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Into the Promise - Take the Step

Dear Journey Participant,

I just wanted to say how thrilled we are that you are continuing with us on The Journey through the Bible in a year. Whether you are a part of our local church family or not, the fact that God has drawn you to be a part of this Journey is a blessing to us, and we trust it is a blessing for your faith walk as well.

We began The Journey with a more in-depth study of 'the beginnings' as covered in the Book of Genesis, where God created the world and a people that would be distinct from a world stuck in rebellion to the Word and will of God. The thread of redemption has begun, with God making a way to bridge that separation between sinful people and His holiness. We witnessed a nation taken out of bondage in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, on their way to the Promised Land. In the wilderness, the people bear witness to the holiness of God, as well as His heart for His people through the very provision and presence of God.

The nation of Israel has been wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. It is now time to enter into the Promised Land, which is why we are entitling this next section: INTO THE PROMISE. In this section, we will be introduced to numerous characters who took steps of faith towards obedience to God. Each had their flaws as we will clearly see, yet each was used by God for a specific time and a specific purpose, each story pointing to the real Savior.

'Take the Step' is part I of this section as you will be encouraged to consider areas in your life that need more attention for the Lord to do His transforming work. As we will see, real faith grows when we learn to see through heaven's eyes, and not our own.

THANKS BE TO GOD THAT HE HAS GIVEN US HIS WORD TO BE 'A LAMP TO OUR FEET AND A LIGHT TO OUR PATH' (PSALM 119:105), WHILE PROMISING TO BE WITH US EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.

Join us by taking part in this Growth Guide as we pray this becomes a wonderful resource for you to better know the One who calls you to 'take the step' towards following Him into the promise.

In His Grip,
Pastor Bryan Tema

How to Use this Guide

We've developed this guide to be a tool and asset for you in diving into scripture and setting aside time for prayer and devotion with God. Each week you'll find a Personal Growth Guide with opportunities to dig into the scriptures and themes that will be taught during the next Sunday's message. Each week there is a specific study method to help you open up the scripture and develop a relationship with God's word. You will find space for prayer journaling for each week of the personal study. You might find that the scriptures you're reading don't match up with what is being taught on Sunday. Keep on reading! Our messages are meant to provide specific snapshots of the overarching narrative of scripture, while each week providing you with tools to help you through your Bible Reading Journey. You will also find a Community Growth Guide each week. This guide will highlight important questions for you to discuss in your own community group or Bible Study. These are meant to be used after Sunday's message in the context of group conversation.

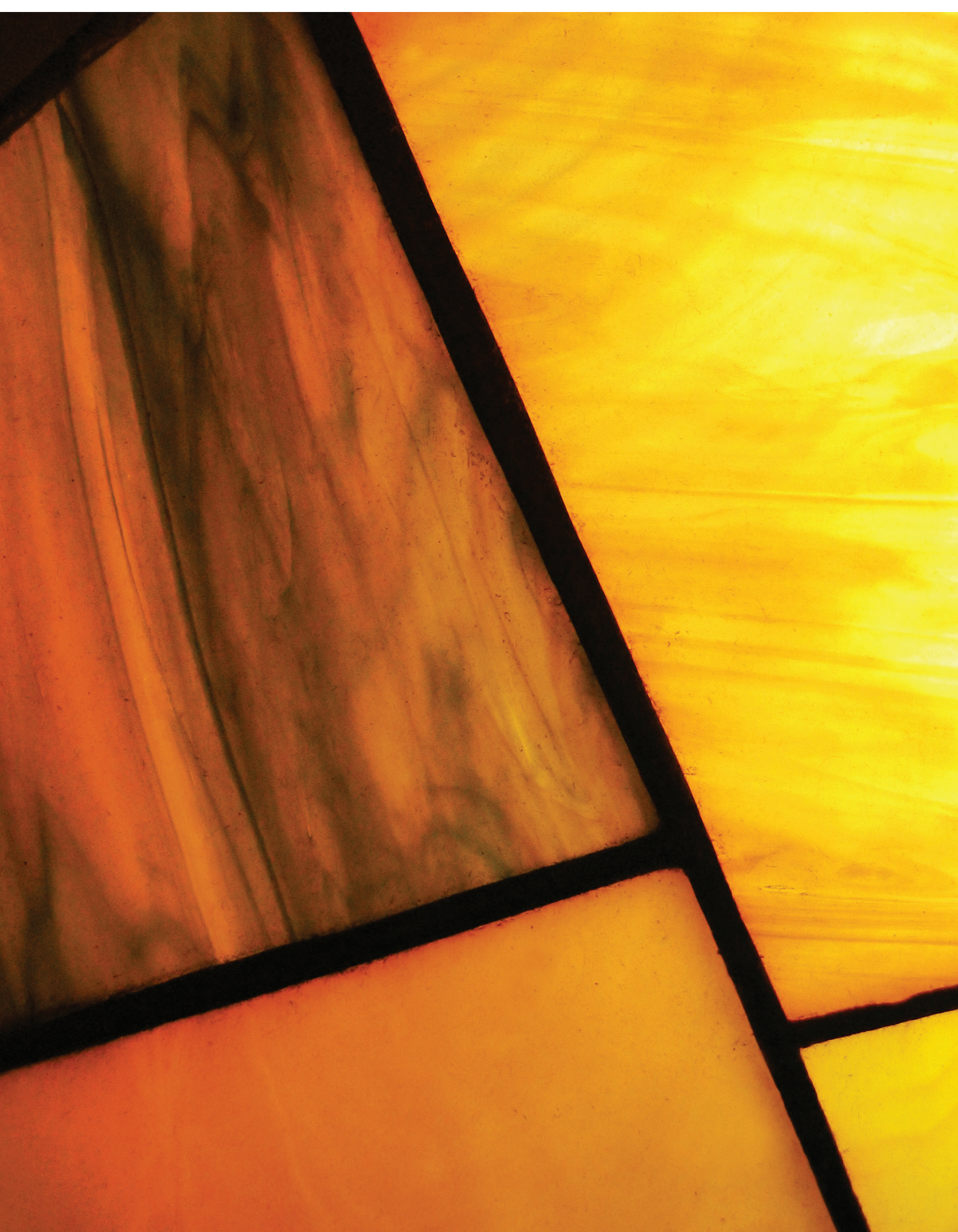


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RESOURCES FOR THIS GROWTH GUIDE

AS WE WORK THROUGH THE MESSAGES AS A CHURCH, WE WANT TO PROVIDE YOU WITH SOME EXTRA RESOURCES TO GUIDE YOU THROUGH THIS JOURNEY. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF RIGHTNOW MEDIA, APPS, WEBSITES, AND BOOKS AS YOU ENCOUNTER JESUS THROUGHOUT THIS SERIES.



RIGHTNOW MEDIA

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

by Tim Mackie

PSALM 119

by Matt Chandler

READ THE BIBLE

by Don Carson

THE BIBLE FOR GROWN UPS

by Andy Stanley

OLD TESTAMENT OVERVIEW
PART 2

by Preston Sprinkle

READ SCRIPTURE SERIES

by Tim Mackie



APPS AND WEBSITES

YOUVERSION BIBLE APP

READSCRIPTURE APP

VERSES APP

BLUELETTERBIBLE

STEPBIBLE



BOOKS

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE
FOR ALL IT'S WORTH

by Gordon Fee

EAT THIS BOOK

by Eugene Peterson

READING THE BIBLE
SUPERNATURALLY

by John Piper

HOW TO ENJOY READING
YOUR BIBLE

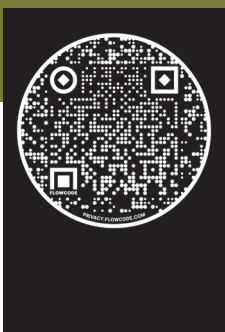
by Keith Ferrin

30 DAYS TO
UNDERSTANDING
THE BIBLE

by Max Anders

JUDGES FOR YOU

by Timothy Keller



**Find all of the resources at gracespringchurch.org/thejourney
You can access the site above by using the camera on
your phone to scan this QR code! Look for them throughout the growth guide!**

POTENTIAL PATHS THROUGH THE BIBLE

STRAIGHT THROUGH THE BIBLE

DAILY READINGS IN 4 DIFFERENT THEMES

CHRONOLOGICALLY THROUGH THE BIBLE

While we will be teaching in a specific pathway through the Bible, we want to encourage you to follow a path that is comfortable to you! You will find through the different weeks and messages in the series that you might be reading faster than we are covering scriptures. That's totally ok! On the following pages are several different methods for reading through the entire Bible in a year. Maybe you have tried before and have gotten bogged down in details or have missed a few days and couldn't get caught back up. That's ok! Give yourself some grace. This is a journey and the heart behind it is truly to connect more with God through His word and to connect with one another. It's not a guilt trip! Here are 3 different potential reading lists to get you in the word each day through Easter. We will release the next Growth Guide with continued plans when we begin part 2 of this series.

STRAIGHT THROUGH THE BIBLE

4/5 2 Samuel 14-16

4/6 2 Samuel 17-19

4/7 2 Samuel 20:1-22:34

4/8 2 Samuel 22:35-24:17

4/9 2 Samuel 24:18-25;

1 Kings 1:1-2:18

4/10 1 Kings 2:19-4:19

4/11 1 Kings 4:20-7:39

4/12 1 Kings 7:40-9:9

4/13 1 Kings 9:10-11:25

4/14 1 Kings 11:26-13:34

4/15 1 Kings 14-17

4/16 1 Kings 18:1-20:25

4/17 1 Kings 20:26-22:36

4/18 1 Kings 22:37-53;

2 Kings 1:1-4:28

4/19 2 Kings 4:29-8:15

4/20 2 Kings 8:16-10:24

4/21 2 Kings 10:25-14:10

4/22 2 Kings 14:11-17:18

4/23 2 Kings 17:19-19:24

4/24 2 Kings 19:25-23:9

4/25 2 Kings 23:10-25:30,

1 Chronicles 1:1-16

4/26 1 Chronicles 1;17-3:9

4/27 1 Chronicles 3:10-6:30

4/28 1 Chronicles 6:31-8:28

4/29 1 Chronicles 8:29-11:21

4/30 1 Chronicles 11:22-15:29

5/1 1 Chronicles 16:1-19:9

5/2 1 Chronicles 19:10-23:11

5/3 1 Chronicles 23:12-26:19

5/4 1 Chronicles 26:20-29:19

5/5 1 Chronicles 29:20-30;

2 Chronicles 1:1-4:10

5/6 2 Chronicles 4:11-7:22

5/7 2 Chronicles 8:1-11:12

5/8 2 Chronicles 11:13-15:19

5/9 2 Chronicles 16:1-20:13

5/10 2 Chronicles 20:14-24:14

5/11 2 Chronicles 24:15-28:27

5/12 2 Chronicles 29-31

5/13 2 Chronicles 32:1-35:19

5/14 2 Chronicles 35:20-36:23;

