes from the Hebrew word יִרָאָה (yirah) meaning "reverence". Webster's dictionary defines reverence as "honor and respect." As the Spirit of God moved in the first century church through the judgment of Ananias and Sapphira, the body grew in reverence of the Lord. They grew in honor and respect for the Lord's ways, which are higher than man's ways. Additionally, it is our fear of the Lord that allows us to grow in His ways, His affections, and His knowledge. As His seed, we Thrive upon the things He has designated for us. But if we turn away from those things, He has designated for us..... CULTIVATED!

This afternoon consider two things: First submit to God the places where you have not honored Him. Let Him know you realize your mistake and take a step toward Him by repenting. Second, spend time praying for someone close to you who has stopped walking in the fear of the Lord. Pray for God's mercy to fall upon them, that they would Thrive in His love and mercy.

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# DAY SEVEN

## Beyond Belief

### **DAY SEVEN - AM: Be an Action Hero**

Read Acts 6:1-8:3

Can you imagine if the Acts 6 story read something like this, "Gather 'round, Disciples! Widows and orphans are being neglected. We need them to know we empathize with them in their struggle. Organize a group that will come alongside them in their pain. We need them to feel loved and affirmed in this trial and hardship." DON'T get me wrong, empathy and sensitivity to someone in their need is a beautiful characteristic of Yeshua we should exercise. Simply read John 11 and you will see the heart of Yeshua for those grieving the loss of Lazarus. Yeshua felt their pain. Having empathy and sensitivity toward the needs of others isn't complete without proper action.

Do you ever show up to church or an event with a group of believers and feel like the facade of faith is all around you? You may hear, "How are you?" But the invitation isn't met with the courtesy of listening to the response. "Let me know if you need anything" isn't followed up. These people sound friendly, but their actions are lacking.

We also see how the church today generally functions in a way that places "a Band-aid on a broken arm" as opposed to rushing to the scene as a medic on the battlefield. You expect the congregation of believers to come around you in a time of need and spur you on in faith.

At CFM, we have multiple ministries designed to

recognize and meet needs within the community. Let me boast a little about them here! The Hospitality Team greets the newcomer and the regular attendee alike. They warmly welcome all who enter and connect newcomers with other church attendees. This ministry has been responsible for many Corner Fringers feeling connected and established in the community early on in their attendance. Arms of Love is a newly created ministry meeting tangible needs, encouragement, prayer, and gifts. This ministry not only sends out beautiful, hand-made, personalized cards and flowers, but they orchestrate support to the hurting, bringing true hope and love.

In Acts 6, these men and women knew the health and well-being of the Kingdom of God is built upon empathetic righteousness, experienced through godly action. When we Thrive, so do others. Praise the Lord that godly wisdom directed the disciples to action. They saw the neglect in their community and felt empathy for the people. Taking righteous action, they fixed the problem.

What was the outcome for the needs of the people?  
Action: More people were brought into service and empowered to care for the needy (verse 3).

What did more service produce? Action: FRUIT (verse 7).

The Priests and the Levites, who were commissioned by God to lead the people into righteousness, were receiving salvation through faith in Yeshua. A priestly decision carried great importance in Jewish culture. Consequently, priests turning to faith in Yeshua brought a lot of attention to the disciples and, specifically, Stephen. The

religious rulers began questioning and challenging him. They turned against him when they couldn't match the wisdom of the Holy Spirit that he possessed. He was brought before the high priest, and with great confidence and boldness he recounted the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He proclaimed God's faithfulness in the wilderness and the fulfillment of promises for the future. Without fear he moved forward, calling out the religious leaders' two-faced position. Stoning was the "reward" he received from the religious leaders; but our Messiah gave Stephen a standing ovation and stood in opposition to his accusers. Despite increased persecution, the early church continued to Thrive even after Stephen was put to death.