Ezra 1-3

5/15 Ezra 4-7

5/16 Ezra 8-10;

Nehemiah 1

5/17 Nehemiah 2-5

5/18 Nehemiah 6:1-8:8

5/19 Nehemiah 8:9-11:21

5/20 Nehemiah 11:22-13:22

5/21 Nehemiah 13:23-31;

Esther 1-4

5/22 Esther 5-10

5/23 Job 1:1-5:16

5/24 Job 5:17-8:22

5/25 Job 9:1-12:12

5/26 Job 12:13-16:10

5/27 Job 16:11-20:11

5/28 Job 20:12-24:12

5/29 Job 24:13-29:13

5/30 Job 29:14-32:10

5/31 Job 32:11-35:16

6/1 Job 36:1-39:12

6/2 Job 39:13-42:9

6/3 Job 42:10-17;

Psalms 1-5

6/4 Psalms 6-8

6/5 Psalms 9-10

6/6 Psalms 11-16

6/7 Psalms 17-18

6/8 Psalms 19-21

6/9 Psalms 22-24

6/10 Psalms 25-27

6/11 Psalms 28-31

6/12 Psalms 32-33

6/13 Psalms 34-35

DAILY READINGS IN 4 DIFFERENT THEMES

4/5 Leviticus 1, Psalm 95, Esther 8, 1 Corinthians 13
4/6 Leviticus 2, Psalm 96, Esther 9-10, 1 Corinthians 14
4/7 Leviticus 3, Psalm 97, Isaiah 1, 1 Corinthians 15
4/8 Leviticus 4:1-5:13, Psalm 98, Isaiah 2, 1 Corinthians 16
4/9 Leviticus 5:14-6:7, Psalm 99, Isaiah 3-4, 2 Corinthians 1:1-11
4/10 Leviticus 6:8-7:38, Psalm 100, Isaiah 5, 2 Corinthians 1:12-2:11
4/11 Leviticus 8, Psalm 101, Isaiah 6, 2 Corinthians 2:12-3:18
4/12 Leviticus 9, Psalm 102, Isaiah 7-8, 2 Corinthians 4:1-5:10
4/13 Leviticus 10, Psalm 103, Isaiah 9:1-7, 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:10
4/14 Leviticus 11, Psalm 104, Isaiah 9:8-10:34, 2 Corinthians 6:11-7:16
4/15 Leviticus 12, Psalm 105, Isaiah 11-12, 2 Corinthians 8-9
4/16 Leviticus 13, Psalm 106, Isaiah 13-14, 2 Corinthians 10:1-12
4/17 Leviticus 14:1-32, Psalm 107, Isaiah 15-16, 2 Corinthians 10:13-12:13
4/18 Leviticus 14:33-57, Psalm 108, Isaiah 17-18, 2 Corinthians 12:14-13:14
4/19 Leviticus 15, Psalm 109, Isaiah 19-20, Galatians 1:1-10
4/20 Leviticus 16, Psalm 110, Isaiah 21, Galatians 1:11-24
4/21 Leviticus 17, Psalm 111, Isaiah 22, Galatians 2
4/22 Leviticus 18, Psalm 112, Isaiah 23, Galatians 3
4/23 Leviticus 19, Psalm 113, Isaiah 24, Galatians 4
4/24 Leviticus 20, Psalm 114, Isaiah 25, Galatians 5
4/25 Leviticus 21:1-22:16, Psalm 115, Isaiah 26-27, Galatians 6
4/26 Leviticus 22:17-33, Psalm 116, Isaiah 28, Ephesians 1
4/27 Leviticus 23, Psalm 117, Isaiah 29:1-30:17, Ephesians 2
4/28 Leviticus 24, Psalm 118, Isaiah 30:18-32:20, Ephesians 3
4/29 Leviticus 25, Psalm 119:1-88, Isaiah 33-34, Ephesians 4:1-16
4/30 Leviticus 26, Psalm 119:89-176, Isaiah 35, Ephesians 4:17-32
5/1 Leviticus 27, Psalm 120, Isaiah 36-37, Ephesians 5:1-21
5/2 Numbers 1, Psalm 121, Isaiah 38, Ephesians 5:22-6:9
5/3 Numbers 2, Psalm 122, Isaiah 39, Ephesians 6:10-24
5/4 Numbers 3-4, Psalm 123, Isaiah 40, Philippians 1:1-26
5/5 Numbers 5, Psalm 124, Isaiah 41, Philippians 1:27-2:11
5/6 Numbers 6, Psalm 125, Isaiah 42, Philippians 2:12-30
5/7 Numbers 7, Psalm 126, Isaiah 43:1-44:5, Philippians 3:1-17
5/8 Numbers 8, Psalm 127, Isaiah 44:6-28, Philippians 3:18-4:18
5/9 Numbers 9:1-14, Psalm 128, Isaiah 45, Colossians 1:1-20

PENTATEUCH/HISTORY

PSALMS/WISDOM

CHRONICLES/PROPHETS

GOSPELS/EPISTLES

DAILY READINGS IN 4 DIFFERENT THEMES CONTINUED

5/10 Numbers 9:15-10:10, Psalm 129, Isaiah 46-47, Colossians 1:21-2:5

5/11 Numbers 10:11-36, Psalm 130, Isaiah 48-49, Colossians 2:6-23

5/12 Numbers 11, Psalm 131, Isaiah 50, Colossians 3:1-17

5/13 Numbers 12, Psalm 132, Isaiah 51:1-52:12, Colossians 3:18-4:18

5/14 Numbers 13-14, Psalm 133, Isaiah 52:13-53:12, 1 Thessalonians 1

5/15 Numbers 15, Psalm 134, Isaiah 54, 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16

5/16 Numbers 16-17, Psalm 135, Isaiah 55, 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13

5/17 Numbers 18-19, Psalm 136, Isaiah 56-57, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

5/18 Numbers 20-21, Psalm 137, Isaiah 58, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

5/19 Numbers 22, Psalm 138, Isaiah 59, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22

5/20 Numbers 23-24, Psalm 139, Isaiah 60, 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

5/21 Numbers 25, Psalm 140, Isaiah 61-62, 2 Thessalonians 1

5/22 Numbers 26, Psalm 141, Isaiah 63-64, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

5/23 Numbers 27, Psalm 142, Isaiah 65, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5

5/24 Numbers 28-29, Psalm 143, Isaiah 66, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

5/25 Numbers 30, Psalm 144, Obadiah 1-14, 1 Timothy 1

5/26 Numbers 31, Psalm 145, Obadiah 15-21, 1 Timothy 2

5/27 Numbers 32, Psalm 146, Joel 1, 1 Timothy 3

5/28 Numbers 33:1-49, Psalm 147, Joel 2:1-17, 1 Timothy 4

5/29 Numbers 33:50-34:29, Psalm 148, Joel 2:18-27, 1 Timothy 5

5/30 Numbers 35-36, Psalm 149, Joel 2:28-3:21, 1 Timothy 6

5/31 Deuteronomy 1, Psalm 150, Jonah 1, 2 Timothy 1:1-7

6/1 Deuteronomy 2, Proverbs 1:1-7, Jonah 2, 2 Timothy 1:8-18

6/2 Deuteronomy 3, Proverbs 1:8-19, Jonah 3, 2 Timothy 2

6/3 Deuteronomy 4, Proverbs 1:20-33, Jonah 4, 2 Timothy 3:1-9

6/4 Deuteronomy 5, Proverbs 2, Hosea 1:1-2:1, 2 Timothy 3:10-4:8

6/5 Deuteronomy 6, Proverbs 3:1-12, Hosea 2:2-23, 2 Timothy 4:9-22

6/6 Deuteronomy 7, Proverbs 3:13-20, Hosea 3, Titus 1:1-4

6/7 Deuteronomy 8:1-9:5, Proverbs 3:21-35, Hosea 4-5, Titus 1:5-16

6/8 Deuteronomy 9:6-10:11, Proverbs 4, Hosea 6-7, Titus 2

6/9 Deuteronomy 10:12-11:32, Proverbs 5, Hosea 8, Titus 3:1-8

6/10 Deuteronomy 12, Proverbs 6:1-19, Hosea 9, Titus 3:9-11

6/11 Deuteronomy 13, Proverbs 6:20-35, Hosea 10, Titus 3:12-15

6/12 Deuteronomy 14, Proverbs 7, Hosea 11, Philemon 1:1-3

6/13 Deuteronomy 15:1-8, Proverbs 8, Hosea 12-13, Philemon 1:4-7

CHRONOLOGICALLY THROUGH THE BIBLE

| | | |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| 4/5 Judges 16-18 | 5/7 2 Samuel 7, 1 Chronicles 17 | 6/7 Proverbs 13-15 |
| 4/6 Judges 19-21 | 5/8 Psalm 25, 29, 33, 36, 39 | 6/8 Proverbs 16-18 |
| 4/7 Ruth 1-4 | 5/9 2 Samuel 8-9, 1 Chronicles 18 | 6/9 Proverbs 19-21 |
| 4/8 1 Samuel 1-3 | 5/10 Psalm 50, 53, 60, 75 | 6/10 Proverbs 22-24 |
| 4/9 1 Samuel 4-8 | 5/11 2 Samuel 10, 1 Chronicles 19, Psalm 20 | 6/11 1 Kings 5-6, 2 Chronicles 2-3 |
| 4/10 1 Samuel 9-12 | 5/12 Psalm 65-67, 69-70 | 6/12 1 Kings 7, 2 Chronicles 4 |
| 4/11 1 Samuel 13-14 | 5/13 2 Samuel 11-12, 1 Chronicles 20 | 6/13 1 Kings 8, 2 Chronicles 5 |
| 4/12 1 Samuel 15-17 | | |
| 4/13 1 Samuel 18-20, Psalm 11, 59 | 5/14 Psalm 32, 51, 86, 122 | |
| 4/14 1 Samuel 21-24 | 5/15 2 Samuel 13-15 | |
| 4/15 Psalm 7, 27, 31, 34, 52 | 5/16 Psalm 3-4, 12-13, 28, 55 | |
| 4/16 Psalm 56, 120, 140-142 | 5/17 2 Samuel 16-18 | |
| 4/17 1 Samuel 25-27 | 5/18 Psalm 26, 40, 58, 61-62, 64 | |
| 4/18 Psalm 17, 35, 54, 63 | 5/19 2 Samuel 19-21 | |
| 4/19 1 Samuel 28-31, Psalm 18 | 5/20 Psalm 5, 38, 41-42 | |
| 4/20 Psalm 121, 123-125, 128-130 | 5/21 2 Samuel 22-23, Psalm 57 | |
| 4/21 2 Samuel 1-4 | 5/22 Psalm 95, 97-99 | |
| 4/22 Psalm 6, 8-10, 14, 16, 19, 21 | 5/23 2 Samuel 24, 1 Chronicles 21-22, Psalm 30 | |
| 4/23 1 Chronicles 1-2 | | |
| 4/24 Psalm 43-45, 49, 84-85, 87 | 5/24 Psalm 108-110 | |
| 4/25 1 Chronicles 3-5 | 5/25 1 Chronicles 23-25 | |
| 4/26 Psalm 73, 77-78 | 5/26 Psalm 131, 138-139, 143-145 | |
| 4/27 1 Chronicles 6 | 5/27 1 Chronicles 26-29, Psalm 127 | |
| 4/28 Psalm 81, 88, 92-93 | 5/28 Psalm 111-118 | |
| 4/29 1 Chronicles 7-10 | 5/29 1 Kings 1-2, Psalm 37, 71, 94 | |
| 4/30 Psalm 102-104 | 5/30 Psalm 119:1-88 | |
| 5/1 2 Samuel 5:1-10, 1 Chronicles 11;12 | 5/31 1 Kings 3-4, 2 Chronicles 1, Psalm 72 | |
| 5/2 Psalm 133 | 6/1 Psalm 119:89-176 | |
| 5/3 Psalm 106-107 | 6/2 Song of Solomon 1-8 | |
| 5/4 2 Samuel 5:11-6:23, 1 Chronicles 13-16 | 6/3 Proverbs 1-3 | |
| 5/5 Psalm 1-2, 15, 22-24, 47, 68 | 6/4 Proverbs 4-6 | |
| 5/6 Psalm 89, 96, 100-101, 105, 132 | 6/5 Proverbs 7-9 | |
| | 6/6 Proverbs 10-12 | |



" YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET AND A LIGHT TO MY PATH. "

PSALM 119:105

ANCIENT OIL LAMPS

Maybe when you think of a lamp you think of what we have today. Maybe what comes to mind is more of a lantern, or even an LED flood light. However, when the Bible refers to “*lamps*” we should call to mind a traditional oil lamp. Clay lamps would have been around since the Bronze Age- around the 16th century BC - and were then widely used throughout the Roman Empire. Initially, they took the form of a small dish with a floating wick and they evolved from there. These saucers began to develop a sort of pinched or folded rim which resulted in a nozzle and served the purpose of holding the wick in place. This allowed for greater control of the flame and the smoke it produced. As they continued to evolve, clay lamps became more enclosed, moving from a pinched nozzle to a bridged nozzle, and sporting the addition of a rim, handles, and decorative finishes.

Roman era oil lamps consisted of the vessel itself, some kind of fuel, and a wick. These vessels were made of a variety of materials including stone, clay, shell, glass, and metal. Fuel types ranged from animal fat to bees wax to various plant-based oils including olive oil, sesame oil, and grape-seed oil. Especially in biblical times, olive oil is believed to have been the primary source of fuel used in the Mediterranean. Wicks were made of any kind of fibrous material, typically linen, papyrus, or other plant fibers.

To use the lamp, the fuel was poured into the body through a filling hole and the wick was placed in the body of the lamp. When the wick was lit, the fuel was burned and a flame was produced out of the hole in the nozzle. This, of course, did not emit very much light - it would be very similar to a large candle.

JOSHUA

STEP TOWARDS COURAGE

JOSHUA 1, 5-7

**COURAGE DOESN'T COME FROM LOOKING AT WHAT IS
INSIDE OF YOU, BUT FROM SEEING THE ONE STANDING
BESIDE YOU.**

The story of Joshua is one of boldness, courage, and trust in God. Moses had led the Israelites from bondage through the desert and within breaths of the Promised Land. He was revered as the great leader who helped establish the relationship between God and His people. Yet, because of his sin, Moses was unable to enter into the promised land and the mantle of leadership landed squarely on the shoulders of Joshua.

Can you imagine the emotions that Joshua must have felt following in the footsteps of a great leader like Moses? Moses was the great man of God who withstood temptation, glimpsed God's presence, and brought God's commandments down from the mountain. Joshua stood on the commandment and promise from God - "Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go." (Joshua 1:7) Through courage, Joshua stepped into the role that

God called him to and led the Israelites into the power and promise of God in taking the land that would become the nation of Israel. What is possible when we take hold of the promises of God and set forth into His plan courageously?

PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: BOLDNESS

When Joshua took up the mantle of leadership from Moses, he was stepping out into faith in the promise of God. As believers, God has given us His promise, His presence, and His power to live lives that glorify Him and invite others into His salvation. How often do we see the risk or effort that it takes to stand boldly in His promise and trade it for lesser things? As you focus on God and His word this week, think through a situation where you need His boldness and courage to find victory. This might mean trusting Him in a tough spot when it would be easier to find despair. It might mean sharing the Gospel with a friend or coworker. It might simply mean boldly declaring His word over situations that seem dark and hopeless. Make a decision this week to ask God for His boldness and to step out in His presence.

PRAYER

Take time this week to write out a prayer of boldness and courage. What are you currently facing that you could use an extra measure of strength or God's presence in? Write out your prayers expressing your need for God and your thankfulness for His power, presence, and promises.

[illegible]

KEY VERSES

Take time to memorize this verse this week. Let it sit with your soul and take time to pray and meditate through it. Use the space underneath the verse to write it out again or to paraphrase it in your own words.

“ ONLY BE STRONG AND VERY
COURAGEOUS, BEING CAREFUL TO
DO ACCORDING TO ALL THE LAW THAT
MOSES MY SERVANT COMMANDED
YOU. DO NOT TURN FROM IT TO THE
RIGHT HAND OR TO THE LEFT, THAT
YOU MAY HAVE GOOD SUCCESS
WHEREVER YOU GO. “

JOSHUA 1:7

[illegible]

Take time to write out some of your thoughts each day surrounding the verses you've read.

Why do you think this passage was written? Why is it important enough to be in the Bible? What do you think the overall theme or topic is?

Which verse seems to be the most important thought in this passage? Why? Take time to write out the entire verse and the reference.

Make a list of the promises you find in the passage. How do these apply to your life?

Is there anything that didn't make sense in the verses you read? Any words, thoughts, or concepts you have trouble wrapping your brain around? Take time to look up the answers - you could use some of the resources provided on the series page.

What does this passage mean to you? What actions should you take based on the reading and journaling you did this week? **What are your next steps today?**

EXODUS 3:1-6

“ Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”

When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!”

And Moses said, “Here I am.”

“Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” Then he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.”

At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. “

JOSHUA 5:13-15

“ Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?”

“Neither,” he replied, “but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.” Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, “What message does my Lord have for his servant?”

The commander of the Lord’s army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.”

TAKE COURAGE

THE GOLDMAN'S STORY





Our story seems to be several stories combined into one, all a picture of the Lord's faithfulness and nearness during a long, hard season. It took courage to push through to see the fruit on the other side, but nevertheless, He was in the fire with us equipping us with all we needed.

Let's rewind to the spring of 2018. Ashley owned her own event company and I was in full-time ministry as a Student Pastor in Nashville, Tennessee. One Sunday as Ashley was driving to a wedding she was planning, the Lord audibly spoke to her and told her that we were going to move to MI. This thought is NOT something that Ashley would have come up with herself as this was never on our radar, but she had heard the Lord as clear as day. It is cool when He speaks to us like that. We leaned into that word and asked the Lord to confirm this was what He wanted us to do. We knew it wasn't the right time, but we prayed and waited for the release and guidance. In the fall of 2019, we felt the Lord was leading us to move in December to Michigan, but we had NO clue why or for what. We had no jobs, no real reason to move out of Nashville - but when the Lord calls you to go, you go. Ashley sold her business - a business that she had built from the ground up - and I stepped down from my role at our church. On December 16, 2019, we said goodbye to everything we had known, a city that we loved, jobs that gave us security, and a community that loved us and we headed north. It was heartbreaking and at the same time exciting because the Lord had confirmed this move over and over and we knew this was our next step. But here is the catch - we had no job and no prospects. We kind of felt like Abraham in Genesis 12:1 when the Lord told him to "go to the land I will show you." On paper, we looked crazy moving into my mom's basement with no job, but we held tightly to His leading.

In January 2020 the Lord opened a job up for me at State Farm which has been such a gift, and in March we finally moved out of my mom's basement and into a home we bought! Things were looking up; but the Lord wasn't done with our story and this is where things get painful. One morning in June, Ashley was home alone with Porter while I was at work and a neighbor broke into our house, assaulted Ashley, picked up our son and ran out the door with him, attempting to kidnap our son. Ashley caught up with her and fought hard for our son, as any mother would, and was severely beat up in the process. Thankfully the police showed up just in time to catch the neighbor and help us get our son back. It was horrific, traumatizing, and honestly, all of our worst fears had just manifested. We didn't even have time to process because we had to get out of the house and into a safer location, so once again we moved into a new house. This was our fourth move in ten months and we felt defeated, tired, and confused about what the Lord was doing. This story was painful, and at times we questioned his goodness in it all. It honestly felt like we had just obeyed His prompting to move and took the biggest faith move of our lives only to be met with horrific trauma here. But then the Lord met us in our doubt and in our weakness. He picked us back up and put us on our feet. Looking back at last year, it is only the Lord's nearness that got us through.

Fast forward to today and Ashley is still healing from the trauma, but the Lord has done such a work in her mind and heart. We love the new home the Lord gave us and we feel like we can settle in and start digging deep roots here. Looking back at last year we see the Lord equipping us with the courage and strength we needed to get through some of the hardest days of our life.

If there is one thing we can take away from it all, it is that the Lord is near even on our darkest days. He walks through the fire with us, and on the other side, there is beautiful refinement.

Take courage and keep pressing on.

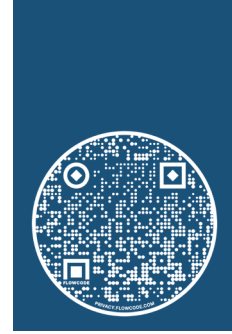
Craig & Ashley Goldman



BELONG

As a group, watch this video overview of Joshua by Bible Project at <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/joshua/>

Remember playing 'Follow the Leader' as a child? Play Follow the Leader with your gsLifeGroup. Select one member to be the 'leader.' The leader should perform a variety of gestures and facial expressions. The 'followers' should attempt to mimic the leader's actions. If a follower does not quickly follow the leader's actions, they will be 'out.' Keep playing until all but one follower is out. To keep playing, switch leaders and play again.



GROW

Read Numbers 14:5-10.

What important leadership qualities did Joshua display in this passage?

How did the Israelites react?

Consider Joshua 1:1-9.

What challenges faced Joshua as he took over leadership of the Jewish people?

What advantages did he have? How was he prepared for this task? How many times was Joshua directed to be strong and courageous and not to be afraid? Why were these directives necessary? How could he meet this directive? Who did he receive help from? When have you been afraid when facing a challenge? How did you cope with your fears?