Thriving when it hurts feels almost wrong. Thriving through trials may feel like we are insensitive and cavalier, but it is God's design. When individuals Thrive through hardship, the whole body of Christ thrives. The book of Acts is an example of thriving in daily struggles. Shipwreck, wolves in sheep's clothing, and imprisonment didn't prevent the early church from growing strong in faith and action.

Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

This morning, journal about a time you ministered with righteous acts of service in a person's life that made a lasting impact in their faith. Give glory to God by sharing your story with someone close to you. Is there someone else God is calling you to serve?

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## DAY SEVEN - PM: Action Plan

For the rest of the devotional, we are going to provide you with some tools we believe will help you Thrive through every circumstance and trial you go through. The first tool for you is what we are calling the “Action Plan.” Any plan that will ever be successful is birthed from a plan, right? Discipleship is no different. Take Yeshua’s words from Luke 14:28-30 for example, a man who decides to build a tower needs to consider the total cost. Otherwise, he may find he runs out of the materials needed and becomes a mockery in the eyes of others. Just as the known world had their eyes on Stephen, the world has their eyes on you! Your action plan in the faith will draw people to God in surrender or push people away from God in disbelief. The CFM Action Plan is designed to help you communicate with the Holy Spirit, determine what steps you need to make immediately, and then to take the needed action.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

CORNER FRINGE MINISTRIES <small>Lev. 19:21</small>		Sukkot 2023 - You Were Made to Thrive			
Space	Goal	Action Plan	Measure of Success	Notes	Accomplishments
PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP with GOD	1				
	2				
	3				
MINISTRY in the Home	1				
	2				
	3				
MINISTRY in the Kingdom	1				
	2				
	3				



Scan the QR code for a printable Action Plan.

We've analyzed three main areas of impact where the Action Plan can bear the most fruit:

1. Vertical relationship with **God**
2. Horizontal relationship with those closest to us in the **home**
3. Horizontal relationship with the **Kingdom**

Let me explain how this works.

**Goals** allow us to identify targets to be met. This space is given to clarify the desire for your relationship with God, service in your home, and in the Kingdom. It is important for you to spend time with Yeshua asking Him to search you and know you and reveal to you any area He wants to strengthen (Psalm 139:23-24).

Here are some examples of goals:

- **With God:** I am hungry to know God more, but when I should be reading or praying, I am distracted by things I have to do. I want to spend time with God first thing in the morning, before I get bogged down by the pressures of my day.
- **In the Home:** I know it is my role to establish good habits in the faith, but I haven't done a very good job. I have a goal of praying over my family everyday.
- **In the Kingdom:** I know God has called me to make disciples of all nations, but I really struggle to share my faith. I want to develop more courage so I can share my faith on a regular basis.

Once you have identified your goals, now comes the action! Notice there are three areas for you to insert an action. Sometimes our efforts need to be multifaceted and attacked from several points.

Here are some examples of an **Action Plan** corresponding to the goals mentioned above:

- **With God:**

1. Start the day off with 20 minutes of Bible reading.
2. Instead of listening to the radio or my audio book, pray during my commute 3-5 days each week.

- **In the home:**

1. Pray with my family before every meal.
2. Pray over my family every night before bed.

- **In the Kingdom:**

1. Memorize 10 scriptures about salvation I can easily share with someone.
2. Pray for God to bring the right person to you.
3. Share the Gospel with at least one person this month.

Notice how the Action Plan is very tangible and easily measured. Which brings us to the next step - **Measure of Success**. Here you will be able to look back and see if you hit your mark or not.

The **Notes** section is designed for you to be able to track specific thoughts during the action. You can write down what hurdles you faced, what attacks came, or what brought the best victory.

**Accomplishments** is the fruit section. It's where you can clearly look back and see what God did through you as you surrendered your life to Him. This is the place where you can write the name of the person now attending CFM with you, because you trusted God enough to use you to share the gospel. This is the place where you enjoy the heartfelt prayer of your family as you pray for each other before bed, and this is the place where you reflect on the

intimate time you've shared with Yeshua because you intended to put Him at the beginning of everything.