Read Exodus 3:1-6 and Joshua 5:13-15. (See page 17).

What similarities are there between these two passages? What phrase was the same?

Why do you think that this was important in establishing Joshua in his new role as leader of the Jewish people?

Look at Joshua 6:1-7, 20-21.

What were Joshua's battle instructions from the Lord? What was the result of obedience to His instructions? Have you ever been called to obey instructions from the Lord that seemed odd to you? If so, how did you react? What was the result?

Read Joshua 6:20-21 and 7:1-8, 19-26.

Compare and contrast the results of obedience and disobedience to the Lord.

What were the consequences of disobedience in chapter 7? How did the disobedience of one affect others? Do you consider this to be 'fair?' Why or why not?

REACH

Consider Joshua 6:22-23, 25, Matthew 1:1, 5.

How did Joshua keep the promise that had been made to Rahab? Why is it important to keep our promises? What do we learn about her importance in Christian history in Matthew 1? What does this suggest about the importance of reaching those that society may consider to be outsiders with the Good News? How are you putting this into practice?

GOING DEEPER:

Look at Joshua 1:1-9 together.

When have you had to prepare for a new role in leadership? How did you prepare? What was the role of prayer in your preparations? What emotions did you experience in taking on this new leadership role? What can you learn from Joshua 1:1-9 about leadership that might



Deborah and Barak

STEP TOWARDS AVAILABILITY

JUDGES 2:16–23; 4:1–5:31

**GOD DOES HIS OWN WORK IN THE WORLD THROUGH OUR
AVAILABILITY MORE THAN OUR ABILITY.**

God used Deborah and Barak to rescue the people of Israel from the Canaanites. The beauty of the story of Deborah and Barak is not in military might or great victory, but in availability and obedience. Because Deborah was available to God's plan and calling on her life, she was able to position Barak in the place of victory. This story is an example of how often the narrative of scripture is woven through with ordinary people who are empowered by God through their obedience and openness to His word being spoken.

What an encouragement to God's people! We don't need to possess great strength or wisdom. We don't need to be strategists or help God in His pursuits. We simply need to be available to His will and His way. When we take ourselves out of the driver's seat and allow God to move through us, we see His plan laid out before us. The question is, am I available and am I ready to be obedient?

PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: OBEDIENCE

The narrative of the people that we see throughout scripture is often that God uses ordinary people to do the extraordinary. These people weren't meant to be put on pedestals, but to show how obedience to God's perfect plan changes the world. This week we are focusing on obedience as a practice. Start out by asking God for guidance and wisdom. What are some things that you know He has called you to do? Are these things that you have been working towards or that you might not even be able to grasp as possible? As you pray, begin to

KEY VERSES

How can you seek to make this verse at the forefront of your life this week?

“FOR WE ARE HIS
WORKMANSHIP,
CREATED IN
CHRIST JESUS
FOR GOOD
WORKS, WHICH
GOD PREPARED
BEFOREHAND,
THAT WE SHOULD
WALK IN THEM. “

EPHESIANS 2:10

ask God what steps He would have you take towards His will. Now start to develop a concrete plan of the next step that you might need to take in obedience. Only you will know what God is calling you to do, but consider asking someone close to you for accountability in taking the next step of obedience. This could be dropping off cookies or other treats to neighbors, or any number of opportunities. Pray this week that God would illuminate at least 2-3 ways that He would like for you to serve someone else and then do it.

PRAYER

Take time this week to write out your prayers. Use the prompts from Practicing Spiritual Disciplines to pray about obedience. Make a list of people who might benefit from your obedience to God in sharing the Gospel. Pray for them and ask God to open doors. Take time to journal your prayers this week and open your heart and mind to the next steps that God is leading you in.

What is happening
in this passage?
What should we learn from it?

What truth is this passage
directing us to see?
How can we see it better?

What is this passage
encouraging us to do?
What is the truth and wisdom
in that encouragement?

How can we personally apply
the truth and wisdom in
this passage this week?

BELONG

What things are you afraid of?

What is a difficult life lesson you've learned recently?

GROW

Judges 2:15-23 describes a cycle that defined Israel during the time judges ruled them. How would you describe each phase of the cycle? (2:17, 2:18, 2:19, 2:20-23)

Where in the cycle is Israel in Judges 4:1-3? What similarities and differences are there between Israel's condition and ours?

Judges 4:6-9 describes an exchange between Deborah (a prophet and judge) and Barak. Why was Barak afraid to fight without Deborah? What does this show about Barak's faith?

Judges 4:17-24 gives graphic detail about the death of the Philistine commander. Why do you think this detail is included?

Judges 5 is a retelling of how God delivered Israel in poetic form. What details in chapter 5 help you understand God's involvement better?

REACH

What is God calling you to do that seems scary?

How can you refocus your faith on Him instead of your fear?

How can you learn from the hard lessons God has taught you and avoid repeating the same mistakes?

THE QUESTION IS

AM I AVAILABLE AND AM I READY

TO BE OBEDIENT?

A·VAIL·A·BLE

ADJECTIVE

ABLE TO BE USED OR OBTAINED; AT SOMEONE'S DISPOSAL.

NOT OTHERWISE OCCUPIED; FREE TO DO SOMETHING.

PRESENT OR READY FOR IMMEDIATE USE.

O·BE·DI·ENCE

NOUN

COMPLIANCE WITH AN ORDER, REQUEST, OR LAW.

SUBMISSION TO ANOTHER'S AUTHORITY.

ACTING IN TRUST AND RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY.

GIDEON

STEP TOWARDS CONFIDENCE

JUDGES 6

**GOD DOESN'T CALL THE BRAVE AS MUCH AS HE MAKES
BRAVE THOSE HE HAS CALLED.**

Gideon was kind of a hot mess. God called him explicitly and he still had doubts and fears. Over and over again, God needed to show Gideon that He had a plan and deliverance for the people of Israel and we see Gideon grow in confidence throughout His encounters. From questioning God's word to doing what God had called him to do in the darkness instead of the light, God would eventually build confidence in Gideon to free the people of Israel and provide peace.

If we are being honest, it's really easy to read the story of Gideon and think, "Come on, man! You heard from God and yet you're still doubting! Do what he said to do." But, we can find ourselves in Gideon's shoes more than we would like to admit. What we truly need in our lives is a confidence that comes from the Lord. When we have confidence in God's plan and His provision and eliminate distractions, there's nothing He can't accomplish through us.

PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: RADICAL TRUST

Trusting is a spiritual discipline because sometimes it takes a concerted effort to get our minds and ideas out of the way and truly believe. This is rooted in how we truly see God and how we truly see ourselves. At our core do we really believe that God is trustworthy? At our core do we truly believe that we can bootstrap our lives and make our own way? This week, take time to find examples from scripture of God's character. Who is He? Can we truly believe what He says? Then take time to find scriptures that talk about the condition of man. Can we truly trust ourselves? When life rails against the promises of God, we have an opportunity to exhibit radical trust. What are the promises of God that we need to practice trust in? Take time to write them out and come back to them when you need the reminder. God is worthy of our trust and confidence. Sometimes it takes capturing our thoughts and making them submissive to the will of God.

PRAYER

Take time this week to think and pray about trust. What has God shown you in your life that proves that He is trustworthy? Write these ideas out. Why should we have confidence in God and not ourselves? What is an area this week that you can practice walking in confidence? Write out a prayer committing that area to God and take time each day to pray through the words you've written.

[illegible]

IN OUR CULTURE
IT IS SO EASY TO
BE SWAYED OR
DISTRACTED.
WE FIND A
MILLION
DIFFERENT
THINGS TO
OCCUPY OUR
TIME AND WHEN
IT'S TIME TO
STEP OUT IN
FAITH, IT CAN
BE A LOT
EASIER TO LET
SOMEONE ELSE
DO WHAT GOD
HAS CALLED US
TO DO.

“

“THUS SAYS THE LORD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL: I LED YOU UP FROM EGYPT AND BROUGHT YOU OUT OF THE HOUSE OF SLAVERY. AND I DELIVERED YOU FROM THE HAND OF THE EGYPTIANS AND FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO OPPRESSED YOU, AND DROVE THEM OUT BEFORE YOU AND GAVE YOU THEIR LAND.”

JUDGES 6:8-9

KEY VERSES:

Memorize, Rephrase, or Meditate
on these verses this week:

Take time to write out some of your thoughts each day surrounding the verses you've read.

Identification: What is happening in this passage? What should we learn from it?

Direction: What truth is this passage directing us to see? How can we see it better?

Encouragement: What is this passage encouraging us to do? What is the truth and wisdom in that encouragement?

Application: How can we personally apply the truth and wisdom in this passage this week?



BELONG

Have you ever felt unfit to handle a challenge? Perhaps a difficult circumstance, a tough conversation, or a challenging job? How did you prepare yourself, and how did things turn out?

Have you ever had to address insecurities, either in yourself or a close friend? What actions were taken? What support was sought out? And did these insecurities ever fully go away?

GROW

In Judges 6, we read about yet another daunting challenge faced by the nation of Israel, the Midianites and Amalekites. And as before, God identified and called a warrior named Gideon. Have a member of your group read Judges 6:11-15, 6:25-27, and 6:36-40, discussing Gideon's insecurities exhibited in these verses.

Despite these challenges, how did God work with Gideon to affirm him and empower him for his calling?

6:12-16 – an appearance and pep-talk from the angel of the LORD

6:19-21 – a sign of power from the angel of the LORD

6:23 – a word from the LORD directly

6:25 – another message from God at night, calling him to begin his ministry

6:26-40 – two separate signs to reassure Gideon of his calling

After this time (as far as we can read), Gideon appears to be a bit more confident in God's calling... even watching as God releases nearly all of his 32,000 soldiers, and leaving just 300 men to defeat the entire Midianite army. Yet, God in His grace still offered Gideon reassurance. Have a member of your group read Judges 7:9-15 and discuss this clear message offered to Gideon.

REACH

Do you ever struggle with doubt in God's direction and calling in your life?

How can we learn from Gideon in these chapters to balance asking God for confirmation and direction with trusting His calling from the start?

JEPHTHAH

STEP TOWARDS GRACE

JUDGES 10–12

**WHAT WE DO FOR GOD IS NOT NEARLY AS IMPORTANT
AS WHO WE BECOME IN HIM.**

Jephthah had no concept of the grace of God.

Instead, he felt the need to try to earn his position before God. The beauty of the gospel is that we never have to make promises or offer sacrifices to God to earn His favor. God's grace is a free gift that is given to us when we believe in Him. Faith in that gift is the only way to please God as it is the conduit for our transformation.

In our zeal, sometimes we are overly eager for God to work through us but we neglect the fact that He wants to work in us first. We must always remember that the work that we do is the fruit that comes from our salvation and not the root of our salvation. The root of our salvation only comes from the free gift of God through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. How great is His grace that He lavishes upon us!

PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: PERSONAL EVANGELISM

The Gospel is the good news that in our brokenness, sinfulness, and separation from God, Jesus Christ entered the world as fully God and fully man to live a perfect life, die the death that we deserved, and raise from the dead to defeat death, hell, and the grave. In the midst of this, King Jesus ushered the Kingdom of God into the earth, showing the new way of living as citizens. The spiritual discipline that we are focusing on this week is self evangelism, or preaching the Gospel to ourselves daily. When we feel broken or fall into sin and shame, the Gospel is good news. When we feel angry or defeated, the Gospel is good news. When we find ourselves in the midst of emotions or thoughts that are contrary to our new life in the Kingdom of God, we have to remember His grace and His salvation. This allows us to reframe our minds and focus on God's grace and mercy instead of the things that remind us of who we were before we encountered the Gospel. There is no negativity or brokenness that we face that the Gospel doesn't speak to. So how will you preach this Gospel to yourself this week?

PRAYER

Take time this week to think through the idea of the Gospel in your prayer time. Enter into prayer with adoration, thanking God for who He is and what He has given to you. His free gift of salvation is poured out on you in your most broken places. Next, focus on confession. What are the issues that are keeping you from everything God has for you? What are some areas you might have slipped up in or fallen short in? Our confession frees us from guilt and shame as we hand our issues over to God. Finally, end your prayer in deep thanksgiving for the Gospel and for redemption. Write these prayers out so you can reference them later.

[illegible]

KEY VERSES

Memorize, Rephrase, or Meditate on
this verse this week:

“ YET WE KNOW THAT A PERSON IS NOT JUSTIFIED BY WORKS OF THE LAW BUT THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST, SO WE ALSO HAVE BELIEVED IN CHRIST JESUS, IN ORDER TO BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH IN CHRIST AND NOT BY WORKS OF THE LAW, BECAUSE BY WORKS OF THE LAW NO ONE WILL BE JUSTIFIED. “

GALATIANS 2:16

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

Take time to write out some of your thoughts each day surrounding the verses you've read.

Try to answer the Who, What, When, Where, and Why questions about this passage. Who wrote it, What is it about, When was it written, Where did it take place, and Why did they include this passage in scripture? What do these observations teach you about God?

How is this passage relevant to your life today? In what ways is it applicable and how can you immediately put to use what you're learning through reading?

Write out any promises that you've gleaned from these portions of scripture, whether explicitly stated or inferred. Declare these promises over your life in prayer. Ask God for his will and his timing in these promises.



BELONG

Have you ever felt unwelcome around a group of people due to their words or lack of words?
How might you feel about helping them if they were to approach you about a leadership role later?

GROW

Looking at the map of Tribal Allotments of Israel, find the land of Issacar (left of the Jordan River), Ephraim (left again) Gilead (right of the Jordan River), Moab and Ammon (right of the Dead Sea) and Mizpah (left of the Jordan River in Benjamin). Note that there is also a Mizpah in the land of Gilead.

Have someone read Judges 10 aloud. Notice the history of leadership, wealth, location of each person/people group mentioned, patterns of sin and God's response.

How did God respond to their pleas for help?

What do you think it means to 'become impatient over the misery of Israel?'

Now read Judges 11:1-32. Notice the name of Jephthah's father, the descriptive words used to define who Jephthah is, the company he kept, the way he was treated by his siblings and the help being asked of him.

What is Jephthah's response to those asking for his help?

Did Jephthah start with a diplomatic approach or a "show of force" approach to the situation with the Ammonites?

When Jephthah is giving a historical account of how they came to own the land, who does he give credit to?

Look at verses 30-32. Do you think Jephthah's vow is an act of devotion or showing a lack of faith?

Reading the remaining verses of Judges 11, did Jephthah defeat the Ammonites?

Read verse 35. Do you believe Jephthah was bound by his vow to the Lord?

Have someone read Leviticus 18:21 and Deuteronomy 12:31 aloud.

Think about the historical event in Genesis 22 (Abraham and Isaac) in comparison to this one.

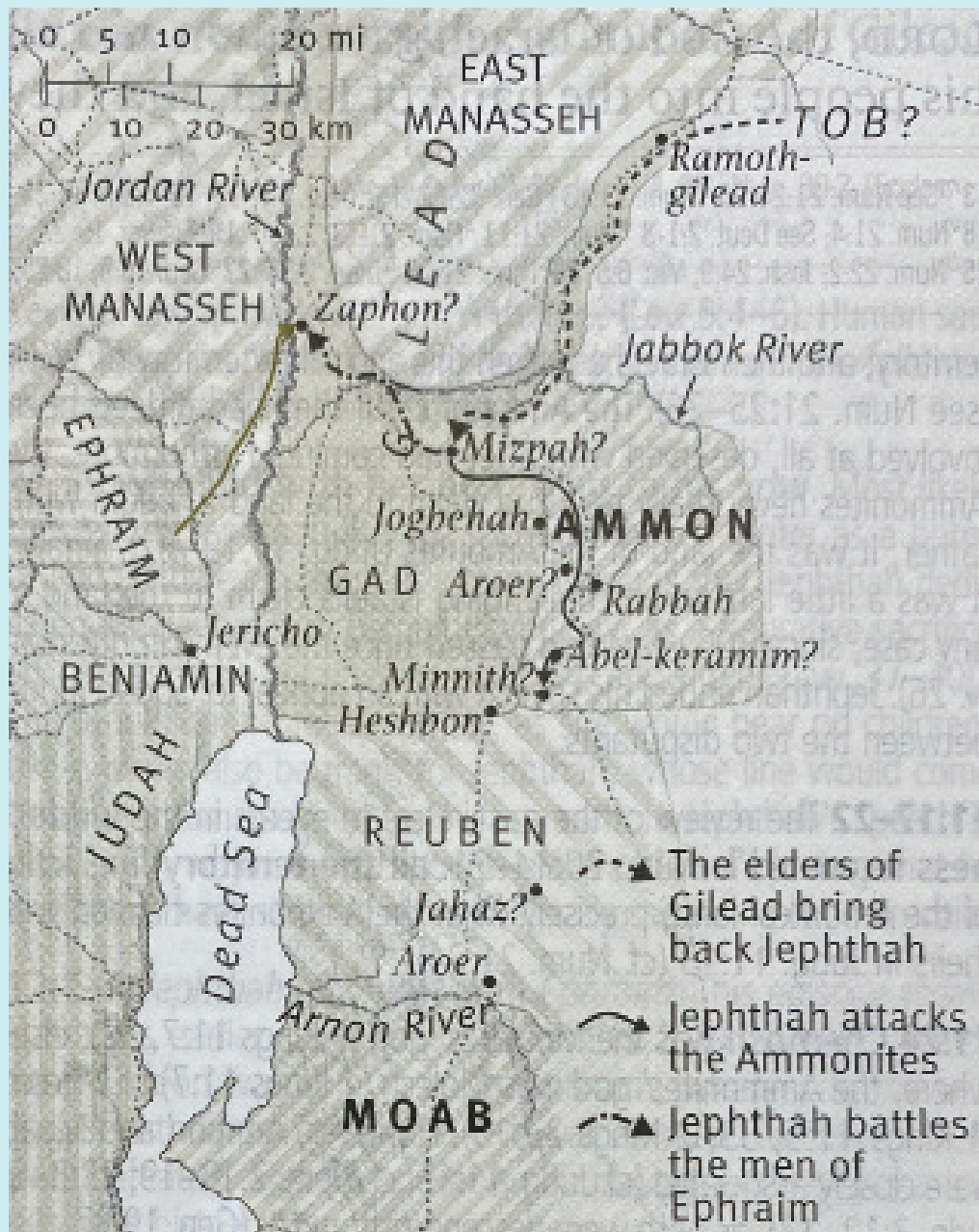
What parallels do you see in these families' lives? What significant differences do you see?

Have someone read Judges 12:5-7 and Matthew 26:69-73 aloud.

What similarities do you notice in these passages?

Look at the rest of Judges 12.

What types of things does the author bring the reader's attention back to after the history of Jephthah is complete?



REACH

Jephthah's life experiences had toughened him for such a role in contrast to Jair's pampered life. Are you avoiding serving because someone has offended you? Please know that you are needed! Let go of the offense and use the life experiences God has given you.

JEFF VANDERSTELT

Foreword by Jackie Hill Perry

GOSPEL FLUENCY

Speaking the truths of Jesus into
the Everyday Stuff of Life

VANDERSTELT

GOSPEL FLUENCY

GOSPEL FLUENCY

Have you ever desired to bring up Jesus to people, but just didn't know how? Jeff Vanderstelt provides us wonderful reminders of how the life of Jesus impacts every area and stage of life. He then provides us with practical ways to take advantage of those opportunities as they arise by showing us how to work Jesus into everyday conversation.

I encourage this as a must read for Jesus followers, especially with the attractional church ministry model fading, the decline of which being accelerated by Covid. We must be a people who live true to our God-given mission of bringing light into the darkness where we live, work and play. This book helps to remind us that every day is a mission opportunity, having ourselves been impacted by the unmerited grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- Bryan Tema

"Reading *Gospel Fluency* has drastically challenged the way I walk with the Lord throughout my day. It beautifully and gracefully explains the distinct difference between knowing about the Gospel and how it works compared to living in the power of believing it to be working IN ME.

Seeing the Gospel work in everyday life to shape my heart by believing fully in the freedom I have because of the work of Jesus Christ compels me to share the Gospel in a way that is way beyond a formula or step by step process - it's simply understanding and sharing my own story of redemption in Him and the TRUTH that there is hope of abundant life with Him because of the Gospel."

- Kylie Whitman

RUTH

STEP TOWARDS REDEMPTION

RUTH 1-4

TURN THE PAGE BY RECOGNIZING GOD'S EXCLUSIVE PLAN OF SALVATION.

The story of Ruth is a story of redemption. From the sad situation of loss and grief, God brought redemption through Ruth's passion and kindness. When her husband and father-in-law died, she had every right to return to her roots, but caring for her mother-in-law, Naomi accompanied her to Bethlehem. It is in Bethlehem that Ruth meets Boaz who becomes her kinsman redeemer. A "*kinsman redeemer*" was a relative who was responsible for caring for and vindicating a family under certain hardships. As Boaz steps into this role, it directly foreshadows the role of Jesus Christ as the kinsman redeemer for the people of Israel.

What was a lost and hopeless situation turned into redemption through the marriage of Boaz and Ruth. Ruth found protection, love, and care through her obedience and unwillingness to see Naomi suffer. Even the most bleak and frustrating situations can spring forth hope of redemption when we trust in Christ and follow in the path that He has put in front of us.

His redemption is worth the sacrifice.

PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: KINDNESS

Ruth's kindness in adversity is mentioned multiple times throughout her story. She stayed and cared for her mother-in-law even when she was released to go back to her mother. She was kind to Boaz and cared deeply for him. Her kindness positioned her to receive the blessing and redemption that the Lord desired for her. The discipline of kindness can be difficult in our culture. With the world around us so fast paced, it's not necessarily that we don't mind to be kind, but sometimes we just forget to stop and spread joy into the world around us. What would it look like if we slowed down this week and spent intentional time thinking about who we might bless with our kindness? Our kindness, joy, and hospitality show the world around us who we belong to and how He wants to invade the world with His presence. What are some practical ways you can show kindness this week?

WRITE A NOTE

OFFER A

DATE NIGHT

CALL

This week in your prayer time, spend time writing about and praying through your redemption story. Where were you before God redeemed you? What sorrows and brokenness did you experience? What did God do for you when you entered into relationship with Him? What future hope of redemption do you have? Take time to journal these thoughts and prayers, thanking God for His redemption and presence.

[illegible]

“BLESSED BE THE LORD, WHO HAS NOT LEFT YOU THIS DAY WITHOUT A REDEEMER, AND MAY HIS NAME BE RENOWNED IN ISRAEL! HE SHALL BE TO YOU A RESTORER OF LIFE AND A NOURISHER OF YOUR OLD AGE...”

GENESIS 6:17-19

KEY VERSE:

Memorize

Rephrase

Meditate

on these verses

this week.

Take time to answer these questions each day surrounding the verses you've read from your reading plan.

Write down some of the facts found in this passage. You should be able to write down a bunch of observations. Start with simple thoughts and then write down bigger and more broad observations about the passage.

EVEN THE MOST BLEAK AND FRUSTRATING SITUATIONS CAN

SPRING FORTH HOPE OF REDEMPTION

WHEN WE TRUST IN CHRIST AND FOLLOW IN THE PATH

THAT HE HAS PUT IN FRONT OF US.

Next, draw out some principles from the observations that you made. What is God teaching his people through this passage? What are guiding principles that God might want to teach readers as they take in the words of this passage? What is God trying to teach you?

How will you apply these principles to your life? Be as specific as you can. What will you do today to make these principles and lessons stick?

BELONG

As a group, watch this video overview of Ruth by the Bible Project.



GROW

Read Ruth 1:1 and Judges 2:10-15, 17:6.

In what period of Biblical history did the Book of Ruth occur?

What was the spiritual, moral, political, and cultural climate at that time?

What parallels do you see between the spiritual, moral, political, and cultural climate at the time Ruth lived and our current time?

Considering Ruth 1:4-18, in what way did Ruth show loyalty to her mother-in-law Naomi? In what way did she declare her loyalty to the God of Israel? Is loyalty an important character trait? Why or why not? How do you show your loyalty to other people and to God?

Read Ruth 1:4-18. How did Ruth show bravery in following her mother-in-law to Israel? Is bravery an important character trait? Why or why not? When have you been called upon to be brave? How did you meet this challenge?

Look at Ruth 2. Who was Boaz in relation to Naomi? What character traits did Boaz display in this chapter? Are these traits important to you in your relationships with other people? Why or why not?

Read Ruth 2:20-21, 3:12-13 and this article from Got Questions at <https://www.gotquestions.org/kinsman-redeemer.html>. Why did Naomi refer to Boaz as a 'redeemer'? What was the significance of the kinsman redeemer in the days of the Old Testament? As Christians, Who is our kinsman redeemer? How does Boaz as kinsman-redeemer foreshadow or picture our kinsman redeemer as believers?

Read Ruth 4:13, 21-23, Isaiah 11:1-11, Revelation 5:5. What notable Biblical figures are descendants of Ruth and Boaz? How did the Lord set the stage for the coming of the Messiah in the Book of Ruth?



REACH

Looking at Ruth 1:4, 4:13, and 4:20-21, what was Ruth's background?

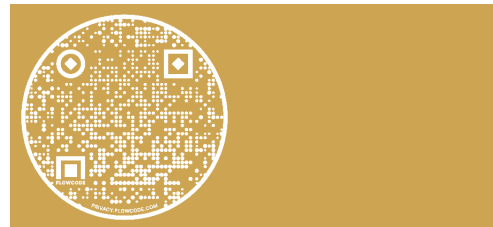
How was she likely to be looked upon by the Israelites? How did God use her despite her background? What does that tell us about God's care and concern for 'outsiders?' How should this affect our testimony and witness to nonbelievers?

GOING DEEPER

The Book of Ruth has been the subject of a number of famous paintings. Some of these can be viewed here

<https://www.womeninthebible.net/bible-paintings/ruth-naomi/>

at the Women of the Bible website. How are relationships and emotions portrayed in these paintings? What moves you emotionally in the Book of Ruth and in these paintings? Why do you think that this story has been an inspiration to so many artists? What inspiration do you take from the Book of Ruth and these paintings?



WE ARE NOW
ENTERING
A TIME IN THE
HISTORY OF
ISRAEL WHERE
GOD HAS GIVEN
PEOPLE KINGS
INSTEAD OF
JUDGES WHO
RESCUE THE
NATION.

KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL

| ISRAEL | | PASSAGE | |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| Saul | | 1 Samuel 9 | |
| David | | 1 Samuel 16 | |
| Solomon | | 1 Kings 1 | |
| JUDAH | PASSAGE | ISRAEL | PASSAGE |
| Rehoboam | 1 Kings 11-14 | Jeroboam I | 1 Kings 12-14 |
| Abijam | 1 Kings 14-15 | | |
| | | Nadab | 1 Kings 15 |
| | | Baasha | 1 Kings 15-16 |
| Asa | 1 Kings 15 | Elah | 1 Kings 16 |
| | | Zimri | 1 Kings 16 |
| | | Omri | 1 Kings 16 |
| | | Ahab | 1 Kings 16 |
| Jehoshaphat | 1 Kings 22 | Ahaziah | 1 Kings 22 |
| Jehoram | 2 Kings 8 | Jehoram | 2 Kings 1 |
| Ahaziah | 2 Kings 8-9 | Jehu | 2 Kings 3-9 |
| Athaliah | 2 Kings 11 | | |
| Joash | 2 Kings 11-12 | Jehoahaz | 2 Kings 9-10 |
| | | Jehoash | 2 Kings 13-14 |
| Amaziah | 2 Kings 14 | Jeroboam II | 2 Kings 14 |
| | | Zechariah | 2 Kings 14-15 |
| Azariah | 2 Kings 15 | Shallum | 2 Kings 15 |
| | | Menahem | 2 Kings 15 |
| Jotham | 2 Kings 15 | Pakahiah | 2 Kings 15 |
| | | Pekah | 2 Kings 15 |
| Ahaz | 2 Kings 16 | Hoshea | 2 Kings 15-17 |
| Hezekiah | 2 Kings 18-20 | | |
| Manasseh | 2 Kings 21 | | |
| Amon | 2 Kings 21 | | |
| Josiah | 2 Kings 21-23 | | |
| Johoahaz | 2 Kings 23 | | |
| Jehoiakim | 2 Kings 23 | | |
| Johoiachin | 2 Kings 24 | | |
| Zedkiah | 2 Kings 24-25 | | |

Righteous Kings

DAVID

STEP TOWARDS GIANTS

1 SAMUEL 15–17

**BECAUSE GOD HAS DEFEATED THE REAL GIANT,
WE CAN BRAVELY FACE LESSER GIANTS.**

We see opposition to God's chosen people through the army of the Philistines, and the answer doesn't come from seasoned warriors or kings, but from a shepherd boy. God uses the most unlikely people to accomplish his purposes because it brings glory to Himself.

The story of David the Giant Slayer is only possible because of David the Shepherd. God spent time preparing David for years as he protected his flock from the dangers of the natural world. It was in this time that God cultivated David's heart and mind and helped him to see his reliance on God alone. When the opportunity to slay Goliath came about, David rose confidently in the Lord's strength and power to see the giant fall. In the same way, Jesus conquered the giant of sin and death so that we could face any lesser giants that crop up in our lives. We have the power to face our issues because Jesus faced them first.

PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: ABIDING IN GOD

The only way to face the giants in our lives is to have an abiding relationship with God. When we truly see God as our shepherd, we realize that nothing in our lives can truly stand up to the greatness and glory of who He is. Only through abiding in His word and His presence are we able to gain that level of confidence in our great Giant Slayer. The practice of abiding comes in handy when we realize that “*to abide*” is to build a home around something. It's not a simple waiting game, but a dwelling experience. When we abide in God's word, we meditate on it and let it grow within our hearts. When we abide in His presence, we don't rush from moment to moment, but relish who He is and what He wants to do in our lives. What are some practical steps towards abiding that you can take this week?

PRAYER

Take time to write out your prayers this week and think of what keeps you from abiding in God’s word and presence. Write these things out and ask God to help to eliminate distraction and impatience. Take time to write out Psalm 23 and think of God as your Shepherd and Giant Killer. Maybe rewrite the words to be more expressive for your situation and pray through them as you abide in His Word and presence.

PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of
the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow
me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of
the Lord Forever.

Take time to write out some of your thoughts each day surrounding the verses you've read.

Make a list of any sins, wrong actions, or incorrect attitudes mentioned in this passage.

How can you avoid these in your life?

Make a list of any promises - either stated or inferred in this passage.

Which of these promises can you claim this week?

What examples do you see in this passage? Is there an example you should take to heart and use in your own life? Write it down.

Write out any commands that you find in your reading. If the passage encourages you to take a specific action, view that as a command.

BELONG

As a group, watch this video overview of 1 Samuel from Bible.com together: <https://youtu.be/0Cj43LBf4PQ>



Play a few rounds of the children's game "I spy with my little eye" as a group. The first person to lead provides the first hint, starting with the phrase, "I spy with my little eye something that is..." referring to something that is visible in the room and provides a descriptor i.e., round, yellow, etc. The group then makes guesses that can be answered 'yes' or 'no' by the leader. The person to guess correctly leads the next round.

GROW

Read 1 Samuel 15: 1-2, 8-30, Psalm 40:6-8, and Hebrews 10:6-9.

Answer the following:

What was Saul instructed by the Lord to do? What did he actually do? How was this disobeying the Lord's instructions? What excuses did Saul give for his disobedience? What was Samuel's reaction? What did it take before Saul recognized his sin and confessed? What was the consequence for Saul's disobedience? How did Saul react? Have you ever only partially obeyed the Lord's instructions? If so, what types of excuses did you make for partial obedience? What were the consequences of partial obedience? What did you learn from this experience?

Look at 1 Samuel 16:1-13 together and answer the following questions:

Why was Samuel grieving? Have you ever grieved over another person's sin? What was Samuel instructed to do? What was his response? How many of Jesse's sons were presented to Samuel initially? Where was David? Why do you think David was missing at first? What did David experience after being anointed by Samuel? Have you ever heard the phrase 'don't judge a book by its cover'? How does this apply to this passage? When have you judged by appearance rather than by the heart? What was the result?