This afternoon, take some time to fill out your own Action Plan. Remember the actions should be easily measurable. Establish a goal or action that can be accomplished in two months or less. Also, remember God's mercies are NEW every morning, so if you miss something on your Action Plan, get up and start again (Lamentations 3:23). Have fun and share your Action Plan with someone who will help you accomplish what the Holy Spirit has put on your heart.

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Click the QR code to hear how Jamie Stute, a fellow Corner Fringer, has used the Action Plan to seek the righteousness of Yeshua and become a doer of the Word.



DAY SEVEN

*Additional Notes*

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## DAY EIGHT

# We Were Made to Thrive!

### **DAY EIGHT: Write Your Testimony**

In reading through this devotional, our prayer is that you have seen the theme of thriving through life. As stories were shared and analogies were made, these are compiled testimonies of the faithfulness of God. They are meant to encourage you in your faith. They are meant to motivate you to see your life and circumstances from God's point of view. These testimonies are told to make Yeshua famous, to give Him credit for what He's done in your life, giving God the credit is one way we give Him glory. Now it's your turn. Let's give God the glory as you write down the work He's done in your life. Read the descriptions and follow the prompts to construct your testimony.

1 Peter 3:15, "... but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence..."

### **The Backdrop**

The backdrop sets the stage for the story. The main idea is to bring people into the world you were experiencing at the beginning of the story. This is important to share with your listeners about what was happening in your life at this time and paint the picture of the emotional place you were in. Examples may be: "I was \_\_\_ years old." Or "In the year \_\_\_\_," or "When I was working in \_\_\_\_."

Write the backdrop to your testimony.

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**The Problem**

This is the part of your story that is causing you to pause, reexamine, and change course. Examples are, "Then I was looking at the stock market and I watched my retirement funds become nonexistent." Or "I was given the opportunity to \_\_\_." Or "I wondered if this was really the dream I had worked so hard for?"

Write the problem.

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## The Surrender

It's where we see the Acts 2:24 verse become true in your life. This is the part of your story when God intervenes. It's your "But God" moment. It's the end of your strength, knowledge, and hope, and God comes through and you surrender to His will. Examples: "I couldn't see \_\_\_\_\_, but God." Or "I didn't have anywhere \_\_\_\_\_, but God." Or "Left to myself I \_\_\_\_\_, but God."

Write your moment of surrender and how God came through.

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## The Victory

This is the section you share about where you're at today. Despite the trial, this is how you thrived. Examples: "Today, I can see how God used \_\_\_\_\_ to pull me back to Him." Or "Because of \_\_\_\_\_ I am doing \_\_\_\_\_ today." Or "I was not only spared from \_\_\_\_\_, but God went above and beyond and showed me \_\_\_\_\_."



Write the victory God has in your life today, despite the past. How are you thriving?

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DAY EIGHT

*Additional Notes*

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A L L W E E K  
*Family Connections*

**DAY 1: Intro**

This week we're talking about how working hard is a really good thing. When we work hard at something it feels good when we're successful! For years, Pastor Kraig played chess with his son, Grant. He showed Grant how each piece moved, strategy, and the importance to think several moves ahead. Grant learned the game of chess. He played with his friends and was oftentimes victorious. But when Grant would play his dad, he would lose. Pastor Kraig and Grant would talk about the game and moves that could have been different, but Pastor Kraig never went easy on him. Grant would read books, watch videos, and talk with his friends about different moves to increase his knowledge of chess. Game after game would end the same, Pastor Kraig: The Victor! Until one day... fourteen-year-old Grant asked his dad to play a game of chess. Pastor Kraig made a mistake with his queen and the game was over: Checkmate. Grant had won! The victory was amazing. He knew that he had won fair and square. Grant thrived!