Have each group member read 1 Samuel 17 to themselves. Refer to this chapter to answer the following:

- What was the situation in 1 Samuel 17? Who was Goliath and how is he described?
- Compare and contrast David's reaction to the situation to that of the Israelites. Why were the Israelites so afraid?
- In Whom did David put his trust?
- How did Goliath react when he saw David?
- What was David's response?
- What was the result of their brief battle?

What similar themes can you spot between Chapter 16 and 17 of 1 Samuel?

Tell about a time when you experienced fear based upon the appearance of a situation. Where were you putting your trust? What was the outcome? When you have relied on the Lord and His promises, what have you experienced?

REACH

Consider 1 Samuel 17: 46-47. According to David, who would win the battle with Goliath? For what reasons? In what ways do you give credit to the Lord? Do you let others hear and see His work in your life? How will doing so influence your ability to witness for Christ?

GOING DEEPER

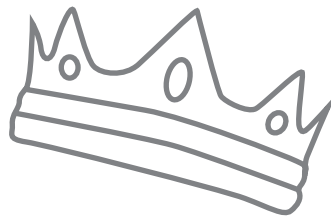
Consider 1 Samuel 16:14-22. What did Saul experience? What was the suggestion of his servants? How did this serve the Lord's purposes in preparing David for his later role as king? Looking back on your life, how did the Lord place you in the right circumstances to prepare you for your service to Him? Were you aware of His intervention at the time, or only in retrospect? As a group, say a prayer of thanks for God's intervention in your life and the way He has prepared you for your service to Him today.

FROM SAUL TO DAVID

1 SAMUEL WALKS US THROUGH A LOT. ISRAEL'S FIRST KING, SAUL, IS REJECTED AS KING BECAUSE OF HIS REBELLION. A YOUNG SHEPHERD BOY IS ANOINTED AND GOD'S SPIRIT LEAVES SAUL TO DWELL WITH DAVID. SAUL IS DRIVEN INTO DEEP MADNESS FUELED BY HATRED AND JEALOUSY; YET GOD IS WORKING.

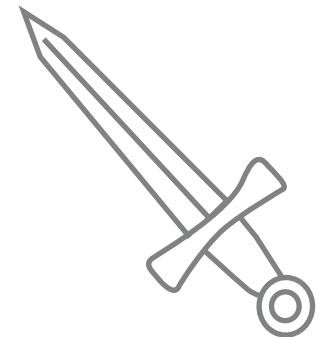
CHAPTER 9

Saul anointed as king. He is an impressive man standing a head higher than anyone else.



CHAPTER 10

Saul received as king by the people of Israel as he is very successful in battle.



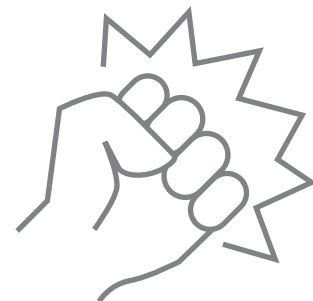
CHAPTER 13

Saul rebels and fails when he offers an inappropriate sacrifice to God.



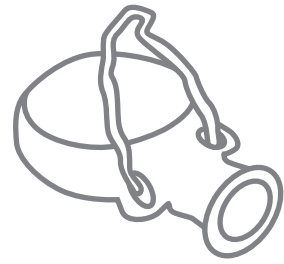
CHAPTER 14-15

Saul makes a rash oath that endangers his son, Jonathan, and flees from battle. Saul is now rejected by the people as king.



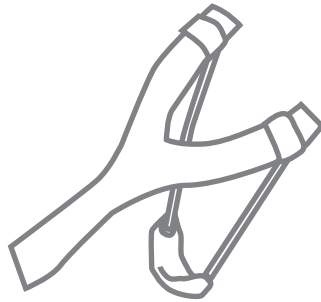
CHAPTER 16

Samuel anoints David as the next king. He is a young shepherd boy - unexpected for this role.



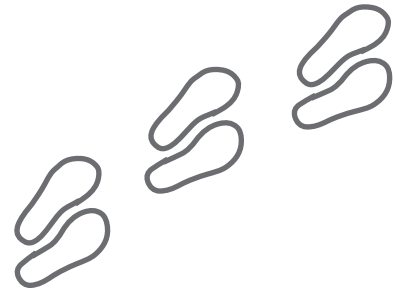
CHAPTER 17

David kills Goliath by God's power and is successful in battle.



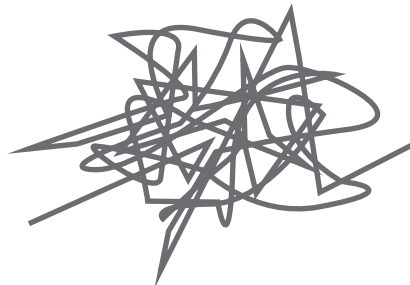
CHAPTER 18

Saul begins to pursue David to take his life.



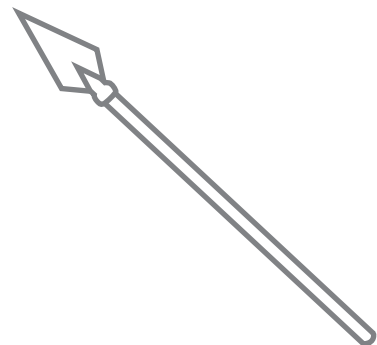
CHAPTER 22

Saul's hatred and jealousy deepen against David.



CHAPTER 26

David has the opportunity to take Saul's life but relents out of respect for God's anointing on him.



CHAPTER 31

Saul and his sons die by the sword in battle.



DAVID

STEP TOWARDS DEPENDENCE

PSALM 16

THERE IS NO END TO WHAT GOD CAN DO THROUGH A PEOPLE WHO ARE FULLY SATISFIED IN CHRIST.

We enter into this week with some background. David has killed Goliath and has become famous among the Israelites. In his fame and his anointing as future king, the current king, Saul, became jealous and vengeful and attempts to kill David to keep him from taking his position. David takes his most loyal men into hiding in order to flee from the wrath of Saul. This is the context in which Psalm 16 was written.

David doesn't focus on the enemy, but on God and his promise. Because David knew what true radical dependence on God looked like, He was able to withstand the storm of the crazy king and find peace in the eyes of God. Given the chance to kill Saul while he was sleeping and be rid of the threat on his life, David refused because Saul was still God's anointed king.

THIS LEVEL OF RADICAL DEPENDENCE ON GOD WAS THE HALLMARK OF DAVID'S LIFE AND SHOWS US WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE TO POUR OUR HEART OUT TO GOD, EVEN IN THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF LIFE.

PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: WORSHIP

True worship is giving worth to something. We choose to worship different things with our lives every single day. When we worship God with our lives, we are allowing His thoughts, His word, and His will to penetrate our hearts above any other voice or desire.

WHEN WE WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH, WE OPEN OURSELVES UP TO A RADICAL DEPENDENCE ON HIM AND HIM ALONE.

We might be stuck in a cave like David, yet we can find peace that nothing else can provide what we need. This week, take time to evaluate the time you spend on different activities and priorities. Maybe take time to audit your daily schedule and ask yourself what you are worshiping with your time, talent, and treasures. How can you spend more time this week worshiping God with your life?

WORSHIP:

PRAYER

Take time this week to listen to one or two specific worship songs. What are some of the common phrases found in the songs? What lines stick out to you? Take time to write a prayer surrounding the concepts that mean the most to you. Spend time worshiping Him through your prayer as you listen to the songs.

[illegible]

KEY VERSE — MEMORIZE, REPHRASE, OR
MEDITATE ON THESE VERSES THIS WEEK:

I BLESS THE LORD
WHO GIVES ME
COUNSEL;
IN THE NIGHT
ALSO MY HEART
INSTRUCTS ME.
I HAVE SET THE
LORD ALWAYS
BEFORE ME;
BECAUSE HE IS AT
MY RIGHT HAND,
I SHALL NOT BE
SHAKEN. THEREFORE,
MY HEART IS GLAD,
AND MY WHOLE
BEING REJOICES;
MY FLESH ALSO
DWELLS SECURE.
PSALM 16:7-9



Take time to answer these questions each day surrounding the verses you've read from your reading plan.

What is the biggest Truth that you
pulled from your reading today?
Why did it stand out to you?

What made it an important truth
for you to cling to? How can you
apply it to your life? Write down
the scripture and the truth
that you gleaned.

What lie are you believing or are
tempted to believe that stands in
the way of these truths? Take time
to refute that lie with the truths that
you've learned.

Claim victory over the lie. Write
down a sentence that says
something like this,
"The lie I've believed is _____,
but God's word says that
_____."

BELONG

What is a Miktam? Not quite sure? Neither were Bible translators. Read more about this term at <https://www.gotquestions.org/michtam.html>.

GROW

In Psalm 16, what descriptions for God are given? Of these descriptions, which one matches your experience with God most closely? Why? Which of these descriptions least matches your experience with God? Why?

According to Psalm 16:1, where does David take refuge?

When life gets difficult, where do you turn?

Considering Psalm 16:2, where does 'good' come from? Is there any good that stems from another source? When have you tried to find good elsewhere? If so, what was your experience like?

Read Psalm 16:5-8. Who did David refer to as his inheritance? Where does he find his confidence? As a believer in Christ, Who is your inheritance? How can you keep this in mind amidst life's challenges and difficulties?

Consider Psalm 16:11, Proverbs 10:17, and Matthew 7:14.

What is the 'path of life'? What are the benefits of following this path? Why is this path sometimes difficult to follow? Have you been following the path of life? Why or why not? If not, how can you choose and follow this path?

REACH

Look at Psalm 16:3-4. Who did David choose to spend time with? Who did he avoid? How do the people that you spend time with influence your thoughts, opinions, and behaviors? What forms of idolatry remain prevalent in our culture? How can you spend time with nonbelievers and share the Gospel while making sure to guard against having your heart and mind led astray?



GOING DEEPER

IN PSALM 16:8–11, WHAT DOES DAVID
EXPRESS GRATITUDE FOR?

WHAT CAN YOU BE GRATEFUL FOR?

HOW OFTEN DO YOU REMEMBER TO EXPRESS YOUR THANKFULNESS?

ARE THERE TIMES WHEN YOU EXPERIENCE
DISCONTENTMENT?

HOW DO YOU HANDLE THESE TIMES?

HOW DO YOU FIND YOUR SATISFACTION

IN JESUS?

DAVID

STEP TOWARDS REPENTANCE

2 SAMUEL 11-12

REAL REPENTANCE BEGINS WHERE BLAME SHIFTING ENDS.