In our spiritual walk, the Lord is teaching us how to Thrive. We don't get it right all the time, but we keep trying. God keeps teaching and giving us opportunities to succeed. He gives us tools, like the Holy Spirit and His Word, to be victorious. All of this is to draw us to the Lord, show others the way to the Lord, and make the name of Yeshua famous. Take the time this week to talk with your parents about their relationship with Yeshua. Ask them how God helps them when things are hard and how you can learn from that. We are looking forward to an amazing week and would love to hear what you have learned as well!

## **DAY 2: Hoping & Waiting**

Read Acts 1

Yeshua, before He ascended to Heaven, told His disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit, or Helper. They waited a long time for something that the Son of God, Yeshua Himself, promised. It must have been so exciting! But they kept waiting and waiting and waiting. Have you ever anticipated something so exciting that you just cannot wait? Maybe your mom or dad have told you that you're going to visit your grandparents. Maybe the next day is your birthday. When you are waiting for something you are really looking forward to, how do you feel? Excited? Impatient? Scared? Is it hard to sleep? Sometimes when we wait, we get more excited. We start thinking about the thing we are waiting for; it's really hard! We may get impatient. Grumpy. Or out of control.

Isaiah 40:41

This verse tells us that when we wait on the Lord He will give us renewed strength. But the kind of renewed strength we are considering here isn't excitement for a new toy or a trip. It's the kind of renewed strength that we need when our friends are not being kind to us, and we are unkind back. It's when we have to do our homework and chores before we are allowed to have time with our friends. The disciples were waiting for the Holy Spirit and they decided to pray.

Parents, share with your child(ren) about a time when you had to wait on the Lord. Share about when your strength was at the end and God gave you a renewed strength. Pray together that you will seek the Lord in prayer while you wait for him. We encourage you to pray about family hopes and dreams.

### **DAY 3: Jesus Take the Wheel**

Read Acts 2:1-36

We just read about the Holy Spirit coming and filling the disciples and the amazing way they testified about the work of Yeshua in their hearts. They testified in a very unique way; did you catch it? The disciples spoke in the languages of the people they were talking to. That would be like me going to the grocery store and speaking Spanish with the lady ringing up my groceries, Russian with the man in line behind me, and Chinese when I bumped into someone on the way out of the store. They spoke different languages without learning them. The Holy Spirit performed a miracle so the Gospel message would go forth and people were saved through their testimonies.

Parents, share with your child(ren) a time when the Holy Spirit empowered you to do something hard. Talk about yielding to the Holy Spirit and submitting to God's will. Share the way you thrived through your obedience.

### **DAY 4: Common Unity**

Read Acts 2: 38-47

The believers were repenting and being baptized. They were selling their possessions and hanging out with the other, like-minded believers, all the time. No one had needs that were not met. They shared everything! The people were going to each other's homes and having dinner. In Acts 2:46-47, we read they were glad and generous, praising God and other people liked them. And The number of believers were growing every day! It was an explosion and the believers were thriving in the good times!

Thrive through service, unified as a family. Open up discussion on ways you can show hospitality in your home,

as an entire family. What special jobs can each member do to be like the believers in Acts? Who can help clean the house, cut the veggies, and do the dishes? When the whole family works together the work is less for one person and the joy of the Lord will go forth when people come over to your house.

## **DAY 5: Living & Working**

Read Acts 3

The lame beggar was healed! What? How cool would that be? This guy couldn't walk for his entire life. He was begging and Peter said, "I don't have any money, but what I do have I will give to you." And the dude not only walked, but was leaping for joy because he was healed!

Sometimes we have trials in our life. Things may be hard, but God uses these hard times in our life to help us see Him more clearly. The second part of this chapter is Peter correcting the religious leaders. They had two options: Listen to what he was saying and repent or continue to do what they had been doing without a change of heart.

When a time of correction comes into your life, you have two options. Will your heart be proud or humble? Will you learn from your mistakes or fight harder for what is wrong? Thriving means learning through the good times and the hard times. Thriving means that you will choose God's ways even when it is hard.