David has absolutely blown it. Not only has his lust and lack of control led him to sleep with a married woman, but he has her husband killed to cover up his sin. God's chosen king proved that even the people who seem to have it together the most are capable of the most egregious sins when left to their own devices. The beauty of this story is that this didn't spell David's demise.

David was confronted with his sin and through his repentance, found a new understanding of God's grace and mercy. It was only after facing up to his sin and realizing that he had not just sinned against those involved, but against God, that he was able to be restored. God's desire is for us to see our sin as something that separates us from Him and repent of it so that we can live in His restoration. Let's take David's example and walk in new life with the God who created us and creates new hearts inside of us.

PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES:

CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE

Confession is a spiritual discipline that is so necessary for a new life with Christ. What role does confession really play in our lives as believers? Do we treat it like a simple apology or do we come to the Lord and others with contrite hearts asking for deep forgiveness as we confess our sins? We can't truly confess our sins unless the reality of what they mean pierces our hearts. Do we see sin as casual or as a deep offense to God and others?

In Jesus' gospel message, he told people to repent of their sins and follow Him. Repentance is born out of a deep understanding that sin is a disease that severs our relationship with God and that only through our grieving, confession, and turning away from our sin, can we enter into the life that God has for us. As believers we have the opportunity to practice confession and repentance in our daily lives. When we mess up, we can confess our sins to God and to those around us. Then we repent by walking in the other direction towards wholeness. How can you practice this principle this week?

PRAYER

Take time this week to think through the idea of confession. God saved us from rebellion and entered into a relationship with us. This is massive! We have so much to be thankful for, but still so much in our humanness that rebels against the one, true, living God. Remember that He has already saved us from the penalty of sin, He is currently saving us from the power of sin (already and not yet), and He will save us from the presence of sin. This means that we have a lot of room for confession. What are the elements of confession? Take time to write out your thoughts and write a prayer of confession. This might be for a bigger sin or even a practice prayer for you to use in the future.

KEY VERSES

Memorize, Rephrase, or Meditate on these verses this week:

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.”

**Psalm
51:10-12**

Take time to write out some of your thoughts each day surrounding the verses you've read.

What does this passage have to teach me today? Write down lessons that characters learned or principles that are present that you can glean from this passage.

What don't you understand about the passage? Take time to write down these questions. What could be illuminated through further study? What principles should you discuss with those around you?

What are some of the nuggets of truth from this passage that you can learn from? What truths do you need to take away and put into practice?

What will you do with what you've read? How can you put the lessons and truth into action this week? Write out your steps and follow them!

“

Remember that He has already saved us from the **penalty of sin**, He is currently saving us from the **power of sin** (already and not yet), and He will save us from the **presence of sin.**

”

BELONG

Watch this video for an overview of 2 Samuel:

<https://youtu.be/YvoWDXNDJgs>



GROW

Read 2 Samuel 11:1-2. What was happening at the beginning of Chapter 11?

Where was David? Where should he have been? Have you ever been somewhere other than where you should have been? What was the result?

Considering 2 Samuel 11, Exodus 20:13, 14, 17, and James 1:13-15, what was the progression of David's sinful thoughts and actions? How did he react to the initial temptation? Which of the Ten Commandments did he break? What could he have done differently to avoid sinning? What can we learn from David's experience that we can apply to our own temptations and to avoiding sin? Who and where can we turn to for help in avoiding sin?

Read 2 Samuel 12: 10-15, 13:26-30, 15:13, and 16:20-23. According to Nathan, what would the consequences of David's sin be? Why did these consequences occur even after David repented of his sin? How do we see these consequences affect David and David's family later in II Samuel? What does this tell us about the nature of sin and its consequences?

Look at 2 Samuel 12:26-31. Why did Joab call David into battle? Who was responsible for most of the hard work that had occurred during that military campaign? Who received the credit? Do you think that this was fair? Why or why not? Have you ever experienced a situation where credit was not given where it was deserved?

REACH

Considering Psalm 51, who did David sin against? In whom does he place his hope for cleansing and for salvation? As a result of being forgiven and saved, how does David hope to influence others? As believers, how does confession of sin relate to our ability to be a witness for Christ?



GOING DEEPER

Read 2 Samuel Chapter 12:1-13. Why do you think Nathan used a parable to confront David with his sin? Do you think that Nathan showed bravery in confronting David? Why or why not? How did David react? Have you ever had to confront someone with a difficult truth about sinful behavior? How did the other person react? Conversely, have you ever been confronted by someone regarding sinful behavior? How did you react? How can such situations be handled with honesty, respect, and love? How does the manner in which such situations are handled affect the outcome?



VISION SUNDAY

STEP TOWARDS VISION

KEY VERSES

*Memorize,
Rephrase, or
Meditate on this verse
this week:*

WHERE THERE IS NO
PROPHETIC VISION
THE PEOPLE CAST
OFF RESTRAINT,

BUT BLESSED IS HE
WHO KEEPS THE LAW.

Proverbs
29:18

PROVERBS 29:18

Vision is important. Proverbs tells us that without vision, people perish. As we embrace this season of vision at gracespring, there's a good opportunity to think about the vision for your life. Take some time this week to prayerfully encounter God and ask Him for a checkup. How are you doing on the mission that He's given you? Where are you headed now and where do you want to be in the next five years? What is the vision that you are prayerfully walking towards and what are the steps you need to take to get you there? This whole guide has been about taking the next step towards Jesus, so take this week to write out your thoughts and ideas surrounding His words and His work that will light up the path in front of you to step into His promise.

PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: A RULE OF LIFE

A Rule of Life is a set of vision statements, practices, and rhythms that help to create space to center life on Jesus and focus on how to live life to the full in Christ. The Latin word for "*rule*" here was referring to a trellis in a vineyard that would help the vines extend to bear the most fruit. Consider writing out vision statements for your life for the next year that encompass your goals, dreams, plans, and practices. Use the following topics to craft these ideas and to help align your heart and mind with where God is leading you: God, Mind, Body, Relationships, Rest, Work, Money. Develop vision for each one by describing what practices you would like to put in place and where you'd like to be in a

PRAYER:

Pray through the examples from the Practicing Spiritual Disciplines section above. Write out your prayers and vision statements that God lays on your heart. Write out a prayer expressing your thoughts and feelings afterward.

This image shows a blank 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.

What is happening in this
passage? What should you
learn from it?

What truth is this passage
directing you to see?
How can you see it better?

What is this passage
encouraging you to do?
What is the truth and wisdom
in that encouragement?

How can you personally
apply the truth and wisdom
in this passage this week?



CASTING VISION

DURING THIS WEEK OF VISION, TAKE TIME TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN YOUR GSLIFE GROUP AND THEN WORK TOGETHER TO CAST VISION FOR YOUR GROUP.

What are some Bible verses that define Godly character? Marriage? Parenting?
How do we apply those verses as a group?

How do we approach Belonging, Growing, and Reaching as a group? Is it working in equal measure or do we focus on one more than the others? How can we increase our focus in the areas that we are weaker in?

Who do we want to be as a group?
What principles and characteristics do we want to define our time together?

If we were to create a vision statement for our group what would it be?
(Take time to write down ideas and actually create a vision statement together of what you want your group to be and do.)

What are some areas of growth that we can look toward over the next year?
What are some areas of strength that we want to keep cultivating?

Pray together about the discussions that you've had this week. How can you keep each other accountable to move towards this direction over the next year?

SOLOMON

STEP TOWARDS WISDOM

I KINGS 3:3–15; 11:1–13, ———
 ECCLESIASTES 12:13–14 ———

PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES:
SEEKING WISDOM

**YOU NEED SOMETHING MORE THAN WISDOM,
 BUT SOMEONE WHO GIVES YOU THE STRENGTH TO BE WISE.**

Solomon was the wisest man in the world in his day. He is known as the man who wrote most of the wisdom literature in the Bible and provided countless insights into what wisdom looks like for believers. Yet, he still found ways to compromise and allow sinful behavior to enter into his life. Simply put, wisdom in itself will only get us so far. We need a relationship with the giver of wisdom in order to be complete.

We can so easily fall into the trap of being wise in our own eyes and forget what God wants to speak to us. We need to constantly remind ourselves that the fear of God and relationship with Him is the beginning of all wisdom and that the wise truly seek Him with their entire being.

Proverbs 9:10 tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. This fear means respect and reverence rather than terror. When we have a healthy understanding of who God is, we begin our journey in wisdom. When we walk with Him continually on the sanctification journey, the Holy Spirit pours wisdom into us. In the same way that we focused on abiding earlier in this guide, a large part of our focus as believers is on living a spirit-filled life full of the wisdom of God. The practice of seeking wisdom is realizing that we need God to fulfill us, to guide us, and to show us what is best for our lives. It's leaning into His presence and asking Him for wisdom. What are some areas that you could use the wisdom of God to illuminate in your life this week?

PRAYER

What are some areas that you need wisdom this week? Write out prayers asking God for wisdom in specific areas and thanking Him for the ways that He has already provided for you.

KEY VERSES

How can you seek to make this verse at the forefront of your life this week? Use the space below to rewrite the verses as a tool to memorize or to give them new meaning as you write them in your own words. Then ponder them throughout the week.

**“THE FEAR OF
THE LORD IS THE
BEGINNING OF
WISDOM,
AND THE
KNOWLEDGE OF
THE HOLY ONE
IS INSIGHT.”
PROVERBS 9:10**

BELONG

What are some of your favorite quotes or words of wisdom that you've been given?

Take time as a group to search the internet for different proverbs, expressions, or quotes that provide wisdom. These could be funny sayings or actual scripture.

What stands out to you?

Think of the wisest person you've ever met. Describe them to the group.

What made them wise?

GROW

Read Proverbs 9 together as a group.

What are the two main "characters" that are presented in Proverbs 9?

Look through other parts of Proverbs and search for other characteristics of wisdom.

Do the same for folly. Share what you find with the group and make a list of the characteristics of both.

Read Proverbs 9:10 out loud a few times.

What do you think about the phrase

"The fear of the Lord"? What does fear mean here?

Proverbs 9:10 says that the fear of the Lord is the BEGINNING of wisdom.

Why do you think that is? What is the end of wisdom?

What is the definition of wisdom? Are you wise?

REACH

Think of the ideas that we've discussed. What is an area that you could use more wisdom? How can we pray for each other in this way?

How do you share wisdom with those around you? Is there a right way and wrong way?

How can we share the wisdom of the Gospel with someone this week? Who will keep us accountable as we do this?

“BUT HE SAID TO ME, “MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU, FOR MY POWER IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS.” THEREFORE I WILL BOAST ALL THE MORE GLADLY ABOUT MY WEAKNESSES, SO THAT CHRIST’S POWER MAY REST ON ME.”

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9



Thank You

**FOR STUDYING GOD'S
WORD WITH US!**

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Online @ <https://gracespringchurch.org/>

CONTACT US

269.629.9622

connect@gracespringchurch.org