Parents, share a time with your child(ren) that you were being refined by the Holy Spirit. Share the pain in the moment but the excitement in victory. You can also share with them the rock polishing story above in the main

devotional. Encourage your family to pray when times are hard so you will Thrive and be used for God's glory.

## **DAY 6: Thrill of Living vs Thrill of Dying**

Read Acts 4:5-20

I would like to focus your attention to verse 13. "Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus."

These men were not the smartest people in town. They didn't have the best education or training in the ways of the Lord according to the standards of that time, but they had been with Yeshua. Kids, if you're with Yeshua, if you spend time with him, you will be wise. Wisdom comes from the Lord.

1 Timothy 4:12, "Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity show yourself an example of those who believe."

Even at a young age, you can be bold in your faith because you have spent time with Yeshua. Spending time with Yeshua will cause you to Thrive.

Parents, share a time with your child(ren) where your boldness came from the Lord and even though others meant to harm you, God meant it for His glory. How did you Thrive? Share the story about the heather plant in the main devotional for day six. Develop a family strategy to intentionally be with Yeshua. Maybe it's a morning or evening family devotion time. Maybe it's daily praying over your children before your day begins. Be intentional to make Yeshua your teacher so as to Thrive as a family.

## **DAY 7: Beyond Belief**

Think about a time when you really needed help and someone helped you. Take a moment for each person in the family to share about that.

Read Acts 6:1-5

The widows, women whose husbands had died, from this passage were not being cared for. The disciples noticed a problem and appointed Stephen, and several others, to fix it. I bet these widows, and possibly their children, were so grateful for the help!

Discuss how you can help others, individually and as a family. Pay attention to the needs of neighbors, friends, and families. Share the love of Yeshua by serving those around you. Think about ways to help others Thrive by the work that you do.

Stephen was a really amazing guy. While he was doing all this good, some of the religious leaders of the time were threatened by the testimony of Yeshua and the large number of followers that it was creating. These leaders arrested Stephen. It's a sad thing that Stephen was arrested for doing good, but sometimes the darkness of sin feels very threatened by the love of Yeshua being shared. Let's read about how these leaders treated Stephen.

Read Acts 7:51-60

Even though Stephen was stoned, he never stopped believing in the testimony of his faith. This is a very good example of thriving to the end! Stephen was a man who was so steadfast in his faith nothing could make him waver. In order to have this strong faith, we must have a plan for success. Thriving in your whole life takes intentional planning. Take some time to make family goals, intentionally



making an effort in the spiritual growth of your family. These goals should be attainable and measurable. Thriving as a family starts with a vision. Walk the family through this exercise and develop a game plan to succeed this year. Review with the family throughout the year and recount your successes and places you can grow more.

## **DAY 8: We Were Made to Thrive**

Share your testimony with your children and help them write theirs. Everyone has a story about what God has done in their life. Writing or thinking through your testimony is one way we Thrive. Follow the prompts from the main devotional and help your children to think through how they can make Yeshua famous through the story He wrote for them.

## *Personal Inventory*

Here's a tool you can use daily that will help you keep a short record of wrongs and keep yourself in fertile soil.

1. How did I Thrive today?
2. Did I act selfishly, with resentment, or from a place of fear today?
3. Do I owe an apology to anyone?
4. Is there a sin committed that I need to confess to another person?
5. Was I kind and loving to others in my actions, words, and thoughts?
6. Do I need to make any changes in my Action Plan?
7. Did I share the testimony of God's work in my life with others today?

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Lastly, Yeshua, we praise You! In Your great love You have lavished upon us the power of Your resurrection through Your Holy Spirit allowing us the ability to Thrive in our life. Thank you for shepherding us into Your Kingdom! May You receive ALL honor and glory from everyone who reads and applies Your words.

# Closing

Scan the QR code for a closing message from  
Pastor Kraig.



